2023 SOCIETY OF COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY, DIVISION 17, APA
Early Career Professionals Committee Award Recipients

Monica Becerra, Ph.D.

2023 Early Career Mentorship Award

Dr. Monica Becerra (she/they/ella) is currently serving as a bilingual staff psychologist at the University of California, Berkeley where she also completed her postdoctoral training. She obtained her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. She identifies as a bicultural queer Latina and is the proud daughter of immigrant parents from Mexico. She finds meaning in combining her lived experiences and training to support individuals with marginalized identities in their healing from multiple forms of intersecting trauma and pain caused by disconnection, colonialism, oppressive systems, hatred, shame, historic and world events. Dr. Becerra's research has focused on multicultural supervision and training and she enjoys being a source of support and empowerment to other early career professionals. As a first-generation college student, Dr. Becerra relied heavily on mentors to guide her through her academic and professional journey. She believes in the power of community and the importance of being able to pay forward the nurturance she has received. She would like to thank her ancestors and the people who have paved the way for people like her to have access to restricted spaces and resources. She would also like to thank all the mentors who continue to uplift and empower her in the journey. We continue to keep the faith.

Sherry Wang, Ph.D.

2023 Early Career Social Justice Advocacy Award

Sherry C. Wang, PhD (she/her/她) is an Associate Professor of Counseling Psychology at Santa Clara University. She is also a licensed psychologist, anti-racist educator, and researcher. She identifies as a cisgender woman and her worldview is influenced by her bilingual and bicultural background as a Taiwanese immigrant and Asian American. Her scholarship is rooted in advocating for the voices of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities and she focuses on the ways in which sociocultural determinants (e.g., access to healthcare services, social support, community attitudes) contribute to ethnic/racial health disparities. She teaches graduate courses in multicultural counseling, developmental psychology, microskills, and feminist multicultural therapy. She provides clinical services one day a week in her private practice. At the national level, she co-chairs the Asian American Psychological Association's (AAPA) Division on Women (DOW). She is a representative to APA Council for Division 45 (Society for the Psychological Study of Culture, Ethnicity, and Race). Since the start of COVID19, she has been featured, cited, and interviewed in the media on the topic of anti-Asian racism, xenophobia, and cross-racial coalition-building.

Sebastian Barr, Ph.D.

2023 Early Career Clinical Practice Award

Dr. Sebastian Barr (he/him/his) works as a psychotherapist, researcher, and consultant in independent practice, and is licensed in both Kansas and Massachusetts. He specializes in trans mental health, healing from traumatic stress, and the intersection of these areas. Dr. Barr presents multiple times a year on trans-affirming psychotherapy and trans well-being to diverse audiences, including clinicians, family, and community members. As a part of his clinical practice, he writes pro bono referral letters for gender-affirming healthcare utilizing an approach that centers client autonomy and minimizes gatekeeping, and he has trained organizations and clinicians in developing their own no-cost letter-writing practices. His work can be found in multiple textbooks and he serves on the editorial boards for Psychotherapy and Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity. Dr. Barr was previously recognized as a 2020 QLGBTI scholar-in-residence at the Faber-lull residency, which involved collaborating with trans and queer activists, artists, and academics in the Catalan region of Spain. He is grateful for the many mentors and peer-mentors that have shaped his career, particularly his fellow trans psychologists.

David Zelaya, Ph.D.

2023 Early Career Teaching Award

Dr. David G. Zelaya (he/him/él) is an Assistant Professor at Brown University School of Public, a research fellow at Harvard Medical School within the Department of Psychiatry and Cambridge Hospital, and an affiliated scientist at Yale University with the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS. He received his Ph.D. from Georgia State University in counseling psychology. His program of research focuses on examining health disparities, from an intersectionality and minority stress lens, among Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and sexual and gender minority communities and links to HIV risk, mental health, and substance use. Clinically, he is interested in providing culturally competent behavioral health services to historically underserved communities (e.g., Spanish-speaking Latinx people; sexual and gender diverse people). He is an APA Minority Fellow alumnus, has been the recipient of numerous social justice awards, his research has been published in the flagship journals of his field, and he serves on the editorial board for the Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity journal.