

# THE DIALOGUE

## COUNSELOR EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

Winter 2023 · Issue 3

Dept. Chair Letter - 1	Student Spotlight - 5
Faculty Spotlight - 2	Alumni Spotlight - 7
Aphasia Lab Training - 4	Chi Sigma Iota - 9
Dept. Announcements - 4	Faculty Achievements - 10

### Letter from our Department Chair

Greetings Counselor Education community! Welcome to the third edition of The Dialogue. Please join me in thanking Amanda Mercer, our Department Graduate Assistant, for their leadership in coordinating and creating this edition of our newsletter. I am also grateful to those who offered stories, interviews, and accomplishments to share with our community.

This year, the Counselor Education Department welcomed several new faculty and staff, and we are thrilled to be training future counselors amongst a full and vibrant community of educators and supervisors. To our faculty, staff, instructors, supervisors, students, and alumni, thank you for your continued dedication to our department, and we look forward to staying in community with you as we enter our second year of in-person teaching and learning.

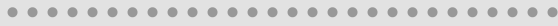
Happy Spring!

Dr. Rana Yaghmaian  
Department Chair, Counselor Education



## Faculty Spotlight:

### Dr. Kate Friedman shares her insights on classroom policies practices



by Alice Dauenhauer

I had the opportunity to interview Dr. Kate Friedman, one of Portland State University's newest faculty members. With one term coming to a close and another one starting in only a few weeks, I asked, "What are some things you are planning to do differently next term?" Dr. Friedman reflected on this, stating,

*"I'm making adjustments to better suit the constituency of students that I have in class."*

Being approachable and flexible is not only essential as a counselor, but seem to be characteristics that are very important to Dr. Friedman. She spoke to a few policies that she has and plans to keep in future courses:

*"I have an open extensions policy. If you need more time, You tell me you need more time....I have an open accommodations policy as well. Obviously students are entitled to requirements for accommodations made through the DRC, but there are also students who have barriers to accessing the DRC, especially at the beginning of the year."*

I posed a question to Dr. Friedman regarding course materials, some of which are dated in ideas and interventions. I asked, "What advice would you give to students facing challenges in making immediate changes in their education and professional environment?"



Dr. Friedman responded by sharing some history of her field, stating,

*"My specialty is Rehabilitation Counseling, which was born entirely out of the American war machine to get injured World War I veterans back into the workforce. To this day we rely on work, and by some extension, capitalism itself, as our core intervention. How can I, as someone who works to practice culturally responsive, antiracist, anticapitalist, and feminist teaching, responsibly be tasked with supporting, teaching, and furthering a profession with those roots? For me, it's about grappling with and acknowledging that past and understanding that while that is where we have come from, it does not have to be where we are going. Contemporary Rehabilitation Counseling is so much more dimensional than its historical roots."*

I followed up by asking how students and future counselors can feel they're making an impact in a profession still grappling with a history of oppressive values. Dr. Friedman said,

*“That's a really big question, because that brings up something that I'm really cognizant of, and then I'm really kind of passionate.... that being emotional and mental labor. The emotional and mental burden that is carried by particular groups that forces us by design to be the ones to be the squeaky wheel. You need to stand up for your truth and you need to advocate in a way that feels safe and comfortable for you. But I think it's also important for people to recognize that there's a lot of mental and emotional labor in there that isn't necessarily incumbent on you.”*

Our recorded time came to a close shortly after this portion of the interview. Major takeaways include that our faculty is deeply invested in this work, which is not a marathon, but an ongoing and lifelong journey.



# Aphasia Lab Training

We are excited to share a recent interdisciplinary collaboration between the Counselor Education Department and the Aphasia Lab in the Department of Speech and Hearing Science led by Professor Gerasimos Fergadiotis.

Led by the Aphasia Lab's Research speech language pathologist Stacey Steel in collaboration with Dr. Yaghmaian, a two-part series of informational and interactive workshops was developed and implemented for the Counselor Education Program graduate students. These interdisciplinary trainings offered current and next generation counselors the foundational knowledge and skills to serve clients with language disorders like aphasia as well as other, often co-occurring, communication disorders that patients often exhibit after a stroke.

While some speech language pathologists receive a basic introduction to counseling, they are not equipped to fully support clients' counseling needs. At the same time, most mental health professionals are not trained on how to effectively communicate with people with aphasia and people with communication disorders more broadly. In a series of interviews conducted last year by the Aphasia Lab, more than 20 speech language pathologists from every major healthcare system in the Portland Metro area identified the lack of trained counselors as a significant gap in the community.

After completing the two-part workshop, approximately 15 student clinicians were trained to work with this unique population at PSU's Community Counseling Clinic. Meanwhile, the Aphasia Lab is actively recruiting people with aphasia for an ongoing NIH-funded research project and referring interested participants and/or their family members to receive much-needed mental health services from these specially trained counselors.

We hope that this interdisciplinary collaboration will continue between our respective programs at PSU and ultimately benefit the greater Portland community.



Counselor Education students and faculty at the Aphasia Lab training

## Counselor Education Department News

- This is a CACREP re-accreditation year!
- We are expanding our School Counseling Licensure-Only program. This program is great for folks who already have master's degrees and want the opportunity to work in schools. People who complete this program can work with kids and families and make an impact!



# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

-----  
*SENNA DILSI*

*By Hannah Kuhns*

## **“Counseling is a front-row seat to the human experience”**

A second-year clinical mental health counseling student, community rights organizer, and graduate assistant at the Community Counseling Clinic, Senna Dillsi has a fierce passion for serving the populations she has seen go underserved firsthand. Senna had initially wanted to be a lawyer but quickly learned that she did not want to participate in the justice system based on the harm it causes so many marginalized identities. It was during her time working as a middle school teacher that she began to learn more about the world of counseling. Senna also noticed a mental health care gap for immigrant families which only further drove her towards a career in counseling.

The Portland State University Counselor Education class of 2024 holds a unique experience of being a cohort that went through their entire first year of the program remotely and only now with this past summer term returned to in-person learning. When asked about her experience of first year and the subsequent transition, Senna noted that it was a much more challenging and isolating experience than she expected traversing such a content-heavy courseload via zoom. She continued on to say that because her cohort had to work so hard to connect via zoom, once the transition to in-person learning was complete, it felt so much easier to bond with her classmates.

When asked about her aspirational goals beyond graduate school, she is quick to share that she wants to work with people who share salient identities with her. A proud Palestinian Muslim woman, Senna's community organizing work has taken her far beyond her rural Washington hometown as well as Portland. In her future work with clients, she hopes to work to bridge the gap between that community work that means so much to her and her work with clients in session. Senna is incredibly excited to start her practicum experience in the spring and is honored to be a part of her future client's stories.

# Alumni Spotlight:

## Myra Sicilia and Marie Mellberg at Sakura Counseling

By David McGarry



Myra



Marie

Myra Sicilia graduated from PSU with a Master's in Counseling in 2014, immediately going into private practice and founding Sakura Counseling. Born in Guatemala and adopted in the United States, Myra grew up navigating identity between racial worlds, unable to feel a sense of belonging with either her Latina or White friends. In the process of starting her own business as a person of color serving mostly marginalized individuals, Myra felt that she required continued learning particularly as it related to power and identity issues as a professional working with clients outside of the dominant (White/patriarchal) culture and noticed the ways that graduate school had not prepared her for these issues. She has sought to establish Sakura Counseling as a place where therapists and clients can learn about personal growth and therapy in a truly safe and aware environment.

*"One thing we talk about in supervision is code-switching [changing vocabulary depending upon the culture of those present]. We ask whether it's present with particular clients and if so, how it may be affecting the work. I'd never even heard of code-switching in graduate school. They did not teach us that. That was not a term I'd ever learned so I had to ask what it meant. I see Sakura as an extension of whatever educational backgrounds therapists are coming from. We talk about on-going learning here and we get to experience how it shows up. We navigate how to move around roadblocks."*

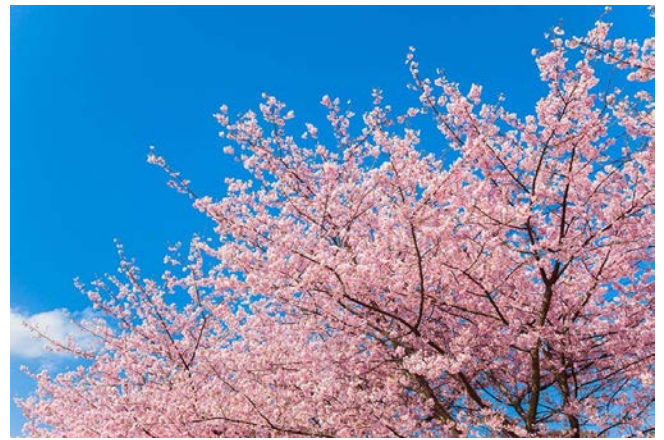
Sakura's Clinical Supervisor is Marie (pronounced like 'Mary') Mellberg. Marie had a similar upbringing, adopted into a White family and learning very little about her identity outside of White Culture.

*"Because of the ambiguity of my facial features and my lighter skin tone, everywhere I go, I just wound up a part of whatever brown community was there. But I never had the opportunity to know what that meant. I never fit in. I never had an understanding of who I was and where I came from or anything like that. I was very conditioned through the White lens. I had a very progressive gay family, and I primarily grew up in Portland. Portland has a very specific type of racism, which is very subtle. There's a racial gaslighting, so we say all the right things, but we*

*don't actually follow-through, which can be more emotionally dangerous for folks of color. It's like "You're saying all the words but something's going on and if I acknowledge it then you're gonna, like, stab me emotionally, and now it's not safe, even though you literally said, 'This is a safe space.'"*

Sakura has a specialty in serving couples navigating power differentials along racial or gender lines. I asked Myra if she could give me an example of how that might look in therapy:

*"Yeah, so maybe one person comes in from the dominant culture (White) and the other one identifies as Black or Latina and how that interplays in their marriage. Often the marginalized individual is considered 'oversensitive' or told they're 'a lot.' So, we talk about their skin-color and how they often experience racism, where the partner on the other side might say 'Why can't you just turn it off? We're safe here in our home.' So, we talk about that and ask: What does safety mean? And is that really true?"*



*Because you are someone they often feel oppressed by because of your skin color. So, we do a lot of naming of those issues. And with the dominant partner we look how can you be supportive as a partner, and then how can you find your own support? Because this is a lot that you carry so how do you find your own support and process that in a place that feels safe to you, that you can name, and express that, yes, sometimes this is hard."*

Sakura has a vision of offering modalities of healing beyond the talk-therapy that itself reflects a generally white and patriarchal tradition. With a staff that is empowered and supported as marginalized folks working for marginalized folks, Sakura sees itself partnering with and employing healers of different varieties, including mindfulness practices, artistic, somatic, massage, and a host of other means of healing that can cross cultural boundaries in ways that conventional talk-therapy often can't. It will be very exciting to see the terrain they create in our city!



# Chi Sigma Iota

## Letter from the President

Hello All!

Welcome back to Winter Term! Winter break, with its shortened daylight hours is often a time students find restful and restorative, and I hope you all found some peace. As I reflect on Fall term, I feel a sense of flurried activity: new students arriving to the program, new classes, new professors, new relationships being built. It is exciting to start to meet people from different years and different tracks as we move further into the year. For those second and third year students who are adjusting to in-person classes, it has been so wonderful seeing your faces in real life. Here's to carpool groups, after-class chats, and a deeper sense of togetherness than we were able to get during our years of remote learning.

One of CSI's main missions is to bring students together. Our board is made up of second and third year students with many different strengths and backgrounds, and are from all four tracks. In 2023 we plan to bring a social event for counselor ed students (possibly with a prize to be won!), as well as professional development events so students can learn from professionals about specific topics not always addressed in our classes. I look forward to meeting those of you I have not yet met, and learning with you all over the next two terms!

Best,  
Clea Partridge





# Welcome to the 2022-2023 CSI Board

- President: Clea Partridge, clea2@pdx.edu
- Vice President/President-Elect: Senna Dillsi, dillsi@pdx.edu
- Secretary: Anya Hall, anyhall@pdx.edu
- Treasurer / Fundraising: Stephanie Doig, smdoig@pdx.edu
- Faculty Liaison: Walter Sebaste, wsebaste@pdx.edu
- Membership Chair: Jessica Truong, truong23@pdx.edu
- Mentorship Chairs: Carrie Strurrock, strurrock@pdx.edu & Liz Temple, etemple@pdx.edu
- Professional Development Chair: Janay Wright, janay@pdx.edu
- Social Chairs: Jeannie Balenger, jbal2@pdx.edu & Megan Snow, snow@pdx.edu
- Chapter Faculty Advisors: Dr. Lindsay Vik, lvik@pdx.edu & Dr. Katherine Friedman, fried25@pdx.edu



## ***ANNOUNCEMENTS***

- You are always welcome to join CSI at any time during the school year! Contact our membership chair Jessica Truong (truong23@pdx.edu) to join us!
- If you have any speakers or topics you would like to learn more about, contact our Professional Development Chair Janay Wright (janay@pdx.edu). We would be happy to provide support for student requests.



# FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS

## Dr. Yun Shi:

### Presentations

10/14/22 Western Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (WACES) 2022 Conference  
10/15/22 Western Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (WACES) 2022 Conference  
11/18/22 Oregon Counseling Association (ORCA) Fall 2022 Conference: Exploring the Many Facets of Trauma  
12/2/22 Keynote at 2022 NBCC Foundation Global Capacity Building Conference

## Dr. Yi-Wen Su:

### Award

Western Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (WACES) Outstanding Publication Award (2022).  
Collaborating with Families to Addressing Cyberbullying: Exploring School Counselors' Lived Experiences.

### Publications

**Su, Y.** & Swank, J. M. (In press). Multitiered System of Support with Attention Problems: The Role of the School Counselor. (Journal of Professional Counseling- Practice, Theory & Research).

Harrichand, J. J. S., **Su, Y.-W.**, Hyun, J. H., & Anandavalli, S. (2022). School Counselors and Refugee Students: Application of the Refugee Well-Being Project Intervention to Address the Social Determinants of Health. Professional School Counseling. 26 (1b): 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759X221106810>

Doty, J. L., Girón, K., Mehari, K. R., Sharma, D., Smith, S. J., **Su, Y.**, ... & Rousso, B. (2022). The Dosage, Context, and Modality of Interventions to Prevent Cyberbullying Perpetration and Victimization: A Systematic Review. Prevention Science, 23, 523-537. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-021-01314-8>

### Book chapter

Hyun J. H., J. H., Harrichand, J. S., Anandavalli S., **Su, Y.** & Yoon E. (2022, In press). Chapter 6: Culturally Responsive Counseling for Clients of Asian American and Pacific Island. Book titled: Multicultural Counseling: Responding with Cultural Humility, Empathy and Advocacy. <https://www.springerpub.com/multicultural-counseling-9780826139528.html#description>

### Presentations

**Su, Y.** & Luo Y. (2023, March). Mindfulness for Mental Health Professionals: What and How. American Counseling Association (ACA), Toronto, Ontario, Canada. (Proposal accepted.)

**Su, Y.** (2022, November). Supporting Asian Immigrant Parents Addressing Online Racism: Community Cultural Wealth Approach. Oregon School Counseling Association (OSCA). Oregon City, OR.

Li, D. & **Su, Y.** (2022, November). Online/Remote Teaching and Learning in Counselor Education. SACES Conference, Baltimore, MD.

Harrichand, J. J. S., Hyun, J. H., & Anandavalli, S. **Su, Y.-W.** (2022, October). School Counselors Supporting Refugee Students: The Refugee Well-being Project. American Counseling Association (ACA) Virtual Conference, Online.

# FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS CONT.

**Su, Y.** & Anandavalli S. (2022, October). Supporting immigrant students and families by using community cultural wealth. WACES Conference, Portland, Oregon.

**Su, Y.** & Chen S. (2022, October). COVID-19 Online Racism: Lessons from Asian and their families. WACES Conference, Portland, Oregon.

**Su, Y.** & Luo Y. (2022, September). Mindfulness for Mental Health Professionals: A Systemic Review. Association for Assessment and Research in Counseling (AARC) conference, St. Luis, MO. (Proposal accepted.)

**Su, Y.** (2022, July). Address Online Racism Against Asians. American School Counselor Association (ASCA), Austin, Texas.

## **Dr. Rana Yaghmaian**

### **Grants**

Siuty, M. & **Yaghmaian, R.** (2022). Interrogating college student support spaces: Examining the experiences of disabled students of color using critical disability race spatial analysis. Spencer Foundation. Total Award: \$75,000

### **Publications**

Pebdani, R. & **Yaghmaian, R.** (in press). Intersectionality in CACREP accredited rehabilitation counselor education: An analysis of multicultural counseling syllabi. Rehabilitation Research, Policy, and Education.

Brickham, D., **Yaghmaian, R.**, Morrison, B., & Rosenthal, D. (2021). Mitigating counselor trainee stress and burnout through self-care initiatives in rehabilitation counseling programs. Rehabilitation Research, Policy, and Education, 35(4), 323-335

### **Presentations**

**Yaghmaian, R.** (2023). Exploring Intersectional Disability Justice Frameworks in Postsecondary Education and Beyond. Training provided for the Inclusive Career Advancement Program at Portland Community College.

Russo-Mitma, G. & **Yaghmaian, R.** (2022). Addressing Anit-Fat Bias through a Disability Justice Lens. WACES Conference, Portland, OR United States.

**Yaghmaian, R.** (2021). Disability Intersections Roundtable. Western Washington University Institute for Critical Disability Studies.

Pebdani, R. & **Yaghmaian, R.** (2021). Multicultural Competencies in Rehabilitation Counselor Education: An Analysis of Multicultural Counseling Course Syllabi. National Council on Rehabilitation Education Fall Conference, Online.

### ***Meet the Team:***

**Amanda Mercer, Creative Director**

**Dr. Rana Yaghmaian, Lead Editor**