

Substance use and Intergenerational Trauma Social Processes (SITS) Research Team

The Substance use and Intergenerational Trauma Social processes (SITS) research team explores the interpersonal (e.g., family socialization, cultural socialization, postmemory/countermemory, intersectional microaggressions, social support, meaning-making, subjective appraisal, community connectedness) and institutional/systemic (e.g., colonization, cultural dispossession, collective cultural memory, institutional oppression) social processes underlying substance use and intergenerational trauma among marginalized populations (e.g., BIPOC folks, LGBTQ+ BIPOC folks).

We take a liberation psychology, critical psychology, and postcolonial studies-informed approach, grounding our explorations with the assumption that knowledge production is not neutral, but rather always situated in power relations. We predominately use critical qualitative research methodologies (e.g., interpretative phenomenological analysis, constructivist grounded theory, reflexive thematic analysis, ethnography, critical discourse analysis, community based participatory action research, photovoice, countermemory, and the archive).

Our goals are to (re-)conceptualize substance use and intergenerational trauma in relation to the historical conditions that inform them for marginalized communities to better inform communal healing. We aim to do community-informed work and will partner with local organizations in the Bay Area to prioritize the elevation of community voices rather than doing research that remains in the ivory tower.

Research Areas

Intergenerational trauma; historical trauma; cultural dispossession from colonialism; family socialization; cultural socialization; substance use (cultural stress/coping paradigm); harm reduction

Current Research Projects

An interpretative phenomenology study of how individuals who descend from peoples who have experienced colonization, enslavement, or genocide understand, experience, and express their identities (especially gender and sexuality)

A critical discourse analysis study of how CA domestic violence shelters construct their policies concerning substance use among their residents (collaboration with Dr. Amanda Fanniff's DIPP lab)

An interpretative phenomenological analysis of how those from non Abrahamic religious groups negotiate their LGBTQ+ identities (collaboration with Dr. Tyler Lefevor from Utah State University)

Training Opportunities

Conducting literature reviews, IRB preparation, recruitment

Learning about qualitative research methodologies and study design

Furthering one's insights and self-reflection on how their social positioning, social context, and epistemological assumptions inform all aspects of research

Presenting at conferences and co-authoring manuscripts

Gaining mentorship experience of junior students

Pursuing your own research projects under the mentorship of the team when you are ready to do so

Research Mentorship/Team Culture

Paying it forward – the goal of working toward becoming an independent research scholar is to mentor the next generation of scholars. In the words of the late Toni Morrison, “The function of freedom is to free someone else”.

Co-construction/collectivism over toxic hyper-individualism – the team is a space of collaboration and no one person's voice is more important than anyone else's.

Meeting people where they are – it is ok to not know things! Asking questions, intellectual and cultural humility, and being in a stage of growing is not only encouraged, but also celebrated.

Artificial Intelligence use in the SITS team (in any shape or form, including in outlining, summarizing articles, AI-generated writing, use of Grammarly, PerplexityAI, or ChatGPT, or similar technologies) is vehemently **NOT ALLOWED** due to exploitation of worker's from the Global South, AI furthering environmental racism, and diluting of ideas/your own voice. Violators of this policy will be referred to academic disciplinary committees for whatever program you are affiliated with. Zero exceptions.

How to Apply

Send current CV, unofficial PAU transcript, cover letter detailing fit with SITS team and goals (and any experience using qualitative research methodologies), and contact information of two references to Satveer at skler@paloaltou.edu

Satveer will invite selected students to 1:1 interview with Satveer and students will also have a group interview with existing students in the SITS team (without Satveer)

Lab selection will follow all established PAU guidelines and students will be notified on PAU uniform notification date via email.

Questions?

Feel free to email Satveer at skler@paloaltou.edu with any questions.