

Women's History Month

In 1987, Congress designated the month of March as “*Women's History Month*.” Between 1988 and 1994, Congress passed several resolutions authorizing the President to proclaim March of each year as Women's History Month. Since 1995, every President has issued a series of annual proclamations designating the month of March as “Women's History Month” (The Library of Congress, 2018).

The precursor to Women's History Month was “Women's History Week,” which was created in 1978 by the National Women's History Project. Feminist activists took issue with how history books had largely ignored the many contributions of American women. In 1980, President Carter issued the first Presidential Proclamation declaring the Week of March 8th as *National Women's History Week* (Zorthian, 2016).

The 2018 theme, “***Nevertheless She Persisted: Honoring Women Who Fight All Forms of Discrimination Against Women***”, honors the countless women who have shaped American history and its future through their tireless commitment to ending discrimination against women and girls (MacGregor, 2018). We celebrate all women who have fought, and continue to stand up, against the many forms of discrimination (e.g., sexism, classism, heterosexism, racism, ableism, and other “isms”) faced by girls and women throughout the nation.



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Women's History Month & International Women's Day

In 1975, in recognition of the powerful impacts that women have had globally, the United Nations began marking **International Women's Day (IWD)**, which first emerged from the activities of labor movements at the turn of the 20th century in North America and across Europe (United Nations, 2018). IWD is celebrated in countries around the world as a day when women are recognized for their achievements without regard to divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic or political (International Women's Day, 2018). The IWD **2018 campaign theme is #PressforProgress**.

As global activism for women's rights and equality is being fueled by movements such as the **Women's March on Washington**, **#MeToo**, and **#TimesUp**, there is a strong momentum to recognize the achievements of women in all facets of life—e.g., education, literature, government, art, sports, science, and medicine. We draw strength and inspiration from the remarkable women who came before us, and those working among us today. They are our story—a truly balanced and inclusive story—that recognizes the influential roles that women have had, and will continue to play, in our society.



Sources:

- International Women's Day. *About International Women's Day*. Retrieved February 13, 2018, from <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/About>
- The Library of Congress. *Women's History Month*. Retrieved February 13, 2018, from <https://womenshistorymonth.gov/>
- MacGregor, M. M. *Why March is National Women's History Month*. Retrieved February 13, 2018, from <http://www.nwhp.org/womens-history-month/womens-history-month-history/>
- United Nations. *International Women's Day*. Retrieved February 13, 2018, from <http://www.un.org/en/events/womensday/history.shtml>
- Zorthian, J. (2016, February 29). *March Is Women's History Month: How It Started*. Retrieved February 13, 2018, from <http://time.com/4238999/womens-history-month-history/>

Commemoration of Women's History Month & International Women's Day in the Greater Boston Area

Click on the links below for more information:

- [Boston Women's Heritage Trail](#)
- [International Women's Day 2018](#)
- [#PressForProgress: International Women's Day](#)
- [Women's History Month Event: An Evening with Congresswoman Niki Tsongas](#)
- [Women's History Walk: "Nevertheless She Persisted"](#)
- [The International Institute of New England - International Women's Day](#)

Women's Stories, Human Stories: A Reflection on Collective Healing in the #MeToo Era

By Luana Bessa, Ph.D.

I have been thinking a lot, in the wake of the current #metoo movement, about the power of women's stories—the power that women's stories have when they are shared, and when they are believed. Women's stories have long been marginalized, their experiences of trauma and abuse treated as untrustworthy, rather than as reliable testimony of lived human experience. Statistically, 1 out of 5 women will be raped in her lifetime. According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, more than half of women aged 18 to 44 who are murdered are killed by current or former partners. The lyrics of songs that play on the radio, in clubs, and in homes are littered with the objectification of, fetishization of, and violence toward women—especially women of color. Female sports anchors get death threats simply by virtue of being female while doing their jobs. It takes countless women to step forward and report sexual assault for a powerful man to be removed from a position of power—if then. And yet, when women speak up, they get asked why they did not do so sooner. It is at great personal cost that women speak up, and women calculate how much they are willing to re-traumatize themselves on the (off) chance that maybe there will be some justice.



The #metoo movement has been a rallying cry, a way to challenge in the mainstream what women have known since time immemorial: that women's bodies are not considered their own, that their stories have not been believed, and that this world's status quo was not built by or for them. And in the age of Twitter and the viral video, women have had a platform to speak out in mass numbers like never before. Not all women have wanted to speak out; some understandably want to maintain their privacy and do not want to feel pressured to publicly broadcast their personal traumas—nor should they! Some feel frustrated with how the movement has evolved, and many have felt unsure about whether their experiences 'counted.' But however we feel about the hashtag movement, I am heartened that the status quo is being rocked to its core, and that major media outlets are engaging in discussions that have long happened in women's and gender studies classes, and among women, discussions about the fact that, as Samantha Bee stated, "It doesn't have to be rape to ruin your life, and it doesn't have to ruin your life to be worth talking about." The fact that these discussions include a great deal of backlash, victim blaming, and scrutiny is only a reflection of how far we have to go.

In the wake of the current sociopolitical climate, therapy clients with whom I have worked for a long time have disclosed experiences of sexual assault. I have discussed with a client the fact that her history of multiple assaults is not an indictment of her, because she is 'the common denominator' in spite of being unconscious during one of the assaults and coerced in another, but rather an indictment of the rape culture that we continue to exist in, a culture where toxic masculinity and performative femininity are taught, and where pornography is a substitute for sex education and features scenes of violence toward women as a matter of course. I have walked in the world feeling sick, aware of my physical smallness, my non-white features, and my femaleness, feeling the weight of carrying this body in the world and everything that gets projected onto it every day.

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Women's Stories, Human Stories... (cont.)

I am incredibly proud of all of my identities—especially the identities associated with marginalization—but they come with the price of consciousness and vulnerability. I have reflected on my own stories of harassment, some I had not thought about in years. I have realized that I, too, drank from a poisoned well, the well of a culture where walking home with keys sticking out from between clenched fingers, just in case, is normal. A culture where I tell the cab driver to drop me off a few doors down from where I am really going. A culture where as a woman, every day, sexual assault is a threat at the forefront of my brain, while young men are taught that a hesitant woman is a willing woman, and news anchors wonder what was she wearing. Women's stories have the power to dismantle this culture of cultivated normality of daily micro- and macro-aggressions. Sharing stories is a way to refuse this as normal, to remember that this is not an isolated woman's experience. Sharing stories is a way to take off the filter of the status quo, to bring it to light so that it can be changed and we may collectively heal.

Women's stories are powerful because they insert women's experiences into a cultural conversation, a conversation we have had to fight our way into, bit by bit. Not only women's stories of oppression and marginalization (which are vast), but also women's stories, period. Women's stories as human stories, women's stories being shared, and believed, and celebrated. Women have been left out of history books, where their ideas are often credited to the men with whom they shared their lives. When women are credited with their own work, they get a pre-fix that instantly makes them a sub-category: they are "women" artists, "women" scientists.

On February 1st, Shonda Rhymes tweeted "Okay. Entertainment industry, time to stop using the phrases 'Smart Strong Women' and 'Strong Female Leads'. There are no Dumb Weak Women. A smart strong woman is just a WOMAN. Also? 'Women' are not a TV trend – we're half the planet." It is about time that women's stories become a part of the stories told in the light, as a part of THE story, rather than an amendment to it. Even in Psychology, a field largely occupied by (white) women, leadership positions are largely held by (white) men. This means that although we have more women in the field, we do not have adequate representation of women in positions of leadership, in addition to lacking diversity in the field, which then impacts our ability to fully recognize and address the needs of women and diverse groups.

When I think of women's stories that are shared, I think of whose stories get shared, and how often. I think of the fact that women of color and women in the LGBT+ community often do not see their narratives present even in discussions of women and feminism. I think of Tarana Burke, the Black woman who created the #metoo campaign 10 years ago, who did not immediately get credit for the effort. I think of women with other marginalized identities whose stories get told second, or third, or never. May we take this current sociopolitical movement as an opportunity to lift up women, and to make #believewomen and #timesup more than buzzwords. May we lift up women not only in hearing their stories of trauma and marginalization, but may we also lift them up, without reservation or qualification, for their contributions, their accomplishments, their leadership and their strengths.

May we take this present moment as an opportunity to critically examine how we, as a field, are engaging with clients, colleagues, and emerging professionals when it comes to cultural competence, an awareness of issues of power and privilege, and an awareness of our own biases. How are we, as a field, reaching beyond seeing college aged White males as the representatives of humanity in research? How are, we as a field, taking a stand against injustice and oppression? How much are we approaching treatment from a culturally informed lens? How are we supporting women in positions of leadership, or helping diverse applicants to pursue and succeed in graduate Psychology programs? We are currently in a historic time, when Jessica Henderson Daniel has been elected the first African American woman to take the office of APA President. May we take to heart her charge to be "Citizen Psychologists." May we strive to do better, always, and recognize that we have not arrived until women's stories are human stories rather than every 20th name in a history book, until women can walk home without clutching their keys, until the stories of women of color are given the same attention and credibility as the stories of white men.

Luana Bessa, Ph.D., is a licensed psychologist working in a group practice at Commonwealth Psychology Associates. She also serves as the organization's Coordinator for Diversity and Inclusion. Dr. Bessa is the Co-Chair for the Early Career Psychologist Committee at the Massachusetts Psychological Association. She is passionate about issues related to social justice and culturally informed care in psychology.

WJC in Action: Practicing What We Teach

William James College Faculty Presented at the Second International Conference on Mental Health, Drug Abuse, Suicide and Domestic Violence

Ciego De Ávila, Cuba

Drs. Natalie Cort, Jill Bloom, and Mari Carmen Bennasar participated in the *Second International Conference on Mental Health, Drug Abuse, Suicide and Domestic Violence* held in Ciego De Ávila, Cuba from January 17-19, 2018.

The conference was hosted by the University of Medical Sciences of Ciego De Ávila, the Guyana Embassy in Cuba, and the Guyana Foundation—a charitable trust focused on mental health in Guyana.

The faculty was invited to participate in the conference due to our existing partnership with the Guyana Foundation. Since 2017, the Center for Multicultural & Global Mental Health has hosted an annual *Guyana Service Learning & Cultural Immersion* Program where students and faculty have conducted workshops to enhance women and youth's empowerment as well as facilitated a suicide gatekeeper training with community leaders to address Guyana's high incidence of suicide.

The WJC's faculty presentation, titled ***No Health without Mental Health: A Global Mental Health Agenda to Address Inequities around the World***, offered:

- ♦ an overview of global mental health programs at William James College and an introduction to Global Mental Health, which was delivered by Dr. Bloom;
- ♦ a “case study” highlighting the association between a challenged mental health infrastructure and suicide in Guyana, given by Dr. Cort; and
- ♦ an approach for integrated health and mental health, illustrating there is no health without mental health, provided by Dr. Bennasar.

The presentation was well-received by a multilingual audience that was incredibly warm and welcoming.



From left to right: Dr. Natalie Cort, Ms. Supriya Sing-Bodden, Ms. Miriam Hinds, Mr. Halim Majeed, Dr. Jill Bloom, and Dr. Mari Carmen Bennasar

WJC in Action: Practicing What We Teach

From the Classroom to the Community: Consultation Services to a Local Health Center

By Alexis DiGasso, 3rd Year Clinical PsyD Candidate, William James College

In the fall of 2017, my classmates and I completed a community service project as part of our *Systems Theory and Practice* course. We — Denice Cronin, Alexis DiGasso, and Alberto Hernandez — chose a



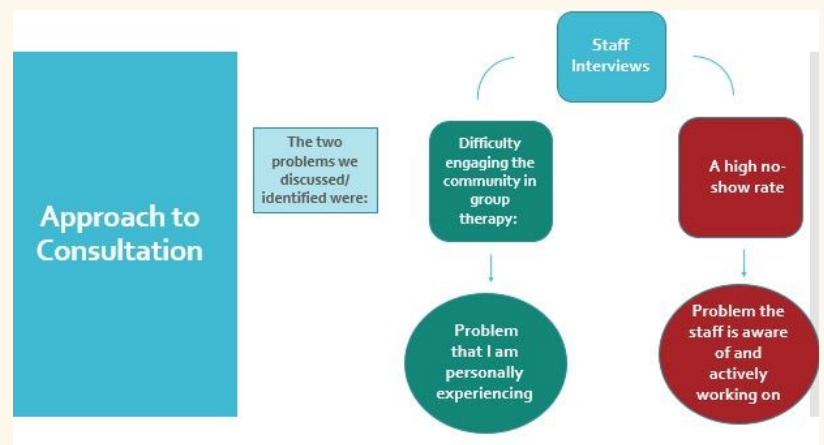
From left to right: Denice Cronin, Alexis DiGasso, and Alberto Hernandez

local community mental health center and provided consultation around their low attendance rate for psychotherapy appointments. We met with five staff members (i.e., a clinical director, a psychologist, a mental health social worker, an ambulatory clinic supervisor, and a patient experience representative) to assess the scope of the problem and to gather a variety of perspectives regarding potential solutions to the issue. Following the staff interviews, our team proposed a set of acceptable, feasible, and culturally-informed recommendations as well as a plan for a future evaluation and follow-up.

The findings and recommendations from the consultation were presented at a staff meeting at the mental health center, and were well received. Staff members appreciated the feedback and the unique perspective that we provided as external consultants. The presentation brought positive reflections by staff on suggestions that they had not considered, particularly the importance of the provider being the one to call patients directly before and after the initial diagnostic interview to set realistic expectations and to dispel worries or concerns.

Copies of our presentation and recommendations were provided to all staff members, including the clinical director who later invited me (Alexis DiGasso) to participate in a “No-Show Reduction Pilot Program” at the center. As part of this pilot program, I helped to establish new policies on the number of missed appointments, reminders, and cancellations allowed before a case is closed. Additionally, I helped create a reminder protocol for staff, and a system for tracking and recording data on the efficacy of these new procedural implementations. I have been invited to attend a data review meeting in one month to further collaborate with the staff and to determine if additional systemic changes are needed.

This community service project has not only taught me how to conduct a system-wide evaluation and consultation, but how to deliver feedback in a way that leads to sustainable changes and improvements within an organization. I am hopeful that our recommendations, some of which have now been implemented, will help to decrease the no-show rate at the community mental health center.



“Red Monster” — Film Screening & Panel Discussion

On February 7th, CMGMH hosted a Black History Month Event and film screening of ***“Red Monster”***. Seven panelists discussed the social, emotional, behavioral, and psychological impacts of sexual abuse and trauma on Black males. The panelists were Martin Pierre, Ph.D., Psychologist; Keith Mascoll, SAG-AFTRA, AEA, Actor, Producer; Mariano Humphrey, B.S., Special Education Coordinator; Ulric Johnson, Ph.D., Psychotherapist; Byron Beaman, B.A., Dean of Students; Jamele Adams, MS, Dean of

Students and Poet; & Walter R. Higgs, III, M.Div., LCSW, Clinical Social Worker, Seminary-Trained Clergy.



From left to right: Byron Beaman, Walter Raleigh Higgs, Ulric Johnson, Martin Pierre, Jamele Adams, Keith Mascoll, & Mariano Humphrey

“Red Monster” depicts the racial and psychological dimensions of sexual trauma in the life of Malik, an African American male. Malik shares his story by wading through the emotional currents of his personal experience as a victim of chronic childhood sexual abuse. One of the goals of the film is to raise awareness of the impact of sexual abuse on African American males.

The panel discussion that followed the film examined ways in which traumatic experiences leave their imprint on young Black men’s mind, body and soul. Many of these young men are living in urban environments and routinely face traumatic stressors in the form of sexual abuse. Researchers have documented a strong and consistent relationship between experiences of sexual abuse and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Van der Kolk, 2014). The behaviors of young Black men who have experienced sexual abuse are often labeled as oppositional defiant, acting-out, impulsive, problematic, truant, sociopathic, and delinquent. However, these young men’s behaviors must be understood from a trauma-informed and culturally-sensitive lens.



Latino Mental Health Conference

Cultural Foundations & Interventions in Latinx Mental Health: History, Theory & Racially Conscious Interventions

**Friday, April 6, 2018
9:00 to 4:00 p.m.**

Program Director: Mari Carmen Bennasar, PsyD



Presenters: Hector Y. Adames, PsyD, and Nayeli Y. Chavez-Dueñas, PhD, authors of *Cultural Foundations and Interventions in Latino/a Mental Health: History, Theory and Within Group Differences*

This conference will provide an overview of the diverse cultural roots of Latino/as, exploring both the racial and ethnic differences within the Latino/a community. Theories regarding the heterogeneity of experiences within the Latino/a population in the U.S. will be reviewed.

COST: 6 CE Credits: \$130; General Public (No CE Credits): \$65 (*Networking lunch included*)

To register for the conference, [click here](#).

Lucero Memorial 5K Run/Walk & Community Day

The 5K Lucero Run/Walk was created in memory of Dr. Cynthia Lucero, a much-loved, community-oriented William James College (WJC) graduate from Ecuador who completed her doctoral degree days before the start of the 2002 Boston Marathon, during which she collapsed and died. The Latino Mental Health concentration carries her name and extends her legacy. Proceeds from the race help to fund the Cynthia Lucero Scholarship program that supports WJC students dedicated to serving the Latino community. **All are welcome!**

WHEN: Sunday, April 8, 2018, 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

WHERE: William James College, 1 Wells Avenue
Newton, MA 02459

EVENT INFO: Please email advancement@williamjames.edu



Eighth Annual Hollywood Scriptures Film Series

Psychology of Human Nature in Cinema: Childhood

The theme of the 8th Annual Hollywood Scriptures Film Series is on Childhood. The contemporary study of childhood has been predominantly psychological, reflecting a sentimentalized, ahistorical perspective on child development. The films in this series offer a nuanced view of childhood innocence, illustrating the historical and cultural dimensions of family life.

Film Series Coordinators:

Jill Betz Bloom, PhD; Carter Long; Steven Nisenbaum, PhD, JD

Following each film, a discussion will be held.

Cost: \$11 general admission; \$9 MFA members (per film)

PLEASE NOTE: Film times may change; check with the MFA. Tickets will only be available at the MFA one week before the film date through the ticket line at 1-800-440-6975. For further information please go to www.mfa.org/film.

Lion (2016)

April 11, 2018 at 7:00pm

2.5 CE Credits

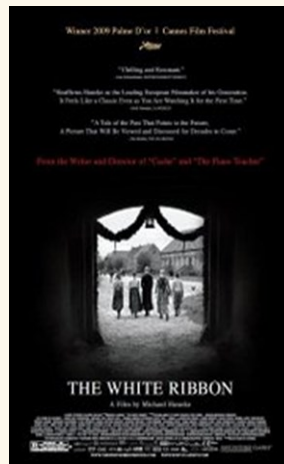


A five-year-old Indian boy gets lost on the streets of Calcutta, thousands of kilometers from home. He survives many challenges before being adopted by a couple in Australia. 25 years later, he sets out to find his lost family.

The White Ribbon (2009)

April 12, 2018 at 7:00pm

3 CE Credits



Using their social status and harsh punishments, a baron, a doctor and a pastor rule over a small German village. One day, the doctor falls off his horse after it trips over a wire strung between two trees. More pranks follow, seemingly without reason, all directed at the village's upper class and growing increasingly more brutal with time. There are no suspects, but a local schoolteacher has his suspicions.

The Florida Project (2017)

April 14, 2018 at 11:00 am

2.5 CE Credits

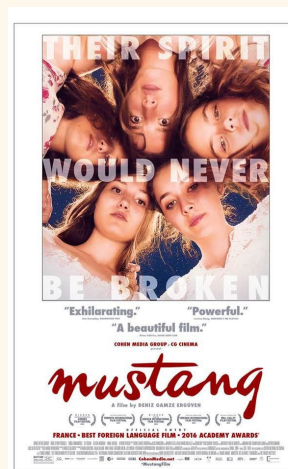


Set over one summer, the film follows precocious 6-year-old Moonee as she courts mischief and adventure with her ragtag playmates and bonds with her rebellious but caring mother, all while living in the shadows of Disney World.

Mustang (2015)

April 15, 2018 at 11:00 am

2.5 CE Credits



When five orphan girls are seen innocently playing with boys on a beach, their scandalized conservative guardians confine them while forced marriages are arranged.

Current Events Corner

Mental Health in the News

- **“Cornell researchers create mental health personal aid.”** *The Cornell Daily Sun*. A Cornell research team has developed a watch-like device meant to help students calm down during stressful scenarios.
- **“Why Don’t More Olympians Talk About Mental Illness?”** *NAMI*. Many Olympians have talked about various health issues they’ve overcome, but so few have opened up about living with a mental health condition.
- **“Why we need to take emotional pain as seriously as physical pain.”** *TED*. We need a more open dialogue about how severely heartbreak impacts our emotions and functioning.
- **“Why Africa needs to start focusing on the neglected issue of mental health.”** *Independent Online*. Mental health has historically been neglected on Africa’s health and development policy agenda.
- **“Most see inaction on mass shootings; mental health screening is a priority.”** *ABC News*. A new poll found that Americans think Congress is not doing enough to stop mass shootings. Improved mental health screening and treatment lead the public’s preferences for action.
- **“NAMI urges legislators to mental health funding.”** *News-Press*. NAMI has long recognized the need for more discussions around mental health policies and funding from state policymakers.

Save the Date: Upcoming CMGMH Events

The following events will take place at WJC:

- March 26: **Transracial Adoption and Identity**. 11:30am-1:00pm
- March 29: **Celebrating WJC Student Leaders with a Strong Commitment to Social Justice**. 6:30pm—8:30pm
- April 6: **Conference on Latino Mental Health**. 9:00am—4:30 p.m.
- April 28: **LGBTQ Youth: Magnifying the Splendor of the Rainbow**. 8:30—4:30pm
- May 5: **Biannual Conference on Haitian Mental Health**. 8:30am—5:00 pm

To learn more, email cmgmh@williamjames.edu

March Holidays & Observances

- March 1: **Zero Discrimination Day**.
- March 1-2: **Holi**
- March 1-31: **Women’s History Month**.
- March 1-31: **Irish-American Heritage Month**.
- March 8: **International Women’s Day**.
- March 11-17: **National Sleep Awareness Week**.
- March 17: **St. Patrick’s Day**.
- March 19-23: **National Youth Violence Prevention Week**.
- March 20: **Spring Equinox**.
- March 21: **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**.
- March 22: **World Water Day**.
- March 25: **Palm Sunday**.
- March 30: **Good Friday**.

Community Events, Workshops & Conferences

- March 9th or 16th, 2018: **Sexual Assault & People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: Adaptations to Treatment.** <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/sexual-assault-and-people-with-intellectual-and-developmental-disabilities-adaptations-to-treatment-registration-41239823422>
- March 15th–17th, 2018: **10th Annual Muslim Mental Health Conference.** <http://mailchi.mp/380d7527b397/muslim-mental-health-conference-call-for-proposals-399495?e=5ba106d246>
- March 17th, 2018: **Project Shatter: A Community Awareness Forum. Interrupt, Educate and Prevent Sex Trafficking!** <https://fs9.formsite.com/thedutch4/form8/index.html?qr>
- March 19th, 2018: **Trauma, Healing & the Holocaust: Voices of the Second Generation.** <http://www.cvent.com/events/trauma-healing-and-the-holocaust-voices-of-the-second-generation/event-summary-306584ff985e4a02b54c3d4c204ad6f9.aspx>
- March 21st, 2018: **Navigating Sexism and Other "isms" in Therapy & Other Professional Settings.** <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/join-the-conversation-navigating-sexism-in-therapy-other-professional-settings-tickets-43282220286>
- March 24th, 2018: **Let's Talk: Promoting the Success and Well-Being of Asian & Asian-American Students.** <http://www.talkhgse.org/>
- April 7th, 2018: **EMI to IDEAS: 30 Years Later, Persisting in Challenging Times.** <https://sites.google.com/edcollab.org/ideasconference/home?authuser=0>
- April 9th, 2018: **NAMI Massachusetts Advocacy Day.** <http://namimass.org/event/nami-massachusetts-advocacy-day>
- April 14th-15th, 2018: **GHIC 2018: Global Health & Innovation Conference.** <http://www.uniteforsight.org/conference/>
- April 19th-21st, 2018: **Society for the Study of Psychiatry and Culture's 39th Annual Meeting.** <https://psychiatryandculture.org/#!event/2018/4/19/society-for-the-study-of-psychiatry-and-culture39th-annual-meeting>
- May 4th-5th, 2018: **LGBT Health Workforce Conference.** <http://bngap.org/lgbthwfconf/>
- May 19th, 2018: **NAMIWalks Massachusetts.** <http://namimass.org/event/namiwalks-massachusetts>
- June 22nd-23rd, 2018: **The Inaugural Convention of Asian Pacific American Feminist Psychologists.** https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfVfVU2K0tughv74SR8oVwM_SKR1nW_-hgDfc6p2eHeBh77g/viewform
- June 29th-July 1st, 2018: **Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues' 2018 Summer Conference.** <http://www.spssi.org/index.cfm?pageId=480>
- July 1st-5th, 2018: **International Congress of International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology (IACCP).** <http://www.iaccp.org/node/627>
- July 9th-13th, 2018: **Biennial International Seminar on the Teaching of Psychological Science.** <https://bishops.org/>
- October 5th-7th, 2018: **7th International Conference of Community Psychology, Chile 2018 .** https://www.cipc2018chile.cl/modalidades-de-trabajo/?lang=en#presentacion_carteles
- October 10th-13th, 2018: **5th World Congress of the World Association of Cultural Psychiatry.** <http://wacp2018.org/>
- October 18th-21st, 2018: **The National Latina/o Psychological Association Conference.** www.nlpaconference.org/
- November 12th-16th, 2018: **Caribbean Regional Conference of Psychology.** <http://crcp2018.org/>