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ISSUE NO. 1

# IGNITE

*Newsletter of the Section on Black Psychology,  
Canadian Psychological Association*



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# **What is IGNITE?**

The main objective of the IGNITE newsletter is to share information relating to Black Psychology. In doing so, we hope that we can *spark, or IGNITE, a passion for Black Psychology* within those who are interested in this area of study, as well as promote and advance practitioners, educators, students, and scientists of psychology who identify as Black and/or are concerned about psychology-related issues that impact Black people.

*“...it is time that we ignite a passion for psychology in Black students who have no idea about the number of opportunities available in the psychology profession.”*

*- Barbara Afram*

# Current Executive Members



**Chair**

**Mrs. Kafui Sawyer**

*Email: [kafuisawyer@joyhrc.com](mailto:kafuisawyer@joyhrc.com)*

Kafui Sawyer is a Psychotherapist and a Mental Health/Trauma Consultant for Health Canada. She is also the Clinical Director for Joy Health and Research Centre (a mental health clinic in Ottawa), providing clinical supervision and training to clinicians. Kafui is the Founder and Chair of the Black Psychology Section of the Canadian Psychological Association. Kafui is a Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Trainer and a specialist in treating personality disorders. Kafui has provided mental health services and training to numerous clinicians across Canada, including the Arctic Region. Kafui completed her graduate studies in Counselling Psychology at Trinity Western University, British Columbia and extended her Community Mental Health Education and Research in Queensland, Australia. Kafui also worked as a clinician and suicide prevention coordinator for the Ministry of Children and Family Development in British Columbia.

# Current Executive Members



**Chair**

**Mrs. Kafui Sawyer**

*Email: [kafuisawyer@joyhrc.com](mailto:kafuisawyer@joyhrc.com)*

While working for the BC government as a clinician she also provided trauma and addiction services to a treatment centre that primarily served Indigenous youth and their families. Kafui is a creative entrepreneur passionate about advocacy that engages low socio-economic groups, complex clients, and varying cultures. Kafui has been featured on CBC news and several radio stations in Canada. Kafui has long advocated for mental health programs in schools and faith communities, as well as racial inclusivity in the discipline and profession of psychology. Kafui is grounded in Christian spirituality and strives to bring hope to the hopeless and to serve in her professional capacity with joy and freedom. Kafui is a loving mother of 3. She resides in Ottawa with her family.



# Current Executive Members

**Chair-Elect**

**Dr. Helen Ofosu**

*Email: [helen@ioadvisory.com](mailto:helen@ioadvisory.com)*



Dr. Helen Ofosu has been practising industrial /organizational psychology (also known as work or business psychology) in the public and private sectors for almost 20 years. She completed her studies at McMaster University and the University of Windsor. In addition to career and executive coaching, her specialties include the assessment and development of leadership skills, and navigating the complex issues of workplace bullying, harassment, diversity and inclusion. Prior to starting her consulting practice in 2012, Dr. Ofosu worked for the federal public service at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (now Global Affairs Canada), the Department of National Defence, and the Public Service Commission. She has developed online screening tests, structured interviews, role plays and simulations, etc., for evaluating job applicants' skills and behaviours as part of the hiring and promotion process.

# Current Executive Members

**Chair-Elect**

**Dr. Helen Ofosu**

*Email: [helen@ioadvisory.com](mailto:helen@ioadvisory.com)*



Dr. Ofosu has always been interested in business and entrepreneurship. Consequently, she's excited about her role as a board member with the Canadian Black Chamber of Commerce. She's also thrilled to be one of the founding officers of the Section on Black Psychology, CPA. In addition to the official/stated goals of the section, she hopes this becomes a safe space and community for Black students and practitioners of psychology (and their allies). When she is not working, she enjoys spending time with her son and partner in Ottawa... and improving her skills as a recreational boater!

Click [here](#) to learn more about Dr. Ofosu's work/IO Advisory Services!

# Current Executive Members



**Secretary-**  
**Treasurer**

**Dr. Erin Beettam**

*Email: [ebeettam@gmail.com](mailto:ebeettam@gmail.com)*

Dr. Erin Beettam is a child and adolescent psychologist who has been practicing in hospital, educational, and community mental health settings for almost 10 years. She enjoys working with children, youth, and parents as a practitioner, an educational consultant, and clinical supervisor. She completed her training in pediatric psychiatry at both the Douglas Mental Health Institute and the Montreal Children's Hospital in Montreal, Quebec, where she lives. Her specialized clinical interests include treating anxiety, depression, and other mood disorders, body image and eating disorders, interpersonal effectiveness skills development and emotion dysregulation in youth. She also enjoys providing parent coaching and school supports for youth facing challenges that impact on schooling.



# Current Executive Members



**Secretary-**  
**Treasurer**

**Dr. Erin Beettam**

*Email: [ebeettam@gmail.com](mailto:ebeettam@gmail.com)*

Her therapeutic approach emphasizes pragmatic problem-solving skills, cognitive behavioural therapy, dialectical behavioural therapy, and attachment-informed parenting solutions. Erin's approach and orientation are sensitive to the impact of trauma on everyday functioning as individuals, and within family systems. She is deeply passionate about applying the essential pillars of DBT to everyday life. Her approach strongly emphasises parents and teens working together to create more harmony in their families and more balance in children and adolescent's lives. It is Erin's desire to be a collaborative, intentional, ally working in solidarity with other members of the new Black Psychology Section of the CPA. Erin spends her time off from her practice partying with her 2 children, spouse, & dog. She tries to practice mindfulness while gardening, sewing, cooking, & watching tonnes of Marvel movies.



# Current Executive Members

**Officer-At-Large**

**Dr. Monnica T. Williams**

*Email: [Monnica.williams@uottawa.ca](mailto:Monnica.williams@uottawa.ca)*



Dr. Monnica T. Williams is a board-certified clinical psychologist and Canada Research Chair in Mental Health Disparities at the University of Ottawa. Her work focuses on mental health in communities of color, psychopathology research, and interventions to reduce racism. Dr. Williams has published over 150 scientific articles, primarily on obsessive-compulsive disorder, trauma, and cultural issues. She serves on the Scientific and Clinical Advisory Board of the International OCD Foundation (IOCDF) and the Racial Equity and Access Committee of the Chacruna Institute. She is a member of the Association of Cognitive and Behavioral Therapies (ABCT), where she is an associate editor of the journal Behavior Therapy. Her work has been featured in major media outlets, including CTV, CNN and the New York Times.

# Current Executive Members



**Undergraduate  
Student & Social  
Media**

**Representative  
Ms. Barbara Afram**

*Email: [barbarajafam@burmanu.ca](mailto:barbarajafam@burmanu.ca)*

Barbara Afram is a 4th-year psychology student at Burman University. Barbara was born in Toronto, but she is a proud Ghanaian. Barbara is passionate about spirituality, family, and her future. She is currently working as a Research Assistant in the Selection and Recruitment Lab at the University of Calgary, which focuses on the adverse impacts of recruitment and selection tools that may disproportionately affect marginalized groups.

Barbara also has research interests in women's health, racial disparities in healthcare, cultural factors that impact the mental health of minorities, and problem behaviour in adolescents.

# Current Executive Members



**Undergraduate Student & Social Media**

**Representative**  
**Ms. Barbara Afram**

*Email: [barbarajafam@burmanu.ca](mailto:barbarajafam@burmanu.ca)*

Barbara is a board member of Ubuntu: Mobilizing Central Alberta where their mission is to steer Central Albertan communities through racial and social injustice by means of engagement, advocacy, and community building—both individually and systemically.

Psychology has a vast number of sub-disciplines, making the pursuit of higher education in the field daunting to students; especially Black students who already face crippling educational disparities. As Undergraduate Student Representative for the Black Psychology Section, her aim is to empower Black undergraduate students with knowledge and opportunities.

# Current Executive Members

Graduate Student Representative & Newsletter Editor

**Mrs. Jennifer McWilliams**

*Email: [jsanfor1@unb.ca](mailto:jsanfor1@unb.ca)*



Jennifer McWilliams is a PhD Student in Experimental Psychology at the University of New Brunswick (Fredericton campus). Her research interests include the psycho-social impact of social and cultural practices on the daily lives of marginalized populations and women in men-dominated occupations, the effects of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination on Black women and men, exercise prescription practices of mental healthcare professionals, and how exercise may buffer the negative affects of microaggressions on marginalized individuals' quality of life and well-being. During her Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)-funded Master's project, she examined the experiences of ageing career women firefighters in Canada.



# Current Executive Members

Graduate Student Representative & Newsletter Editor

**Mrs. Jennifer McWilliams**

*Email: [jsanfor1@unb.ca](mailto:jsanfor1@unb.ca)*



Her PhD thesis, which is supported by SSHRC, the O'Brien Foundation, and the University of New Brunswick, focuses on mental healthcare professionals' exercise prescription practices for individuals with mental health disorders (e.g., anxiety). During her graduate degree, she has also conducted research that focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on recently graduated undergraduate students in Canada and hiring discrimination against Black women in engineering occupations.

## SPECIAL REPORT



# **CPA President- Elect** **Dr. Eleanor Gittens**

We are thrilled to announce that the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) Board has elected Dr. Eleanor Gittens as the President for 2023-2024! Dr. Gittens will serve as President-Elect until the Annual General Meeting in June 2023, where she will then replace current CPA President, Dr. Kerri Ritchie. Dr. Gittens is the **first ever Black CPA President-Elect**, and we could not be more proud of her accomplishments!

Congratulations, Dr. Gittens!



# **The Chair's Corner** **with Kafui Sawyer**

***Expect Good Things to Happen – Keep Asking, Keep Knocking, and Keep Seeking***

I am very good at advocating for others but writing about myself can be challenging. When the newsletter editor, Jennifer, approached me to write a few words about myself as Chair of the Black Psychology section, I did not know where to begin. A lot happened in the past year when we were trying to launch this new section. I still remember driving into Chicago from Ottawa during the summer of 2021 with my three teenage children to visit my mother and father and hoping that the border guards would allow me into the states as I had not seen my American family in over a year due to the COVID lockdowns. In the vehicle, I coordinated the formation of this section with my terrific friends Helen, Anita, Erin, and Monnica (founding officers of this section).

All the discussions that ensued back and forth, trying to move my dream to reality, took hard work. Here I was, trying to be a good daughter and a wonderful mom to my children by giving them a well-deserved vacation to see their grandparents and cousins and also trying to lead the formation of a section on Black Psychology while managing a mental health clinic. There were hurdles along the way: the petitions required and the back and forth with the CPA office. My goodness, what a journey we passed through! It finally happened in December 2021, while I was in Oxford, England, with my genius daughter, trying to make her way into one of the top schools in England. I was overjoyed to receive the great news from Cara, the manager of governance and section

administration of CPA! What an exciting moment for all of us.

How did we start this journey? I believe in miracles, and I genuinely expect good things to happen every day. I believe in the incredible power of God! That is why I am a therapist. If I had never believed in miracles, I would be downhearted and very depressed. I have experienced many blessings in my family and myself! Let me share a testimony about myself, and then you will understand why I am big on miracles.

In 2001, I became very ill while pursuing my undergraduate studies in Psychology and Theology at the University of Ottawa and Saint Paul University. The physicians found a tumour in my esophagus, which required surgery. The surgery turned out to be complicated, and I was admitted to the General Hospital in Ottawa. One surgery led to another, and I ended up on life support in the intensive care unit and stayed in the hospital for almost two months. While in the intensive care unit, the physicians, including my sister, a pathologist, thought my life was over. But little did they know that there was a group of prayer warriors asking God for a miracle. I came through this whole experience with intensive rehabilitation. You see, whenever I hear physicians say, "They don't know what else they can do," I look to God and keep asking, knocking, and seeking.

I never give up because, after everything I have experienced, I know anything is possible! That is why I expect good things to happen every day. Not sometimes, but every day!

In 2018, I attended a leadership conference hosted by the CPA in Ottawa. I was astounded to see that I was the only Black person at the meeting and no Indigenous person was present, with about 150 attendees. I saw many White psychologists and leaders but was very disappointed at the lack of racial diversity at the conference. During the Q&A period, I asked about the lack of racial diversity at an informative meeting with the theme: "Effective Communication and Leadership in a Crowded Landscape." I knew I had spoken about what most attendees in the room knew but did not say.

After that experience, everyone recognized that we could improve racial representation in psychology. I attended that conference as a clinician and the executive director of Joy and Research Centre, not as a psychologist. I started having discussions with White allies who agreed that racial injustice existed in the education and training of psychologists in Canada. I remember speaking with Dr. Ada Sinacore at that leadership conference in 2018: she is now past president of the CPA and a professor at McGill University who



agreed that there was a representation problem of Black people in Psychology. Some of us were trying hard to address the representation issue through the accreditation process in CPA. In the process, I ran for a seat on the CPA board of directors but lost by a few votes. Knowing that I had lost a few votes was a win because it confirmed that many CPA members wanted to do better with diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. I was encouraged that many voted for me.

After the killing of George Floyd on May 25th, 2020, during the COVID lockdowns, there was a rise in the need for mental health services to address grief and loss, racism, workplace bullying, trauma, depression, anxiety, family conflicts, and other mental health issues. Canada went into a mental health crisis, with many therapists working tirelessly around the clock to meet the needs of people. However, BIPOC people suffered the most because they struggled to find Psychologists with lived experiences.

I then reached out to like-minded individuals, like Dr. Jude Cenat, Dr. Monnica Williams, Dr. Helen Oforu, Dr. Erin Beettam, Dr. Marvin McDonald, Dr. Manuel Reimer, and Dr. Anita Shaw, and continued conversations that would lead to change. Dr. Anita Shaw, a White social psychologist who had developed a curriculum at the University of Northern

British Columbia with her Indigenous thesis supervisor, Dr. Harder, on Decolonizing Psychology, became my friend. Anita and I belonged to the Association of Women in Psychology (AWP) and decided to submit an article for the annual conference in 2021. Our presentation, *Decolonizing Psychology: Undoing Epistemic Violence*, received excellent reviews, and we knew that we could move forward with starting a section on Black Psychology and required more professionals in psychology to support us. I again reached out to Dr. Manuel Reimer, past Chair of the Community Psychology section. We discussed starting a Decolonization group to focus on three issues: decolonizing the psychology curriculum, which is heavily rooted in epistemic violence, starting a Black psychology section, and collecting race-based data amongst psychology professionals in Canada. This group now called the Black Indigenous and Racialized (BIR) Psychology, became the catalyst in advocating for a section on Black Psychology as we received many signed petitions to move this forward.

**So, here we are today, with this incredible Section all of you made happen!**

I am very grateful for your membership and dedication to this Section. Your commitment to social justice, diversity, inclusion, and belonging tell us we can all expect great things to happen for all Canadians.



I hope you continue to believe that more extraordinary things can happen in 2023. Miracles do happen all the time. We must believe that when we ask: we will be heard by those in power; when we knock, they must open the door; when we seek, we will find.





# **Reflections** with **Dr. Erin Beetam**

As a trained School and Developmental Psychologist, I have come to realize how significantly racism and unconscious bias impact the mental health of BIPOC children and youth as well as their parents. Participating as a member of the Black Psychology Section and having the opportunity to host so many wonderful speakers this year has given me the words for things that were previously unseen by me in my position of privilege, and which I had not recognized before in our education systems, our social structures, and in mental health care, in general.

Understanding the language of microaggressions and the impact they have on mental health has opened my eyes to how this chronic stress leads to coping methods such as being disengaged with systems you do not trust and creates avoidance of



psychological help where you anticipate experiencing possibly more microaggressions and a lack of understanding (Ogunyemi et al., 2019).

In my practice, I have noticed two phenomena regarding Black youth receiving proper psychological services. One is that they are less frequently referred for services compared to non-Black youth. And are less likely to request a referral for services or to engage in the services offered in the public sector. Two is that, particularly in school settings, difficult behaviour in emotionally dysregulated children and teens is viewed differently if the youth is Black versus not. The behaviour is more likely to be the focus of “intervention” compared to focusing on

the mental health difficulties causing intense emotion dysregulation.

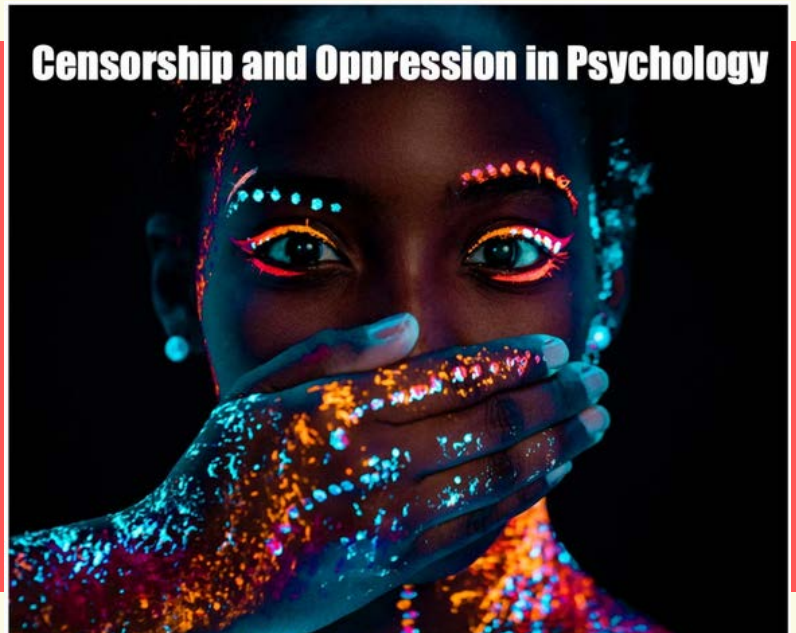
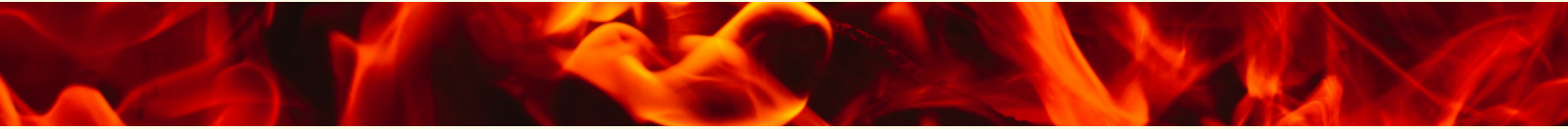
Not surprisingly, research into this issue confirms my clinical observations. Fante-Coleman & Jackson-Best (2020) found similar results in their qualitative analysis of barriers to mental health services for Black youth. Issues with access fell into three thematic categories: systemic barriers (access issues, waiting lists, cost), community-related barriers (internalized stigma, community-based stigma against mental health services), and practitioner-specific barriers (racism, discrimination, and poor organizational support for youth) meaning that many clinicians were not trained to provide culturally competent care to Black youth.



I have become more intentional in my thinking patterns, to change my default frame. The mindfulness approach that I use in my DBT-oriented practice has allowed me to “just notice” internal biases and assumptions, I was not aware of. Not judging but noticing them (both from the DBT framework) has begun the process of releasing those unconscious assumptions. I have become focused on intentionality with Black clients; to be gentler and more validating with parents and youth and open about acknowledging the added stress and struggles they experience, and to advocate for their needs. I also draw attention to issues and assumptions that I notice among colleagues to hopefully increase awareness.

I have found changing my practice and focusing on intentionality and transparency with clients and with colleagues has led to transcendent and illuminating experiences personally as a therapist and has increased my ability to connect with clients and families. It’s so true that “you can’t un-ring that bell.” I am grateful for all I am learning and helping to come to fruition in the Black Psychology Section. I feel hopeful that we can work together to do a better job of meeting the needs of Black Canadians. Thanks for the honour and trust placed in me of being the Treasurer, Secretary, and Ally.





## Dr. Monnica Williams

*I was invited to give a workshop for psychologists on psychedelics for mental health. My lab also was selected to give a talk on our study of the state licensing board. Controversy erupted and one of the talks was cancelled. Guess which one?*

at the University of Louisville, where I became the first Black woman to gain tenure in the psychology department in over a century. Although I live in Ottawa now, I love culture and beauty of Kentucky.

***"I was shocked to learn our presentation had been cancelled."***

Kentucky is known for its annual horse race the Kentucky Derby, the Louisville Slugger baseball bat, the birthplace of bourbon, and legendary Black boxer Muhammad Ali. I lived in Kentucky for five years and taught

Kentucky is also a place of contradictions. It is markedly segregated by Black-White racial lines. Skirting the US South and Midwest regions, there is a joke that Kentucky is the only state that joined the Confederacy *after*

the Civil War. When I worked at the University of Louisville, I had to walk past a seventy-foot monument to honour fallen confederate soldiers, though thankfully they've moved it since I left.

I was amused and surprised when I was invited by the Kentucky Psychological Association (KPA) to give a half-day workshop on psychedelics. For some

facility that created a chilling effect on the whole notion of psychedelics.

The half-day KPA workshop was a success by all indicators - standing room only, 150 participants all engaged, and excellent feedback afterwards. The second talk was the one my students had submitted based on a project about Kentucky's all-White state licensing board and equitable protections for



[Photo of Louisville / Wikipedia]

background, in 2019, I organized a training in Kentucky for therapists of color on [how to use MDMA to treat PTSD](#), with a focus on racial trauma. Participants flew in from all over the country and international locations, but we could not get locals to participate, despite extensive community outreach. We later learned that decades ago there was a CIA-funded project that was using Black men as [guinea pigs for psychoactive drug research](#) at a Lexington

early-career psychologists. We conducted an analysis showing that psychologists who caused severe harm or engaged in grave ethical violations always had their licenses suspended or revoked. But, those who committed lesser offences were subject to almost random means of punishment. Further, early-career psychologists appeared to have lesser offences but more punishments, although the numbers were not large enough to make solid statistical conclusions for most

of those comparisons.

What really stuck out were the first-hand accounts of psychologists who had had interactions with the state licensing board – most of whom had done nothing wrong. They described it as “horrible”, “Draconian”, “unfair”, and “ridiculous.” But more concerning was the trauma they expressed. When one psychologist was asked how being investigated by the licensing board had affected him, he was moved to tears. “I lost so much sleep. I could cry about it ... it literally feels like I have trauma from it.”

I had reached out to the Black president of KPA in advance of the conference to see if anyone might be interested in working together to help advocate for improvements to the inequitable systems that traumatized so many early-career professionals. There was some fear of retaliation for bringing problems to light, and as such, it seemed there would be no interest. Only 15 people had signed up for our talk.

Something felt odd when I received a cryptic email from the KPA executive director who wanted to review our slides the day before the presentation. He said, “I understand it’s likely to be a challenging talk and was hoping to have some time to think about it beforehand.” I wasn’t sure what to make of this. That evening I learned they

were cancelling our talk. **I was shocked.**

Apparently, a confidential early draft of the report to accompany our talk was leaked out a week before and had been circulated. Some of the licensing board members had seen it and were furious, demanding that the event be cancelled and making threats of legal action if KPA allowed it to proceed. And they didn’t want anyone getting CE’s for attending.

This extreme response validated all the complaints we had heard about this board, showing they were more controlling and aggressive than anything written in our report. Although academic debate is essential for improving our systems, they did not want to hear about the problems nor our thoroughly researched solutions to create more equity.

My two diverse students who came from Ottawa to present the research were stunned and felt like their voices were being silenced.

I was able to convince the leadership of KPA to allow us to give our talk to some of their board members as a private event, but not for conference participants. I suggested that the members of the licensing board could join as well, but I was told they would not attend. There was a chill in the air at the meeting. The KPA attendees seemed interested in the findings but very guarded in their responses. Nonetheless, we left with the hope that the KY



licencing board's clumsy attempt at censorship may have helped us to get the information to those who most needed to hear it.

At the end of the day, it became clear to us that systems of power and privilege will go to great lengths to censor opposing voices, even if it is in no one's best interest. And abuse of power is an even bigger taboo than psychedelics.

More work needs to be put into understanding systems of privilege and oppression. The issue of power structures in society is such a critical topic that there is now an open call for papers in *Frontiers* for a special issue entitled: [Power, Discrimination and Privilege in Individuals and Institutions](#).

Wu, E., Bartlett, A., & Williams, M. (discussant). (2022, November 12). [Equitable Protections for Early-Career Psychologists in Kentucky](#). Kentucky Psychological Association & Foundation Annual Convention, Louisville, KY.



[Photo: Student Amy Bartlett, JD, LLM, presents at a closed meeting in Louisville.]

Source: A. Bartlett/Used with permission



# **The Value BIPOC Leaders Bring to Corporate Risk Management**

## **Dr. Helen Ofosu**

**The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.**

***In December 2020, global law firm [Cooley LLP](#) reported that Nasdaq, a global electronic marketplace for buying and selling securities, has done the “analysis of over two dozen studies that found an association between diverse boards and better financial performance and corporate governance.”***



During a recent video call, a colleague reminisced about the start of her Executive MBA studies and how that is analogous to strong corporate boards. One of her earliest memories of her MBA program was each student completing [psychometric assessments](#) so that groups could be created with representation from each “type” of person. The rationale was that each group could only have a “whole brain” if each of the parts of the brain was represented by the members. If one perspective, approach, and style of thinking were missing, the group would be incomplete and vulnerable to making mistakes. Their goal, even before classes started, was to avoid blind spots and try to see around corners.

Modern organizations that are determined to remain viable regardless of the curve balls that are thrown at them know that they need to pay attention to issues like governance, risk management, and accountability. This is easier to do when companies/organizations have a 360-degree perspective and can avoid blind spots by having the “whole-brain” approach. In my opinion, this plays out by hiring and appointing people based on [what they can contribute](#), not how much they look like the people who are already sitting at the table. Some problems are only understood by people with the right combination of hard and soft skills, intelligence, and relevant lived experience.

### Talent vs. Tokenism

This link between diversity and high performance is a stark contrast to a frequently expressed belief that doing “diversity hires” implies lowering an organization’s normal standards. The common (and often false) narrative is that Black, Indigenous, and people of colour (BIPOC) leaders and employees get jobs because of quotas and tokenism rather than because they are talented and qualified.

In my experience, BIPOC leaders and employees working in certain fields where there are mandatory credentials are often equally or better qualified than their non-BIPOC peers. The fact is that racialized

candidates often need to be extremely capable, otherwise, due to the systemic barriers that they have navigated, they would never have gotten a foot in the door to obtain their qualifications if they were mediocre.

### New Rules of Engagement for Businesses

In January 2021, [CNN](#) reported that Nasdaq is proposing a rule that would require some evidence of diversity on the boards of directors of companies listed on the exchange. This rule still “needs the approval of the Securities and Exchange Commission to take effect, [and] would require companies to have at least two diverse directors, including one woman and one member of an “underrepresented” minority group, including Black people, Latinos or members of the LGBTQ+ community. Smaller companies and foreign companies on the exchange could comply with two women directors.”





This proposed rule is consistent with what has already been in place with Goldman Sachs' clients and for companies based in California. In January 2020, Goldman Sachs (GS) announced that it will not take a company public unless it has at least one diverse board member. For now, however, Goldman Sachs' version of diversity is focused on women, not BIPOC leaders. Since September 2020, the boards of all publicly traded companies based in California must have at least one minority member on them. Throughout 2020, [Goldman Sachs](#) "built up a business to help recruit directors for those boards, which has expanded to cover public companies as well." Banks are very intentional, "it's a sign that there are not just morals at play – there is money at stake, too."

There are many qualified BIPOC people and non-BIPOC women who are ready and willing to lead. In many respects, creating more diverse boards is a much easier task than creating an inclusive corporate culture. Board seats are normally for a limited time so there are regular opportunities to replace departing board members with qualified BIPOC people and non-BIPOC women. While this is a good start, I believe that the more challenging goal is to improve the diversity and inclusion among the leaders who work within the organization. This is more challenging because it means that current leaders need to

move into new roles or organizations to create leave vacancies that can be filled by more diverse candidates. The bigger task is to create corporate cultures where BIPOC leaders (and leaders from other underrepresented groups) will want to work in, and more importantly, will stay for a while.

In the months following the murder of George Floyd, many organizations created Director of Diversity and Inclusion positions, Anti-Racism Secretariats, and various task forces and initiatives. Despite these efforts, it will take time for organizations to become inclusive enough for all employees to feel like they [belong](#) and no longer need to [cover up aspects of themselves that they believe are unwelcome](#).

I am encouraged by the approach taken by The Genesis Collective. This company was founded by a Black/Bi-racial woman who understands recruitment and inclusion. . The Genesis Collective will offer nuanced recruitment of talented BIPOC candidates and some non-BIPOC women – but Genesis will only place their candidates in environments that have been vetted and have an adequately inclusive corporate culture and practices. I anticipate that this will appeal to the best and brightest candidates who will not be in a hurry to settle for less.



**Francesca D'Ambrosio, CEO The Genesis Collective**

Following the 2021 inauguration of President Biden, the drive towards greater diversity, equity, and inclusion looks like it will continue in the US. Gary Gensler, President Biden's pick for chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), is expected to push for company disclosure of diversity data.

That said, the road ahead will not be a walk in the park. Arthur Levitt Jr., the former SEC chairman during the Clinton administration, argued that the "new rules would not break hiring habits that depend on informal social

networks where friends recommend each other." He would know, and I am sure most of these prestigious opportunities will continue to be filled this way. The old boys' club will guarantee that non-BIPOC men will continue to have solid prospects going forward.

**Note** – on May 18, 2021, Statistics Canada released a report on [Diversity among Board Directors and Officers](#). This report provides information on the socioeconomic profile of executives by gender and diversity, and it examines the types of businesses where diverse women executives work.

**Update** – On August 6, 2021, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), approved Nasdaq's proposal to require evidence of diversity on the boards of directors of companies listed on the Nasdaq exchange of approximately 3,000 companies.

**Are you ready to go beyond writing a statement or setting up a Diversity and Inclusion Committee/Task Force? Or are you an employee who is seeking a more inclusive workplace?** Dr. Helen's training in Work and Business Psychology (officially known as Industrial and Organizational ([I/O Psychology](#))) means she is a genuine expert in evaluating work-related behaviours. She uses those skills to help hiring managers tell the difference between people who say the right things during interviews and people who actually deliver on the job. Plus, she knows how to do it inclusively.



**A Happy  
New Year  
from Barbara  
Afram**



A recent online poll conducted by Leger (as cited by Gilmore, 2022) revealed that out of the 1,526 Canadians surveyed, 31% felt that 2022 was “worse for them than last year”. I personally agree with their sentiments – 2022 was a rollercoaster ride that I was eager to escape. Fortunately, the idea of a “silver lining” has never left me, and I hope it stays with us all. During dark times, it may be frustrating to have someone tell you to “look at the bright side,” but is that so bad?

According to recent studies sponsored by the NIH (2022), optimism is linked to a longer lifespan in women across racial and ethnic groups, and to better emotional health in older men. There are also cognitive benefits of negative experiences. They foster wisdom—a quality that we all yearn for. Although I can’t think of one positive outcome for the sky-high inflation rates we experienced and will continue to experience for the foreseeable future, I can look toward 2023 with a hope that I will be able to practice and share the valuable lessons I have learned in 2022, and I hope that you can, too.

Have a very happy new year! **2023**





## BREAKING NEWS



### HOW TO BE RESILIENT IN YOUR CAREER

Facing Up to Barriers at Work

Helen Ofosu

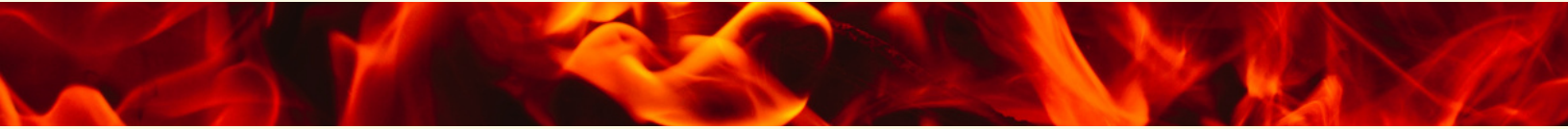
ROUTLEDGE

## **Dr. Helen Ofosu**

I'm excited to announce that my first book, [How to be Resilient in Your Career: Facing Up to Barriers at Work](#), will be published by Routledge!

As a psychologist, it's an honour to be published by the same company that published giants like Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud (... not to mention Albert Einstein).

In the book, I share vital career advice to help readers navigate common difficult career experiences such as harassment, imposter syndrome, bullying, being part of an underrepresented group, toxic workplaces, discrimination, and more.



It will launch on **February 23, 2023** but it is available now for [pre-order](#).

Writing this book was a passion project of mine and I'm so excited to finally see it come to fruition. I hope that it will provide readers with the support and advice they need to overcome challenges in their careers.

If you or someone you know is struggling with these issues, I hope my book will provide some guidance and comfort. In the meantime, please visit my [website](#) for more resources and information.

Thank you for your support - I can't wait for you to read it!



# Quick Glimpse of Recent Section Events



The Black Psychology Section of the CPA  
Presents:

**DR. ELEANOR GITTENS**



join us for a discussion on  
"Microaggressions:  
Navigating a Primarily White Workplace."

October 21, 12pm EST



**Microaggressions: Navigating a  
Primarily White Workplace with  
Dr. Eleanor Gittens**

The Black Psychology Section of the CPA  
Presents:

**Truth and Reconciliation Day**

*In Honour of our Indigenous Brothers and Sisters*



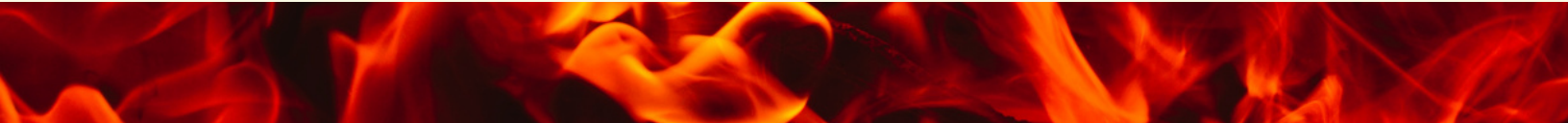
September 30, 2022  
12-1pm EST

join us for a facilitated discussion with  
**Dr. Anita Shaw**



**Truth and Reconciliation Day: In  
Honour of Our Indigenous Brothers  
and Sisters with Dr. Anita Shaw**





# How Diverse Branches of Psychology Address Social Justice

Dr. Ciann Wilson, Speaker

Dr. Fred Chou, Speaker

Dr. Kemi S. Anazodo, Speaker

Dr. Jude Mary Cénat, Speaker

Dr. Sara Crann, Chair of Section on Women and Psychology (SWAP)

A collaborative, virtual event presented by the  
 Black Psychology  
 Community Psychology  
 Counselling Psychology  
 Industrial-Organizational Psychology  
 Women and Psychology

CANADIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DE PSYCHOLOGIE

"How Diverse Branches of Psychology Address Social Justice"

Register for this virtual event with the link in bio @blkpsychcpa

Presenting Award-Winning Author of *The Book of Negroes*, *Beatrice and Croc Harry* and *The Illegal*

Lawrence Hill

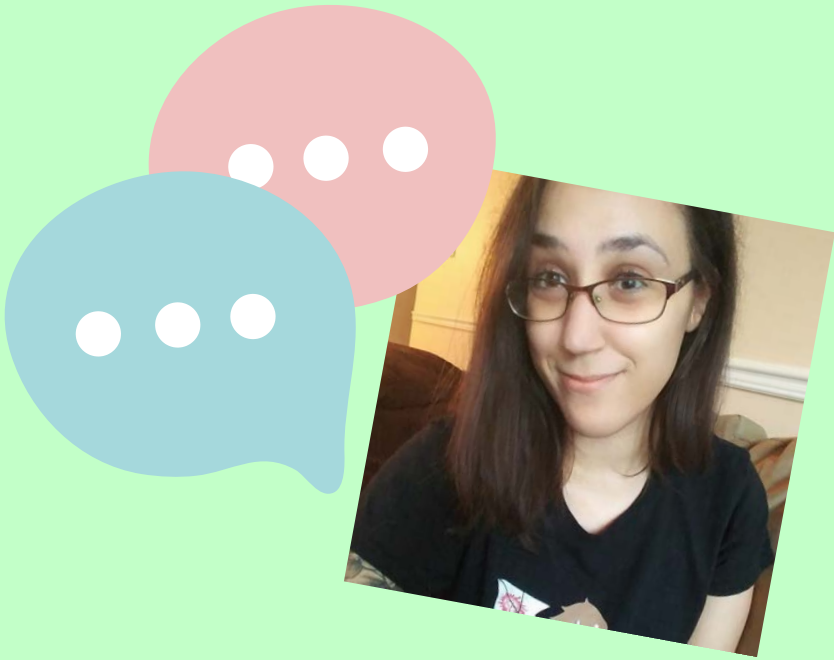
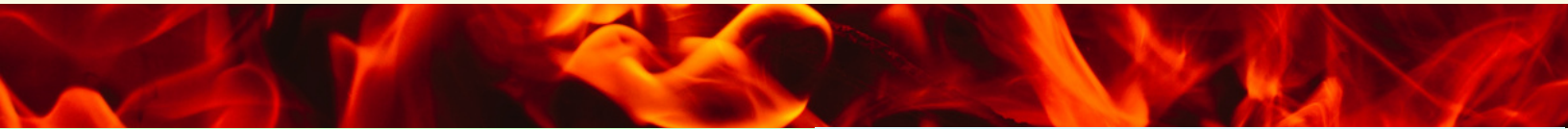
Brought to you by the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) the Black Psychology, Educational Psychology, and Traumatic Stress Sections of the CPA. Joy Health and Research Centre, and I/O Advisory Services Inc.

THIS FREE, VIRTUAL EVENT WILL TAKE PLACE ON DECEMBER 9, 2022, 12PM EST

# Award-Winning Author, Lawrence Hill

Thank you, Barbara, for creating all of these wonderful advertisements!





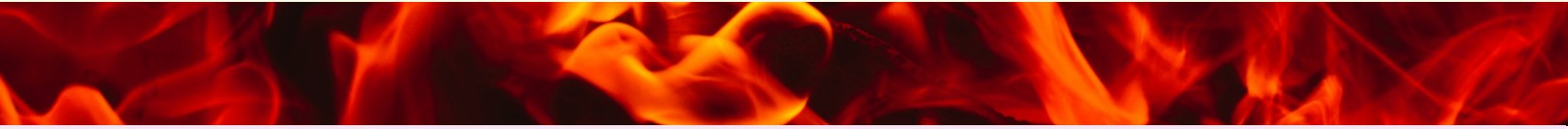
# Message from the Editor

**Jennifer McWilliams**

I am honoured to serve as the Graduate Student Representative and Newsletter Editor for the Section on Black Psychology, CPA! When I (virtually) attended the Annual General Meeting in June of 2022, I knew wholeheartedly that I wanted to contribute to this section in some way. Although I was listening from my kitchen table in my two-bedroom apartment in Fredericton, New Brunswick, I could feel how special this Section was and that the Executive Committee and Section members cared deeply about each other and furthering the field of Black Psychology. I knew during that short one-hour session that this group of individuals was going to do something great, so I quickly offered to serve as the Graduate Student Representative. Am I ever glad that I did! I have had such a wonderful time thus far working with the other Executive Committee Members and have thoroughly enjoyed hosting such important and timely events!

When Kafui asked me to also serve as the Newsletter Editor, I was excited as I knew that I would be able to return to my artistic roots. Before taking on this responsibility, I had not created any form of art since I was in the third year of my undergraduate degree. Being able to work on this newsletter has brought back my passion that I thought was lost, so I cannot thank Kafui, Helen, Erin, Monnica, and Barbara more for trusting me with this role! I hope that everyone will enjoy the newsletter and that we can IGNITE a passion for Black Psychology!

I hope that everyone had a wonderful holiday season! Happy New Year to you all!



# **Section on Black Psychology - Social Media**

***Stay up to date on news, events, and discussions related to Black Psychology and the Section on Black Psychology!***



Black Psych Section of CPA (@blkpsychcpa)



Section on Black Psychology, CPA (@BlkPsychCPA)



Black Psychology Section (CPA Website)

Questions? Please contact Barbara at [barbarajafraam@burmanu.ca](mailto:barbarajafraam@burmanu.ca)





# Call for Submissions!



NEWSLETTER

The IGNITE newsletter aims to provide readers with information on research projects and activities undertaken by Section on Black on Psychology members, books, book chapters, and published articles (e.g., peer-reviewed journal publications, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, reports), relevant announcements (e.g., upcoming conferences, webinars, thesis proposals and defences), reviews of events (e.g., conferences, webinars), and opportunities (e.g., volunteer positions, internships, research assistantships, fellowships, seeking participants for studies). We would **love** to know what members are doing to further the field of Black Psychology!

Calls for newsletter submissions will go out to members of the Section of Black Psychology twice a year (at the beginning of the Fall and Winter academic terms), with publications following in **November** and **May**, respectively.

If you would like to submit content that relates to Black Psychology for the **May 2023 IGNITE Newsletter**, then please send a title and summary (1000 words max), a relevant photograph (or photographs to tell your story/animate your research), and your name to Jennifer McWilliams at [jsanfor1@unb.ca](mailto:jsanfor1@unb.ca).