

New Book from USC Social Work Faculty Couples Powerful Personal Narratives with Incisive Observations on the Impact of Oppression, Ostracism and Hate on Mental Health and Wellness

“The Reality of Diversity, Gender, and Skin Color: From Living Room to Classroom” reveals the myriad of complexities and challenges related to diversity.

Los Angeles, CA. (X,X, 2020) – A new publication from professors at the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work uses personal narratives and observations to illuminate the impact of oppression, ostracism and hate on the mental health and wellness of marginalized individuals. *The Reality of Diversity, Gender, and Skin Color: From Living Room to Classroom* by Dr. Kimberly Finney and Dr. Terence Fitzgerald, both clinical associate professors of social work at USC, explores issues related to diversity, including colorism, the stigma of incarceration, aggression shown to American atheists, and how bias affects an individual’s behavior and health. Available through Cognella Academic Publishing (titles.cognella.com), the book is designed to foster cultural humility, and is an ideal resource for students, social workers, psychologists, therapists, organizational trainers, and anyone looking to increase their knowledge and understanding of social diversity.

Each chapter centers around a specific theme, with Finney and Fitzgerald bringing together a diverse group of colleagues from the social work school at USC as contributing authors, including Dr. Karen Lincoln, Dr. Renee Smith-Maddox, Dr. Robert Hernandez, Dr. Juan Carlos Araque, Dr. Shannon Dunn, Dr. Erik Schott, Brittani Morris, LCSW and Pamela Franzwa, LCSW, as well as additional subject experts, including Dr. Tracy Washington, Dr. Raven Rosetti, Dr. Edna Rodriguez, Dr. Laura Anderson, Dr. Cynthia Joseph and Dr. Gabriel Crenshaw.

“The idea for this book came from my observation that diversity, equity and inclusion was not working,” Finney said. “Moreover, not everyone at the table was interested in equality, equity or inclusion of others.”

A general framework is presented around the theme of each chapter, followed by personal interviews and an analysis emphasizing the impact of oppression and marginalization on health and wellness. This unique format offers the reader the opportunity to hear from Mexican American women, white women, LGBTQ+ individuals, Black professors in predominately white institutions and other populations generally overlooked in conversations on diversity.

“We provide an opportunity to be exposed to the multitude of diverse voices discussing the pains and gains of being part of a marginalized population within U.S. society,” Fitzgerald said. “Also to the intersectionality related to oppression and marginalization.”

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About Dr. Kimberly Finney

Kimberly Finney is a clinical associate professor at the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, a board certified clinical psychologist and retired military psychologist, and is medically trained in psychopharmacology. Finney regularly lectures on the neurobiology of racism and serves as a consultant and analyst on race-related issues in working with African Americans. Finney holds an MS in organizational development and PhD in clinical psychology from Wright State University.

About Dr. Terence Fitzgerald

Terence Fitzgerald is a clinical associate professor at the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, a race scholar and policy analyst. Fitzgerald has worked at the elementary, middle and high school levels as a school social worker in racially and economically diverse settings in Illinois. Fitzgerald holds a PhD in educational policy from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

About the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work

The USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work is a leader in social work and nursing education and research. The school integrates the science of social work with real-world practice to improve the wellbeing of vulnerable individuals and communities and advance social and economic justice on a local, national and global scale. The school is a recognized leader in academic innovation, experiential learning, online education and translational research. For more information, visit dworakpeck.usc.edu.