Crossroads

GREETINGS FROM AMENA-PSY

Dear AMENA Psy Members,

We are excited to welcome you to the first issue of Crossroads, the official newsletter for AMENA Psy. In this issue you will read updates from key executive board members about research, practice, students, and membership. This is an exciting time in the history of MENA Psychology and we hope that you will consider being involved in one of the many exciting projects we have planned. Please note that we have an announcement section where you can learn about new career advances and recent publications of members.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

Drs. Ayse S. Ikizler, Nadia Hasan, and Thorayya Said Giovannelli (the Newsletter Committee)
ABOUT AMENA-PSY: OUR BEGINNINGS

The American Arab, Middle Eastern, and North African Psychological Association (AMENA-Psy) is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation dedicated to the development of Arab/MENA psychologists and psychological research and interventions in North America. The organization welcomes anyone interested in American Arab/MENA psychological issues.

The word “amena” comes from the Arabic root a-ma-na which relates to honesty, fairness, faithfulness, safety, and peace. We strive to carry those values in our organization’s work.

Learn more about your AMENA-Psy!

WHO’S WHO
AMENA-PSY ELECTED EXECUTIVE BOARD

* Mona Amer, President
* Ayse Ikizler, President-Elect
* Laila Abdel-Salam, Secretary
* Germine Awad, Treasurer
* Maryam Kia-Keating, Member-at-Large, Research/Education Slate
* Nora Alarifi Phraon, Member-at-Large, Practice/Advocacy Slate
* Samih Jallouqa, Member-at-Large, Student Slate

Learn more about board members on our website, https://amenapsy.org/

MISSION
Building a supportive network to enhance the professional development of the American Arab/MENA psychological workforce, as well as to promote the wellbeing of Arab/MENA communities in North America through research, education, advocacy, and the advancement of ethical practice.

VISION
A thriving American Arab/MENA psychology.

VALUES
Social justice and responsibility
Respect and compassion
Inclusiveness and diversity
Family and community
Culture and tradition
Innovation and advancement
REPORT FROM THE RESEARCH & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

BY MARYAM KIA-KEATING, PH.D.
MEMBER-AT-LARGE, RESEARCH & EDUCATION

I am delighted to serve as the chair of the AMENA-Psy Research & Education Committee. Our committee aims to raise awareness about empirical research and other scholarship related to Americans of Arab, Middle Eastern, and North African ancestry.

Working alongside me are committee members: Minnah Farook, Emmanuel Bonilla, and Monica Ghabrial. Minnah Farook is a counseling psychology doctoral student at the University of Kentucky, beginning her predoctoral internship at the Atlanta VA Medical Center in August 2018. Her research interests focus on acculturation, identity development, immigration, socio-political factors that affect marginalized groups, and psychotherapy process/outcomes. Emmanuel Bonilla is a graduate student in clinical psychology at the Arizona School of Professional Psychology-Argosy in Phoenix, AZ. His concentration is Diversity, and he has particular interests in biracial individuals, and understanding overt and covert discrimination. Monica Ghabrial is a doctoral candidate at the University of Toronto. Her research uses an intersectional approach to address issues concerning women’s health and wellbeing, as well as identity, stress, and resilience among racialized sexual orientation and gender minority people. She has a particular interest in issues concerning Middle Eastern sexual orientation and gender minority individuals. Molly Mechammil is a doctoral student in clinical psychology at Utah State University. Her research interests focus on cultural and familial factors that influence behavioral outcomes in Latinx and Middle Eastern families, as well as understanding mental health stigma among ethnic minority populations.

This year, we are launching Research Spotlights which you can find on our website, to showcase seminal and recent empirical studies on MENA populations in the United States. We are excited to share research findings and hope to talk with authors about their experiences as researchers with these communities. We have also developed an Award for Distinguished Scholarship in Psychology. We are looking forward to finding other ways to increase networking, mentorship, collaboration, and connection among MENA scholars. Please be in touch with your ideas and your interest in participating in these endeavors! You can email me at maryamkk@ucsb.edu.

Congratulations
2018 AMENA-Psy research award winners!

Distinguished Contribution to Psychological Scholarship Award:

Dr. Julie Hakim-Larson

This award is granted to a full member of AMENA-Psy who holds a graduate degree in psychology and has made significant contribution to research relevant to the Arab/Middle Eastern/North African populations in the US.

Distinguished Dissertation Award:

Aiyat B. Zalzala

This award is granted to a student or full member of AMENA-Psy who has completed a doctoral dissertation demonstrating important contributions relevant to the Arab/Middle Eastern/North African populations in the US.

See page 7 for more on this year’s winners
Contributory factors for the under-utilization of the mental health system are socio-economic, familial, financial, and geographic inaccessibility. These have been attributed to access barriers created by financial deterrents to seeking care, program locations and service hours, and treatment problems related to misdiagnosis.

“Lack of cultural awareness by clinicians can lead to incomplete assessments, inadequate diagnoses or treatments, and failed treatment alliances.”

Language barriers especially during assessment and treatment, cultural misunderstandings, prejudice, also play a role. In care, difficulties in communicating can lead to inappropriate treatment, ineffective case management and inadequate referrals, alienating many who therefore leave treatment prematurely.

Other considerations include the lack of knowledge about available services, or agencies that are located away from cultural population centers, offer limited hours of operation, and do not accommodate child-care or transportation needs.

Furthermore, the social stigma in seeking psychiatric help is keenly felt within all cultural groups. Strong feelings of social stigma often lead to delayed treatment that is pursued only when symptoms become severe and community and family support systems are exhausted. Lack of cultural awareness by clinicians can lead to incomplete assessments, inadequate diagnoses or treatments, and failed treatment alliances.

To alleviate some of these issues that represent serious barriers to effective treatment, AMENAPsy is seeking to develop a directory of all psychology professionals who provide services in North America. We hope that this directory will provide up-to-date resources that will help those who are seeking psychological services for themselves or their loved ones find a good match by specialty, and orientation in addition to language, religion and sub ethnic background among many other criteria. This directory will be posted on our website and will be available to all.
With deep passion for researching, advocating, and supporting Arab-American populations, I am excited to be serving as AMENA-Psy’s student member-at-large. As a part of my role, I have recently recruited a committee of students who will serve to educate support, and advocate for Arab, Middle-Eastern, and North African students in psychology at the graduate and undergraduate level. We plan to work collaboratively to achieve these goals through various projects, including hosting webinars and creating a social media visibility campaign. The committee also aims to develop programs, such as a mentorship program, a dissertation document database, and a student needs assessment for implementation. As of now, an AMENA serving internship site reference list is in development (to add to this list, please email me at sjallouqa15@midwestern.edu).

As AMENA-Psy's first student member-at-large, I am excited to begin and continue these efforts to not only serve and support Arab, Middle-Eastern, and North African/American students, but to also advance knowledge, research, and practice with AMENA populations, overall.
GET INVOLVED!

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING, PLEASE COMPLETE OUR VOLUNTEER SIGN-UP FORM HERE:

HTTP://TINYURL.COM/AMENAPSYVOLUNTEER

WE'RE SOCIAL!

FIND US ON:

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MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

BY GERMINE ("GIGI") AWAD, PH.D., TREASURER

AMENA-Psy is a registered 501 (3)c organization. Our finances and current budget is made up primarily of membership dues. We have a small amount of monies that have come in via donations. In the coming year, we will be working to increase fundraising to help fund some of our infrastructure and other activities such as awards. Currently, your membership dues are mostly used to fund the website, video-conferencing, and awards. If you are interested in helping with fundraising, please contact me at gawad@austin.utexas.edu. We currently have 144 paid members of AMENA-Psy. We are slowly growing. Please encourage your colleagues and students to join us!

Please encourage your colleagues and students to join us as new members!
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR RESEARCH AWARD WINNER

BY MARYAM KIA-KEATING, PH.D.

We are delighted to present **Dr. Julie Hakim-Larson as the winner of AMENA-Psy’s first annual Award for Distinguished Contribution to Psychological Scholarship.** Dr. Hakim-Larson is a Professor of Child Clinical Psychology at the University of Windsor, Canada. Dr. Hakim-Larson’s contributions to the field of psychology have spanned over three decades. During that time, she has been a key leader in providing a critical voice to the clinical needs and culturally sensitive approaches for Arab and MENA populations. Her scholarship and impact related to Arab populations in the U.S. and Canada has come in the form of multi-faceted approaches including 15 publications, 2 DVDs, and organizing international symposia and international collaborations and study groups. She helps draw communities of scholars and practitioners together, creating connections, validation and support for the work, and helping to guide future generations of researchers.

Notably, she recently co-edited a book published by Springer titled Biopsychosocial Perspectives on Arab Americans, with an emphasis on prevention and advocacy related to health disparities. Her book provided an important space for scholars, many with Arab/MENA backgrounds themselves, to highlight the needs and strengths in these communities and to draw visibility to the necessity of further research with this population. Her research is significant, influential, and incredibly needed. We congratulate and honor her today and look forward to her continued contributions to the field.

We are happy to present **Aieyat Zalzala as the winner of AMENA-Psy’s Distinguished Dissertation Award.** Aiyat’s dissertation titled The Intimate Partner Violence Experience of Arab Immigrant Women in the U.S., which examines the intimate partner violence experiences Arab immigrant women living in the America. Aiyat’s study has made significant contributions to the psychological research of AMENA populations, as it was the first to examine the intersectionality of religion, race, sex, and immigrant history and its influence upon the lived experiences of this population. Her research adds to the limited literature of this group, giving a voice to women often unheard in the mainstream feminist movement, and contributes to the advancement of culturally appropriate preventative and psychological interventions for Arab women experiencing intimate partner violence.
ABOUT & LOGO—GET TO KNOW YOUR AMENA-PSY

BY NORA ALARIFI, LAILA ABDEL SALAM, & AYSE IKIZLER

We’re excited to share with you the logo that was developed with the help of several talented artists. The act between seeing and understanding is critical for moving the viewer’s perception so that when they first look at the logo they get the idea. We compiled a list of four characteristics that distinguish our logo from others. First, we wanted it to incorporate constant movement and change by choosing a circular form. Next, the interlocking curves demonstrate collaboration, support and solidarity. Third, the interior Mosaic design represents our diversity and cultural heritage. Finally, the colors represent the earth and bodies of water that hold us together.

Additionally, we hope that the logo represents both the diversity of the AMENA population in addition to the interplay between old and new. The outer circles represent the modern, while the inner Arabesque highlights the traditional elements of our cultures. AMENA-Psy aims to embrace current MENA movements within the context of and in conversation with our cultural roots.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR MEMBERS!

BY NADIA T. HASAN, PH.D., NEWSLETTER CO-EDITOR

Career Milestones and Updates

Eddy Ameen, PhD, Associate Executive Director of Early Career and Graduate Student Affairs at APA, moved October 1 within the American Psychological Association to the Education Directorate following Nancy Moore’s retirement as the Executive Director of Strategic Programs. With a team of five, Eddy oversees the APAGS Office and the Office on Early Career Psychologists.

Linda Najjar, Ph.D., Licensed Psychologist, at Inner Wisdom Counseling, L.L.C. is celebrating the tenth anniversary of her successful feminist multicultural private practice in Albuquerque, NM. Website: www.innerwisdomcounseling.com

Maya Boustani, PhD, became an Assistant Professor at Loma Linda University in Southern California

Ramy Bassioni, M.S., Counseling Psychology Doctoral Student, University of Missouri - Kansas City received the 2018 – Graduate Student Travel Award from Division 45 to attend the 2018 APA Convention in San Francisco, CA.