

SUSAN HEFFNER RHEMA

Assistant Professor of Professional Practice
Kent School of Social Work and Family Practice
University of Louisville
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EDUCATION

- Ph.D.** University of Louisville 2014
Kent School of Social Work and Family Science
Dissertation title, *Completing the Journey: Predicting Emotional Distress in Newly Arrived Refugee Adults*, a logistical regression of factors impacting refugee mental health in resettlement.
- M.S.W.** University of Maryland at Baltimore, UMAB 1983
School of Social Work and Community Planning
Specialization in Community Organizing.
Thesis title, *The Family, Social, and Community Impact of Inter-Race Adoption*
- B.A.** Albright College 1980
Reading, Pennsylvania
Major: Social Work

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Refugee and immigrant mental health, international social work, liberation theory and practice, whole health treatment and alternative care methods, community wellness, qualitative and mixed methods research

LICENSURE

Kentucky Board of Social Work, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, (LCSW), 2004 to present.
Arizona Board of Social Work, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, (LCSW), 1993-2017.

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Student Champion Award 2011/2012, 2021/2022
- Liberation Award 2018
“making a significant impact in the effort against human trafficking in Kentucky; for providing assistance to and advocating on behalf of those affected by human trafficking in Kentucky.”

PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Rhema, S., Verbillis-Kolp, S., Gray, A., Farmer, B., Hollifield, M., (2020), Mental Health Screening. In Annamalai, A., Editor (Ed.), *Refugee Health Care, 2nd Edition* (p 215-227) New York, Springer.

Rhema, S., (2015). A mental health therapist's guide to working with Refugees. In *Walking Together*, Lutheran Community Services Northwest.

Rhema, S., Gray, A., Verbillis-Kolp, S., Farmer, B., Hollifield, M., (2014). Mental Health Screening. In Annamalai, A., (Ed.), *Refugee Health Care-An Essential Medical Guide* (pp. 163-171). New York, NY, Springer Publications.

Miller, J., **Rhema, S.,** Faul, A., D'Ambrosio, J., Yankeelov, P., Amer R., Clark, R., (2012) Strength in Process: Using Concept Mapping to Inform Community Coalition Development, *Journal of Community Practice*, 20:4, 432-456, DOI: 10.1080/10705422.2012.736074

PEER REVIEWED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Rhema, S., Ballard-Kang, J., Nyerges, E., Sato, D., Harris, L., Adams, N., Archuleta, A., Sar, B., (2023). Perpetuating Stigma: Provider and refugee perceptions of mental health undermine continuity of care. North American Refugee Health Conference, (NARHC).

Ballard-Kang, J., **Rhema, S.,** Nyerges, E., Sato, D., Harris, L., Adams, N., Archuleta, A., Sar, B., (2023). Examining the Refugee Health Screener-15 (RHS-15): Providers' processes and perceptions. North American Refugee Health Conference, (NARHC).

Rhema, S., (2020) Non-Pharmacological Treatment of Pain in Survivors of Torture, War and Polytrauma, North American Refugee Health Conference, (NARHC).

Rhema, S., (2016). Trauma Informed Suicide Assessment for Refugees: An Evidence Based Model for maintaining relationship while creating a Risk Assessment and Plan, North American Refugee Health Conference, (NARHC).

Rhema, S., (2015). Mind Body Skills Group with Nepali Refugees, North American Refugee Health Conference, (NARHC).

Rhema, S., (2015). Integrating Mindfulness and Mind Body Skills into practice with refugee communities: Experience a theoretically grounded and replicable model, North American Refugee Health Conference, (NARHC).

Rhema, S., (2015). Trauma Informed Practices with Refugees in Resettlement, North American Refugee Health Conference, (NARHC).

Rhema, S., (2014). Factors Predicting Emotional Distress in Adult Refugees, North American Refugee Health Conference, (NARHC).

Bush, M., **Rhema, S.**, (2014). Sisters of Survival: Familial Body Mapping with Iraqi Child Trauma Survivors, North American Refugee Health Conference, (NARHC).

Faul, A.C., Gordon, B., D'Ambrosio, J.G., Ferrell, G., Tucker, M., Schapmire, T.J., Morgan, F., Thompson, J., **Rhema, S.**, Miller, J.D., Boamah, D.A., Brown, L., Boes, R.C., Zheng, Y., Lawson, T.R. (2013, July). Academia and the aging network. 38th Annual N4A Conference and Tradeshow, Louisville, KY.

Rhema, S., (2012). Universal assessment: Reframing critical thinking to enhance culturally competent practice skills, Council on Social Work Education, (CSWE).

Miller, J., **Rhema, S.**, Faul, A., D'Ambrosio, J., (2012). The Promise of Social Work in Community Organizing: A Pragmatic Approach, Council on Social Work Education, (CSWE).

Miller, J., **Rhema, S.**, Faul, A., D'Ambrosio, J., Yankeelov, P., (2012). The Use of Concept Mapping to Create a Coalition Logic Model and Evaluation Tool, Society for Social Work and Research, (SSWR).

Rhema, S., Segretto, R., (2011). Effective Techniques for Working with Immigrant, Refugee and Limited English Proficient Clients, Council on Social Work Education, (CSWE).

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

Best Practices for Supporting Refugee Mental Health, Refugee Health Conference, Kentucky Office for Refugees, February 2023

Motivational Interviewing Skills for Refugee Case Management, Kentucky Office for Refugees, January 2023

An Exploration of Refugee Mental Health Interventions, Refugee Mental Health Learning Community, Kent School of Social Work and Family Science, January 2023

Trauma Informed Practice for Maintaining Wellness, Trager Institute and Barren River Healthy Communities, June 2022

Whole Health Practices and Non-Pharmaceutical Pain Management, Tip It Forward, Louisville, KY May 2022

Introduction to Trauma Informed Care, Tip It Forward, Louisville, KY, April 2022

Trauma Informed Practices and the Adverse Childhood Experiences, Trager Institute, Louisville KY, March 2021

Training for Enhancement of Therapeutic and Treatment Protocols for Youth Survivors of Trafficking, Kentucky Department of Community Based Services, Kentucky Statewide Response to Child Trafficking Project, January 2021

Interdisciplinary and Holistic Approach to Healthcare with Underserved Populations, Optimal Aging Conference, Trager Institute, Louisville, KY, November 2019

Trauma Informed Practice and the Aging Adult, Mental Health and Aging Symposium, Kentucky Indiana Planning and Development Agency, Louisville, KY, April 2019

Hidden Pain, Mental Health Issues Faced by Survivors of Labor Trafficking, Labor Trafficking Conference, Louisville, KY, March 2018

Non-Pharmaceutical Pain Management, Palliative Care Staff Rounds, University of Louisville Physicians, Louisville, KY, October 2018

Pain Management in Survivors of Torture, Survivors of Torture Recovery Center, Louisville KY, September 2017.

Responding to the Needs of Refugee Students in the School System, Warren County Schools, Bowling Green, Kentucky, September 2017

Understanding and Responding to Refugee Mental Health, World Refugee Day Summit, Lexington KY, June 2015

Survivors of Torture: Fundamental to Mental Health Services for Survivors of Torture. Kent School of Social Work, University of Louisville, Sar, B., Archuleta, A., Rhema, S. 2014.

Survivors of torture: Identifying survivors of torture for referral. Survivors of Torture Recovery Center, Seven Counties Services, Kent School of Social Work, University of Louisville. Archuleta, A., Rhema, S. (2013).

Challenges in Refugee Mental Health, Cuban Haitian Entrant Program Conference, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Department of Health and Human Services, Miami, FL, August 2012.

Improving Response to Reported Domestic Violence in Immigrant and Refugee Communities- A Cross Cultural Perspective, Kentucky Domestic Violence Association Conference, Lexington Kentucky, November 2011.

New Eyes for a New Land, Plenary presentation for the Coalition on Intimate Violence in International Communities conference entitled, The Intersection of Culture and Trauma: A Summit to improve access for Immigrant and Refugee Survivors of Sexual and Domestic Violence, Louisville, KY, May 2011.

Finding the Human Connection in the Journey of Acculturation, Society for Intercultural Education Training and Research National Conference, SIETAR, Raleigh, NC, April 2009.

Supporting Refugee Students, National Refugee Conference, Chicago IL, September 2008.

Facing the Challenges of Acculturation, National Somali Bantu Conference, Louisville KY, August 2008.

Treating Refugee Trauma, Church World Service, Albuquerque NM, August, 2008.

CREATIVE PRODUCTS

Healing the Heart--Forgiveness, Path to Whole Health program video presentation, War Survivors Institute, 2020

PTSD-Life on a Tightrope, Video, 2019

Understanding Trauma and Culture-A Case Based Perspective on Congolese Family Dynamics-Video, 2019

Refugee Mental Health Toolkit for Kentucky, Online Resource, Kentucky Office for Refugees, 2018

The N-648—Completing the Waiver for Citizenship, Brochure-2017

Using an Interpreter-Guidelines for Effective Utilization-Brochure-2016

Managing a Healthy Adjustment—Understanding Mental Health in the US, Cultural Orientation Series, Video and Script, 2010-2017

Supporting Healthy Acculturation—An experiential training, National Somali Bantu Leadership Conference, 2008

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

BSW 470 Practicum I

Fall 2010, Fall 2011, Fall 2012, Fall 2013, Fall 2014, Fall 2015, Fall 2016, Fall 2017

BSW 471 Practicum II

Spring 2010, Spring 2011, Spring 2012, Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2015, Spring 2016, Spring 2017, Spring 2018

BSW 405 General Practice III

Fall 2010, Fall 2011, Fall 2012, Fall 2013, Fall 2014, Fall 2015, Fall 2019, Fall 2020

BSW 406 Generalist Practice IV

Spring 2011, Spring 2012, Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2015

SW Advanced Seminar Topic--Trauma Informed Practice

Summer 2012, Summer 2013, Summer 2014, Summer 2015, Summer 2016, Summer 2017

BSW 472 Practice Seminar and Lab I

Fall 2015, Fall 2016, Fall 2017, Fall 2018, Fall 2019, Fall 2020, Fall 2021, Fall 2023

BSW 473 Practice Seminar and Lab II

Spring 2016, Spring 2017, Spring 2018, Spring 2019, Spring 2020, Spring 2021, Spring 2022

SW 640 Advanced Social Work Practice II

Summer 2016, Summer 2017, Fall 2017, Summer 2018, Spring 2019, Fall 2020, Spring 2020

SW 641 Social Justice Policy

Summer 2019, Summer 2020

BSW 426 Introduction to Social Work Research

Fall 2020

SW 619 Human Behavior in the Social Environment II

Spring 2021

SW 677 Mezzo and Integrated Social Work

Spring 2021

DSW 703 Continuous Quality Improvement

Spring 2022, Spring 2023

DSW 705 Program Evaluation

Summer 2022, Summer 2023

DSW 706 Applied Social Service Leadership, Management and Practice

Fall 2022, Fall 2023

DSW 701 Ethics, Equity and Social Justice

Fall 2022, Fall 2023

DSW 712 Capstone Project 1

Fall 2023

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Refugee Mental Health Needs Assessment, Kentucky Office for Refugees, University of Louisville, Kent School of Social Work and Family Science. (2022)

Office of Refugee Resettlement, Department of Health and Human Services. Survivors of Torture Recovery Center (STRC), University of Louisville, Kent School of Social Work. (2017)

Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Agency, (KIPDA), for the Diabetes Prevention and Control Research Project, funded by the Centers for Disease Control, (CDC). (2012).

Robert Woods Johnson Foundation Grant, Seattle, Washington for the development and validation of the Refugee Health Screen Version 1, (2010).

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Anti-Oppression Committee member, Kent School of Social Work and Family Science.
Facilitated sub-committee addressing potential impact on curriculum related to BR-60 submitted to Kentucky legislature restricting education of diversity and systemic racism, 2021-2022.
Member of Environmental Justice subcommittee, 2022-2023.
Member of Refugee and Immigrant Student Support subcommittee, 2022-2023.

Restorative Justice Committee, Kent School of Social Work and Family Science.
Designated respondent to a student concern reported to the committee, 2022.
Participated in discussions with committee to improve support to students in the DSW program, 2022-2023.

Multidisciplinary Team Commission on Child Sexual Abuse, Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, November 2017 to present.

Tip It Forward, Lead Trainer for Whole Health and Equity in Healthcare, 2019-2021

War Survivor's Institute, Kentucky Representative, 2016 to present.

Society of Refugee Healthcare Providers, 2014 to present.

Louisville Refugee Mental Health Alliance, 2015 to present.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

University of Louisville, Kent School of Social Work and Family Science, (August 2021-present)
Professor of Professional Practice, Doctor of Social Work program
Course development and teaching, program development and implementation, student advising and support.

University of Louisville, Kent School of Social Work and Family Science, (August 2010- July 2021)
Associate Professor, Adjunct
Course development and teaching.

Threshold Services, PLLC, (2006 to present)
Owner, Clinical and Consulting Services
Trauma informed and culturally competent clinical intervention for individuals and families with developmental trauma and trauma spectrum disorders.
Program development and evaluation, staff training in the areas of trauma informed care, cultural competency, and best practices for working with survivors of human trafficking, torture and war.

War Survivors Institute (2017- current)
Representative to Kentucky supporting services to refugees and war veterans.

Department of Community Based Services (2019 – current)
Consultation to statewide network serving child survivors of human trafficking.

Bakhita Empowerment Initiative (2008-2021)
Provided human trafficking consultation and training statewide and clinical services to clients.

Tip It Forward (2017- 2021)
Provided clinical oversight to program development, training and implementation of services.

Survivor of Torture Recovery Center (2011-2018)
Clinical Director, Created a trauma informed and client centered model of clinical treatment and directed interdisciplinary oversight to the multidisciplinary team.

Kentucky Office for Refugees (2017-2018)
Clinician/Consultant, Completed a statewide assessment of refugee mental health service needs, Created a searchable online Refugee Mental Health Toolkit for Kentucky.

Kentucky Office for Refugees (2007-2012)
Clinician/Consultant, Provided refugee mental health treatment services and consultation to statewide programs.

Louisville Urban Corps (2004-2008)
Director, Created young adult service program, board development, program management.

Presbyterian Church USA, (1995-2004)
Director of International Service Programs, Administered program development and evaluation for international placement, training and personnel review of 500 employees, administered personnel policies and \$14,000,000 budget.

Community Hospice, (1992-1995)
Director, Administered program development and evaluation, clinical oversight, state licensure, employee screening, and training. Facilitated the multidisciplinary team case review.

LANGUAGES

Spanish- Conversational

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Lived in Kenya, East Africa; Peru, South America; Mexico and Central America over a period of ten years, working in community organizing and community development for non-governmental organizations. Provided oversight to funds management, and technical support for community-based development projects, including community organizing for women's economic and family enhancement development projects. Worked an additional 9 years with international non-

governmental organizations and agencies, evaluating programs and personnel requiring travel to over 25 countries throughout Europe, Central America, South America, the Middle East, Central Asia, and East Asia.