

Keith J. Watts

School of Social Work
Virginia Commonwealth University
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PROFESSIONAL OBJECTIVE

Conduct research that expands our understanding of the unique mental health and wellness needs of LGBTQ+ people, with the goal of informing programs and practices that improves mental health service delivery and deepens the cultural sensitivity and humility of practitioners.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

The impact of multiple minority identities on the development, mental health, and well-being of LGBTQ+ individuals; social work practice with LGBTQ individuals and their families; the integration of intersectionality into LGBTQ+ research; collaborative and community-based mental health and well being; social justice, advocacy and human rights in service delivery; participant-engaged research; practice evaluation.

EDUCATION**Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Social Work**

Richmond, Virginia

- Degree: **Doctor of Philosophy** (anticipated May 2021)
- Dissertation Title: *Exploring the Role of Community Belongingness in the Mental Health and Well-Being of **Black LGBTQ Individuals***
- Committee Member: Drs. M. Alex Wagaman (Chair), Jamie L. Cage, Maurice N. Gattis, & madison moore

Clark Atlanta University, Whitney M. Young Jr. School of Social Work

Atlanta, Georgia

- Degree: **Master of Social Work** – Clinical concentration (May 2017)
- Capstone Research Paper Title: ***African American Gay and Bisexual Men: An Intersection of Vulnerability***

Georgia State University, Department of Psychology

Atlanta, Georgia

- Degree: **Bachelor of Arts** (December 2014)

SCHOLARLY PRODUCTS***Refereed Publications***

Watts, K. J. & Bentley, K. J. (2020). Perceptions of gay Black men on the social construction of masculinity and its role in Mental Health. [Manuscript revised and resubmitted.]

Wagaman, M. A., Gattis, M. N., **Watts, K. J.**, Yabar, M. P., Blair, D., Haynes, T., & Williams, E. G. (2020). The role of schools in supporting students experiencing homelessness: Perceptions of school staff. [Manuscript under review.]

Wagaman, M. A., **Watts, K. J.**, Lamneck, V., D'Souza, S., McInroy, L. B., Eaton, A., & Craig, S. (2020). Managing stressors online and offline: LGBTQ+ youth in the Southern United States. *Children and Youth Services Review*.

Wagaman, M. A., Alessi, E., Goffnett, J., **Watts, K. J.**, Iacono, G., Thomas, D., . . . Craig, S. (2019). Interrupting hetero- and cisnormativity in social work programs: LGBTQ+ student strategies for increasing inclusion. *Journal of Social Work Education*.

Watts, K. J., Wagaman, M. A., Eaton, A., Leung, V., & Craig, S. (2021). Examining the role of peer and family belongingness in the mental health of Black LGBTQ youth. [Manuscript in preparation.]

Book Chapters

Dentato, M. P., Verdino, A., **Watts, K. J.**, & Argüello, T. M. (2021). Practice with the gay male community. In M. P. Dentato (Ed.), *Social work practice with the LGBTQ+ community: The intersection of history, health, mental health and policy factors* (2nd Ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. *In preparation*.

National and International Juried Presentations

Thrasher, S., Opara, I., **Watts, K. J.**, & Thrasher, B. (2021, January). I am my daughter's keeper: Paternal involvement and social bullying victimization. Poster presentation submitted to present at the Society for Social Work and Research 25th Annual Conference; San Francisco, CA, United States.

Watts, K. J. & Bentley, K. J. (2020, July). *The perceptions of gay Black men on the social construction of masculinity: Implications for mental health care*. Paper accepted to present at the Preaching to the Choir: International LGBTQ Psychology Pre-Conference 2nd Annual Convention. Canadian Psychological Association. Live-streamed virtually at (<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=602291490425628>).

Watts, K. J. & Buckley, T. (2020, January). *Examining the effects of social participation on life satisfaction for LGB college students*. Poster presented at the Society for Social Work and Research 24th Annual Conference; Washington, D.C., United States

Wagaman, M. A., **Watts, K. J.**, & McInroy, L. B. (2019, October). *Impact of online/offline support on stress for LGBTQIA+ youth in "the South."* Oral presentation at the Council on Social Work Education 65th Annual Program Meeting; Denver, Colorado.

Watts, K. J. (2019, May). *Masculinity and mental health: The intersectional challenges of gay Black men*. Paper presented at the 7th Annual LGBTQ Research Symposium at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Urbana-Champaign, IL.

Buckley, T. & **Watts, K. J.** (2019, January). *Examining the effects of traumatic or stressful events experienced in childhood and college on the mental health of college students*. Poster presented at the Society for Social Work and Research 23rd Annual Conference; San Francisco, CA.

Thomas, D., **Watts, K. J.**, & Goffnett, J. (2018, November). *LGBTQ+ social work student narratives: Identifying advocacy strategies to enhance LGBTQ+ inclusion*. Oral presentation at the Council on Social Work Education 64th Annual Program Meeting; Orlando, Florida.

Local Presentations

Watts, K. J. (2018, April). *The relationship between social participation and life satisfaction for LGB college students*. Invited presentation at the Student Research Symposium, School of Social Work at Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA.

Watts, K. J. (2018, April). *An application of the narrative policy framework to North Carolina's House Bill 2: The story of passage and repeal*. Invited presentation at the Social Welfare Policy Mini-Conference, School of Social Work at Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA.

Watts, K. J. (2017, December). *The systematic bias and discrimination experienced by African American gay and bisexual men: An intersectional perspective*. Invited presentation at the Student Poster Presentation: Theoretical Explorations, School of Social Work at Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA.

Invited Workshops and Panels

Watts, K. J. (2020, November). *Navigating campus as a man of color: Building and connecting with community*. Invited workshop for the Men of Color First Year Seminar, an undergraduate course with Professor Lamont D. Simmons. Salem State University, Salem, MA.

Watts, K. J. (2019, October). *"Queer Your Mind": LGBTQ+ Panel Discussion*. Panelist for 2nd Annual RVA Black Mental Health Week hosted by the Richmond Chapter of the National Association of Black Social Workers. Diversity Richmond, Richmond, VA.

Watts, K. J. (2019, October). *Utilizing an Intersectionality Lens in Social Work Practice*. Panelist in Social Work with Oppressed Groups, a BSW course with Professor Sarah K Price. Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA.

Watts, K. J. (2019, September). *Engaging with Diverse Populations*. Panelist in Policy, Community and Organizational Practice I, an MSW course with Professor David L. Conley. Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA.

Watts, K. J. (2019, March). *Campus community conversation: The silenced experiences of LGBT students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities*. Panelist for a university-wide student and faculty forum to discuss the experience of being an African LGBTQ+ student at an HBCU. Virginia Union University, Richmond, VA.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Virginia Commonwealth University School of Social Work, Richmond, Virginia:

BSW courses:

- Persons in Society III (co-taught with Professor M. Alex Wagaman, Fall 2019)
- Foundations of Social Work Research II (Spring 2020)

MSW courses:

- Foundations of Research in Social Work Practice (Online; Summer 2020)

Guest lectures

- Watts, K. J.** (2020, September). *It's simply complex: Intersectionality*. Understanding Privilege, Oppression, and Cultural Competence In Social Work, a BSW course with Professor Lamont D. Simmons. Salem State University, Salem, MA – online
- Watts, K. J.** (2019, October). *Intersectional identities in social work practice and research: Implications for power and oppression*. Social Work and Social Justice, an MSW course with Professor Nicole A. Corley. Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA.
- Watts, K. J.** (2019, April). *Queering social work: Understanding LGBTQ+ student experience and creating affirming classrooms*. Panelist for university-wide student and faculty forum to discuss the experience of LGBTQ+ social work students. Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA.
- Watts, K. J.** (2018, March). *Intersectionality explored: Origins and current applications for social work research and practice*. Social Work with Oppressed Groups, a BSW course with Professor Nicole A. Corley. Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA.
- Watts, K. J.** (2016, February). *Understanding chi-square: Test of independence vs. goodness of fit*. Human Behavior and the Social Environment II, an MSW course with Professor Sandra J. Foster. Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta, GA.

GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS**School of Social Work, Virginia Commonwealth University*****Robin M. McKinney Dissertation Honor Fund Scholarship***

- Received **\$500** scholarship competitively awarded to a Ph.D. student whose dissertation research seeks to expose social injustices or advance social justice, or extend our appreciation of, and response to, the diversity of human experience

Fahs-Beck Fund For Research And Experimentation***Doctoral Dissertation Grant Program***

- Applied for **\$5,000** grant that supports dissertation expenses of doctoral students in the United States and Canada whose studies have the potential for adding significantly to knowledge about problems in the functioning or well-being of children, adults, couples, families, or communities

RESEARCH PROJECTS AND EXPERIENCE***Investigator*****Virginia Commonwealth University School of Social Work****“Being a man: Exploring the meaning of masculinity for gay Black men.”*****Responsibilities:***

- Co-investigator with Dr. Kia J. Bentley
- Phenomenological study, collecting qualitative data within multiple focus groups, on the meaning and experience of **masculinity** for **gay Black men**, emphasizing their socialization into manhood and both the positive and negative impacts of masculinity on their **mental health and well-being**

Research Assistant

Virginia Commonwealth University School of Social Work

Doctoral Research Assistant to Dr. M. Alex Wagaman, August 2017 – present

Responsibilities:

- Transcription, analysis, co-authorship, and presentation of national and international qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods studies on and with **LGBTQ+ youth and LGBTQ+ social work students**
- Lead team efforts and coordination of research meetings, communications, and collaborations
- Draft manuscripts, grant and conference proposals, and conduct data entry, cleaning, storage, and analysis

Children, Families, and Animals Research Group (CFAR)

Virginia Commonwealth University School of Social Work

Doctoral Research Assistant May 2019 – December 2019

Responsibilities:

- Conducted qualitative interviews with **LGBTQ+ youth** living in the United States in a study examining whether and how pet ownership relates to **wellbeing** in LGBTQ+ young people (ages 12-21 years), and whether human-animal interaction (HAI) operates as a protective factor in this population

Photo Elicitation Project with the International Partnership for Queer Youth Resilience

Loyola University Chicago, School of Social Work

Doctoral Research Assistant March 2020 – Present

Responsibilities:

- Conduct qualitative, online interviews with **queer youth** living in the United States in a photo elicitation study investigating their online and offline experiences, and how being online affects their lives

Training

University of Michigan, Institute for Social Research

Program for Research on Black Americans (PRBA): Summer Graduate Student Mentoring Workshop – June 2018

- Competitively chosen to participate in this graduate student workshop and received training in numerous areas including: publishing in peer review journals, writing grant proposals to the NIH, the tenure process, ethical conduct of research, successful mentoring and collaborative relationships, recent developments in a variety of research areas, and how to navigate the academy

Fellowships and Partnerships

International Partnership for Queer Youth Resilience

International Student Training Network February 2019 – September 2020

- Member of an international research partnership between universities and community organizations across Canada, the US, the UK, and Mexico that is designed to train the next generation of scholars to conduct research with **gender and sexual minority youth (GSMY)**, particularly focused on strengthening resilience through utilization of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in a global context
- Received training in five core areas: (1) research with GSMY, (2) ICT research methodologies, (3) mixed-method data management and analyses, (4)

interdisciplinary research, and (4) knowledge mobilization; and gaining valuable research experience and garnering an international research network

- Worked directly in Regional Network to support research being conducted by the INQYR team and collaborates with colleagues in this network to co-present and publish research findings

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

Action Ministries, Inc., Atlanta, Georgia

August 2015 – May 2017

Position: Social Work Intern.

Responsibilities:

- Provided **predominately African American population of** housing residents with direct case management services.
- Facilitated residents' weekly workshops and Life Enrichment activities

Hillside, Inc., Atlanta, Georgia

February 2015 – August 2015

Position: Behavioral Specialist.

Responsibilities:

- Actively supervised **predominately African American population of** children, monitoring the physical health, hygiene, and safety of each child assigned to unit
- Collaborated with the multi-disciplinary team to provide an ongoing assessment of changes in child status and implementing the team's plan of care, including individual treatment plans and group therapy treatment for each child assigned to unit

CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Men's Sunday Social Hour

Diversity Richmond, Richmond, VA.

Facilitator, May 2019 – August 2020

Responsibilities:

- Lead and facilitated a biweekly a two-hour social event for LGBTQ+ men in the community that provides a space to network, make connections, and practice the art of communication with fellow community members in a safe space.

Governance and Operations Committee

Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA.

Doctoral Student Representative, August 2018 – May 2020

Responsibilities:

- Attend monthly meetings and represent the interests of students

Doctoral Program Committee

Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA.

Doctoral Student Representative, August 2018 – May 2020

Responsibilities:

- Attend monthly meetings and represent the interests of students

Treasurer, Doctoral Student Association

Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA.

August 2018 – May 2020 (2 terms)

Responsibilities:

- Served as a student representative to the Doctoral Program Committee, participating in monthly committee meetings and acting as a liaison between doctoral students and faculty
- Collaborated with President and Vice President to develop budget and plan allocation of funds
- Consulted, reviewed, and assisted doctoral students with funding materials, such as travel funding for conferences

Richmond [Re]Visited: Intersections of Race and Mental Health

Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA.

June 2018 – August 2018

Responsibilities:

- Attended weekly meetings with the planning team to develop this day-long annual community educational program focused on the marginalized experience of **African Americans** sponsored by the School of Social Work
- Led educational timeline presentation and activity for participants on the connections of historical racism and slavery to the present state of mental health in the **African American community** in Richmond and beyond
- Moderated a panel of substantive area community leaders & advocates
- Facilitated multiple workshops/activities and led a roundtable discussion with participants about the connection of racism to the **mental health of African Americans**

Black Lives Matter Student-Faculty-Alumni Collective

Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA.

January 2018 – present

Responsibilities:

- Facilitation of community forums, panels discussions, and film screenings that are focused on the impact of systems of racism and oppression in social work and the larger society have on the **Black community**
- Assist in coordination of on- and off-campus events
- Campus outreach and recruitment for collective

Clark Atlanta University Day at The Capitol

Georgia State Capitol Building, Atlanta, Georgia

February 2017

Responsibilities:

- Managed information table for Whitney M. Young Jr. School of Social Work
- Promoted enrollment opportunities to prospective students

Peace Corps Recruitment Volunteer

Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta, Georgia

February 2016 - July 2017

Responsibilities:

- Worked as assistant to the Diversity Recruiter and Outreach Specialist
- Managed Recruitment/Information Tables
- Data entry of Recruitment information
- Spread awareness of Peace Corps opportunities to **predominately African American population of students** on campus

Global Youth Food Project, Inc.

Atlanta, Georgia

December March 2015 – June 2017

Responsibilities:

- Mentored students in Atlanta Public Schools in **underserved communities** to expand their of how urban agriculture and food banking could help secure food and create more independence
- Volunteered at various community events related to food insecurity

Volunteer Youth Counselor

Westbury Recreational Center, Westbury, New York

November 2003 – May 2008

Responsibilities:

- Supervised, supported, and mentored **predominately African American population of youth** in the community
- Engaged youth, individually and in groups, by assisting with homework and other afterschool activities

AWARDS AND HONORS

International Partnership for Queer Youth Resilience (INQYR)

International Student Training Network Travel Award, October 2019

- Received travel award to attend the annual INQYR meeting and concurrent International Student Training Network (ISTN) symposium in Mexico City, Mexico

Virginia Commonwealth University

Black History in the Making Award, February 2019

- Competitively awarded to African American students who have been recognized for their achievements and for making important contributions to the African American community. Recipients of this award have stellar academic records, a history of community service, and professional or work experiences that place them at the forefront of their careers

School of Social Work Leadership and Service Award, April 2020

School of Social Work Leadership and Service Award, April 2019

- Competitively awarded to students who have demonstrated leadership and service to the school, the university, and the community

University of Michigan Institute for Social Research

Summer Graduate Student Mentoring Workshop Travel Award, June 2018

- Received competitive travel award to attend 3-day graduate student training workshop at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan

Clark Atlanta University Whitney M. Young Jr. School of Social Work

Deans Choice Award, May 2017

- Awarded by the Dean to students in the Whitney M. Young Jr. School of Social Work who have demonstrated academic excellence in research

Clark Atlanta University Whitney M. Young Jr. School of Social Work

Student Representative Travel Award, November 2016

- Competitively awarded to two outstanding students to represent Clark Atlanta University's Whitney M. Young Jr. School of Social Work at the 62nd Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education, Atlanta, GA.

PROFESSIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- National Association of Black Social Workers, 2018 – present
- Council on Social Work Education 2018 – present
- Society for Social Work and Research, 2017 – present
- Caucus of LGBT Faculty & Students in Social Work, 2017 – present
- The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, inducted 2017
- Phi Alpha National Social Work Honor Society, inducted 2017
- Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, 2015 – present
- Psi Chi International Honor Society in Psychology, inducted 2014
- National Technical Honor Society, inducted 2008
- International Partnership for Queer Youth Resilience 2019 – present

References

Available on request.