

May/June 2021

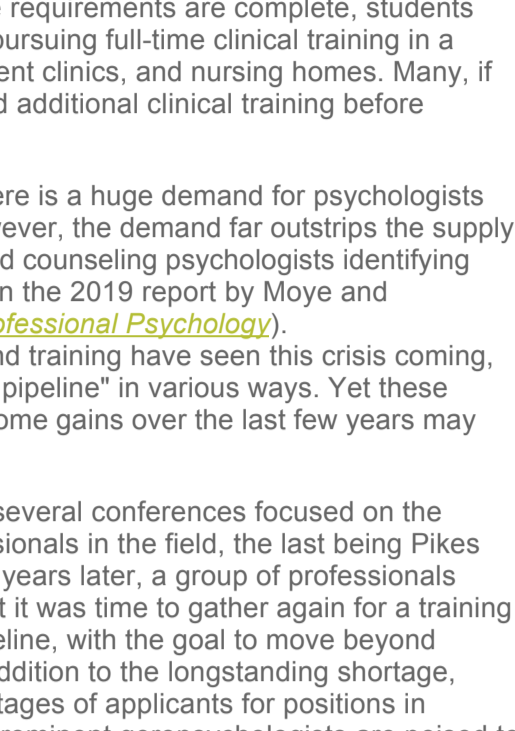
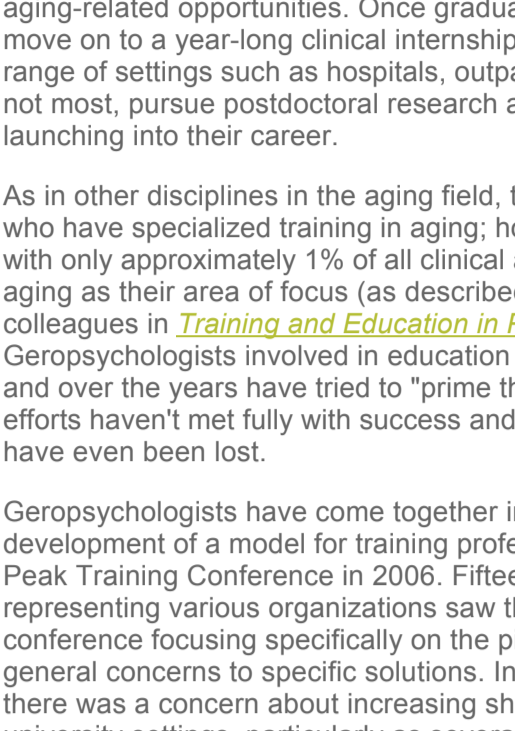
The *Advancing Age Inclusivity in Higher Education* Newsletter is a place where educators, administrators, scholars, and community members can share news about how colleges and universities are responding to aging populations and the rise of more age-diverse campuses. The value of more age-friendly programs, practices, and partnerships can be seen on many fronts. In this issue, we explore the rising shortage of clinicians, practitioners, educators, researchers, and others with expertise in geropsychology to meet the needs of aging populations and discuss how more age-friendly institutions can serve as effective and necessary professional pipelines.

Comments and suggestions about Newsletter content and special areas of focus are very much welcomed from our readers. Please send correspondence to ageinclusive@geron.org.

Feature Article

Building Bridges: An Age-Friendly Conference for the Geropsychology Pipeline

By **Brian Carpenter, PhD, Washington University in St. Louis** and **Jennifer Moye, PhD, VA New England Geriatric Research Education and Clinical Center**



As its name suggests, geropsychology is a specialty focused on aging that is typically practiced by those who pursue doctoral training in clinical and counseling psychology. The specialty includes psychologists who do research, teach, and/or provide clinical services to older adults and their care partners. The path to becoming a geropsychologist begins in graduate school, either in the few training programs with specialty tracks focused on aging or in more general programs with aging-related opportunities. Once graduate requirements are complete, students move on to a year-long clinical internship, pursuing full-time clinical training in a range of settings such as hospitals, outpatient clinics, and nursing homes. Many, if not most, pursue postdoctoral research and additional clinical training before launching into their career.

As in other disciplines in the aging field, there is a huge demand for psychologists who have specialized training in aging; however, the demand far outstrips the supply, with only approximately 1% of all clinical and counseling psychologists identifying aging as their area of focus (as described in the 2019 report by Moye and colleagues in [Training and Education in Professional Psychology](#)). Geropsychologists involved in education and training have seen this crisis coming, and over the years have tried to "prime the pipeline" in various ways. Yet these efforts haven't met fully with success and some gains over the last few years may have even been lost.

Geropsychologists have come together in several conferences focused on the development of a model for training professionals in the field, the last being Pikes Peak Training Conference in 2006. Fifteen years later, a group of professionals representing various organizations saw that it was time to gather again for a training conference focusing specifically on the pipeline, with the goal to move beyond general concerns to specific solutions. In addition to the longstanding shortage, there was a concern about increasing shortages of applicants for positions in university settings, particularly as several prominent geropsychologists are poised to retire. Further, individuals from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds are underrepresented within psychology—and even more so within geropsychology. The group envisioned that solutions would need to focus not only on traditional pathways into doctoral programs in aging (undergraduate to graduate pathways), but also on (1) training at the post-licensure level for those who are now seeing older adults, (2) supporting people considering academic careers, and (3) focusing efforts to expand racial and ethnic diversity. Taken together, it was decided that "Building Bridges" was an appropriate moniker for the conference recognizing the need to build bridges across these levels, settings, and issues.

Developed by a planning team of academics, clinicians, and trainees representing major professional organizations, the Building Bridges: Generating Resources for Geropsychology Education—A Virtual Geropsychology Training Conference was recently held over the course of 2 days and brought together more than 150 people with a powerhouse mixture of students, academics, researchers, and clinicians. Conversations were robust and highly generative. Following a series of presentations, discussions, and brainstorming activities, a number of lessons were learned that can inform efforts at colleges and universities for advancing age inclusivity in higher education and help to create more pathways to geropsychology.

It was learned that there are many educators, practitioners, and researchers in the field who profoundly care about this issue, and that they can be brought together for a rich, productive conversation without too much work in the virtual world—it doesn't take a huge apparatus and tons of money.

It was also learned that there are a variety of age-friendly ways they can work together across our campuses to raise awareness and support professional development. Suggestions include:

- Creating a speakers bureau of experts from our institutions who can speak with students and emerging professionals about geropsychology.
- Developing a collaborative initiative to enhance cultural diversity in the field.
- Advocating with our professional organizations to position geropsychology more prominently.
- Expanding practicum, internship, and related professional development opportunities in our undergraduate and graduate programs.
- Mounting efforts to build the post-licensure workforce.

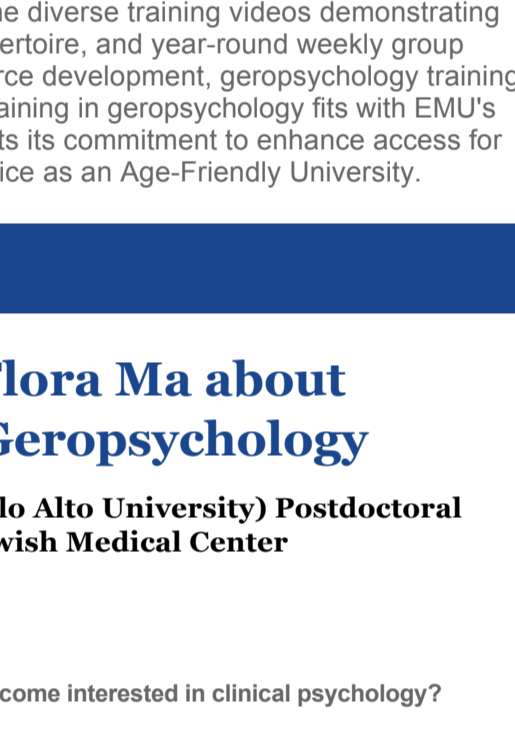
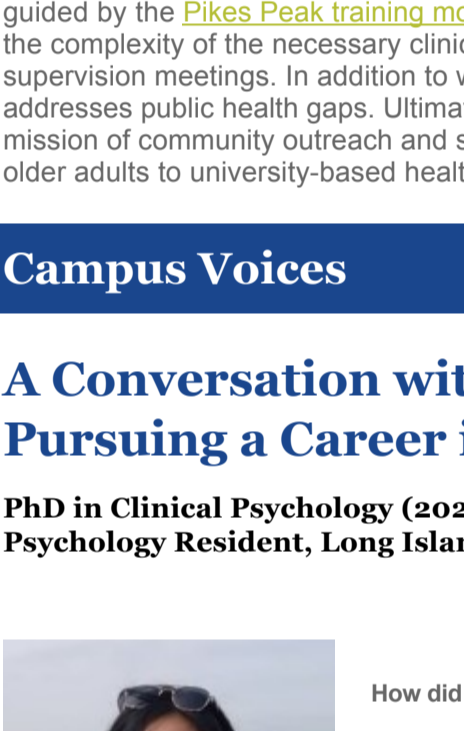
While this conference didn't solve the current crisis in geropsychology, it did give us a roadmap forward and demonstrated the enthusiasm within the field for making real progress—and a reminder that more age-friendly efforts at our colleges and universities can go a long way to opening the constricted pipeline in geropsychology.

Please visit the conference website for resources, presentation slides, conference recordings, and other ideas generated: <https://sites.wustl.edu/geropsychology/building-bridges-conference/>.

Campus Spotlights

Geropsychology Training at Eastern Michigan University: An Age-Friendly Collaborative Model

By **Claudia Drossel, PhD, Eastern Michigan University**



While geropsychology has been recognized since 2012 by the American Board of Geropsychology, training opportunities and student interest are scarce. When I received my training, I appreciated being part of a larger learning community with didactics, clinical research, and community outreach working with older adults across multiple settings. A vibrant learning community is critical to draw students to clinical practice and research. Furthermore, supervision models that use a tiered peer-mentoring model in which advanced students serve as role models and mentors for junior students, supervised by faculty members, offers opportunities in geropsychology education.

When I came to Eastern Michigan University (EMU), I set out to replicate this training experience and build a tiered peer-mentoring community to foster student interest and address the continuing [workforce shortage in geropsychology](#). In 2017, with a workforce development grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, I developed such a program by establishing community relationships and modeling health service delivery including measurement-based care for complex presentations in geropsychology to students in EMU's Community Behavioral Health Clinic. Students received individual supervision, shadowed clinic and home-based services, engaged in co-therapy, and finally took the lead as clinicians. As the first cohort of advanced trainees emerged, they brought concerns to weekly group supervision around social justice and ageism, sexuality, quality of life, caregiving, chronic diseases and fragmented health care systems, capacity, advance care planning, and end-of-life care. Difficult conversations and a strong focus on advocacy enhanced student involvement in the team.

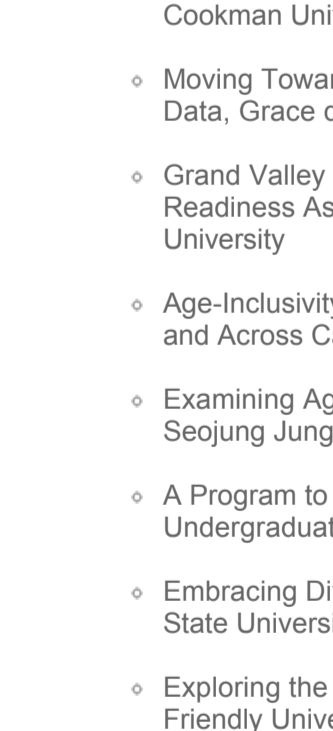
Consequently, from 2017 through 2019, 15 doctoral students received training (approximately 37% of EMU's doctoral trainees at the time). During that time, the team grew to include master's and undergraduate students. The latter facilitated behavioral health plans and provided companion services, with funding from the Ann Arbor Foundation's Anna Botsford Bach Fund for Seniors. Clients consented to the use of their videos for training purposes, which generated more than 1,000 video clips. Few students have had intergenerational opportunities, and these video clips arrange for learning about heterogeneous and rich experiences of living long lives from clients themselves.

Since 2019, my team has demonstrated sustainability even as the global pandemic prompted a shift to telehealth. We are currently completing a project to detect and manage high-conflict caregiving situations, funded by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund. The success of EMU's clinical geropsychology training program lies in the tiered peer-mentoring model with its careful scaffolding of competencies guided by the [Pikes Peak training model](#), the diverse training videos demonstrating the complexity of the necessary clinical repertoire, and year-round weekly group supervision meetings. In addition to workforce development, geropsychology training addresses public health gaps. Ultimately, training in geropsychology fits with EMU's mission of community outreach and supports its commitment to enhance access for older adults to university-based health service as an Age-Friendly University.

Campus Voices

A Conversation with Flora Ma about Pursuing a Career in Geropsychology

PhD in Clinical Psychology (2020, Palo Alto University) Postdoctoral Psychology Resident, Long Island Jewish Medical Center



How did you become interested in clinical psychology?

I moved back and forth between different environments and countries throughout my life. This life journey of being a third-culture individual is the reason I became interested in psychology. Through the field of psychology, I now value the opportunity to explore diverse individual and cultural differences on quantitative and qualitative dimensions, understand the multiple layers of my own identities, and develop the flexibility to adjust to ever-changing environments.

Additionally, my experiences of learning novel approaches, such as artificial intelligence, to understand humans during my undergrad and my research along with hands-on experience in developmental psychology have shown me that my skills and knowledge can make a significant difference in peoples' lives to alleviate suffering and to empower self-efficacy in overcoming adversity. Clinical psychology provides the practical impact of solving real-world problems in flexible, scientific, and evidence-based ways. Though at times it can be emotionally challenging, I am reminded of how meaningful it is to walk alongside individuals during their difficult times.

Why did you choose geropsychology as your focus?

My focus in geropsychology stems from a recognition that aging is what binds us together. Regardless of wealth, social status, ethnicity, or circumstance, we converge at the same point in life: aging. Aging comes with a complex set of emotions and transitions that keeps me intrigued in continual learning. As we walk that path together, we share universal wisdom. From that adult development class when I first heard about geropsychology to each year of clinical training and working with the geriatric population, I feel as if I'm seeing ahead in my own life. Older adults' individual storytelling of their unique rich life experiences and how they view meaning in life is quite remarkable.

What are your goals for geropsychology in the profession?

We need to spread awareness that this field is amazing! It's an intersection of neuropsychology, medical care, and many other fields of psychology. If you're a geropsychologist, you really need a combination of skills as geriatric patients tend to have physical and psychological comorbidities. And as a geropsychologist, you need to understand how the complexity of various biological, psychological, and social aspects affect them. More age-friendly institutions of higher education that call attention to the complexities of aging and the need for integrated research and training are critical to make this happen.

We also need more age-inclusive geriatric-specific training and job opportunities. We may have psychologists who are hired and trained for the general population, but mostly they will be seeing more older adults in their caseload with an increasing number and diversity of the geriatric population.

What are some diversity goals within geropsychology?

It's important for us to unite to make meaningful changes, and training with ourselves. Not only do we need to increase self-awareness, but also to attract and train more diverse workforces within geropsychology. Traditional formats of training, such as workshops, can allow dissemination of information throughout different fields and at various levels of education. Social media and movies can also serve as powerful avenues of psychoeducation as well as branding the identity of the aging population.

The differences in healthy aging among diverse populations are also often not recognized. We need to continue to adapt our methods to reach the public and make them care and think about why gerodiversity is so critical to them because each of us can relate to older adults in our lives. Finding ways to translate what aging means and highlighting the cultural intergenerational traditions can connect us to one another. Here again, institutions that are committed to advancing age inclusivity and its intersections are important to bring these efforts together.

News and Notes

- Congratulations to awardees of GSA seed grants made possible by AARP to support new initiatives to advance age inclusivity in higher education:
 - Golden Wildcats Alumni Mentorship Initiative, Felicia Wheaton, Bethune-Cookman University
 - Moving Toward an Age-Friendly University: Analyzing GSU 50+ Student Data, Grace da Rosa, Georgia State University
 - Grand Valley State University (Michigan) Age-Friendly University Readiness Assessment, Priscilla J. Kimboko, Grand Valley State University
 - Age-Inclusivity at Miami University: Addressing Ageism in the Classroom and Across Campus, Suzanne Kunkel, Miami University (Ohio)
 - Examining Age-Friendliness From the Perspectives of Older Students, Seojung Jung, State University of New York at Old Westbury
 - A Program to Enhance Palo Alto University's Age-Inclusivity Across Undergraduate and Graduate Programs, Flora Ma, Palo Alto University
 - Embracing Diversity Across the Lifespan, Kelly Munly, The Pennsylvania State University
 - Exploring the Perceptions of Emeritus Professors: Enhancing Age-Friendly University (AFU) Principles, Ramraj Gautam, University of Massachusetts Lowell
 - The University of Michigan—Flint Senior Programming: Intergenerational College Experience (SPICE) Program, Sheryl Groden, University of Michigan—Flint
- Previous GSA seed grant awardee **University of California, Berkeley Emeriti Academy** hosted "Emeriti as Mentors: Intergenerational Virtual Poster Session" that brought together members of the Academy, their student mentees, and other members of the campus retiree community to learn about recent intergenerational collaborations.
- The leadership team at AFU partner **Stockton University** and its [Stockton Center on Successful Aging](#) successfully lobbied to have age included in the revised Diversity and Inclusion statement of their University's Middle States Report as part of the institution's accreditation process.
- AFU partner **Eckerd College** launched a virtual version of [Mentor Up](#), an intergenerational program offering technology training sessions to assist older adults in the community. The initiative is a collaboration organized by Tamar Shoval (Assistant Professor of Human Development) with AARP and Westminster Communities of Florida.
- As part of its [age-friendly strategic planning](#), AFU partner **Northern Kentucky University (NKU)** established the NKU AFU Coalition of institutional units across its campus led by Sara Conwell (Adult Learner Programs and Services), Amy Danzo (Adult Learner Programs and Services), Allyson Graf (College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Psychological Science), Sukhee Kim (College of Health and Human Services, School of Social Work), and Katherina Nikzad-Terhune (College of Health and Human Services, School of Social Work).
- AFU partner **Miami University** (Ohio) and its Center for Teaching Excellence hosted the workshop "Recognizing and Reducing Age-Biased Teaching for Effective Classroom Learning," led by Kate de Medeiros (O'Toole Family Professor in Gerontology), which examined instructors' assumptions and expectations about student learning, explored how an overreliance on presumed generational differences can detract from classroom learning, and suggested ways to create a more age-inclusive learning environment.
- AFU partner **University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB)** brought together Bruce Jarrell (UMB President), Ronda Kramer (Secretary of the Maryland Department of Aging), and AFU affiliated faculty Nicole Brandt (Health System Engagement), Jay Magaziner (Research), and Diane Martin (Workforce Development) for a webinar, "[Working Collaboratively to Reframe Aging](#)," discussing ways UMB could support the strategic goals of the Maryland State Plan on Aging.

Resource Center

- You're invited! The GSA-AGHE-AFU Workgroup is holding a series of Campus Conversations for Advancing Age Inclusivity in Higher Education organized around the Toolkit created with support from AARP. The sessions are perfect for colleagues looking for new ideas, feedback on plans, and networking with other institutions doing similar work. For questions about the series, please contact ageinclusive@geron.org. Register for just 1 conversation or all 4 using these links:
 - May 13—Making the Case for Age Inclusivity: while these sessions were not recorded, contact ageinclusive@geron.org for the slide deck and resource list
 - May 27—Where to Start: [Click here](#)
 - June 24—Gaining Momentum: [Click here](#)
 - September 14—Assessing and Tracking Success: [Click here](#)
- Join AFU partner Quinipiac University, AARP Connecticut, and Masonicare for Virtual U: Pathways to Living in an Age-Inclusive Society on June 8, 2021, from 2–4 PM ET. This annual event offers a virtual journey around the globe exploring creating societies for everyone at any age and any stage. This year's event features members of the Age-Friendly University Global Network. Register [here](#).
- The 2021 theme for Older Americans Month (OAM) sponsored by the [Administration for Community Living](#) is Communities of Strength. Read President Biden's [Proclamation on OAM, 2021](#) and be sure to share your #OlderAmericansMonth plans and stories on social media.

The *Advancing Age Inclusivity in Higher Education* Newsletter is produced bi-monthly by The Gerontological Society of America and is supported by AARP.

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