



NEWSBYTE

MAY 2023

NOTE FROM DOSAA EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Dear DoSAA Members,

It has been an exciting and busy five months since I joined the DoSAA Executive Committee Board! I am happy to say have the chance to say hello, share what I am looking forward to this summer, and ask you the same!

I'm eager to get back to riding my bike along the river trails in Pittsburgh, where I live, and get out of the city for some hiking in the state parks. I'm looking forward to talking with and spending more time with old and new friends and family, mentoring a DoSAA Summer Fellow, and soak up some sun and spend time in water! I hope to see you all at a Chai and Chat event, the upcoming workshop by Drs. Ankita Nikalje and Snehal Kumar (a workshop on caste), or an Advanced Clinical Consultation Group among other exciting ongoing and upcoming events.

Please consider joining me and other DoSAA members coming together in community or reach out with questions, ideas, or interests. I also welcome hearing what you all are up to in the next couple of months, personally or professionally, and what it is you might want to see from DoSAA in the next six months and beyond, should you care to share!

You may reach me at dosaa.chairelect@aapaonline.org.

Take Care!



-Sonia Bajwa, DoSAA Chair Elect

Mental Health Month

The month of May has been recognized as Mental Health Month in the United States since 1949 in order to raise awareness and educate the public about mental health, reduce the stigma surrounding it, and celebrate recovery from mental illness.

This year's Mental Health Month theme is "Look Around, Look Within" and the campaign focuses on how mental health is impacted by surroundings, including housing, the home environment, neighborhoods and towns, and the outdoors and nature.

In a news statement from the U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius identifies Mental Health Month as a valuable opportunity to celebrate the strides this nation has made in promoting mental health and increasing the public's knowledge that effective services and support are available. DoSAA has identified notable South Asian mental health resources as well as fellow DoSAA members who have contributed to the field on mental health and South Asians.

WWW.SOUTHASIANTHERAPISTS.ORG

Directory of South Asian therapists around the world, searchable by zip code.

MY MANTRA

Offers free/low-cost emotional and career coaching, classes including in yoga, meditation, dance, and cooking, and peer-support group spaces including on topics of LGBTQ+ identity, South Asian dating, grief, and beauty standards.

MANNMUKTI

Dedicated to encouraging healthy, open dialogue of mental health issues in an effort to remove stigma, improve awareness and promote self-care, especially within the South Asian community. They offer a variety of resources and a community forum.

SOUTH ASIAN AMERICANS LEADING TOGETHER (SAALT)

Offers a factsheet on health-care issues faced by South Asian Americans.

SAKHI FOR SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN

Originally a NY-based organization dedicated to ending violence against women in South Asian communities and supporting women through advocacy and community services. Sakhi features a list of women's resources across states and municipalities.

THE SOUTH ASIAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION (SAPHA)

Dedicated to improving the health and well-being of South Asians and the communities in which they live within the United States.

7th Annual South Asian Mental Health Conference

"Above and Beyond: Navigating Inner and Outer Boundaries of What it Means to Be South Asian"

Established in 2016, the South Asian Mental Health Consortium held their 7th annual South Asian Mental Health Conference in person on Saturday April 29, 2023 with a virtual option on Sunday April 30. The theme for this year focused on topics of generational trauma, breaking cycles of trauma, creating boundaries, and how they define us and separate us to gain an understanding of "We The People; Past, Present & Future."

Session speakers included our very own DoSAA board members Dr. Nida Mirza and Sona Bajwa who presented DoSAA's Advanced Clinical Consultation Group for folks of South Asian descent who work with patients of South Asian descent. They shared their experiences and process in the development and evolution of a multicultural, virtual, national South Asian American consultation group, sharing strengths and challenges.

STUDENT SECTION

Seeking participants for your research? Have an event you would like to advertise to the DoSAA community? [Submit information](#) for an announcement in the DoSAA Newsbyte.

Should we do some informal hangouts to connect with fellow students across DoSAA? With classes, work, dissertation, practicum, internship, and demands of daily living, it is normal to feel overwhelmed. You are not alone. Let's decompress together.

How can DoSAA help psychology trainees? [Share your thoughts](#) on how we can support.

Community Spotlight

Introducing the first book of it's kind

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY FOR SOUTH ASIAN AMERICANS: IDENTITY, PSYCHOLOGY, AND CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS

Edited By Ulash Thakore-Dunlap, Devika Srivastava, Nita Tewari

This text explores what it means to be a South Asian American living in the US while seeking, navigating and receiving psychological, behavioral or counseling services. It delves into a range of issues including cultural identity, racism, colorism, immigration, gender, sexuality, parenting, and caring for older adults.

Chapter authors provide research literature, clinical and cultural considerations for interviewing and treatment planning, case examples, questions for reflection, suggested readings, and resources. The book also includes insights on the future of South Asian American mental health, social justice, advocacy, and public policy.

Integrating theory, research, and application, this book serves as a clinical guide for therapists, instructors, professors and supervisors in school/university counseling centers working with South Asian American clients, as well as for counseling students.

SELF-CARE FEATURE OF THE MONTH ~ KINDNESS TOWARDS THE SELF ~

We often tend to hold ourselves to higher standards than others because it might feel selfish or self-indulgent to be kind to ourselves, when in reality, it's important for our health. Try to make time to do something that adds joy to your life. Give yourself permission to feel your feelings and stop with the negative self-talk.

Be a friend to yourself. Be kind to yourself.

Member Spotlight

DOSAA STUDENT & EMERGING PROFESSIONALS AWARD RECIPIENTS

For our 13th year of the student award and the 2nd year of the emerging professional award, DoSAA is recognizing a student and an emerging professional for their exceptional contributions to the field of psychology, mental health, and the South Asian community.



Aakriti Prasai

3rd year PhD student in Counseling Psychology, NYU

Aakriti Prasai is a Nepali American woman and 3rd doctoral student at New York University pursuing her PhD in Counseling Psychology. She is committed to working with South Asians, particularly low-income and marginalized communities. She is involved with a youth group at *Adhikaar for Human Rights and Social Justice*, an organization that focuses on the needs of low-wage Nepali speakers in the New York City area. Through her dissertation she aims to understand the links between bicultural identity integration and mental health outcomes among working-class youth of color.

Aakriti has also spent over 6 years working with a community-based research project centered around ethnically-Nepali Bhutanese Americans, providing support in translation efforts, training, and advocating for community involvement in research. Her responsibilities also include leading manuscript preparation about elders' health care needs and youth suicide prevention. As one of few therapists of Nepali origin in the United States, she is committed to expanding access to conversations about mental health and the pressures of being a first-generation student among youth in her community.

Dr. Tara Kulkarni identifies as a cisgender, heterosexual Indian immigrant who moved to the US to pursue her PhD in School Psychology. She is currently an Assistant Professor of School Psychology at California State University, Monterey Bay. Dr. Kulkarni aims to highlight the important role that school psychologists play in providing critical mental health services to students in schools. Her research focuses primarily on improving student educational and mental health outcomes through a strengths-based developmental perspective and novel theoretical frameworks (e.g., QuantCrit - borrows from Critical Race Theory).



Tara Kulkarni, PhD
Assistant Professor of School Psychology at CSU, Monterey Bay

She played an integral role in publishing the first paper in the field that disaggregated the South Asian community from the larger Asian diaspora to inform policy makers and school administrations in decision-making that promotes equitable outcomes for AAPI children who are often neglected in educational policy. And in 2023, Dr. Kulkarni spoke at the National Association of School Psychologists Conference, presenting on the history of the Indian American community in the US as well as their unique mental health needs.

Dr. Kulkarni is passionate about training the next generation of school psychologists and promoting visibility of South Asian school psychologists to ensure culturally competent service delivery and positive outcomes. Recognized for her commitment to mentorship, in 2021 she was named as an AAPI School Psychologist Trainer of the Year. She also volunteers for Division 16's TEAM project, which connects students and faculty to support mentorship, networking, and relationship building.

UPCOMING EVENTS

A Time to be Mindful

In collaboration with AMENA Psy Student Committee and ABPsi

Join us as we take time to pause, follow a mindfulness practice, and discuss self-care! [Register here.](#)

Wednesday, May 24th
5 pm PT / 8 pm ET

DoSAA Chai & Chat Series

Join us for this ongoing series in which we casually discuss various issues with a glass of cha/chai (or other beverages/snacks of your choice).

[Register for one or both here.](#)

- *Defining Self-Care from a South Asian Lens*

Wednesday, June 7th
2 pm PT / 5 pm ET



- *Let's Talk about Releasing Guilt!*
- Thursday, August 17th
4 pm PT / 7 pm ET

Caste: An Introduction Workshop

With Dr. Snehal Kumar and Ankita Nikalje

Join us for an interactive and experiential workshop where we introduce casteism and why it's important to consider for South Asian clients. [Register here.](#)

Saturday, June 10th
12 pm PT / 3 pm ET

Virtual Self-Care Retreat

Save the date for DoSAA's first virtual self-care retreat this fall! Our members are invited to join DoSAA for a day in community focused upon yoga, meditation, art and music. More information to come.

Sunday, September 24th
10 am PT / 1 pm ET