

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Let me begin by saying how honored I am to have been selected by AVAPL members to serve as your president, following in the footsteps of Drs. Tracey Smith and Sam Wan.

My History and What I Bring to AVAPL.

I am an Air Force “brat,” born to a 3-stripe Sergeant. My father’s high intelligence and work ethic was identified by the Air Force, and they put him through Officers Candidate School. A formative experience for me was when my father was ordered to serve to coordinate communications for the Vietnam war, primarily from Thailand. My dad was incredibly motivated, and he received the Bronze Star for his service. However, it was not without consequences. His wife and kids were left to cope with Hurricane Camille, and changes to our family dynamic from which we never fully recovered. This story, pales compared to the experiences of many combat Veterans, but I also know the impacts of service and war on Servicemembers and their families.



Frequent moves across the south and living in Turkey and Hawaii also impacted me. I was exposed to different cultures, religions, and I was always the new military kid, “an outsider.” Sometimes I was a minority member of the community, albeit with white privilege. When I was 14, my dad was at the Air War College in Montgomery, AL, where I attended public school when Montgomery was first desegregated by court order. I saw both the fear and anger among administrators, teachers, parents, and students at first, but I also saw a very non-violent transformation as we all settled into this new way of living. Sadly, this subsequently led to white flight from public schools in places like Montgomery, but I felt that we proved that integration could work. When I attended Millsaps College in Jackson, MS, the college hosted a Freedom Summer Revisited event in association with Tugaloo College, a historically black college, not far from Jackson. In the late 1960’s faculty from these two institutions organized the housing and support of the Freedom Riders. The event brought in leaders like Ray Abernathy, Julian Bond, Al Bornstein, Richard King, among others. This culminated in a musical event featuring artists who participated in the freedom rides, like Dick Gregory, Pete Seger, and Mary Travers from Peter, Paul, and Mary. I was moved by the courage, passion, principles of non-violence and respect for fellow humans that were shown by the Freedom Riders, the leaders of the movement, and the black and white families who housed and fed these mostly young students during the freedom rides. I also saw that sustained group efforts could lead to real change, locally and nationally.

My first four years post-graduate school were spent as an Assistant Professor at BGSU. I then served seven years as the Director of Training at the Biloxi VA. I left VA for five years, during which most of my time was as a postdoctoral fellow in gastrointestinal health psychology, and then a faculty member in Gastroenterology at UNC-CH. I returned to Biloxi in 2003 and then I moved to the VA Central Office. First as the National Director for the MOVE! Program from 2004 to 2014, and then as Director of Allied Health Education at the VHA Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA). I currently serve as the Chief Psychologist at the Southeast Louisiana VA Health Care System in New Orleans since April 2019.

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

Where has AVAPL been as an organization:

In reviewing the history of AVAPL, mostly recorded by Rod Baker and Kathy McNamara, there have been many common themes and issues that AVAPL and its predecessor organization focused on including: Title 38 status for psychologists; concerns about reductions in staffing/degrading positions, hiring, and retention issues; training issues (stipends, formation of postdoctoral fellowships, and concerns about increasing or decreasing psychology trainee funding); concerns about being a more inclusive organization for VA psychologists; actively promoting our liaison with APA, Division 18, and the Division 18 VA Special Interest Group; and our advocacy/support of legislative work.

Values I hold:

The Value of Title 38 Status: Having overseen over 40 disciplines in allied health at OAA and episodically also overseeing the total portfolio including physicians, nurses, dentists, and others, I strongly believe that our absence of a full Title 38 status for our doctoral-level profession hinders our profession, takes more benefits away than Title 5 provides, would not take our bargaining rights away as has been portrayed by some unions, and is confusing and a difficult status to defend with our professional peers and local and national leaders in VA. Frankly, I am embarrassed that we cannot come together as a group, avoid fear mongering, and move forward into a full clinical professional employment for psychologists status in VA.

VA Psychologists as Clinical Educators: First, VA has helped define psychology in the US through our doctoral internship and residency training. The 2020-21 class marks the 75th internship class in VA, a major accomplishment that most of us have supported, even if not directly benefitting from the training. The APA doctoral accreditation process began with a request from VA for a list of schools of high caliber that continues to this day.

The importance of VA Psychology for the identity of Psychology as a Profession: VA is the largest employer of psychologists and have a unique role in VA health and mental health care. Few other health care systems include such a significant and important role in providing assessment, interventions, providing consultation to others, conducting relevant clinical research, and using our range of unique skills to foster the health and mental health of the Veterans we serve.

What Does Prescriptive Authority Look Like in Other Federal Agencies: Many of our younger colleagues have been aware that some psychologists now prescribe. I value our unique skills in working with patients and I would hate to see us become staff members who only do 15-minute medication check-ins once a quarter. Nonetheless, in contemporary clinical science, we are often not fully considering the biological contributions to mental illness. Furthermore, I am already seeing that Physician Assistants and Nurse Practitioners, with little preparation in mental health care, are now being more actively sought after for Mental Health positions. Finally, the Department of Defense, the US Public Health Service, and Indian Health Service now have psychologists prescribing. While I am not yet ready to go all in for the battle for prescriptive authority that we may encounter, I do think AVAPL should monitor how these other federal agencies are managing these practices and psychologists who provide this care. We should consider the following: what would this mean for our patients, our profession, and this agency? Are psychologists doing this work as safely as PAs and NPs in other federal agencies?

Diversity: I value diversity, recognizing that we serve a diverse population and our staff and trainees should more closely resemble that population. While having multi-cultural competence is good, there are some patients that will simply feel uncomfortable placing their trust in someone who does not resemble them. As an assistant professor, I participated in NIH and NSF minority high school student summer research experiences. At Biloxi, I established a minority apprenticeship in collaboration with the State of Mississippi, providing the brief clinical and research activities during the summer for undergraduates and master's level students from primarily minority-serving academic institutions to foster their applications for doctoral training. With MOVE!, we worked hard to measure our impacts on enrollment and treatment outcomes with our

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

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diverse population. MOVE! is the only VA clinical program that I am aware of that has all its materials available in Spanish. At OAA, I worked with others to measure the extent to which VA is affiliated with minority-serving clinical education programs. I was also part of the work to make VA medical residencies more open to HBCU-sponsored residencies and heard from medical education leaders about the serious pipeline shortages of black men, especially, applying to and being selected for medical school. Others have found that children from minority families often drop out of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses beginning as early as the third grade, and when older, these students often are behind their peers when they want to apply to health-related professional training. While all our programs attempt to recruit with respect to diversity in our training and staff positions, I strongly believe that pipeline problems will limit our selection pool. I believe that psychologists and their medical centers could sponsor such activities.

<<Please see President Jones' Call to Action on page 10>>

Kenneth R. Jones, Ph.D., President, AVAPL

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NOTE FROM HISTORY

As the global coronavirus pandemic continues, I again express my hope that each of you are healthy and safe. If you had the additional challenge of losing a family member, friend, co-worker, or one of your veteran patients, I hope you found the emotional and spiritual support you believed would be helpful.

Before I share what will be covered in this *Note from History* column, I want to confirm that other communications through the AVAPL and Division 18 VA Section listservs about the upcoming 75th anniversary in 2021 of Psychology in the VA have caught your attention. Training Directors received a special request from the AVAPL Historian for Training, Dr. Jodi Rubenstein, to submit brief narratives about your graduates who have notable achievements across many areas of psychology, whether within the VA, APA, other psychology organizations, research, or in public and private settings, so that these accomplishments can be highlighted throughout the anniversary year. If you have not submitted your contribution, please do so (jravaplhistory@gmail.com). The History Team began to focus on training since those completing training this year (2020) will be the 75th class of trainees. As they join our VA Psychology family we want to be sure they recognize the significance of their success!



Dr. Kathleen McNamara

As AVAPL's Principle Historian I am aware that the significant milestones for Psychology in the VA over these 75 years are many, as can be expected given how productive VA psychologists continue to be. However, the venues available across the anniversary year to share major accomplishments shaping our continued contributions to veterans and the VA generally will be limited. Consequently, throughout 2021 the AVAPL History Team intends to send frequent "tidbits" in the form of "Did you know....?" This column is a preview. To begin.....

- Looking at the 75th anniversary, *did you know* Congress authorized the President to establish the Veterans Administration in 1930 and in 1946 established the Department of Medicine and Surgery? Clinical Psychology became a section under the Neuropsychiatry Service, along with Psychiatry and Neurology.
- *Did you know* the doctoral degree became the qualification standard for VA clinical psychologists in 1946?
- While the administrative issues were key areas addressed in 1946, Psychology's contributions to research were also decisively recognized. *Did you know* that an Associate and an Assistant Chief Clinical Psychologist for Research in the Psychology Section within VA Central Office were appointed in 1946?
- Affiliations with medical schools were created in 1946 to train physicians to work in VA hospitals, but *did you know* that same year saw over 200 psychology students from 22 universities appointed to part-time VA employment *for training* in clinical psychology?
- In addition to structural changes in 1946 creating a Clinical Psychology section, recognizing the practice contribution to veterans, *did you know* that it was that year the first Chief Clinical Psychologist in VA Central Office was appointed?

I look forward to sharing more tidbits! Ψ

With aloha,

—Kathleen McNamara, Ph.D., Principal Historian, AVAPL

AVAPL SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIG)

Connecting on a Different Level

There are several ways to become more involved in AVAPL, including attending the annual conference, inquiring with other members in leadership roles about opportunities for involvement, or joining one or more of the VAPL Special Interest Groups (SIGs). In this issue, there are updates from the following SIGs: Women in VA Leadership, Psychologists of Color and Allies, LGBTQ and Allies, Early Career Psychologists, and a spotlight on TeleMental Health.

ADVOCACY — DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND EQUITY ACTIVITIES

OFFICE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

In the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic, we have also been grappling with the reality of racial injustice. George Floyd's very public killing on May 25, 2020, followed by multiple incidents showing graphic violence against Black Americans disseminated widely across social media has fueled protests and exacerbated race-based stress and trauma across our nation. The emotional impact on VHA staff and the Veterans we serve has been significant.

The Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention (OMHSP) has been actively working to address issues of diversity, inclusion and equity. Dr. David Carroll has established a Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee (DISC), co-chaired by Dr. Gayle Iwamasa. The OMHSP DISC established a Diversity and Inclusion Workforce Management Workgroup with broad and diverse representation across OMHSP to examine within office hiring practices. Many national mental health programs have had subject matter experts provide presentations and webinars on disparities in mental health care as well as strategies to address inequities and improve culturally responsive treatment for all Veterans. We also established a Diversity and Inclusion Committee Subject Matter Expert Workgroup who is collaborating with VA's Office of Resolution Management and Diversity and Inclusion (ORMDI) to establish a Diversity and Inclusion Committee Resource Library on ORMDI's soon to be launched revamped website. This library will contain resources for any VA (not just VHA) staff to establish or enhance their Diversity and Inclusion Committee efforts.



Dr. Nazanin H. Bahraini

Further, in June 2020, OMHSP established an interdisciplinary workgroup of subject matter experts from across VHA to discuss how the office can support mental health leadership and staff in their efforts to promote equitable and culturally responsive mental health care for all Veterans.

The workgroup is comprised of a racially and ethnically diverse team of professionals from psychology, psychiatry, social work, nursing and peer support.

One of the first tasks of the workgroup was to develop a resource hub for VHA clinicians and facility leaders to access practices, tools, and other sources of information that promote racial equity. As a result, the [OMHSP Discrimination, Bias and Equity Resources SharePoint](#) was launched in July 2020. Resources include not only topics related to the provision of care, but also highlight resources focused on aspects of the work environment that are critical to developing an inclusive organizational culture. Since its launch a little over two months ago, we are pleased to report that the OMHSP DBE SharePoint has had over 8,400 unique visitors! The site is designed to be dynamic and thus, content is updated regularly. Current efforts are underway to create a portal in which facilities can submit information about practices and resources that they have developed or successfully implemented to address systemic racism, discrimination, and the pursuit of equity in the VHA. These facility-based resources will also help facilities learn from one another and share innovative practices and resources to ensure VHA is welcoming to staff and Veterans. We invite you to visit the SharePoint to find resources and to share your innovative practices, tools and resources with each other!



Dr. Gayle Y. Iwamasa

—Gayle Y. Iwamasa, Ph.D. and Nazanin H. Bahraini, Ph.D.

AVAPL SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIG) UPDATES

SIG Update: Early Career Psychologist

Hello fellow ECPs! We hope this newsletter update finds you well and using all our great psychology tools as we continue to navigate a year of a pandemic, racial injustices, and many other systemic events. The SIG has attempted to resume business as usual and provide for our community. Since our last update, we have successfully put on two incredible webinars: “Breaking into Leadership as an ECP” and “What grad school didn’t teach us: Navigating patient suicide in the VA.” Each seminar had over 100 attendees. We want to give a BIG thank you to all our presenters: Josh Rinker, PsyD., Anne Day, PhD., Claire Collie, PhD., Ken Jones, PhD., Lisa Kearney, PhD., ABPP, and William Ron Hill, PsyD. For our upcoming fall webinar, the ECP SIG has partnered with the early career group, of the VA Section, within APA’s Division 18. More details will follow about this exciting event.

We also have had a major change within our SIG leadership structure. Co-chairs Paul Korte and Heather Kacos, along with their fellow officers, have shifted the leadership structure. Paul is now our Past-Chair and Heather is our current Chair. We are happy to announce Jennifer Presnall-Shvorin as our newly appointed Chair-Elect! We have some additional officer transitions upcoming in the very near future, so please be on the lookout for open positions if you would like to become more involved in our SIG.

As we continue to create resources and opportunities for the ECP community to engage with one another, we always welcome your input! Not only do we seek out requests, but also turn to all of you for your expertise that you may be willing to share with us.

To Join our ECP SIG listserv, email the chair: Heather.Kacos@va.gov

SIG Update: Women in Leadership

Members of AVAPL are invited to join our Special Interest Group (SIG) focusing on developing and supporting women psychologists in VA. The Women in Leadership (WiL) SIG emphasizes principles that will guide us towards the ultimate goal of gender equality in our shared workplace. We strive to be a community within the AVAPL community that creates and maintains a safe space for both women and men to grow together through a mutual understanding that gender inequality negatively impacts everyone. We are currently focused on reconnecting with SIG members since we were unable to meet during the 2020 VAPLC. The VAPLC has, for the past few years, served as our annual opportunity to take a “gender equality focused” pulse of the VA psychologist community while offering education and support. We are still mourning the loss of the 2020 VAPLC but take great inspiration however from recent offerings from our VA community, including the virtual VAPLC, and are looking forward to being able to announce our own webinars and other WiL SIG virtual offerings. If you are a member and are interested in helping with webinars or other membership activities, please contact us or post your thoughts and experiences to the list serv! If you are not a member and would like to join the conversation, please email Jeff Burk at webmaster1@avapl.org. Women in VA Leadership SIG Co-Chairs are Mary Beth Shea, PhD and Nicole Shiber, PsyD.

VAPL CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE UPDATE



VA PSYCHOLOGY LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Greetings from the VA Psychology Leadership Conference Planning Committee. Thank you to everyone who was able to attend our virtual event, *Affirming the Community: Addressing Racial Injustice in VA Psychology*, that was held on July 30th. During this time, we had the opportunity to connect and affirm our community of VA Psychology Leaders, present the 2020 Russell B. Lemle conference award, and begin a much-needed conversation about racial injustice in VA Psychology. As part of the virtual event, we also provided specific inclusive actions that leaders can take against racism, such as recruiting, promoting, and honoring people of color. Links and resources were also shared, a few of which are included below.

We were pleased to announce the recipient of the 2020 Russel B. Lemle Conference award, which was Dr. Rodney R. Baker. There were multiple, extremely qualified nominations, with a very competitive pool of psychology leaders. Congratulations to Dr. Baker and thank you for outstanding contributions and demonstrated excellence within the community of VA

Psychology.

The planning committee continues to review the feedback that we received after the virtual event and will be using this to guide our planning process for 2021 events. As you are all aware, there continues to be many factors related to in-person events outside of our control and much unknown. The planning committee continues to review all options and is looking forward to continued conversations and connecting with all of you over the upcoming months.

In the meantime, we would like to encourage everyone to find ways to stay connected with colleagues and to reach out to each other to support, encourage, and acknowledge outstanding work.

VA Developed Resources Included in Virtual Event:

- [OMHSP Discrimination, Bias and Equity Resources SharePoint](#)
- [VA Psychology Training Council Multicultural Diversity Training Resources](#)

—Kathy Dollar, Ph.D.

SPECIAL FEATURE — SOPHIE FRIEDL, MPH

Sophie Friedl, MPH, is the new Director of Congressional and Federal Affairs, Military and Veterans Health Policy at the American Psychological Association. Prior to joining APA, Sophie was a Professional Staff Member on the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs where she worked on Veteran mental health and suicide prevention, women Veterans' issues, homelessness, VA research, and several other portfolio areas. Sophie worked on several pieces of important Veterans' legislation, including S. 785, the John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act. When it was introduced, this bill included moving psychologists to full Title 38 hiring authority, which is an area she is excited to continue working on in her new role at APA. Sophie received a Master's in International Public Health from University College Dublin in Ireland, during which time she was able to live and work in both Malaysia and Nepal. She received a B.A. in Sociology with a concentration in Inequality and Social Justice from the University of Montana, Missoula.



SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG) SPOTLIGHT

Telemental Health

The AVAPL Telemental Health Special Interest Group (TMH SIG) is a community of VA TMH psychologists who continue to meet the growing needs of TMH providers during the COVID19 pandemic. With more providers offering TH services than ever before, the TMH SIG offers networking opportunities, consultation and mentoring to VA providers in their use of technology to facilitate mental health treatment. In addition, TMH SIG offers subject matter expertise to the AVAPL Executive Committee and VACO. TMH SIG links members to resources relevant to TMH, including guidelines, best practices, and policy.

Recently, the TMH SIG developed several workgroups. The EBP for VVC Workgroup is collaborating with the Psychologists of Color and Allies SIG to expand resources on diversity and anti-racism for telehealth. The Telesupervision workgroup addresses the intersection of psychology training and TMH. The Mentoring workgroup is partnering with the AVAPL Mentorship program, pairing psychologists who want to learn TMH together. Additionally, we are bridging our efforts with the LGBTQ SIG, starting with an upcoming presentation that will

demonstrate intersection between TMH and LGBTQ care for our Veterans.

TMH SIG welcomes new members at all levels of their use of telehealth. We meet via VANTS/TEAMS the first Thursday of each month at 3pm ET/12pm PT. In addition, The TMH SIG offers opportunities for psychologists to present to a low-key, supportive, national audience on TH-related topics. If you are interested in becoming a member and/or presenting on one of our monthly calls, please email our co-chairs at ann.smith2@va.gov or ruth.varkovitzky@va.gov. Please join us!

Upcoming TMH SIG presentations include:

- **November:** TelePRIDE: Addressing LGBT Veteran healthcare disparities during a global pandemic by Dr. Monica Lynn Thompson and Dr. Tiffany Lang-Altman
- **December:** Treating Trauma-Related Nightmares Via Telehealth by Dr. Jessica Carlile

—*Ruth Varkovitzky, Ph.D. and Ann Smith, Ph.D.*

SIG Update: LGBTQ and Allies

At The LGBTQ and Allies SIG is up and running and looking for more members! The SIG is working on developing a listserv and other member benefits and would love to hear from others about ways the SIG can assist the AVAPL community. Below are the meeting dates and times through June 2021. For more information, or to be added to the SIG meeting calendar invite, please contact SIG Chair, Kaela Joseph at kaela.joseph@va.gov.

October 22 / December 17 / February 25 / April 22 / June 24
(all times 1:30 pm PST, 4:30pm EST)

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT / RECOGNITION

DR. GAYLE Y. IWAMASA

Recently, at the Secretary's Diversity and Inclusion Awards Program, Dr. Gayle Y. Iwamasa was recognized in the nonsupervisory employee category for her exceptional leadership and ongoing efforts to promote and develop diversity and inclusion. Dr. Iwamasa was recognized as her work and passion embodies the goals of VA's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan—growing a diverse, high-performing workforce, cultivating an inclusive work environment that leverages diversity and empowers contributors, and clearly demonstrates excellent public service. Dr. Iwamasa has been an integral member of VHA's Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention since its inception, and her VHA and non-VHA work has exemplified all three criteria for the Secretary's Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Award. We are fortunate to have Dr. Iwamasa's expertise, guidance and leadership skills within the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention. Her commitment to diversity and inclusion is long-standing and began long before she came to VHA. Using her extensive foundation of expertise and leadership experience, she co-founded the Psychologists of Color (PoC) and Allies Special Interest Group (SIG) within the Association of VA Psychology Leaders (AVAPL), establishing a leadership structure that provides ethnic minority psychologists with leadership experiences. She established a listserv and monthly calls for SIG members which provides support and resources to psychologists and students across the enterprise. Dr. Iwamasa actively collaborates with the LGBTQ and Women in Leadership SIGs within AVAPL, providing webinars and national presentations regarding VHA resources such as the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and Office of Health Equity. In addition to her extensive VHA-focused efforts, she engages in leadership activities outside VHA, sharing her expertise and skills with stakeholders through her scholarship and professional presentations. At this time of crisis and reflection across our nation and within the VA healthcare system, we are truly blessed to have Dr. Gayle Iwamasa with us, walking with us, leading us through the challenges with her insight, knowledge, and compassion. We congratulate Dr. Iwamasa on her well-earned recognition, and we stand and cheer on her commitment to diversity and inclusion. View the Eighth Annual Secretary ADR and D&I Awards Winners video at <https://youtu.be/cDBvjg4ZilM> (Dr. Iwamasa's award starts at 6:55).

—Clifford A. Smith, Ph.D., ABPP-Cn

Hot off the Press!

Gayle Y. Iwamasa, PhD, HSPP, is the new National Inpatient Mental Health Program Director in the VA Central Office (VACO), Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention (OMHSP), Department of Veterans Affairs (effective 10/25/20). Congratulations Gayle!

AVAPL PRESIDENTIAL CALL TO ACTION

As a VA psychologist, I have been a part of or led many different activities, local or national, but almost any work of value and impact came through a team effort. Thus, I am proposing that we put together some task forces. Advocacy Team: First, AVAPL is much more engaged with our advisory/advocacy work with Congress presently. I think having a small team that would be engaged with monitoring and advising the EC on these issues could be very helpful. I believe this is a team that could be a standing group. The remaining teams could be time-limited: 1) Enhancing the Diversity Pipeline in VHA: a team that would propose a plan for AVAPL members to participate in activities to enhance our future pipeline of diverse students from our communities. 2) Title 38: Objectively elucidating the realistic benefits and potential costs for a full Title 38 status and what is the satisfaction by other professions. 3) Prescribing Psychologists in other Federal Agencies: Review the current practices in HHS-Public Health Service, Indian Health Service, and the Defense Health Administration and lessons for AVAPL. Explore whether this work is safely done, beneficial to patients and systems, and compares to the work of other disciplines. 4) Celebrating the 75th anniversary of Doctoral Internship Psychology Training in VA: AVAPL has been an ongoing supporter of training and expanding training opportunities. Working with the VAPTC, APA, and others this group would guide AVAPL in celebrating the huge impact of psychology training in VA for the nation, for Veterans, and for our profession.

I hope you share some of these interests. Please let me know if you are interested in serving in any of these teams (President1@avapl.org).

— *Kenneth R. Jones, Ph.D., President, AVAPL*

SIG Update: Psychologists of Color and Allies

Between dealing with healthcare disparities related to the pandemic and coping with the murders of people of color, the Psychologists of Color and Allies Special Interest Group has had a busy and challenging past few months. As always, though, our membership has tackled these issues with a level of grace, fortitude, and compassion. Some of our work has included:

- Gathering and disseminating resources on our webpage
- Conducting many seminars on a range of topics (e.g., Racism, Systemic Oppression, and Health Disparities; Working with Race-Based Stress and Trauma; Establishing & Maintaining a Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee; etc.)
- Serving as panelists at the AVAPL Roundtable and the VAPL Conference Virtual Event
- Formulating a plan to partner with the National Center for Organizational Development to provide Diversity & Inclusion consultation to leaders
- Collaborating with the Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion to work on and share diversity initiatives
- Collaborating with other AVAPL Special Interest Groups (e.g., Telehealth, Women In Leadership, LGBT)
- Mentoring Psychologists of Color on skills to prepare them to advance in their careers
- Recognizing and celebrating the recent awards and accomplishments of our membership

In addition to this work, our group continues to share information on its listserv and to have monthly calls.

So, as noted, it has been a very challenging, yet rewarding few months! Please visit our page to see more details (<https://avapl.org/poca.html>).

Editor-in-Chief Opportunity

The AVAPL Newsletter Team is now accepting self-nominations for the Editor-in-Chief role.

Candidates will shadow the current Newsletter Editors for the Spring 2021 edition and then assume responsibility beginning in August in preparation for the Fall 2021 edition (typically October).

Previous publication experience is welcome but not required.

If you are interested, please contact Dr. Kelly Gerhardstein (Kelly.Gerhardstein@va.gov) and Dr. Wendy Batdorf (Wendy.Batdorf@va.gov), for more information and next steps. Thank you!

Interested in submitting an article to the AVAPL Newsletter?

Do you have a suggestion for a topic to be included in an upcoming edition?

Please contact wendy.batdorf@va.gov
or kelly.gerhardstein@va.gov

