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Through an Inequitable Collective Trauma Lens: Elevating narratives on Mental Health and COVID-19

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Through an Inequitable Collective Trauma Lens: Elevating narratives on Mental Health and COVID-19

Presentation at MI-ALA, May 21, 2019 by Sheila García Mazari,
Samantha Minnis, Juliana Espinosa, and Anne Heidemann

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Introduction:

Hello and welcome to this panel. Our goal today is to elevate the experiences of two librarians who lived and worked through the COVID-19 pandemic through the sharing of personal narratives. We recognize the importance of elevating individual narratives as we reckon with a world wide experience that had unique and inequitable impacts. We want to recognize the limits in terms of identities represented on this panel and note that we are missing many important identities in this conversation that should be centered, specifically black and indigineous identities. We also want to note that we had a third panelist, Anne Heidemann, who put time and work into creating this panel, but was ultimately unable to join us today. We hope this conversation serves as a model and inspiration for other conversations and therefore will be sharing our questions, resources, and other material.

In order to achieve some measure of safety in this conversation, we will not be recording this session, and we would ask that anyone in a position of institutional power over any of the panelists please excuse themselves from this session.

Accountability Agreement:

The organizers acknowledge that no space can be truly safe and that in entering this space, we agree to work toward reducing harm and centering the voices of individuals that are the most affected by injustices. As such, we agree that all viewpoints will be valued insofar that they do not conflict with a person's right to exist in any of their identities.

To this end, we offer the following ground rules in engaging with each other in this space:

Make No Assumptions. Remember that every person is a complex individual with multiple overlapping identities that may not fit your personal ideas, understandings or social constructs.

Honor Everyone's Boundaries. Take care of yourself; listen to your physical, mental, and emotional needs and limits; express and honor your boundaries and honor the personal spaces of all.

Embrace Your Mistakes, Then, Move Forward. We are all learning and unlearning. When we make mistakes, it's our responsibility to admit, correct, and repair the harm. Do not center yourself or your mistake(s) and listen to the needs of those who were harmed. This space embraces mistakes and does not use them as a tool against an individual but rather as a learning opportunity to move forward.

Controversy with Civility. Conflict is a natural outcome in a diverse group. We value seeking understanding over preservation of our own comfort by not opting-out of the conflict by "agreeing to disagree." Rather, we enter conversation expecting different views to be present and commit to addressing gaps in understanding and working cooperatively toward solutions.

Questions for panel:

We encourage you to engage with these questions here:

<https://gvsu.padlet.org/minniss1/quaaqt4t6oc2khrz>

1. How are you? [How do you engage with this question, while remaining authentic and maintaining the boundaries you need?].
Please answer this question as our panelists are answering it here:
<https://www.menti.com/bnk5mbrmp3>; (or go to www.menti.com and use code: 4203 9995)
2. The pandemic has highlighted how collective traumas can still be inequitable and further, that they can be compounded for certain individuals. What are the inequities that you've seen in your communities? How may this relate to the conversation around invisible labor in librarianship?
3. How do you engage in conversations around self-care and mental health, particularly as related to the pandemic in your workplaces? And if you don't, what can be done to facilitate this?
4. Libraries have long grappled with a state of crisis. This crisis narrative continues to shape how we approach our collections and services, whereby we seek to ensure that we respond in the present based on what we believe the near future will bring. How has

your library been impacted by COVID-19 and how has this interacted with the pre-existing crisis narrative within librarianship?

5. What is one resource that has helped you in your own self-reflection?
6. Has your experience with this pandemic changed the way you work as a librarian?
7. Based on experiences during the pandemic, what are your thoughts on how we can move toward organizations that are more human-centered, recognizing that trauma does not have to be experienced, in order to be validated?

Resources:

Online Resources

- [What's Your New Normal? Series from the Asian Pacific American Librarians Association](#)
- [Survey: Pandemic Hurt Students, but They Aren't Seeking Help](#)
- [Reserve and Renew Mental Health Zine](#)
- [APALA Statement Against Anti-Asian Violence](#)
- [Harvard Library - Black America and COVID-19: Documenting the Impact of COVID-19 on Black America](#)
- [Race, Health, and COVID-19: The Views and Experiences of Black Americans. Key Findings from the KFF/Undeclared Survey on Race and Health \(October 2020\)](#)
- [Navajo Strong - COVID-19 Survivors](#)
- [#DinéDoctorHistorySyllabus: Diné Histories of COVID-19, Disease, and Healing](#)
- [Building Life-long Opportunities for Strength, Self-Care, Outlook, Morale, and Mindfulness Symposium](#)
- [APALA Statement in Solidarity with India, China and all AAPI Communities](#)
- [2021 MLGSCA Virtual Spring Symposium - Uplifting Community Voices](#)

Publications

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