

Section on Mental Health

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From the Chair's Desk: Alisa K. Lincoln, Northeastern University



Greetings from Boston! I am excited to be writing these remarks for the first of this year's Section on the Sociology of Mental Health Newsletter. First, I want to thank Scott Schieman for his leadership and his work with the Section Council including: Kristi Williams, Christy Erving, Melissa Milkie, Patricia

Drentea, Brea Perry, Christina Falci, and William McConnell, for all of their efforts to create great section activities and sessions at the 2018 meetings in Philadelphia. There were many great presentations and discussions of the important challenges in our fields. I am equally excited to be working with our new Council members: Chair-Elect, Kristen Marcussen; Nominations Committee Chair, Lijun Song; Awards Committee Chair, Teresa Scheid; and Student Member, Tanya Rouleau Whitworth. And as always, a special thank you to Richard Adams and Katie Gary, our graduate student editor, for all of the hard work on this newsletter.

This edition of the Section Newsletter includes a brief summary of Scott Schieman's remarks as the Leonard Pearlin Award Winner so please do take the time to read them and again – Congratulations to Scott and all of the 2018 Section on Mental Health Award winners. This year, we have the new Graduate Student Paper Award so please be sure to nominate your colleagues and students for these honors and note the deadlines below.

We have many exciting things going on within the section in the coming year.

1. 2019 Annual Meeting - Call for Papers

1. Mental Health at the Intersection: Mental Health and the Criminal Justice and Education Systems

Organizer: Teresa Scheid, UNC-Charlotte; tlscheid@unc.edu

2. Social Justice Approaches to Mental Health: Addressing Marginalization, Exclusion and Racism

Organizer: Alisa Lincoln, Northeastern University, al.lincoln@neu.edu

3. Open Topics on Sociology of Mental Health

Organizer: Christy Erving, Vanderbilt University, Christy.l.erving@vanderbilt.edu

From the Chair's Desk (continued)

We will also continue our shared efforts with the Medical Sociology Section and will again have a joint reception. In addition, please help us spread the word that several tables of the Medical Sociology Roundtables will be reserved for Mental Health topics. Thanks to the hard working Brea Perry who has leadership roles in both sections this year!

2. Call for nominees: Section Awards

We have added a new Graduate Student Paper Award to our section awards. This year we seek nominations for the following award

(<https://www.kent.edu/sociology/awards>)

Award for Best Publication in Mental Health:

This award is given for the best published article, book or chapter in the area of the sociology of mental health. The publication date needs to have been within the last two years. Letters of nominations for this award may be sent to the Awards Committee Chair for the Mental Health Section, Teresa Scheid at tlscheid@uncc.edu, by **April 1st**.

Award for Best Dissertation in Mental Health:

This award is given for the best doctoral dissertation in the area of the sociology of mental health. The dissertation should have been completed within the previous two academic years. Please send a letter of nomination and a paper based on the dissertation (or dissertation synopsis) to the Awards Committee Chair for the Mental Health Section, Teresa Scheid at tlscheid@uncc.edu, by **April 1st**.

Annual Graduate Student Paper Award:

This distinction will be given to a current graduate student for the best published or unpublished article, book or chapter in the area of mental health. The paper should have been completed within the academic years of 2016-2018 by a current graduate student. Papers authored by more than one

student are acceptable but papers coauthored with faculty are not eligible. Section Members are encouraged to submit nominations. Self-nominations from graduate student members of the section are also welcome. Please send a letter of nomination and a paper by **April 1st** to Teresa Scheid at tlscheid@uncc.edu.

4. Membership – I will continue to work with Christy Erving to further the strong efforts that she and Scott Scheiman made to increase our section membership. Under Scott's leadership we increased membership by almost 100 and are currently at close to 400 members, primarily through our gift memberships to students. We will continue our efforts this year, and develop plans to reach out to other ASA sections with a shared interest in mental health and well-being, as well as, the mental health sections of other professional organizations, such as American Public Health Association (APHA). If you have a leadership position in an organization or group that might have members interested in joining our section, please let me know and I can work with you on outreach. If we can get above 400 members we will be able to have an additional section at our 2020 meetings.

5. Section Mentoring Program - This year we are bringing back formal mentoring to our section. With our increase in student members we have been reminded of the importance of a formal mentoring structure within the section in addition to the many informal mentoring relationships that are ongoing. I know many of us, myself included, appreciate the generosity of many scholars from our section who have taken the time to share their experiences, wisdom and expertise and served as mentors over the years. With this in mind we are asking student and post-docs who would like to be paired with a mentor to email Tanya Whitworth, Section

student representative (twhitworth@soc.umass.edu). Please provide a brief description of your research interests and any specific areas they would like mentorship in along with a CV if you have one. In addition, if you are a member willing to serve as a mentor, please send Tanya an email as well. I will be working closely with our student representative, Tanya Whitworth, to create appropriate matches. We are starting the program with three simple activities and hope that in future years we can expand these as needed as well as institute a mechanism for matching junior faculty with senior faculty mentors.

Mentorship Program Activities:

1. Schedule at least one phone call or video- conference call during the Spring of 2019.
2. Mentors and Mentees will schedule a one-hour meeting during the 2019 ASA Annual Meeting
3. Mentors and Mentees will attend a brief get-together either before or after our Section Business meeting in New York (2019 ASA Annual Meeting).

Finally, as many of us have seen in our ongoing research and community engaged partnerships around stress, mental health and well-being, and mental illness; these are challenging times for many in our communities. Recently the 2018 [APA Stress in America Survey](#)™ findings were released and high levels of stress were reported among all age groups, particularly related to the state of the Nation (United States) and the future. In addition, new sources of stress added to the survey were highly endorsed including discrimination, personal debt, and less frequently, but still importantly, housing instability and food scarcity. This year's ASA Annual Meeting Theme of *Engaging Social Justice for a Better World* is a particularly strong match for our current

moment and provides a real opportunity for those of us doing work in the Sociology of Mental Health to engage in these critical discussions and highlight the great work of our many section members. Please do consider submitting your work for inclusion in the program and join us in New York next Summer.

Best, Alisa

Mental Health Section 2017 Award Winners

Leonard I. Pearlin Award for Distinguished Contributions. This Award carries the name of the highly influential and deeply respected mental health sociologist Leonard Pearlin. It goes to a scholar who has made substantial contributions to the sociology of mental health in theory and/or research. In 2018, the award went to **Scott Schieman** at the University of Toronto.

Congratulations to Scott!

The award for Best Publication. This award is given for the best published article, book or chapter in the area of the sociology of mental health. In 2018, the award went to **Tony N. Brown, Mary Laske Bell and Evelyn J. Patterson** (Vanderbilt University) for their 2016 article, "Imprisoned by Empathy: Familial Incarceration and Psychological Distress among African American Men in the National Survey of American Life," (*Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 51[2]:240-256).

Congratulations to Tony, Mary and Evelyn! Courtney Boen (University of Pennsylvania) is the recipient of the 2018 Dissertation Award for her research entitled "Death by a Thousand Cuts: Psychosocial Stress Exposure and Black-White Disparities in Psychophysiological Functioning in Late Life"

Congratulations, Courtney!



Scott Schieman and Blair Wheaton



Melissa Milkie and Courtney Boen

Blair Wheaton's Introduction of Pearlin Award Winner, Scott Schieman

It is time. I can't imagine a more deserving and accomplished candidate for this year's Pearlin Award: Scott Schieman has been a rising star in the sociology of mental health for years, and now his star has risen. The Pearlin Award was specifically not intended to be an end of career award; instead, it was designed purely to be a reflection of career contributions to the sociology of mental health. The fact that Scott has achieved as much as he has at this stage of his career is the foundation of the self-evident choice he represents.

Checking the statistics does communicate his qualifications in clear outline, but it is only part of a larger picture. His rate of productivity over the first 20 years of his career has been remarkable: I know, because I sat on the merit pay committee that decided pay increases for the first ten

years of his time at the University of Toronto. As a result, I have a very detailed sense of the consistency and quality of



Melissa Milkie, Evelyn Patterson and Tony Brown

placement of his research over that period, in a wide variety of sources. The proper word *is* remarkable. His h-index as of August 2018 was 38, which is also unbelievably high for a scholar at his stage of career. The h-index is interpreted this way: he has 38 articles with at least 38 citations. Comparatively, across all areas of the discipline, this marker of influence would be very unusual.

As many of you know, Scott was a post-doc with Len Pearlin early in his career. All of his early work focused squarely on core issues in the Stress Process, but in fact, his work has extended this framework in a number of directions. Examples are easy to find. Generally, he is a master of the fine-grained reality that others often don't see. He is a frontier scholar in the burgeoning industry of research on the spillover of work into the family realm, while also basing this work on the connection to stress in the stress process. He has pursued the issue of stress in higher status positions with subtlety, without upsetting the dominant view of inequality due to lower status disadvantage. This takes some care in presentation: Scott's writing is without exception a standard for making a point without ruffling feathers. Just as I was commenting to people that anger was a missing component of the study of mental health outcomes in the 1990's, Scott started to publish articles on anger. These articles are important because they balance the picture of social inputs in essential ways, especially in the discussion of gender differences. But they also presaged the expansion of the mental health universe in later DSMs.

Scott has managed to be the P.I. for two national longitudinal studies of work and health, one in the U.S. and one in Canada. This is actually most unusual, because he was awarded these major grants early in career, and without any

history of rejections from major agencies in either the United States or Canada. In my 2001 Pearlin Award paper, I commented on the need for our area to engage other areas in the discipline and insert mental health into the discourse of those areas. He has done so like few others. His work, and his professional affiliations and networks, reflect his influence in the general discipline, in work, in stratification and inequality, in neighborhoods and urban life, in religion, in social psychology, in the family. Few of us who work in this area could claim this much influence in so many related core areas of the discipline.

I can think of no one who would more enthusiastically recommend Scott for the Pearlin Award than Len Pearlin himself, and so, it is sad to think that Len could not be here to enjoy the moment. But we all know how appropriate and timely and this choice is now. Let us all congratulate Scott as the recipient of the 2018 Leonard I. Pearlin Award.

Pearlin Award Talk

Ordinary Lives and the Sociological Character of Stress: How Work, Family, and Status Contribute to Emotional Inequality

By Scott Schieman

[Brief selections from the Introduction and Conclusion portions of the Pearlin Award Lecture. The full paper will appear in *Society and Mental Health*]

My introduction to Leonard Pearlin ("Len") and many of his wonderful colleagues, collaborators, and friends in the discipline began in the mid-1990s. As a graduate student, I enrolled in a course titled the "Sociology of Stress," taught by one my mentors—Heather Turner, at the time a new assistant professor at the University of New Hampshire. The course packet (which I still have to this day) was chock full of foundational pieces from leading scholars

in the field—Blair Wheaton, Carol Aneshensel, Jay Turner, Peggy Thoits, Bruce Link, Catherine Ross, John Mirowsky, Elizabeth Menaghan, Bill Avison, and the list goes on.

Heather's course set me on an exciting journey—for this, and her support over my career, I owe her a great deal of gratitude. I remember cracking open that course packet for the first time and peeling back the cover to see the first paper: Len's (1989) *The Sociological Study of Stress*. I was hooked. Over the years, I have gone back to it many times to discover new ways of thinking about my own ideas. Len's classic work left an indelible mark. It shaped the way the field thinks about stressors, their emotional consequences, and the factors that influence the nature of the links between stressors and outcomes. It has been thirty years since the publication of *The Sociological Study of Stress*. In this essay, I dialogue with that paper—not with a comprehensive summary of the field, but rather with a sharper focus on a few core themes that have inspired the direction and current parameters of my scholarship.

There are many reasons why receiving the Pearlman Award means a great deal to me. Len Pearlman was a great mentor—he truly transformed my experience and shaped the direction of my intellectual life. Our friendship was deep and enduring. Len was “mindful” before mindfulness became trendy. He was one of the most empathic listeners and easy conversationalists I have ever met; I am so grateful for having been a part of his life.

I spent four years working with Len as a research scientist at the University of Maryland from 2000 to 2004. On many late afternoons, Len and I would share the commute home. He would drop me off at the Friendship Heights metro station, and then I would hop on the subway to continue my journey to my condo in Washington,

DC. Along the way, Len would share his experiences as a key figure in the history of social stress research and his rich insights about the intellectual puzzles that remained. In those conversations, I also discovered how much the sociological study of stress could teach us about our own ordinary lives. Those trips to Friendship Heights gave me the inspiration and confidence to become the scholar I am today.

This past year we also lost another giant—R. Jay Turner—a friend and supportive mentor to many, myself included. The Sociology of Mental Health Section of the American Sociological Association, and the broader discipline, has benefited in countless ways from prominent scholars like Len and Jay. They are deeply missed, but they stay with us over time in so many different ways. When we come up with our own ideas, or think differently about an old idea, or attempt to add something new to an existing theoretical model, or mentor the next generation of scholars, we build upon their contributions. In this important work, we celebrate—and pay tribute—to the lives of scholars like Len and Jay, and we keep moving forward as a community of thinkers and teachers.

Please Encourage Membership in our section! Be Sure to Renew YOUR Membership. Remember to recommend our section to graduate students. You can also give a gift membership to a graduate student.



114th ASA Annual Meeting New York, NY, USA, August 10-13, 2019

[Call for Submissions](#)

Regular Sessions

Mental Health

Kimberly Huyser (University of New Mexico)

khuyers@unm.edu

Health and Well-being

Kammi Schmeer (The Ohio State University)

schmeer.1@osu.com

Sociology of Mental Health Section

Mental Health at the Intersection: Mental Health and the Criminal Justice and Education Systems

For this session we seek papers that examine mental health at the intersection of systems. Greater attention is needed to the impact of mental health and well-being across systems such as the criminal justice system and education system. This session will highlight the work of sociologists working in these and other similar spaces. Additionally, papers applying a sociological lens to the intersect of general medical care and mental health care are welcome.

Organizer:

Teresa Scheid (University of North Carolina -- Charlotte) tlscheid@uncc.edu

Sociology of Mental Health Refereed Roundtables (1 hour)

Open topics

Organizer

Christy Erving (Vanderbilt University)

christy.l.erving@vanderbilt.edu

Social Justice Approaches to Mental Health: Addressing Marginalization, Exclusion, and Racism

The Sociology of Mental Health has a long and rich history of social justice. For this session, we seek papers that address sources of social marginalization and exclusion, such as stigma and racism, and focus attention on the relationships among exclusion and mental health and well-being. In addition, this session will include papers that focus on the social consequences/exclusion of mental illness and seeking mental health care. Papers addressing strategies to address these consequences at the individual, interpersonal, clinical, and policy levels are also welcome.

Organizer

Alisa Lincoln, Northeastern University, a.lincoln@neu.edu

Other Conferences in Philadelphia:

[The Society for the Study of Social Problems](#)

69th Annual Meeting August 9-11, 2019

Roosevelt Hotel, New York City, NY

Illuminating the SOCIAL in Social Problems

[Graduate Students on the Job Market](#)

We didn't have any profiles this time. Maybe next issue.

AWARDS FOR 2019

See [website](#) for descriptions and deadlines for 2019 awards or contact the Awards Committee Chair for the Mental Health Section, Teresa Scheid at tlscheid@uncc.edu. Please note that the *date for nominations for the Pearl Award is January 15*. Due dates for the other awards are April 1.

NOMINATIONS

From Nominations Committee Chair:

Dear Mental Health Section Members,

There are four positions (listed below) up for election on the ASA Mental Health section council for terms that will start immediately **after** the 2019 ASA annual meeting. All council members serve 2-year terms, expect the chair who serves a 3-year term as chair-elect, chair and, then, past-chair.

Chair-Elect

Membership Committee Chair

Publications Committee Chair

Council Member

Members of the section may **self-nominate** and nominate other section members to serve on the council. I will send an email to all those nominated inquiring about their willingness to serve. We have to nominate at least two candidates for each open council position. Please send your nominations (with the candidate's name, institutional affiliation, and council position) to Lijun Song at lijun.song@vanderbilt.edu by **December 15th 2018**. Lijun is happy to answer any questions you may have about the responsibilities and privileges that come with serving on the section council. You can also contact the outgoing individuals who served in specific council roles.

Past Chair: Scott Schieman
(scott.schieman@utoronto.ca)

Current Membership Committee Chair:
Christy LaShaun Erving
(christy.l.erving@vanderbilt.edu)

Current Publications Committee Chair:
Patricia Drentea (pdrentea@uab.edu)

Current Council Member: Jennifer Caputo
(caputo@demogr.mpg.de)

Thanks,
Lijun Song
Nominations Committee Chair
ASA Mental Health Section Council
Associate Professor of Sociology
Vanderbilt University

2018-2019 Section Officers

Chair: Alisa K. Lincoln, Northeastern University

Chair-Elect: Kristen Marcussen, Kent State University

Past Chair: Scott Schieman, University of Toronto

Council Member: Jennifer Caputo, Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research

Membership Committee Chair: Christy Erving, University of North Carolina-Charlotte

Secretary/Treasurer: Brea Perry, Indiana University

Publications Committee Chair: Patricia Drentea, University of Alabama at Birmingham

From the Newsletter Editor

Please note that the Section has restarted its Mentorship program. Please see the Chair's Report (pg. 2) for details.

I continue to remind everyone to please send me information about your activities that you would like to share with section members. Please put "newsletter" in the title of the email.

Here is a partial list of other possible contributions for future newsletters:

- Upcoming conferences, calls for papers, grant opportunities or special issues of journals.
- Newly published books by section members. Please include publication date and publisher information.
- Graduate or post-doctoral students on the market and would like to be profiled. Please send your picture, title of your dissertation, email address, affiliation, and a brief statement of your work (200-300 words). We did not have any profiles this time.**
- Congratulatory information (e.g., promotions, new jobs, awards, honors, grants).
- Short articles on topics that cross boundaries with other sections, such as animal-human interactions and mental health. We ask that you keep submissions brief (no more than 500 words).
- Descriptions of class activities/books/films for use in undergraduate sociology of mental health and illness classes or general tips and strategies for teaching at both the graduate and undergraduate level.

Don't forget to look at other Associations for conference presentations:

[Society for the Study of Social Problems](#)

[American Public Health Association](#)

[AcademyHealth](#)

If there are other venues where sociologists can present their work, please let me know.

Please visit the Section's website for resources and links to graduate programs focusing on mental health and illness.

Thanks, Richard

SMH

SOCIETY AND MENTAL HEALTH

[The Journal of the ASA Section on the Sociology of Mental Health](#)

Editors: Timothy J Owens, Kent State University and
Susan Roxburgh, Kent State University
Past Editor: Elaine Wethington, Cornell University

Editorial Scope of SMH: Society and Mental Health publishes original articles that apply sociological concepts and methods to the understanding of the social origins of mental health and illness, the social consequences for persons with mental illness, and the organization and financing of mental health services and care. Its editorial policy favors manuscripts that advance the sociology of mental health and illness, stimulate further research, inform treatments and policy and reflect the diversity of interests of its readership.

Manuscripts must be submitted electronically at
<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/smh>

For more information about the Journal go [here](#) or contact:

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Newsletter Editor



Katharine M. Gary
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AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Section on Mental Health

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