

Sarah E. Gzesh, MSW

EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL OF SOCIAL POLICY & PRACTICE Doctor of Philosophy in Social Welfare	<i>anticipated 2025</i>
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA CENTER FOR FEMINIST, QUEER, AND TRANSGENDER STUDIES Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Study Graduate Certificate	<i>anticipated 2024</i>
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK Master of Science in Social Work, Advanced Clinical Practice with specialization in Family, Youth & Children	2019
UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION Coursework in Human Rights and Multicultural Education, maintained GPA of 3.9	2016
LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF EDUCATION Single Subject Secondary English Teaching Credential	2013
BRYN MAWR COLLEGE, BACHELOR OF ARTS History of Art Major and English Minor, focus in Gender and Sexuality Studies, graduated with honors	2012

RESEARCH INTERESTS

LGBTQ+; youth & young adults; developmental trauma; attachment ruptures; identity-based support & chosen family; sexual exploitation/work; system involvement; harm reduction; substance use; queer theory; critical qualitative research

PUBLICATIONS

Manuscripts published, in press, under revision, under review, & in preparation

Gzesh, S. (2022). Queering Kinship: Biopolitics, the Death Function, and Transcendent Capacity. *NEOS* 14 (2).

Bozak, C. & **Gzesh, S.** (2022). Teaching Tool: Queering Kinship: Biopolitics, the Death Function, and Transcendent Capacity. *NEOS* 14 (2).

Greeson, J.K.P., **Gzesh, S.E.**, Wasch, S., Jaffee, S.R, Ciluffo, K. (2022) "Just being there, like a shoulder to lean on": Resilience and Mental Health among Older Youth in and Aged out of Foster Care during COVID-19. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40653-022-00498-7>.

Nagy, A., Lyons, A., Arendt, A., **Gzesh, S.** (2022). Research socialization in participatory projects: a trans-Atlantic exchange between the US and Europe. *Forschungssozialisation(en) in partizipativen Projekten: Ein transatlantischer Austausch zwischen den USA und Europa*. Beitrag in „[Widersprüche](#)“, Heft 166.

Gzesh, S. (invited foreword in press). Rosine 2.0: Archival Precedents of Pathology, Harm Reduction, and Healing in Philadelphia. Published by the Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College.

Gzesh, S., Kattari, S., Juarez, N., Meyer, M. (invited chapter in press, anticipated 2023). A (Very Brief) History of Disability and Sexuality Policy. *Exploring sexuality and disability: A guide for academics and health and human service professionals*. Routledge.

Grishow-Schade, L., Hillier, A., **Gzesh, S.**, Thompson, M. (under revision). Breadcrumbs for Family: How Gender Nonconforming, Non-binary, and Transgender Youth Adults Give and Receive Gender Messages. *LGBTQ+ Family: An Interdisciplinary Journal*.

Gyourko, J. R., Greeson, J. K. P., Jaffee, S., Wasch, S. & **Gzesh, S.** (under review). Mental health and social connectedness of older youth in and recently aged out of foster care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Gzesh, S. (under review). Words of Healing for Our Younger Selves. *Journal of Adolescent Health*.

Prince, D., Roberts, S., **Gzesh, S.**, Kynn, J., Schuler, M., Munson, M. (in preparation). Peer Support Services for Sexual and Gender Minority Youth with Behavioral Health Needs: A Scoping Review.

Kynn, J., **Gzesh, S.**, Prince, D. (in preparation). Exploring the connection between LGBTQ+ identity, homelessness, and system involvement.

Gzesh, S. (in preparation). Cunning Linguists: Epistemic Elision in Sex Work Discourse.

Gzesh, S. (in preparation). "To Secure from Vice and Degradation": 19th Century Proto-Social Work as Precedence for Prostitution Diversion Programs.

Gzesh, S. (in preparation). Dazzle Camouflage: Strategizing Performative Pathology for Gender-Affirming Care.

Gzesh, S., Shelton, J., Kroehle, K., Narendorf, S., Santa Maria, D., Bender, K., DeChants, J., Petering, R., Hsu, H., Barman-Adhikari, A., & Ferguson, K. (in preparation). Homeless experiences of transgender youth and young adults at the intersections of race and gender.

Gzesh, S., Shelton, J., Narendorf, S., Santa Maria, D., Bender, K., DeChants, J., Petering, R., Hsu, H., Barman-Adhikari, A., & Ferguson, K. (in preparation). LGBTQ youth homelessness, suicidality, and depression: An examination of mediating factors.

PRESENTATIONS

Gzesh, S., Greeson, J. K. P., Wasch, S., & Jaffee, S. (2023, January). "Just being there, like a shoulder to lean on:" Resiliency and mental health among older youth in and aged out of foster care during COVID-19. to be presented at the Society for Social Work Research Conference. Phoenix, AZ.

Gzesh, S. (2022, June). Hate the Sinner, Love the Sin: Discourse Analysis in Sex Work and Social Work. Presented at the LGBTQ Research Symposium. Virtual.

Gzesh, S., Greeson, J. K. P., Wasch, S., Ciluffo, K., & Jaffee, S. (2022, May). Impact of COVID-19 on the mental health and resiliency of older youth in and aged out of foster care. Presented at the FC2C Statewide Network Quarterly Meeting. Philadelphia, PA.

Gzesh, S., Eskridge, S., Briere, X. (2020, October). Creating Safe and Affirming Systems of Care for LGBTQ Children, Youth, and Families. Co-presented at the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Annual Conference. Virtual.

Gzesh, S. (2018, June). The Culture Keepers: YPAR, Restorative Justice, and Community Cultural Wealth. Presented at the Leadership Public Schools Equity Symposium. Oakland, CA.

Gzesh, S. (2017, October). Literature of Liminality: Displacement, Diaspora, and Cultural Dialogue. Presented at the Fulbright-Hays Summit at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at University of California. Berkeley, CA.

Gzesh, S. (2017, June). Project Hearts Desire: Allied Exploration for Youth Experiencing Belonging Uncertainty in Schools. Presented at the Leadership Public Schools Equity Symposium. Oakland, CA.

Gzesh, S. (2016, June). iLearn: Collective Feedback Tool for Equitable Engagement. Presented on Innovation Award Panel at the Teach for America Bay Area EdTech Summit. San Francisco, CA.

Gzesh, S. (2016, March). Trauma Transformed: School Sites as Conduits for Healing, Empowerment, and Social Cohesion. Presented at the Comparative and International Education Society 60th Summit. Vancouver, Canada.

Kristof, N., McAuliffe, J., **Gzesh, S.** (2010, September). Women's Education and Global Engagement: The Case Study of Bangladesh. Co-presented with Nicholas Kristof and College President Jane McAuliffe at the Heritage and Hope International Conference. Bryn Mawr, PA.

GRANTS & AWARDS

EXAMINING ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE MEASUREMENT, COLLECTION, STORAGE, AND USE OF DATA ABOUT GENDER IDENTITY IN CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS, AND THEIR CAREGIVERS, Funded through Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics, Health Systems and Policy Small Grants Awards. PIs: Amy Hillier, MSW, PhD and Scott Jelinek, MD, MPH, MAEd. Co-Investigators: Jose Bauermeister, MPH, PhD; Nadia Dowshen, MD, MSHP; **Sarah Gzesh, MSW**; Steven Marcus, PhD; Joseph Whelihan, MD; Sarah Wood, MD, MSHP. Total Direct Support: \$20,000.

LEADERSHIP EDUCATION IN ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH ADULT HEALTH (LEAH) FELLOWSHIP, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, 2022-23. Total Direct Support: \$9,882.

MARYMOUNT FELLOWSHIP, nominated by faculty at School of Social Policy & Practice, selected from applicant pool across twelve graduate schools by University of Pennsylvania faculty committee, 2022-23. Total Direct Support: \$5,000.

FULBRIGHT-HAYS SEMINAR THROUGH CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES, funded by Office of Resources for International and Area Studies. Total Project Support: \$80,059, Direct Support amount not available.

MARGOT STERN STROM INNOVATION GRANT, funded by Facing History and Ourselves, 2017. Total Direct Support: \$2500.

INNOVATION AWARD GRANT, funded by Teach for America, 2015-2016. Total Direct Support: \$10,000.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OFFICE PRAXIS GRANT, funded by Bryn Mawr College, 2012. Total Direct Support: \$5000.

HEPBURN CENTER SUMMER FUNDING GRANT, funded by Bryn Mawr College, 2011. Total Direct Support: \$7000.

CARE NATIONAL CONFERENCE AMBASSADOR, funded by Bryn Mawr College, 2011. Total Direct Support: \$600.

STORIES THAT LIVE GRANT, funded by Holocaust Storytelling Fellowship, 2009-2010. Total Direct Support: \$2000.

CENTER FOR PEACE & GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP INTERNSHIP GRANT, funded by Haverford College, 2010.
Total Direct Support: \$6500.

RESEARCH & PROGRAM EVALUATION EXPERIENCE

FELLOW, LEADERSHIP EDUCATION IN ADOLESCENT HEALTH (LEAH) *Philadelphia, PA September 2022 – present*

- Participate in federally funded interdisciplinary training program encompassing core competencies of medicine, nursing, nutrition, psychology, and social work at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
- Integrate bio-behavioral, bio-psychological and social determinants concepts through public health and policy frameworks, explicit focus on health disparities and equity; co-author peer-reviewed proposals and publications
- Develop, enhance, and improve evidence-based, patient-centered, family-involved, culturally responsive, community-based care plans and practices for adolescents with specialized needs
- Create Individualized Training Plan and Leadership Project in collaboration with attending physicians and research scientists at the Gender Clinic, Adolescent Initiative, Center for AIDS Research, Adolescent Specialty Clinic

ASSOCIATE FELLOW, LEONARD DAVIS INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH ECONOMICS, UPENN *Philadelphia, PA October 2022 – present*

- Spend >75 hours per year related to LDI's mission through collaboration, participation, and community engagement
- Attend policy seminars and conferences, Perelman School of Medicine health services workshops
- Prepare a research proposal and/or serve as co-investigator on project directly connected to LDI's mission

RESEARCH ASSISTANT, CENTER FOR GUARANTEED INCOME RESEARCH, UPENN *Philadelphia, PA May 2022 – present*

- Assist with data collection, qualitative analysis, and co-authorship of peer reviewed manuscripts, advocacy, and social work practice on asset building, cash-transfers, and economic justice and mobility
- Revise interview guide for West Hollywood Pilot for Guaranteed Income, focused on low-income LGBTQ+ older adults

- Conduct fieldwork encompassing semi-structured interviews, ethnography, and oral histories

PROJECT EVALUATOR, ROSINE 2.0

Swarthmore, PA February 2022 - present

- Wrote foreword for upcoming book publication; serve on advisory council for participatory exhibition
- Evaluate extent to which the final project aligns with objectives of exploring how harm reduction and mutual aid seek to reduce stigma and increase community health and social cohesion in marginalized communities
- Co-authored Institutional Review Board submission to ensure protection of welfare, rights, and privacy of human subjects; assist in community-based participatory action research project on harm reduction modalities

STUDENT INTERN, FIELD CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S POLICY, PRACTICE, AND RESEARCH

Philadelphia, PA May 2021 – present

- Co-author research reports, academic conference presentations, and peer-reviewed journal articles to disseminate topical findings pertaining to child welfare
- Participate in monthly interdisciplinary forum exploring abolitionist movement in child welfare

SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, PACIFIC CENTER

Berkeley, CA August 2020 – August 2021

- Identified strategic priorities to align with mission and purpose as third-oldest LGBTQ+ center in the US
- Contributed to national search for new Chief Executive Officer; support interim CEO by evaluating current needs
- Spearheaded national search for Clinical Director; provided weekly support to interim CD
- Facilitated Town Halls; served as liaison between Board and clinical staff during time of transition
- Initiated organizational assessment to infuse Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in systemic and clinical practices
- Conducted listening tour to heal ruptures between staff and management, and better inform Strategic Plan

PROGRAM MANAGER AND CLINICIAN, LARKIN STREET YOUTH SERVICES

San Francisco, CA August 2020 – April 2021

- Evaluated organizational practices for serving LGBTQ+ youth across various housing sites, focusing on comparison of two engagement centers; utilized cluster analysis from intakes and youth feedback, conducted focus group with Youth Advisory Board, and presented findings and recommendations to Core Leadership
- Authored Behavioral Health reference for therapists and case managers, guiding best practices for non-pathologizing and liberatory documentation; integrated clinical imperatives while maintaining anti-racist framework
- Co-crafted staff survey in service of Strategic Plan, incorporating tenets of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

FULBRIGHT-HAYS GROUP PROJECTS ABROAD: UC BERKELEY CENTER FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES

Morocco, Summer 2017

- Conducted socio-cultural ethnographic field research on impact of Arab-Israeli conflict and the Arab Spring on inter-communal and minority-majority relations, utilizing material culture and sacred objects as tools for storytelling
- Developed programming with Moroccan counterparts, focused on cultural competence and narrative healing

WASC ACCREDITATION PROJECT LEAD AND AUTHOR: LEADERSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

San Jose & Hayward, CA 2013 – 2018

- Pioneered instructional/assessment modalities with Gooru & Exit Ticket vis-à-vis idea formation and beta-testing
- Served as a member of Solidarity Advisory Council and adapted research-driven socio-emotional best practices to address the impact of racism on educational experience of students of color; implemented Leaders of Equity tools for planning and action, in coalition with FREE (Fellowship for Race and Equity in Education)
- Advised school action plan; gave key feedback on program elements as member of Instructional Leadership Team
- Utilized investigative process with key stakeholders (students, alumni, faculty, staff, Board of Directors, community partners); achieved the maximal 5-year accreditation granted at both school sites

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH EXPERIENCE

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CLINICIAN, LARKIN STREET YOUTH SERVICES

San Francisco, CA August 2020 – April 2021

- Performed on-site behavioral health screening, clinical assessments, crisis intervention and support services at Larkin Street Youth Access Points; conducted street-level outreach and harm reduction interventions for homeless youth
- Provided clinical consultation and professional development to staff on a range of behavioral health issues and best practices for transitional age youth experiencing homelessness, substance abuse, sex work and exploitation
- Facilitated Collaborative Case Conferences to assist in determining treatment plans for a caseload of 20 clients
- Coordinated services with other agencies and resources to address youths' needs, including: biopsychosocial health,

education, employment, independent living skills, advocacy, placement stability, and age-appropriate enrichment activities; assisted youth in accessing community resources

- Acted as Program Manager during on-call rotation for nine transitional housing programs and three shelters
- Crafted community-based photo narrative entitled “Elegy for My Inner Child” which centered the experiences of transitional age LGBTQ+ youth, addressing the impact of developmental trauma through narrative therapy, using ‘testimonios’ and ethnography to showcase individual and collective healing within the community

MENTAL HEALTH THERAPIST, WESTCOAST CHILDREN’S CLINIC

Oakland, CA July 2019 – August 2020

- Conducted community-based, trauma-informed psychotherapy, crisis intervention and stabilization to assess cognitive, emotional, and social functioning and needs for sexually exploited youth
- Provided mental health screening/assessment as children entered into or changed placement within the child welfare system; implemented in milieu setting at Alameda County Assessment Center for ages 0 to 18 years old
- Integrated psychological, social, cultural, medical, developmental, educational, and other relevant information into wrap-around service development and clinical case management plan for youth; convened planning meetings with adults in youths’ support system to develop a Community Team and provide referrals/linkages with other agencies
- Developed and provided trainings to other mental health providers on best practices in working with transitional age youth, specific to LGBTQ+ identity and commercially sexually exploited children and young adults

SOCIAL WORK INTERN, OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Oakland, CA August 2018 – May 2019

- Provided counseling at Title I public elementary and high schools for children and families struggling with histories of trauma, forced migration, incarceration, housing instability, substance abuse, and domestic and community violence
- Conducted psychosocial and clinical case evaluations, risk assessments, crisis response, and safety planning
- Managed case load and coordinated with probation officers, school administrators, teachers, wraparound services, and immigration attorneys; supported clients and families with MediCal enrollment
- Assessed family situations and reported cases as needed to Child Protective Services
- De-escalated student dysregulation through behavioral/therapeutic interventions in counseling-enriched Special Day Class for children with ADD/ADHD, ODD, emotional disturbance, and autism
- Participated in coordination of care team meetings to evaluate Tier II and III supports for individual students
- Facilitated weekly therapeutic groups on emotion regulation, mindfulness, grief (loss of caregiver), racial trauma

SOCIAL WORK INTERN: LEADERSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Hayward, CA January 2017 – June 2018

- Advocated for AB540 (undocumented) students on the “Dream Team” and fostered coalitional agency
- Designed and implemented “Project Hearts Desire,” a project pairing mentors with youth who lacked an identified caring adult for allied exploration of a mutual interest, modeled after Johanna K. P. Greeson’s CARE intervention
- Developed and spearheaded “Culture Keepers,” a Youth Participatory Action Research mental health initiative training student first-responders to address conflict utilizing peer-led restorative practices
- Facilitated mindfulness therapeutic groups to promote belonging certainty and emotion regulation for students struggling with academic mindset, identity safety, stereotype threat, forced migration, and community violence
- Created and presented professional development aligned with PBIS, targeting Tier I and Tier II interventions

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

TEACHING ASSISTANT, UPENN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL POLICY AND PRACTICE

Philadelphia, PA January 2023 – present

- Co-construct syllabus for SWRK 701: Health and Mental Health Policy, including delineating key concepts and skills, and application of course objectives through written and oral discussions
- Facilitate small group interactive activities, provide feedback on completed assignments, craft rubrics in accordance with demonstration of proficiency for Masters-level students

TEACHING ASSISTANT, UPENN SCHOOL OF NURSING

Philadelphia, PA January 2023 – present

- Co-teach NURS 3420/5420: The Health of Sexual and Gender Diverse Individuals and Populations Across the Lifespan
- Provide support for primary instructor using structured, active, in-person pedagogical approaches

EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANT, SCHOLAR CO

San Francisco, CA June 2017 – present

- Advise youth and families on all aspects of college access and narrative-building, beginning in ninth grade and culminating with submitted applications in twelfth grade
- Utilize reflective practices to enhance students' competitiveness, support their educational/vocational goals, and help them develop executive functioning skills and practical strategies for purposeful learning

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER, COURSE FACILITATOR: LEADERSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS *San Jose & Hayward, CA 2013 – 2018*

- Taught English 2, English 3, Senior English, and AP English Language & Composition in Title I high school serving 60% free or reduced lunch, 74% English Language Learners, 85% first generation, 9% undocumented students
- Fostered language acquisition and progress: over 75% of incoming students performed at elementary skill levels, with an average of 1.8 years of MAP growth; mean score for AP Language & Composition increased from 2.15 to 3.14
- Achieved "Accomplished Teacher" designation through rigorous application process with portfolio review

VOLUNTEER HUMANITIES INSTRUCTOR: SAN QUENTIN PRISON *Marin CA August 2016 - May 2018*

- Through the Prison University Project, provided student-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally-responsive education in humanities for incarcerated men at San Quentin Prison

BAY AREA REGIONAL FACILITATOR: GIRLS LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE *Bay Area, CA July 2014 - December 2016*

- Conducted weekly workshops for elementary-aged girls and their guardians on assertive self-expression, social-emotional intelligence, and leadership capabilities using theater-based Freirian model of kinesthetic learning

ENGLISH TEACHER: SAN JOSE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT *San Jose, CA August 2012 - June 2013*

- Taught English Language Arts and English Intervention classes to 6th, 7th, and 8th grade system-involved students who had been expelled from public schooling
- Differentiated instruction for students with special needs, including speech impairment, ADD/ADHD, ODD, emotional disturbance, developmental delay, and autism (approximately 68% of students had 504 plans or IEPs)

LEAD FACILITATOR AND GRANT-WRITER: BUILDABRIDGE INTERNATIONAL *Philadelphia, PA, 2010-2012*

- Educated youth in transitional housing, using hope-infused, child-centered, trauma-informed arts-based model
- Collaborated on designing and facilitating the Annual Institute for Arts and Transformation in Philadelphia
- Wrote annual report for organization; secured continued \$75,000 grant from the Philadelphia School District

YOUTH ADVOCATE AND MENTOR: WINDOWS FOR PEACE NGO *Tel Aviv, Israel 2011*

- Designed and implemented project-based expressive arts healing for Israeli, Arab-Israeli, and Palestinian youth
- Empowered and educated through new media cultural programs designed to break down stereotypes

ACCESS ACADEMY TEACHER, TIGER PASS SCHOOL CO-FOUNDER: ASIAN UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN *Chittagong, Bangladesh 2010*

- Instructed >120 Access Academy students during their pre-university bridge program; improved lexile scores and English proficiency, as measured by diagnostic and summative assessment
- Co-founded Tiger Pass School, located in an impoverished 'slum' and serving 90 students between 5 and 15 years of age
- Designed three tiers of skill groupings; developed and launched curriculum and assessment metrics; trained university students to be teachers by utilizing a hierarchical structure modeled after BRAC schools

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Counsel on Social Work Education
- National Association of Social Workers
- Society for Social Work and Research
- University of Pennsylvania SexGen Policy Lab
- Sexuality, Relationships, Gender Research Collective

CERTIFICATIONS & TRAINING

- Cleared Secondary English Teaching Credential, State of California

- Red Cross Disaster Relief Mental Health First Responder
- American Teenager Project Ambassador
- Mindful Schools Facilitator
- Mind-Body Awareness Project Facilitator
- National Suicide Hotline Certified Counselor
- CITI Human Subjects Training: Social-Behavioral-Educational Track