Advocacy Webinar Series launches with *Health Impacts of Identity Bias, Trauma and Violence*

Kali Cyrus, MD, MPH, one of the founding members of the TimesUP Healthcare initiative, spoke with OHSU members and more healthcare professionals this past Tuesday about the health impacts of trauma and violence, culturally-relevant trauma-informed care, and the unique individual and institutional roles in stopping, healing from, and preventing violence. Dr. Cyrus launched the first in a series of free webinars for OHSU’s Confidential Advocacy Program (CAP) based around the intersections of advocacy in healthcare with *Health Impacts of Identity Bias, Trauma and Violence.*

Dr. Cyrus, a psychiatrist at a community mental health center and Assistant Professor at Johns Hopkins Medicine, supports institutions around conflict stemming from difference and strategies to support inclusivity within organizations. Dr. Cyrus described the psychological “shortcuts” our brain uses when judging others, and that often, humans are drawn to the same trends in identities that they see among their social circles.

“This is what we have to overcome. Our shortcuts are imperfect with respect to meaning,” Dr. Cyrus said. “Even if you don't believe in using identities and categories, your brain is categorizing, and other people are categorizing to actually do harm.”

Dr. Cyrus highlighted the importance of recognizing intersectional identities among survivors, in order to be an ally and supportive of survivors of violence. She described how an individual can be targeted due to their gender, race, age, religion, and more identities they can’t necessarily control.

“Most hate crime incidents occur near residences, homes, highways, sidewalks,” Dr. Cyrus said. “This is why it’s important to be an ally.”

Dr. Cyrus highlighted in her webinar that 21% of transgender, queer, and gender non-conforming college students have reported sexual assault, compared to 18% of heterosexual, cisgender women, and 4% of heterosexual, cisgender males in college. She added that consistently in literature, American Indians are confirmed as the demographic in society that is twice as likely to experience rape or sexual assault compared to other races. Dr. Cyrus also explained that there are many forms of sexual violence, including digital stalking, abuse, and sexual exploitation, providing examples of mistreatment of transgender women and elders by medical providers.

“I want to mention this is a trend of how isolated some of these victims might be,” Dr. Cyrus said. “If we’re talking about elders, if we're talking about folks in the military, or if we're talking about adult survivors of child sexual abuse - you can see that a lot of the violence is centered in populations or an identity group that may be more isolated than not.”

CAP is currently funded by federal grants through Title IX; Dr Cyrus also spoke on the importance of programs being funded and supported by an institution to continue to provide a confidential space to those who have less privilege or are survivors of violence in current and future healthcare professions. The expansion of these programs by the institution can provide necessary education to the workforce and student body around best practices to prevent violence. She also stated that the updates to Title IX regulations that go into effect in August, increases the amount of evidence required to persecute perpetrators of sexual violence.

“It’s going to get even harder to get justice for folks who have been victims of sexual violence for that reason,” Dr. Cyrus said. “They're also going to have to face being cross examined, as part of the new regulations. Imagine how distressing that is.”

CAP has quickly adapted their programs to support survivors during the pandemic, create strategies to address the recent changes in Title IX regulations, and support the Black and POC community at OHSU. The following projects are aimed at promoting change, amplifying voices of those less privileged, and to promote healing among the OHSU community:

* **The Survivor Voices Project,** an anonymous, peer-led support community built of survivors to amplify their voices.
* **The Advisory Council** to center the voices of BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and people with disabilities in addressing necessary change.
* **Virtual Trauma-Informed Yoga** Sessions offered on Tuesdays.
* **Volunteers** to assist with developing a new OHSU policy in response to the Title IX regulations that protects and advocates for the rights of survivors.

To join any of these projects, email capsupport@ohsu.edu.

“I want to be clear, the advisory council and survivor voices project are not workgroups – CAP staff and volunteers will be doing the work. This is a space for us to build community and identify tangible steps that can be implemented at OHSU to improve the emotional and physical safety and wellbeing of survivors, as well as ensure our rights are upheld and protected,” CAP Program Manager Stephanie McClure said.

Save the Date for CAP’s additional Advocacy Webinars planned so far, and register [here](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ohsu-advocacy-webinar-series-tickets-104146852038):

**July 28th:**Supporting Immigrants, Refugees, and Latinx Survivors: Anh Vu ([IRCO](https://irco.org/)) & Immigration and Law: Sarah Purce ([Catholic Charities](https://www.catholiccharitiesoregon.org/))

**August 25th:**Supporting Survivors of Violence with Disabilities: Ashley Carroll and Shannon Rose ([Multnomah County](https://multco.us/dv))

**September 22nd:**Supporting Indigenous Survivors: Annie Forsman-Adams ([WomenSpirit Coalition](https://www.womenspirit.net/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank))

These webinars are for healthcare providers, community-based, campus, and legal advocates, and the overall OHSU community. ASL interpretation and closed captioning is provided. To view the recording of Dr. Cyrus’ webinar, as well as sign up for the upcoming advocacy webinars or learn more about CAP, please visit www.ohsu.edu/cap.

The Confidential Advocacy Program (CAP) at OHSU provides confidential and privileged support to OHSU members who have experienced sexual misconduct or violence, regardless of the location or timing of their experience.

**Contact CAP**

You can connect with OHSU’s confidential advocates Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. by emailing capsupport@ohsu.edu or calling the following hotlines:

* **Portland**: 833-495-2277 (CAPS)
* **Monmouth**: 833-963-2277 (CAPS)
* **Ashland**: 833-913-2277 (CAPS)
* **Klamath** Falls: 833-981-2277 (CAPS)
* **La Grande**: 833-992-2277 (CAPS)

**CAP also offers support through** [**Signal**](https://signal.org/)**, a messaging app that deletes text messages from your phone**, which can be vital for survivors who are having their devices monitored by an abusive partner. If talking on the phone is not a safe option, you can call CAP’s hotline and simply say “Signal,” and the CAP team will provide you with the Signal messaging phone number.

After business hours, the CAP hotlines are forwarded to community partners across the state in order to ensure a confidential advocate is always available to you.

**Download the Respect for All app**

The Respect for All mobile app is an educational tool about sexual harassment and sexual misconduct resources specifically made for OHSU members. It is intended to educate you about how to access confidential resources in your area.

* [Download via app store (Apple)](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/respect-for-all/id1494019799?ls=1)
* [Download via GooglePlay](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.mongooseprojects.respectforall)
* [View as website](https://ohsurespectforall.com/app/)

**Learn more**

To learn more about CAP and access additional resources for sexual misconduct survivors, visit the [CAP webpage](https://www.ohsu.edu/title-ix/confidential-advocacy-program) or email capsupport@ohsu.edu.