

**THE GEORGE  
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UNIVERSITY**

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# The GW Psychiatrist

The Newsletter of the George Washington University  
Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

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## Fifty Years Since Dr. Anonymous

Jeffrey S. Akman, MD  
Interim Chair



American psychiatry and the gay rights movement arrived at an historic intersection fifty years ago at the 1972 Annual Meeting when psychiatrist John

Fryer, MD appeared before the membership disguised in a mask, wig, and oversized tuxedo as Dr. Henry Anonymous. The “terrified” Dr. Fryer was there to reveal to his stunned colleagues, “I am a homosexual. I am a psychiatrist.” Here is a link to a New York Times article (published 5/2/22) on John Fryer and an

audio tape of Dr. Anonymous at the annual meeting:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/02/health/john-fryer-psychiatry.html>

With homosexuality listed as a mental illness in the DSM and many state laws criminalizing homosexuality, no psychiatrist dared risk coming out publicly for fear of losing one’s medical license and career. But John, who was far from being the only closeted LGBTQ psychiatrist in the APA at that time, was there to make his colleagues understand that the closet was a terribly unhealthy place. “We are taking an even bigger risk, however, in not living fully our humanity,” he said. “This is the greatest loss, our honest humanity.” Catalyzed by Dr. Anonymous’ appearance at the Annual Meeting, the following year the APA removed homosexuality per se out of the DSM. It would take until 1987 for homosexuality to disappear completely from the DSM when “ego dystonic

homosexuality" (a diagnosis that legitimized conversion therapies) was removed from the DSM-III-R. By that time, I was an out gay psychiatrist on the GW faculty and friends with John Fryer. As a professor of psychiatry at Temple engaged in medical student education with expertise in hospice care, death and dying, and HIV/AIDS, John and I had a lot in common. We would see each other at APA Annual Meetings and meetings of the Association of Gay and Lesbian Psychiatrists.

I visited him in his large Victorian home in the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia and listened to him play the organ in his home. I joined him as his guest at the Institute of Religion in the Age of Science conference where I presented a paper on homosexuality and creativity. But one thing that John rarely spoke about was his experience as Dr. Anonymous. He was no longer closeted, was living a full life as an out gay man, and no longer wanted to be defined by those ten minutes in 1972.

One would think that with all of the advances in LGBTQ civil rights since 1972, there would be little need for continued vigilance or activism. Yet, we are seeing the highest rates of hate crimes targeting LGBTQ individuals, significant health disparities among LGBTQ individuals especially related to mental health and addiction, a leaked draft of a Supreme Court opinion overturning *Roe v. Wade* that neuters the legal foundation for much of the civil rights gained by LGBTQ individuals and couples, and a spate of anti-LGBTQ legislation in states across the country. These mean-spirited, dangerous "don't say gay" laws and laws that criminalize physicians for prescribing gender reassignment

treatments and traumatize parents and their children by labeling these treatments as child abuse are already causing LGBTQ kids to feel helpless, depressed, and suicidal. These legislators say they care about children and their families, but they really don't. They only care about scoring political points with their base. It is hard to believe that we are once again seeing states criminalize healthy LGBTQ identity development. Dr. Anonymous' actions might have led to homosexuality not being considered a mental illness, but the stigma, bigotry and discrimination against LGBTQ individuals and their families, unfortunately, remains.

## The Future of Learning

Benedicto Borja, MD  
Program Director, Psychiatry Residency Training



The COVID-19 pandemic crept into everyone's lives like a thief in the night. With health and quarantine protocols placed to prevent the spread of the virus, most - if not all - industries and sectors came to a crippling halt. Everyone had to drastically adapt to the times in order to survive. In graduate medical education, specifically, digital transformation was inevitable. Since the beginning of the pandemic, it was the healthcare providers who bore a profound pressure physically, mentally, and emotionally. Being exposed to those who are infected made them more vulnerable, and so full support and appreciation were due and given to

them. Truly, this pandemic made us appreciate the importance and value of graduate medical education.

Learning is viewed as a collaborative effort by the faculty, educational leaders, and residents in their common aim to develop 21st-century learners who are logical thinkers, creative performers, and highly motivated individuals. These goals are achievable, but the COVID-19 pandemic has spawned the turned topsy-turvy system in which the educational platform has changed from face-to-face learning to virtual didactic classes, online assessment, and overall distance education. With the 180-degree change in ways and styles, how is everybody coping? Is it still the same atmosphere of learning amid a global health crisis? What were the adjustments made by everybody under this kind of learning setup?

Residents and faculty are now familiar with applications like Google Meet, Zoom, Webex and others that are used in different learning tasks. We also developed different modalities to assess the learning development of our learners, to see the difference between traditional and distance learning, i.e., through video conferencing and applications like Messenger and Microsoft Office.

Flexibility and adaptability are keys to accelerating a shift to a “better normal” scenario. It is time to adopt a new learning paradigm that veers away from being campus- and classroom-centric. What about adopting an optimal amalgam of face-to-face and virtual, synchronous and asynchronous modes of learning that could bring about more diversity, equity and inclusion? It is time to harvest the fruits of a digital transformation that has accelerated at a breathtaking pace as an offshoot of the global pandemic. But wait... as pointed out by a respected educational leader in our community, there is a need to bridge a “widening digital divide.”

Undeniably, this unprecedented situation is not only teaching us resilience and optimism, but also the value of time. As an educational leader, I need to press forward and do the necessary steps to guide my colleagues in addressing their difficulties, and most importantly guide the residents so that they can adapt to the new ways. “It takes two to tango,” they say— to make things work, cooperation is necessary. Moreover, the new ways of teaching and learning during the pandemic have taught me to become more positive— that no matter how big the change we are facing or might face, when there is teamwork and collaboration, goals can be achieved and results can be wonderful.

## APD Corner

Kaitlin Slaven, MD  
Associate Program Director



I know it sounds cliché, but I tell anyone who asks that the thing I love most about GW is the people. As another academic year comes to a close, I’ve been reflecting on my years with the program and all of the people who have made this such an incredible place to be. To my co-residents: It’s no secret that residency is tough. There really is no way I would have gotten through it without my co-residents. My class was unique in being all female— something we were incredibly proud of. What I don’t think we were unique in was how close we all were.

There is nothing like going through a challenging experience to bring a group closer. Our program has been known for small classes with all the trappings of a family— the love/hate kind of stuff. From the day we all met, we were family. Though we’ve all scattered throughout the country over the past few years,

we remain close. As our lives move forward, we have been a part of each other's joyous moments—the weddings, the baby showers, the career advancements. We have also been a part of each other's most difficult moments. I am forever grateful to GW for bringing us all together. To my mentors: What an honor to have trained under you and to now work alongside you. I feel so fortunate for every moment of teaching I received. From Dr. Lieberman, I learned psychopharmacology (my co-residents and I still ask each other— what would Lieberman do?). From Dr. Griffith, I gleaned the wisdom of the field of psychiatry from both a neuroscience and a psychotherapeutic perspective. From my two program directors, Dr. Catapano and Dr. Khin Khin, I learned so much didactically, but even more importantly, I learned what it means to be a strong psychiatrist, fierce leader, confident woman, mother, and friend.

And finally, to my trainees: It all comes full circle. Watching another residency class graduate and go on to incredible endeavors fills me with such pride. We are so excited for you to take the next step in your psychiatry career. I hope that you all leave our program with the same sense of family that I feel every day in our program. Now is your time to leave the nest, but as one of my mentors says, "GW is your forever home, and you can always come back home."

Congratulations!

## Meet the Chief Residents



**Emily Schutzenhofer, M.D.**

Chief Resident



**Shayna Popkin, D.O.**

Chief Resident

# Farewell to the Class of 2022



Kate Cowhey, MD  
Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Fellowship  
Tulane University



Sharwat Jahan, MD  
Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Fellowship



Rida Malick, MD  
Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Fellowship  
University of Maryland



Renee Mao, MD  
Attending Psychiatrist: Integrative Health at DC



Raj Sachdej, MD



Michael Sexton, MD  
Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Fellowship  
Children's National Medical Center



Alexandra Yoon, MD  
Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Fellowship  
Children's National Medical Center

## Welcome to the GWU Psychiatry Residency Class of 2025!



**Martin Clark** earned his B.S. in Psychology from the Virginia Commonwealth University and will soon be graduating from the George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences. Martin began his career as a mental health technician at Tucker Pavilion Psychiatric Hospital and enrolled in a post-baccalaureate pre-health sciences program while working full time at Tucker. Through his work with student interest groups and as a rehabilitation specialist and crisis intervention specialist on an Assertive Community Treatment in DC, he worked with adults experiencing homelessness and chronic mental illness. He has received recognition for excellence in leadership in mental health delivery and organization. Martin has shown steadfast commitment to providing mental health support for vulnerable patients and populations, and he hopes to continue his work in his future career.

**Hobbies:** Long distance backpacking (hiked 2,650 mile of the Pacific Crest Trail and 1,250 miles of the Appalachian Trail, Bicycle Touring: completed section of The Great Divide Mountain Bike Route from Canada to Montana, trail running and electronic music production



**Darren Jackson II** is a fourth year medical student at the Georgetown University School of Medicine. He completed his B.S. at Morgan State University and his M.P.H. at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. As the Wellness Coordinator for The Harlem Children's Zone, he used his passion for child development to forge a more efficient and effective support system for kids of color living in Harlem. He continued his commitment to youth mentorship through his position as the senior program coordinator for the Envision National Youth Leadership Forum. In his role, he led a diverse staff of educators and managed the daily facilitation of a hands-on clinical curriculum for over 900 High School STEM students.

**Hobbies:** Meditation (Books-Medications for Men Who Do Too Much, The Mind Illuminated, Mixed martial arts, Event Planning (RULES for Black Men, Public Health Theory of Change for Underserved Communities)



**Hira Mohyuddin** will soon be graduating from the George Washington School of Medicine and Health Sciences. She earned her B.A. in Cognitive Neuroscience from the University of Virginia. Hira has been a member of a multidisciplinary team of medical students, residents and faculty for the past eleven years, during which time, she has participated in research projects, presented at national conferences and has multiple publications to her credit. She is passionate about advocacy and believes her experience as an intern for former senator and current Vice President Kamala Harris was instrumental in helping her realize that she is drawn towards advocating for underrepresented populations, for equity health access and delivery and for parity for mental health services. She has served as president for three student organizations (William H. Beaumont Medical Research Honor Society, Psychiatry Interest Group, Art in Medicine Club). Hira's leadership in these roles speaks to service to her school and community in a variety of capacities. She has been inducted into the Gold Humanism Honor Society.

**Hobbies:** She enjoys kickboxing and Tae Kwon Do. Hira is a black belt in Tae Kwon Do. She loves to read and travel around the world



**Marissa Penn** is a fourth year medical student at the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California. She received her B.S. in Neuroscience Major, Chemistry & Psychology Minors. Marisa served as student chapter president of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, served on the executive board of the American Medical Women's Association, tutored first year medical students in anatomy, and mentored premedical students at a local high school. Prior to medical school, she worked in an inpatient psychiatric facility on the child crisis stabilization unit. Working alongside a multidisciplinary team, she assisted patients as they adjusted to medications and processed their traumas and diagnoses. She mostly enjoyed designing and leading therapy groups grounded in tenets of dialectical behavior therapy.

**Hobbies:** Marisa enjoys caring for her extensive houseplant collection and watching true crime documentaries. She also enjoys performing at community events with the Dancers of Keck student organizations and appeared in the Thank You, Keck music video



**Vignesh Sadras** will be graduating from the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine this spring. He completed his B.S. in Biomedical Engineering at the Johns Hopkins University. Vignesh provided GED tutoring to people who were incarcerated and experiencing mental illness at the Baltimore City Detention Center through the Johns Hopkins University Jail Tutorial Project. Through his experience, he recognized his own biases and the truth of human dignity. He is facilitating engagement with an East Baltimore community advocacy group to repair the historic and current injustices experienced by this community of color and it has impressed upon him his responsibility as a physician to advocate for social justice. Vignesh leads a 30-minute weekly meditation group for the entire East Baltimore Johns Hopkins community for participants to learn about, practice and reflect on approaches to Dharmic religions. Guiding his group has taught him how to create a safe and engaging learning environment, group facilitation skills and has deepened his own practice of medication.

**Hobbies:** He enjoys singing, especially spiritually oriented songs and Carnatic (South Indian Classical) music, appreciates books written by visionaries in spirituality and social justice (Swami Chinmayananda, Marisela Gomez, Bryan Stevenson)



**Aryan Tafreshi** earned his B.A. in Biological Sciences from the Binghamton University and will be soon graduating from the State University of New York Upstate Medical University. Early in the pandemic, Aryan teamed with a friend to develop a proposal and secure New York State grant money to develop what grew to be an up to 40K boxes-per-week food distribution program for immunocompromised New Yorkers unable to safely venture into public spaces. The experience not only honed skills in creative problem solving, teamwork and logistics, but also solidified the idea that service can act as a form of therapy and working with underserved communities is a passion of his. He is an active musician and recognizes the important role music and arts can play in mental health as it can be both an outlet and a way to connect with others shared experience. He is a mentor to a first-year medical student through Upstate's MedMentor and he continues that strong relationship to this day.

**Hobbies:** Sound Design, Music Production, Audio Engineering, Vocal Recording & Songwriting, Poetry, Electric Guitar, Math-rock, and Hip-Hop Music; Iranian/Persian Culture and Associated Festivals/Holidays; Reading Russian Literature, Fantasy and Sci-Fi (Haruki Murakami is his favorite author)

## Welcome to the Newest Member of the GWU Psychiatry Residency Class of 2024!



**Nina Govalla, MD (she/her)** was born in Douala, the industrial capital of Cameroon. She completed her undergraduate course in Biological Sciences at Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla, Missouri. She then earned her medical degree from University of Missouri-Kansas City, School of Medicine. Throughout medical school, she worked as Caregiver for elderly patients with dementia. She volunteered as mentor to refugee youths in the Kansas City Area. As an immigrant, she is primarily driven to improve mental health for people in her cultural community. She hopes to create an organization to promote mental health awareness in Cameroon. She will be completing her PGY-1 residency at the University of Arizona-Tucson Banner Health Psychiatry Program this June. Nina will be joining us as a PGY-2.

**Hobbies:** baking cheese, running her thrifting page, sewing, traveling and sampling deserts from all cultures, reading fiction novels, game nights with friends and family.

# Residency Retreat 2022

This year, residents stepped out on the town for a day of fun during Residency Retreat 2022. Themed "A Touristy Take on DC," residents toured DC on Old Town Trolley and then picnicked at the historic Glen Echo Park. The residents took a spin on the Glen Echo Carousel and sported their touristy finest! Thank you to special guest speaker, Dr. Lorenzo Norris, for joining in on the cornhole competition and for talking up our residents as we discussed wellness. Drs. Annie Weissman and Dr. John Zinner joined in for lunch and laughs. And thanks to Dr. Borja's pup, Peanut, for making an appearance!



A special thanks to the resident-run Retreat Committee for planning a new-and-improved retreat experience! - Kate Cowhey, Shayna Popkin, Emily Schutzenhofer, Melanie Tam, and Alexandra Yoon

## Kudos! to...

- **Alexander Beard** received the American Geriatrics Society's 1st Place Resident Poster Award at their annual conference.
- **Shayna Popkin** is the first resident inductee into GW's Gold Humanism Honor Society.
- **Emily Schutzenhofer** was the first resident awarded a McClendon Center "Super Shout-Out Award" for outstanding contributions to the care team efforts.
- **Emily Schutzenhofer** was re-elected as Resident-Fellow Member Representative on the Washington Psychiatric Society Board of Directors. She also served as the WPS Representative (stand-in alternate) to the 2022 APA Assembly and Area 3 Council.
- **Melanie Tam** was selected as a fellow in the prestigious SAMHSA/APA Minority Fellowship Program.
- **Alexandra Yoon** was named the SAMHSA/APA Minority Fellowship Program's Vice Chair.
- **Dr. James Griffith** and **Emily Schutzenhofer** presented together at the Society for the Study of Psychiatry and Culture Annual Meeting 2022.
- Several of our program's residents presented at the APA Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA, including: **Emily Schutzenhofer** (panel presentation), **Rajkaran Sachdej** (presentation), and **Shayna Popkin** (poster). Faculty **Dr. James Griffith** and **Dr. Brandon Kohrt** also presented a panel presentation on global mental health education.



- **Tamara Lyons**, for her dedicated efforts as Program Coordinator and for organizing the residency recruitment season, which continued virtually.