

Saharra L. Dixon, MA, CHES®

(856)631-8382 | Saharra.dixon@gmail.com | TheDramaticHealthEducator.com/

EDUCATION

New York University, New York, NY December 2019
Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development
MA, Educational Theatre in Colleges and Communities: Specialization in Applied Theatre
Study Abroad: Dublin, Ireland *Creating Meaning Through Community Drama* Summer 2019

University of Delaware, Newark, DE May 2018
College of Health Sciences
BS, Health Behavior Science, Minor in Public Health [*Cum Laude*]

CERTIFICATIONS & MEMBERSHIPS

CHES®, Certified Health Education Specialist #32970 October 2019
National Commission for Health Education Credentialing
Member, National Organization for Arts in Health (NOAH) September 2020-Present
Member, Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) March 2019-Present
Member, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. November 2016-Present

AWARDS

- Nancy and Lowell Swortzell Educational Theatre Scholarship 2019
- NYU Steinhardt Student Research and Creative Project Grant: *Back to the Basics* 2019
 - Awarded for exploring how interactive theatre and health coaching programming can assist students in identifying and alleviating stress and anxiety for academic success
- AKA Educational Advancement Foundation 2019 Youth PAC Essay Finalist 2019
 - Awarded for essay proposing the use of Forum Theatre in bridging the gap between clinician and patient communication and trust in Black Maternal Health outcomes
- Student of Distinction, University of Delaware 2015, 2016

PRESENTATIONS

Co-Presenter, Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) 72nd Annual Conference April 2021

- **Title:** Leveraging Theatre & Storytelling Pedagogies: A Theatre for Health Workshop

Presenter, National Organization for Arts in Health (NOAH) 4th Annual Conference October 20 2020

- **Title:** *We're Having a Party!: Using Interactive Theatre Experiences to Improve Self-Efficacy, Health, & Play for the Very Young*

Co-Presenter, North American Drama Therapy Association 40th Annual Conference September 2019

- **Title:** *Turbulence*

PUBLICATIONS

Dixon, S.L, Gundersen, A. & Holiman, M. (2020). The #StayHome Project: Exploring Community Needs and Resiliency Through Virtual, Participatory Theatre During COVID-19. *ArtsPraxis* 7(2a).

- *Article is currently "In Press" expected December 1, 2020*

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Guest Lecturer, Programs in Educational Theatre, New York University Steinhardt School

Graduate Course: Understanding Diversity Teaching Pluralism

Lecture Title: Hearing Through Drama: Leveraging Theatre for Collaboration and Problem-solving in Public Health

Fall 2020

VOLUNTEER

President & Programming Chair, NAACP, University of Delaware, Newark, DE May 2016-May 2018

Student and Volunteer, African Genesis, Cairo, Luxor, and Aswan, Egypt July-August 2010

EXPERIENCE

Soul Circle, Atco, NJ

June 2020-Present

Founder & Executive Director

- Found a Women's Arts and Health Collective working to redefine health, wellness, and justice through diverse arts-based programming, health promotion, and sisterhood
- Develops, plans, and implements virtual programming that incorporates arts and culture in health, wellness, and fitness including Pose & Prose, Girl Chat, Act Up! Act Out!
- Manages a small team of Healing Artists and Interns; conducts weekly check-ins and provides feedback for staff and interns on a regular basis
- Facilitates partnerships with local health centers, non-profits, and healthcare organizations

CAMBA, Inc., Brooklyn, NY

September 2019-Present

Health Educator, Comprehensive Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program (CAPP)

- Sexual and reproductive health educator in a New York State Department of Health funded program
- Implement comprehensive, age-appropriate, and evidence-based sexual education programming to youth ages 10-21 in high-need communities and schools across Brooklyn using the *Be Proud! Be Responsible!* and *Making Proud Choices!* curricula
- Develop and facilitate original Youth Development Activities including using art in health and social justice, STI & HIV/AIDS education, contraception, and LGBTQ+ identities
- Refer youth to medical providers and other social services as needed
- Train and Supervise teen educators in a peer leadership summer program

Indiana State Department of Health, Indianapolis, IN

May 2020-August 2020

Lead Investigation Specialist

- Lead investigations into situations concerning individuals who have tested positive for COVID19 and their contacts.
- Educated and counseled clients regarding transmitted disease and risk reduction
- Provide education and information on COVID-19
- Connect appropriate persons to social services and additional resources as needed to ensure their health and safety
- Prepare reports and managing patient and contact data

The Dramatic Health Educator, Atco, NJ

November 2019-Present

Health Education Specialist & Arts Facilitator (Freelance)

- Curates interactive and educational arts-based health and social justice interventions, workshops, and performances for all age groups
- Creates health education and arts in health content and materials including flyers and infographics
- Consults theatre artists and public health educators in using arts in health promotion

New York University, New York, NY

September 2018-August 2019

Preprofessional Advisor, College of Arts and Sciences

- Advised students and alumni interested in pursuing professional studies such as medicine, dentistry, law, and veterinary and tailored messaging to each student's needs
- Interviewed over 30 students as part of the Committee Letter process for medical school applications
- Wrote over 20 Committee Letters, attesting to applicant strengths and weaknesses in several areas including education, research, work, and volunteer experience
- Refer students to other on and off-campus resources as needed, including health and wellness services
- Worked actively to maintain confidentiality

New York University, New York, NY

September 2018 - October 2019

Co-Researcher/Performer, Theatre & Health Lab, "Turbulence"

- Explored the experiences of Black and Brown People of Color (BPOC) in clinical settings and the larger world through drama therapy and other arts-based inquiry, which included the writing and production of an interactive performance-activism play titled *Turbulence*
- Participated in participatory-action research involving image theatre, play, and other qualitative methods of data collection to understand how best to serve the needs of BPOC clinicians, health educators, and society at-large who function in predominantly White spaces
- Engaged audience members in challenging systems of oppression through interactive performance elements with the aim of enhancing cultural awareness around BPOC identities and fostering social action
- In the process of creating materials for dissemination, including articles for potential publication

Armed Services Arts Partnership, Alexandria, VA

May 2018-August 2018

Program Development Intern

- Supported planning and execution of program's classes, workshops, and performances across Washington, D.C. area in helping reintegrate veterans and service members into their communities through the arts
- procedures, program communications, and volunteer recruitment and management
- Developed a program DIY toolkit for community members interested in developing their own affiliated arts-based workshop or event including resources on how to plan and recruit participants

Career Services Center, University of Delaware, Newark, DE

February 2015-May 2018

Lead Peer Advisor (Promotion)

- Counseled undergraduate and graduate students with career search process including resume and cover letter development
- Review student resumes, cover letters, and LinkedIn profile pages and give corrective feedback

College of Health Sciences, University of Delaware, Newark, DE

June 2017-August 2017

Data Collector

- Assisted with data collection, recruitment and program evaluation for a Delaware statewide reproductive health project charged to assess the impact of a quality improvement project on health outcomes and related cost savings

Planned Parenthood of Delaware, Newark, DE

August 2016-December 2016

Community Development Intern

- Aided in preparation/delivery of educational workshops for students ages 8-12 on various aspects of sexual health
- Facilitated a Healthy Relationships and Sexting workshop for pregnant teens and teen mothers
- Developed educational and promotional materials for persons with developmental disabilities

SELECTED ARTS-in-HEALTH PROJECTS

The #StayHome Project, The Dramatic Health Educator, Atco, NJ

March 2020-Present

Creative Director

- Devised a virtual COVID-19 arts response, leading a group of 8 co-investigators using a trauma-informed, community-engaged participatory action approach
- Coded interviews and field-notes which served as the basis for developing the ethnodrama
- Directed the virtual play experience and collaborated on continued outreach including an “Echo Back” open to the public

We're Having a Party!, New York University, New York, NY

July 2019-Present

Playwright and Developer, Steinhardt Program in Educational Theatre

- Project Synopsis: Youth aged 5 to 7 discover what it means to make healthy lifestyle choices as they help characters prepare for a party in an immersive and interactive theater experience. Children will be asked to help plan the best party of the century while exploring topics like choosing healthy foods, physical activity, hygiene and safety.
- All health information in the script is evidence-base. A focus group of caregivers was conducted before the script-writing process.

Back to the Basics, New York University, New York, NY

September 2018-September 2019

Student Developer/Facilitator, Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development

- Explored how interactive theatre and health coaching programming can assist students in identifying and alleviating stress and anxiety for academic success in an effort to supplement university counseling services in outreach to first year students and high-risk students
- Curriculum development for implementation at colleges and universities to serve as a tool to alleviate burden on counseling centers and to identify at-risk students

Band-aids, New York University, New York, NY

January 2019-April 2019

Director, Steinhardt Educational Theatre Youth Ensemble

- Directed a micro-ensemble of youth ages 13-18 in a new play, *Band-aids: A Temporary Fix*, which explores how school dress codes disproportionately target feminine bodies
- Explored multiple acting pedagogy and practice with youth, leading them through a co-created process to ensure their thoughts and feelings were reflected in the art piece

New York University, New York, NY

January 2019-May 2019

Student, Steinhardt Program in Educational Theatre

Project Title: *Act Up! Peer Health Exchange: A Peer Educator Training Program*

- Course: Acting: Pedagogy, Technique, and Performance
- Developed an arts-based peer health educator training program
- From Synopsis: *Act Up! Peer Health Exchange* is a program for college students to develop as health leaders on their campuses, in local high schools, and within their communities. Peer Educators fulfill the program's goals by receiving training in the foundations of public health, social justice, and applied theatre. More so, Peer Educators will be able to provide interactive, drama-based educational outreach and conduct needs-assessments

RELEVANT TERM PROJECTS

New York University, New York, NY

August 2019-December 2019

Student, College of Global Public Health

Project Title: *Exploring Teen Births in Fordham, NY*

Course: *Global Issues in Social and Behavioral Health*

- Learned how to access and present demographic and health data retrieved from local and national web-based data sources
- Assessed how neighborhood conditions might affected teen birth rate
- Described the pathways of influence between teen birth, proximal risk factors and root causes
- Considered social, psychological and biological mechanisms that connect these factors
- Synthesized health data and conceptual maps of relations
- Developed and delivered a concise presentation on a teen birth

New York University, New York, NY

August 2018-December 2018

Student, Steinhardt Programs in Educational Theatre

Project Title: *Black/African American College Students and African American Vernacular English*

Course: *Methods and Materials of Research in Educational Theatre*

- Developed a small, mixed-methods study seeking to critically examine the attitudes and existing approaches to African American Vernacular English (AAVE) use among Black/African-American undergraduate and graduate students within the university and campus setting
- Conducted a thorough literature review, survey, focus group, observation, and interviews from which to pull and analyze data
- Devised a short theatrical piece that explores the experiences of AAVE-using Black/African-American college students, offering a lens into the questions: "Why do I talk this way?" and "what are my experiences as a AAVE-speaking college student?" This piece was inspired by data collected through a survey, observations made at New York University, and several interviews. This piece may help stakeholders begin to explore the many answers to these questions, garnering understanding of their plight in academic spaces and navigating the many facets of their identity, community, culture, and more

University of Delaware, Newark, DE

August 2017-December 2017

Student, College of Health Sciences, Department of Behavioral Health and Nutrition

Project Title: *Precious Start, Bright Future*

Course: Development of Health Promotion Programs

- Course: Health Promotion Program Development
- Developed a culturally-sensitive 3-month infant mortality intervention for Black/African-American mothers and infants in Wilmington, DE
- Analyzed data from key-informant interviews, needs assessments, census statistics, and the state of Delaware

SKILLS

Computer: Microsoft Office (Word, Publisher, Outlook, PowerPoint, Excel), Google Suite, SPSS, Canva, Student Information System, Facebook, Instagram, WordPress, Wix, Snapchat, Twitter

Health: Survey Development, Needs-Assessment, Health Promotion Programming, Motivational Interviewing, Qualitative Research Methods, Arts-based Inquiry/Research