

## From the Guest Editors

Erin Booker, LPC

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I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to be a Guest Editor on what I consider to be an essential issue of the Delaware Journal of Public Health. As a Behavioral Health professional, the topic of trauma is one I have dedicated much of my career to. I have seen the significant impact and pain it has inflicted on lives while simultaneously being given the gift of seeing the beauty in the healing journey.

The word trauma can often be misunderstood, and in doing so it can strip people of their very real experiences, so I hope that this issue will help to shed light on the reality that trauma can present itself in many different ways, and that no one trauma is more or less impactful or real than another.

Healing from trauma is a complicated process, but what I know is that in order to heal, you must start by acknowledging your experience. For many, the ability to do that is closely connected to the feeling of being heard and removing the feeling of isolation. As you walk through your life, I ask that you take the time to truly see people and give them the safe space to show up authentically, because in that authenticity many will find the courage needed to begin their healing process.

As a community we have the power to create a healing environment. That is something I wake up every morning excited to be a small part of, and I hope that each of you will join me.

Meghan McAuliffe Lines, Ph.D.

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I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as a Guest Editor for this issue of the *Delaware Journal of Public Health* focused on Behavioral Health and Trauma-Informed Care. Behavioral health is a vital element of overall health and wellbeing, and as such public health approaches to improve the behavioral health of the population are of paramount importance. Multifaceted, evidence-based strategies across the lifespan and care continuum are essential to addressing the growing needs of the population.

The focus on Behavioral Health and Trauma-Informed Care for the current issue of the *DJPH* is timely. There have been dramatic increases in mental health symptoms globally during the COVID-19 pandemic, related to fear, uncertainty, isolation, grief, and loss. Moreover, scholars have cited the impact of "dual pandemics" of COVID-19 and systemic racism, in which communities of color have been disproportionately impacted by racial trauma and disparities in care during the pandemic. These circumstances emphasize the importance of a trauma-informed and culturally-responsive lens when evaluating and treating behavioral health concerns.

The collection of articles included in this special issue highlight the robust research and practice related to behavioral health, social determinants of health, and trauma-informed care that is happening in Delaware. We are fortunate to have so many experts conducting behavioral health scholarly and applied work with different clinical populations and cultural groups across settings and contributing their knowledge and expertise to this issue. In addition to client- and patient-centered work, a trauma-informed approach reinforces the importance of considering the vicarious trauma experienced by clinicians as well. Several articles in this issue also look at the provider perspective as related to burnout, wellness, and workforce development, which must not be overlooked if we are going to build a sustainable behavioral health workforce.

I hope you enjoy reading the special issue, and it sparks interest in advocacy and collaboration with partners statewide to address the behavioral health needs of our community.