

Culturally Responsive Organizations Workshop – Friday, August 24, 2018

Speaker Biographies



Dr. Ann Curry-Stevens

Associate Professor, Faculty of Social Work, Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada

Founding Director, Center to Advance Racial Equity, Portland State University

Ann is a longtime researcher and advocate in racial equity in the Portland region. Working in a multiyear partnership with the Coalition of Communities of Color, she was the principal investigator of the seven reports on racial disparities facing communities of color in Multnomah County called, the “Unsettling Profile” series. This work generates urgency to improve racial equity and cultural responsiveness and she has been engaged in advocacy work in these arenas with public and nonprofit sector work. She has been generating resources to support organizations to engage in their own racial equity journey, highlighted by her publication (with Marie Elena Reyes) “Protocol to Culturally Responsive Organizations.” Recently, Ann has been researching organizations that have been doing racial equity work in the Portland area, and also studying the assets of organizations of color (referred to as “culturally specific organizations”), seeking to understand the distinctiveness of the contributions such organizations make to human services. The findings of this latter study have been adapted to create the “Successful Families 2020 Organizational Assessment for Culturally Specific Organizations.” In 2017, Ann returned to Canada, alongside continuing her partnerships with several Portland initiatives.

In Canada, Ann has begun to contribute to her university and faculty’s efforts in decolonization, in response to Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations.



Marie-Elena Reyes

ORCHWA Data & Evaluation Manager

Marie-Elena Reyes graduated from the University of Wyoming with an M.S. degree in Zoology & Physiology and a second M.S. in Statistics. Before moving to Portland, Marie-Elena developed programs to increase the participation of girls and women from underrepresented groups in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields while researching methods for infusing science education with gender and multicultural perspectives. Since arriving in the northwest she has worked as an evaluator and on various research projects including: veteran experiences with the medical home model, a culturally responsive protocol, the risks of African youth to join gangs and assessments of maternal and children’s health in several immigrant and refugee communities.

Marie-Elena’s areas of expertise include culturally responsive evaluation, community based research & assessment, racial equity training, grant writing, proposal review, internship programs for women of color transferring from community college to university in STEM and mentoring and leadership programs for women of color in STEM.

In her spare time Marie-Elena loves to research the genealogy of her Puerto Rican (Taino & Yoruba & Spanish) / Peruvian/ Italian family.