

Ruth White

Clinical Associate Professor Dept. of Social Change and Innovation at USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work

Los Angeles, CA, US

Dr. White specializes in stress management, emotional resilience, mental wellness, organizational change, and community-based interventions.

Biography

Ruth White applies theoretical frameworks using analytics grounded in sociology, public health, social welfare and economics to solve complex problems. She teaches social policy, and leads the management and organizational development course in the Virtual Academic Center.

Dr. White specializes in stress management, community-based strategies, organizational change, mental health, and policy advocacy. She has worked in health and social welfare in the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States, and collaborated with organizations and governments in Belize, Uganda and Jamaica. She is the author of the Stress Management Workbook: De-stress in 10 minutes or less, Preventing Bipolar Relapse, Global Case Studies in Maternal and Child Health, and Bipolar 101.

Inspired by her own journey of illness, recovery and resilience with bipolar disorder, she is a mental health & wellness educator and advocate, who works to create healthier and happier workplaces and workforces, integrate mental health into primary healthcare, eliminate the stigma of mental illness, and increase access and utilization of mental health services,

For five years, she co-led Maama Omwaana, a community-based program for improving the maternal and child health outcomes for a community in Uganda that resulted in a tripling of use of maternity services in less than five years despite stagnant overall clinic attendance. White transferred the project to the local department of health, which still manages the program activities. Local leaders that emerged from this program are now part of the National Secretariat of the White Ribbon Alliance in Uganda.

Her professional service includes being on the editorial board of the American Journal of Public Health, and the review boards of the American Journal of Health Behavior and the Journal of Social Work Education. She referees articles for many other journals and organizations, such as the American Public Health Association and Culture, Health and Sexuality.

White's work has been featured in print, TV and radio, including the New York Times, Women's Health, PsychologyToday.com, Marie Claire, Woman's Day, Parent Map and in a popular social welfare policy text. She has hosted a policy-focused radio show, written magazine features and authors well-received blogs. As an expert witness, she has worked with Yale, Columbia and New York University law schools, immigrant and gay rights organizations, and law firms such as Sidley Austin LLP.

Availability

Keynote, Moderator, Panelist, Workshop, Host/MC, Author Appearance, Corporate Training

Industry Expertise

Social Services, Health and Wellness, Education/Learning, Management Consulting

Areas of Expertise

Stress Management, Mental Health Advocacy , Organizational Change and Design, Community Organizing & Development, Change Management & Strategic Planning, Online Education, Bipolar Disorder, Mental Health Education, Public Health and Health Services

Affiliations

American Public Health Association, Council on Social Work Education

Grand Challenges

Close the health gap

More than 60 million Americans experience devastating one-two punches to their health—they have inadequate access to basic health care while also enduring the effects of discrimination, poverty, and dangerous environments that accelerate higher rates of illness. Innovative and evidence-based social strategies can improve health care and lead to broad gains in the health of our entire society.

Eradicate social isolation

Social isolation is a silent killer—as dangerous to health as smoking. National and global health organizations have underscored the hidden, deadly, and pervasive hazards stemming from feeling alone and abandoned. Our challenge is to educate the public on this health hazard, encourage health and human service professionals to address social isolation, and promote effective ways to deepen social connections and community for people of all ages.

Advance long and productive lives

Increased automation and longevity demand new thinking by employers and employees regarding productivity. Young people are increasingly disconnected from education or work and the labor force faces significant retirements in the next decades. Throughout the lifespan, fuller engagement in education and paid and unpaid productive activities can generate a wealth of benefits, including better health and well-being, greater financial security, and a more vital society.

Education

University of California, Berkeley
PhD Social Welfare

University of California, Berkeley
MPH Maternal & Child Health; International Health

McGill University
MSW

University of Ottawa
BSS Sociology

McGill University
BSW

Testimonials

Jeffrey L. Edleson, PhD

Dr. White's talk about the stigma of mental illness was engaging, practical and thought-provoking. Using examples from popular culture, and her life, she illustrates the process and outcomes of stigmatization, with support from the research literature. She helps the audience explore their biases against people living with mental illness, and provides strategies for challenging them

Katia Mitova

Dr. White gave an engaging, interactive 50-minute talk. She masterfully balanced observations from research and personal experiences. The lecture was followed by a lively discussion. Several months later the students continue to refer to Dr. White's talk as a "transformative experience"

Catherine Leslie, P. E

Ruth White's presentation on cultural awareness brought new insight and opened doors to a group of engineers who are doing engineering projects in the developing world. Her presentation was insightful and engaging and demonstrated the need for a community practice rather than an engineering fix. Ms White was able to cross communication lines and was able to appeal to a more technical based audience.

Anna Morgan-Mullane DSW, LCSW

Dr. White has by far been the most inspirational professor I have had in my entire academic career. The passion Dr. White demonstrates within her lectures have encouraged numerous students to apply themselves beyond their own expectations. Using her unique sense of humor, Dr. White comes across as an extremely accessible and enjoyable lecturer. She can speak to a large group of college students and not only get them all to laugh, but she can also make them feel as though she's made a personal connection to each and every one of them.

Anthony Kkonde

Dr. White has a reputation for being effective and efficient and committed to the needs of the community. She is held in the highest regard by community health workers, traditional birth attendants and health professionals in the region because she is a woman of her word who goes the extra mile to give her best. She brings out the best in colleagues by building capacity through training or through mentorship or leadership, whether they are community health workers or clinic staff. As a district health officer, I have observed Dr. White for 5 years and found her work to be of the highest quality in her collaboration with the Njeru community. She lets the community set the agenda and then she works with them to achieve their goals.

Faustine Ngarambe

Ruth White is a down to earth lady who can use her profession and little resources to change the world. She initiated a project “Safe Motherhood” in Njeru Town Council Uganda. Her ability to involve the community to take the lead was amazing and inspirational to the community leaders and the local NGOs

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