

Nikita Aggarwal, MSW

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Education

Ph.D. Candidate, Social Work
School of Social Work
University of Maryland, Baltimore

Fall 2025
(Expected Graduation)

Master of Social Work
School of Social Work
Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India

May 2017

Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Political Science
Lady Shri Ram College, Delhi, India

May 2014

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Workplace victimization; social determinants of health; health equity and social justice; ethnically minoritized populations; acculturative stress; precarious working and living conditions; risk behaviors; economic inequities; community-based participatory research; mixed-methods; advanced statistical and qualitative methods; global social work

TEACHING INTERESTS

Human Behavior in the Social Environment; Advanced Social Work Practice with Communities, Organizations, Individuals, Groups, and Families; Social Welfare Policy; Social Policy Theories; Community Organizing and Planning; Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed-method Research Designs

Publications

Aggarwal, N. & Smith, E. (2024). Acculturative stress and psychological distress during COVID-19 among racial-ethnic minority immigrants in the US. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15313204.2024.2335899>

Harmon-Darrow, C., Aggarwal, N., & Finigan-Carr, N. (2024). Law enforcement training on child trafficking: Engaging all stakeholders. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 18. <https://doi.org/10.1093/police/paae077>

Graham, L., Hopkins, C. Q., Cavaletto, A., Aggarwal, N. (In press) Using restorative justice to respond to and prevent sexual harm: A qualitative study of formal practices in six countries. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*.

Park, E., Shdaimah, C., Aggarwal, N., & Garzón-Hampton, A. (2024). “Roadblocks and passageways”: Pandemic lessons for helping graduate students survive and thrive in times of crisis. *Journal of Graduate Education Research* 5(1). <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/jger/vol5/iss1/4>

Michalopoulos, L., Jiwatram-Negrón, T., Ahmed, S., Diaz, M., Asombang, M., Ward, M., Nemphos, N., Aggarwal, N., Kamugisha, S., & Mwansa, M. (2023). Utilizing the ADAPT-ITT Method to Adapt an Evidence-based Intervention Addressing HIV, Trauma and Mental Health Risks among Female Fish Traders in Zambia. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 53(7), 3344–

Manuscripts Under Review

Aggarwal, N., Michalopoulos, L., Northrup, T. & Ncube, N. (Under Review). Examining Trauma, Mental Health, and Risk Behaviors among Long-Distance Truck Drivers in Zambia. *Global Social Welfare*

Harmon-Darrow, C., **Aggarwal, N.**, Buress-Cousins, K., & Finigan-Carr, N. (Under Review). Child welfare professionals serving child sex trafficking victims: Changes in knowledge and self-efficacy over time. *Social Work in Public Health*.

Cardenas, I., **Aggarwal, N** & Postmus, L. J. (Under review). The Association between Immigration Status-related Intimate Partner Violence and Financial Strain Among Women. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*

Presentations

Refereed Presentations

Aggarwal, N. & Michalopoulos, L. (2025, January). Mapping the Health and Mental Health Needs Among a Rural Fishing Community in Zambia [Oral Paper]. Society for Social Work and Research Conference, Seattle, Washington.

Cardenas, I., **Aggarwal, N** & Postmus, L. J. (2025, January). The Association between Immigration Status-related Intimate Partner Violence and Financial Strain Among Women [Poster Presenter]. Society for Social Work and Research Conference, Seattle, Washington.

Aggarwal, N., (2024, January) *Association between workplace violations and behavioral health outcomes among migrant workers: A modified systematic review* [Poster Presenter]. Society for Social Work and Research Conference, Washington, DC.

Aggarwal, N., & Michalopoulos, L., (2024, January) *Trauma, mental health problems and HIV risk behaviors among long-distance truckers from Southern Africa* [Poster Presenter]. Society for Social Work and Research Conference, Washington, DC.

Aggarwal, N., & Michalopoulos, L., (2023, November) *Examining the relationship between trauma, mental health, and HIV risk behavior among long-distance truckers from Zambia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo*. [Poster Presenter]. International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, Los Angeles, CA.

Smith Jr. E. & **Aggarwal, N.**, (2023, January) *Directed acyclic graph construction through the use of theory and research. Building & using directed acyclic graphs to inform causal analysis in social work research* [Symposia]. Society for Social Work and Research Conference, Phoenix, AZ.

Deng, Y, **Aggarwal, N.** & Adams, V., (2023, January) *Using a directed acyclic graph to inform research with propensity score analysis. Building & using directed acyclic graphs to inform causal analysis in social work research* [Symposia]. Society for Social Work and Research Conference, Phoenix, AZ.

Harmon-Darrow, C., Buress-Cousins, K., & **Aggarwal, N.**, (2022, November) *Human trafficking-related field placements: Tensions in the work* [Oral paper]. Council of Social Work education, Annual Program Meeting, Anaheim, CA.

Aggarwal, N., Evans, K. & Siegel, J. (2022, November) *Continuum of exploitation for*

immigrant workers: Disparity in accessibility and implications for human behavior [Interactive Workshop]. Council of Social Work education, Annual Program Meeting, Anaheim, CA.

Aggarwal, N & Smith Jr. E. (2022, November) *The impact of acculturative stress and COVID-19 on racially minoritized immigrants' psychological functioning* [Oral paper]. Council of Social Work education, Annual Program Meeting, Anaheim, CA.

Aggarwal, N. & Smith Jr. E. (2022, November) *Promotion of psychological well-being amongst racially minoritized immigrants during the COVID-19 pandemic* [Roundtable]. American Public Health Association, Boston, MA.

Aggarwal, N. & Mack, L.J. (2022, June). *Ambiguous and tangible loss: Risks for left-behind children of parents immigrating for work* [Poster Presenter]. International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, Tallinn, Estonia.

Aggarwal, N. & Long, C. (2022, March). *Overlooked through multiple lenses: Sex-trafficked LGBTQIA+ immigrant and refugee children in the US* [Poster Presenter]. International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, Quebec City, Canada.

Shdaimah, C., Park, E., & **Aggarwal, N.** (2022, January). *Graduate school adaptations during COVID-19* [Oral paper]. Society for Social Work and Research Conference, Washington, DC.

Invited Presentations

Aggarwal, N. (October 2024). Community-engaged research using a mixed-method approach. Qualitative Research Methods Panel. University of Maryland School of Social Work.

Michalopoulos, L., & **Aggarwal, N.** (May 2024). *The moving well project: A mobile application addressing the health and mental health needs of long-distance truckers from Zambia. How does research relate to practice?* BHWell Lab University of Maryland School of Social Work.

Aggarwal, N., Katerere, R., & Gilgoff, J. (April 2022). *Nuts and bolts of social work research: Insights from research practicum cohort.* Social Work Research Course. University of Maryland School of Social Work.

Shdaimah, C., Park, E., & **Aggarwal, N.** (October 2021). *"Super Lucky": Pandemic lessons of graduate student survival and success.* [Guest Presenter]. University of Delaware.

Research Experience

Graduate Research Assistant, UMB

Faculty mentor: Dr. Laurie Graham, Ph.D.

Project: Levitas Initiative Photovoice Project on Sexual Violence and Prevention among Youth

Funder: The State of Maryland

Topic areas: Sexual violence, prevention, dating violence

- Currently working on creating photovoice protocol using SHOWED technique.
- Participating in a photovoice training

Graduate Research Assistant, UMB

Sep 2023-Aug 2024

Faculty mentor: Lynn Murphy Michalopoulos, AM, Ph.D.

Project: Thai Kickboxing as an Adjunct to Talk Therapy Afghan Refugees: A feasibility and acceptability study

Funder: Institute for Clinical & Translational Research (ICTR) Grant and Health Equity and Health

Population (HEPH) Grant.

Topic areas: Labor migrants, Refugee Trauma Survivors, Trauma, HIV prevention, Global Health

- Worked on grant proposal writing and contributed background, research objectives, and measurement sections.
- Conducted mid-intervention focus-group discussion with Afghan female refugees.
- Conducted advanced statistical data analysis (such as multivariate regression models) and prepared a manuscript for publication.
- Conducted interviews with participants who were trauma survivors.

Summer Research Intern, Occupational Health Internship Project

Jun-Aug 2023

Association of Occupational & Environmental Clinics

- Developed and conducted community-participatory research on workplace violence among transit workers in the D.C., Maryland, and Virginia (DMV) area.
- Developed surveys on workplace violence and its impact on the mental and behavioral health of transit workers.
- Conducted informal interviews and focus-group discussions with transit workers in DC and Virginia.
- Conducted advanced data analysis and wrote reports and recommendation documents for different stakeholders. Supported developing an assault reporting system and procedures that unions, transit agencies, and officials will use.
- Offered a comparative safety study at WMATA and the surrounding privately operated systems in the DMV area

Research Team Member, UMB

Jan 2023-May 2023

Faculty mentor: Dr. Nalini Negi, Ph.D.

Project: Photo-elicitation Project- COVID-19 and behavioral health needs of Latino immigrant men in Baltimore.

- Conducted street recruitment of immigrant workers.
- Conducted informal interviews.

Graduate Research Assistant, UMB

Jul 2022-Jun 2023

Faculty mentor: Dean Judy Postmus, Ph.D., ACSW

Projects: Violence Against Women Research Consortium; Immigration abuse and financial strain among immigrant IPV survivors, part of Testing and Validating Financial Measures with IPV Survivors project.

Funder: National Institute of Justice (NIJ).

Topic areas: Domestic violence, IPV, Teen dating violence, Stalking, Victimization

- Conducted advanced statistical analysis (such as multivariate interaction models) and developed a manuscript.
- Conducted and wrote the literature reviews.
- Facilitated listening sessions with researchers and practitioners in the field of violence against women and assisted in note-taking.
- Conducted content analysis for webinars.
- Co-authored a blueprint on the prevalence of victimization and perpetration of gender-based violence against women in the US for the National Institute of Justice.

Graduate Research Assistant, UMB

Sept 2021-Jun

2022 Prevention of Adolescent Risks Initiative (PARI),

Faculty mentor: Dr. Nadine Finigan-Carr, Ph.D.

Topic areas: Human trafficking, Adolescent sex, and labor trafficking, Child protection and safety

- Reviewed training for child welfare personnel working with child victims of trafficking.
- Wrote and contributed to manuscripts using statewide training data of law enforcement and

child welfare professionals.

- Completed institutional review board (IRB) applications.
- Developed surveys and supported recruitment for environmental child labor trafficking scan.

Graduate Research Assistant, UMB

Mar 2021-Jul 2021

Field Placement Office, University of Maryland SSW

Faculty mentor: Dr. Samuel Little, Ph.D., LCSW-C

Topic areas: Homelessness, Racial and ethnic minority

- Reviewed and edited book chapters.
- Created an online survey on field seminar student feedback and analyzed survey data using STATA.
- Conducted a literature review on breastfeeding programs for low-income women.
- Prepared reports using field placement data of MSW students.

Research Team Member, UMB

May-Aug 2021

Faculty mentor: Dr. Laurie Graham, Ph.D.

Project: Restorative Justice for people who experienced and perpetrated sexual violence.

- Created codebook and conducted thematic coding.
- Contributed to the manuscript using qualitative themes/codes developed from the data transcripts of restorative justice providers.

Research Team Member, UMB

Dec 2020-Jul 2021

Faculty mentor: Dr. Corey Shdaimah, Ph.D.

Project: Pandemic lessons for helping graduate students survive and thrive in times of crisis.

- Conducted semi-structured interviews with graduate students in US universities.
- Conducted thematic analysis and contributed to manuscript writing and publication

Research Team Member, Azad Foundation

Feb 2018-May 2018

Project: Walk Out Study” with migrant women who left the livelihood training program of the organization

- Conducted face-to-face interviews and developed case studies to explore the perceived impact of commercial driving on physical and mental health.
- Conducted exploratory quantitative (bivariate analysis using STATA) and qualitative coding.

M.A Dissertation, Tata Institute of Social Sciences

Jan 2016-Mar 2017

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Trupti Panchal, Ph.D.

Project: Dissertation on understanding economic abuse among migrant women survivors of domestic violence.

- Conducted mixed-method research using face-to-face interviews and surveys to explore experiences of economic violence and examine whether economic empowerment reduces the incidence of violence at home.

Teaching Experience

Guest Lecturer

Nov 2022

School of Social Work, George Washington University

BSW Course: Professional Relationships in Human Services (in-person)

Instructor Linda-Jeanne Mack

Guest Lecturer

Mar 2022

School of Social Work, University of Maryland.

MSW Course: SOWK 632: Group Work in Social Work Practice (in-person)

Instructor Everett Smith Jr.

Teaching Assistant

Jan-May 2022

School of Social Work, University of Maryland

MSW Course: SOWK 645: Human Behavior and the Social Environment (Hybrid)

Professor Dr. Caroline Long

Clinical Experience

Program Coordinator, Outreach and Mobilization

Jun 2017-Aug 2019

Azad Foundation, New Delhi

- Planned, directed, and delivered mobilization activities to register and enroll eligible and interested young women in the *Women on Wheels* training program.
- Conducted weekly community visits to connect newly arriving resource-poor immigrant families to health care, employment, and educational services.
- Designed and implemented outreach activities such as training camps in resettled immigrant communities and focused group discussions (FGDs) with immigrant women, men and families.
- Partnered with non-profits and organized large campaigns aimed at addressing neighborhood crime and community violence against women.
- Conducted qualitative research with women in the livelihood program, maintained a large database, and provided technical assistance to partnering non-profits in community-based research.
- Apprenticed on the Parvaz- Feminist Leadership Program with the following responsibilities in addition to my primary role:
 - o Planned and designed training sessions with a particular focus on gender-based violence, gender, patriarchy, sexuality, communication and social media, power, group dynamics, and social positionality.
 - o Conducted pre-and post-training program evaluation using surveys and semi-structured interviews.
 - o Recorded case studies of women trainees in the leadership program.
 - o Program management and implementation and logistical assistance.
 - o Organized dissemination event in the community- photo exhibition using women's case studies.
 - o Mentored women community leaders to liaise with government stakeholders and other local authorities in the community.

Graduate Intern

Jun 2016-Dec 2016

Navjeevan Mahila Vastigruh (Women's Shelter), Mumbai, India

- Organized sessions on reproductive health rights for women engaged in sex work.
- Assisted in counseling sessions, recorded case notes, assisted in court visits, and legal aid.

Research Intern

Mar 2016-Apr 2016

Sutra, Himachal Pradesh, India

- Conducted an ethnography study with rural families and local authorities (village heads).
- Developed case studies of women in self-help groups.

Graduate Intern

Jul 2015-Mar 2016

Hamara Foundation, Mumbai, India

- Organized health camps in resettled Muslim communities in Central Mumbai..
- Conducted casework and group work with youth experiencing homelessness.

- Organized sessions on reproductive health and adolescents' health.
- Collaborated with the Family Planning Association to conduct cancer screening tests among migrant Muslim women experiencing homelessness.

Graduate Intern

Jul 2015–Mar 2016

ChildLine 1098, Mumbai, India

- Conducted outreach work, in collaboration with child welfare organizations, in central railway stations in Mumbai
- Assisted child welfare organizations in connecting young boys and girls to relevant health and mental health services.

Awards

Global Scholar Funding Award

Spring 2024

University of Maryland, Center for Global Engagement

Dissertation Award

Spring 2024

University of Maryland, School of Social Work

Graduate Student Association (GSA) Travel Award

Fall 2023

International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies Conference, Los Angeles, CA

UMB SSW Ph.D. Travel Fellowship

Fall 2023

International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies Conference, Los Angeles, CA

Graduate Student Association (GSA) Travel Award

Fall 2022

Council of Social Work Education Conference, Phoenix, AZ

UMB SSW Ph.D. Travel Fellowship

Fall 2022

American Public Health Association, Boston, MA

Professional Development Award, GSA

Spring 2022

Council of Social Work Education Conference, Orlando, FL

Academic and Community Services

Academic Services

Co-chair

Aug 2023-Present

UMB Qualitative Research Interest Group

Reviewer

Systematic Reviews Journal

Mar 2023-Present

Perspectives on Social Work (PSW)

Dec 2022-Jan 2024

Community Services

Summer Program Coordinator Intern

Feb 2015-Apr 2015

Teach for India

- Conducted educational workshops on extra-curricular activities with young girls in a government primary school.

Volunteer

Jul 2013-Dec 2013

Udyaan Care

- Assisted in counseling sessions for girls in the age group of 4 - 17 years who have no familial, economic, or educational support.

Volunteer

Jul 2011-Apr 2012

Friendicoes, Animal Shelter (SECA)

- Managed administrative responsibilities, including fundraising events.

Professional Affiliations

Senior Volunteer Coordinator

Present-Jan 2025

Conference Committee, Society for Social Work and Research

- Collaborate with the conference e-board and liaise with the volunteer committee.
- Conducted interviews to form a new volunteer committee.
- Provide on-site support to the committee.
- Mentor lead and deputy volunteer for future involvement with SSWR.

Lead Volunteer Coordinator

May 2023-Jan 2024

Conference Committee, Society for Social Work and Research

- Conducted volunteer training.
- Provided on-site support to deputy volunteer coordinators.
- Mentored deputy volunteer coordinators for future involvement with SSWR.

President

Aug 2023-Jul 2024

Vice-president

Jun 2022-Jul 2023

International Student Committee, School of Social Work UMB

- Organized writing groups for international students.
- Organized cultural events.
- Organized fundraising initiative to financially support professional development opportunities for international students.

Member, Mentoring Committee

May 2022-May 2023

Doctoral Student Association, Society for Social Work Research

- Matched mentors and mentees across the global and national universities.
- Facilitated the Coffee with a Scholar and New Attendee Programs.

Deputy Volunteer, Conference Committee

Jan 2022-Jan 2023

Society for Social Work and Research

- Logistical support for conference volunteers, including checking volunteers in and out of their shifts and troubleshooting issues such as no-shows and late arrivals.

Graduate Council Representative

May 2021-Jun 2024

Graduate Student Association, UMB

- Acted as liaison to the faculty and administration of the Graduate School.
- Supported graduate students' research interests with professional opportunities and financial assistance.

- Co-created a platform for graduates to discuss key issues affecting their academic lives.

Member, Students' Stipend Committee

Apr 2021-May 2022

Graduate Student Association, University of Maryland

- Advocated for student stipend increase to match the cost-of-living index.

Languages

Hindi

Written, Spoken, Understood

English

Written, Spoken, Understood