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Member Spotlight: Meenakshi Richardson, PhD, MS, MPH (Haliwa- Saponi)

AUTHOR

Meenakshi Richardson, PhD, MS, MPH
(Haliwa - Saponi)

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Bio:

Meenakshi Richardson (she, her, hers) is a citizen of the Haliwa-Saponi Tribe and of Indo-Fijian descent. She has worked alongside diverse Indigenous communities, government entities, and community-based organizations to provide health and human services, community-based participatory research, and Indigenous informed systems of care. She engages and advocates for reciprocal collaborations through decolonial praxis to address intergenerational trauma, health equity, and social justice. Her research interests involve trauma transmission prevention among Indigenous populations and communities of color via kinship systems, caregiver-child relationships, traditional healing modalities, and protective socio-

ecological determinants of health to address various health outcomes such as substance use and toxic stress through trauma-informed, culturally grounded prevention, and strength-based intervention strategies that center Indigenous knowledge and methodologies.

Have you recently or do you currently serve on any SRCD Committees, Councils, or task forces?

Secretary, Indigenous Caucus Governing Council

What motivates you to continue to pursue your field of study?

The love of my people motivates me to carry out research and knowledge sharing as a good relative. My efforts are rooted in relationship and uplifting the interconnectedness of Indigenous communities to one another, to the land, and to our more than human kin. I am truly grateful to take part in highlighting cultural strengths and fostering generational healing for the health and well-being of our future generations.

What advice would you give to a student beginning their Ph.D. studies in developmental science or related?

- Stay true to your values and connections to your community and sources of support.
- Strengthen relationships that foster your well-being and those that you work with and learn alongside.
- Seek out training opportunities and mentorship that will expand your perspectives and skillsets.
- Set aside time for rest, reflection, and rejuvenation - I encourage you to center in your own interests outside of work/school to support your health and wellness.

What hobbies do you engage in or enjoy?

I enjoy beading, yoga, reading, growing and harvesting plants, blending medicinal teas, cooking, and birding.

What publication or book would you say is a must read in the field (and why)?

Research is Ceremony by Shawn Wilson - A beautiful grounding in positionality and self-reflexivity in research practice for Indigenous and allied scholars working alongside community.