



2015-2016 ISPRC Staff

Director

Cara Feldberg: An Interview with the Burke School Advocate Supervisor

How would you describe your experience supervising counselors-in-training to become Advocates? What are the positives and challenges?

I am thrilled to supervise BC students as Advocates in their work with the Burke high school students. This position integrates my two past major vocations and passions—community organizing and clinical psychology. Having a chance to examine and promote the importance of addressing systemic issues as a causal factor in the complicated lives of these high school students who are racially, ethnically and economically diverse is so important. Creating a safe space to learn about, discuss, and integrate into advocacy work critical identity issues—race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, religion, immigration status, trauma, and systematic barriers—that perpetuate inequalities seems particularly relevant as our country becomes more divisive. I also find working with students who are dedicated to issues of social justice and committed to honing their clinical skills inspiring, and it provides me with a sense of hope for the next generation.

There have been many positives to this experience. Many authentic, caring relationships developed between BC Advocates and their Burke high school student partners. This might sound trite, but such relationships truly can have impact as the teens get the message that they matter, that their experiences and ideas are worthy, that they have strengths and potential. It is also gratifying when the advocacy works in concrete ways. This year small and significant gains have been made — improved teacher-student connections, writing applications for summer programs, better attendance, access to tutoring, testing, involvement in a sports team, and providing a space to grieve,

Burke School Advocacy Program

ISPRC continues to provide advocacy services to the students at the Jeremiah E. Burke High School, a racially, ethnically and economically diverse high school in Dorchester, MA. Now in our 6th year, the ISPRC Advocates empower and provide a voice for the students in helping them advocate for their needs while connecting them to appropriate resources. Graduate students are paired with one or two students at The Burke and assess for emotional and social barriers to their students' school engagement while collaborating with their students to create goals and problem solving strategies. They also work with Burke faculty and staff to identify resources and collaborate with school and community agencies. Finally, Boston College Advocates

A collage of 12 images showing various scenes from the ISPRC 2019 conference. The images include: a group of people in a hallway; a group of people holding a sign that says 'ISPRC 2019'; a person sitting at a desk; a person standing in a hallway; a person sitting at a desk; a person standing in a hallway; a person sitting at a desk; a person standing in a hallway; a person sitting at a desk; a person standing in a hallway; a person sitting at a desk; a person standing in a hallway.

Helms, J.E. (2015, June) Invited Talk, "Challenging Myths When Working in Other Cultures," Conference on Multicultural and Global Mental Health, William James College, Newton, MA.

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