

Melanie A. Sonsteng-Person

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ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

2022-Present **Postdoctoral Associate**
School of Special Education, School Psychology, and Early Childhood Studies
College of Education
University of Florida

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Department of Social Welfare, UCLA, June 2022
Dissertation: *The (re)production of violence and trauma in high schools: How institutional policies and practices influence teacher and staff decision making*
Committee: Todd Franke (Chair), Ron Avi Astor, Sheryl Kataoka, Jorja Leap

M.S.W School of Social Work, Boston University, 2014
Advisor: Melvin Delgado
Concentration: Macro Practice

B.A. Department of Psychology, Azusa Pacific University, 2011

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

- 2021 **Sonsteng-Person, M.**, Loomis, A. (2021). The Role of Trauma-Informed Training in Helping Los Angeles Teachers Manage the Effects of Student Exposure to Violence and Trauma. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Trauma*, 14, 189-199. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40653-021-00340-6>
- 2020 Loomis, A. **Sonsteng-Person, M.**, Jagers, J., and Osteen, P. (2020). School discipline as a consequence of violent victimization: Understanding the mediating roles of head injury and fighting. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 1-29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520959635>
- 2020 Jagers, J., **Sonsteng-Person, M.**, Griffiths, A., Gabbard, W. J., & Murray, M. (2020). Behavioral problems and psychological distress among seriously

delinquent youth: Assessing a mediational pathway of parental monitoring, peer delinquency and violence exposure. *Youth and Society*, 53(2), 230-251. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X20922114>

- 2020 **Sonsteng-Person, M.**, Herrera, L., Koonse, T., & Zatz, N. (2020). “Any alternative is great if I’m incarcerated”: A mixed-methods study of court-ordered community service in Los Angeles county. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 48(1), 32-53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854820923373>

Revise and Resubmit

Sonsteng-Person, M., **Garcia-Perez, J., ** Liévano-Karim, L. **Copeland, V., *Abrams, D., *Van Leeuwen, J., *Bunney, R., *Cooley-Valdez, R., * Jarman, B., and *Taitingfong, S. “What I Would Do to Take Away Your Pain”: A Photovoice study with mothers of children with medical complexities. *Qualitative Health Research*.

Under Review

Sonsteng-Person, M., Jagers, J., Loomis, A. (*First Round Review*) Academic Achievement after Violence Exposure: The Indirect Effects of School Attachment and Motivation to Succeed. *Children and Youth Services Review*. (Submitted May 2021)

Sonsteng-Person, M., **Vugic, L., ** Sandell, L., and **Lowery, C. “The trauma of system failure:” The interactional process affecting MSW Intern Trauma Exposure Response. *Journal of Social Work Education*.

In Preparation

Sonsteng-Person, M., & **Fensterstock, N. “At what point do you ask a suicidal teen to do their math homework?”: How Los Angeles teachers are navigating the impacts of community violence and trauma.

*King-Shaw, N., *King-Shaw, S., & *Orduro, A. **Sonsteng-Person, M.**, **Mikell, D. The normalization of continuous trauma derived from White Supremacy culture in educational systems: A Photovoice study with Black undergraduate students.

Research Reports

- 2021 Franke, T.M., Litt, J., **Sonsteng-Person, M.**, Sabat Bass, N, and Leap, J. *LACOE Community Schools Annual Evaluation Report – Year 1*. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA Agile Visual Analytics Lab.

- 2020 **Sonsteng-Person, M.** and *Van Leeuwen, J. *Cultivating engagement in a virtual photovoice project on a sensitive topic*. PhotovoiceWorldwide White Paper Series (1)2. Marlborough, MA: PhotovoiceWorldwide LLC <http://www.photovoiceworldwide.com/wordpress-whitepaper/papers/CultivatingEngagement.pdf>

- 2020 Franke, T., Blagg, R., & **Sonsteng-Person, M.** *The Antelope Valley Community Survey: Year 2*. Sisylana Evaluation and Consulting. <http://www.antelopevalleysettlementmonitoring.info/>
- 2019 Herrera, L., Koonse, T., **Sonsteng-Person, M.**, & Zatz, N. *Is Forced Labor the Price of Freedom?: Court-Ordered Community Service in Los Angeles*, University of California, Labor Center. <https://www.labor.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Get-to-Work324.pdf>
- 2016 **Sonsteng-Person, M.**, *Promising Strategies for Youth Gun Violence Reduction: An Analysis of the Ceasefire Model*, Wayne State University, Center for Urban Studies.
- 2014 **Sonsteng, M.**, *An Evaluation of Resident Engagement in Community Coalitions to Reduce Community Violence: Are We Doing It Right?* Boston Public Health Commission, Division of Violence Prevention and Intervention.

SELECTED FELLOWSHIPS AND FUNDING

- 2021-2022 Frank D. Gilliam, Jr. Social Justice Award, UCLA School of Public Affairs
- 2018-2020 Social Justice Graduate Fellowship, UCLA Institute of American Cultures
- 2019 Graduate Summer Research Mentorship Fellowship, UCLA Graduate Division
- 2017-2022 Meyer and Renee Luskin Fellowship, UCLA Department of Social Welfare
- 2012-2014 Urban Practice Scholarship, Boston University School of Social Work

CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

Panels Organized

- 2022 **Sonsteng-Person, M.**, Jordan, S., Copeland, V., & Mikell, D. *Keeping the P in PAR during Analysis: A Critical Discussion on Participatory Strategies to Analyzing Data*. Society for Social Work Research. Washington DC.
- 2021 **Sonsteng-Person, M.**, Ritterbusch, A., Mikell, D., Jordan, S., & Brock-Petroshius, K. *Centering Social Justice in the Social Work Research Process: Reflections from Doctoral Students' Participatory Action Research Initiatives in Southern California*. Society for Social Work Research. Virtual.
- 2020 **Sonsteng-Person, M.**, Richards-Schuster, K. Teixeira, S., Ritterbusch, A., and Mikell, D. *Advancing Justice or Tokenism? Critical Discussion of the Past and Future of Participatory Approaches to Research in Social Work*. Society for Social Work Research. Washington DC. <https://sswr.confex.com/sswr/2020/webprogram/Session10523.html>

Papers

- 2022 **Sonsteng-Person, M. & Mikell, D.** “Re-Lensing Predominantly White Universities: Examining and Advocating for Black Thriving within PWI through Photovoice.” Society for Social Work Research. Washington DC.
- 2020 Lee, D., Umemoto, K., Nguyen, T., **Sonsteng-Person, M.** & Allen, T. “Ethnic Studies and Public Scholarship: The Co-Creation of K–12 Curriculum Using University-Based Archival Materials.” AERA Annual Meeting San Francisco, CA <http://tinyurl.com/srzk2wn> (Conference Canceled)
- 2020 **Sonsteng-Person, M.**, Zatz, N., Koonse, T., and Herrera, L. “Any Alternative is Great if I’m Incarcerated:” A Mixed-Methods Study of Court-Ordered Community Service in Los Angeles County. Society for Social Work Research. Washington DC.
<https://sswr.confex.com/sswr/2020/webprogram/Session11107.html>
- 2019 “Educational Implications of Community Violence & Trauma: How Los Angeles Teachers are Dealing with Effects in the Classroom.” National Center for School Mental Health. Austin, Texas.
<http://www.schoolmentalhealth.org/media/SOM/Microsites/NCSMH/Documents/ASMH-2019/Presentations-2019/CS-1.09.-Educational-Implications-of-Community-Violence-&-Trauma.pdf>

Posters

- 2022 **Sonsteng-Person, M.** & Vugic, L., “MSW Interns’ Secondary Traumatic Stress: The impact of Self, Supervisor, and System.” Council on Social Work Education. Anaheim, CA.
- 2022 **Sonsteng-Person, M.**, Lesser, D., Abrams, D., Van Leeuwen, J., Bunney, R., Cooley-Valdez, R., Jarman, B., and Taitingfong, S. “What I Would Do to Take Away Your Pain’: A Photovoice study with mothers of children with medical complexities.” Rady’s Children’s Hospital Pediatric Research Symposium. San Diego, CA.
- 2022 Loomis, A. M., **Sonsteng-Person, M.**, Coffey, R., & Freed, S. “Using multilevel modeling to identify trauma-informed mechanisms of change for preschool expulsion risk.” Society for Social Work Research. Washington DC.
- 2021 Jagers, J., Loomis, A., **Sonsteng-Person, M.**, & Osteen, P. “Victimization and Suspension/Expulsion in Adolescence: Exploring Pathways through Fighting and Head Injury.” Society for Social Work Research. Virtual.
- 2020 **Sonsteng-Person, M.**, Vugic, L., Sandell, L., & Easton, S. “Secondary Traumatic Stress: How Prepared are MSW Interns and Supervisors?” Council on Social Work Education. Virtual.

2020 Jagers, J., Sonsteng-Person, M., Church, W. "Mediating Factors Contributing to Psychological Distress in Serious Delinquent Offenders." Society for Social Work Research. Washington DC.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- 2021-2022 Principal Investigator
Project: Photovoice and Social Change: How Researchers use Photovoice to Influence Policy and Practice Worldwide
Management: Collaborated with Photovoice World Wide staff to conduct a mixed methods study on the social change and policy outcomes of Photovoice projects conducted internationally.
- 2020-2021 Co-Principal Investigator (with community researchers)
Project: "Black Lives Matter All the Time:" A Photovoice Study on the Black College Experience
Funding: Frank D. Gilliam, Jr. Social Justice Award
Management: Collaborated with self-identified Black and African college students to create a virtual exhibition with over 100 attendees. Led to university policy for responding to racist incidents on campus.
Exhibit: <https://youtu.be/BbmgHJAjiU8>
- 2019-2021 Principal Investigator
Project: Project: Trauma Exposure Response Among MSW Interns: The Role of Self, Supervisor, and System
Funding: Boston College School of Social Work Trauma Integration Initiative
Management: Trained and managed a team of LCSW's and graduate students conducting and analyzing qualitative data utilizing a grounded theory approach.
- 2019-2021 Co-Principal Investigator (with community researchers)
Project: Finding our Voices: A Photovoice Study with Mothers of Children with Medical Complexities
Funding: Community funded (\$2,000)
Management: Collaborated with mothers to create a virtual exhibition with over 200 attendees that led to the following changes: (1) Three universities used the recorded exhibit as training for nurses, social workers, and public health professionals. (2) An arts support group for mothers was created in response to mothers highlighting the lack of supports. (3) Rady Children's Hospital in San Diego created a mentorship program for parents of children with medical complexities.
Exhibit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2ZIEmI7xG8>
- 2019-2021 Graduate Student Researcher, UCLA and Department of Mental Health

Project: Evaluation of the Community Schools Program in Los Angeles County Schools

PI: Todd Franke, PhD

Funding: Los Angeles Department of Mental Health

Management: Led the qualitative evaluation for the Community Schools Initiative across 16 high schools in the Los Angeles County Office of Education. Trained and supervised undergraduate and graduate students in qualitative data collection and analysis.

2019-2020

Principal Investigator

Project: Educational Implications of Community Violence and Trauma: How Los Angeles Teachers are Dealing with the Effects in the Classroom

Funding: Graduate Summer Research Mentorship, UCLA Graduate Division

Management: Trained and managed a team of undergraduate and graduate students conducting and analyzing qualitative data utilizing thematic analysis in ATLAS.ti.

2019-2020

Co-Investigator

Project: Ethnic Studies and Public Scholarship: The Co-Creation of K-12 Curriculum Using University-based Archival Materials

Funding: Institute of American Cultures, UCLA

Management: Aided in the development and implementation of an evaluation of a K-12 Ethnic Studies training for teachers on curriculum development on Japanese American Internment, Mass Incarceration, and Solidarity Movements.

2019-2020

Research Assistant, Sisylana Evaluation and Consulting

Project: The Antelope Valley Community Survey: Year 2

Funding: Department of Justice

Management: Conducted survey data collection and analysis Aided in data of an annual survey for Antelope Valley residents intended to assess perceptions of the relationship between the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and the community.

2019

Graduate Student Researcher, UCLA Labor Center

Project: The California Workforce Development Board High Road Training Partnership Evaluation

PIs: Ana Luz Gonzalez-Vasquez, PhD and Magaly Lopez, MA

Funding: California Workforce Development Board

Management: Led qualitative analysis of focus groups to evaluate the High Road Training Partnership. Trained and supervised a team of work study students and graduate students in Dedoose.

2018- 2019

Graduate Student Researcher, UCLA Labor Center

Project: Community Service as an Alternative Sanction to Incarceration

PIs: Tia Koonse, J.D. and Noah Zatz, J.D.

Funding: Arnold Foundation

Management: Conducted mixed methods study to examine labor coercion among individuals serving community service sentences as an alternative to incarceration in Los Angeles County. Collected and analyzed qualitative data. Trained and managed a team of work study and graduate students through the transcribing and coding process utilizing Dedoose.

Outcome: Findings used to influence the State Bill SB71 and the motion to repeal LA County's fees passed in February 2020.

2017- 2018 Graduate Student Researcher, UCLA Department of Anthropology
Project: Gang Reduction Youth Development Program Evaluation
PI: P. Jeffrey Brantingham, Ph.D.
Management: Analyzed a quantitative database of 25,000 respondents to evaluate prevention program outcomes of the Los Angeles City Mayor's Office Gang Reduction Youth Development Program.

2015-2017 Research Assistant, Wayne State University, Center for Urban Studies
PI: Lyke Thompson, Ph.D.
Management: Analyzed Detroit Police Department data utilizing CompSTAT and GIS to identify precinct hotspots and inform crime reduction strategies. Participated in the development of a new research project on Intimate Partner Violence in Detroit. Trained and managed a team of undergraduate students.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

UCLA, Teaching Fellow (Primary Instructor)

MSW Capstone, Interpreting and Disseminating Research (Spring 2020-2022)

MSW Capstone, Data Gathering and Analysis (Winter 2020-2022)

UCLA, Teaching Fellow

Creating Safe and Welcoming Schools (Fall 2021)

Wayne State University, Field Instructor

Clinical and Community Practice (2016-2017)

PRESENTATIONS

Photovoice Exhibits

2020 "‘Black Lives Matter all the Time:’ A Personal PhotoVoice Project by Black College Students Navigating Predominantly White Universities." Virtual Exhibit, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BbmgHJAjiU8&feature=youtu.be>

2020 “‘What I Would do to Take Away Your Pain:’ Glimpses into the Heart of Motherhood.” Virtual Exhibit, <https://www.melaniesonsteng.com/two-moms-a-researcher>

Invited Talks

- 2021 *Trauma and the Helping Profession*, Lewis University School of Social Work, Practice with Individuals and Families
- 2021 *The Impact of Trauma on Educational Outcomes*, California State University Los Angeles, Urban Families and Resilience
- 2021 *Advancing Smart Decarceration Through Research: A Two-Part Virtual Conversation*, University of Chicago, Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice, Smart Decarceration Project,
- 2021 *The Impact of Trauma on Educational Outcomes*, California State University Los Angeles, Urban Families and Resilience
- 2020 *The Impact of Trauma on Educational Outcomes*, California State University Los Angeles, Urban Families and Resilience
- 2017 *Violent Communities, Trauma, and Educational Outcomes*, California State University Los Angeles, Urban Families and Resilience
- 2017 *Careers in Macro Social Work and Beyond*, Wayne State University School of Social Work
- 2017 *Providing Trauma Informed Responses to Crime Victims*, Detroit 8th Police Precinct Radio Patrol Members, Detroit, MI
- 2017 *Trauma Exposure Response for Clinicians Working with Crime Victims*, Detroit Service Corps Domestic Violence Advocates, Center for Urban Studies, Wayne State University
- 2017 *Experiencing a Crime: The process, common reactions, and community resources*, Grandmont Rosedale Neighborhood Association, Detroit, MI
- 2017 *Domestic Violence and Teen Dating Violence in Detroit*, Church of the Messiah, Detroit, MI
- 2016 *Active Listening and other Clinical Tools for Victim Advocates*, Detroit Service Corps Domestic Violence Advocates, Center for Urban Studies, Wayne State University
- 2016 *Court Preparation and Accompaniment for Crime Victims*, Detroit Service Corps Domestic Violence Advocates, Center for Urban Studies, Wayne State University

- 2016 *Detroit Crime Statistics and the Impact on the Community*, Detroit Community Empowerment Summit, Detroit, MI
- 2016 *Trauma Exposure: The Emotional and Behavioral Responses in Students*, East Detroit Public School District
- 2016 *Crisis Response and Brief Treatment for First Responders*, Detroit Community Clergy Alliance, Detroit, MI
- 2016 *The Criminal Justice Process*, Detroit Police Department Chaplain Corps, Detroit, MI

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Peer Review

2022- Present **Editor**, *Abolitionist Perspectives in Social Work*

2021-Present **Reviewer**, *Journal of Social Work Education*

2019- Present **Reviewer**, *Journal of Criminal Justice and Behavior*

Profession

2022- Present Leadership, Equity, Accountability, and Diversity Committee, ACOSA

2020- Present Steering Committee, Social Worker Equity Campaign

2020-2022 Doctoral Student Mentoring Sub-Committee, Society for Social Work and Research Conference

2020-2021 Doctoral Student Conference Planning Sub-Committee, Society for Social Work and Research Conference

2020-2022 Doctoral Student Mentor, Society for Social Work and Research Conference

University

2018-2022 Creator & Chair, Ph.D. Sunshine Committee, UCLA Department of Social Welfare

2019-2020 Student Mentor, UCLA, Department of Social Welfare, Incoming PhD Students

- 2019 Technology in Health/Mental Health Hiring Committee, UCLA, Department of Social Welfare
- 2019-2020 Student Representative, Doctoral Committee, UCLA Department of Social Welfare
- 2019 Conference Organizer, *Civil Rights in California- An Ethnic Studies Perspective*, UCLA Department of Education
- 2018-2019 Mentor, UCLA Community College to Ph.D. Program
- 2018-2019 Student Representative, Luskin Dean's Committee, UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs
- 2018-2019 Chair, Ph.D. Professional Development Committee, UCLA Department of Social Welfare
- 2017-2018 Conference Organizer, *Resistance Through Research: Social Justice Research + Activism in the Trump Era*, UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs
- 2014 Student Representative, School of Social Work Hiring Committee, Boston University
- 2012-2014 Co-President, Macro Student Government Subcommittee, Boston University

To Community

- 2019- 2022 Educational Rights Holder, Los Angeles Children's Law Center

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2016- 2017 Certified Trauma Practitioner, St. John Providence Health System, Detroit, MI
 Worked with a multidisciplinary team of law enforcement, lawyers and community agencies to provide crisis intervention and court advocacy after homicides and violent crimes occurred. Lead psychoeducational trauma and grief support groups for adults and children. Conducted outreach and education on the impact of trauma and grief on individuals and the community.
- 2015-2017 Program Manager, Wayne State University, Center for Urban Studies, Domestic Violence Advocate Project, Detroit, MI
 Worked as the program manager and field instructor for the Domestic Violence Advocate Project. I recruited and trained MSW staff to work within 10 police stations throughout Detroit. I aided in professional development of staff through weekly supervision, training in crisis response and brief treatment, and self-care

practices. Along with this I wrote successful grants and ran fundraisers to increase program funding.

- 2014-2015 7th grade Science Teacher, Brooklyn East Collegiate Charter School, Brooklyn, NY
Designed and implemented lesson plans that lead to a 5% increase in mastery on Interim Assessments. Utilized a variety of instructional methods including cooperative learning, discovery, and discussion.
- 2013-2014 Program Evaluator, Boston Public Health Commission Division of Violence Prevention, Boston, MA
Evaluated intermediate outcomes of community coalitions through a mixed methods study. Utilized evaluation findings to train coalition leaders on best practices for community outreach, engagement, and sustainment. Aided in collective action to homicides through action research, and implementation.
- 2012-2013 Program Manager, City Mission Society, Boston, MA
Worked to increased educational attainment and decrease student suspension and expulsion in a low performing elementary school. Developed a mentoring and tutoring program for students at risk of falling behind in school through needs/assets assessment, identifying best practices, creating a curriculum, and recruiting volunteers. Increased 4th grade state math scores by 4% by creating math-based day camps during breaks. Designed after school parent programs to increase parent involvement.
- 2011-2012 Clinical Case Manager, Guiding Our Youth Group Home, Los Angeles, CA
Worked with young women ages 14-18 within the foster care system to assess needs, create care plans, and achieve goals. Delivered health, educational, and behavioral services and conducted crisis intervention.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Association for Community Organization and Social Action, 2021-present

Social Welfare Action Alliance, 2021- Present

Society for Advancement of Violence and Injury Research, 2019-Present

Society for Social Work and Research, 2018-Present

California Center for Population Research, UCLA, 2017-Present

Detroit Police Department Aftercare Program, 2016-2017

Task Leader for Social Service Impact on Violence Prevention in Detroit, Community Accountability Network, 2016-2017

Victim Advocate, Detroit Community Clergy Alliance, 2016-2017

CERTIFICATIONS

2019-Present Teachstone, Certified CLASS observer, Toddler

2019-Present Teachstone, Certified CLASS observer, Pre-K

2016-Present National Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children, Certified Trauma Practitioner

2016-Present Certified in Danger Assessments

2015-2018 Michigan Department of Regulatory Affairs, Limited License, Master of Social Work