

STARLA SIMMONS, LCSW

starla.simmons@utexas.edu

EDUCATION

University of Texas at Austin

Master of Science in Social Work

Degree Earned: May 2007

Concentration: Clinical

University of Kansas

Bachelor of Social Welfare

Degree Earned: May 2005

TEACHING INTERESTS:

- Social Work Practice and Field Education
- Ecotherapy and Holistic Social Work Practice
- Trauma Informed Practices with People of Color
- Social Justice and Race Equity
- School Social Work Practice
- Community Organizing and Advocacy

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Austin Independent School District

Behavioral Health Specialist

Austin, TX | Feb 2015-August 2018

- Coordinate, liaison, and support implementation and sustainability of 1115 Waiver DSRIP Behavioral Health programming for 19 middle and high school campuses
- Support implementation of VOCA Grant services for 22 elementary campuses
- Represent AISD and maintain relations with community stakeholders at various behavioral health committees
- Liaison various Mental Health grant projects throughout the district
- Provide crisis support and professional development to campuses

Austin Independent School District

Social Services Specialist

Austin, TX | Feb 2012-Jan 2015

- Provide consultation to teachers and administration to create interventions for students' behavioral, academic and social service needs for 12 campuses
- Provide direct service & documentation for families through assessment and linkage to social service agencies in the community
- Serve as a member of both AISD District and Campus Crisis Response Team
- Facilitate professional development for teachers and staff

Communities in Schools of Central Texas

Program Manager

Austin, TX | Aug 2007-Feb 2012

- Create and implement school-based services for pre-K through 5th grade students in the areas of supportive guidance/counseling, health and human services, parent/family involvement, career awareness, enrichment, and educational enhancement
- Supervise AmeriCorps members, Social Work interns, and volunteers
- Complete required documentation, data, and manage program budget

Communities in Schools of Central Texas

Smart Kids Caseworker

Austin, TX | June 2007-Aug 2007

- Facilitate summer programming, including planning enrichment field trips and activities to increase social skills and self-esteem
- Build relationships with families and students in neighborhood housing
- Plan and implement family events to promote child safety and parental involvement

Austin Independent School District

MSSW Clinical Intern

Austin, TX | Jan 2007-May 2007

- Provide individual, group, and crisis counseling to elementary students using play therapy, sand-tray therapy, solution-focused therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy
- Assist families in accessing resources
- Work collaboratively with teachers, support staff, and school administration

UT-Austin School of Social Work

MSSW Graduate & Teaching Assistant

Austin, TX | Jan 2006-Dec 2006

- **Office of Student & Community Affairs:** Facilitate student orientation
- **Advanced Social Work Practice:**
Grade student papers and coursework

Helping Hand Home for Children

MSSW Intern

Austin, TX | Sept 2005-May 2006

- Provide therapeutic interventions to children ages 5 through 12 in residential treatment facility using art, music and play therapy
- Co-facilitate psychotherapy group for girls ages 9 through 12
- Research and develop recruitment tools for foster care program

Wyandot Center for Behavioral Health

Case Manager

Kansas City, KS | Sept 2004-July 2005

- Develop and implement treatment plans and wrap-around services for youth at risk for hospitalization and/or removal from home

STARLA SIMMONS, LMSW

512-809-2574 · starlavictoria@gmail.com

Conference Presentations, Guest Lectures, and Professional Workshops

- *Cultural Considerations in Ecotherapy*, Texas School Social Work Conference, February 2018
- *Building Cultural Competence*, Professional Development workshop for Seedling Foundation, February 2018
- *Dealing with Discomfort: Using Mindfulness to Talk About Race*, Guest Lecture for Social Work Practice class, University of Texas at Austin, February 2018
- *Liberating Structures: Reinventing the How*, Professional Workshop, Guest Facilitator for Alpinista Consulting, August 2017
- *First Year Lessons Learned: Outdoor Afro*, Professional Workshop for National Outdoor Afro Leadership Summit, April 2017
- *Mindfulness Walk for Self-Care*, Professional Development Facilitator for Sierra Club Leadership Retreat, June 2017
- *Community Forum: Breaking the Silence*. Panel Moderator for Austin ISD & Integral Care, May 2017
- *Mindfulness Walk for Self-Care*. Professional Development Facilitator for All-Advisor Retreat, College of Liberal Arts at the University of Texas at Austin, March 2017
- *Structural Racism and Social Work*, Guest Lecture for General Social Work at University of Texas at Austin, September 2016
- *Mentoring Children of Color*, Professional Development Facilitator for Seedling Foundation, November 2016
- *Let's Talk About Race: Using a Racial Equity Lens in School Social Work*, Texas School Social Work Conference, February 2012
- *Self-Care For Teachers*, Professional Development for Austin ISD, As requested yearly, 2012-2015
- *Mindfulness Practice*, Bertha Sadler Means Young Women's Leadership Academy Girls Conference, January 2017/ 2018
- *Structural Racism and Race Equity*, Guest Lecture for Foundations of Social Justice Class, University of Texas at Austin, Fall/Spring, 2012, 2013

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

- **Board Chair**, *Mama Sana Vibrant Woman*, 2017-present
 - Provide governance over non-profit organization that improves birth outcomes of Black and Latina women
- **Leadership Team**, *Outdoor Afro* 2016-2018
 - Provide outreach, organize, & lead monthly outdoor excursions for the Black community
- **Field Instructor**, *University of Texas at Austin School Social Work*, 2007-2012
 - Supervise BSW & MSW Interns at AISD Elementary School with Communities in Schools of Central Texas

COMMITTEE WORK AND HONORS

- *Chair*, School-Based Work Group for Travis County Children's Mental Health Plan 2016-2017
- *Chair*, Austin ISD Mental Health Alliance, 2015-2016
- *Chair*, Communities in Schools of Central Texas Cultural Competency Committee, 2008-2012
- *Member*, Early Childhood Results Count, 2017-2018
- *Member*, Liberating Structures User Group, 2017
- *Member*, Travis County Children's Mental Health Plan, 2017-present
- *Member*, Trauma Informed Care Consortium, 2015-2017
- *Member*, Austin ISD School Health Advisory Committee, 2015
- *Member*, Kids Living Well (formerly Children and Youth Mental Health Planning Partnership) 2015-present
- *Member*, Austin Area African American Behavioral Health Network, 2014-present
- *Member*, Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition, 2015-2016
- *Member*, UT Social Work Action Alliance, 2006-2007
- Recipient, 2017 Volunteer of the Year, Austin ISD
- *Recipient*, Ellen Carey Scholarship Award in Child Welfare, 2006
- *Participant*, Race Equity Leadership Conference, African American Policy Institute, 2010
- *Student*, Spanish For Social Workers, Universidad de Costa Rica, 2004