

Short Biography:

Sonita Simelus is a second-year doctoral student at Mercer University-Atlanta, enrolled in the DrPH Program, Diverse Populations and Health Equity Emphasis. She is currently an Assistant Teaching Professor at the University of Missouri College of Health Sciences, Department of Public Health, where she teaches various public health courses for the BPH and MPH programs. She holds a Doctor of Medicine degree from Universidad Tecnológica de Santiago and a Master of Public Health from the University of Missouri-Columbia. She also has a CHES certification. Sonita Simelus is a passionate advocate for health equity, particularly for historically marginalized populations, and her research interests include determinants of health, population health, and health inequities. This grant will significantly support her research in exploring the impact of Mental Health First Aid training within higher education, aiming to enhance mental health support for university students.

Overview of Project:

This project seeks to enhance mental health support in higher education by implementing Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training for university faculty and staff. The primary objective is to equip faculty members and staff with the skills to recognize and respond to early signs of mental health challenges among students, fostering a more supportive and proactive environment on our campus. To achieve this, we will conduct comprehensive MHFA training workshops focused on mental health awareness, crisis intervention, and referral processes. Participants will be assessed through surveys to measure improvements in confidence and preparedness to handle mental health situations. By empowering faculty and staff as mental health advocates, we wish to reduce stigma, promote well-being, and improve students' overall academic and personal outcomes, contributing to a healthier and more inclusive campus community.