



University  
of Windsor

School of Social Work

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# PhD

## Social Work PhD Candidates and Graduates on the job market

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2023





# Talented scholars and educators with a wealth of knowledge and practice expertise

Dear Colleagues,

We are honored to introduce you to this year's PhD candidates and recent graduates from the University of Windsor, School of Social Work. At the University of Windsor, our students receive a robust education in research methods and pedagogy and gain extensive experience in collaborating and conducting research leading to peer reviewed publications and conference presentations. They also acquire first-hand experience in teaching courses at all levels of academic programming including field education.

As you review their biographies, you will see that these talented scholars and educators bring with them a wealth of knowledge and practice expertise that informs their research and pedagogy and motivates their passion for social change. They are well prepared to advance scientific knowledge, educate the next generation of social workers, and partner with our communities to address our most pressing provincial, national, and global needs.

If you would like further information, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have or connect you with one of our candidates or recent graduates.

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## 2023 PhD Candidates



**Dr. Riham  
Al-Saadi**

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**Keren M.  
Escobar**

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**Aman  
Ahluwalia-  
Cameron**

[amanac@uwindsor.ca](mailto:amanac@uwindsor.ca)



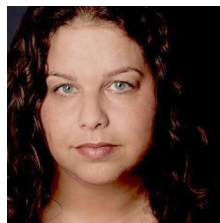
**Candace Hind**

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**Michael Bennett**

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**Naomi R. Levitz**

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## Dr. Riham Al-Saadi

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### Education

<b>PhD</b>	Expected May 2023, University of Windsor, School of Social Work
<b>MSW</b>	2013, University of Windsor, School of Social Work
<b>Honours BSc</b>	2010, Behaviour Cognition and Neuroscience (Combined Biology & Psychology), University of Windsor

### Dissertation

Preserving my Arab self while finding my home in Canada: First generation recent Arab immigrant emerging adults' perspectives on acculturation experiences and Canadian society's role in fostering equitable participation.

### Research Interests

- Acculturation
- Immigrant and refugee populations
- Arab immigrants and refugees' acculturation
- Immigrant emerging adults and youth identity development, emotional and social competence
- Integration of principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion into academic and professional practice

### Languages Spoken

- English
- Arabic

Dr. Riham's dissertation investigated immigrants' and refugees' acculturation; the process of maintaining one's heritage and actively participating in the larger, Canadian society. (<https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/etd/8904/>). Using psychological phenomenology, the study informed that Arab immigrant emerging adults understand acculturation as a mutual dedication of both their Arab ethnic group and the larger Canadian society. The process, however, involves significant emotional labour as newcomers amalgamate their heritage and their desire to be active participants in the Canadian society. In addition, Dr. Al-Saadi is actively engaged in research as she is currently working on manuscripts stemming from her dissertation including a publication addressing her positionality as she conducts qualitative research. Dr. Al-Saadi is also part of the Immigrant Youth Research Group (IYRG) where she has been involved in data collection and analysis in a study targeting young adults' perceptions about peer relationships and the emotions associated with these relationships. Stemming from her IYRG involvement, Dr. Al-Saadi has contributed to a book chapter (in progress) addressing psychosocial development in Arab Americans.

Dr. Al-Saadi is an experienced educator familiar with the academic setting teaching undergraduate, graduate, and PhD students. Specifically, she has taught over 30 courses, which include direct practice courses, community and organizations, program design and evaluation, and qualitative and quantitative research methods. She is also a contributing member on the School's Institutional Quality Assurance Process committee.

Working in private practice, she supports clientele with various mental health and emotional wellbeing challenges including immigrant-related stress. She is actively involved with the Windsor Essex Local Immigration Partnership and the Ontario Association of Social Workers' Local Engagement Network.





## Aman Ahluwalia-Cameron

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### Education

<b>PhD</b>	Expected June, 2023, University of Windsor, School of Social Work
<b>MSW</b>	2011, University of Toronto
<b>Honours BA</b>	2005, Psychology, University of Windsor

### Dissertation

Examining social workers' experiences supporting clients with borderline personality disorder: A critical realist study to reduce stigma and promote trauma-informed care.

### Research Interests

- Teaching social work practice skills
- Critical social work
- Provider based stigma
- Structural stigma
- Field education
- Borderline personality disorder

### Languages Spoken

- English
- Punjabi
- Hindi

As a South-Asian Canadian, critical, community-based mental health scholar, Aman is currently studying provider-based and structural stigma and how it intersects with gender, race, mental healthcare equity and mental illness. Her program of research is directly informed by her years in the field as a registered social worker employed in hospitals and the community. In her dissertation, she qualitatively explores provider-based and structural stigma as it relates to social workers ( $N=41$ ) who provide care to people living with borderline personality disorder. A sub-study of her dissertation received a \$25,000 SSHRC partnership engage grant, to work alongside the Canadian Mental Health Association.

Aman's publication record reflects 18 invited presentations, 14 peer-reviewed oral presentations at national and international research conferences, 10 peer-reviewed poster presentations, and five peer-reviewed manuscripts in leading social work and medical journals, and one peer reviewed booked chapter.

In addition to practice and research excellence, Aman brings experience teaching in the classroom, online and in the field (as a field instructor) at the BSW and MSW levels. By sharing real-life field experiences students have an opportunity to meaningfully engage with the material. She currently holds the position of a Field Learning Specialist within the School of Social Work at the University of Windsor, where she has gained great insight into the importance of field education.



# Michael Bennett

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## Education

PhD	University of Windsor, School of Social Work
MSW	2012, University of Windsor, School of Social Work
Honours BA	2007, Psychology, Sociology, & Criminology, University of Windsor

## Dissertation

Examining tension in the provision of palliative care: Social workers’ experiences.

## Research Interests

- Tension in social work provision
- Bucket lists
- Live music performance in hospice and palliative care
- Social inequalities in palliative care delivery

Michael’s research broadly investigates inequities and marginalization in the field of palliative care using interpretative methods. His work explores the impact of power dynamics and cultural issues on the provision of care, particularly for marginalized groups. His dissertation research examined the challenges faced by social workers in palliative care, including the devaluation of their profession and conflicts with the medical model. He has over 10 years of experience in the field and has published numerous papers in peer-reviewed journals related to death, dying, and end-of-life care. Given his wealth of knowledge and expertise in this area, Michael has been an invited speaker at over 15 international peer-reviewed conferences.

Michael has taught a wide range of practice and theory courses at the graduate level, including a palliative care course he developed, in online, hybrid and face-to-face formats. He has experience in all aspects of faculty life, including serving and often leading committees for curriculum development, adjudicating awards, faculty recruitment, and professional standards. He has mentored over 35 undergraduate and graduate students in the field and has served on two graduate students’ thesis committees.

Outside of research and practice, Michael is passionate about community-work. He founded (and currently directs) a Canada-wide charity that fulfills end-of-life dreams for adults living with a terminal illness, called Oneday Dreams. His expertise in the field of hospice and palliative care has been recognized throughout Canada; he has received awards for exemplary clinical practice, civic leadership, professional role modelling, and community contributions.



## Keren M. Escobar

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### Education

<b>PhD</b>	Expected July 2023, University of Windsor, School of Social Work
<b>MSW</b>	2015, University of Windsor, School of Social Work
<b>Honours BA</b>	2012, Psychology, University of Windsor

### Dissertation

Exploring paradoxical advantages of Latin Americans in Canada: Secondary analytic expositions of contextualized resiliencies and vulnerabilities.

### Research Interests

- Social Epidemiology
- Intersectionality
- Mental Health
- Immigrant Resiliencies and Vulnerabilities
- Evidence-Based Culturally Responsive Interventions
- Latin Americans

### Languages Spoken

- Spanish
- English
- French (advanced level)

Keren's primary research agenda focuses on understanding how social-structural factors produce and resolve inequities in population health across the lifespan with an emphasis on the roles of resource inequalities and social policies. In recent years, she has been particularly interested in the health and mental health of Latin Americans. Taking advantage of secondary analytic opportunities, she has published research on the care of [acute conditions and chronic diseases](#) in both Canada and the United States, along with research related to paradoxical advantages of Latin Americans diagnosed with [colon cancer](#). Additionally, Keren unequivocally believes that any analysis of health or mental health is incomplete without the critical analysis of [intersectionality](#) that recognizes that health is not merely shaped by individual characteristics, but rather multi-dimensional factors such as race, class, income, gender, age, etc.

Drawing on her clinical experience as a social work psychotherapist, Keren is interested in advancing knowledge around evidence-based interventions of culturally diverse peoples. She has published research that systematically evaluated the effectiveness of evidence-based interventions for Latin Americans experiencing [anxiety](#) and [depression](#). Moreover, Keren is very passionate about higher education in social work and has been an instructor teaching undergraduate and graduate courses since 2016. Her ultimate career goal is to serve humanity well through the development of critical knowledge for both preventative public policy and therapeutic clinical practices.



## Candace Hind

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### Education

<b>PhD</b>	Expected September 2023, University of Windsor, School of Social Work
<b>MSW</b>	2013, University of Windsor, School of Social Work
<b>Honours BA</b>	2008, Psychology and Dramatic Art, University of Windsor

### Dissertation

The role of the social worker in long-term care in Ontario: An exploratory qualitative study examining perspectives of social workers about their roles.

### Research Interests

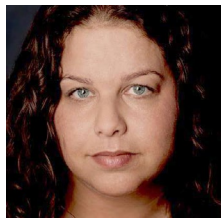
- Social work and gerontology/aging, including interdisciplinary provision of psychosocial care
- Historical and theoretical developments in social work, social welfare systems and aging
- Social work in long-term care (residential settings)
- Arts and aging
- Aging and identity
- Old age pension and income security

Candace's research in gerontology focuses on theoretical and historical views of aging and moving towards valuing and embracing age. She has published and presented at conferences in Canada and internationally on topics such as arts and aging, aging and identity, sexuality and intimacy in older age, social work in LTC, and adjustment to retirement and long-term care. Her current dissertation research explores the role of the social worker in long-term care in Ontario and follows a constructivist qualitative design.

Her professional work spanning two decades includes working in five hospitals and fourteen long-term care homes as a bedside performer with Fools for Health, activity director in retirement, facilitator, writer, and director of theatre about the experiences of aging, outreach coordinator for a senior centre, gerontology consultant and teacher, and long-term care community social worker.

Candace teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in social work at University of Windsor in the BSW, MSW, and MSW Working Professionals programs, ranging from first-year BSW courses, to focused advanced MSW practicums. Her teaching philosophy is rooted in engaging students in theoretical discussions with real world examples and stories. She enjoys incorporating practice experience and research into the classroom in critical and reflexive ways.





## Naomi R. Levitz

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### Education

<b>PhD</b>	Expected May 2023, University of Windsor, School of Social Work
<b>MSW</b>	2005, Interpersonal Practice, Community Systems, Management University of Michigan
<b>Honours BA</b>	2003, Sociology, Equity, Indigenous Studies, University of Toronto

### Dissertation

An exploration of the relationship between social support and healthcare utilization for adult immigrants to Canada.

### Research Interests

- Newcomer mental wellness
- Healthcare inequity
- Diversity and inclusion

### Languages Spoken

- English
- French
- Spanish (basic)

Naomi has worked in both interpersonal and academic social work settings for almost 20 years. Her current research is focused on the intersection of social support and newcomer health outcomes. Past research and academic experiences include coordinating homeless support research, as well as conducting interviews in the areas of gender-based violence and addiction. She has also created course materials for college, bachelors, and masters social work classes and conducted student and peer supervision in the areas of interpersonal practice, Indigenous service provision, social work with mental health and substance use, and work with new Canadians.

Naomi has spearheaded a newcomer mental wellness initiative in Southwestern Ontario and has been active on various local committees and boards including the Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee, Assisted Living Southwestern Ontario, Pozitive Pathways Community Services, and the Health Equity for Newcomers Initiative. Through her work with Divonify, Naomi offers capacity building in the areas of diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion for workplaces. Her professional focus has been on working in cross and trans-cultural initiatives, client/peer integration in community services, and inclusion.

Naomi's work stems from a belief in inherent personal strengths and collaborative care in all settings. She has worked to create dynamic professional environments based on critical thinking about structural inequities and opportunities for creating new and alternate narratives for clients, students, and herself.



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Please contact me if you  
would like additional  
information or would  
like to meet with any of  
our upcoming graduates

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