Cassandra Jackson-Smith

Cassandra Jackson-Smith currently is the Regional Project Specialist for the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services coordinating the AOT (Assisted Outpatient Treatment) program in Tulsa. Co. helping adults with serious mental illness (SMI) gain access to services and maintain compliance while in treatment. Before this position Cassandra worked as a Criminal Justice Diversion Specialist for the Department housed at the Tulsa Co. Juvenile Bureau.

Mrs. Jackson-Smith has an MSW degree from OU and is actively pursuing a doctorate in educational leadership (Ed.D) from Oral Roberts University. Prior to joining ODMHSAS, Cassandra worked for the Oklahoma Department of Human Services first as a Child Welfare Specialist in Permanency Planning and Independent Living (IL) then as a School-Based Social Worker.

Cassandra Jackson-Smith taught at St. Gregory’s University from 2013 until the university’s closure in December 2017 teaching approximately 2-3 classes per year. She taught Sociology of Marriage and Family, Personality Theories, Modern Social Problems, Abnormal Psychology and Physiological Psychology along with several others.

Natasha Hamilton

Natasha Hamilton attended and completed the MSW program at OU in 2013-2016. She is currently the Director of Pearl’s Hope, a transitional living facility housing single women and their children in Tulsa. Pearl’s Hope helps women build a stable income, secure housing, pursue education, and begin to save money for up to two years.

She is also a therapist for foster parents and their children. In this role, she provides mental health services and a wide variety of therapeutic interventions. Additionally, she has experience working with children in outpatient and school based mental health, inpatient psychiatric care for children, and mental health services for clients through the lifespan.

She was previously a child welfare specialist and supervisor at the Oklahoma Department of Human Services.
Dr. Lisa Byers

Dr. Byers is an Associate Professor at the OU School of Social Work. She is an Affiliate Faculty with Native American Studies. Dr. Byers is also the Director of the OU Center for Social Justice-Tulsa.

She was the co-developer of a course for Oklahoma Native elders funded by the Council of Social Work Education and the creator of a Social Work with American Indian certificate that focuses on child welfare, historical trauma, mental health disparities, and policy. Dr. Byers is a Track Chair for the Council of Social Work Education First Nations Track.


Dallas Pettigrew

Dallas Pettigrew is a Clinical Assistant Professor at the OU School of Social Work. He is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation and worked there for over 13 years serving in child welfare, human service administration and behavioral health.

He is a co-founder of The HERO Project, Cherokee Nation’s children’s behavioral health system. He also worked for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in Cherokee, North Carolina. He is a Global Leader for Young Children, part of the World Forum Foundation, and serves on the Indigenous Peoples’ Action Group.

He is a Co-Investigator and Director of Community Environmental Change in “A Prevention Trial in Cherokee Nation: Interactive Effects of Environment and SBIRT,” funded by the National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, and National Institute on Drug Abuse. The project created, implemented and evaluated a new, integrated community-level intervention designed to prevent underage alcohol use and associated negative consequences among Native American and other youth living in rural high-risk communities.

Besides his professional experience, he is a former foster parent for the Oklahoma Department of Human Services and is an adoptive father.