



Ph.D.

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# Alumni Spotlights

*Joshua Miller, Ph.D. '97*



Joshua Miller graduated from the School of Family Studies with his Ph.D. in 1997. His Major Advisor was Steven Wisensale, Ph.D.

In the decade since earning his doctorate, Dr. Miller has been involved in disaster mental health work, as well as teaching courses and writing articles in that field. He counseled survivors of 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina for the Red Cross and also worked internationally in the wake of the Tsunami in Asia. Dr. Miller spent seven weeks in Sri Lanka volunteering for a Sri Lankan NGO called the Center for Peace Building and Reconciliation [CPBR], which worked with four villages affected by the 25 year-old civil war.

During January 2007, Miller worked in Northern Uganda helping to increase the psychosocial capacity of local people to respond to the trauma of the 20-year civil war, which involved mass fatalities and the abduction of many children who were forced to be soldiers. Joshua and his colleagues trained 20 young Ugandan professionals in ways to respond to war and trauma, who then in turn trained 20 people in five refugee camps who were tribal leaders, youth workers, nurses, elders, etc. The model involved integrating western notions of psychosocial health and recovery with Acholi traditions of healing and reconciliation. Dr. Miller plans to return to Uganda for another phase of this project in January 2008.

Dr. Miller is a full professor at Smith University, and when not spending his time teaching, writing, counseling for disaster mental health, or working with refugees, he can be found facilitating workshops on racism for social service agencies, hospitals, counseling centers, churches, and communities. These workshops focus on what is racism, why it is so difficult for white people to see it when it is so ubiquitous, how to deal with internalized stereotypes, how to talk about race and racism, how to work with clients cross-racially, and how to change organizations so that they become antiracism institutions.

Most recently Miller published two books: *School Violence and Children in Crisis and Racism in the United States: Implications for the Helping Professions*; also, with colleagues, two articles about Hurricane Katrina and the social ecology of natural disaster, and a chapter in a book on international social work about the complexity of social identity.

Dr. Miller was recently recognized by the Hampshire County chapter of the American Red Cross for his special disaster relief work over the past year, and he is currently serving as the Acting Dean of Students at Smith College School for Social Work.

*Beena Achhpal, Ph.D. '00*



Beena Achhpal, a 2000 graduate of The School of Family Studies, is Principal Investigator on a \$200,000 grant for a period of two years from the State Department of Education for establishing a laboratory and Model Early Childhood Learning Program in Connecticut. This project involves a major collaboration between Leila Day Nursery School, New Haven and Southern Connecticut State University for providing cutting-edge professional enhancement opportunities for Early Childhood Educators in Connecticut.

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