

Bernadine Waller, PhD, LMHC

Dr. Bernadine Waller is an award-winning National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) T32 Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Department of Psychiatry, Division of Translational Epidemiology and Mental Health Equity with a dual appointment at Columbia University Irving Medical Center and New York State Psychiatric Institute. She is an implementation scientist who partners with community- and faith-based organizations to tailor and implement evidence-based mental health interventions for underserved survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV).

Dr. Waller's ground-breaking research is transforming the country's domestic violence service provision system. She developed the first US theories that identify multilevel barriers that preclude African American women survivors' help-seeking: *The Theory of Help-Seeking Behavior*, *Constructed Agency*, and *Sarah Waller's Help-Seeking Model*. Dr. Waller has received several national awards for her cutting-edge research: **2022 Outstanding Social Work Dissertation Award**, the **2022 Elizabeth Young New Investigator Award**, the **2022 Violence Against Women and Children's Manuscript Award** and the **2023 NYS Women of Distinction Award**.

Dr. Waller is a rare talent who was able to obtain funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to complete her doctoral research and remains funded by the NIMH. This is a feat that few Black women scholars have been able to accomplish. At a time when the NIMH was not funding violence-related research, she secured an R36 to examine African American women help-seeking and IPV. Her NIMH-funded dissertation research has been used to help shape the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act and is currently being used to reshape domestic violence service provision system in New York City. Dr. Waller's research interest stems from more than a decade of practice and ministerial experience. She has provided trauma-informed services to IPV survivors, court-mandated offenders, and emerging adults. Dr. Waller is a member of the ministerial team at Zion Cathedral Church, where she serves as a Deaconess, Assistant Sunday School teacher and member of the intercessory prayer team. Dr. Waller also leads the *Restorer of Broken Walls* ministry, which provides crisis counseling and services to IPV survivors.

At Columbia Psychiatry, Dr. Waller serves as the Director of Community Engagement for the Mental Health Equity Center. The Center works in partnership with the NYS Office of Mental Health and community-based mental health agencies to implement culturally salient models of care in underserved communities in New York State. The goal of the Center is to decrease inequities in mental health care among communities of color that were further exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Waller is a sought-after speaker who regularly shares her cutting-edge work with national and international audiences. Most recently, she was the invited keynote speaker for the Consulate General of India in New York. Her talk highlighted the ways that the Black community continues to flourish despite the pernicious ways that white supremacy and anti-Blackness racism have caused multiaxial points of marginalization that deeply harm the Black community. In May, is on tap to be a featured speaker for the National Institutes of Health's Women's Mental Health Symposium. Her TEDx Talk, [*Hindered Help*](#), illuminates the barriers that prevent Black women from securing crisis assistance during their IPV help seeking process and is part of the required curriculum at several universities, including the University of Michigan, the University of Central Florida, and Rutgers University.

A scholar-clinician, Dr. Waller has taught in academia for more than 14 years. A testament to her investment in the next generation of scholar activists was winning the **2020 GADE Award for**

Teaching in Social Work. She is as a member of the Women's Council, a sub-committee of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) which accredits US schools of social work, and a member of the Research Capacity and Development Committee for the Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR). She additionally serves on the Board of Trustees for the Long Island Children's Museum.

Dr. Waller is a NYS-licensed mental health counselor who earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work and a Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling from Adelphi University; as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism, with a concentration in Legal Studies from Temple University.