

PATRICIA M. DESERT

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SUMMARY

Multidisciplinary professional at the intersection of early childhood education, mental health, and human services with a decade of experience serving diverse populations. Overseeing a not-for-profit organization serving Haitian immigrants and a center-based childcare licensed in Massachusetts.

EDUCATION AND HIGHLIGHTS

- **Jewish Family & Children Services, MA** | Advanced Certification | June 2024
Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Through an Equity Lens
Highlight: ECMH FY2024 State Grants| One of Twelve (12) Selected Fellows
- **Massasoit Community College, MA** | Early Childhood Director Certification | August 2023
Early Childhood Leadership and Policies
Highlight: Advocacy letter to EEC to improve StrongStart portal for optimal and inclusive learning
- **Maryland University of Integrative Health, MD** Online | Completed 12 Credits | January 2023
Masters in Health and Wellness Coaching - (withdrew due to career priority change)
Highlight: Recipient of the “Building Futures Through Equity Grant”
- **Columbia University School of Social Work, NY** | Masters Science in Social Work| May 2019
Social Enterprise Administration | Health, Mental Health, and Disability Concentration
Highlights: Community Needs Assessment Survey for Caribbean Survivors of Sexual Trauma
Macro Project on Applying Learning Organization Theory to Improve My Workplace
Published in the American Psychology Association with Dr. Ani Kalayjian
Recipient of the Donna M. Rosenthal Scholarship
- **Stony Brook University, NY** | Bachelor in Psychology | May 2014
Psychology, Sociology concentration | Early Childhood Education Seminar and Practicum
Thesis: The Impact of Incest Abuse on Childhood Development
Highlights: Independent Reading on Maternal and Child Attachment in the American Workforce
Sociology Research with Dr. Crystal Flemings on Post-Traumatic Slavery Syndrome
Published in the Journal of Emergency Medicine with Dr. Palermo Tia and Hammock Amy.
- **Nassau Community College, NY** | Associate in Liberal Arts | May 2012
Liberal Arts and Humanities | Honors. Dean’s List, Phi Theta Kappa Society
Highlights: President of Honor’s Club, Editor and Writer of the Magazine, Veritas
Recipient of the “Outstanding Leadership Award” by the Honors Society

CERTIFICATIONS

- **Columbia University, NY** | Post-Graduate Certificates | 2019
Pedagogy and Technology for Online Course | Power, Trauma, and Grading |
Technical Skills for Online Event Production
- **Network for Social Work Management**, 2019
Human Services Management
- **National Council for Mental Wellbeing, 2018**
Mental Health First Aid | Motivational Interviewing

PUBLICATIONS:

Desert, P. (2021, May). Social Consciousness in the Digital Age: Using Social Media to Create a Better World. *The New Social Worker*. <https://www.socialworker.com/feature-articles/technology-articles/social-consciousness-digital-age-using-social-media-create-better-world/>

Featured in: Wong, N. Marquart, M. (2020, October). 7 Insider Tips for Online Students from Recent Online Degree Grads Who Now Work in Online Education. *The New Social Worker*. <https://www.socialworker.com/feature-articles/education--credentials/7-insider-tips-online-social-work-students/>

Desert, P. Kalayjian,A. (2019, May). Transforming the Epidemic of Gender-Based Violence: The Case of Caribbean Immigrant Communities- The 7-Step Integrative Healing Model. *American Psychology Association, Trauma Psychology News* 18(2). <https://traumapsychnews.com/2019/05/transforming-the-epidemic-of-gender-based-violence/>

Hammock, A. Palermo, T., Keogler, R., **Francois, P.**, Schiavone, F. et al. (2017, September). Evaluation of a Short Intervention on Screening for Intimate Partner Violence in an Emergency Room. *The American Journal of Emergency Medicine*, Vol. 35(1) 171-173. DOI:10.1016/j.ajem.2016.09.055

AWARD

- **IBREA Foundation, NY** | United Nations World Peace Leaders Training | January 2017
Completed intensive brain education training with a three-day seminar at the United Nations on “Poverty Eradication and Mental Well-Being” and committed to being a change agent within our community.

PRESENTATIONS:

- **Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities** , Franklin MA | January 2024

Spearheaded the development of a 20-hour training on mental health literacy, workforce readiness, and community integration in the United States aka the “Self, Vision, Community” training through Savesouls Mental Health Relief program at **Savesouls Inc.** Presented the training as a 3-day seminar for 87 Haitian immigrants and refugees.

- **Haitian Community Partners**, Brockton MA | February 2024

Contracted with the Haitian Community Partners through **Savesouls Inc** to present a mini version of the Self, Vision and Community workshop series for 105 Haitian immigrant refugees on mental health and social integration in 3 churches in the Boston area.

- **William James College**, Dedham MA | March 2024

Savesouls Inc collaborated with WJC and the Haitian Mental Health Network for a 3-hour workshop on mental health and social integration for Haitian immigrant parents through the Dedham Public School.

- **Department of Public Health**, Woburn MA | August 2023

Contracted with Mount Olive Community Center (MOCC) and partnered with the Immigration Family Services Institute (IFSI) to lead mobile mental health programming to serve the new Haitian migrants in Woburn shelters. Using the service framework I developed, the Self-Vision-Community, we effectively served 115 new immigrants.

- **The Association of Women in Ministry International**, Hyannis MA| September 2023 and 2022

Invited to the annual retreat to organize social-emotional learning workshops for children. Presented on “The Importance of Emotional Health in Childhood Development”

- **Black Family Summit Inc.**, Virtual | April 2022

Collaborated through Perspectives Health Services, LLC, in three presentations to clinicians on mental health approaches for Haitian immigrants and individuals of Haitian descent.

- Integrating Haitian Clients' Health Beliefs to Address Trauma.
- Using Cultural Humility to Address the Mental Health Needs of Haitian Individuals.
- Sharing Our Stories: A Circle of Healing for Haitian Individuals.

- **Radio Tele Louange**, Virtual | April 2022

Interview on Christian Entrepreneurship and Addressing Trauma in Faith-Based Communities

PRESENTATIONS:

- **Columbia University School of Social Work**, NY Online | November 2021

Publishing Your Idea on the Spot. Teaching and Learning Showcase | Lightning Round Presentation

- **California State University of California**, Virtual | November 2020

Social Workers in Technology and Other Nontraditional Roles | Presentation to New Students

- **The Global Social Welfare Summit**. SWHelper, Online | February 2020

Developing Cultural Humility to Address the Needs of Afro-Caribbean Survivors of Trauma.

- **Esther Ministry**, Virtual | May 2020

Presented on “The Self, Vision, and Community Plan for Youth”

- **Savesouls Inc.**, Mattapan, MA| October 2020

Moderator at the 2nd Annual “Let's Talk Forum: Building Trust With the Caribbean Community”

- **Savesouls Inc.**, Brockton MA | January 2019

Partnered with the Plymouth Suicide Coalition and four churches in Brockton to train and certify religious leaders in Mental Health First Aid.

- **Columbia University School of Social Work**, Virtual | August 2019

“Creating Virtual Community as a CSSW Student.”Teaching and Learning Showcase

- **Association of Haitian Women in Boston**, Boston MA | October 2019

“Sexual Trauma and Healing with the Self Vision Community Framework.”

- **Savesouls Inc.**, Brockton MA | September 2019

Keynote Speaker Let's Talk Conference “You Are the Expert. You Lead the Conversation.”
September to October 2019: The Self Vision Community Wellness for Immigrant Youth series

- **Columbia University**, Virtual | October 2019

Presented on Community Care Day - “The Self, Vision, and Community Wellness Plan”

INTERNSHIPS

The Network of Social Work Management, September 2019 - October 2020 | Ambassador
Recruited 25 social workers in leadership roles to be featured in the Monday Morning Manager Newsletter

Association of Trauma Outreach and Prevention, October 2018 - September 2019 | Outreach Coordinator
Assisted the CEO, Dr. Ani Kalayjian, with funding searches, query letters, trauma outreach education, and publications through multiple media.

Stony Brook University Department of Public Health, January 2014 - May 2015 | Research Intern
Conducted literature review and compiled reports on intimate partner violence screening. Contributed to article submission. Edited poster for presentation at the National Conference on Health and Domestic Violence (NCHDV) in Washington, DC, and presented poster at the Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (URECA) annual symposium at Stony Brook University.

Stony Brook Child Care Services, NY, January- June 2015 | Group Leader Assistant
Attended weekly field education seminars on child development and recorded classroom observations. Engaged with children through play-based learning.

Mary Brennan Inn Interfaith Network, NY, January 2014 to August 2015 | Direct Care Staff
Distributed food and clothing to clients in need. Supervised and organized pantry. Trained new staff. Coordinated community drive for needed items.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

La Distinction Enterprises, LLC, DBA La Distinction Academy, MA | February 2021 Present| Founder/CEO

- Developed infrastructure to operate a center-based childcare program in Canton, Massachusetts, from working with a team of contractors for building renovation, writing policies that adhere to EEC regulations, hiring and training staff with our philosophy, and joining the Early Childhood Support Organization to acquire a high-quality curriculum for the center.
- Leading our capacity expansion project and providing direction for marketing promotion, parent communication, and children engagement in the classroom.
- Creating connections in the community to acquire local and state resources for children with subsidies.
- Execute the vision to resolve childcare and homelessness issues for new migrants by advocating to EEC to translate the basic essential course, applying for grants, and collaborating with stakeholders to set up childcare programs near the shelters.

La Distinction Co (the wellness brand) MA | February 2021 Present| Creative Director

- Engage in product development of ladistinctionco.com, develop on-brand content @ladistinctionco, and publish faith and wellness-based devotionals for targeted audiences.
- Launched a non-subscription gift box for Christian entrepreneurs.
- Recorded 8 episodes with mental health experts to launch the “Mind Your Wellness” podcast @mindyourwellness_pod, scheduled for publication in January 2024. MYW is a sub-brand of La Distinction Co in partnership with PrimeArts Media.
- Assisted Christian entrepreneur through the launch of their companies through visionary coaching and content support. This program is now discontinued.

Savesouls Inc., MA | May 2017 to Present | Cofounder and President

- Develop strategies and visions for the organization to lead the first integrative and holistic mobile mental health program for new Haitian migrants in Massachusetts - the Savesouls Mental Health Relief Program (SMHRP)
- Engage with community stakeholders to advocate for resources and promote awareness of the cultural barriers and challenges.
- Developed programs and workshops to educate service providers and empower new migrants with resources to facilitate the transition to independent living.
- Lead the executive team by creating a sustainable internal structure.
- Write grants and seek community partnerships to acquire resources to serve the new migrants.

Columbia University Online School of Social Work | June 2021 to Present | Live Support Specialist
Previously: Teaching Associate, Quality Assurance Reviewer

- Establish the virtual classroom and provide all technical support to the instructors and students.
- Perform special projects such as quality assurance metrics before the start of the semester.
- Prepare the participation report after each class session
- Contribute to lectures and promote student engagement as needed.

Perspectives Health Services, LLC, MA | February 2022 - June 2022 | Parenting Capacity Evaluator

- Conducted parenting capacity evaluation for families of color referred by the Department of Children and Families Services (DCF)
- Provided bilingual and culturally-informed behavioral support to individuals of color under the supervision of the Clinical Director.
- Contributed to community outreach by presenting workshops on mental health issues affecting children and adults of Haitian descent.

South Shore Association for Independent Living, August 2014 to May 2019

Training and Staff Development Specialist | September 2018 to May 2019

- Submitted a proposal to develop an onboarding manual to improve new employees' experience at the agency. The proposal was approved as my field immersion practicum for my graduate concentration in social enterprise administration.
- Selected key partners in each department to create a steering committee for the development of the manual and created a draft on procedures to be improved by each department.
- Researched best practices and collaborated with executive leaders to develop an integrated manual.
- Produced monthly program operations report, conducted program evaluation, and recommended improvements to the agency.

Program Supervisor | November 2016 to August 2018

- Developed a new process for employee evaluation/supervision, which resulted in marked performance improvements, and coached Program Supervisors & Seniors on the method.
- Coordinated community integration events for clients, counseled clients, developed plans to reduce hospitalizations, conducted visits, provided crisis intervention, and assumed on-call responsibilities.
- Reviewed monthly billable Medicaid services and produced program operations reports.
- Conducted apartment inspections, implemented safety procedures, and ensured State guidelines were followed.

Senior Case Coordinator | August 2014 to November 2016

Previously Case Coordinator

- Promoted from Case Coordinator to Senior leadership within 18 months of being hired.
- Managed a caseload of 12 Severe Persistent Mentally Ill (SPMI) clients and provided counseling and case management services.
- Assisted with treatment program intake and referral services through weekly home visits and collateral contact.
- Spearheaded the first Independent Skill Workshop to promote community integration and social development of clients in the program.

Long Island Crisis Center, NY| May 2013 - August 2015 | Crisis Counselor

Previously Assistant Counselor

Completed intensive marathon counselor training to manage crisis hotline, perform verbal de-escalation, provide referrals to long-term services, and document all interactions and interventions.

Cold Spring Hills Health and Rehabilitation Center, NY | June 2010 - June 2015| Nurse Assistant

- Worked in the Nursing and Rehabilitation units to provide quality care to patients
- Assisted patients with daily living activities such as feeding, bathing, and dressing, took vital signs and reported incidents and changes in patients' behaviors.
- Assisted with recreational activities and documented all care provided

Memberships and Affiliations

- North American Association of Christians in Social Work (NACSW)
- The Haitian Collaborative Network
- Network for Social Work Management
- The Haitian Mental Health Network

Languages

English, French, Creole

Interests and Hobbies

Bible Teaching

Blogging: www.patriciamdesert.com

Graphic and Website Design

Product Development

Self-publishing and Editing

Children's Curriculum Design

Nature Photography