

LEKPOH DWANYEN, PH.D.

Michigan State University – Human Development and Family Studies
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EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Date Degree Granted
Ph.D. Family Social Science	University of Minnesota, Twin Cities Minneapolis, MN	2020
M.S. Family Sciences Couple & Family Therapy	University of Kentucky Lexington, KY	2016
B.S. Family Social Science	University of Minnesota, Twin Cities Minneapolis, MN	2014

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Assistant Professor, Tenure-track Couple and Family Therapy Program, Core Faculty Member Department of Human Development and Family Studies Michigan State University	August 2022–Present
Research Associate Dean's Research Associate Development Institute College of Social Science Michigan State University	August 2020–August 2022

AWARDS AND HONORS

CEHD Rising Alumni Research Award	2024
African Studies Center Transforming Institutions Award	2022
Alliance for African Partnership Strategic Partnership Award	2021
Priscilla Rugg Family Social Science Fellowship	2019-2020
Common Ground Consortium Fellowship	2017-2020
CEHD Alumni Society Board Advanced Study Scholarship	2018
Women's Philanthropic Leadership Circle Award	2018
M. Janice Hogan Fellowship	2017-2018
Diversity of Views and Experiences (DOVE) Fellowship	2016-2017

RESEARCH

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

- Dwanyen, L.,** Griffes, S. *, & Wieling, E. (in press). Gender and resettlement: Liberian refugee couple relationships before and after forced migration. *Journal of Marriage and Family*.
- Dorrance-Hall, E., Zhang, Y., **Dwanyen, L.,** Wolfe, B. H. (in press). Communication and resilience in families. In M. Doerfel, J. Theiss, M. Venetis, & K. Scharp (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Communication and Resilience*. Routledge.
- Luberenga, I., Tseng, C.-F., Umugwaneza, M., Kasujja, R., Sanghiv, A. A., Ndeezi, M., & **Dwanyen, L.** (2025). Mental health interventions for refugees in Africa: A scoping review of implementation and motivations. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 16(1), 2498868. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20008066.2025.2498868>
- Smith, E. P., Bibbs, S. E. *, Johnson, D. J., **Dwanyen, L.,** Holtrop, K. & Gipson-Tansil, L. (2025). Out of the mouths of babes: Black children's experiences of emotion-focused racial-ethnic socialization, coping, and antiracist resistance. *Behavioral Sciences*, 15(2): 222. <https://doi.org/10.3390/xxxxx>
- Dwanyen, L.,** Luberenga, I., Asiimwe, R., Galukande, P., Blow, A., & Kasujja, R. (2024). Voices from the ground: Qualitative perspectives on Ugandan national mental health system: Strengths, challenges, and recommendations. *PLOS Mental Health*, 1(6), e0000077. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmen.0000077>
- Dwanyen, L.,** Wieling, E., & Griffes, S. (2024). "People are Still Living with Pains of the War": An Assessment of Long-term Adjustment and War-Related Traumatic Stress Among Liberian Refugees. *Current Research in Educational and Social Psychology*, 6 (2024): 100191. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cresp.2024.100191>
- Asiimwe, R., Nuwabaga-K, R. D., **Dwanyen, L.,** Kasujja, R. (2023). Sociocultural considerations of mental healthcare in Uganda. *SSM Mental Health*, 4(12): 100232. doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmmh.2023.100232
- Dwanyen, L.,** Holtrop, K., & Parra-Cardona, R. (2022). Reducing mental health disparities among racially and ethnically diverse populations: A review of couple and family intervention research methods (2010-2019). *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 48(1), 346–365. [doi:10.1111/jmft.12573](https://doi.org/10.1111/jmft.12573)
- Smith, E., Yzaguirre, M., **Dwanyen, L.,** & Wieling, E. (2022). Culturally relevant parenting approaches among African American and Latinx children and families: Toward anti-racist, resilient, and trauma-informed practices. *Adversity and Resilience Science*, 3(3), 209–224. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42844-022-00059-9>
- Asiimwe, R. *, **Dwanyen, L.,** Subramaniam, S., Kasujja, R., & Blow, A. (2022). Training of interventionists and cultural adaptation procedures: A systematic review of culturally adapted

evidence-based parenting programs in Africa. *Family Process*, 62(1), 160-181.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12780>

- Wieling, E., Derrick, J. M., **Dwanyen, L.**, Escobar-Chew, A. R., Gassas, R. F., ...& Yumbul, C. (2020). Letters to the field from systemic family therapists who represent and work with international and racial/ethnic communities. In K.S. Wampler, R. B. Miller, R. B. Seedall, L. M. McWey, ...& R. Singh. (Eds.), *Systemic Family Therapy and Global Health Issues*, (pp. 569–599). Wiley Blackwell. ISBN: 9781119702269
- Ballard, J., Wieling, E., Forgatch, M., & **Dwanyen, L.** (2020). Parenting practices in the Karen refugee community. *Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal*, 42(2), 95–107. doi:10.1007/s10591-019-09509-6
- Morgan, E., Wieling, E., Hubbard, J., & **Dwanyen, L.** (2020). Perceptions of war trauma and healing of marital relations among torture surviving Congolese couples participating in multi-couple therapy. *Family Process*, 59(3): 1128–1143. doi:10.1111/famp.12487
- Dwanyen, L.**, & Solheim, C. (2019). Human ecology theory. In J. Ponzetti, M. Blankemeyer, S. M. Horan, H. Lyons, & A. Shigeto (Eds.), *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Families, Marriages, and Intimate Relationships*, (pp. 446-449). Cengage Publishing. ISBN: 9780028664613
- Ballard, J., Wieling, E., Solheim, C., **Dwanyen, L.** (Eds.). (2019). *Immigrant and refugee families: Global perspectives on displacement and resettlement experiences* (2nd ed.). St. Paul, MN: University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing. ISBN: 9781946135018
- Dwanyen, L.**, & Hans, J. D. (2017). Postpartum depression: Novel use of video-based interventions. *Journal of Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology & Health*, 32(2), 128–148.

Manuscripts Under Review

- Dwanyen, L.**, Holtrop, K., Johnson, D.J., Stepter, A. & Smith, E. (under review). *A Phenomenological Study of Socioeconomic Socialization Practices in Black Families: Contextualizing “The Hustle”*
- Dwanyen, L.**, Njoroge, M., & Pratt, F.* (under review). *Facilitators of Adjustment and Coping among Long-term Resettled Refugees: A Qualitative Community-based Needs Assessment with Liberian Refugees*
- Griffes, S.*, **Dwanyen, L.**, Maxudov, A.*, Huang, Y.*, & Wieling, E. (under review). *“There is no bush to throw a ‘bad’ child”: Liberian refugee parenting and parent-child relationships post-migration.*
- Luberenga, I., Kasujja, R., Vasanthan, L. T., **Dwanyen, L.**, A. A., Sanghiv, A., E., & Joseph, L. J. H. (under review). *Characteristics and outcome domains of mental health awareness programs for workplace well-being in low- and middle-income countries: A scoping review.*

Holtrop, K., Edwards, C., Huang, Y., & **Dwanyen, L.** (under review). *Cultural adaptation research*. In Advanced methods in family therapy research: A focus on validity and change (2nd Ed).

Manuscripts In Preparation

Dwanyen, L., Luberenga, I., & Maxudov, A. (in preparation). *Evidence-based traumatic stress interventions with war-affected displaced communities*.

Griffes, S. E., **Dwanyen, L.**, Maxudov, A., Huang, Y. (in preparation). *Exploring intergenerational differences in adjustment following forced migration: Qualitative perspectives from Liberian youth and older adults*.

Pratt, F.*, Young, D.*, **Dwanyen, L.**, & Bowles, R., Tseng, C. (in preparation). *Perceived Social Views and Accessibility to Mental Health Care for Black American Women: A Confirmatory Factor Analysis*.

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Griffes, S.*, Maxudov, A.*, Huang, Y.*, **Dwanyen, L.** (2025, March). Liberian refugee parenting and parent-child relationships. Poster presentation at the International Family Therapy Association Conference, Aberdeen, Scotland.

Pratt, F., Young, D., **Dwanyen, L.**, & Bowles, R. (2024, November). Perceived social views and accessibility to mental health care for Black American women: A confirmatory factor analysis. Poster presented at the Systemic Family Therapy Conference, Orlando, Florida.

Luberenga, I., Galukande, P., Blow, A., Kasujja, R., Asiimwe, R., Mitchell, E., & **Dwanyen, L.** (2024, November). Beacons of resilience: The lived experiences of mental health service users in Uganda. Paper presentation at the National Council on Family Relations Conference, Bellevue, Washington.

Dwanyen, L., Blow, A., Luberenga, I., Asiimwe, R., & Kasujja, R. (2023, November). Perspectives on traumatic stress: An ethnographic assessment of national mental health efforts in Uganda. The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, Los Angeles, California.

Dwanyen, L., & Griffes, S.* (2023, November). Examining gender and family resilience after war with Liberian refugees. Poster presentation at the National Council on Family Relations Annual Conference, Orlando, Florida.

Griffes, S.*, & **Dwanyen, L.** (2023, November). Mapping social justice principles onto common themes in couple relationship education programs. Presentation at the National Council on Family Relations Annual Conference, Orlando, Florida.

Huang, Y.*, Edwards, C., **Dwanyen, L.**, & Holtrop, K. (2023, November). Cultural adaptation: A critical approach for couple and family intervention research. Presentation at the National Council on Family Relations Annual Conference, Orlando, Florida.

Wieling, E., **Dwanyen, L.**, & Mittal, M. (2023, September). Lessons from the field: Systemic implementation experiences with underserved families nationally and globally. Invited panel at

the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Intervention Research Conference, Provo, Utah.

Wittenborn, A., Holtrop, K., **Dwanyen, L.**, & Tseng, C. F. (2023, September). Engaging underrepresented populations in couple and family intervention research: Recommendations and considerations. Presentation at American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Intervention Research Conference, Provo, Utah.

Dwanyen, L. (2023, April). Developing needs assessments to explore opportunities for systemic family-level interventions in refugee post-conflict settings. Invited presentation at the University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia.

Dwanyen, L., Campbell, A., & Coffman, K. (2022, November). Language Matters: Evaluating the Use of Systemic Terms of Oppression (STOp) in Family Relations From 2000–2021. Presentation at the National Council on Family Relations Annual Conference, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Dwanyen, L., Kasujja, R., Asiimwe, R.*, Luberenga, I.*, & Blow, A. (2022, October). Mental health in Uganda: An ethnographic assessment of the mental health system and opportunities for systemic interventions. Presentation at the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Intervention Research Conference, East Lansing, Michigan.

Holtrop, K., **Dwanyen, L.**, Lamson, A., & McWey, L. (2022, October). Reflections on the JMFT decade review special issue: Stepping stones and next steps. Panel discussion at the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Intervention Research Conference, East Lansing, Michigan.

Asiimwe, R.*, Blow, A., & **Dwanyen, L.** (2021, November). Expanding our international reach: Trends of systemic family therapy in Africa. Presentation delivered at the Systemic Family Therapy Conference, virtual.

Dwanyen, L. (2021, May). Exploring the role of war trauma exposure on youth and parents in a community sample of resettled Liberians. Presentation delivered at the Michigan State University Youth Equity Project Meeting, virtual.

Dwanyen, L. (2020, November). Integrating Family Therapy Models to Address the Systemic Effects of Trauma: An Autoethnography from Post-conflict Uganda. Flash talk presentation at the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies Annual Meeting, virtual.

Dwanyen, L. (2020, November). The Long-term Effects of War-related Traumatic Stress on the Mental, Relational, Community Health of Liberian Refugees. Poster presentation at the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies Annual Meeting, virtual.

Dwanyen, L. (2020, November). Addressing Traumatic Stress at Relational and Community Levels: Lessons Learned from Gulu, Uganda. Presentation delivered Michigan State Couple and Family Therapy Student-Faculty Meeting, virtual.

Dwanyen, L. (2020, November). Gender, family, and social change: Case study of Liberian mothers and peace activists. Paper presentation delivered at the National Council on Family Relations Annual Conference, virtual.

- Solheim, C., & **Dwanyen, L.** (2019, November). Resettlement and economic adjustment of Karen refugee families: A Family Stress Perspective. Lightning paper presentation at the National Council on Family Relations Annual Conference, Dallas-Fort Worth, Texas.
- Wieling, E., Erolin, K., Cooper, D., Kraus, E., & **Dwanyen, L.** (2018, November). Narrative Exposure Therapy: A treatment for posttraumatic stress. Institute presentation at the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Conference, Louisville, Kentucky.
- Dwanyen, L.,** & Cooper, D. (2018, November). Insider, outsider, or in-between? Managing the self in research and practice with diverse populations. Poster presentation at the National Council on Family Relations Annual Conference, San Diego, California.
- Dwanyen, L.** (2018, September). Engaging with families in Northern Uganda. Presentation at the Family Social Science Immigrant and Refugee Discussion Series, St. Paul, Minnesota.
- Dwanyen, L.** (2018, March). Theoretical applications to parent-child acculturation gaps in war-affected families. Research presentation at the International Family Therapy Association World Family Therapy Congress, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Dwanyen, L.** (2018, March). Navigating the emic or “insider” self: Lessons from exploring war trauma and resettlement. Research presentation at the International Family Therapy Association World Family Therapy Congress, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Dwanyen, L.,** Wieling, E., Kraus, E., & Cooper, D. (2017, November). A needs assessment of Liberian immigrant and refugee families. Paper presentation at the National Council on Family Relations Annual Conference, Orlando, FL.
- Dwanyen, L.** & Wieling, E. (2017, October). A needs assessment of Liberian immigrant and refugee families. Research discussion presented at the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Annual Conference, Atlanta, GA.
- Ballard, J., Cooper, D., **Dwanyen, L.,** & Kraus, E. (2017, April). *Working with refugee families: Key areas of assessment and intervention.* Workshop presentation at the Minnesota Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Annual Conference, Edina, MN.
- Hans, J. & **Dwanyen, L.** (2016, November). *Attitudes toward postpartum depression based on risk factors and diagnosis.* Poster presentation presented at the National Council on Family Relations Annual Conference, Minneapolis, MN.
- Dwanyen, L.** & Hans, J. (2016, November). *The effects of an educational intervention on postpartum depression stigma.* Poster presentation presented at the National Council on Family Relations Annual Conference, Minneapolis, MN.
- Dwanyen, L.** (2016, May). *Postpartum depression: The effects of a video intervention on knowledge and stigma.* Oral presentation presented at the University of Kentucky School of Human and Environmental Sciences Graduate Student Research Day, Lexington, KY.
- Dwanyen, L.** (2013, November). *The maternal experiences of HIV-positive women.* Oral

presentation presented at the McNair National Conference, Lake Geneva, WI.

EXTERNAL FUNDING

Not Funded

- Spencer Foundation Vision Grant, Principal Investigator March 2024
 Increasing Family Engagement Skills to Enhance Mental Health System Capacity: Global
 Mental Health Collaboration Efforts in Uganda and Kenya"
 \$74,992
- National Institute of Health (RFA-DA-23-051), Co-Investigator February 2023
 "Prevention Addressing Social Determinants of Poverty and Discrimination among African
 Americans: Mental Health and Opioid Effects"
 \$6,882,286.91

TEACHING AND ADVISING

COURSE INSTRUCTOR

- HDFS 982 **Qualitative Research Methods** (Ph.D.) Fall 2021-Fall 2024
 Human Development and Family Studies Department, Michigan State University
- HDFS 444 **Interpersonal Relationships in the Family** (Undergrad) Spring 2022-Spring 2024
 Human Development and Family Studies Department, Michigan State University
- HDFS 993 **Clinical Practicum** (Ph.D.) Spring 2021-Spring 2022
 Human Development and Family Studies Department, Michigan State University
- FSoS 1202 **Human Development in Families: LifeSpan** (Undergrad)
 Family Social Science Department, University of Minnesota
- FSoS 2107 **Preparation for Family & Community Engagement** (Service Learning)
 Family Social Science Department, University of Minnesota

GUEST LECTURES

- HDFS 472 Helping Skills December 2023
- Introduction to Traumatic Stress and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- HDFS 830 Survey of Couple and Family Therapy Theories October 2023
- Narrative Family Therapy and Exposure Therapy
- HDFS 830 Survey of Couple and Family Therapy Theories December 2022
- Introduction to Narrative Exposure Therapy
- HDFS 842 African American Families March 2022
- U.S. Immigration and the African Diaspora
- EPSY 8403 Social/Cultural Contexts: Counseling and Skills
- Counseling Multicultural Clients February 2019

FSoS 2107 Preparation for Family and Community Engagement

- Fundraising Resources April 2019
- Welcoming Environments November 2018
- One-on-one Relational Meetings November 2018
- Group Facilitation Practice as a Community Engagement Strategy October 2018

FSoS 2105 Methods in Family Research

- Evidence-based Traumatic Stress Interventions with War-affected Families September 2018

FSoS 4107 Traumatic Stress and Resilience in Vulnerable Families

- Clinical and Research Experience Surrounding Traumatic Stress April 2018

DOCTORAL STUDENT SUPPORT***Primary Advising***

Francesca Pratt (HDFS) – Fourth-year doctoral candidate (dissertation proposal passed)
 Ibrahim Luberenga (HDFS) – Second-year doctoral student (pre-comprehensive exams)
 Aya Maxudov (HDFS) – Third-year doctoral student (pre-comprehensive exams)

Doctoral Dissertation Committees

Pendo Galukande (HDFS) – Pre-comprehensive exams
 Sarah Griffes (HDFS) – Comprehensive exams passed
 Deja Young (HDFS) – Comprehensive exams passed
 Anneliese Samples (HDFS) – Comprehensive exams passed
 Joana Lampe (Social Work) – Dissertation proposal passed
 Jessica Saba (Social Work) – Dissertation proposal passed
 Emily Jensen (HDFS) – Dissertation defended (May 2025)
 Morgan Titus (HDFS) – Dissertation defended (December 2024)
 Caitlin Edwards (HDFS) - Dissertation defended (January 2024)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**US-based Narrative Exposure Therapy Trainer**

August 2018–Present

USA, North America

- Deliver trainings on Narrative Exposure Therapy, an evidence-based treatment for complex posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to mental health providers, researchers, and stakeholders

Associate Therapist

December 2016–January 2024

Kente Circle, LLC., virtual and Minneapolis, MN

- Provide culturally sensitive psychotherapy services with clients affected by complex trauma and related individual-, couple-, and family-level stressors

Traumatic Stress and Complex PTSD Clinical Trainer

August 2019–May 2023

The Family Partnership, Minneapolis, Minnesota

- Deliver trainings on traumatic stress, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), culture and mental health, and topics relevant to culturally sensitive

Research Assistant

August 2017–December 2019

University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, Minnesota

- Analyzed qualitative interviews on economic adjustment of Karen families, coordinated and hosted local Immigrant and Refugee Discussion Series, co-edited revised open-access textbook

Project Coordinator and Case Manager

June 2018–August 2018

vivo International, Gulu, Uganda

- Provided weekly consultation to 16 counselors delivering Narrative Exposure Therapy, managed intakes and clinical case loads, and tracked pre- and post-test assessments

Family Relations Editorial Assistant

January 2015–August 2016

National Council on Family Relations, Minneapolis, MN Headquarters

- Processed manuscripts through peer review and publication processes, liaison between the Editor, editorial board members, corresponding authors, and manuscript reviewers

SERVICE, OUTREACH, AND ENGAGEMENT**DEPARTMENT-LEVEL SERVICE****HDFS Methods Committee**

August 2022–Present

Michigan State University Department of Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS)

HDFS Hearing Board for Graduate Students

August 2023–Present

Michigan State University Department of Human Development and Family Studies

Clinic Renovation Lead

January 2022–April 2024

Michigan State University Couple and Family Therapy Clinic

Co-Chair, Clinic Director Search Committee

September 2022–December 2022

Michigan State University Couple and Family Therapy Clinic

COLLEGE-LEVEL SERVICE**Faculty Advisor, Black Girls in Social Science**

August 2020–Present

Michigan State University College of Social Science

Core Faculty Member, Youth Equity Project

October 2020–Present

Michigan State University College of Social Science

Search Committee Member, Dean's Distinguished Scholar

March 2024

Michigan State University College of Social Science

Board Member, Alumni Society Board

August 2017–May 2020

University of Minnesota College of Education & Human Development

FIELD-LEVEL SERVICE

Editorial Board Member

Journal of Marital and Family Therapy

January 2021–Present

Board President

Minnesota Trauma Recovery Institute

September 2019–December 2020

Family Relations (Journal) Trainer

National Council on Family Relations

September 2016–November 2017

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Speaker: “Prioritizing Emotional Wellbeing After Organizational Loss & Change” May 2024

The New Teacher Center, Sacramento, CA

Speaker: “Black/African Immigrant Mental Health Awareness”

May 2024

Michigan United Action, Detroit, MI

Speaker: “Developing Needs Assessments for Systemic Interventions”

April 2023

University of Georgia Human Development and Family Studies, Athens, GA

Panelist: Journal of Marital and Family Therapy Decade in Review

September 2022

Facebook Live, Virtual

Panelist: “Ubuntu in Mental Health Discourse and Practice”

April 2022

Michigan State University African Studies Center, East Lansing, MI

Panelist: “Youth, System Involvement, and Trauma”

October 2021

Michigan State University Youth Equity Project, East Lansing, MI

Speaker: “Engaging with Families in Northern Uganda”

September 2018

University of Minnesota Department of Family Social Science, Minneapolis, MN

Speaker: “Young, Gifted, and At Risk”: Mental Health and Resources

April 2017

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, Minneapolis, MN

Speaker: “Intersectionality”

December 2016

University of Minnesota Department of Family Social Science, Minneapolis, MN

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

International Family Therapy Association

October 2024–Present

International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies

September 2019–Present

National Council on Family Relations
Ethnic Minorities Section Member
Family Therapy Section Member

October 2015–Present

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
Intervention Research Network
Family Therapists in Healthcare Settings

September 2014–Present