

Dayirai C. Kapfunde

Dayirai (Dye-Rye) C. Kapfunde is a PhD student in Public Health Promotion and Sociobehavioural Sciences at the University of Alberta, co-supervised by Dr. Elizabeth Onyango and Dr. Sophie Yohani. As a WCHRI graduate student awardee, she brings over seventeen years of psychotherapy experience and a solid academic foundation, including a Master of Social Work from Toronto Metropolitan University and a Bachelor of Social Work from McMaster University. Dayirai's work emphasizes holistic healing, anti-colonial practices, and collective well-being, reflecting her deep understanding of the intersections between social justice, mental health, and public health.

Her research focuses on the health and mental wellness of Black women healthcare professionals in Alberta. Dayirai investigates the challenges they face due to systemic racism, classism, and gender discrimination, aiming to assess their health outcomes, document their coping strategies, and inform policies to enhance their work environment and overall well-being. This research addresses critical knowledge gaps in public health promotion and seeks to bolster support for Black women in healthcare.

Beyond her research, Dayirai is an active community leader and facilitator, co-leading workshops on identity-based trauma and mental health support for diverse populations. Since 2018, she has served on the Alberta College of Social Workers Council and was an appointed committee member for the Bylaws and Regulations committee at the Association of Social Work Boards in the USA for two consecutive terms.

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As a Graduate Research Assistant for Dr. Domale Keys, Dayirai contributed to the Black Women Students Safety Project, providing mental health support and facilitation. She is a Graduate Teaching Assistant with Ms. Erin Wright, developing the curriculum for the new SPH:303 Health Promotion in an Unequal World course.

Dayirai's active participation in academic and community events, including the University of Alberta's Pan African Symposium and the City of Calgary's Racial Justice Conference, showcases her dedication to fostering inclusive and diverse spaces. As a co-founder of the Alberta Association of Black Social Workers (AABSW) and a member of the Alberta Black Therapist Network (ABTN) and the Alberta Public Health Association (APHA), she is committed to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion within public health initiatives. Her unique perspective as a trainee positions her to offer valuable insights into the role of social media and citizen movements in shaping evidence-informed public health strategies.