

**Samantha Michael, Director of Business Services 00:06**

**Rutgers School of Social Work**

Hi and welcome to the third episode of the fourth season of toward a more just future. A podcast from Rutgers School of Social Work. My name is Samantha Michael, and I'm the Director of Business Services here at the school this season, I'm speaking with directors and members of institutes and centers at Rutgers School of Social Work about their work, their connections to the field of social work, engagement to communities throughout all of New Jersey and beyond, and how their areas of focus prove critical to the future. Today, we'll be speaking with Chiara Sabina, associate professor at Rutgers School of Social Work, Chancellor's scholar for inclusive excellence in interpersonal violence research, and Associate Director of the Center for Research on ending violence. Dr Sabina's research centers on interpersonal victimization, especially intimate partner violence, sexual violence and dating violence among Latina community members throughout her research, Dr Sabina employs a contextual strengths based perspective with respect to interpersonal violence, focusing on understudied groups the influence of cultural variables, help seeking responses and examination of the Service Delivery System. She has received grants from the Fulbright Scholar Program, National Institute of Justice, Pennsylvania commission on Crime and Delinquency, Vision of Hope and National Sexual Violence Resource Center to conduct her work on Latina victimization, victim needs, violence prevention, domestic violence services and culturally informed services. Dr Sabina is senior consulting editor for psychology of violence and is a member of the research advisory board of Esperanza united, founded in 2007 at the Rutgers School of Social Work, the Center for Research on ending violence, or rev strives to eliminate all forms of violence and the power imbalances that permit them. Rev accomplishes their mission through a collaborative approach that focuses on multidisciplinary research, education and community engagement. Shear is a core faculty member of Rev and has served as associate director for almost two years now. Dr Sabina, thank you so much for joining us today. We're excited to have you here for our third episode of the fourth season to kick us off. Could you give us an overview of the Center for Research on ending violence or rev and the work that you all do?

**Chiara Sabina, Associate Professor 02:54**

**Chancellor's Scholar for Inclusive Excellence in Interpersonal Violence Research**

**Associate Director, Center for Research on Ending Violence**

Sure I'm happy to be here. Thank you. Thank Catie for putting us together. Um yeah. So we are the Center for Research on Ending Violence. We've been in existence since 2007 and we're formally called the Center for Violence Against Women and Children. Yes, the name change was recent, and just about two years ago, we have three main branches and a main trunk, so we think of ourselves as a tree, and the main part of the tree, of the trunk is the center coordinator, and kind of that involves setting up the center and making sure everything runs well and that we are a cohesive group. And then we have three main branches of our tree. One of them is research. We are Research Center, and we range in projects from very small, community-based projects to large federal projects. And then we also have teaching. We have the certificate on interpersonal violence and trauma that educates MSW students to work in the field and work with survivors of violence and trauma. And then we also have a branch on professional training and development, and that works with folks outside of Rutgers in their professional roles in

order for them to be trained to deal with survivors of violence. So we have these three main parts, brought together by the center coordinator the trunk, and together, we strive towards our ideal of eliminating violence.

**Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 04:56**

**Rutgers School of Social Work**

Thank you. Thank you for your work and you. It sounds like you've built a strong culture across the center of support from all aspects. So if we, if we stick with you, can you talk to us about the path that led you here and to this role that that you're in now in your work with the center and the school?

**Chiara Sabina, Associate Professor 05:16**

**Chancellor's Scholar for Inclusive Excellence in Interpersonal Violence Research**

**Associate Director, Center for Research on Ending Violence**

Sure. So I am relatively new to Rutgers. This is my third year at Rutgers. I've been in the role of Associate Director of the Center now for two years. It's a role I'm very happy in, and I'm happy at Rutgers as well. I've been at two institutions before, previously, and although they also had great things the center and being here has been a really wonderful experience to be with other researchers working on similar topics. So, yeah, that's kind of how I came here. I have been working in this field for at least 15 years now, and it kind of have shifted my focus a bit over time, and this seems like a very good fit in in that regard, to to be at the center with other folks working on these issues and that have this aspiration of eliminating violence in all of its forms, not just only on violence against women, for example.

**Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 06:34**

**Rutgers School of Social Work**

Can you talk a little bit more about that, eliminating violence in all of its forms? And maybe some some examples of what's within that.

**Chiara Sabina, Associate Professor 06:44**

**Chancellor's Scholar for Inclusive Excellence in Interpersonal Violence Research**

**Associate Director, Center for Research on Ending Violence**

Yeah, so a lot of this work has centered or or started with the focus on domestic violence and sexual violence, and of course, those are extremely important forms of violence to address and to understand, and my work and work at the Center continues to focus on that, but as we've worked in the field and seen the interconnections to other forms of violence, we realize that we can't just stop there, that we also obviously child abuse also happens in tandem with those issues, but other things, like dating violence, like community level violence, like bias, victimization, all of those things also occur and are traumatic to communities and families and so when we're thinking about violence, and this was part of the name change, to be more open in our thinking, including these Other forms of violence, for example, how can we avoid systemic violence and state sanctioned violence? Right? So we need to understand the various forms and and how they are manifested, which are all based in power differentials.

**Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 08:21**

**Rutgers School of Social Work**

Thank you for that. And I mean that it's helpful to have those examples to really see how wide reaching the scope of your work and of the center work is. So staying within that lane a little bit. Can you talk to us about some of the projects that you've been working on?

**Chiara Sabina, Associate Professor 08:39**

**Chancellor's Scholar for Inclusive Excellence in Interpersonal Violence Research**

**Associate Director, Center for Research on Ending Violence**

Sure, I'll tell you briefly about three projects, if I could do it briefly, yeah, one is a national level project that's funded by the National Institute of Justice, and that is understanding Latina experiences with victimization and discrimination, intersectionality and discrimination. So the acronym is Latvia, and the idea of that actually is to look at Latinas across the United States to get specific numbers on the prevalence of different forms of violence that they experience, and in that when we're using a broad definition. So it does include physical assault and sexual assault, it also includes stalking and sexual harassment and trafficking, which needs much more study. So we have, we'll be gathering data on those various forms of violence. In addition, we also have a focus on intersectionality. So with intersectionality, we're not looking at Latinas as one group, right? We're trying to. Understand the differences within the the larger group of Latinas. So we know that dimensions of difference along race, for example, because Latinas are multiracial, group differences across sexual orientation and gender identity as well as immigrant status. So what we're trying to do, in addition to the national sample, is to recruit folks to get representation from groups that that have been historically not included in research, even on research on Latinas, for example, Afro Latinas have not been studied in depth or indigenous Latinas. And while there's much to learn and to understand, research in this field has not taken that up in a concerted effort. So that is what we're trying to do in this study, focusing again on victimization experiences. So that is an ongoing study. It's in its second of three years and then funded by Rutgers global, I'm working on a project on integrative community therapy for intimate partner survivors in Quito Ecuador. I have spent a year in Quito and develop some collaborations there to look at this integrative community therapy approach. And the quick summary is that it is a community based approach where peers who become trained in a method certain methodology, of conducting these community dialog circles bring people together in their community to talk about things that stress them and how they overcame them more importantly, right? And so it becomes a way for communities and neighborhoods to support each other without necessarily having outside professional help. Of course, if professional help is needed, the the facilitator would refer them, but the idea is that we could gain a lot of strength. There is already a lot of strength in communities themselves, and if we bring people together and give them the opportunity to share, beautiful things could happen. So we're doing that that's built off of previous work that I've done with my community partners there in Quito, and right now, what we're doing is training domestic violence survivors to conduct these circles themselves with other women who are at high risk for experiencing violence. And then another project that's here locally in New Brunswick, was funded by the Office of the Vice President, the Vice Provost of research, and that's on gun violence. And so I am part of a team. The PI is at the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, but I'm bringing in

the Social Work lens to this. So they're working on making a gun violence Care Center to provide continued support for gun violence survivors. And so I am working with them, and we're designing a way to get at what helps gun violence survivors heal, what helps them move beyond the tragic incident. And so what I'm adding to that project is looking at resilience and resilience enhancing factors for that population here in New Brunswick, and that project will be coming to an end sometime over the summer.

**Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 14:31**

**Rutgers School of Social Work**

Thank you for sharing that year. It sounds like you're very busy, but it also each of these projects has such wide ranging impacts for the communities that they're based in, and also policy impacts too. It sounds like so can you talk about a lot of them have collaborators. You mentioned a collaborator that's doing some training now and then, even internal to Rutgers. Tell us. About your network of collaborators and some of maybe revs collaborators. What do those relationships look like? And if you want to share any highlights that you have

**Chiara Sabina, Associate Professor 15:11**

**Chancellor's Scholar for Inclusive Excellence in Interpersonal Violence Research**

**Associate Director, Center for Research on Ending Violence**

Sure, Well, yeah, the collaborators in Ecuador called mayompa. They are part of a group that does this integrative community therapy that originates from Brazil. So this is, I guess, one of our far reaching collaborators, and, of course, with the gun violence Care Center, they are tied in with the hospital Violence Intervention Program hvip, that is housed at the hospital here. And they also have a consortium called wave that brings together people in the New Brunswick area who care about community violence, and we have meetings to share resources and what's been going on with the hvip. So that's not that's in addition to the project, right? That has been going on for for some time. The other kind of representation that rev has we we try to be involved in these coalitions in New Jersey and our local communities, right? So we're part of the Sexual Violence Prevention Coalition and Middlesex County. We're part of the New Brunswick coalition. Also, there's a faculty Coalition on campus for violence prevention and victim assistance that you know, folks involved in rev participate and contribute to each of these coalitions or groups. Then there's also broad, ranging ones like Vicki Banyard, which is part of our center. She runs a resilience consortium, a resilience portfolio Consortium, and that has people globally that's part of that coalition. So we have a wide range of partners, and, of course, and the partners on our projects as well, right? These are, these are groups that we work on that the policy and practice kind of aspects, but also within the research, we partner with different groups, the Latvia project, which I was talking about for a highlight on on some of my collaborators, we've put together a community advisory board. And the idea there is that even though I've been doing work in this field for a very long time, I need a lot of input help to really understand all of the issues going on day to day in the front lines, Right? And so we've put together about 10 to 12 different community organizations that do provide direct service or training to service providers, and they are contributing to the project to help us understand these populations more so, for instance, there's in Indiana the multicultural efforts to end sexual assault. They work a lot with farm workers, and so we're we're learning from their

experiences. We have someone from the National LGBTQ Institute on IPV, so that's its own institute just focused on IPV among the LGBTQ population, and they have an interest in also understanding Latinas who belong to the LGBTQ population. So different collaborators like that. There's a group in New York that provides direct services to mostly Latina women, and they are also part of our board. And what's been great for me to watch is the board coming together and creating a community, even though it's been virtual. You know, there was a real sense of connection, since we're all passionate about the same things, even though we haven't. You know, this is an. New group that has come together, there has been a lot of support and, I guess, mutual inspiration, right where we're like, yes, we need to keep on moving in these directions so that that's been great to watch.

**Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 20:17**

**Rutgers School of Social Work**

Thank you for for sharing. I I skipped over a question, so I'd be remiss to not not come back to it and give you an opportunity to talk on, talk about maybe some of the impacts that you see of around the projects that you're working on, or ones that you'd like to highlight.

**Chiara Sabina, Associate Professor 20:39**

**Chancellor's Scholar for Inclusive Excellence in Interpersonal Violence Research**

**Associate Director, Center for Research on Ending Violence**

Um, sure. I mean, I think one of them that I could share, because it's all analyzed and done earlier version of of the project I talked about with the community dialog circle. So what we did first on that project was to test that specific methodology with domestic violence survivors and to see if engaging in these dialog circles for six weeks helped them heal from their experiences. And so we did. We found change. We actually ran a quasi experiment where we had a comparison group who didn't receive any intervention, and the intervention group, which we which, you know, participated in these six weeks of dialog circles, and we saw their social support went up over the six weeks, right? We saw that their self esteem went up over the six weeks. We saw that their self rated health went up, you know, so you know, when you talk about these things, when you start to engage and process. I think people's over their their whole being responds to that, right? So I was really excited by those impacts on their their lives. They also talked about, you know, wanting to make changes in their lives and improve their lives for the better. And so that was really wonderful to see as a result of of participating in the project. And that's that's what motivated us to then have the women become the facilitators, right, so that they can carry on this methodology in their in their own communities. So that's you know, some of the impacts in my work in general, with Latina survivors, I've been able to coordinate with Esperanza united, which provides technical assistance. And so I think some of the impacts there has been just the getting my work picked up by others in the field, and having them use it for funding opportunities, for example, to say, look, this is a problem. This is of national scope. These are the issues. And so it's been able to guide some work in in that area. So I've been very thankful for that. And it's even some of the work has even been used by attorneys in immigration cases right to substantiate some of the trends that we see with victimization. So I've been, I've been really thankful that it's, it has had some impacts, and of course, I would like to have more impacts. No,

**Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 23:58**

**Rutgers School of Social Work**

but thank you for sharing. And those are such unique examples, too, of places that you might not see the impact, but it is there, and it can be long, long lasting in those areas. So I'm going to pivot a little bit and talk a little bit about the I'd like to talk about the center and the operations you talked about your tree. And so when it comes to to funding and operations of a center, what goes into making sure it works right? So how do you manage wanting to produce good research, effective outcomes, strong community engagement, but also needing to keep the the organization running and making sure that the tree, the people within it, have the support they need.

**Chiara Sabina, Associate Professor 24:45**

**Chancellor's Scholar for Inclusive Excellence in Interpersonal Violence Research**

**Associate Director, Center for Research on Ending Violence**

Yes, I'm sure this keeps some of us up at night. But yeah, we have been successful over time, and of course, that while. Masses and wanes. We are a soft funded center. And so there's realities to that, to acknowledge that it's not a stand a steady funding stream. It is about applying to different projects and different grants and and having success in those so right now we have about 30 folks affiliated in some way with the center, well and affiliate. So we have 15 faculty and staff between staff and faculty, and then we have PhD students, we have postdocs, we have MSW students working with us. And so it is, it is a lot to coordinate and manage all of that and to have the funding to support all of that. So a lot of positions are tied to projects. And so as the projects come in, they have certain tasks and positions affiliated with them. So we have some federal grants the victims, funded by the Victims of Crime Act, funded by National Institutes of Health, funded by National Institute of Justice. So we have some some of those funding streams. We also have contracts at the state level, the New Jersey division on disability services or the Office of the Courts. These are examples of state contracts. So those are some of our bread and butter that keep us moving, and it is a big coordinating job of having these projects with the tide positions and cycling them and making sure that we could produce good work while we're doing that.

**Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 27:15**

**Rutgers School of Social Work**

Thank you for that. I appreciate the complexity of it. I know and you talked about it being a complex job, right? So in your role, you're responsible for the work that goes into the operations of the center. Can you talk a little bit about some of the major areas of responsibility you have as Associate Director?

**Chiara Sabina, Associate Professor 27:38**

**Chancellor's Scholar for Inclusive Excellence in Interpersonal Violence Research**

**Associate Director, Center for Research on Ending Violence**

Sure, so we try to run the center in a way that's as democratic and participatory as possible. And so we have a senior leadership team that meets every month. We will discuss these sorts of

questions, what's coming up? What kind of events are happening? How can we best approach those events? So that's that's one part. But in addition, obviously, we have other initiatives like strategic planning. I've played a large role with strategic planning. We've have completed a new cycle of strategic planning where each of our the core trunk and the different branches have each created a plan for moving forward over the next few years, we are revisited our values statement just because we realize that it's a changing landscape, right? It's not static. And so we need to revisit these things, and it helps for us to be recognized and legible outside of Rutgers, right? It's like this. These are the things that make us unique, and so some of that is a focus on resilience and and strengths. We also me, and my role, in particular, I've worked to renew and think through the affiliates program that we have at Rev. So there are core faculty that are part of Rev, and then there's also affiliates, because we have a very large school of social work, and a lot of people's research intersects with ours, and so there are other faculty that are affiliated with the center, and so I've been able to think through that. And for instance, we had an affiliates breakfast where we could. Come together and discuss potential collaborations, really. So I've worked with that. I've also chaired where hired a new research faculty member, and so like chairing that committee to hire them, those are some of the examples. And then, of course, there's day to day operations, like a lot of business office stuff, a lot of planning stuff. How are we going to make this event work, that kind of thing. So yeah, the website that we're working with, Katie on, all of those sorts of things. It just, it really does seem endless. And so we try to prioritize. We have to prioritize and and tag team. And luckily, it's a very supportive group.

**Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 31:00**  
**Rutgers School of Social Work**

Thank you for sharing, and a lot of what you've mentioned also adds value to your your center and opportunity for future work and enhancing the work with your collaborators too, right? So congratulations on your hire. It sounds like

**Chiara Sabina, Associate Professor 31:15**  
**Chancellor's Scholar for Inclusive Excellence in Interpersonal Violence Research**  
**Associate Director, Center for Research on Ending Violence**  
Yes, wonderful. She's coming back to rev Julia,

**Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 31:20**  
**Rutgers School of Social Work**

Can you just talk a little bit about what makes the structure of a research center so appealing to kind of the nature of the work that you're doing that rev does? Yeah,

**Chiara Sabina, Associate Professor 31:31**  
**Chancellor's Scholar for Inclusive Excellence in Interpersonal Violence Research**  
**Associate Director, Center for Research on Ending Violence**

I've come I kind of saw this before I got here three years ago, but being here, I've seen this more is that it's a we not only study violence and work towards non violence, but I think that the center works very hard to practice those things and how we approach our work and how we interact with each other, and that really is invaluable. So things like having the SLT meeting,

things like talking about diversity, equity and inclusion when we start our meetings, having a strong emphasis on mentoring, right these sorts of things give us a way to to practice the things that we preach, that You know, like, how do we enact these values that we want to strive towards? So I really appreciate that as part of the center, in addition to the intellectual parts of it, right? So intellectually, it's great too, because we have experts that have worked on a variety of topics, and have long careers in this area that provide guidance and can help. And then we have these super sharp, you know, up and coming scholars that are pushing the envelope, and it's like, great, you know, we need that. And so valuing all of that has been really helpful. Oh, and something that I forgot, but I also, in my role as Associate Director, started our research seminars, which is an opportunity for folks that are part of the center to share their work with each other and provide feedback to each other and support so you know, might have a paper that is going to be published or a report or a grant application or something of that Nature, and how wonderful is it that we can, you know, read and come together and really discuss our work. So yeah, those are all great things as part of a center.

**Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 34:14**

**Rutgers School of Social Work**

It sounds like you have a fantastic culture, and I the thought that goes into the events that you're creating the space to have discussions, even in this hybrid world. I mean, you and I are on zoom right now, right makes a difference and sounds like what's core to your success too. So in conversations about social work, we have a strong commitment to connecting research and practice. How do you see your center contributing to that mission?

**Chiara Sabina, Associate Professor 34:46**

**Chancellor's Scholar for Inclusive Excellence in Interpersonal Violence Research**

**Associate Director, Center for Research on Ending Violence**

Yeah, I think there are several ways, and our research projects definitely try to have a. A dynamic relationship between research and practice in both directions. So not just research to practice, but practice to research, right? So there's definitely questions that service providers can have of direct practical use that potentially, you know, we could work on, I think another area where we have a focus on this is in training, right? So the whole training component, component is really to bring the the research knowledge that we have as a center and inform practice with that right? So there's different kind of of trainings for the Office of the Courts, for example, or on disability services that kind of help in in those arenas and their their whole certificate programs, right that professionals can take another one that's in the research realm. That's an example. Is the enhancing victim services throughout Rutgers University. This is VOCA funded, and that's a very clear example. So that is a grant to work on victim services across all of Rutgers campuses. So it's research, but it's also working with all of the offices across the campuses to coordinate services and looking at the diversity of students and making sure that we're responding to all of our students. I also want to highlight a project that the VOCA project is run by Dr McMahan and Dr Banyard is working on a national institutes of health project to look at bystander intervention for suicide, or people who are thinking about suicide, and so that is very important to have a model, obviously, to intervene, to use bystanders to intervene in a



potential suicide situation, and so that these projects have a clear focus on practical application, right? And I think that kind of exemplifies the orientation that a lot of our projects have.

**Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 37:48**  
**Rutgers School of Social Work**

Thank you. So kind of sticking on the what the work overall that your center is doing violence research is an ever growing and ever changing need, right? Our communities are changing. The environment's changing. Why would you say it's a critical area of study?

**Chiara Sabina, Associate Professor 38:11**

**Chancellor's Scholar for Inclusive Excellence in Interpersonal Violence Research**  
**Associate Director, Center for Research on Ending Violence**

Well, I'll start with the main reason. This is a life or death conversation, right, from intimate partner homicide to community violence to gun violence to suicide. This destroys families and communities, right? And so obviously, in that regard, it's of critical importance. The other things that I've seen as I've gotten more entrenched in the work, is that violence is connected to so many other social problems that it becomes you realize just how much we have to do in order to combat violence? There's not a one, you know, a one component solution, yeah, no single solution to this, right? We have to have a multifaceted effort to do this. So like in my work, focusing on Latinas, I want to look at the violence and the dynamics around violence, let's say in families. But how does immigration policy impact that right? How does discrimination in schools impact that how you know, how does the minimum wage impact that right? And so things like poverty and immigration policy and different inequalities in society all go into. The the experience and possible solution to to violence. And so it, it's a critical area of study, because it has all of these facets and precursors to it. And so really, it takes a systemic level change to address some of these issues. Yeah,

**Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 40:29**  
**Rutgers School of Social Work**

Thank you. So. So some of your work is New Jersey based. Some is outside of the country even, but sticking in New Jersey. Can you talk to us about your aspirational goals for New Jersey in this area of work, and then any similar goals you might have for Rutgers University as an institution?

**Chiara Sabina, Associate Professor 40:52**

**Chancellor's Scholar for Inclusive Excellence in Interpersonal Violence Research**  
**Associate Director, Center for Research on Ending Violence**

Yeah. So as far as aspirational goals, there are strong coalitions. They're strong organizing. There's people really, really devoted to this field and advancement in this field. And I think some of the the ways in which we need to grow overall. For example, one of the groups that I'm on is thinking about state level plan, right? And so one of the things that comes up again and again is affordable housing, right? So how can having more access to unfor affordable housing is violence prevention right? Is part of the equation of violence prevention. Anti racism also is violence prevention, right? So I think for aspirational goals in this area, I do think it's about providing more supports to communities and families so that they have more resources and

including the the their needs, as far as parenting and mental health and substance abuse and those types of things to really help families thrive. I think that I would be in that arena for aspirational goals for Rutgers as an institution, that's a very I get to think outside of the box here. So Rutgers has also been working really hard on these issues. And it's, you know, with some of the projects that I mentioned, and that some of that is continuing. And so one of the groups that I'm affiliated with is about the faculty coalition associated with the violence prevention and I think that's one of the areas where we could work more is, is thinking about trauma informed teaching, thinking about how to respond to students that are experiencing trauma. Obviously, there's been work around that, but we have with with covid, the impacts of covid, the mental health impacts of covid, I think there is a continued need to support students. We also have a really, really diverse student body, and that's one of the strengths of Rutgers. But I also think that creates certain needs as far as services or outreach for violence prevention, right? And so how can we make sure we're being inclusive in all of those for all of our students? And yeah, I know that the provost has some some work on that with the scarlet well, and one of the areas that I think could be focused on is specifically violence prevention with diverse communities at Rutgers. Yeah, thank you.

**Samantha Michaele, Director of Business Services 44:40**  
**Rutgers School of Social Work**

So that's all I had for our questions. Thank you, Dr Sabina, we appreciate you sharing your time, your journey and your experiences with us today. I know you're busy, so thank you for for this time, and have a good afternoon.

**Chiara Sabina, Associate Professor 44:57**  
**Chancellor's Scholar for Inclusive Excellence in Interpersonal Violence Research**  
**Associate Director, Center for Research on Ending Violence**

Thank you. Really enjoyed it.