

# **Bo-Kyung Elizabeth Kim**

**Assistant Professor of Social Work at USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work**  
Los Angeles, CA, US

Elizabeth Kim is committed to research that seeks to reduce racial disproportionality endemic to the juvenile justice system.

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## **Biography**

ELIZABETH KIM joined the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work in 2016 after completing her postdoctoral scholarship at the Berkeley Center for Prevention in Social Welfare. The goal of her research is to bridge the research-practice gap in service delivery models to address the mental, emotional, and behavioral health needs of youth in and at-risk for being involved in the juvenile justice system. Specifically, Dr. Kim is committed to research that seeks to reduce racial/ethnic disproportionality and disparities endemic to the juvenile justice system. In the last two years, Dr. Kim has taken leadership roles in pushing the field of prevention science and social work to engage in research that addresses racial/ethnic inequity. As an appointed member of the Society for Prevention Research Diversity Committee, she and her colleagues developed actionable guidelines and recommendations for reducing health disparities using Prevention Science approaches. Under the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare Grand Challenge of Achieving Equal Opportunity and Justice, Dr. Kim led the development of a position paper to set achievable goals for the field towards equity in the juvenile justice system. While much of the research has focused on evidence-based programs to reduce these problems, not much has been achieved to reduce the racial/ethnic disproportionality and disparities prevalent in the juvenile justice system. Dr. Kim's research includes three focus areas: 1) understanding the development of both healthy and problematic behaviors in adolescence; 2) identifying service needs of youth in school and justice systems; and 3) identifying and testing effective strategies to improve services that promote positive development among youth at-risk for or in the juvenile justice system. Together, her research seeks to move evidence-based practice into service systems in order to reduce mental, emotional, and behavioral health inequity experienced primarily by youth of color over the life course. She is a member of the Society for Social Work and Research, the Society for Prevention Research, the Society for Implementation Research Collaboration and the American Society for Criminology. To reference the work of B.K. Elizabeth Kim online, we ask that you directly quote their work where possible and attribute it to "Bo-Kyung Elizabeth Kim, a faculty at the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work? (LINK: <https://dworakpeck.usc.edu>)

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## **Industry Expertise**

Education/Learning, Social Services

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## **Areas of Expertise**

Translation Research, Delinquency/Violence, Schools, Children & Families, Juvenile Justice, Prevention Science

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## **Grand Challenges**

### **Achieving Equal Opportunity and Justice**

Kim, B. K. E, McCarter, S., & Logan-Greene, P. (2020). Achieving equal opportunity and justice in juvenile justice (Grand Challenges for Social Work Initiative Working Paper No. 25). Retrieved from Grand Challenges for Social Work website: <https://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Achieving-Equal-Opportunity-and-Justice-in-Juvenile-Justice-3.pdf> In order to achieve equal opportunity and justice, our nation's most vulnerable youth must not bear a disproportionate burden of justice system involvement. In 2016, nearly one million youth in the United States were arrested (Hockenberry & Puzanchera, 2018). These youth are often those growing up with neglect, maltreatment, and abuse; living without financial security; facing mental, emotional, and behavioral health problems; and experiencing discrimination for various reasons not limited to race, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Moreover, once they become justice-involved, they face diminished outcomes in development, education, and employment, as well as an increased likelihood of continued system involvement. Therefore, we propose rebuilding social work's commitment to juvenile justice by capitalizing on recent policy and systems change, cross-sector collaboration, and evidence-based interventions. To transform the juvenile justice system over the next decade, we propose five actionable goals for social work practice, policy, and research to dismantle inequity and injustice and foster the full social, civic, economic, and political integration of justice-involved youth.

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## **Education**

**University of Washington**  
Ph.D.

**University of Michigan**  
M.S.W. Social Policy & Evaluation

**University of California, Los Angeles**  
B.A. Interpersonal & Intercultural Communications Studies

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## **Accomplishments**

**Early Career Preventionist Network NIDA Travel Scholarship**  
Early Career Preventionist Network NIDA Travel Scholarship, Society for Prevention Research (2013-2016)

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