

**Washington State University**

**College of Education**

**Sarah Sevedge**

**Will defend the dissertation**

**Date: April 15, 2021**

**Time: 10:00 A.M.**

**Location: Zoom by request**

*Faculty, students and the general public are encouraged to attend*

**CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE DSM-5 CRITERIA FOR  
POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER**

**Chair: Phyllis Erdman**

In 1952, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) created the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) in order to build a common language, or discourse, for the diagnosis of mental health disorders. First, the critical historical tracing of the DSM examines the etiology of the document to broaden our understanding of the discourse as a socially constructed narrative bound to historical context. Secondly, the task of the critical examination of the DSM-5 (2013) diagnostic criteria for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is to imagine how the language could change with the integration of theoretical frameworks provided by liberation psychology and postcolonial psychology. The methodology for this review draws upon critical discourse analysis (CDA), which facilitates exploration of the relationship between themes in the discourse, the transmission of knowledge within sociohistorical context, and the subsequent power in shaping praxis. It is necessary to refine our understanding of trauma and then build a cohesive definition of PTSD that reflects growth and development in knowledge. The goal is to expand the definition of PTSD and include cosmologies of thought that have been historically denied access to authorship of the criteria and open a pathway to initiate systemic reforms, which address the historical, social, political, and economic factors that contribute to creating trauma. The anticipated result of this effort is to help foster environments where it is possible for individuals and communities to be released from the machinations of trauma and increase available resources for healing.

**Keywords: DSM-5, PTSD, discourse, postcolonial psychology, liberation psychology.**