

DR. PAULETTE SIMONE SMITH, MS, LCSW-C

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Professional Summary

Dynamic and accomplished professional with extensive expertise in clinical therapy, higher education, and cannabis wellness. Currently serving as an Assistant Professor at Morgan State University, a Clinical Therapist at Paulette Simone & Associates, an Adjunct Faculty member at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, and the Founder of Canna Heals, LLC, I integrate innovative research with practical applications in cannabis science and mental health. Recognized for delivering engaging presentations and workshops that enhance student learning outcomes and for cultivating collaborative, inclusive environments. I am deeply committed to advancing knowledge, promoting equity, and driving social justice through evidence-based practice, education, and community engagement.

Research Interests:

Investigating the therapeutic applications of medical cannabis in mental health care; examining cannabis prohibition as a social justice issue within social work curricula; and advancing equity-focused, community-based approaches to wellness, policy reform, and professional education.

Proven expertise in:

Public Speaking | Curriculum Development | Engagement Strategies | Assessment and Evaluation | Student-Centered Learning | Interpersonal Communication | Content Creation | Facilitation Skills | Time Management | Active Listening | Emotional Intelligence | Networking and Relationship Building | Adaptability | Feedback and Coaching | Cultural Competency | Knowledge of Educational Technologies | Conflict Resolution | Research and Analysis | Collaboration and Teamwork | Mentoring and Advising

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS & LICENSURE

<i>Simmons University - Doctor of Social Work (DSW)</i>	May 2024
Capstone Project: Cannabis Prohibition and Racial Injustice: Unveiling the Urgency for Social Justice Reform. Course-based research project analysing the intersection of cannabis prohibition, mental health, and social justice, with implications for policy and social work education.	
<i>University of Maryland, Baltimore - Master of Medical Cannabis Science and Therapeutics</i>	2022
<i>Morgan State University - Master of Social Work</i>	2011
<i>Bowie State University - Bachelor of Science in Broadcast Journalism</i> (Summa cum Laude)	2009
LCSW-C – Licensed Certified Social Worker–Clinical (#20734), Maryland Dept. of Health, State Board of Social Work Examiners –	In good standing through Oct 2027
Approved Supervisor, Bachelor’s and Master’s Level Clinicians (#20734) –	Valid through Oct 2027

CAREER HISTORY

<i>Morgan State University – Assistant Professor</i>	August 2025 - Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teach and develop graduate-level courses in social work, focusing on policy analysis, social justice, and integrative approaches to mental health and wellness.Design and implement innovative curricula that incorporate critical pedagogy, experiential learning, and equity-centered frameworks to prepare future social work leaders.Advise and mentor graduate students, supporting their academic, professional, and research development while fostering an inclusive learning environment.	
<i>Insight Timer – Mindfulness & Meditation Instructor</i>	January 2025 - Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop and record guided meditations integrating Internal Family Systems (IFS), Motivational Interviewing (MI), and strengths-based approaches to support emotional regulation, stress reduction, and self-compassion.Create accessible mindfulness content for a global audience, focusing on anxiety, depression, and holistic wellness.Engage an international community of listeners through Insight Timer’s educational platform to promote integrative mental health practices.	
<i>Gladstone Psychiatry and Wellness – Licensed Clinical Therapist</i>	2024 - Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Level 1 Trained Internal Family Systems (IFS) Therapist: Utilize IFS therapeutic techniques to guide clients in identifying, understanding, and healing their internal parts, fostering greater self-awareness and emotional healing.Delivering individualized therapy to a diverse caseload, effectively addressing unique client needs and goals through tailored treatment plans.Ensuring compliance with legal and ethical standards by maintaining thorough and accurate documentation of client progress, thereby enhancing accountability and quality of care.Implementing a range of evidence-based treatment modalities, emphasizing a client-centered approach to facilitate healing and promote personal growth.	
<i>University of Maryland, Baltimore - Adjunct Faculty</i>	2024 - Present
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Designing and delivering engaging course content and lectures that align with curriculum guidelines and learning objectives to enhance student understanding and retention.Assessing and grading student assignments and papers within designated timelines, providing constructive feedback to support academic growth and improve performance.Holding regular office hours to advise and support students, facilitating their academic progress and career aspirations through personalized guidance.	

- Contributing to curriculum development and program planning initiatives by participating in departmental and faculty meetings, enhancing educational quality and relevance.

Canna Heals, LLC - Founder

2022 - Present

- Guiding the strategic direction and operational execution of the company, aligning initiatives with business goals, and ensuring compliance with cannabis industry regulations to foster sustainable growth.
- Leading course development initiatives from concept through commercialization, focusing on innovative cannabis research and methods to mitigate risk and enhance educational offerings.
- Cultivating critical relationships with investors, regulatory bodies, and strategic partners to secure funding and expand market reach, resulting in increased operational capacity and community impact.
- Directing marketing and sales strategies to elevate brand awareness and market penetration, achieving significant growth in customer base and revenue through targeted outreach.

Paulette Simone & Associates - Owner & Therapist

2019 - Present

- Delivering comprehensive psychotherapy services, including assessment, treatment planning, and implementation of effective therapeutic interventions to meet client needs.
- Managing daily operations of the practice, including staff hiring, training, and supervision, ensuring high-quality client care and adherence to ethical standards.
- Establishing and maintaining collaborative relationships with healthcare providers and community organizations to enhance referral networks and integrated care services, improving patient outcomes.
- Overseeing financial operations, including budgeting, billing, and financial planning, to ensure the profitability and sustainable growth of the practice.

ADDITIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

University of Maryland, Baltimore – Teaching Assistant

2022 - 2024

- Supported student work evaluation and provided timely, constructive feedback to improve learning outcomes.
- Maintained availability for student consultations, offering guidance on academic and career-related queries to promote student success.
- Collaborated in departmental meetings to discuss curriculum enhancements and strategies for improving student engagement.

Blair Wellness Center - Cannabis Wellness Specialist

2018 - 2022

- Provided tailored wellness programs and consultations focused on the therapeutic benefits of cannabis, enhancing patient understanding and usage to improve health outcomes.
- Collaborated with interdisciplinary teams to develop integrated care plans, resulting in increased patient satisfaction and wellness.

T.E.A.M. for All (Together Everyone Achieves More) - Therapist

2018 - 2020

- Facilitated group therapy sessions focused on fostering collaboration and shared experiences, enhancing participants' social support networks and coping strategies.
- Conducted assessments and implemented tailored interventions to support clients' emotional and psychological well-being.

Baltimore County Department of Social Services - Foster Care Social Worker

2016 - 2019

- Managed a caseload of foster children, providing comprehensive support services and coordinating with families and external agencies to ensure stability and well-being.
- Conducted assessments and developed case plans, improving placement outcomes and client satisfaction.

Baltimore City Public Schools – Related Educational Roles

2009 - 2016

- Held roles in Student Support Services and Teacher Recruitment and Program Coordination, including College & Career Coordinator, Staff Associate, Dean of Students, and Admissions Coordinator. Responsibilities spanned student engagement, recruitment, and partnership building across public and charter schools.

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES

- Smith, MS, LCSW-C, P. S. (2025). Reframing Cannabis in Social Work and Public Health: From Prohibition to Equity. *Social Work in Public Health*, 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19371918.2025.2573380>

WEBINARS

- “Cannabis Science and Mental Health”: Delivered an oral presentation at the Black Therapists Rock 3rd Annual Heirloom Summit, enhancing awareness of the intersection between cannabis use and mental health.
- “Mental Health and Wellness Seminar, Session 2”: Participated as a presenter for the Emory Grove Rotary Club, Black Physicians and Healthcare Network, and Serve to Change Lives, contributing to community education on mental health and wellness.

TRAININGS & LECTURES

- **October 2025:** Integrating Medical Cannabis into Mental Health Practice: Research, Clinical Strategies, and Mindfulness Tools, Denver, Colorado
- **October 2025:** Social Work in the Age of Cannabis: Science, Equity, and Client Engagement, University of Maryland, Baltimore School of Social Work, Baltimore, MD
- **August 2025:** Cannabis, Trauma & Social Work Practice: Equity, Science, and Client Engagement Across State Lines, Columbia University, School of Social Work, Online
- **May 2025:** Medical Cannabis & Mental Health: A Holistic Approach for Maryland, NECANN, Baltimore, MD
- **February 2025:** The Intersection of Cannabis, Trauma, and Healing: A Holistic Approach, Women Grow Leadership Summit, Washington, DC

- **January 2025:** Cannabis Science & Social Work: Bridging the Gap Between Knowledge, Policy and Practice, University of Maryland, Shady Grove, Maryland, School of Social Work
- **Ongoing:** Medical Cannabis 101 (3-part series): Online
- **Ongoing:** Medical Cannabis Patient Advisor Training (2-part series): Online
- **October 2023:** Exploring Cannabis Science and Therapeutics and Social Work Practice, University of Maryland, Baltimore, School of Social Work
- **September 2022:** Exploring Cannabis Science and Therapeutics and Social Work Practice, University of Maryland, Baltimore, School of Social Work
- **September 2022:** Exploring the History and Health Benefits of Cannabis, Rhodes University, South Africa, online

POSTERS

- **May 2025:** Navigating the Green Frontier: Exploring the Historical Development of Cannabis Prohibition and Examining Key Social, Political, and Economic Factors Leading to its Criminalization, MJ Unpacked 2025, Atlantic City, NJ

COURSES DESIGNED

- **June 2025 and the Upcoming Spring 2026:** Cannabis Prohibition and Modern Regulatory Challenges, University of Maryland, Baltimore

PANELS

- **July 2025:** National Cannabis Festival, Saints & Sinners: Cannabis Consumption Through the Ages, Washington, DC