

## **MH-RITES Center Research Affiliate**

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Shanondora Billiot, MSW, Ph.D. conducts research at the intersection of culture, the environment, and wellbeing among Indigenous peoples. Indigenous communities are at a higher risk than the general population for health problems, partially as a result of historical land displacement and contemporary environmental changes. With endorsement from my tribal community, United Houma Nation (UHN), my current research employs community-engaged methods to understand health and wellbeing in relation to global environmental changes such as chronic disasters and climate change. Pilot data showed that participants who reported increased exposure to environmental changes and discrimination were more likely to meet criteria for diagnosis of depression (both current and recurrent), generalized anxiety disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Those who reported higher experiences of discrimination and connection to their land had increased days of sadness. This is one of the first studies in the United States to examine how environmental change is experienced by indigenous people and will provide critical insights for social work research and practice into the role of Indigenous culture as buffering the effects of environmental change. Dr. Billiot recently completed a fellowship at Yale University.