

# Behind the Door: A Pathway to Equitable Outcomes

## Defining the Problem

Behind the door is a tailored approach to address equitable health outcomes in training the next generation of nurse practitioners to improve health outcomes



NPs can use a systematic approach employing the 4 C's to reduce implicit biases and to improve clinical decision reasoning. Kotter's Change Model can provide the framework to introduce transformational practices.

## Significance of the Problem

Understanding "who is behind the door" represents a paradigm shift in nurse practitioner education. By recognizing each patient as an individual with unique cultural backgrounds, lived experiences, and healthcare needs, NPs can provide person-centered care. This approach moves beyond standardized protocols to embrace the complexity of human diversity.

When NPs are trained to see the whole person—including social determinants, cultural contexts, and personal values—they can deliver care that resonates with patients' lives, improving adherence, trust, and ultimately health outcomes. This training is not merely ethical but practical: inclusive practices lead to more accurate assessments, more effective interventions, and better measurable health outcomes for diverse populations.

## Implications for Research/Practice

- Integrate valid/reliable screening tools
- Tailor approaches for synthesis and application of evidence-based practices



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## Behind the Door

Tracie Kirkland, PhD, ANP-BC, PPCNP-BC, PNP-BC, FAANP, FAAN

### Biography

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Dr. Tracie Kirkland is a distinguished healthcare leader, educator, and advocate who has dedicated her career to advancing nursing practice, promoting health equity, and implementing culturally responsive care across diverse populations. As a board-certified Adult Nurse Practitioner and Pediatric Nurse Practitioner with over two decades of clinical experience, Dr. Kirkland brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise.

Currently serving as Associate Clinical Professor at University of Southern California, Dr. Kirkland's academic work focuses on preparing the next generation of nurse practitioners to deliver comprehensive, culturally tailored healthcare. Her innovative teaching methodologies emphasize the integration of evidence-based practice with cultural humility, ensuring that her students develop both clinical excellence and the interpersonal skills necessary for effective patient-centered care.

Dr. Kirkland is dually prepared as a PhD and DNP prepared scholar. Her additional credentials include a Master of Science in Nursing from Virginia Commonwealth University and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Hampton University. She obtained her postmaster's certificates from Johns Hopkins University, DNP from Texas Christian University, and PhD from Texas Woman's University.

Throughout her career, Dr. Kirkland has maintained an active clinical practice serving patients in primary care, internal medicine, occupational health, urgent care in rural and urban areas in different geographical regions. This ongoing clinical engagement ensures that her academic work remains grounded in the realities of contemporary healthcare delivery and informs her research into health disparities and access to care among vulnerable populations.

Dr. Kirkland's research contributions have significantly advanced understanding of how cultural factors influence healthcare outcomes. She works collaboratively in presenting scholarly work. Her recent research focuses on Food Insecurity in Black Women with particular emphasis on developing practical frameworks for implementing culturally tailored interventions in primary care settings.

As an active member of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners and the Southern Nurses Research Association, Dr. Kirkland contributes professionally to research initiatives and policy advocacy efforts. She is an elected Board member for the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF) and serves as Co-Chair of the Leadership Mentorship Program and is former Chair of the NONPF Nominating Committee where she worked to promote diversity and inclusion. She was recently inducted to FAANP and FAAN.

Dr. Kirkland's leadership extends beyond academic and clinical settings to community engagement. She has developed and implemented several community health initiatives related to human trafficking, mental health, food insecurity, STEM, and the Black Family Wellness Expo, a National Impact Day event

sponsored by the Links Incorporation.

Recognized for her contributions to nursing excellence, Dr. Kirkland has received numerous honors, including Most Supportive Faculty Award. She is frequently invited to collaborate with faculty in various geographical regions and consultant on topics related to social determinants of health on health outcomes, nurse practitioner education, and reducing health disparities.

She is married to her college sweetheart Robert Kirkland and they are the proud parents to Morgan Leigh, Maya Lynn, & Samuel Cuff Kirkland. She is the proud "GiGi" to Olivia and James. Too much is given, much is expected...To God Be the Glory.

### Contact Information

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