

**Diksha Bali**, third year Ph.D. student, School Psychology, University of Maryland, College Park.

**Topic:** Investigating Youth Mental Health First Aid's Effectiveness in Supporting Low-income and Economically Marginalized Communities in Maryland.

### **Project Summary**

The U.S. has noticeable economic disparities. About one in three people live below 200% of the federal poverty line in the U.S., qualifying them as low-income and/or economically marginalized (LIEM). Adults and children of LIEM status seem to be at higher risk for mental health concerns than wealthier peers, yet receive fewer services and generally remain underrepresented in research and intervention development. This project seeks to freely provide and longitudinally evaluate the impacts of Youth Mental Health First Aid Instructor training for individuals of LIEM status in and around Maryland. We aim to take a collaborative approach in this research, seeking to partner and understand individual and community experiences both qualitatively and quantitatively.