



Kafui Dzirasa was born to Samuel and Abigail Dzirasa, who grew up as neighbors in an area outside of Accra, Ghana. His father came to the US in 1971 when he was accepted into the Civil Engineering Program at MIT, and his mother followed soon after completing a nursing degree in England. After graduation, his father went on to obtain an MBA from the Sloan School of Business. Kafui was born in Boston, MA in 1978, and grew up with his three brothers and a sister in Silver Spring.

Kafui Dzirasa is the first African American to complete a PhD in Neurobiology at Duke University. His research interests focus on understanding how changes in the brain produce neurological and mental illness, and his graduate work has led to several distinctions including: the Somjen Award for Most Outstanding Dissertation Thesis, the Ruth K. Broad Biomedical Research Fellowship, the UNCF-Merck Graduate Science Research Fellowship, and the Wakeman Fellowship. Kafui obtained an MD from the Duke University School of Medicine in 2009, and completed residency training in General Psychiatry in 2016.

Kafui is a product of the nationally renowned Meyerhoff Scholarship program at the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC), where he was conference champion in the long jump, an Academic All-American, and Student Body president.

Kafui has served on the Board of Directors of the Student National Medical Association: a national organization dedicated to the eradication of health care disparities. Through his service as Chapter President, Region IV Director and National Internal Affairs Committee Chair, Kafui has participated in numerous programs geared towards exposing youth to science and technology, providing health education for underserved communities, and organizing clinics to screen for chronic diseases. Kafui received the Charles Johnson Leadership Award in 2007, and he was recognized as one of *Ebony* magazine's 30 Young Leaders of the Future in February 2008. He has also been awarded the International Mental Health Research Organization Rising Star Award, the Sydney Baer Prize for Schizophrenia Research, and his laboratory was featured on *CBS 60 Minutes* in 2011. In 2016, he was awarded the inaugural Duke Medical Alumni Emerging Leader Award and the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers: The Nation's highest award for scientists and engineers in the early stages of their independent research careers. In 2017, he was recognized as 40 under 40 in Health by the National Minority Quality Forum, and the Engineering Alumni of the Year from UMBC.

Kafui has served as an Associate Scientific Advisor for the journal *Science Translational Medicine*, and he was a member of the Congressional-mandated Next Generation Research Initiative. He currently serves on the Editorial Advisory Board for *TEDMED*, and the Advisory committee for the NIH Director for the BRAIN Initiative.

Kafui is an Associate Professor at Duke University with appointments in the Departments of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Neurobiology, Biomedical Engineering, and Neurosurgery. His ultimate goal is to combine his research, medical training, and community experience to improve outcomes for diverse communities suffering from Neurological and Psychiatric illness.