

# COUPLES RESEARCH AND THERAPY

<https://abctcouples.org/>

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### Letter from the Editors

Happy Fall, Couples SIG! ABCT is right around the corner, so we are looking forward to connecting with all of you this weekend!

We are happy to share with you the Fall 2023 edition of the Couples SIG newsletter. There are many exciting updates from members at all stages of their careers. Thank you to all who generously shared their lab accomplishments with us.

***Thank you for making the Couples SIG Newsletter possible!***

- Alyssa Miville, M.S. | Binghamton University (SUNY)  
([amivill1@binghamton.edu](mailto:amivill1@binghamton.edu))
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# Thank You!



## Special Announcement



Shelby Scott and Hannah Williamson have been selected as this year's co-recipients of the SIG's Early Career Contributions to Couple Relationships Award. Amazing work to the both of you! We appreciate your impactful contribution to our field.

### Letter from the SIG Co-Leaders

*Drs. Kayla Knopp & Shelby Scott*

2023 has been quite a year so far. We are really looking forward to reconnecting with everyone in Seattle!

### Conference Events

The **Couples SIG Preconference** is on **Thursday, 11/16 from 6:30pm—8:00 pm in the Kachess Room (405) on the fourth floor of the Hyatt Regency**. The preconference will be a panel discussion focusing on “Couples/Relationship Work Beyond the Ivory Tower,” featuring Drs. Anthony Chambers, Galena Rhoades, Ron Rogge, Howard Markman, and Sarah Campbell. After the talk, we invite everyone to stick around and catch up!

We were excited to see the great representation of couples research in the ABCT program this year. See pages 4-6 for a list of these events. We would like to draw particular attention to the two SIG-sponsored symposia - come out and support your SIG colleagues!

**Student symposium: “The Role of Sexual identity, Race, and Income on Individual and Relationship Functioning” on Saturday, 11/18 at 12:30 pm, Clallum (701), Level 7**

**DEI symposium: “The Implications of Minority Stress on Romantic Relationships Among Sexual and Gender Minority Individuals” on Sunday, 11/19 at 8:30 am, Clallum (701), Level 7**

**Our SIG business meeting** has been scheduled from **4:00-5:30 pm on Friday, November 17 in Duwamish (room 306) in the Hyatt Regency**. We hope you will join us! There are a number of exciting and important things happening at the meeting, including nominations for new SIG officers, presentation of the Weiss Student Poster Awards and Early Career Awards, and a visit from the ABCT Presidential candidates. If you cannot attend in person, you can join us via Zoom (or watch the Zoom recording after the conference).

We will also offer a **SIG Cocktail hour on Saturday from 6:30-8:30 pm (location TBD)**. Despite calling dozens of venues, our budget did not support reserving a spot at a nearby restaurant or bar, which we will discuss during our business meeting. As a result, Shelby and Kayla will check out the conference hotel and nearby bar/restaurants to find a large enough space for everyone to meet up without a reservation. We will still provide appetizers within our budget. We will send this information by Friday.

### SIG Officer Elections

We are so grateful for the service of the SIG officers who are wrapping up their terms this November. *Mollie Shin* has been holding down the Student Leader role all by herself, and has been doing an excellent job. *Sarah Turk Karan* has also been a fantastic solo Media Coordinator. We are hopeful that we can fill these important roles with two students each this year. Thank you also to *Melissa Gates*, one of our superb Newsletter Co-Editors (along with *Alyssa Miville*) who will be stepping down this year. **As a reminder to students, these are great opportunities to establish yourself as an emerging leader in our SIG and network with other professionals.**

This year, nominations for the SIG Officer positions can be made either via email to Kayla ([kayla.knopp@gmail.com](mailto:kayla.knopp@gmail.com)) and Shelby ([shelby.scott@utsa.edu](mailto:shelby.scott@utsa.edu)) before the conference, or in person during the SIG business meeting. Voting will take place after the conference via a Google form. **Please nominate yourself or a colleague!**

**We will be filling the following positions:**

- *Student Co-Leaders* (2 positions: one for 2-year term, one for either 1-year or 3-year term)
- *Media Coordinators* (2 positions, open to students)
- *Newsletter Co-Editor* (1 position, open to students)

**\*A note to faculty and mentors:** Student engagement in the SIG has really taken a hit following COVID-19. **Please talk with your students and mentees**, and encourage and support their involvement in the SIG as student officers! Students are the future of our SIG, and we hate to see positions go unfilled.

### **Service to the SIG**

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to these additional members for their generous service to the SIG:

*Feea Leifker* and *Danielle Weber* are this year's Jr. Awards Committee, coordinating both the Weiss Student Poster Awards and the SIG Graduation Ceremony.

*Steffany Fredman*, *Kristi Coop Gordon*, and *Don Baucom* are this year's Sr. Awards Committee, administering the SIG Early Career Award.

*McKenzie Roddy* is serving the SIG as treasurer, managing dues, membership, and many other essential tasks.

*Michelle Ramos*, *Nick Perry*, *Jasara Hogan*, and *Colin Adamo* are the SIG DEI Committee, heading up initiatives to help the SIG continue to improve diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice. Thank you!

See you in Seattle! Bring your umbrellas!

Your SIG Co-Leaders,  
Shelby Scott, Ph.D., and Kayla Knopp, Ph.D.  
([shelbybscott@gmail.com](mailto:shelbybscott@gmail.com) | [kayla.knopp@gmail.com](mailto:kayla.knopp@gmail.com))

### **Letter from the SIG Treasurer**

*Dr. McKenzie Roddy*

Hello SIG Members!

This is my second update as your Treasurer. If we haven't had the chance to meet, my name is McKenzie Roddy and I hope you'll say hello - my contact information is at the bottom.

An update on our membership status and dues:

- We have 158 active members (87 professional, 71 students). We have seen a drop in student membership - likely due to virtual conferences - so please forward this to your students and colleagues and encourage them to join!
- If you don't pay dues, you aren't considered an active member. Please help by contributing your time, talent, and treasure to this wonderful community.
- Our current balance is \$3,597. Since my last update, I have collected \$275 in dues. We were awarded \$167 from ABCT.
- The Underrepresented Scholar Fund has a balance of \$970. Since assuming the role, I have collected \$15 from dues towards this fund.

We will collect dues for the 2023-24 academic year at the upcoming conference. Dues are \$30 for professional members and \$5 for students, first-year post-docs, and retired members. For every professional membership, \$5 of dues automatically goes toward the Couples SIG Underrepresented Scholars Fund.



Please complete or update the membership form (<https://forms.gle/3xustNBLzbfApjgT8>) and send your dues electronically via Venmo (send to @McKenzie-Roddy) or via PayPal (send to [mckroddy@gmail.com](mailto:mckroddy@gmail.com)). It is important to designate the payment as “Send to friends and family” to avoid processing fees. For all dues, indicate “ABCT Couples SIG” in the note.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns about dues or membership.

My best,  
McKenzie

McKenzie K. Roddy, PhD  
[McKenzie.Roddy@yumc.org](mailto:McKenzie.Roddy@yumc.org)

**Letter from the SIG Student Co-Leader(s)**

*Mollie Shin*

We are excited to see everyone in Seattle soon! As mentioned by our SIG Co-Leaders, the **SIG cocktail hour** will be **Saturday night 6:30pm-8:30pm** in one of the hotel bar/restaurant areas. We will send out more details about the location during the conference. We are in the process of coordinating the **Couple SIG’s mentorship program**. Please refer to the email sent on October 30th and sign up to be a mentee if interested!

Please see below for a list of couples-related presentations:

Date/Time	Location	Presentation	Presenters
Friday (11/17) 8:30am—10:00am (PST)	Clallum (701), Level 7	<b>Panel Discussion -</b> Increasing Access to Care Among Under-resourced and Under-represented Couples in Research and Practice: What Is Working and What Else Is Needed?	<b>Moderator:</b> Katherine A. Lenger, Ph.D. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill <b>Panelist:</b> Kristina Gordon, Ph.D. University of Tennessee-Knoxville <b>Panelist:</b> Hannah C. Williamson, Ph.D. The University of Texas at Austin <b>Panelist:</b> Ryan G. Carlson, Ph.D., LPC University of South Carolina <b>Panelist:</b> Sarah W. Whitton, Ph.D. University of Cincinnati <b>Panelist:</b> Shawn C.T. Jones, Ph.D. Virginia Commonwealth University <b>Panelist:</b> Michael Newcomb, Ph.D. Northwestern University
10:30am - 12:00pm PST	Clallum (701), Level 7	New horizons of digital relationship research: Expanding methods, reach, and application	<b>Chair:</b> Emily Georgia Salivar, Ph.D. Nova Southeastern University <b>Discussant:</b> Scott Braithwaite, Ph.D. Brigham Young University <b>Presenter:</b> McKenzie Roddy, Ph.D. Vanderbilt University Medical Center <b>Presenter:</b> Alexia Hirlemann, M.S. Nova Southeastern University <b>Presenter:</b> Tea Trillingsgaard, Ph.D. Aarhus University <b>Presenter:</b> Shayna Guttman, M.S. University of Miami <b>Presenter:</b> Gabe Hatch, Ph.D.

Date/Time	Location	Presentation	Presenters
<b>Friday (11/17)</b> 12:30pm— 2:00pm (PST)	Clallum (701), Level 7	Unraveling the Differential Effects of Couple Relationship Education on Underserved Populations: Leveraging Novel Analytic Approaches	<b>Chair:</b> Yuning Le, Ph.D. University of Denver <b>Discussant:</b> Brian D. Doss, PhD University of Miami <b>Presenter:</b> Danielle Weber, Ph.D. University of Georgia <b>Presenter:</b> Hannah Williamson, Ph.D. The University of Texas at Austin <b>Presenter:</b> Yuning Le, Ph.D. University of Denver <b>Presenter:</b> Gabe Hatch, Ph.D. (he/him/his)
2:30pm— 3:00pm (PST)	Regency Ballroom, Level 7	Couples and Close Relationships Poster Session	
2:30pm— 4:00pm (PST)	Clallum (701), Level 7	Couples' Joy and Satisfaction over the Life Cycle: You Can Do This!	<b>Chair:</b> Feea Leifker, M.P.H., Ph.D. University of Utah <b>Discussant:</b> Galena Rhodes, Ph.D. University of Denver <b>Presenter:</b> Howard Markman, Ph.D. University of Denver <b>Presenter:</b> Danielle Weber, Ph.D. University of Georgia <b>Presenter:</b> Donald Baucom, Ph.D. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill <b>Presenter:</b> Ron Rogge, Ph.D. University of Rochester
4:00pm— 5:30pm (PST)	Duwamish (306), Level 3	Couples Research and Treatment SIG Meeting	
<b>Saturday (11/18)</b> 8:30am— 10:00am (PST)	Clallum (701), Level 7	Psychedelic-assisted Therapies for Couples and Relationships: The Joy of Connection	<b>Moderator:</b> Kayla Knopp, Ph.D. VA San Diego Healthcare System/ University of California, San Diego <b>Panelist:</b> Anne C. Wagner, Ph.D. Remedy + Remedy Institute <b>Panelist:</b> Chandra Estelle Khalifian, Ph.D. - VA San Diego Healthcare System, San Diego <b>Panelist:</b> Jayne Gumpel, LCSW Relationship Resources LLC <b>Panelist:</b> Leslie Morland, Psy.D. - VA San Diego Healthcare System/University of California, San Diego
10:30am— 12:00pm (PST)	Clallum (701), Level 7	From "Too Little, Too Late" to the Right Treatment at the Right Time: Toward a Stepped-Care Approach to Relationship Health	<b>Chair:</b> Dev Crasta, Ph.D. (he/him/his) Center of Excellence for Suicide Prevention, VA Finger Lakes Healthcare System <b>Discussant:</b> James Córdova, Ph.D. - Clark University <b>Presenter:</b> Kayla Knopp, Ph.D - VA San Diego Healthcare System/University of California, San Diego <b>Presenter:</b> Dev Crasta, Ph.D. - Center of Excellence for Suicide Prevention, VA Finger Lakes Healthcare System <b>Presenter:</b> Peter Britton, Ph.D. - Center of Excellence for Suicide Prevention, VA Finger Lakes Healthcare System <b>Presenter:</b> Tea Trillingsgaard, Ph.D. (she/her/hers) - Aarhus University
* <b>student sponsored symposium*</b> 12:30pm - 1:30pm	Clallum (701), Level 7	The Role of Sexual identity, Race, and Income on Individual and Relationship Functioning	<b>Chair:</b> Mollie Shin, M.A. University of Colorado Denver <b>Discussant(s):</b> Shelby Scott, Ph.D.- The University of Texas at San Antonio <b>Presenter:</b> Alexandra Wojda-Burljij, M.A. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill <b>Presenter:</b> Emily Carrino, M.A. UNC Chapel Hill <b>Presenter:</b> Darya Magidi, B.S. University of La Verne <b>Presenter:</b> Madeline Jubran, B.S. Nova Southeastern University

Date/Time	Location	Presentation	Presenters
<b>Saturday (11/18)</b> 2:30pm— 4:00pm (PST)	Clallum (701), Level 7	Cultivating Relationship Joy: Early Detection, Prevention, and Intervention for Fostering Relationship Health in Active-Duty Military Couples	<b>Chair:</b> James Córdova, Ph.D. Clark University <b>Discussant:</b> Brian D. Doss, Ph.D. University of Miami <b>Presenter:</b> James Córdova, Ph.D. Clark University <b>Presenter:</b> Christina Balderrama-Durbin, Ph.D. - Binghamton University <b>Presenter:</b> Tatiana Gray, Ph.D. Springfield College
4:30pm— 5:30pm (PST)	Clallum (701), Level 7	Addressing Distress in the Service of Joy: The Associations Between Individual Psychological Health and Intimate Relationship Functioning Over Time	<b>Chair:</b> Jessica Hill, M.A. Binghamton University <b>Chair:</b> Emily Taverna, M.S. Penn State Psychology Department <b>Discussant:</b> Galena Rhoades, Ph.D. (she/her/hers) - University of Denver <b>Presenter:</b> Jessica Hill, M.A. Binghamton University <b>Presenter:</b> Mikhila Wildey, Ph.D. Grand Valley State University <b>Presenter:</b> Emily Taverna, M.S. Penn State Psychology Department, State College <b>Presenter:</b> Tatiana Gray, Ph.D. Springfield College
<b>Sunday (11/19)</b> 8:30am- 9:30am	Clallum (701), Level 7	The Implications of Minority Stress on Romantic Relationships Among Sexual and Gender Minority Individuals	<b>Chair:</b> Melissa Gates, M.S.- Binghamton University, SUNY Binghamton <b>Chair:</b> Shelby Scott, Ph.D. - The University of Texas at San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas <b>Discussant:</b> Michael Newcomb, Ph.D. Northwestern University <b>Presenter:</b> Melissa Gates, M.S. Binghamton University <b>Presenter:</b> Shelby Scott, Ph.D. The University of Texas at San Antonio <b>Presenter:</b> Madison Smith, M.S., Ph.D. Northwestern University <b>Presenter:</b> Alexandra Long, M.A. American University <b>Presenter:</b> Timothy Sullivan, M.A. Stony Brook University

**KUDOS!**

**We would like to celebrate these amazing milestones from the following SIG members. Congratulations on your accomplishments!**

Dr. Christina Balderrama-Durbin’s Couple Adjustment to Stress and Trauma (CAST) Laboratory, Binghamton University—SUNY

☺ **Melissa Gates** received a university grant to fund her dissertation research focused on sexual and gender minority-specific adverse childhood experiences on romantic relationship functioning!

Dr. Katie Baucom’s HEART Lab, University of Utah (<https://heartlab.psych.utah.edu>)

☺ **Manny Gutierrez Chavez** received grants from the Association for Contextual Behavioral Science (ACBS) and the University of Utah Center for Families & Health Research (C-FAHR) for the development and pilot of a family-based mindfulness intervention together with. He also received his M.A. in May 2023!



Dr. Meagan Brem’s Research for Alcohol and Couples Health (REACH) Lab at Virginia Tech

☉ **Dr. Brem** received a R21 from NIAAA for her project, “Integrating Remote Breath Alcohol Monitoring into Ecological Momentary Assessment of Alcohol-Related Intimate Partner Violence among Young Adult Drinkers.”

☉ **Allison Tobar-Santamaria** received the 2023 Norma M. Holmes Education Grant and a Virginia Tech Graduate Research and Development Program Grant to support her project, “Sexual Assault on College Campuses: An Exploration of Attitudes and Perceptions from College Students.”

☉ **TJ Shaw** received a 2023 Psi Chi Graduate Research Grant and a Virginia Tech Graduate Research and Development Program Grant to support his project, “Proximal Associations between Alcohol Use, IPV, and Post-Trauma Symptoms: A Daily Diary Study of Trauma-Exposed College Students.”

☉ **Dr. Brem** received the 2023 Deborah L. Rhatigan Early Career Award from ABCT’s Child Maltreatment & Interpersonal Violence SIG

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Dr. Rebecca Brock’s Family Development Lab at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

☉ **Erin Ramsdell** graduated with her Ph.D. in August and began a postdoctoral fellowship at *Michigan Medicine* specializing in perinatal and reproductive mental health and infant and early childhood mental health.

☉ **Frannie Calkins** received the Robert L. Weiss Research Award from the *ABCT Couples SIG* this past fall and began her predoctoral clinical internship at the *Emory University School of Medicine* this summer.

☉ **Lauren Laifer** continued her research as part of her F31 project from *National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)* and received the *University of Nebraska-Lincoln* Outstanding Research & Creative Activities Award.

☉ **Eric Phillips** received a F31 award from the *National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)*.

☉ **Rachel Martin** received the *University of Nebraska-Lincoln* Othmer Fellowship and presented research at the *Marce of North America* Conference.

☉ **Allison Sparpana** and **Seth Finkelstein** were welcomed as new graduate students in the lab.

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Dr. Amy Marshall’s Penn State Relationships and Stress Lab

☉ **Emily Taverna** finished her PhD and is now completing a post-doctoral fellowship in the Women’s Health Sciences Division of the National Center for PTSD at VA Boston.

☉ **Zach Zhang** is continuing on the Creating the Next Generation of Scholars in Child Maltreatment Science T32 training grant at Penn State while applying for clinical internships.

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Dr. Steffany Fredman’s Penn State Couple & Family Adaptation to Stress Lab

☉ **Steffany Fredman** has been named Edna P. Bennett Faculty Fellow in Prevention Science at Penn State.

Drs. Richard Mattson and Matthew Johnson’s Center for Transdisciplinary Research on Intimate Relationships (CTROIR) Lab:

☺ **Alyssa Miville** obtained her Masters in Science (M.S.) in the spring after successfully defending her second-year project and has officially become a PhD Candidate after successfully passing her comprehensive exams last month. She was also selected to serve as an inaugural LGBTQ+ Community Health Scholar in the greater Binghamton area and has received additional funding to support her work towards her dissertation. An additional congratulations to Alyssa on her recent engagement!

☺ **Michael Shaw** has officially submitted all of his APPIC applications. We are wishing him well as he waits to hear back from internship sites!

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Dr. Tea Trillingsgaard: The Couple and Family Research Lab, Denmark

☺ **Tea Trillingsgaard** received a grant from the Independent Research Fund Denmark. The research planned in collaboration with Lea Tangelev Greve aims to investigate the long-term effects of the “The Incredible Years” parenting program on 1209 children’s education, mental, and physical health utilizing the Danish national registers and ultimately integrating these data with a larger European dataset.

☺ **Lea Tangelev Greve** received a postdoc position at The Couple and Family Lab, Denmark.

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Dr. Hannah Williamson: The Williamson Lab at UT Austin

☺ Post-doctoral fellow, **Dr. Betul Urganci** will begin a faculty position at Koc University in Istanbul in January.

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Drs. Brian Baucom and Feea Leifker

☺ Congrats to **Robyn Kilshaw** on the birth of her daughter Marlee!

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Dr. Melanie Fischer (Clinical Couple and Family Psychology at the University of Marburg, Germany)

☺ **Dr. Fischer** is one of the PIs on a newly funded LOEWE-Centre (“DYNAMIC – Dynamic Network Approach of Mental Health to Stimulate Innovations for Change”), which is funded by the State of Hesse, Germany (14.7 million €) to promote innovations in our understanding and treatment of psychological disorders based on dynamic network approaches. Starting in 2024, Dr. Fischer and her team will examine dynamic network changes as a function of relationship factors and partner involvement in the treatment of depression.

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Dr. Sarah Whitton’s The Today’s Couples and Families Research Program

☺ **Charlie Giraud** received an award from the UC Psychology Department’s Seeman funds to support their research exploring partner support during medical gender transitions (the PaST Study).

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Dr. Ron Rogge’s Rogge Lab

☺ **Jack Peltz** recently started a tenure-track faculty position at SUNY Brockport and has received grants from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the National Sleep Foundation to explore the impact of sleep problems on college student and family functioning.



☉ **Dev Crasta** is a research investigator at the Canandaigua VA and was recently awarded a career development award to fund an RCT of the Marriage Checkup in a veteran population.

☉ **Jaci Rolffs** is now the DCT for the clinical psychology doctoral internship program at the Iowa City VA

☉ **AJ Pollard** completed her PhD and has started a post-doc at the SDSU student counseling center.

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## Lab Updates

**Lab Name:** Relationships Lab, Indiana University Dept of Psychological and Brain Sciences

**Head of Lab:** Amy Holtzworth-Munroe

**Lab Update:** From Amy: I will be retiring in May 2024. I want to thank so many of the ABCT Couples SIG members for so many things! ABCT was my first professional “home” outside of my graduate program and lab; it was wonderful to be surrounded, and feel supported, by others who shared my research interests and were always willing to discuss important research and professional issues in our area! Over the years, many SIG members served as my unofficial mentors and/or collaborators—all made my career much more exciting, productive, and fulfilling. I plan to attend ABCT (for one last time) this fall, and I hope to see many of you there, so I can thank you in person!



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**Lab Name:** The Williamson Lab at UT Austin

**Head of Lab:** Dr. Hannah Williamson

**Lab Update:** Dr. Williamson received a Fulbright Fellowship and is currently spending the 2023/2024 academic year in Spain, as a visiting scholar at the Universidad de Granada. She is collaborating with Dr. Inmaculada Valor-Segura, Associate Professor in the Dept. of

Psychology on multiple projects, including translating and validating measures in Spanish, and cross-national projects examining basic relationship processes and how they predict health and well-being. Meanwhile back in Austin, Chris Kinstley has joined the lab as a first year PhD student. Fourth year PhD student Nick Chen, post-doctoral fellow Betul Urganci, and post-bacc project managers Eva Lopez and Daniela Esquivel Cantu, as well as a great group of RAs, are all contributing to multiple ongoing projects, including an RCT of relationship and financial interventions for low-income couples, and a longitudinal study of the transition to parenthood among low-income couples.

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**Lab Name:** The Rogge Lab

**Head of Lab:** Ron Rogge, Ph.D.

**Lab Update:** The first manuscript on the Agapé app is now in press at JFP. Additionally, Ben Rassmussen joined the lab as a clinical graduate student, coming to us from Scott Braithwaite’s lab at BYU.

**Lab Name:** Couple Adjustment to Stress and Trauma (CAST)  
Laboratory; Binghamton University – SUNY

**Head of Lab:** Christina Balderrama-Durbin, Ph.D.

**Lab Update:** The CAST Lab has been focused on disseminating novel findings from a national sample of partnered lesbian, gay, bisexual individuals, and those with other marginalized sexual identities (LGB+). Indeed, fourth-year graduate student, Melissa Gates, has submitted several papers for publication including examining the role of internalized and relationship stigma in intimate partner violence perpetration for LGB+ couples. She has also completed and submitted a review paper explicating the impact of adverse childhood experiences on LGBTQ+ relationship functioning. With additional papers and projects in the pipeline, Melissa continues to grow her program of research focused on the unique experiences of sexual and gender minority couples. Second-year graduate student, Jessica Hill, has begun working with longitudinal data from partnered military members to better understand the temporal relation between individual and couple distress for newly enlisted military couples. She is also focusing her efforts on completing her thesis aimed at examining the buffering effect of partner support on relationship functioning for those with and without a history of sexual victimization. Finally, the CAST lab is working on the next steps in our research using a minority stress-specific trauma log to illuminate the interpersonal impacts of minority stress experiences for LGB+ couples. We're excited about growing this aspect of our research to ultimately leverage the interpersonal protective factors following minority stress experiences. Thank you to our dedicated and enthusiastic undergraduate research assistants who make this work possible!



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**Lab Name:** Penn State Couple and Family Adaptation to Stress Lab

**Head of Lab:** Steffany Fredman, Ph.D.

**Lab Update:** We're excited about our ongoing research projects focused on couples, stress, and trauma. We're thrilled to now be actively recruiting couples for our DoD-funded RCT to compare an abbreviated, intensive, multi-couple group version of cognitive-behavioral conjoint therapy for PTSD (AIM-CBCT for PTSD) to the Prevention and Relationship Education Program (PREP) for the treatment of PTSD in active duty military and veteran couples (PI: Fredman). This project is being conducted as part of the STRONG STAR consortium at UT Health San Antonio.

Co-Investigators include Alan Peterson, Tabatha Blount, Stacey Young McCaughan, and Vanessa Jacoby (UT Health San Antonio), Galena Rhoades and Scott Stanley (University of Denver), Candice Monson (Toronto Metropolitan University), and Damon Jones (Penn State). Jeesun Lee is leading work on the role of parental depressive symptoms in the daily spillover from interparental conflict to parent-adolescent relationship quality as well as on mechanisms accounting for the link between PTSD symptoms and couple communication difficulties. We're also delighted to continue our collaborations with CFAS alums Annie Le and August Jenkins on work related to PTSD and emotion dynamics, PTSD and parenting, and the study and treatment of individual mental health concerns among partnered Black adults.

**Lab Name:** Research for Alcohol and Couples Health (REACH) Lab at Virginia Tech

**Head of Lab:** Meagan Brem, Ph.D.

**Lab Update:** In June 2023, Dr. Brem, along with co-Is Drs. Brian Feinstein, Ryan Shorey, and Alexandra Hanlon, submitted a R21 to NIAAA entitled, “Daily Impact of Sexual Minority Stress on Alcohol-Related Intimate Partner Violence among Bisexual+ Young Adults: A Couples’ Daily Diary Study.”

We have finished collecting EMA paired with portable breathalyzer (EMA+) pilot data on IPV perpetration/victimization, alcohol use, and drinking contexts from 47 heavy-drinking and previously-aggressive college students in dating relationships. An R21 supports continued data collection, and we look forward to reporting the feasibility and acceptability data at an upcoming conference!

We are currently coding our qualitative interview data from 16 clinicians (e.g., couples/substance use disorder treatment providers in rural areas) and 12 individuals in relationships impacted by mutual IPV and alcohol use disorder to identify needs of, preferences for, and barriers to treating couples with AUD who experience IPV.

In the 2021-2022 academic year, the REACH lab welcomed 3 new graduate lab members: Lindsay Mongan, TJ Shaw, and Allison Tobar-Santamaria. Welcome!

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**Lab Name:** Penn State Relationships and Stress Lab

**Head of Lab:** Amy Marshall

**Lab Update:** We are thrilled to report that we have finished data collection on the Children, Intimate Relationships, Conflictual Life Events, and Stress (CIRCLES) Study. This includes 450 high-risk partnered caregivers (48% men) of children age 3-5 years. Participants completed up to 9 segments of a longitudinal study focused on incidents of family violence. It was no easy task, but our team did a phenomenal job! We are now looking for help analyzing the mountains of data, including recruiting two new graduate students for Fall 2024!

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**Lab Name:** The Couple and Family Research Lab, Denmark

**Head of Lab:** Tea Trillingsgaard

**Lab Update:** Dr. Trillingsgaard and her colleagues Dr. Fentz and Dr. Hansen have achieved a significant milestone in their multi-site implementation study of a stepped-care model for treating couple distress, successfully recruiting 400 parenting couples to date. Funded by the Danish foundation Samfonden and spanning four co-funding municipalities, the comprehensive model ranges from digital relationship health promotion to intensive face-to-face couple therapy using Integrative Behavioral Couple Therapy (IBCT).

Following the last year's well attended event, Dr. Trillingsgaard, in collaboration with distinguished research professor Andrew Christensen and his team, is repeating the success with another full 5-day online international IBCT training in January and February 2024. The previous training session welcomed 77 participants from 7 countries, underscoring the international appeal and recognition of the program's impact on couple therapy practices.

Available for couple SIGs as well, see:  
<https://psy.au.dk/en/workshop-integrative-behavioral-couple-therapy>

Astrid Bjørn Leth Nissen has wrapped up her postdoc adventures in the research unit and has smoothly transitioned to the real-world realm of doing couple checkups and couple therapy in a downtown clinic. Meanwhile, Nanna Fensman Lassen, licensed psychologist with 10 years of clinical experience, has leapt into her role as a research assistant, and — fingers crossed — has just sent off her PhD application for a study examining self-help couple interventions with a focus on moderators and preferences.



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**Lab Name:** University of Nebraska-Lincoln Family Development Lab

**Head of Lab:** Rebecca L. Brock. Ph.D.

**Lab Update:** We are continuing to collect data as part of our multi-method longitudinal study of families, the *Family Development Project*. This project is aimed at understanding how functioning in the interparental (couple) relationship impacts family functioning more broadly (e.g., coparenting and parenting), ultimately impacting the health and well-being of parents and their young children. So far, we have collected 9 waves of data, starting during pregnancy, and we just launched a tenth assessment when the child turns 7 years of age.

Learn more about results from this study here:

<https://familydevelopmentlab.wixsite.com/familyproject>

We continue to investigate the consequences of daily experiences with discrimination and harassment for sexual and gender minority couples and identify sources of resiliency both within the couple relationship and from larger community supports. Building on this work, we were recently awarded a R01 from the *National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism* titled “Experiences of Rural Sexual and Gender Minority Couples: Does Alcohol Use Explain the Link Between Minority Stress and Intimate Partner Discord and Violence”.

We published a new measure – the Individuality in Couples Questionnaire – which captures the extent to which someone feels respected by their partner for their individuality and experiences personal autonomy in the relationship. Scores from the ICQ show incremental predictive validity for explaining relationship satisfaction and individual well-being above and beyond other key dimensions of the relationship (e.g., intimacy, support, sexual satisfaction, psychological aggression, communication).

You can use this measure, and access the corresponding psychometrics paper, free of charge by visiting this link:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371042847\\_Free\\_to\\_be\\_me\\_with\\_you\\_Development\\_of\\_the\\_Individuality\\_in\\_Couples\\_Questionnaire](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371042847_Free_to_be_me_with_you_Development_of_the_Individuality_in_Couples_Questionnaire)





**Lab Name:** Behavioral Health Innovation and Dissemination Center

**Head of Lab:** Drs. Brian Baucom and Feea Leifker

**Lab Update:** We're midway through our third year as a center at the University of Utah. It's been a pleasure working with a trainees from a variety of training programs to help them learn evidence-based couple therapies (and CBT more generally). Our third cohort of trainees includes students from the U of U's Clinical Psychology doctoral program, Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner doctoral program, Counseling Psychology, Masters of Social Work program, and Psychiatry Fellows. We are excited to share that we have two new locations opening up soon that will allow us even more ability to provide mental health care and couple therapy to underserved populations.

Dr. Baucom is working on the second year of data collection for a study funded by a gift from Apple to establish a large, sharable, computational psychiatry data set generated to facilitate identification of community individuals at risk for a mental health crisis. Lab members are also involved in several dyadic sleep intervention studies. Dr. Leifker recently submitted a K23 award.

This year our lab has welcomed **Emily Spargo**, who has started her first year as a doctoral student in the U of U's clinical psychology program, **Stevie Shock**, who is joining us as a post-bacc research assistant, and **Dr. Andy Godfrey** who is working as a postdoctoral fellow on several ongoing research projects.



**Lab Name:** The Today's Couple and Families Research Program

**Head of Lab:** Sarah Whitton, Ph.D.

**Lab Update:** Thanks to new funding from NIMH, we have just launched Phase 2 of FAB400, a longitudinal cohort study of sexual and gender minority youth assigned female at birth (SGM-AFAB), including cisgender sexual minority women, transmen, and gender nonbinary youth AFAB. In the first phase of the study we collected 7 waves of data and now we plan to collect 6 additional waves, across ages 21-28. We will use the prospective data to help understand risk and protective factors for mental health and healthy relationship functioning among SGM-AFAB youth from adolescence through young adulthood.

We have just completed data collection on the ACE study, a qualitative study on the identity disclosure and concealment experiences of individuals who identify as asexual.

This fall we launched the PaST Study, led by 2nd year student Charlie Giraud, which will use a qualitative approach to learn more about romantic partners' experiences during their partner's medical gender transition.

Data collection is completed on Familias Latinas and IPV, a qualitative study of Latina women's experiences with their extended families during and after abusive relationships led by 5th year student Margaret Lawlace.



**Lab Name:** Clinical Couple and Family Psychology, Department of Psychology, University of Marburg, Germany

**Head of Lab:** Melanie Fischer, Ph.D.

**Lab Update:** Our new lab at the University of Marburg started up in February 2023. Research foci include psychopathology in couples and families (basic and intervention research) as well as topics related to couple relationships more broadly (understanding, preventing, and treating relationship distress). Current doctoral students are Sophie Blum, M.Sc. (research focus on OCD and its treatment in a couple and family context), Laura Weber, M.Sc. (research focus on accommodation and vocal emotional arousal in couples with OCD), and our newest lab member (as of 09/2023) Anne Vogel, M.Sc., whose research will focus on couple relationships among sexual minorities (welcome!).

Current major projects include a study of accommodation and interpersonal emotion regulation in couples with OCD (funded by the German Research Foundation) and the development of a psychoeducational website and online training for couples/parents considering separation (funded by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and the Klaus-Grawe Foundation, with Beate Ditzen), along with a variety of other ongoing research efforts and collaborations. These include projects with a focus on interpersonal dynamics of vocally encoded emotional arousal, such as in a sample of >400 couples to examine associations with depression, anxiety, and relationship distress (with Don Baucom and Brian Baucom), in families presenting for behavioral parent training (with Deborah Jones), in trauma-exposed couples (with Steffany Fredman) and in couples coping with cancer (with Shelby Langer, Laura Porter). Other efforts focus on relationship experiences of sexual and gender minorities (with Ashley Randall, Pamela Lannutti), the validation of a German version of the CSI (with Anne Milek), and on relationship distress and cardiac/metabolic health in rural Burkina Faso (with Beate Ditzen, Till Bärnighausen). Dr. Fischer also continues her dissemination efforts for couple therapy for depression in the National Health Service, England and will establish a specialty clinic for the treatment of OCD in couples and families at the University of Marburg.




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## Hot off the Press!

*Recent or Upcoming Contributions to the Couples Literature*

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