

COUPLES RESEARCH AND THERAPY

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A Newsletter brought to you by the ABCT Couples SIG, Spring 2022

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Letter from the Editors

The weather is getting warmer, and spring is here! We are excited to share with you the Spring 2022 edition of the Couples SIG newsletter. We would like to extend a special thank you to all the members who gave us a warm welcome and shared their lab updates with us!

We are pleased to highlight our **featured article** from the INTREPRID lab: "A randomized trial of brief couple therapy for PTSD and relationship satisfaction." This is the first study to systematically examine any couple therapy delivered virtually compared to in-person. Otherwise, in addition to lab updates, lab kudos, "hot off the press" publications, and our featured article, information regarding the Underrepresented Scholars Fund (USF) can be found on pg. 4-5. The Couples SIG is committed to increasing diversity within our field; therefore, the USF is requesting donations to cover graduate school related costs for students from underrepresented groups. We hope that you will consider donating!

Lastly, the newsletter features updates from our president, Dr. Hannah Williamson (pg. 2) who provides important information on the demographic data of our members, as well as an update from our treasurer, Dr. Michelle Ramos (pg. 3), who provides an update regarding membership status and dues. Additionally, the SIG student co-leaders, Corey Pettit and Mollie Shin (pg. 3-4), share updates on the SIG mentorship program and the SIG-sponsored symposium!

Thank you all for the contributions you provided! We are both very excited to serve as the Couples SIG newsletter editors and we hope to see you all in person in New York City in the Fall!

Alyssa Miville, BA | Binghamton University (SUNY)

Melissa Gates, BA | Binghamton University (SUNY)

Thanks for making the Couples SIG Newsletter possible!

Melissa Gates (mgates5@binghamton.edu)
Alyssa Miville (amivill1@binghamton.edu)

Letter from the SIG President

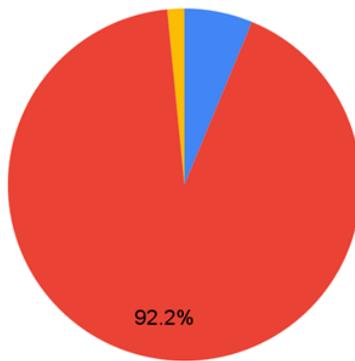
Dr. Hannah Williamson

In Nov 2021 we implemented a new process for membership renewal in which we collected demographic data about our members. Thank you to everyone who elected to provide this data as you joined or renewed your membership last Fall. Our goal in initiating this demographic survey was to better understand our SIG membership, including the extent to which we are inclusive of individuals from groups traditionally under-represented in academia. We'd like to share with you some descriptive statistics about our current SIG membership (N=64 people have joined or renewed since Nov 2021).

First, we have a lot of junior members! 41% of our current members are students and 59% are full members. Of full members, 41% received their PhD in the last 10 years, 13% received their PhD 10-20 years ago, and 6% received their PhD more than 20 years ago. Our membership is also majority female (77%), with 23% reporting their gender as male, and no one identifying with any other gender identity.

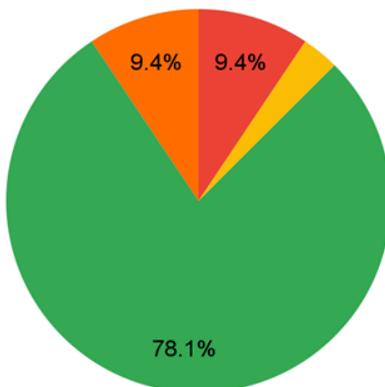
We also had a number of members report that they identify as a sexual or gender minority (22%), as coming from a disadvantaged background (28%), and as having a physical or mental disability (5%). Finally, in regards to race and ethnicity, as seen in the charts below, our membership is predominantly White and not Latine/Hispanic.

Ethnic Identity



● Latine/Hispanic ● Not Latine/Hispanic ● Prefer not to answer

Racial Identity



● Asian or Pacific Islander ● Black or African American ● White ● Other

We will be working with the SIG DEI committee to digest this data and determine next steps toward improving inclusivity and representation within our SIG. We welcome any thoughts that members have about this; please email us at hwilliamson@utexas.edu and esaliver@nova.edu.

Finally, we are optimistically hoping to see all of you in person in NYC this fall for the annual convention. We hope to be able to return to hosting all of our usual SIG events, and we will communicate about plans closer to the date

Hannah (hwilliamson@utexas.edu)

Letter from the SIG Treasurer

Dr. Michelle Ramos

Hello SIG Members!

Happy Spring! Here is an update of our membership status and dues: Our current dues-paying membership, including those who have paid dues within the last 5 years, is 180 (88 professionals, 92 students). This includes 10 new members (2 professionals and 8 students) since the November convention. Please reach out and encourage others to join as we enjoy welcoming new members.

The balance last reported at November’s SIG business meeting was \$3998.83. Since then, we have paid out \$300 for poster awards, \$53.12 for shipping fees for graduate hoods, \$378.24 for website fees, and \$1050 for Underrepresented Scholar awards . We have taken in \$1427.28 in dues and underrepresented scholars donations, thus we have a current balance of \$3644.75. Thank you for your continued support!

A reminder that it is not too late to pay dues for the 2021-22 academic year. Dues are \$30 for professional members and \$5 for students, first-year post-docs, and retired members. With every professional membership, \$5 of dues automatically goes toward the Couples SIG Underrepresented Scholars Fund. Please complete the membership form:

<https://forms.gle/3xustNBLzbfApjgT8>

You may send your dues electronically via Venmo (send to [@Michelle-Ramos-PhD](https://www.venmo.com/Michelle-Ramos-PhD)) or via PayPal (send to mcramos@fullerton.edu).

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 do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or concerns about dues or membership.

Take good care,
Michelle
(mcramos@fullerton.edu)

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Letter from the SIG Student Co-Leaders

Corey Pettit & Mollie Shin

We are both excited and honored to serve as your student co-leaders for the next two terms! We hope everyone is staying healthy and adapting to what is the “new normal”. We are looking forward to meeting many of you in person (fingers crossed) in New York this November!

Symposium

Thank you to everyone who submitted an abstract to be considered for the SIG sponsored student symposium! It’s always fun to hear about the different research our fellow students are working on all across the country. We selected four talks that discuss couple functioning in the face of internal and external threats to the relationship. All of the talks have strong research designs and the samples comprise diverse couples, in various forms. We hope the reviewers are excited as we are about the symposium!

Mentorship program

The mentorship program was also a big success! There were 11 SIG mentor-mentee pairs this year, which is a significant increase from the past few years. This year we broadened the scope of the program to allow mentors from a range of career stages (e.g., advanced grad student/intern, fellow, early career faculty, tenured faculty, non-academic career paths), and mentors could also request

a mentor for themselves. This change seems to have worked well – mentees ranged from Post-Baccs to Associate Professors and mentors ranged from Post-Docs to Full Professors. Thank you to everyone who volunteered to serve as a mentor!

Corey & Mollie
(cp7ze@virginia.edu) & (mollie.shin@ucdenver.edu)

FEATURED FUNDING

The ABCT Couples' SIG Underrepresented Scholars Fund

We are requesting donations for the USF for our next cycle! The Couples SIG recognizes that our field is stronger when all voices are represented, and we are committed to increasing diversity within our field. We know that the cost of applying to programs, networking at conferences, and interviewing for graduate school or internship is a significant barrier to entry within our field, particularly for those young scholars from minoritized backgrounds, and we created the Underrepresented Scholars Fund to help close the gap. This fund is open to all students and potential students from underrepresented groups (broadly defined) to cover any costs associated with getting into graduate school, getting through graduate school, and internship. Starting this year, we will be accepting applications in two cycles, one in winter and one in late summer. We had a very successful winter round and were able to fund three new scholars! We will be accepting applications in August for our second cycle and would love to be able to help as many new scholars as possible. Please consider donating to this important cause- any amount helps! Email us at underrepresentedscholarsfund@gmail.com with any questions!

All donations can be sent through Venmo using the QR code below. Please include USF in the description.



Jasara Hogan

@Jasara-Hogan



venmo

Finally, here are short bios and words of gratitude from the 3 amazing recipients of the winter 2022 Underrepresented Scholars Fund:

My interest in couple/family psychology is at the intersection of interpersonal violence, trauma, and alcohol/substance use disorders. This award will aid in my professional development as I work to develop a program of research in couple/family psychology.

— Charli Kirby

My research interests focus on the effect of emotional maltreatment during the early developmental stage and how the parent-child relationship can impact the developing outcome. Being able to not only look at individuals, but larger system factors around the individual provide more insight for me thinking through future possible interventions. Attending conferences and additional professional training can support me better at enhancing my knowledge in my interested area. However, I am an international student who originally came from China. My parents back home have tried very hard for me to get advanced education and I hope to look for resources that could help me to alleviate their financial pressure. So, super appreciate this opportunity that ABCT Couples SIG DEI committee provides!

— Yu (Sharon) Li

I am a first-year student in the master's program of Marriage and Family Therapy at Northwestern University. I started to see clients in January 2022 as a therapist-in-training. Meanwhile, as a research assistant in Dr. Erika Lawrence's Couple & Family Development lab, my current work focuses on conducting semi-structured interviews and running skill workshops for couples. I enjoy this combination of clinic work in MFT and family/couple-focused research. The tuition of the master's program and living expenses in Evanston are incredibly high. With the high pressure of the program in terms of clinic work and course work, I barely have time to work part-time jobs. Also, as an international student, the visa situation significantly limits my choices of jobs. I really appreciate the scholar funds from ABCT Couples SIG to help alleviate some financial pressure from me. I also feel encouraged to work in this field and continue providing services with empathy to my community.

— Kayla Jiaxuan Zhang

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KUDOS!

We'd like to celebrate these special events in the lives of the following SIG members.

Congratulations to you!

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Dr. Christina Balderrama-Durbin's Couple Adjustment to Stress and Trauma (CAST) Laboratory

- ☉ Congratulations to **Eileen Barden**, who successfully matched at the VA Central Western Massachusetts Healthcare System for her pre-doctoral internship!
 - ☉ Congratulations **Dana Ergas** on her postdoctoral position at The Lukin Center for Psychotherapy!
 - ☉ Kudos to **Alex Wang**, who has recently accepted a staff psychologist position at the local Binghamton VA!
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Dr. Brian Baucom's Couples Lab for Observational Studies

- ☉ Congrats to **Colin Adamo** on the birth of baby Indigo, for finishing internship, and for beginning his position as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania with Torrey Creed.
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Dr. Don Baucom's UNC Couples Lab

- ☉ **Alexandra Wojda-Burlij** successfully proposed her dissertation in December 2021. Her project explores a cognitive model to help explain individual and relationship functioning among low-income couples. She received UNC's Dashiell Dissertation Start-Up Award and the 2022 Earl and Barbara Baughman Dissertation Award to fund her work. Congratulations, Alexandra!
- ☉ **Anais Faith D'Oelsnitz**, a couples lab research assistant, is on track to defend her honors thesis, focused on sociocultural predictors of sarcasm use in couple communication, in early April. Congrats, Anais!
- ☉ **Kimberly Pentel**, PhD, a recent lab alumnus, officially joined a group practice in Seattle, Washington. Congrats, Kim!
- ☉ **Danielle Weber** accepted an offer to work as a postdoctoral research associate in the lab of Justin Lavner, PhD. Congratulations, Danielle!

Dr. Kristina Coop Gordon's Couple Research Lab

☺ **Kristina Gordon** won the 2021 Alexander Prize for Distinguished Scholarship and Excellence in Teaching.

☺ **LaTrice Wright** matched at the Einstein College of Medicine Montefiore Medical Center.

☺ **Zahra Amer** is getting married in July 2022.

☺ **Kristina Gordon** began a new position in July 2021 as the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Engagement in the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

☺ **Erica Mitchell** began a new position in August 2021 as a Research Assistant Professor in the College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

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Dr. Dr. James V. Córdova's Center for Couples and Families at Clark University

☺ **Jenna Rice** was recently awarded the Robert L. Weiss Student Research Award – First Prize: For Outstanding Student Poster Presentation at ABCT as well as a Clark University Graduate Student Council Spring 2022 Travel Award. Congrats, Jenna!

☺ **Nick Canby** will be returning to New England for a post-doctoral fellowship at Brown University this fall. Congratulations, Nick!

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Dr. Steffany Fredman's Penn State Couple and Family Adaptation to Stress Lab

☺ **August Jenkins** recently defended her dissertation entitled “Linkages between Black Americans’ Relationship Adjustment and Emotional Well-Being Over Time: The Role of Socio-Ecological Context and Gender” and began her position as a Visiting Postdoctoral Research Associate in Family Diversity at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Congratulations, Dr. Jenkins!

☺ **Dr. Yuning (Annie) Le** will start a Research Assistant Professor position working with Dr. Galena Rhoades in the Department of Psychology at the University of Denver this summer. Congratulations, Annie!

Dr. Matthew D. Johnson's Marriage and Family Studies Lab:

☺ **Erin Alexander** successfully matched with Holcomb Behavioral Health for internship! Congratulations, Erin!

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Dr. Richard Mattson's Center for Transdisciplinary Research on Intimate Relationships (CTROIR) Lab:

☺ Congratulations **Allison McKinnon**, who matched with the San Diego/UCSD Consortium for internship!

☺ Congratulations **Maggie Parker**, who matched with the James A Haley VA (Tampa VA) for internship! We are proud of both Allison and Maggie and wish them well!

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

☺ **Lisa Godfrey** was accepted for a postdoctoral fellowship at The Family Institute, Northwestern University

Dr. Skye Fitzpatrick’s Treating and Understanding Life-threatening Behavior and Posttraumatic Stress (TuLiP) Lab

- ☺ MA student **Lindsay Fulham** completed her MA thesis investigating emptiness in BPD and is preparing for her defense on April 7th
- ☺ MA student **Lindsay Fulham** received Ontario Graduate Scholarship
- ☺ MA student **Ashley Siegel** received the SSHRC Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship
- ☺ MA student **Sonya Varma’s** Master’s Thesis was nominated for a highly-competitive Outstanding Thesis Award
- ☺ MA student **Sonya Varma** matched to her first choice practicum at the Anxiety Treatment and Research Clinic (ATRC) at St. Joseph’s Healthcare Hamilton
- ☺ Former lab manager **Sophie Goss** welcomed their son Ilyas at the end of October

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Dr. Kayla Knopp and Dr. Chandra Khalifian’s Innovative and Novel Treatments for Relationship Problems and Individual Distress (INTREPID) Lab

- ☺ 1IK2RX003490 (PI: **Khalifian**) VA RR&D CDA “Development of a Novel Couple-Based Suicide Intervention: Treatment for Relationships and Safety Together (TR&ST)”
- ☺ 1IK2RX003777 (PI: **Knopp**) VA RR&D CDA “Clinical Trial of OurRelationship, a Scalable Digital Intervention for Veteran Couples”

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Dr. Howard Markman, Dr. Galena Rhoades, and Dr. Scott Stanley’s Center for Marital and Family Studies

- ☺ This summer, graduate student **Maggie Allen** (nee O’Reilly Treter) married her husband, Will, and began her internship at the Pittsburgh VA!
- ☺ **Dr. Lane Ritchie**, former graduate student, started a new position as a Research at Mathematica.
- ☺ **Dr. Kayla Knopp**, former student, was recently awarded a Career Development Award at the San Diego VA.
- ☺ **Dr. Rhoades** was awarded several new evaluation contracts from ACF as well as funding from the HMRF program and the Families and Youth Services Bureau for relationship education programs in the community.
- ☺ **Dr. Perry** was awarded a Wayne F. Placek grant from the American Psychological Foundation.

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Dr. Michelle Leonard from the University of Michigan-Dearborn:

- ☺ Lab member **Charles Giraud** was accepted into the University of Cincinnati PhD program.

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Dr. Ron Rogge’s Rogge Lab:

- ☺ **Shinyoung Kim** (2nd year, Fulbright scholar) was awarded a \$20,000 Valera grant from the Mind and Life Institute funding a study of the individual and interpersonal benefits of loving kindness meditations.
- ☺ **AJ Pollard** (4th year) will be starting her internship at the University of Rochester, Undergraduate Counseling Center this summer

☺ **Jenn Daks** (5th year) is completing her internship at the Boston VA and will be starting a geropsychology postdoc there this summer

☺ **Dev Crasta** (former student working at the Canandaigua VA) and his wife just had a second little boy

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Dr. Hannah Williamson’s Williamson Lab at UT Austin:

☺ The lab recently received a 3-year grant from the ACF Family and Youth Services Bureau to study the effects of an integrated youth sexual and relationship education program in Texas public schools.

☺ **Dr. Williamson** was named an APS Rising Star.

☺ Graduate student **Nick Chen** recently defended his Masters thesis, which is entitled “Does socioeconomic status moderate the link between marital quality and health?”

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

☺ **Rebecca Brock (Lab PI)** was awarded the Susan J. Rosowski Professorship from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She also received the Dean’s Award for Excellence in Graduate Education.

☺ **Erin Ramsdell** (6th year graduate student) matched with the APA -accredited University of Michigan/Rackham Institute Psychology Internship Program and will be joining the Child and Adolescent track in September 2022.

☺ We currently have six Ph.D. students in our lab including Erin Ramsdell, Lauren Laifer, Frannie Calkins, Eric Phillips, Emily Hamburger, and our newest addition, **Rachel Martin**.

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Dr. Joanne Davila’s Relationship Development Center:

☺ Jiaqi Zhou graduated in May 2021, got a great postdoc in NYC, and has accepted a job as an Assistant Professor at East China Normal University!

☺ **Emily Bibby** was awarded the APAGS/Psi-Chi Junior Science Fellowship!

☺ **Joanne Davila** is now the Chair of the Psychology Department! (Wait, is that really a kudo?!)

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Lab Updates

Lab Name: INTREPID – Innovative and Novel Treatments for Relationship Problems and Individual Distress

Heads of Lab: Dr. Kayla Knopp, Dr. Chandra Khalifian

Lab Update: Dr. Leslie Morland, our postdoc mentor, just completed the largest RCT of Cognitive Behavioral Conjoint Therapy for PTSD. It was also the first study to systematically examine any couple therapy delivered virtually compared to in-person. Kayla and I both worked as therapists on this trial over the past several years and have published multiple manuscripts from baseline data. We are excited to dive into more of the longitudinal data now that the outcome paper was accepted! Also, a huge shout out to Kayla for taking the lead on all of the analyses for this paper!!

In other news: We are excited to introduce our new INTREPID lab, based in VA San Diego’s Research Service! Our focus is on developing and evaluating innovative treatments for couples and individuals experiencing distress, trauma, and mental health concerns, in order

to improve the lives of U.S. military veterans and their loved ones. Dr. Khalifian is beginning year 2 of her VA CDA focused on refining and evaluating TR&ST, the couple-based suicide intervention she has developed. Year 1 saw successful attainment of recruitment goals and positive feedback from participants. Dr. Knopp has completed her postdoctoral fellowship and has transitioned to a Research Psychologist position supported by her VA CDA, which aims to evaluate the OurRelationship program for veteran couples. We are also beginning several exciting new projects in the field of psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy, including MDMA-assisted couple therapy for PTSD and ketamine-assisted therapy for individuals and couples.

Lab members:

Dr. Chandra Khalifian, co-director
 Dr. Kayla Knopp, co-director
 Katya Rashkovsky, project coordinator

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Lab Name: Baucom Lab/UNC Couples Lab

Head of Lab: Donald Baucom, Ph.D.,
 Richard Lee Simpson Distinguished Professor of Psychology
 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Lab Update: Our lab continues both its treatment outcome research and basic research on various couple processes. We believe that both of these approaches are valuable in themselves and interact in a synergistic manner to contribute to our knowledge in the field of intimate relationship functioning.

Treatment research, therapist training, & dissemination efforts:
Eating disorders: **Dr. Baucom** and **Emily Carrino** (3rd year student) continue collaborative efforts with **Dr. Bulik** at UNC evaluating the effectiveness of a couple-based intervention for binge eating disorder in our community clinic. To further disseminate therapist training of our empirically-supported interventions in eating disorders, we are partnering with 3-C Family Services and the UNC Center for Excellence in Eating Disorders to take therapist training online for our couple-based treatment for anorexia nervosa (Uniting Couples in the treatment of Anorexia Nervosa - UCAN) and our couple-based intervention for binge eating disorder (UNiting couples In the Treatment of Eating disorders – UNITE; an RCT comparing individual- and couple-based treatments are ongoing).

Insomnia: Our lab is collaborating with **Dr. Sean Drummond** in Australia and **Dr. Melissa Jenkins**, a former UNC doctoral student, on a randomized controlled trial to treat insomnia with a couple-based intervention, expanding our couples and psychopathology work to a new disorder. The RCT is ongoing.

Depression: Our lab continues a long-standing collaboration with the National Health Service in England to offer training and supervision to therapists in our couple-based interventions for couples in which one partner is depressed. This is part of England's nationwide IAPT program to provide empirically-supported interventions to the public.

Basic research

In response to the rapid onset of COVID-19, our lab executed a longitudinal, online survey study to examine changes to individual and couple functioning across the pandemic. Our main outcome manuscript is now published, and follow-up analyses are in preparation.

Our commitment to research focused on understanding underserved couple populations continues. **Emily Carrino** and **Alexandra Wojda-Burlij** (5th year) are co-leading investigations on (a) differences in relationship schematic processing (RSP) among same-sex female couples across couple therapy and (b) relationship schematic processing (RSP) in long-distance relationships. Observational coding and analyses for both projects are underway. For her Master's thesis, Carrino compared differential patterns of relationship functioning between subgroups of sexual and gender minority couples, with a focus on mixed-gender and bisexual+ couples. She recently completed an-

other project examining relationship processes with regard to partners' gender-concordance and sexual orientation-concordance. Wojda-Burlij's dissertation focuses on better understanding the cognitive processes associated with individual and relationship functioning in low-income couples; data collection is ongoing. She is also currently preparing a manuscript that introduces a novel framework for understanding relationship resilience within low-income populations. Lastly, our lab has forged a new collaboration with **Stacey Daughters**, PhD, and her 3rd year doctoral student, **Louisa Kane**, to explore how using substances to cope with negative experiences impacts dyadic coping processes over time.

Our lab continues its broad-based exploration of interpersonal emotion regulation by examining couple conversations using dynamic systems modeling and other intensive time series methods. We have been interested in vocal features of emotional arousal within multiple populations of couples and are currently working on multiple projects at various stages. Papers on interpersonal emotion regulation in (a) therapy-seeking couples with experiences of bidirectional physical and psychological intimate partner violence and (b) couples in which one partner has cancer are in preparation, whereas another on emotional communication in same-sex female couples pre- and post-couple therapy has been resubmitted for review.



(Dr. Donald Baucom's Lab Pictured above)

Dr. Baucom and **Dr. Melanie Fischer** are co-Principal Investigators on a funded effort to explore how symptoms of anxiety and depression relate to various interpersonal emotion dynamics in couples. This effort uses data across multiple samples of couples using integrative data analysis, in collaboration with **Dr. Dan Bauer** and **Dr. Brian Baucom**, along with several other couple researchers who have provided invaluable data sets. The paper based on the primary set of findings is in preparation.

Our lab is collaborating with **Dr. Shelby Langer** and **Dr. Laura Porter** in a large investigation of communication among couples experiencing different forms of cancer. Dr. Baucom is involved in procedures for observational coding of couple interactions and emotional arousal. Dr. Melanie Fischer and **Danielle Weber** have provided consultation regarding procedures for processing and analyzing vocal features of emotional arousal within couple interactions, and Dr. Brian Baucom is overseeing comprehensive behavioral coding efforts. A recent paper overviewing the study has been recently published. In addition, Danielle took the lead on a set of primary analyses and this publication is in preparation.

Led by **Danielle Weber** in collaboration with Dr. Steve Du Bois and Dr. Tamara Goldman Sher, our study of community long-distance couples in comparison to geographically-close couples is complete. Weber used components of these data as her dissertation and a manuscript based on her main findings has been resubmitted for review. As noted above, Carrino has also led the efforts examining RSP in these long-distance couples. Carrino has also led a mixed - methods (qualitative and quantitative) investigation to explore differences in remote and in-person communication in long-distance and

geographically-close couples which she presented at last year’s convention; additional observational coding of couple communication in this sample in ongoing and a manuscript is in preparation.



Lab Name: Behavioral Health Innovation and Dissemination Center

Head of Lab: Brian Baucom and Feea Leifker

Lab Update: Whew! We’ve had very busy first year getting our center up and running. It’s been an exciting and fulfilling challenge to begin working with therapist trainees from graduate programs within and outside of psychology and to help them learn evidence-based couple therapies (and CBT more generally). Our first cohort of trainees included students from the U of U’s Clinical Psychology doctoral program, Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner doctoral program, and Masters of Social Work program. We look forward to having the opportunity to work with students from the U of U’s Counseling Psychology doctoral program next year.

We’ve also been focused on building out additional services and training opportunities that we can offer more broadly. We’re excited to announce that we’ll be offering a 5-day, online Cognitive Behavioral Couple Therapy for relationship distress and psychopathology workshop led by Don Baucom this coming summer, June 6 – 10. We’ll share additional details through the listserv and would love to see some of you there.

We want to welcome **Rob Warner**, who will be joining us as a post-doctoral scholar this summer.



Lab Name: Center for Couples and Families at Clark University

Head of Lab: James V. Córdova, PhD

Lab Update: **Dr. Córdova** is currently writing a book about intimate relationship as a mindfulness practice for Guilford Press. He has also been busy disseminating the Relationship Checkup through the Department of Defense’s Military Family Life Counselor program. The lab’s manuscript reporting on the RCT of the Marriage Checkup with active duty couples in the Air Force was recently accepted in JCCP.

Nick Canby is on internship at the Southern Arizona VA Health Care System. He has plans to graduate with his Ph.D. this summer and begin a post-doctoral fellowship at Brown University in the Fall. Nick is still finishing his dissertation, which examines the characteristics and consequences of experiences that involve perceptions of oneness with someone or something outside the self and/or a loss of their sense of self. **Setareh Rossman** is working on her dissertation exploring how meaning-making processes and values relate to intimate partner acceptance. She continues to enjoy treating patients through the Eating Disorders Clinical Research Program at Mass General Hospital. **David Yoo** is currently working on his dissertation proposal exploring the impact of emotionally vulnerable conversations between emerging adults and their parents on emerging adults’ intimate safety with their parents. David and Setareh are both preparing to apply for internship next year. **Jenna Rice** received her master’s degree in December after completing her thesis examining the influence of discussing common relationship patterns on relationship health. She is greatly enjoying her clinical practicum at UMass Medical School’s Student Counseling Services, and looking forward to continuing her training at her externship next year at Brigham and Women’s Outpatient Psychiatry. **Lizzy Engelkamp** is working on her master’s thesis, examining how couples communicate about pornography use in the context of their relationship.

Finally, we are excited to welcome our newest lab member next fall: **Allie Shafran**.

Welcome to Clark, Allie!



(Dr. James Córdova’s Lab Pictured above)

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

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

Lab Update: We continue to focus our research efforts on understanding the impact of acute stress and trauma particularly for high-risk and marginalized couples.

Second-year graduate student, **Melissa Gates**, is finalizing her thesis project examining the reactivity and recovery of couples where one partner was exposed to a laboratory trauma analog to better understand sympathetic nervous system activity (i.e., the cardiac pre-ejection period) in a dyadic context. Fifth-year graduate student, **Eileen Barden**, is poised to defend her dissertation this early summer examining the role of emotion regulation and dyadic coping in partnered individuals with co-occurring hazardous drinking and PTSD symptoms. Additionally, Eileen has successfully matched at the VA Central Western Massachusetts Healthcare System for her pre-doctoral internship! **Dana Ergas**, fifth-year student, and **Alex Wang**, sixth-year student, are completing their pre-doctoral internships at the Syracuse VA. Dana Ergas will be defending her dissertation this April and has accepted a postdoctoral position at The Lukin Center for Psychotherapy in New Jersey. Alex Wang has recently accepted a staff psychologist position at the local Binghamton VA. Finally, we are excited to welcome a new graduate student into the CAST Lab, **Jessica Hill**, this coming fall!

The CAST Lab has dedicated much of this academic year to engaging in qualitative analyses of our semi structured interviews obtained from sexual minority couples in the upstate NY area. We also continue to analyze and disseminate findings from several projects that were recently completed including studies working with Veterans, military, and sexual minority couples. Additionally, our federally funded randomized clinical trial testing a prevention program designed specifically for at-risk military couples entering technical training is set to launch this late spring/early summer. We’re thrilled to continue to advancing evidence-based care for marginalized and high-risk couples. And, a BIG thank you to our impressive and dedicated team of undergraduate research assistants!



(Dr. Christina Balderrama-Durbin’s Lab Pictured above)

Lab Name: Gordon Couple Research Lab

Head of Lab: Dr. Kristina Coop Gordon & Erica Mitchell

Lab Update: **Zahra Amer** is preparing to propose her dissertation study in which she aims to extend upon her thesis and explore second-generation South Asian immigrants bicultural identities within the context of intimate relationships and marriage.

The John Templeton Foundation grant awarded to **Dr. Kristina Gordon**, to study how to develop successful and sustainable university-church partnerships to deliver empirically supported relationship education, is in its third and final year. We are wrapping up a community mapping project to illuminate the availability of couples services through churches and practitioners across the county. We are also interviewing church representatives about their experience of completing a readiness assessment for university-church partnership.

Desirée Woodle joined the lab as a first year Clinical Psychology doctoral student in Fall 2021.

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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 delighted to welcome **Jeesun Lee** as the newest member of the Penn State CFAS lab! Jeesun's interests focus on the intersection of individual mental health, couple functioning, and parenting. Our lab is continuing to work on a variety of basic and translational research projects focused on couples and stress. **Annie Le** is leading work on micro timescale emotion regulation in couples, couple and family adaptation during the COVID-19 pandemic, and evaluation of online relationship programs delivered to low-income couples. **August Jenkins** is leading work on the daily and long-term associations between relationship functioning and individual mental health among African Americans within a sociocultural and gendered context. We've wrapped up a project on micro timescale emotion regulatory processes among couples with PTSD conducted in collaboration with Melanie Fischer from the University of Heidelberg, Don Baucom from UNC-Chapel Hill, Annie Le, Emily Taverna, Sy-Miin Chow, and Amy Marshall from Penn State, and Nilam Ram from Stanford and are eager to continue this work in the context of treatment outcome research. Building on the success of our pilot study of an abbreviated, intensive, multi-couple group version of cognitive-behavioral conjoint therapy for PTSD (AIM-CBCT for PTSD), we've recently submitted a proposal to the DoD to conduct an RCT to test the efficacy of AIM-CBCT for PTSD relative to the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) in active duty military and veteran couples. This work is being conducted in collaboration with Galena Rhoades, Scott Stanley, Candice Monson, and the Consortium to Alleviate PTSD.



(Dr. Steffany Fredman's Lab Photo Pictured above)

Lab Name: Treating and Understanding Life-threatening behavior and Posttraumatic stress (TuLiP) Lab

Head of Lab: Dr. Skye Fitzpatrick

Lab Update:

Our lab focuses on optimizing treatment for borderline personality disorder and posttraumatic stress, with a particular focus on scalable interventions and ones that harness the healing power of relationships to enhance treatment outcomes. To this end, we are currently collecting data for several exciting studies.

First, in collaboration with our colleague **Dr. Candice Monson**, we are running a randomized controlled trial that compares the efficacy of a guided, online, self-help intervention that we developed with **Drs. Monson and Anne Wagner**. This intervention is for couples wherein one member has posttraumatic stress disorder called Couple HOPES (Helping Overcome PTSD and Enhance Satisfaction; www.couplehopes.com). We are examining the efficacy of Couple HOPES compared to a waitlist control in improving PTSD symptoms, relationship satisfaction, and a range of secondary outcomes in couples wherein one member has COVID-related PTSD or is a Military Member, Veteran, First Responder, or Healthcare worker with PTSD.

Second, we are running an uncontrolled trial of a novel intervention that we have developed with our colleagues (**Drs. Rachel Liebman, Candice Monson**) for couples wherein one member is a suicidal or self-injuring individual with borderline personality disorder (BPD) called Sage. Named after a plant that thrives in an ecosystem with other organisms, Sage is designed to target BPD symptoms (including suicidal and self-injurious thoughts and behavior), relationship conflict, and intimate partner mental health simultaneously. We are currently completing data analysis of an initial case series of five couples who received Sage with promising preliminary findings. Recruitment for a 15-couple uncontrolled trial is underway. We have also submitted a Canadian Institutes of Health Research project grant (currently under review) to advance Sage to its next phase of testing wherein its efficacy would be compared to an active control that involves psychoeducation and case management.

Third, we are running a Canadian Institutes of Health Research-funded longitudinal study of couples wherein one member has BPD and engages in suicidal or self-injurious behavior (SSI). This study aims to examine how these couples communicate in general and about SSI in particular, and how partners respond to SSI. It also aims to examine which forms of communication and responses predict a higher or lower likelihood of the recurrence of SSI. Recruitment has begun for this study and findings will provide clinically-relevant information about what factors can be modified in individuals with BPD's relationships to reduce SSI.

Fourth, we have completed data collection for a three-month longitudinal study with family members of those with BPD. This study used questionnaire and ecological momentary assessment (EMA) to examine communication processes between family members with BPD and the health and wellness of these family members. Data cleaning is underway.

Fifth, we are currently conducting a meta-analysis examining which specific forms of social support predict suicidal thoughts and behavior longitudinally. We have completed the article selection phases and have moved on to data extraction.

We have had several incredible new members join our lab, including our incoming MA student (**Talia Tissera**), our new lab manager (**Elizabeth Earle**), and our new postdoctoral fellow (**Dr. Melissa Latham**).

Lab Name: The Couple and Family Lab, Denmark

Head of Lab: Tea Trillingsgaard

Lab Update: During this spring, we are refining the final procedures for a 3-year implementation study of a stepped-care model in the treatment of couple distress funded by the Danish foundation, Samfonden. The stepped-care model aims to overcome barriers to couples' help seeking in the municipality and includes the delivery of high to low intensity services delivered through digital marketing (relationship health promotion), self-help literature (guided bibliotherapy), web-based intervention (the OurRelationship program), brief face-to-face treatment (the Marriage Checkup) and full face-to-face treatment (IBCT). This work is done in collaboration with local Danish municipalities and Center for Family Development, a non-profit non-governmental organization serving couples and families.



(Dr. Trillingsgaard's Lab Pictured Above)

This semester, we welcomed **Frederik Godt Hansen** as a new post-doc in the lab. He received his Ph.D. in political science from Aarhus University in 2021 with a dissertation combining insights from social psychology with public administration literature. He will be working on the implementation study.

Dr. Trillingsgaard and Dr. Nöerr Fentz are waiting for the outcome of a grant submission proposing a full scale RCT comparing the OurRelationship to Bibliotherapy for distressed couples in the search for help through organic Google searches. They recently completed the pilot for his RCT and are currently analyzing the pilot data.

Astrid Björn Leth-Nissen is in the process of completing her doctoral dissertation and is finishing analysis concerning the long-term effects of two Marriage Checkups and the effects of receiving a third booster MC.

Anne Klode is examining the influence of paternity leave for paternal involvement in play, childcare, and coparenting processes as part of her dissertation research.

Lea Greve is working on her dissertation research, which examines the effectiveness of the parent-training program Incredible Years and its short- and long-term effects for children aged 2 to 14 years from 19 Danish municipalities.

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Lab Name: The Today's Couples and Families Research Program

Head of Lab: Dr. Sarah Whitton

Lab Update: We have completed Wave 7 of FAB400, our NICHD-funded longitudinal cohort study of sexual and gender minority youth assigned female at birth (SGM-AFAB). While we seek funding to continue following this unique cohort, we are focused on disseminating findings related to risk/protective factors for intimate partner violence, other couple outcomes, and mental and physical health problems.

We have particular interests in using our racially diverse sample and an intersectional framework to understand how SGM-AFAB youths' multiple intersecting social identities affect their relationship and individual outcomes.

For her dissertation, **Lisa Godfrey** completed a study of 300 bisexual women's relationships with cisgender men, cisgender women, and gender minority partners, which revealed interesting findings regarding differences in women's relationship quality, mental health, and minority stress experiences by partner gender.

Sabrina Bothwell joined our lab as a first-year student in UC's Clinical Psychology Ph.D. program.

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Lab Name: Center for Marital and Family Studies

Head of Lab: Dr. Howard Markman, Dr. Galena Rhoades, and Dr. Scott Stanley

Lab Update: Our lab grew substantially in the last year! This spring and summer, **Dr. Nick Perry** joined the lab as a Research Assistant Professor, fresh from his post-doctoral work at Brown University and **Briana Schubert** joined the lab as our newest graduate student. We also welcomed **Carra Gilson**, MPH, as a new project coordinator and **Sarah Turk Karan** as a post-bac RA. These fresh faces have already been instrumental in beginning several new evaluation projects (related to the new round of ACF Health Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood funding). **Dr. Rhoades's** community-based MotherWise program continues to enroll 40 to 50 pregnant or post-partum women and teens a month and is funded through Thriving Families, a new non-profit. **Dr. Markman** continues with his international efforts in disseminating PREP, the latest being in Spain, giving talks at the University of Navarra, Pamplona. **Dr. Stanley** continues working on various evaluations as well as basic science papers, and reading about statistics when he can.

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Lab Name: Rogge Lab (www.couples-research.com)

Head of Lab: Dr. Ron Rogge

Lab Update: MODELING MINDFULNESS: In an effort to bridge the mindfulness and ACT (acceptance and commitment therapy) literatures, our second paper on the Unified Flexibility and Mindfulness (UFM) model was just accepted at Mindfulness (Rogge et al., in press). We successfully linked tenets of Buddhism to mindfulness processes in a stepwise mediation model that emerged across 4 languages and 5 cultural groups. It was also the first time I was able to work with a Buddhist monk as a co-author!

AGAPE APP: After over 2 ½ years of beta testing and development, our relationship wellness app, Agapé, has over 10,000 daily users! Agape promotes individual and relationship awareness, compassion, gratitude, and connection by sending couples daily prompts (developed and tested by Dr. Rogge, based heavily on research findings in our field) and then sharing answers between partners when both have responded. We have just started our first, single-arm intervention study following hundreds of couples through their first month of using the app and we've been successful in recruiting over 170 dyads in just the last 2 weeks.

MEDITATION STUDY: Funded by a Valera grant from the Mind and Life Institute that was secured by my student, Shinyoung Kim, we are also gearing up to do a study examining the potential benefits of daily meditation in a sample of 300 subjects. We will look at the relative benefits of breathing meditations and loving kindness meditations across two weeks using standard pre-post self-report assessments, daily diary data, and physiological assessments of stress-reactivity.

Lab Name: Williamson Lab at UT Austin

Head of Lab: Dr. Hannah Williamson

Lab Update: On the intervention research side, the lab is currently in year 2 of a 5-year grant from the ACF Office of Family Assistance to conduct an RCT comparing traditional relationship education to relationship education with integrated economic-focused services. The logistics of remotely running a large-scale RCT in collaboration with three community agencies in Fort Worth, TX is keeping everyone in the lab very busy. For our basic research, we are currently collecting pilot data on unmarried couples as they transition to parenthood, in collaboration with a low-income community health clinic here in Austin.

Rebecca Horne, who will be completing her PhD in Social Psychology at the University of Toronto this summer, will be joining the lab as a SSHRC-funded postdoctoral fellow in Fall 2022.

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Lab Name: Couples and Health at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science

Head of Lab: Dr. Tamara Sher

Lab Update: At our first full year at RFUMS, we were pleased to accept two Ph.D. students into the lab and into the study of couples. Jacinda Lee, received her master of science in marriage and family therapy from Northwestern University in June 2021 Her master’s thesis was entitled “Good Night, Sleep Tight: An analysis of copresence, sleep quality and relationship satisfaction among long distance relationship couples”. She has a bachelor of science degree from Vanderbilt University. Jacinda is broadly interested in examining relationship and health outcomes in couples experiencing forced and/or ongoing separation, including traditionally marginalized populations such as migrant workers, mixed status immigrant couples, and refugees. She hopes to disseminate research in service of immigrants in the Asian diaspora to increase accessibility to psychoeducation and evidence-based treatment.

HyeRim Ryu also received her master of science degree in marriage and family therapy from Northwestern University. Her BA is from Wheaton College. The title of her Master’s Thesis is The Association between Supervisory Alliance and Therapeutic Self-Efficacy among Marriage and Family Therapy Trainees. HyeRim says that her future goals are ‘to do it all’ by becoming a professor, a clinical supervisor, and a therapist!

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Lab Name: University of Nebraska-Lincoln Family Development Lab

Head of Lab: Dr. Rebecca Brock



(Dr. Rebecca Brock’s Lab Pictured Above)

Lab Update: We have now completed eight waves of data collection spanning pregnancy to preschool age as part of our ongoing *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. We just launched a ninth assessment when the child turns 5.5 years of age. As part of this study, we examined the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating that families had already experienced significant declines in relationship quality and parent and child mental health during the first 6 months of the pandemic. However, we also found that some families experienced aspects of flourishing (e.g., feeling more connected as a family), especially if parents had a high quality couple relationship prior to the onset of the pandemic. We are now tracking long-term consequences of the pandemic and identifying sources of risk and resiliency.

Learn more about results from this study here:

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

We have completed data collection for the *Experiences of Sexual and Gender Minority Couples* project which is aimed at examining daily experiences with discrimination and harassment of sexual and gender minority couples. Initial qualitative and quantitative analysis suggests that couples living in rural Midwestern communities are at particular risk for relationship discord and dysfunction despite limited access to community support and couple interventions. This work has been funded by the UNL Minority Health Disparities Initiative (MHDI).

Dr. Brock anticipates recruiting a graduate student to the clinical psychology training program for 2023 admission. Learn more here:

<https://psychology.unl.edu/family-development-lab/>

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Lab Name: Relationship Development Center

Head of Lab: Dr. Joanne Davila

Lab Update: The Relationship Development Center continues its work on romantic relationships and well-being among individuals of diverse sexual and gender identities. We continue to be involved in a number of projects and collaborations, including:

The development and evaluation of a relationship education program for college students, and its adaptation to different populations using a variety of formats. Some examples of what we're doing include: (1) an adaptation for students who are elevated on depressive symptoms (with an RCT in progress); (2) a modular approach for LGBTQ+ students; (3), an 8-week group treatment for relationship problems (for individuals, not couples - that might come later); (4) an adaptation into a brief online single session "intervention" (in collaboration with postdoc **Atina Manvelian** and my colleague **Jessica Schleider**, who is an expert in single session interventions), and we'll be running an RCT with teens soon.

The study of LGBTQ individuals' identity, health, and relationship experiences. Some examples of what we're doing include: (1) examining stress, support, and intimacy processes in sexual minority couples; (2) examining measurement invariance of numerous measures to determine whether they perform in a similar manner across groups; (3) examining associations between relationship status and well-being.

The study of diverse relationship types. Some examples of what we're doing include: (1) examining correlates of consensual non-monogamy; (2) examining relationship agreements and their correlates across different types of relationships.

We're starting up some new projects that will examine (1) sexual communication and satisfaction in young couples of all types and (2) need fulfillment inside and outside of romantic relationships across different types of relationships.

Our lab members include:

Ellora Vilkin, Howard Huang, and T.J. Sullivan (co-advised by **Dan O’Leary**), all finishing up their 4th year, **Stephan Brandt**, who is nearing the end of his 2nd year (and no longer training only remotely!), **Emily Bibby**, who is nearing the end of her 1st year, **Tamara Luginbuehl**, our postdoc from Switzerland who is running the RCT of our workshop for college students with elevated depressive symptoms, **Atina Manvelian**, our postdoc who’s also working with Jessica Schleider, **Yuki Kitagawa**, who collaborates on lab projects, and **John Miller**, who manages Tamara’s project.

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Hot off the Press

In Press and Recently Published Literature

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*denotes co-first authorship

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