

Area of Emphasis: Health Psychology

Description of Area of Emphasis:

The Health Psychology area emphasizes understanding the myriad connections between psychological and physical health and well-being in support of the development of meaningful prevention, assessment, and intervention strategies. Health Psychologists specialize in assessing and treating many populations of adults and children including: individuals experiencing co-morbid medical and psychological diagnoses (e.g., schizophrenia and diabetes), individuals who have medical illnesses exacerbated by psychological conditions (e.g., stress in cardiac patients), individuals experiencing significant psychological distress related to their medical diagnosis/prognosis (e.g., coping with end of life issues), individuals who have psychological symptoms caused by physical processes (e.g., cognitive impairments in dementia and traumatic brain injury patients), individuals who have chronic medical conditions that require high levels of behavioral adherence to complex regimens of care (e.g., asthma or diabetes), and individuals with significant behavioral lifestyle management issues related to physical disability (e.g., obesity, smoking, etc.). The Health Psychology area teaches students to work within the context of multidisciplinary teams in a variety of settings including primary care, specialty care, inpatient, outpatient, and integrated care environments. Faculty and students in this area often collaborate with colleagues from other departments at EMU as well as those from other universities and training facilities.

Research Training:

Similar to other areas of emphasis in the department, research training takes place within our mentorship model, wherein students are paired with specific faculty whose interests are a good fit for promoting the students' development of research skills. Students must complete the master's thesis, qualifying paper, and/or dissertation project in an area related to health psychology (e.g., identifying psychosocial barriers to regimen adherence among a chronically ill population). Students typically present their findings at research conferences such as those affiliated with the Society for Behavioral Medicine, the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, and the Society of Pediatric Psychology. Students are also encouraged to submit manuscripts for peer-reviewed publications. Internal sources of funding exist to support student research expenses and travel to research conferences.

Clinical Training:

Clinical training in the Health Psychology area covers a broad range of empirically supported assessment and treatment approaches. All students in the doctoral program are trained in both adult and child/family treatment approaches through required coursework, supervised clinical practica experiences, as well as a course in organized systems of care. In addition to these core courses, students within this area of emphasis also take specialized courses in Psychopharmacology, Behavioral Medicine, and Integrated Primary Care.

Beyond the classroom, students complete a one-year practicum in-house at our own [Psychology Clinic](#), and continue to maintain a small caseload thereafter. At our Clinic, students may request that they be assigned cases related to their area of interest when it is possible and feasible to do so. After a year in-house, students complete advanced practicum training at a wide range of health-related [external practicum sites](#) including the Ann Arbor Rehabilitation Center, Ann Arbor Veteran's Administration Medical Center Primary Care, the Henry Ford Health System, St. Joseph Mercy Health System, and the University of Michigan Health System.

Affiliated Faculty and Related Interests:

[Jin Bo, Ph.D.](#) (Cognitive Neuroscience) – Behavioral and neural mechanisms of age-related differences in individuals with cognitive and motor difficulties, such as children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, Developmental Coordination Disorder, ADHD and older adults with mild cognitive impairments. Approaches to facilitate learning to improve cognitive and motor functions in these populations.

[Michelle Byrd, Ph.D.](#) (Child Clinical and Health Psychology) – Integration of behavioral and medical care in pediatric healthcare settings, parent training programs, the incorporation of acceptance-based strategies in the treatment of medically ill populations.

[Claudia Drossel, Ph.D., Ph.D.](#) (Adult Assessment, ABA-Behavioral Gerontology, Clinical-Adult, and Health Psychology) – Adult assessment; modern behavior therapies for individuals at the intersection of medical and emotional difficulties in later life; effects of drugs on behavior, emotion, and cognition; contextual solutions to prevent or reduce emotional and behavioral difficulties commonly associated with cognitive loss (e.g., from Alzheimer’s disease, Lewy Body’s disease, stroke, brain tumors); professional and family caregiver training.

[Heather Janisse, Ph.D.](#) (Developmental and Health Psychology) – Pediatric obesity, interventions for at-risk preschoolers, health disparities in at-risk minority populations, parent-child relationships and child outcomes, developmental methodologies.

[Ellen Koch, Ph.D.](#) (Clinical-Adult and Health Psychology) – Exposure-based treatments for PTSD as well as other anxiety disorders, behavior therapy and cognitive-behavior therapy for adult anxiety disorders, treatment outcome research, anxiety sensitivity and its relationship to other constructs predicting psychopathology, secondary prevention of psychopathology resulting from elevated anxiety sensitivity, and one-session exposure treatment for small animal phobias.

[Renee Lajiness O’Neill, Ph.D.](#) (Pediatric Neuropsychology) – Neurodevelopmental disorders such as Autism Spectrum Disorders, language based learning disability, and ADHD, cognitive, behavioral and neural correlates of these disorders using neuropsychological measures and functional neuroimaging such as magnetoencephalography (MEG), early identification of risk/resilience factors in neurodevelopmental and acquired disorders of childhood.

[Tamara Loverich, Ph.D.](#) (Clinical-Adult and Health Psychology) – Emotion regulation, excessive behavior, eating behavior, modern behavior therapies, multicultural therapy.

[Alexandros Maragakis, Ph.D.](#) (Clinical-Adult, Applied Behavior Analysis, and Health Psychology) – Integration of primary and behavioral health, reverse integrated care for those with serious mental illness, using behavioral principles in brief interventions, third wave psychotherapies.

[Catherine Peterson, Ph.D.](#) (Pediatric Psychology) – Neurocognitive and psychological issues associated with chronic medical conditions in childhood such as childhood cancer, type 1 diabetes, sickle cell disease, and recurrent pain; psychological outcomes, academic achievement, quality of life, family burden, and family intervention related to pediatric medical populations.

[Karen Saules, Ph.D.](#) (Health Psychology) – Addictive behaviors, interaction of addictive and eating behaviors, binge eating, obesity, bariatric surgery, weight management/ maintenance, body image, weight stigma.

[Angela Staples, Ph.D.](#) (Developmental Psychopathology and Health Psychology) – Interplay between sleep regulation and daytime functioning in parent-child dyads, regulation of and perception of expressed emotion during face-to-face communication, parenting stress and early child development of emotion regulation, longitudinal research methods and statistical analysis (e.g., SEM, HLM).