
CURRICULUM VITAE

Kenan G. Sayers

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EDUCATION

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Class of 2022

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Minors in Exercise and Sport Science and Hispanic Studies
with University Honors

Cumulative GPA: 3.79 | Major GPA: 3.76

HONORS & AWARDS

2021 **5th Place Poster Presentation**, *Council of University Directors of Clinical Psychology – Diversifying Clinical Psychology Conference*

- Judged by 40+ Directors of Clinical Training of graduate schools from around the country as the 5th best poster presentation out of 45 posters at the Diversifying Clinical Psychology Conference held virtually on Friday, April 23rd, 2021

2019 **Psi Chi International Honor Society in Psychology**, *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

2018- **Hayden B. Renwick Academic Award**, *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

- 2021**
- Awarded all eligible semesters at UNC Chapel Hill
 - This award “recognizes all Black/African American, American Indian/Native American, Hispanic/Latinx students who have achieved a cumulative grade point average of 3.2 or higher” in memory of Hayden B. Renwick

2018- **Dean’s List**, *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

- 2021**
- Awarded all eligible semesters at UNC Chapel Hill

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

MAY 2021 – PRESENT

Anxiety and Stress Lab

Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Supervisor: Jonathan S. Abramowitz, Ph.D.

- Conceptualized and currently conducting a randomized controlled trial as part of a senior honors thesis. This study examines the effects of high-intensity interval training (HIIT) and moderate-intensity continuous training (MICT) on self-efficacy and anxiety sensitivity, with a focus on the mediation effects of self-efficacy on the relationship between these exercise interventions and anxiety sensitivity.
- Converted the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) and the Anxiety Sensitivity Index-3 (ASI-3) into Qualtrics surveys for dissemination
- Scored participants’ answers to the GSE and ASI-3 at each time point
- Created the study screening survey and managed the inclusion/exclusion of prospective study participants
- Prepared submissions to and will manage communications with the Institutional Review Board (IRB)
- Modified the study design to allow study sessions to be conducted remotely, providing a larger participant pool and ensuring safety during COVID-19
- Created the protocol for the exercises used in each condition
- Recorded standardized videos for the exercise treatment conditions
- Developed a flyer used to recruit participants via social media

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT

SPRING 2019 - PRESENT

Anxiety and Stress Lab

Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Supervisor: Jonathan S. Abramowitz, Ph.D.

❖ As an Undergraduate Research Assistant of the Anxiety and Stress Lab, I collaborated with graduate students, my mentor, and other undergraduate research assistants on studies and projects examining OCD, stress, and anxiety disorders, including:

1. NIH Postpartum Obsessive-Compulsive Symptoms Study (N-POCSS)

PIs: Jonathan S. Abramowitz, Ph.D., Mary Kimmel, M.D., Gerald Nestadt, Ph.D.

Advisor: Jonathan S. Abramowitz, Ph.D.

- The purpose of the study is to follow expecting mothers from mid-way through their pregnancy until 6-months postpartum to (1) better understand biological and psychological factors that might predict postpartum depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and (2) better understand the relationships between postpartum depression and OCD.
- Duties included creating biospecimen collection kits and managing data entry using REDCap.

2. Obsessive-Compulsive Symptom Dimensions in Trauma-Exposed Adults: Relationships with Trauma Type and Posttraumatic Cognitions

PI: Heidi J. Ojalehto, B.S.

Advisor: Jonathan S. Abramowitz, Ph.D.

- A study conducted as part of a master's thesis that examines thoughts and cognitions of individuals who experienced traumatic events.
- Duties included analyzing and coding self-report data on traumatic experiences to determine whether the responses met diagnostic criterion A for PTSD according to the DSM-V.

3. Expectancy Violation During Exposure Therapy: A Randomized Controlled trial

PI: Jennifer L. Buchholz, M.A.

Advisor: Jonathan S. Abramowitz, Ph.D.

- This randomized controlled trial investigated the short and long-term effectiveness of three treatments for a one-time intervention in individuals with spider phobia.
- Duties included conducting and scoring assessments of symptom severity of participants using Behavioral Assessment Tasks, data entry, administering Qualtrics surveys, and managing payments and consent forms.

4. Obsessive-Compulsive Symptoms in African American Young Adults

PI: Henry A. Willis, M.A.

Advisors: Enrique W. Neblett, Ph.D., Jonathan S. Abramowitz, Ph.D.

Consultant: Monnica Williams, Ph.D.

- A longitudinal survey-based study that aims to explore the long-term impact of experiences of racial discrimination and racial identity beliefs on changes in obsessive-compulsive symptoms in African American young adults. Supported by a research grant from the International OCD Foundation.
- Duties included administering Qualtrics surveys to participants and briefing participants on the study design via video call to ensure their understanding of study requirements.

❖ Other Research Responsibilities

- Assisted in the creation of abstract and poster submissions for psychological conferences
- Attended regular lab meetings to discuss ongoing research and view research presentations

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

SUMMER 2019

Treatment Research Center

Department of Psychiatry | Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania

Supervisor: Tim Pond, MPH.

❖ As a research assistant at the Treatment Research Center, I gained valuable research experience working for Henry Kranzler, M.D. and his staff. His research focuses on the genetics and pharmacological treatment of

substance dependence, and I worked on several pharmacological studies involving the use of alcohol, opioids, and other medications including:

1. Molecular Genetic Prediction of Opioid Dosage Requirements in African American Orthopedic Surgery Patients

PI: Henry Kranzler, M.D.

- A pharmacogenetic study that examined genetic markers to determine what dosages of opioids were effective in African American orthopedic post-op patients.
- Duties included recruiting study participants via phone, conducting clinical phone screening interviews to determine the eligibility of prospective study participants, and scheduling participant study sessions.

2. Genetics of Alcohol Dependence and Withdrawal in African Americans

PI: Henry Kranzler, M.D.

- This study examined biological markers that influenced the severity of alcohol dependence and withdrawal symptoms in African Americans.
- Duties included managing data entry for Timeline Followbacks for alcohol and medication use, as well as study survey responses.

3. Prospective Randomized Pharmacogenetic Study of Topiramate for Treating Alcohol Use Disorder

PI: Henry Kranzler, M.D.

- This study sought to replicate prospectively the effect of topiramate and a single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP; rs2832407) in patients with DSM-5 alcohol use disorder who sought to reduce or stop their drinking.
- Duties included reviewing clinical interview audio recordings and data management.

4. Pharmacogenetic Study of Ondansetron in Alcohol Use Disorder

PI: Henry Kranzler, M.D.

- This study aimed to: 1) to determine the efficacy of ondansetron in reducing risky drinking among currently drinking subjects with alcohol use disorder who have selected genotypes at the serotonin transporter and receptor genes, and 2) assess the safety and tolerability of ondansetron in subjects with alcohol use disorder who have selected genotypes at the serotonin transporter and receptor genes.
- Duties included recording the remaining medication doses upon collection from study participants and assisting in medication inventory.

❖ **Other Research Responsibilities**

- Observed clinical interviews involving drug use, alcohol use, and medication use of study participants
- Filed client forms and assessments
- Organized and updated client data in an Excel spreadsheet
- Attended seminars on current studies, regulatory issues, and research ethics

FELLOWSHIPS & GRANTS

2021-2022 **Inaugural Guskiewicz Undergraduate Research Fellowship, *The Center for the Study of Retired Athletes, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill***

- Awarded to a single undergraduate student who is “hard working, innovative, with aspirations of combining research, clinical care, and service to conduct work that aims to understand and promote lifespan health and well-being of former athletes,” to honor UNC Chancellor Kevin Guskiewicz, Ph.D., ATC.

WORK AND VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

CHAIR, EMOTIONAL WELLNESS COMMITTEE

JANUARY 2021 – PRESENT

UNC Semillas de Unidad

- Semillas de Unidad (Seeds of Unity) strives to foster and support a bilingual community throughout North Carolina. Through service, mentoring, tutoring, and fundraising, UNC students will be able to create interpersonal relationships with the local Latinx community.

- *Emotional Wellness Committee Mission Statement:* The mission of the Emotional Wellness Committee is to bring attention to the many factors Latinx families face that negatively impact their mental health and exacerbate mental illness. Through projects and service work, we aspire to disseminate research regarding these factors to the greater community and provide support for the families and the organization as a whole.

CLERK, REPARATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

JULY 2021 - PRESENT

Subcommittee of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee | Abington Monthly Meeting

- Organized and facilitated meetings to create guidelines that would meet the intent of the Bothwell Reparations Fund
- Managed grants and proposals “whose goals include the work of reparations for African-Americans and Native Americans, or for the purpose of education related to reparations and truth in reconciliation”

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Sayers, K. G., Ojalehto, H. J., Hellberg, S. N., DeMartino, E., Rivero Quintana, T. C., Tadross, M. E., Butcher, M. W., & Abramowitz, J. S. (2021, November). *Psychological predictors of COVID-19 related anxiety*. Poster to be presented at the 55th annual meeting of the Association of Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT), New Orleans, LA.

Nguyen, D. V., Hellberg, S. N., Sayers, K. G., Todross, M. E., Butcher, M. W., Ojalehto, H.J., & Abramowitz, J. S. (2021, November). *Predictors of depression and anxiety in incoming medical students*. Poster to be presented at the annual meeting of the Association of Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT), New Orleans, LA.

Friedman J., Hellberg, S. N., Butcher, M. W., Walsh, E. C., Sayers, K. G., Miyares, P., Ojalehto, H. J., Buchholz, J. L., & Abramowitz J. S. (2020, November). *Emotion regulation difficulties as a potential mediator linking sleep disturbance to obsessive compulsive symptoms*. Poster presented at the 54th Annual Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies Convention (held virtually) and by Kenan Sayers at the 2021 Diversifying Clinical Psychology Conference (held virtually).

Friedman, J., Hellberg, S. N., Walsh, E. C., Sayers, K. G., Miyares, P., Ojalehto, H. J., Buchholz, J. L., & Abramowitz, J. S. (2020, November). *Investigating the relative specificity and strength of associations among emotion regulation difficulties and various mental health symptoms*. Poster presented at the 54th Annual Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies Convention (held virtually).

Ojalehto, H. J., Sayers, K. G., DeMartino, E., Daniely, T., Hellberg, S. N., Buchholz, J. L., & Abramowitz, J. S. (2020, November). *OCD symptoms in trauma-exposed individuals with and without probable PTSD*. Poster presented at the 54th Annual Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies Convention (held virtually).

AFFILIATIONS

2021 - present Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, undergraduate member

2019 - present Psi Chi International Honor Society in Psychology, member

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

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- Proficiency in Spanish
 - Proficiency in data management and analysis in Excel and SPSS
 - Proficiency in survey development and implementation in Qualtrics

REFERENCES

Jonathan S. Abramowitz, Ph.D.

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