The Ph.D. program in Clinical Psychology at USF is committed to the clinical-scientist training mentor model, and this commitment is reflected in our membership in the Academy of Psychological Clinical Science. We are also accredited by the American Psychological Association and the Psychological Clinical Science Accreditation System. Graduate students are actively involved in research throughout their residency in the program. Therefore, it is important for applicants to consider the research opportunities available at USF to ensure that there is a good match between their interests and the research programs of the Clinical faculty.

The research interests of the Clinical faculty are described below. Our faculty members have diverse interests within clinical psychology, and we urge applicants to read the descriptions carefully before deciding whether to apply to our program. In addition to the research foci of the individual faculty members, we would like to highlight a few general areas that cut across faculty, and are therefore particular strengths of the clinical training program at USF. Please note, however, that these general themes do not represent all of the areas of research carried out by our faculty and students.

**Health Psychology**
This is the fastest-growing area within the field of clinical psychology, and it is a clear strength of our department. Areas of health psychology studied by our faculty include, addictive disorders (Bornovalova, Brandon, Goldman, Drobes, Verona), eating disorders and obesity (Rancourt), and behavioral oncology and risk factors for cancer (Brandon). Research in health psychology is enhanced by the presence of a medical school and large medical center on campus. Among the hospitals in the medical center are the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute and the James A. Haley Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Both of these facilities often serve as sites of clinical research and practicum placements for our students.

Substance abuse is one of the most prevalent behavioral problems today, impacting society in a multitude of ways. It is also an area that has benefited greatly from psychological research. Although mentioned above as a sub area within health psychology, research on addictive behaviors can also be considered a strength of our department in its own right. Clinical faculty conducting research in this area include Mark Goldman (alcohol expectancies), Marina Bornovalova (drug use disorders and comorbidity with externalizing psychopathology), and Edelyn Verona (gender differences in pathways to drug use, drug use links to antisociality and psychopathy), Thomas Brandon (tobacco use and cessation), David Drobes (drug addiction and craving), and Robert Schlauch (individual differences in alcohol and drug use behavior).

**Psychopathology**
The study of mental illness and disordered behaviors continues to serve as a foundation for much of clinical psychology. Faculty whose research falls in this area include Marina Bornovalova (externalizing disorders and behaviors, borderline personality disorder), Edelyn Verona (psychopathy, personality disorders, aggression/violence), Marc Karver (self-harm and suicidal behavior), Vicky Phares (developmental psychopathology), Jon Rottenberg (individual differences in the experience of emotions, especially depression), and Diana Rancourt (eating disorders).

**Clinical Child Psychology**
Clinical child psychology has been one of the most popular and expanding areas of study over the past decade. Department research spans the prevention-treatment continuum from studies of etiology, assessment, and treatment of child/adolescent disorders to primary and secondary prevention efforts to reduce rates of...
disorder and promote healthy functioning. Clinical faculty conducting research in this general area include Vicky Phares (developmental psychopathology, parenting), Marc Karver (treatment processes and suicidal adolescents), and Diana Rancourt (peer influence and adolescents’ weight-related behaviors). Research and practicum sites include the USF Psychological Services Center, three local school districts, and the Rothman Center for Pediatric Neuropsychiatry in the USF Department of Pediatrics.

Clinical Faculty

Marina A. Bornovalova
(University of Maryland-College Park)
Associate Professor

Research Interests:

In general, my research focuses on externalizing psychopathology, substance use disorders, and their interrelationship. Additionally, a large part of my work focuses on borderline personality disorder (BPD). I am especially interested in how problems with inhibitory control (a.k.a. “impulsivity”) underlie the development of these phenomena, and how these vulnerabilities interact with environmental stressors (i.e., childhood trauma). In my research, I use several methods of examining etiology and causal influences. Specifically, I use a) correlational studies in clinical populations to identify risk factors associated with externalizing behaviors, substance use, and BPD; b) Laboratory analogue studies to further “tease out” the nature of underlying vulnerabilities (e.g., tasks tapping emotion dysregulation); c) treatment development studies to try to alter these vulnerabilities; and d) investigations of the genetic and environmental contributions to these phenomena (via twin studies, in collaboration with the Minnesota Twin and Family Study).

Representative Publications (* student authors):


Mark S. Goldman, Ph.D.
(Rutgers University)
Distinguished Research Professor

Research Interests:

This laboratory investigates the influences of cognitive factors on behavior and physiological responses to addictive drugs. Our specific research area is alcohol expectancies and how they influence alcohol consumption and behavior while under the influence. To this end, we develop alcohol expectancy instruments, develop assessment techniques for alcohol related cognitions, and design preventive and therapeutic strategies for undermining the links between cognition and behavior. We are currently funded by grants from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Representative Publications (* student authors):


Marc Karver, Ph.D.
(Vanderbilt University)
Associate Professor

Research Interests:

My research interests include understanding core processes (e.g. therapeutic alliance) in mental health services research for youths/young adults and youth/young adult suicide risk assessment, prevention, and management. I look at how mental health clinicians make decisions, what treatment techniques they use, and how they form therapeutic relationships. I am interested in learning how to improve the work of experienced clinicians and to discover better ways to train novice clinicians. I am particularly interested in studying the provision of mental health services to “high risk” populations such as suicidal adolescents. I have been involved with several studies of adolescent and young adult suicidality. I examined mental health professionals’ ability to evaluate high risk individuals and make placement decisions. I have examined crisis line counselors’ ability to predict suicide related behaviors. I have also been involved in several studies looking at treatment processes related to engaging depressed and suicidal adolescents. I have had 9 federally funded suicide prevention grants (3 currently funded) to examine means (gatekeeper training, care coordination, screening, professional training, social marketing, family involvement activities, postvention) to increase knowledge and identification abilities of students, parents, and staff while also tracking the processes and outcomes of linkage of school, agency, and parent referrals as aided by case management services of suicidal individuals to mental health assessment and treatment (e.g. CBT, DBT)

Representative Publications (* student authors):

for Youth Suicide Prevention. 


Hangartner, R., Totura, C., Labouliere, C., Gryglewicz, K., & Karver, M. (accepted). Benchmarking the "Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)" Program against Evaluations of Established Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Trainings. *Suicide and Life Threatening Behavior.*


Vicky Phares, Ph.D.  
(University of Vermont)  
Professor

Research Interests:

My research group has explored a variety of issues related to child, adolescent, and family functioning. In particular, we have been interested in exploring the connections between psychopathology in fathers, mothers, and children. A focus of our work remains on gender in relation to parenting, with particular interest in parenting in relation to anxious youth. Projects include the exploration of fathers’ and mothers’ involvement in therapy, mother-blaming, and racial/ethnic differences and similarities in families. We are in the beginning stages of exploring connections between parents’ and children’s prosocial behavior, with a specific focus on volunteerism.

Representative Publications (* student authors):


Diana Rancourt  
(University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)  
Assistant Professor

Research Interests:

My research integrates clinical, social, developmental, and health psychology. I am committed to integrating research on eating disorder and obesity risk factors by considering
weight-related behaviors as a spectrum across healthy and pediatric populations. My two specific lines of research are: 1) social norms and sociocultural factors associated with adolescents’ and young adults’ weight-related behaviors and their application to prevention and intervention programs; and 2) food craving as a transdiagnostic mechanism of eating disorders and obesity. My approach is multi-faceted and involves the identification of how peers and social context may be helpful or harmful to efforts to encourage a healthy approach to eating and body image, as well as the identification of important moderators of peer influence. My word on food craving is collaborative with Dr. Schlauch and is based on the Ambivalence Model of Alcohol Craving. My work uses cross-sectional and longitudinal surveys, EMA and observational approaches, as well as experimental designs (e.g., cue reactivity). Current topics of interest include, food craving as a transdiagnostic factor across eating disorders and obesity, glycemic variability in disordered eating behaviors, weight status misperception, "fat talk," the role of peer popularity and victimization on weight-related behaviors, how athletes’ may differ from non-athletes in their weight-related attitudes and behaviors, and gender differences in the correlates, functions, and outcomes of these behaviors.

Recent publications (*indicates student author).


**Jonathan Rottenberg, Ph.D.**
(Stanford University) Professor

Research Interests:

Work in my laboratory is in the area of emotional pathology, particularly as it applies to Major Depressive Disorder. Using both experimental and naturalistic designs, we have been pursuing the hypothesis that a core dysfunction in depression involves a loss of the capacity to respond to changes in stimulus valence, a phenomenon we term emotion context insensitivity (ECI). Recent studies have examined ECI as a function of stimulus meaning in depressed individuals. Other projects in my laboratory examine biological markers of emotion dysregulation in depression, such as heart rate variability. Our work is funded by the National Institutes of Health. For more information, visit my laboratory website at:

http://uweb.cas.usf.edu/mood/

Recent publications (*indicates student author).


**Robert C. Schlauch** (Florida State University)

Assistant Professor

Research Interests:

My research interests focus broadly in understanding the role of individual differences in alcohol and drug use behavior. Specifically, I am interested in applying multidisciplinary approaches to the study of: a) processes associated with positive treatment outcomes for substance use disorders (e.g., craving), including pretreatment change and mechanisms of behavior change, b) risk factors for the development of substance use disorders (e.g., personality variables, comorbid disorders), and c) the moderating role of individual difference variables in alcohol related disinhibited behaviors. Secondary interests include methodological issues in substance use research, and in collaboration with Dr. Diana Rancourt, examining the applicability of addiction models to disordered eating and compensatory behaviors.

Representative Publications (*indicates student author):


Edelyn Verona, Ph.D.
(Florida State University)
Associate Professor, Director of Clinical Training

Research Interests:

Our lab has focused on using models from affective science to advance understanding of antisocial behavior and aggression and to identify subgroups of offenders.

An especially novel feature of this work involves investigating the spectrum of emotional experience and expression at its two extremes in this population: 1) the classic psychopath, in whom emotional reactivity is believed to be blunted or deficient; and 2) highly antisocial individuals who may be at particular risk for affective violence and impulsive suicide, and are more likely to have a history of abuse or adversity. Recent work has dealt with gender differences in the development and expression of externalizing and psychopathy, including identifying distinct genetic and environmental pathways to substance use and manifestations of violence and psychopathy in women and men.

Representative Publications (* student authors):


Affiliated and Courtesy Faculty

Thomas H. Brandon, Ph.D.
(University of Wisconsin- Madison)

Research Interests:

My general research interest is in health psychology with a focus on addictive behaviors. Tobacco use has the greatest total negative health and economic impact of any addictive substance, so it is the primary focus of our research. Our laboratory uses two convergent research approaches. One is human laboratory research on addiction motivation, focusing on affective and cognitive variables involved in drug use and relapse. Variables studied include affective state, outcome expectancies, task persistence, cue reactivity, and self-efficacy. The second approach involves large-scale treatment-outcome studies in which basic theory and research are applied to smoking cessation and relapse prevention.

Treatment strategies investigated include: cue exposure, coping skills training, supportive counseling, cognitive mood-management therapies, and pharmacotherapies. We also conduct nationwide randomized controlled trials of cost-effective minimal interventions for smoking cessation and relapse prevention. We have developed a series of Forever Free booklets that have been found to produce substantial reductions in smoking relapse, and consequently have been adopted by the National Cancer Institute and various health organizations throughout the country. We are now extending this research to special populations at risk for smoking relapse, such as pregnant/postpartum women, Spanish-speaking smokers, and e-cigarette users. In addition, we have recently been conducting a range of research on the use of e-cigarettes. Our laboratory is the Tobacco Research & Intervention Program at the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute. Our research has been funded by grants from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the National Cancer Institute, the American Cancer Society, the Florida Biomedical Research Institute, and other foundations.

Representative Publications (* trainee authors)


David J. Drobes, Ph.D. (Purdue University)
Professor

Research Interests:

My laboratory is located within the Tobacco Research and Intervention Program of the Moffitt Cancer Center. Our research program conducts human laboratory studies of tobacco use and addiction, with a long-term goal of translating findings into improved smoking cessation interventions. Specific research topics have included cue-elicited drug craving, the interaction between smoking and alcohol use, cognitive and affective markers of nicotine intake and withdrawal, and the impact of physical activity on motivation to smoke and cessation. We are currently examining the use of reduced nicotine cigarettes for an extinction-based smoking cessation treatment. Recent work has been supported by grants from the NIH, the state of Florida, and the Moffitt Cancer Center.

Representative Publications (* student authors):


Paul B. Jacobsen, Ph.D. (Michigan State University)
Professor

Research Interests:

My interest is in behavioral and psychosocial aspects of cancer and is conducted at the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute. The goal of this work is to demonstrate how an understanding of psychological principles can be used to reduce cancer-related morbidity and mortality. Over the past few years, my students and I have conducted a number of studies investigating the etiology and management of behavioral side effects of cancer treatment. With funding from the American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute, we demonstrated that a brief cognitive-behavioral intervention (stress management training) is effective in improving patients’ quality of life as they undergo cancer chemotherapy treatment. Based on these findings, we are currently evaluating a version of this intervention transcreated for Hispanic/Latina patients receiving chemotherapy and developing a web-based version for English-speaking patients. Current work also focuses on investigating fatigue, one of the most common and distressing symptoms experienced by cancer patients. Our research has led to the development of tools to measure fatigue, estimates of the prevalence and intensity of fatigue during and following completion of cancer treatment, and identification of clinical and psychological factors that explain individual differences in fatigue severity. We are also involved in studying behavioral aspects of cancer prevention and detection. Along these lines, we are investigating ways to promote cancer screening and prevention behaviors among individuals who are at increased risk for cancer due to a family history of the disease.
Representative Publications (* student authors):


