Erin McKenney, M.A.

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Pronouns: She/her/hers

# Education

**Clinical Psychology Doctoral Student** Expected Graduation 2025

Rowan University, Glassboro, NJ

APA Accredited Program on Contingency

Emphasis on integrated healthcare and health psychology

Thesis title: *“Predictors of emotional health across autistic and non-autistic*

*students’ first semester of college”*

Master of Arts awarded in May 2022

**B.A. in Psychology and Anthropology & Sociology** Aug 2016 - May 2020

Lafayette College, Easton, PA

Graduated Summa Cum Laude with honors in psychology

Attended Spring 2019 in Copenhagen through the DIS study abroad program.

Honors thesis title: *“The effect of timing of access to communication devices on wellbeing in adulthood for nonspeaking individuals”*

# Clinical Experience

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| |  | | --- | | **Pre-Doctoral Extern**, Department of Family Medicine July 2022 – present | | Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine  Supervisor: Dr. Kristin Bertsch |  * Provide individual therapy for adults and older adults in a primary care setting both in-person (~80%) and via telehealth (~20%). * Client presenting concerns include depression, anxiety, personality disorders, nicotine dependency, anger management difficulties, and grief. * Responsibilities include conducting clinical intake interviews, treatment planning and intervention implementation, adding case notes to medical records, and collaborating with primary care providers as needed.  |  | | --- | | **Pre-Doctoral Extern**, NeurAbilities July 2021 – July 2022 | | Supervisor: Dr. Gregory Alberts |  * Completed neuropsychological testing for the purpose of diagnosis and creating intervention recommendations for individuals ages 6 through adulthood. * Responsibilities included conducting and scoring a wide variety of assessments, interpreting results, writing integrated reports and recommendations, and assisting in explaining results to clients and families. * Provided cognitive behavioral therapy for adults and older adolescents via telehealth, targeting concerns such as social anxiety, major depression, and effects of trauma.   **Pre-Doctoral Assessments Intern**, Rowan University Sept 2020 – May 2021 |
| Supervisor: Dr. Roberta Dihoff |

* While enrolled in assessment course, completed clinical interviews and assessments for the purpose of creating accommodations recommendations for undergraduate students.
* Responsibilities included facilitating clinical interviews, interpreting results, writing reports and accommodation recommendations, and explaining results to clients.
* Standardized assessments given include Nelson-Denny, The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale Fourth Edition (WAIS-IV), and Woodcock-Johnson IV Tests of Cognitive Abilities.

**Undergraduate Practicum Student**, Social Psychiatry Café Jan 2019 – May 2019

Copenhagen, Denmark

Supervisors: Simone Sandager and Eleftherios Saftis

* Spent approximately four hours per week one-on-one or in small groups with café clients. Clients were primarily middle-aged and older adults, often with a diagnosis of schizophrenia and prior history of trauma.
* Facilitated social skills practice through group conversations and activities.
* Used evidence-based skills drawn from cognitive behavioral therapy, motivational

interviewing, and humanistic psychology.

* Researched and presented on café’s shared decision-making and patient leadership.

**Volunteer**, Easton Hospital Behavioral Health Unit May 2018 – Sept 2018

* Interacted one-on-one with patients, assisted with admittance and discharge, and created patient binders, under supervision of psychiatrist and psychiatric nurses.
* Patients were all over the age of 18 and had a variety of diagnoses. Many were experiencing psychosis, had recently engaged in self-directed violence, and/or had co-occurring substance use disorders.

**Volunteer/Preminger Gerontology Scholar** March 2018 – Sept 2018

Gracedale Nursing Home

* Facilitated activities with residents and evaluated the success of high school volunteer program. Proposed an oral history program and created its procedure, under supervision of Volunteer Services and Activities departments.
* Worked one-on-one regularly with a small group of residents, primarily with major neurocognitive disorders.

# Selected Additional Training

UCSF Conference on the Assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorders: Dec 2022

Best Practice Guidelines for Measure Selection and Interpretation

DBT of South Jersey: DBT Phone Coaching 101 Jan 2021

CenterStat: Introduction to Structural Equation Modeling May 2021

National Register Associate Certificate Program: Clinical Suicidology Oct 2020

# Research Experience

**Doctoral Student and Research Fellow**, Rowan University Sept 2020 - present

Social, Emotional, and Affective Health Lab (SEAHL)  
Mentor: Dr. Katherine Gotham

* The Social, Emotional, and Affective Health Lab seeks to collaborate with the autistic community to help improve emotional health in neurodivergent populations. Current research focuses on the predictors and measurement of depression and anxiety in autistic adolescents and adults.
* Research responsibilities include study design, measurement development, facilitating focus groups of autistic adults to receive feedback on study design, leading multi-site longitudinal data collection, analysis in SPSS and R, and dissemination of findings.
* Additional professional responsibilities include hiring, supervising, and providing professional development opportunities to undergraduate research assistants.
* Master’s thesis explored cognitive and social predictors of depression and anxiety across autistic and non-autistic students’ first semester of college.
* Grant-funded dissertation research evaluates cognitive and social predictors of depression and anxiety across first-semester of college, with novel emphasis on distressing/unwanted sexual experiences and perceptions of consent in autistic and non-autistic students. Includes both in-person, cross-sectional and online, longitudinal data collection.

**Psychology Honors Thesis**, Lafayette College Aug 2019 – May 2020

Mentor: Dr. Jennifer Talarico

* Researched how timing and consistency of access to Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices affects non-speaking children’s mental health and independence outcomes in adulthood.
* Created research question, designed screen-reader accessible surveys, recruited participants, analyzed data, and defended thesis proposal.

**EXCEL Scholar Research Assistant**, Lafayette College Aug 2018 - May 2020

Kids Lab

Mentor: Dr. Lauren Myers

* Studied how toddlers respond to on-screen partners and how parents use strategies to engage children in video chat.
* Designed studies, recruited participants, created surveys, ran trials, coded behavioral video data through Datavyu, analyzed data, and trained new undergraduate research assistants.
* Worked extensively with families in the Lehigh Valley.

# Manuscripts

**McKenney, E. E.**, Brunwasser, S. M., Richards, J. K., Day, T. C., Kofner, B., McDonald, R. G., Williams, Z. J., Gillespie-Lynch, K., Kang, E., Lerner, M.D., & Gotham, K. O. (in press, 2023). Repetitive negative thinking as a transdiagnostic prospective predictor of depression and anxiety symptoms in neurodiverse first-semester college students. *Autism in Adulthood.*

Williams, Z. J., **McKenney, E. E.**, & Gotham, K. O. (2021). Investigating the structure of trait rumination in autistic adults: A network analysis. *Autism*, 25(7), 2048–2063. https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613211012855

# Invited Talks

**McKenney, E. E.** (2022, November) *Applying to graduate school in psychology.* [Invited virtual oral presentation]. Felician University, Rutherford, NJ.

**McKenney, E. E.** & Nicoletti, A. (2022, September) *Motivational interviewing in the primary care setting.* [Invited oral presentation]. Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine, Stratford, NJ.

**McKenney, E. E.,** Richards, J.K., Day, T., Kofner, B., McDonald, R., Gillespie-Lynch, K., Kang, E., Lerner, M., & Gotham, K. (2022, February). Predictors of depression across autistic and non-autistic students’ first semester of college. In Gillespie-Lynch, K. (Chair), [*How can we use an understanding of the neurodiversity movement to develop socially valid supports for autistic people*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYj7wlX7N54)*?* [Invited virtual symposium]. Autism Intervention Research Network on Physical Health (AIR-P) meeting.

Stramondo, J., Andler, M. & **McKenney, E.E.** (2021, February). *Vulnerability to COVID-19 and the moral questions of institutional long-term care*. [Invited virtual co-moderation]. Lafayette College, Easton, PA.

# Oral Presentations

**McKenney, E.E.**, Brunwasser, S., Richards, J.K., Cucchiara, C., Day, T., Kofner, B., McDonald, R., Cargill, M.I., Williams, Z.J., Gillespie-Lynch, K., Lamm, J., Kang, E., Lerner, M., & Gotham, K. (2023, May) Repetitive negative thinking as a prospective predictor of depression and anxiety symptoms in autistic and non-autistic incoming college students. In K. Gotham (Chair), *The role of repetitive thinking in depression within the autistic community.* [Symposium under consideration]. International Society for Autism Research (INSAR) 22nd Annual Conference, Stockholm, Sweden.

**McKenney, E.E.**, Richards, J.K., Day, T., Kofner, B., McDonald, R., Gillespie-Lynch, K., Kang, E., Lerner, M., & Gotham, K. (2022, May) Modeling social predictors of depressive symptoms across the first semester in autistic and non-autistic college students. In J. Schwartzman (Chair), *Advances in understanding depression and suicide in autism.* [Symposium]. International Society for Autism Research (INSAR) 21st Annual Conference, Austin, TX.

**McKenney, E. E.,** Richards, J.K., Day, T., Kofner, B., McDonald, R., Gillespie-Lynch, K., Kang, E., Lerner, M., & Gotham, K. (2022, April). *Predictors of depression across autistic and non-autistic students’ first semester of college.* [Paper presentation]. Rowan University Annual Psychology Research Conference, Glassboro, NJ.

**McKenney, E.E.**  (2021, January) *Neuropsychological assessments with transgender and nonbinary clients.* [Training presentation for clinicians and trainees]. NeurAbilities Healthcare, Voorhees, NJ.

**McKenney, E.E.**, Richards, J.K., Day, T., Kofner, B., McDonald, R., Gillespie-Lynch, K., Kang, E., Lerner, M., & Gotham, K. (2021, November) Repetitive thinking as a predictor of depression across autistic and non-autistic students’ first semester of college. In K. Gotham (Chair), *The role of repetitive thinking in depression within the autistic community.* [Virtual symposium]. Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies’ (ABCT) 55th Annual Convention.

Myers, L. J. & **McKenney, E.** **E.** (2021, April). *Run away or play? Parents need evidence-based recommendations to create playful and engaging video chat interactions with their children*. In M. Jing (Chair,) Young Children and Digital “Symbols:” A Socio-contextual Lens. [Virtual symposium, presented by Myers]. Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD).

**McKenney, E.** (2019, August) *How does parental co-viewing support children during video chat?* [Paper presentation]. Lafayette College, Easton, PA.

# Posters

Richards, J.K., **McKenney, E.E,** Day, T.,Cucchiara, C., Kofner, B., McDonald, R., Cargill, M.I., Williams, Z.J., Gillespie-Lynch, K., Lamm, J., Kang, E., Gotham, K., & Lerner, M. (2023, May) *The reliability and validity of a novel autistic burnout measure among neurodiverse college students.* [Poster presentation under consideration]. International Society for Autism Research (INSAR) 22nd Annual Conference, Stockholm, Sweden.

McDonald, R., **McKenney, E.E.**, Cargill, M.I., Richards, J.K., Day, T., Kofner, B., Gillespie-Lynch, K., Lerner, M., Gotham, K., & Kang, E. (2022, November) *Impact of friendships on generalized anxiety in gender-diverse college students during the COVID-19 pandemic.* [Poster presentation, presented by McDonald]. Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT) 56th Annual Convention, New York City.

**McKenney, E. E.** & Talarico, J. M. (2021, July: originally scheduled for July 2020 and delayed due to COVID-19) *Alternative communication methods and wellbeing: Childhood access to communication’s long-term effects on adult wellbeing.* [Virtual poster presentation]. 15th Congress of the International Association for the Study of Child Language.

**McKenney, E. E.** & Gotham, K.O. (2021, May) *Modeling prospective predictors of mental health symptoms across the first semester of college.* [Virtual poster presentation]. International Society for Autism Research (INSAR) 20th Annual conference.

**McKenney, E. E.** & Gotham, K.O. (2021, April) *Modeling prospective predictors of mental health symptoms across the first semester of college.* [Virtual poster presentation]. Rowan University Annual Psychology Research Conference.

**McKenney, E. E.** & Talarico, J. M. (2020, March) *Augmentative and alternative communication methods and wellbeing: How childhood access to communication affects adult health.* [Accepted poster presentation]. Meeting on Language in Autism (MOLA), Durham, NC. (Conference cancelled due to COVID-19.)

**McKenney, E. &** McDermut, M. (2020, February) *Guest involvement in social psychiatric cafes’ leadership.* [Poster presentation]. Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges (LVAIC) Global Student Conference, Easton, PA.

**McKenney, E. E.** & Myers, L. J. (2019, October) *Run away or play with Grandma? How do parents support children's video chat experiences with relatives?* [Poster presentation and brief oral presentation]. Cognitive Development Society, Louisville, KY.

Myers, L. J., Kirkorian, H. L., & **McKenney, E. E.** (2019, October). *Are you talking to ME?: An exploratory study of toddlers' responsiveness to prompts from a video chat partner.* [Poster presentation and brief oral presentation]. Cognitive Development Society (CDS), Louisville, KY.

McDermut\*, M. & **McKenney, E.\*** (2019, May) *Guest Involvement at Mamma Mia.* Poster presented at program-wide poster session open to the public, Copenhagen, Denmark.

*\* represents equal contributions between authors. Presented by McKenney except where otherwise noted.*

# Grant and fellowship funding

**Predoctoral Fellowship**  August 2022-July 2024

“Examining Depression, Anxiety, and Trauma in First-Semester Autistic College Students”

New Jersey Department of Health: Governor’s Council for Medical Research and Treatment of Autism

Role: Principal Investigator Total funding over two years: $60,000

# Teaching Experience

**Adjunct Instructor**

Rowan University Department of Psychology, Instructor of Record

**Courses:**

Essentials of Psychology (In-person) Sept 2022- Dec 2022

Child and Adolescent Development(Asynchronous, online) Jan 2022- May 2022

Essentials of Psychology(Asynchronous, online) Sept 2021- Dec 2021

**Guest Lecturer**

*Provided individual live lectures for the following classes:*

Autism in our Communities, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Sept 2022

Introduction to Psychology, North Carolina State University July 2022

Essentials of Psychology, Rowan University March 2022

Psychology as a Profession, Rowan University Nov 2021

# Honors and Awards

2021 International Society for Autism Research (INSAR) Student and Trainee Award

2020 Barge Oratorical Prize: Oral Defense of Honors Thesis

2020 Herbert W. Rogers Psychology Prize

Psi Chi National Honor Society

2016-2020 Marquis Scholar, Charles A. Dana Foundation Scholar

2016 BBC 100 Women Honoree, recognized for creation of STEM Program

# Selected Mentorship and Service

**Ad-hoc reviewer**

*Autism in Adulthood*Aug 2022- present

**Doctoral Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee member** Dec 2020 - present

Rowan University

Attend regular meetings with faculty and graduate students to advocate for student concerns and plan events relevant to the committee’s mission.

**Student Diversity Committee member** Sept 2020 - present

Rowan University

Assist in the creation of this graduate student committee and planning events relevant to its mission.

**“Skype a Scientist” volunteer** May 2020 - present

Video chat with K-12 classrooms, nonprofits, and families to engage in science communication and answer questions about psychology.

**Expert reviewer for doctoral student research** June 2022

Invited to serve as expert reviewer for the development of research on “Provider Knowledge of Severe Behavior and Behaviorally-Based Training,” due to knowledge of autism. Provided feedback on survey drafts.

**Neurodiversity Committee Score Card Subcommittee member** Nov 2020 – May 2021

Rowan University

Assisted in creating surveys and analyzing data to evaluate the success of neurodiversity initiatives at Rowan University and affiliated institutions. Presented results with subcommittee colleagues to the larger Neurodiversity Committee.

**Outside resource for Engineering Studies project** Aug 2020 – Nov 2020

Lafayette College

Assisted undergraduate students in their project on integrating Disability Studies and Engineering.

**“Hearing Happiness” planning committee member** Nov 2020

Lafayette College

Initiated and assisted in planning one of the first presentations at Lafayette College focused on disability. Worked with faculty to select the presenter (Dr. Jaipreet Virdi), publicize, and ensure accessibility of the talk.