



BALLYHOO

Behavioral Health
Family Medicine Newsletter

August 2022 Issue

Recently Hired Faculty
Post Doc, Interns, Externs
Back to School
Patient Comments
Weird Science – facts about human behavior



Recently Hired Primary Care Psychology Faculty



Gesa Kohlmeier, PsyD – Lone Tree

Dr. Gesa Maria Kohlmeier is a licensed clinical psychologist who is coming to primary care from The Collective, a group of outpatient behavioral health clinics across Denver. Her passions include psychological assessment, ADHD, anxiety, relational challenges, sleep difficulties, personality disorders, LGBTQ+ issues, and eating disorders. Gesa also enjoys working with parents, couples, and families.

Gesa completed her doctorate in clinical psychology with an emphasis in child and adolescent psychology at Adler University in Chicago, IL. Her doctoral training included practicums in psychiatric inpatient, community mental health, forensic, and private practice settings. During this time, she also worked as an Applied Behavioral Analysis in-home therapist for children with autism. Gesa has worked with students for seven years and also considers teaching a primary passion. In her free time, she loves to dance ballet, go skiing, and paint.



Christy Thrash, PsyD – Depot Hill

I began my mental health career 21 years ago as an adolescent addictions counselor at Arapahoe House in Denver. I also have experience working with children and families at a residential treatment center in Larkspur, at a high school in Parker, and at an inpatient unit at a psychiatric hospital in Pueblo. I completed court ordered evaluations for adolescents and adults as a forensic psychologist for the State of Colorado for five years. I had a private practice in Colorado Springs that specialized in attachment-based family therapy for two years. I provided psychotherapy and testing services at the Wellness Center located on the UCCS campus for three years prior to joining the CU Anschutz Dept. of Family Medicine.

My clinical interests include bipolar disorder and other mood disorders, substance use disorders, chronic pain, health behavior change, and stress management. I enjoy hiking, downhill skiing, gardening, crafting with my daughter, and saving up for trips to Europe and Asia with my family.

Primary Care Psychology Fellowship, Internship and Practicum Trainees



Alisa Karmel (Intern AFW)

My clinical interests are health psychology, body positivity, integrated primary care, weight management, and assessment.

On my personal time I like to spend my time including all things outdoors with my husband and lab, running or HIIT workouts, trying out new recipes, and exploring new neighborhoods for real estate and awesome yards.



Meghan Paynter (Intern AFW)

I am a Ph.D. Candidate in the Counseling Psychology program at the University of Denver. I am interested in understanding the therapeutic alliance between counselor and client and how this can have an impact on targeted interventions used for physical and emotional health. I am also interested in understanding how various factors such as grief, chronic illness, or other compounding factors in a person's life impact mental health and behavior. I grew up in California, where I played many sports, my favorite being soccer. Prior to my doctoral program, I received my Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and her Masters of Arts degree in Counseling from Loyola Marymount University. Previously, I also served as a City Year Los Angeles Americorps member for two years, and also worked for the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network, a nonprofit working with/for patients and caregivers of the disease.



Sarah Kassabian (Intern AFW)

Sarah Kassabian Downey is a doctoral student in Clinical and School Psychology at the University of Virginia. Her clinical interests include utilizing evidence-based treatments in integrated care settings to increase access to mental health care. She enjoys working with children and their families from a strengths-based lens to promote adaptive coping. She grew up in Massachusetts and graduated from Boston College before working as a research coordinator in pediatric psychopharmacology at Massachusetts General Hospital prior to attending graduate school.





Dallas Robinson (Extern LM/Cent)

Dallas Robinson is a Clinical Health Psychology doctoral student at the University of Colorado Denver. She graduated from Missouri State University with a Master of Science degree in Clinical Psychology. Dallas has trained in a variety of clinical and research settings providing individual and group therapy. She is passionate about serving a diverse population and providing patient centered care focusing on both physical and mental health with an integrated care team. She has extensive experience working with anxiety and mood disorders as well as health concerns such as pain, sleep, and stress management using both cognitive behavioral and acceptance-based strategies. In her free time, she enjoys exploring Colorado's trails with her dog, rock climbing, and dancing.



Kelsey Nogg (Extern AFW)

Kelsey Nogg is a PhD student in the Clinical Health Psychology program at the University of Colorado Denver. At CU Denver, and in previous experiences at AIDS Project Los Angeles and earning her Master of Arts degree in Psychology from San Diego State University, she has dedicated herself to addressing health disparities in underserved populations. Through her training in several evidence-based interventions (e.g., CBT, ACT), she is committed to providing whole-person care by treating mental and physical health concerns.



Megan Weishaar (Extern AFW)

Megan is a 5th year in the Counseling Psychology PhD Program at Colorado State University. Clinically, she is interested in promoting access to mental health care by providing brief, patient-centered, evidence-based, values-guided treatment to patients across the lifespan in integrated behavioral health settings. Specifically, she is most interested in working with children, adolescents, and adults who experience chronic health diagnoses, complex trauma, and those who have rehabilitative needs. Megan's research interests include identifying individual and systemic characteristics that may be used to inform individualized/targeted prevention and intervention efforts for adolescent and young adult health risk behaviors. In her free time Megan enjoys spending time with friends and family, paddle-boarding, hiking, and exploring the Denver area.



Orphea Wright (Extern Westminster)

Years of clinical work across various systems of care including residential treatment, correctional care, and community mental health has informed my work with clients to include a strong social justice and intersectional-feminist lens. My passion for Women's Health is rooted in my years of clinical experience working with pregnant, postpartum, and parenting Women, children, and



Sarah Martin (Extern Lone Tree)

Sarah is a PhD candidate in the Clinical Health Psychology program at the University of Colorado Denver. Prior to this program, she received her Master of Science degree in Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Throughout her



Cindy Villanueva (Extern Lone Tree)

Cynthia "Cindy" Villanueva is a doctoral student in the Clinical Psychology program at the University of Colorado Boulder. She is passionate about improving mental health equity in research and treatment, including expanding access to care for marginalized groups and rural communities, such as among her hometown of migrant farmworkers. In her clinical work, she emphasizes a person-centered and

families navigating a variety of systemic barriers to quality care.

I conceptualize from a person-centered Relational-Cultural Therapy (RCT) framework, and I also draw strongly from CBT, ACT, and multicultural perspectives. As a former yoga and meditation teacher (and current practitioner/student), I am deeply passionate about integrating holistic, evidence-based mindfulness practices in collaboration with clients.

My pronouns are she/her/hers. I am committed to providing affirming and inclusive care."

training, she has gained clinical experiences working with patients in a variety of settings, including pain management, transplant, private practice, community outpatient, and addiction clinics. She also has in-depth experience in translational research and hopes to achieve a career in which she can continue to help bridge the gap between science and practice. Sarah is passionate about providing person-centered care that is informed by science and highlights the relationship between mental and physical health. Outside of research and practice, she enjoys being outdoors and spending time with her family and animals.

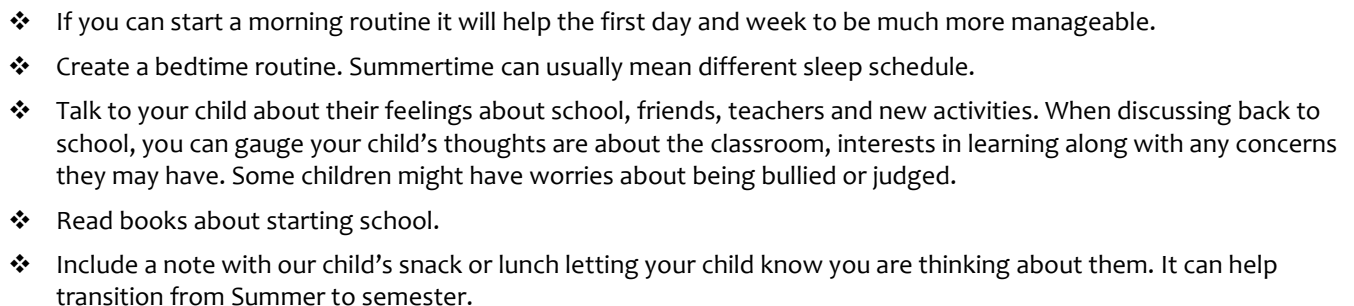
collaborative approach that incorporates sociocultural context to help clients pursue a values-guided, meaningful life. In her free time, she enjoys reading, live music, basketball, iced coffee dates, and spending time with her family.



Courtney Agorsor (Extern AFW)



Courtney Agorsor, M.S. is a third-year doctoral student at the University of Denver in the Counseling Psychology PhD program and earned her M.S. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from John Hopkins University. She has experience working with adolescents and adults in inpatient mental health hospitals, partial hospitalization programs, college counseling centers, government and community agencies. Courtney is involved in research projects aimed to examine how to increase trainees skills around multicultural orientation (MCO). Her research interests include studying what factors in therapy lead to better therapeutic outcomes especially for racial, ethnic, and cultural minority client populations. Her clinical interests include anxiety and depression, grief and loss, health behavior change, and trauma. As a behavioral health extern at UCHHealth Family Medicine Clinic, Courtney is looking forward to further developing her clinical skills in an integrated health setting.



Practice Observation Patient Statements

As our UPL evaluation team are completing their practice observations from visiting each clinic we would like to share some of the patient's comments received from surveys that have been collected.

- *"I have been to a number of therapists throughout the years and I would definitely say that I really appreciated that my Behavioral Health Provider sat down and asked me what my previous experiences with behavioral health had been and why it wasn't working... I really appreciated that my Behavioral Health Provider... understood [what I described as challenging] and worked to do the opposite [of that] and actually asked questions. ... she definitely was very good about asking questions, and asking how I was feeling about things, and helped me order my thoughts to feel much more manageable."*
- *"They [the behavioral health team] are amazing!"*
- *"That is why I love UCH is because during the lockdown with COVID my Doctor's office still allowed me to come in once a week for treatment, because they know isolation, for me makes suicidal ideation worse especially when it's a chronic issue. My other treatment center was closed..."*
- *"This experience with my doctor [psychologist] has changed my life in a positive way."*
- *"The behavioral health care team has been invaluable to me."*
- *"I love being able to see my behavioral health provider at my primary care office."*

Weird Science Facts about Human Behavior

Food made by someone else tastes better than your own cooking, despite having the same recipe.

A study found that making a meal requires you to stand around it so long that it already feels less appealing by eating time. Hence, your satisfaction decreases subsequently.



Everything your mind says has an equivalent reaction from the cells in our body. It is the reason why amounts of negativity eventually takes your immune system down and make you feel sick.

Community Health Network <https://mychn.org/parents-guide-how-to-get-ready-for-school/>

Scholastic Parents <https://www.scholastic.com/parents/school-success/school-life/back-to-school/8-tips-to-prepare-first-days-school.html>

Facts.net <https://facts.net/psychology-facts/>