

Francesca S. Kuhney, M.A.

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Education

- 2019 – present **Doctor of Philosophy**, Clinical Psychology, University of Illinois – Chicago (Chicago, IL)
Anticipated: May 2025
Research Advisor: Dr. Vijay Mittal, Northwestern University
- 2021 **Master of Arts**, Clinical Psychology, University of Illinois – Chicago (Chicago, IL)
Master's Thesis: “*Evaluating the Role of Distress Tolerance in Childhood Poverty-Related Adversity and Adolescent Anxiety*”
- 2013 – 2017 **Bachelor of Art**, Psychology, University of Connecticut (Storrs, CT)
Honors Distinction
Honor's Thesis: “*Hippocampal Function in the Schizotypal Personality Spectrum*”
Advisor: Dr. Robert Astur

Awards & Fellowships

- 2022 Jamie Carter Award, University of Illinois – Chicago
- 2021 Modeling Developmental Change in the ABCD Study Workshop
(NIMH Grant #R25-MH125545)
- 2021 Honorable Mention, Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP),
National Science Foundation
- 2021 Early Career Award, Schizophrenia International Research Society
- 2018 NIMH Three-Minute Talk Competition Winner
- 2017 – 2019 NIMH Post-Baccalaureate Intramural Research Training Award (IRTA)
- 2015 – 2017 Honors College, University of Connecticut
- 2015 Dean's List, University of Connecticut
- 2014 Office of Undergraduate Research Travel Award, University of Connecticut
Title: “*Human Conditioned Place Preference Using a Secondary Reinforcer*”
Poster presented at Annual Meeting of the Society for Neuroscience

Peer-Reviewed Publications

9. Park, J., Damme, K.S.F., **Kuhney, F.S.**, Shankman, S., Mittal, V.A. (2022). Anxiety and Psychotic-Like Experiences Impact Cognitive Performance in the General Population. *Scientific Reports*.
8. Oluwoye, O., Davis, B., **Kuhney, F.S.**, Anglin, D. (2021). A Systematic Review of Pathways to Care in the U.S. for Black Individuals with Early Psychosis and their Family Members. *NPJ Schizophrenia*.

7. **Kuhney, F. S.**, Damme, K.S.F., Pelletier-Baldelli, A., Chun, C., Ellman, L., Schiffman, J., & Mittal, V.A. (2021) Prevalence and Functional Consequences of Social Anxiety in Individuals at Clinical High-Risk for Psychosis: Perspective from a Community Sample Comparison. *Schizophrenia Bulletin Open*.
6. Wijtenburg, S.A., West, J., Korenic, S.A., **Kuhney, F.**, Gaston, F.E., Chen, H., Rowland, L.M. (2021). Multimodal Neuroimaging Study of Visual Plasticity in Schizophrenia. *Frontiers in Psychiatry, Molecular Psychiatry*.
5. Pelletier-Baldelli, A., Strauss, G.P., **Kuhney, F.S.**, Chun, C., Gupta, T., Ellman, L.E., Schiffman, J., Mittal, V.A. (2021). Perceived Stress Influences Anhedonia and Social Functioning in a Community Sample Enriched for Psychosis-Risk. *Journal of Psychiatric Research*.
4. Wijtenburg, S. A., West, J., Korenic, S. A., **Kuhney, F.**, Gaston, F. E., Chen, H., & Rowland, L. M. (2017). Glutamatergic Metabolites are Associated with Visual Plasticity in Humans. *Neuroscience Letters*, 644, 30-36.
3. Carew, A. W., Palmisano, A., Deaton, B. E., **Kuhney, F.**, Niezrecki, R., & Santos, M. (2016). Cravings in a Virtual Reality Room Paired with Chocolate Predict Eating Disorder Risk. *International Journal of Child Health and Human Development*, 9(3), 299.
2. Astur, R. S., Palmisano, A. N., Carew, A. W., Deaton, B. E., **Kuhney, F. S.**, Niezrecki, R. N....& Ritter, C. J. (2016). Conditioned Place Preferences in Humans Using Secondary Reinforcers. *Behavioural Brain Research*, 297, 15-19
1. Astur, R. S., Palmisano, A. N., Hudd, E. C., Carew, A. W., Deaton, B. E., **Kuhney, F. S.**,...& Santos, M. (2015). Pavlovian Conditioning to Food Reward as a Function of Eating Disorder Risk. *Behavioural Brain Research*, 291, 277-282

Manuscripts Under Peer-Review

3. **Kuhney, F.S.**, Damme, K.S.F., Ellman, L., Schiffman, J., Mittal, V.A. (revise & resubmit). The Social Functioning Scale: Validation and Recommendations for Use in Individuals at Clinical High-Risk for Psychosis. *Schizophrenia Bulletin*.
2. Ryan, P., Damme, K.S.F., **Kuhney, F. S.**, & Mittal, V.A. (revise & resubmit). Social Function Predicts Social Network Size in Clinical High Risk for Psychosis. *Early Interventions in Psychiatry*.
1. Bridgwater, M.A., Klaunig, M., Petti, E., Rakhshan Rouhakhtar, P., Ered, A., **Kuhney, F. S.**, Boos, A., Andorko, A., Ellman, L., Mittal, V.A., & Schiffman, J. (under review). The Influence of Psychotic-like Experiences on Intent to Seek Treatment: Findings from a Multi-site Community Survey of Mental Health. *Schizophrenia Research*.

Manuscripts In-Preparation

4. **Kuhney, F.S.**, Damme, K.S.F., Mittal, V.A. (in prep). Sex Specific Mechanisms of Negative Life Events on Psychosis-Risk Symptom Course: Findings from a longitudinal analyses of the NAPLS-2 Cohort.
3. **Kuhney, F.S.**, Schiffman, J., Miklowitz, D.J., Mittal, V.A. (in prep). Family-Based Psychosocial Interventions for Caregiver Expressed Emotion in Severe Mental Illness: Social Barriers and Policy Implications.

2. **Kuhney, F.S.**, Damme, K.S.F., Mittal, V.A. (in prep). Sex Differences in the Association Between Cumulative Life Stress and Psychosis-Risk Symptoms: Findings from the NAPLS-2 Cohort.
1. **Kuhney, F.S.**, Roy, A., Berenz, E., Herbener, E. (*in prep*). Evaluating the Role of Distress Tolerance in the Relationship Between Childhood Poverty-Related Adversity and Adolescent Anxiety.

Ad-Hoc Journal Reviewing

- Schizophrenia Research

Presentations & Conference Abstracts

Symposium Presentations & Invited Talks

National Institutes of Health Annual Post-Baccalaureate Seminar Series 15-minute talk (2018)

Title: “Alterations and Developmental Trajectories of Relative Hippocampus and Amygdala Volume in Williams Syndrome”

Selected Conference Presentations & Abstracts

20. **Kuhney, F.S.**, Damme, K.S.F., Ellman, L., Schiffman, J., Mittal, V.A. (2022). The Social Functioning Scale: Validation and Recommendations for Use in Individuals at Clinical High-Risk for Psychosis. Poster presented at Association for Psychological Science Annual Meeting.
19. Petti, E., Bridgwater, M.A., Rouhakhtar, P.R., Klaunig M., Akouri-Shan, L., Boos, A., Martínez, A., Andorko, N.D., **Francesca Kuhney, F.S.**, Mittal, V.A., Ellman, L.M., Schiffman, J. (2021). Associations Between Race, Psychotic-Like Experiences, Discrimination, and Social Support with Intent to Seek Mental Health Services. Poster presented at Association for Psychological Science Annual Meeting.
18. **Kuhney, F. S.**, Damme, K.S.F., Pelletier-Baldelli, A., Chun, C., Ellman, L., Schiffman, J., & Mittal, V.A (2021). Prevalence and Functional Consequences of Social Anxiety in Individuals at Clinical High-Risk for Psychosis: Perspective from a Community Sample Comparison. Poster presented at Schizophrenia International Research Society Congress.
17. **F.S. Kuhney**, K.S.F Damme, V.A. Mittal (2020). Social Anxiety in Adolescents at Clinical High-Risk for Psychosis: Prevalence, Functional Consequences, and Relationship Between Symptoms. Abstract accepted to Society of Biological Psychiatry Annual Meeting (meeting cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic).
16. **F.S. Kuhney**, J.S. Kippenhan, K. Reding, T.A. Nash, M. Jabbi, M.D. Gregory, M.R. Hamborg, LK. Sorcher, S.E. Grogans, P.D. Kohn, D.P. Eisenberg, C.B. Mervis, K.F. Berman (2019). Longitudinal Development of Social-Cognition Regions Covaries with Amygdala Volume in Children with Williams Syndrome. Poster presented at Society of Biological Psychiatry Annual Meeting (Chicago, IL).
15. **F.S. Kuhney**, J.S. Kippenhan, K. Reding, T.A. Nash, M. Jabbi, M.D. Gregory, M.M. O’Brien, D.L. Currin, S.E. Grogans, P.D. Kohn, D.P. Eisenberg, C.B. Mervis, K.F. Berman (2018). Alterations and Developmental Trajectories of Relative Hippocampus and Amygdala Volume in Williams Syndrome. Poster presented at Society of Biological Psychiatry Annual Meeting (New York, NY).
14. **F.S. Kuhney**, J.S. Kippenhan, K. Reding, T.A. Nash, M. Jabbi, M.D. Gregory, M.M. O’Brien, D.L. Currin, S.E. Grogans, P.D. Kohn, D.P. Eisenberg, C.B. Mervis, K.F. Berman (2018). Alterations and Developmental Trajectories of Relative Hippocampus and Amygdala Volume in Williams Syndrome.

Poster presented at the National Institutes of Health 2018 Annual Postbaccalaureate Poster Day (Bethesda, MD).

13. Corbera, S., **Kuhney, F.S.**, Assudani Patel, S., Astur, R.S. (2018). Empathy and Spatial Working Memory Deficits in Schizotypy. Poster presented at New England Psychological Association & Northeast Conference for Teachers of Psychology Annual Meeting (Worcester, MA).
12. E.B. Teefe, M.D. Gregory, J.S. Kippenhan, T.A. Nash, S.E. Grogans, S.L. Elliott, **F.S. Kuhney**, D.P. Eisenberg, C.B. Mervis, K.F. Berman (2018). Differences in Brain Myelination Patterns Associated with 7q11.23 Copy Number Variations. Poster to be presented at American College of Neuropsychopharmacology (Hollywood, FL).
11. D. Currin, T. Nash, M. Jabbi, D. Eisenberg, M. Gregory, K. Roe, R. Prabhakaran, J. Carrasco, O. Ravindranath, S. Grogans, M. O'Brien, **F. Kuhney**, J.S. Kippenhan, P. Kohn, C.B. Mervis, K.F. Berman (2018). Neural Correlates of Abstract Social Cognition in Williams Syndrome and 7q11.23 Duplication Syndrome. Society of Biological Psychiatry Annual Meeting (New York, NY).
10. E.B. Teefe, M.D. Gregory, J.S. Kippenhan, T.A. Nash, D.L. Currin, M.M. O'Brien, S.E. Grogans, A.L. Boroshok, S.L. Elliott, **F.S. Kuhney**, D.P. Eisenberg, C.B. Mervis, K.F. Berman (2018). 7q11.23 Copy Number Variation Impacts White Matter Microstructure as Measured by mcDESPOT. Poster presented at Society of Biological Psychiatry Annual Meeting (New York, NY).
9. **F.S. Kuhney**, S. Assudani Patel, A. Mehndiratta, A. Arnista, M. Padua, O. Okifo, R. Valentini, R.S. Astur (2017). Hippocampal Function in Schizotypal Personality Spectrum. Poster presented at Frontiers in Undergraduate Research at the University of Connecticut (Storrs, CT).
8. Assudani Patel, S., Errante, E., Niezrecki, R., Masayda, L., Friedland, S., **Kuhney, F.**, Mehndiratta, A., Racki, A., Frick, K.M., Newhouse, P., Astur, R.S. (2016). Estrogen Effects on Hippocampal Memory in Women. Poster presented at the Annual Conference of Cognitive Neuroscience Society (New York, NY).
7. Errante, E., Assudani Patel, S., Racki, A., **Kuhney, F.**, Mehndiratta, A., Padua, M., Maren, S., Astur, R.S. (2016). Fear Within Virtual Reality Environments. Poster presented at the 2016 Meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association (New York, NY).
6. Friedland, S., Assudani Patel, S., Errante, E., Niezrecki, R., Masayda, L., **Kuhney, F.**, Mehndiratta, A., Racki, A., Frick, K.F., Newhouse, P., Astur, R.S. (2016). The effects of estrogen on hippocampal-dependent spatial memory. Poster presented at the annual conference of the Eastern Psychological Association (New York, NY).
5. Assudani, S., Palmisano, A.N., Carew, A.W., Deaton, B.E., **Kuhney, F.**, Niezrecki, R., Hudd, E., Masayda, L., Friedland, S., McQuade, C., Padua, M., Astur, R.S. (2015). Human conditioned place preference using a secondary reinforcer. Poster presented at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association (Philadelphia, PA).
4. Rowland, L., Wijtenburg, S.A., **Kuhney, F.**, Korenic, S., Nisonger, S., West, J., Gaston, F., Pocivavsek, A., Kochunov, P., Hong, L.E. (2015) Multimodal Neuroimaging of Visual Plasticity in Healthy Humans. Poster presented at American College of Neuropsychopharmacology (Hollywood, FL).

3. Palmisano, A., Carew, A. W., Niezrecki, R., Deaton, B.E., **Kuhney, F.**, Santos, M., Astur, R.S.(2014). Cravings in a Virtual Reality Environment Predicted by Eating Disorder Risk. Poster presented at the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Neuroscience Society (Boston, MA).
2. Astur, R.S., Carew, A.W., Palmisano, A., Niezrecki, R., Deaton, B.E., **Kuhney, F.**, Santos, M. (2014). Pavlovian Conditioning within a Virtual Reality Environment predicts Eating Disorder Risk. Poster presented at the Annual Meeting of the Biological Psychiatry Society (New York, NY).
1. Palmisano, A.N., Carew, A.W., Deaton, B.E., **Kuhney, F.**, Niezrecki, R., Hudd, E., Mendicino, K.L., Ritter, C., Astur, R.S. (2014). Human Conditioned Place Preferences using a Secondary Reinforcer. Poster presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Neuroscience (Washington, D.C.).

Research Experience

- 2019 – present **Adolescent Development and Preventative Treatment (ADAPT) Lab, Northwestern University**
Clinical Psychology Doctoral Student
Principal Investigator: Vijay Mittal, Ph.D.
- 2017– 2019 **National Institute of Mental Health, National Institutes of Health**
Post-Baccalaureate Intramural Research Training Award (IRTA) Fellow
Principal Investigator: Karen F. Berman, M.D.
- Performing longitudinal analyses of structural MRI data to assess alterations in developmental trajectories of the hippocampus and amygdala in typically-developing and Williams syndrome children
 - Collecting, preprocessing, and analyzing structural MRI data of cortical gray matter to determine the impact of 3T GE MRI scanner system upgrade on image similarity and quality pre and post
 - Coordinating and managing a large longitudinal study of children with Williams Syndrome, 7q11.23 Duplication Syndrome, and healthy controls, including MRI data collection and preprocessing, genetic sample collection and processing, and logistical organization of travel, lodging, imaging, neuropsychological testing, and clinic visits
 - Collecting and processing MRI, fMRI, and PET data acquired for longitudinal, double-blinded, counterbalanced medication-withdrawal protocol for inpatients with schizophrenia
 - Collecting and processing structural MRI (voxel-based morphometry) and resting-state fMRI data, across the pubertal development as part of longitudinal protocol examining the influences of sex, age, and pubertal status on neurodevelopment, providing a model for elucidating problems arising in development that may contribute to the onset of psychiatric disorders
 - Training new post-baccalaureate fellows on administrative work, MRI and PET data collection, and basic analyses
 - Collaborating to enhance data collection and analysis methods with physicians, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, and staff scientists
 - Presenting and discussing new research findings at weekly lab meetings
 - Collaborating with physicians, postdoctoral fellows, and post-baccalaureate

fellows to perform, troubleshoot, and optimize data analysis methods and tools

- Attending conferences to present novel findings and gain insight into other current research in clinical neuroscience

2013–2017

Human Behavioral Neuroscience Lab, University of Connecticut

Undergraduate Research Assistant

Principal Investigator: Robert Astur, Ph.D.

- Applied translational virtual reality tasks with populations at risk for eating disorders, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and addictions
- Examined the effects of abused drugs on memory processes and brain function
- Assessed the effects of varying estrogen levels on navigational strategies in women
- Explored the physiological and behavioral consequences of conditioned fear
- Investigated the effects of conditioning on those at risk for Internet and gambling addictions, and anxiety
- Gained experience recruiting and testing participants, summarizing and analyzing data, and presenting research at conferences
- Engaged in weekly journal clubs, lab administrative meetings, literature reviews, grant proposal editing

Summer 2016

Center for Neural Science, New York University

Summer Research Assistant

Principal Investigator: Joseph LeDoux, Ph.D.

- Accepted to competitive summer undergraduate research program
- Investigated drug effects of Pregabalin on Pavlovian auditory threat conditioning, memory retrieval, and reconsolidation in rats as a model for novel treatment and prevention of post-traumatic stress disorder
- Gained experience in animal research, bench science, and scientific writing
- Participated in a lecture series presented by NYU faculty and research symposium

Summer 2015

Maryland Psychiatric Research Center, Silvio O. Conte Center

Summer Research Assistant

Principal Investigator: Laura Rowland, Ph.D.

- Conducted analysis of multimodal (fMRI and MR spectroscopy) visual plasticity in healthy volunteers for later comparison to patients with schizophrenia
- Gained experience pre-processing, modeling, and analyzing fMRI data
- Participated in the research assistant lecture series, research and ethics discussions with faculty, journal club, a career development seminar, and a Scholars' Research Day

Skills

Research Methods: Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI), Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), Positron Emission Tomography (PET)

Programming, Neuroimaging, and Statistical Analysis: R, Microsoft Excel, and experience with Bash, AFNI, SPM

Mentored Undergraduates

Jan. 2021 – May 2021	Allison Plyer (Psychology Major, University of Illinois – Chicago)
June 2020 – May 2021	Patrick Ryan (Biology & Psychology Major, Northwestern University)

Teaching Experience

Spring 2021	Graduate Teaching Assistant , University of Illinois – Chicago, Department of Psychology <i>Course:</i> Field Work in Applied Psychology <i>Responsibilities:</i> Provide support and guidance on empirical literature reviews and grade undergraduate papers
Spring 2020 –2022	Graduate Teaching Assistant , University Illinois – Chicago, Department of Psychology <i>Course:</i> Clinical Psychology Laboratory <i>Responsibilities:</i> Grading undergraduate papers, guest lecturing, record keeping, and held weekly office hours
Fall 2019	Graduate Teaching Assistant , University Illinois – Chicago, Department of Psychology <i>Course:</i> Introduction to Psychology <i>Responsibilities:</i> Grading undergraduate papers, teaching weekly discussion sections, and proctored examinations

Clinical Experience

2022 – 2023	Autism Assessment, Research, Treatment, and Services Center (AARTS), Rush University Medical Center
2019 – 2022	Office of Applied Psychological Services, University of Illinois – Chicago
2017 – 2019	Schizophrenia Inpatient Clinical Program, National Institute of Mental Health

Specialized Training:

2021	Brief Psychiatric Rating Scale (BPRS)
2021	Calgary Depression Scale for Schizophrenia (CDSS)
2021	Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS)
2021	Negative Symptom Inventory- Psychosis Risk (NSI-PR)
2020	Structured Interview of Psychosis-Risk Syndromes (SIPS)
2020	Structured Clinical Interview for Mental Disorders, 5 th Edition, Research Version (SCID 5-RV)

Leadership & Service

- 2021 – 2022 **Faculty Search Committee Member**, University of Illinois – Chicago
- I was invited to be one of two graduate students on a faculty search committee for a tenure-track faculty member in UIC’s Clinical and Community/Prevention Psychology departments.
- 2020 – 2021 **Relationships to Inspire Success & Excellence (RISE) Mentor**, Black Graduate Student Association, University of Illinois – Chicago
- The goal of this initiative is to provide mentors that can share their experiences, guide their progress, and encourage success for underrepresented undergraduate students.
- 2020 – 2021 **Psychology Students for Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (PSIDE)**
- This group connects clinical/counseling psychology graduate students and fosters inclusion of underrepresented groups in the field through outreach, networking, and diversity programming. Through this group, I have led meaningful discussions on racial disparities and concerns in psychology and initiatives, such as collaboratively writing a letter to the APA addressing equity within training programs/models.

Professional Affiliations

- 2022 – present Association for Psychological Science
- 2022 – present Flux Society for Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience

