

LEAP Investigators and Scholars: Panel Presentation

Moderator: Warren Ferguson, MD, co-PI Capacity Building JCOIN CTC

Session Objectives: Following this session, participants will be able to:

1. Discuss how the program design has helped early career investigators and practitioners with building their careers.
2. List three program interventions which have had impact for the participants.
3. Consider how research education could be applied to home institutions

Investigator Panelists:

- [Tess K. Drazdowski, PhD](#), is an early career investigator and licensed clinical psychologist at the Oregon Social Learning Center. She was accepted into the LEAP Program as an Investigator in 2021, and mentored by Dr. Faye Taxman. Dr. Drazdowski's research and clinical work focuses on important topics for underserved and at-risk populations. Most recently, her research has concentrated on the misuse of prescription drugs, cannabis, and polysubstance use with a strong focus on emerging adults. She is interested in investigating how to improve access to evidence-based practices for youth and young adults with substance use and mental health problems, particularly for those with criminal legal system involvement.
- **Dr. Barbara "Basia" Andraka-Christou, PhD** is an Assistant Professor in the School of Global Health Management and Informatics, with a Joint Secondary Appointment in the Department of Internal Medicine, at the University of Central Florida (UCF). She is also a licensed attorney in Florida. Her research explores substance use disorder treatment from health services and health policy perspectives. Much of her work focuses on improving access to medications for opioid use disorder, including in problem-solving courts. She leads the UCF Court Health Services & Policies Working Group (<https://ccie.ucf.edu/ucf-court-health-services/>). Dr. Andraka-Christou has authored fifty peer reviewed articles. She is the author of the book *The Opioid Fix: America's Addiction Crisis and the Solution They Don't Want You to Have* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020). Dr. Andraka-Christou received her J.D. and Ph.D. from Indiana University and completed a postdoctoral research fellowship there.
- **O'Dell Johnson, PhD** currently serves as a post-doctoral research fellow at the University of Arkansas Medical Center with Nick Zaller, PhD. He is a highly competent educator in psychology, health behavior/health education, and integrative health. His research interest focuses on health disparities in marginalized communities (e.g., SUD, influenza, correctional health, collegiate health). As part of his professional development training, he serves as associate researcher on several NIH grants. Prior to his postdoc training, he founded the Research Institute for Social Equity (RISE), a community-based research organization that provided program evaluations, and surveys to corporate, government, and community-based programs (CBO). He has conducted various public health didactic workshops and training in academia, as well as with CBOs and correctional health practitioners.

Scholar Panelists

- **Katherine (Katie) Pereira, MS** is a third-year PhD student clinical psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She received her bachelor's degree in neuroscience and psychology from Virginia Tech. Katie's research focuses on how to create feasible, effective, and scalable mental health assessments and treatment strategies for people who are currently or formally incarcerated, with a specific interest in racial, ethnic, and cultural considerations throughout her work. She hopes to integrate research, practice, and policy to bring evidence-based care into the legal system.
- **Rebecca A. Bates, DNP, FNP-C, PMP, PhD candidate** Dr. Rebecca Bates is an experienced family nurse practitioner, educator, and project manager. Her interests focus on the care of marginalized and minoritized populations including those affected by substance use. She has served as project manager for several federally funded programs focused on implementation of integrated care models for behavioral health and substance use identification and treatment in clinical, correctional, and community-based settings. She enjoys working with interdisciplinary teams to improve the health of individuals and communities. She is also a PhD candidate at George Mason University exploring sub-cultural adolescent population experiences of opioids, a National Science Foundation Research Trainee (2020-2021), and a JCOIN LEAP Scholar (2022-2023). In August 2022, she also started course work at George Mason University to obtain a graduate certificate in Qualitative Research Methods. Rebecca currently works for the University of Baltimore, Washington-Baltimore High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area's (HIDTA) prevention program, A Division for Advancing Prevention and Treatment (ADAPT) as the Technical Assistance Program Manager. In this role, she manages supports all TA requests from HIDTA communities throughout the U.S.
- **Daniel Bullman, MPH** is an incoming PhD student at the Kent School of Social Work and Family Science, University of Louisville. He currently serves as the continuing education director and board member of the Indiana chapter of the Society for Public Health Education (INSOPHE) and Inside-Out Program coach for Temple University. Originally from Anchorage, Alaska, he now resides south of Indianapolis, Indiana with his spouse and two young children. Daniel earned an A.S. in Behavioral Science from Vincennes University, B.S. in Applied Behavioral Analysis from Ball State University, and MPH from Georgia Southern University. His research focus is on continuity of care and transition from correctional to community providers; formerly incarcerated family reunification and health outcomes; and the impact of community health workers on recidivism.
- **Mancy Thompson, AAS** is a Scholar in the Prison Cell to PhD program. He is has been a justice impacted person and in recovery from chemical dependency. He served for several years as a U.S. Marine. He currently serves as job readiness program manager at Strive Second Chance in San Diego. He has worked and has been employed in several capacities with a goal of contributing to vulnerable communities to address health disparities. He is a community public servant who wants to bring awareness to the issue that plagues our society and to contribute to tangible solutions. He has held positions for 20 years in Workforce Development and Harm Reduction/Social Work.