

EMORY DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES KUDOS
FEBRUARY 2025

REMEMBER

Please send me your accomplishments, program/team activities, and personal updates for the March 2025 Kudos

SAVE THE DATES

UPCOMING FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SEMINAR

The next Faculty Development Seminar is:

- Wednesday, April 2, 2025, from 9-10:30am – Consulting as Faculty Members: Securing and Engaging in Opportunities and Navigating Challenges
- Wednesday, May 21, 2025, from 9-10:30am – Promotion Readiness: Writing Your Personal Statement
- Wednesday, July 16, 2025, from 9-10:00am – Understanding Your Responsibilities: External Activities and COI Disclosures with Nicole Tannebaum, JD, MSPH

WRITING GROUPS: UPCOMING

The Faculty Writing Group is the first Wednesday of every month from 8:00-9:00am. These meetings are on [Zoom](#). This group is for faculty including adjunct faculty.

SPOTLIGHTS

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: Belinda McIntosh, MD

Belinda McIntosh is an assistant professor in the department of psychiatry and behavioral sciences. She is also attending psychiatrist at the Grady Behavioral Health Adult Outpatient Program, faculty mentor for the Emory at Grady health equity advocacy course and Grady site liaison with the psychiatry residency training program. Outside of Emory, Belinda is a national board member with Physicians for a National Health Program, co-chair for Georgians for a Universal Health Program, board member with the Episcopal Community Foundation, volunteer and former Board Member for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and Hunger Walk/Run team captain for the Atlanta Community Food Bank.

Belinda enjoys clinical work, training and program development. Teaching residents and medical students has been the biggest highlight of her work since she returned to Emory in the Fall of 2024. She loves working with bright and enthusiastic trainees. It brings out her own excitement about the clinical work Emory does and impact the work can have on the people and communities served.

Belinda has worked in various clinical settings, including university mental health at Georgia Tech and Emory, Veterans Affairs, Skyland Trail and private practice. In her years as a student health psychiatrist, she worked with others to facilitate approaches aligned with the increasing mental health needs of college and university students. In

private practice, she enjoyed being able to combine psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy in working with adults and treating a spectrum of psychiatric conditions, from depression and anxiety to psychotic disorders. Belinda spent nine years in private practice while raising her daughter and returned to Emory when she left for college. She chose to work at Grady because she has always had a passion for community psychiatry and came back to Emory because she loves learning and enjoys being in a teaching and learning environment.

Looking to the future, Belinda hopes to help in the planning and development of a new PHP/IOP program at Grady to serve as a bridge between the inpatient units and the adult outpatient program. In her vision, the PHP/IOP would also serve as an entry point into MH services at Grady for people who do not require inpatient treatment but need more support than the regular outpatient program provides. She would like to work with community partners to increase access to housing, transportation and other vital resources that can help patients who seek care at Grady to overcome systemic barriers to treatment and recovery. Belinda hopes to engage in research to evaluate outcomes from innovative approaches to community mental health care. She will continue to be a vocal advocate both locally and nationally for health equity and access to affordable, quality healthcare for every person. She intends to have an ongoing role in residency training, including bedside/clinic teaching and leading seminars on topics residents would find interesting and relevant to their work.

Outside of work, Belinda enjoys serving on non-profit boards aligning with her commitments to health equity and social justice. She also enjoys reading nonfiction. The best books she read last year include Defectors by Paola Ramos, The Fear of Too Much Justice by Stephen Bright and Poverty by America, by Matthew Desmond. Belinda enjoys spending time at the beach whenever she can. She has a large Jamaican family and travels to spend as much time with them as possible. She enjoys listening to music and eating delicious food, preferably at the same time. She also enjoys live entertainment including concerts, plays and musicals.

ADJUNCT FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: Alexandra Sawicki, MD

Alexandra Sawicki is a general adult psychiatrist and adult psychoanalyst in clinical practice in Atlanta who teaches, supervises, advises and mentors trainees at the Emory University Psychoanalytic Institute (EUPI) as an adjunct faculty member in the department of psychiatry and behavioral sciences. She is board-certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology and licensed to practice medicine in Georgia and New York.

Alexandra has been in practice for twelve years, consulting with and treating adult patients (those in their twenties through centenarians) from all walks of life, for all manner of presenting issues. Using the extensive knowledge bases and professionalism of medicine and psychiatry, combined with those of contemporary psychoanalysis, she provides treatments that help patients understand and utilize their emotions, change recurrent relationship patterns, break cycles of counterproductive behaviors and grow into their best selves. Her expertise in psychoanalytic listening

allows her to help patients address unconscious psychological and psychosocial forces that are outside their everyday awareness. She finds people seeking psychoanalytic treatment in the current era do so because of pain they have been unable to alleviate on their own, often despite immense effort, time and cost to themselves and those around them. In seeking psychoanalytic treatment, they make a commitment to themselves not to give up, but to find a process and a person who can truly help them to psychically and literally stay alive and flourish. Alexandra finds the personal benefits patients gain from treatment often have a huge ripple effect - strengthening families, communities, organizations and professions and benefitting future generations.

Alexandra received a Bachelor of Arts in English at Yale University where she also ran the 5000 meters for the varsity cross country team, and indoor and outdoor track teams. She received her medical degree from Jefferson Medical College (now Sidney Kimmel Medical College) at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, PA, where she discovered she especially liked the challenge and equality of outpatient work, in which patients remained solidly in their lives, coming in for only one impactful hour at a time. She also liked that psychiatry and psychoanalysis required little equipment (like running) and the main finely tuned instrument used was oneself. She returned to her hometown to complete residency in adult psychiatry at Emory University School of Medicine and served as Chief Resident of ambulatory psychiatry in her fourth year, learning from the phenomenal teaching faculty in psychiatry that she still calls home. In addition to her medical and psychiatric training, she completed training to become a psychoanalyst through the Adult Psychoanalytic Training Program at EUPI and is a graduate psychoanalyst on faculty there.

As an adjunct faculty member, Alexandra developed and teaches a course at EUPI on the writings of the pediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott. She also co-teaches a course on psychoanalytic clinical assessment. She loves advising and mentoring medical students, residents and psychoanalytic candidates to help them find a path in life driven by what energizes and excites them, which can be hard to figure out amongst external pressures and extrinsic rewards. She currently serves as a faculty representative at EUPI and hopes to take on more leadership responsibilities locally and nationally, as well as continuing to immerse herself in her clinical work.

Alexandra still considers herself an athlete. In her senior year of high school, she was named Atlanta Journal and Constitution Female Athlete of the Year and enjoys running and resistance training even more today than she did 25 years ago. She will have you know she can do 11 (high-quality) pull ups as of this writing. She loves spending time with her parents, who are here in Atlanta, running with her twin sister Nadia, pretending to be a pirate with her nephew Parker and screaming after Atlanta United scores goals with her brother-in-law Dan. She loves being outside, works in a community garden and grows many plants native to Georgia, as well as a Meyer lemon, pomegranate and mulberry.

Alexandra is currently quite focused on how physicians and mental health professionals are going to act in the next few years. Will we keep our heads down and allow

discrimination and intolerance to intensify and public health to degrade? Will we manage to stand up for human rights, the natural world and each other? She is hopeful we will find strength and courage during this time. Alexandra can be reached at 404-923-3040 or her [website](#). Also, the [Emory University Psychoanalytic Institute](#) is accepting a new class now.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: Jill Mast

Jill Mast's roles and responsibilities within the department, specifically in clinic change a bit from day-to-day or moment-to-moment. She enjoys the change, which provides novelty to her workday. Most of Jill's responsibilities involve the perinatal patient population seen in the clinic. She is also the intake coordinator for Emory Women's Mental Health clinic. She screens, schedules and provides additional resources for those who are referred to the specialty clinic for services.

Jill also has responsibilities with the Perinatal Psychiatry, Education, Access and Community Engagement (PEACE) for Moms of Georgia, funded by the Georgia Department of Health, which aims to reduce health disparities and improve healthy birth outcomes throughout the state of Georgia. Currently her responsibilities with PEACE include co-leading a mothers and babies evidenced-based intervention for pregnant or postpartum parents with the goal to manage stress and prevent postpartum depression. She participates in outreach opportunities as well, with the goal to bring program awareness to clinicians in the state of Georgia. Outreach meetings might be in person or via Zoom to explain the services of the program and ways clinicians can engage with PEACE on behalf of their patients.

Jill has enjoyed learning and participating in the research/clinical trials occurring in the department. Currently, she has a role as an unblinded pharmacy team member on the Reconnect postpartum depression study evaluating an investigation drug RE104 as a potential new treatment for postpartum depression. Last but not least, Jill assists daily in managing the outpatient adult psychiatry patient clinical concerns in EPIC. It might be responding to an escalation call from a patient who is having a serious mental health crisis to variety of other non-urgent requests.

Joy in work for Jill is all about the relationships and connections she makes with patients and coworkers daily and the friendships she has developed over the 23 years of being employed at Emory. She learns so much about herself by listening to others.

When Jill graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Nursing, the recommended career trajectory was inpatient bedside nursing. Her interest in nursing has always been focused on the maternal/infant population. Over the years, she worked on a variety of inpatient units caring for that population. Her career trajectory changed when she became a mom. Shift work was challenging, and she found it difficult to create a work life balance to be the mom she wanted to be and have a career outside the home. She left bedside nursing and decided to further her education at Georgia State University School of Nursing. Shortly after completing her Master of Nursing, she applied for a position with Emory University School of Medicine as a Clinical Research

Nurse in 2002. The position was in the psychology department collecting data for a NIH grant studying maternal depression as an early life stress for infants. In 2005, funding for the grant ended, but she was able to continue in the department in an outpatient clinical nursing position. Here she is twenty-three years later. She is contemplating retirement but not yet ready to leave the department that has given her so much.

Outside of Emory, Jill's most significant role is that of being a mother and grandmother. She has two daughters living on opposite coasts. Her oldest is in the Seattle area, married, and a busy mother of two boys ages 4 and 2, and another boy due in May. Her youngest daughter lives in Boston. She is a Pediatric Nurse working on a Pediatric Intermediate Care Unit at Boston Children's Hospital. When she is not visiting one of them or visiting her brother's and their families in Wisconsin, she keeps busy playing tennis on an ALTA Sunday business women's doubles team, going to a favorite yoga class, walking and listening to a favorite podcast or book on tape, baking, gardening, trying a new Atlanta restaurant or volunteering at a food pantry/soup kitchen in the community.

TRAINEE SPOTLIGHT: Alejandra Grullón

Alejandra Grullón began her work at Emory in research for first-episode psychosis at Grady. In the years since, she has gained a wealth of experience and knowledge from her psychiatry residency. Now in her PGY-4 year of residency, Alejandra is a VA chief. She leads morning meetings and provides medication management for the geriatric mental health clinic, offers specialized care in the women's mental health clinic and treats first-episode psychosis patients through Project ARROW. Additionally, she has the privilege of offering psychotherapy across multiple treatment modalities in her outpatient clinic and provides both co-therapy and solo sessions for patients in the Intensive Outpatient Program-OCD Clinic.

Alejandra appreciates the collaborative nature of her work; consulting with others in different subspecialties and learning from other mental health providers. She enjoys helping her patients and finds it especially meaningful when they feel seen and heard. Of great importance to Alejandra is dismantling mental health stigmas that have previously prevented patients from seeking help. As a proud daughter of Dominican and Argentinian parents, Alejandra greatly values the opportunities she gets to communicate with Spanish-speaking patients in their native language.

Alejandra has gained valuable experience working across diverse psychotherapy modalities, including ACT/CBT, integrative, psychodynamic and prolonged exposure therapy.

Recognizing the importance of maintaining balance as a mental health provider, Alejandra keeps a full and fulfilling life. Outside of the workplace, she enjoys maintaining an active lifestyle through strength training and walking, immersing herself in the arts by attending Broadway shows and performances by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, and indulging her love for culinary experiences by trying out new restaurants and recipes.

Above all, she takes great joy in spoiling her beloved orange cat, Coco, who is unquestionably mami's little pampered boy. A highlight of Alejandra's journey at Emory has been working with extraordinary supervisors both for medication management clinics and psychotherapy. The mentorship and positive feedback she received from Emory colleagues, faculty and staff have reinforced her confidence in achieving her professional goals.

MENTOR SPOTLIGHT: Ray Young, MD, FAPM *(written by Nicholas Thompson, MD, and David Thylur, MD)*

Ray Young's approach to mentoring is characterized by mutual respect and direct communication. He is proactive about identifying the ways his mentee is hoping to grow and works with his mentee to develop a framework within the mentoring relationship that facilitates this, while honoring differences in backgrounds and perspectives. He provides meaningful support while offering the space to build our own approach and thought process to clinical concerns. He is flexible while at the same time offers concrete advice based off his years of experience in the consultation liaison field.

Though Ray has far more experience in consultation-liaison psychiatry, he is humble in discussions, and we always felt seen and valued as a person by him. Another thing we appreciate about Ray's style is how he helps to create a clear framework for what the mentoring relationship will be like, what the focus of meetings will be, how often to meet and when the next meeting will be. He will gently reach out to us if we have not been able to stick to this. This creates a foundation for the mentoring relationship that gives his mentee space and flexibility to explore areas for growth in an intentional way without being overly constrained.

Ray is incredibly generous with his time and energy in providing support. When we have needed his guidance, he has made time to meet very quickly. This can look like making time to talk about a complicated clinical case or providing support to develop and build our visions for educating trainees on the consultation service.

He also tried not to just solve the issues we are struggling with but also develop our independent thinking process for developing our own skills and identity as faculty. He also uses his experience and knowledge to help us better understand the system and context we are working in and how best to meet current needs of patients and the overall system, while thinking about how to develop and grow the program as well. The consistency and follow-through he shows as a mentor is very special.

Developing our skills as educators are goals of ours. He has been instrumental in guiding our development of an education curriculum for residents and students. He helped us to think through different formats of this education curriculum, offered past cases he has developed for us to utilize, brainstorm different learning courses for us to develop our teaching skills and think through how to continue improving the curriculum over time. This mentorship has been instrumental in our implementations of the curriculum and providing a better educational experience for trainees.

Another of the really impressive things about Ray is how he has grown consultation-liaison psychiatry at Emory Healthcare. This experience gives him a broad perspective about what it means to be a consulting psychiatrist and how to find ways to be a helpful consultant while also maintaining important boundaries about our involvement with primary services.

Like many other things about Ray, some of his best advice is not only told, but also shown and modeled for others to see. Some primary services can have unreasonable or misinformed ideas about the type of help we can provide. Ray has helped us learn how to not get dragged into unnecessary quarrels, and find non-confrontational ways to hold steady when there are areas of disagreement. This is particularly important for working in the consult liaison space but applies to working in many different areas as well.

WELLNESS COMMITTEE

The Wellness Committee is recruiting members!

If you have an interest in helping others, make better lifestyle choices and create a culture of wellness, we need you! We're looking for members in the Department who are available to meet at least once a month.

Contact [Elizabeth McCord](#) and [Rachel Ammirati](#) if interested.

DISC – GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Sobha P. Fritz, PhD, ABPP, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics & Assistant Professor of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences

One fun fact that highlights my commitment to diversity is I have Indian-themed ornaments on my Christmas tree. Among these are a miniature gulab jamun, a traditional Indian sweet, and a small figure of Ganesh, the Hindu God of beginnings and remover of obstacles. This small act reflects my cultural identity and how I like to blend my heritage with different celebrations.

Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Lights, is a celebration that holds great significance for me and my family. We engage in the traditional practice of creating Rangoli, which are intricate patterns made of colorful powder or flowers, on our sidewalk and driveway. Inside our home, we decorate with tiny lamps called diyas and candles that light up our space with a warm glow. As a family, we make peda, a traditional sweet, and I enjoy sharing these treats with friends and colleagues. It is a time for us to celebrate the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil, and it holds a deep cultural and spiritual meaning.

Years ago, during my time as a graduate student, a professor mistakenly claimed I had an arranged marriage. This was not true, but I did not speak up at that moment, even though it made me uncomfortable. My peers noticed the comment and often asked why I did not correct the professor. I explained I would address it when the time was right.

That moment came when my husband (who is non-Indian and Caucasian) visited the university. The professor, upon meeting him, was confused and asked me about the arranged marriage again. I simply replied, "No, you told me that." The professor never brought it up again, and it was a quiet but powerful way to address the issue.

One memorable experience was when I worked with a teen who had Type 1 diabetes and fasting during Ramadan. The teen was feeling unwell during the day due to the fasting. I reached out to a Muslim colleague for guidance, who provided me with valuable insights on how fasting affects individuals with Type 1 diabetes. This information allowed me to provide culturally sensitive advice to the family, helping them manage the condition while respecting their religious practices. It was an eye-opening moment that taught me the importance of understanding the intersection of health, religion and cultural practices.

I want people to know I was raised in a family that valued acceptance and inclusivity. My parents never taught us to hate or discriminate against others based on their background or identity. As I have grown older, I have come to realize how deeply these values have shaped me. As a parent now, I strive to create an inclusive environment for my own children, and hope they carry forward the same openness to diversity and respect for all.

I've realized the importance of continuously reflecting on where I may have blind spots and the areas where I need to grow to be more inclusive and respectful. This ongoing self-awareness has given me the opportunity to stand up for patients, families, colleagues and trainees, especially in clinical spaces where advocacy is critical. I feel over time, I have gained a stronger voice and more confident in using it, partly due to the support and guidance I have received from colleagues in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion work. Speaking up and being an ally has become something I value deeply.

My diversity has fostered a deep sense of support and respect I had not experienced before. Being seen and heard for who I am, has helped me develop greater resilience in both personal and professional contexts. It has empowered me to navigate challenges more confidently, knowing my experiences and perspectives are valued.

FACULTY KUDOS

Major Leadership Appointments, Activities and Achievements

Vinny Costa has been appointed to the rank of Associate Professor effective July 2025.

Ebrahim Haroon was promoted to the rank of Professor effective September 1, 2025.

Steve Levy has been appointed as Bernard C. Holland Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences.

Larry Tune has been appointed as Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences.

Naadira Upshaw will be promoted to the rank of Associate Professor effective September 2025.

Sanne van Rooij will be promoted to the rank of Associate Professor effective September 2025.

Research

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Dieujuste N, Petri JM, Mekawi Y, Lathan E, Carter SE, Bradley B, Fani N, & Powers AL. (Accepted; *Journal of Affective Disorders*). Investigating co-occurrence of emotion dysregulation and DSM-5 Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) using network analysis.

Elbasheir A, Bond R, Harnett NG, Guelfo A, Karkare MC, Fulton TM, Ely TD, McDermott TJ, Lanius RA, Ahluwalia V, Bradley B, Siegle GJ, Fani N. Racial Discrimination-related Interoceptive Network Disruptions: A Pathway to Disconnection *Biol Psychiatry Cogn Neurosci Neuroimaging*. 2024 Dec 27: S2451-9022(24)00387-2.

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Fani N. Torture as a Trauma of Disconnection: Neuroplastic Alterations in Survivors of Torture. *Biol Psychiatry Cogn Neurosci Neuroimaging*. 2024 Dec;9(12):1234-1235.

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Goodman G. (in press). Godly Play: Suffer the little children to come unto me. *Pastoral Psychology*.

Gu J, Cheng Y, Gu M, Wang S, Shi Y, Xia L, Jiang F, Liu H, Tang Y. Income gap between male and female psychiatric nurses in China: A national survey. *Int Nurs Rev*. 2024 Dec;71(4):1130-1136.

Haft S, Fiskeaux M, Sprang-Jones K, & Rauch S. Intensive Delivery of Prolonged Exposure (PE). In McLean, C., Goetter, L. Editor (Eds.), *Prolonged Exposure for PTSD: Innovations to Improve Access, Engagement, and Outcomes*. In Springer Nature.

Kable JA, Potter AS, Akshoomoff N, Blasco PM, Bodison SC, Ciciolla L, DeGray S, Hulce Z, Kuschner ES, Learnard B, Luciana M, Perez A, Novack MA, Riggins T, Shin SY, Smith S, Vannest J, Zimak EH; Measurement of emerging neurocognitive and language skills in the HEALthy Brain and Child Development (HBCD) study. HBCD Neurocognitive and Language (NCL) Work group. *Dev Cogn Neurosci*. 2024 Dec;70:101461.

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buprenorphine-related services: A systematic review. J Am Pharm Assoc (2003). 2024 Dec 27:102319.

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Honors, Awards, Rankings

Ann Schwartz received the Georgia Psychiatric Physicians Association's Psychiatrist of the Year Award which recognizes Georgia psychiatrists for exceptional contributions to their patients, profession, and community.

Media

Nadine Kaslow (1) Healthbeat Atlanta – [How Uncertainty Over Federal Health Funding and Data is Affecting Georgia Researchers](#)

Presentations

Negar Fani (1) “Neurophysiological signatures of minoritized stress and device-augmented technologies for relief and reconnection.” Grand Rounds Lecture Series, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, January 15th, 2025. (2) “Changing technologies and mental health landscapes.” Harvard College Project for Asian and International Relations, February 15th, 2025.

Goodman G. (2025, June). Sequential relations between interaction structures and analyst and patient verbal activity in the four treatment phases of the psychoanalysis of Amalia X. Paper presented at the meeting of the Society for Psychotherapy Research, Kraków, Poland. (oral)

Goodman G, & Dent V. (2025, July). Once upon a time: Studying the efficacy of the Storytelling/Story-Acting (STSA) play-based intervention on Ugandan preschoolers. Paper presented at the meeting of the International Psychoanalytical Association, Lisbon, Portugal. (oral)

Joya Hampton-Anderson gave a continuing education presentation entitled Supporting African-American Youth with Contextual Stress and Internalizing Symptoms (CSIS): A Focus on Culturally-Responsive Intervention.

Kołodziejczyk S, Garceau C, Goodman G, Baldwin D, Baker S, Ravits P, Hunter J, Pain C, Leszcz M, & Tasca GA. (2025, June). Do therapists walk the talk: Attachment insecurity as a moderator of therapists' self-reported versus observer ratings of therapeutic orientation. Paper presented at the meeting of the Society for Psychotherapy Research, Kraków, Poland. (poster)

Honors, Awards, Rankings

Toby Goldsmith participated in WABE's community conversation Missing Moms: Maternal Mental Health Conversation at the East Lake YMCA.

ADJUNCT FACULTY KUDOS

Sharon Harp was certified as Fellow of the American Board of Psychoanalysis.

TRAINEE KUDOS

John Perna received the Skobba award for the best poster presentation at the Georgia Psychiatric Physicians Association meeting for his work in understanding the impact of psychedelics.

STAFF KUDOS

None reported.