

Kelsey Isman

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CURRICULUM VITAE

RESEARCH INTERESTS

I am interested in utilizing diverse research approaches to perform clinically informed research to address the health disparities and stigma associated with mental health conditions, substance use disorders, and physical health conditions such as HIV. I aim to use computational methods to learn about and address public mental health concerns, as well as encourage equitable access to mental healthcare. As a lifelong Spanish student, I am also passionate about bilingual clinical and academic resources and reducing health disparities among Spanish-speaking populations.

EDUCATION

Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut

May 2023

B.A. in Neuroscience & Behavior, Psychology, and Hispanic Literature & Culture

GPA 3.83

Psi Chi Psychology Honor Society

Relevant Courses: Research Methods in Cognition; Cognitive Psychology; Behavioral Neurobiology; Statistics: An Activity Based Approach; Neurobiology of Disease; Neurobiology of Disease; Discovering the Person; Culture in Psychology; Seminar in Cognitive Neuroscience; Neurodevelopmental Disorders; Science of Suicide Risk and Prevention; Seminar in Social Neuroscience; Psychology of Human Memory

Universidad de Carlos III y Universidad de la Complutense, Madrid, Spain

Spring 2022

Relevant Courses: Neuropsicología del Lenguaje; Perspectivas Sociales, Epidemiológicas, y Clínicas Sobre la Adicción

PUBLICATIONS AND MANUSCRIPTS

1. **Isman, K.**, Giorgi S., Ellis, J., Huhn, A., Liu, T., Curtis, B. (Revise and Resubmit, Anticipated 2025). Perceived Stigma and its Role in Substance Use Disorder Treatment Completion (Previously *Perceived Stigma and its Impact on Substance Use Disorder and Mental Health*). [PsyArXiv PDF](#)
2. **Isman, K.**, Giorgi, S., Curtis, B. (In Preparation, Anticipated 2025). Communities at the Crossroads: Exploring Cultural Variations in Opioid Epidemic Outcomes in the United States.
3. Giorgi, S., **Isman, K.**, Liu, T., Fried, Z., Sedoc, J., Curtis, B. (2024). Evaluating Generative AI Responses to Real-World Drug-Related Questions. *Psychiatry Research*. [Psychiatry Research PDF](#)
4. Giorgi, S., Liu, T., Aich, A., **Isman, K.**, Sherman, G., Fried, Z., Ungar, L., Curtis, B. (2024). Modeling Human Subjectivity in LLMs Using Explicit and Implicit Human Factors in Personas. *Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing Findings*. [EMNLP PDF](#)
5. Aich, A., Liu, T., Giorgi, S., **Isman, K.**, Bobojonova, R., Ungar, L.*, Curtis, B.* (2025). Language Models in Digital Psychiatry: Challenges with Simplification of Healthcare Materials. *Nature - Digital Psychiatry and Neuroscience* *Contributed equally. [NPP Digital Psychiatry and Neuroscience PDF](#)
6. Liu, T., Tay, L., **Isman, K.**, Curtis, B., Ungar, L. (Revise and Resubmit, Anticipated 2025). The Development of Friendship Function Scale for Adults.
7. Habib, D.*, Giorgi, S.*, **Isman, K.**, Aich, A., Liu, T., Lahnala, A., Hemmons, J., Kady, A., Demko, Z., Lou, S., Fried, Z., Curtis, B. (Under Review, Anticipated 2025). Systematic Analysis of Substance Use Discussions on Reddit: A Novel Dataset for Interdisciplinary Research.*Contributed equally
8. Fried, Z., Giorgi, S., Aich, A., Earleywine, D., Osseyi, P., **Isman, K.**, Curtis, B. (Under Review, Anticipated 2025). Exploring Sexualized Cannabis Use on Reddit: Patterns, Motivations, and Public Health Implications.

INVITED TALKS

1. **Isman, K.** & Aich, A. (2025, April). Trust in Digital Interventions. Presented to the Translational Addiction Medicine Branch of the National Institute on Drug Abuse Intramural Research Program. [Slides](#)
2. **Isman, K.** (2025, February). Perceptions Matter: Perceived Stigma and its Role in SUD Treatment Completion. National Institute on Drug Abuse Intramural Postbac Research Presentations. [Slides](#)
3. **Isman, K.**, Blay-Tofey, M. (2025, February). Meeting People Where They're At: Methods of Studying Substance Use in one's Natural Environment. Presented to the Translational Addiction Medicine Branch of the National Institute on Drug Abuse Intramural Research Program. [Slides](#)
4. **Isman, K.**, Rico Roza, A. (2024, December). Health Trends in the Hispanic and Latine Communities: Barriers to Healthcare and Lessons from the Community. Presented to the Translational Addiction Medicine Branch of the National Institute on Drug Abuse Intramural Research Program. [Slides](#)
5. **Isman, K.**, Giorgi, S., Liu, T., Huhn, A., Ellis, J., Curtis, B. (2023, September). Perceived Stigma and its Impact on Substance Use Disorder and Mental Health. Presented as *keynote talk* at the 2023 NIH Stigma Scientific Interest Group Symposium. [Slides](#)

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

1. **Isman, K.**, Giorgi, S., Ellis, J., Huhn, A., Liu, T., & Curtis, B. (2025, May). Stigma and Substance Use Disorder Treatment Retention: How Perceived Stigma at Intake Predicts Premature Treatment Dropout. Presented at the National Institutes of Health and National Institute on Drug Abuse Trainee Poster Day 2025.
2. Aich, A., Giorgi, S., **Isman, K.**, Fried, Z., Liu, T., Sedoc, J., Curtis, B. (2024, July). The State of Modern LLMs for Substance Use Help. Presented at the 10th International Conference on Computational Social Science by Ankit Aich. [Poster](#)
3. **Isman, K.**, Giorgi, S., Curtis, B. (2024, June; July). Communities at the Crossroads: Exploring Cultural Variations in Opioid Epidemic Outcomes in the United States. Presented at the College on Problems of Drug Dependence Annual Meeting 2024; Johns Hopkins School of Medicine Behavioral Pharmacology Research Unit Poster Day 2024. [Poster](#)
4. **Isman, K.**, Giorgi, S., Sherman, G., Liu, T., Curtis, B. (2024, May). The Impact of Cultural Differences Across American Communities on the Opioid Epidemic. Presented at the National Institutes of Health Trainee Poster Day 2024; National Institute on Drug Abuse Trainee Poster Day 2024. [Poster](#)
5. **Isman, K.**, Giorgi, S., Liu, T., Huhn, A., Ellis, J., Curtis, B. (2022, October). Perceptions Matter: Stigma, Mental Health, and Drug Treatment Outcomes. Presented at the 2022 Howard University International Conference on Stigma.
6. **Isman, K.**, Giorgi, S., Liu, T., Huhn, A., Ellis, J., Curtis, B. (2022, July). Perceived Stigma and its Role in Substance Use Disorder and Mental Health Outcomes. Presented at the 2022 NIH Trainee Poster Session; Johns Hopkins School of Medicine's 2022 Behavioral Pharmacology Research Unit Trainee Poster Session. [Poster](#)

CLINICAL & RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Technology and Translational Research Unit, National Institute on Drug Abuse, Baltimore, Maryland

Postbaccalaureate Research Fellow

July 2023 - Present

Summer Research Intern

June 2022 – August 2022

Principal Investigator: Brenda Curtis, Ph.D., MSPH

Mentor: Salvatore Giorgi, Ph.D.

Perceived Stigma and its Role in Substance Use Disorder Treatment Completion

- Design and execute analysis plan of dataset with 7,000+ participants using SPSS
- First-author manuscript currently under review
- Receive the NIH Stigma Scientific Interest Group Outstanding Trainee Award at the Inaugural Stigma Symposium
- Deliver keynote talk at the Inaugural Stigma Scientific Interest Group Symposium
- Collaborate with co-authors from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine Behavioral Pharmacology Research Unit
- Design and present multiple posters at the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine Behavioral Pharmacology Research Unit, and the Howard University International
- Use LaTeX in Overleaf to conceptualize and prepare a full-length manuscript to be submitted for publication
- [PrePrint PDF](#)

Communities at a Crossroads: Exploring Cultural Variations in Opioid Epidemic Outcomes

- Co-first-author manuscript in preparation
- Utilize the [American Communities Project](#) community classifications to evaluate community-level trends in OPM
- Perform ANOVA and t-tests using SPSS
- Design and present multiple posters at the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the National Institutes of Health, the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine Behavioral Pharmacology Research Unit, and the College on Problems of Drug Dependence 2024 Meeting
- Create interactive data visualization tools using Python

Evaluating Generative AI Responses to Real-World Drug-Related Questions

- Second-author manuscript published at Psychiatry Research (2021 IF: 11.3)
- Outline, draft, and revise introduction section of the manuscript
- Perform extensive literature review
- Revise and edit manuscript to be submitted for publication
- [Publication PDF](#)

Modeling Human Subjectivity in LLMs Using Explicit and Implicit Personas

- Manuscript in press at the 2024 Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing (EMNLP) Conference Findings (peer reviewed, top venue in computer science/computational linguistics field)
- Perform extensive literature review
- Perform data curation and manual data cleaning using U.S. Census data
- [Preprint PDF](#)

Language Models in Digital Psychiatry: Challenges with Simplifications of Healthcare Materials

- Perform transcriptions of real time, multimodal, video-to-text data, along with post-processing, curation, and cleaning
- Manuscript currently under review
- [Preprint PDF](#)

The Development of a Friendship Function Scale for Adults

- Perform extensive literature review on scale design and well-being theory
- Collaborate with colleagues to outline, draft, and revise introduction section of manuscript
- Manuscript currently under review

Systematic Analysis of Substance Use Discussions on Reddit: A Novel Dataset for Interdisciplinary Research

- Perform manual annotations of 100+ subreddit forums relevant to substance use and social support themes
- Review and adjust annotation codebook
- Perform extensive literature review
- Utilize Endnote, Zotero, and BibTex to create libraries of published articles that utilize specific SUD-related subreddit forums (to be available publicly upon publication)

- Revise and edit manuscript introduction section
- Manuscript to be published in preparation

Meta-Analysis Exploring Loneliness and Drinking Habits

- Participate in multiple phases of abstract and full-text screening for inclusion or exclusion in the meta-analysis
- Manuscript to be published in preparation

Exploring Sexualized Cannabis Use on Reddit: Patterns, Motivations, and Public Health Implications

- Manage manuscript citations
- Revise and edit manuscript
- Manuscript to be published in preparation

SmartR Digital Phenotyping

- Perform sensor testing on Android mobile devices on AWARE application
- Testing ecological momentary assessment schedules and surveys
- Application to be used in multiple digital phenotyping studies

Clinical Psychoneuroendocrinology and Neuropsychopharmacology Section Shadowing

- Shadow clinical visits in the STAR-B protocol under Dr. Lorenzo Leggio
- Observe psychological battery administration, fMRI scanning, bar lab simulation tasks, and virtual reality sessions

NIDA Trainee Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Activities Committee

- Contribute to creating college application resources for Baltimore City Public Schools high school students
- Lead the development of the section devoted to athletic recruiting and opportunities

Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut

Research Assistant, Schizophrenia Cognition Lab

August 2020 – May 2023

Principal Investigator: Matthew Kurtz, Ph.D.

InterCommunity Health Care, Hartford Connecticut

- Deliver cognitive skills training to participants with schizophrenia in an outpatient mental health treatment facility
- Prepare group sessions for 15-week training course
- Observe and collaborate with mental health professionals to administer trainings

Hartford Hospital Institute of Living, Hartford Connecticut

- Deliver cognitive remediation to participants with schizophrenia in an inpatient mental health treatment facility
- Prepare group sessions for 15-week training course
- Observe and collaborate with mental health professionals to administer trainings

A Meta-analysis of Childhood Trauma in Bipolar Illness: Influence on Symptoms, Functioning, and Cognition

- Use Covidence to assist in performing 100+ abstract and full-text screenings
- [Zoey Goldberg Senior Thesis, Wesleyan University, 2022](#)

Mood Lifters, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Group Helper

January 2022-May 2022

- Assist in administering the 15-week Mood Lifters self-referral mental health program
- Become trained and certified in Mood Lifter's psychoeducation program
- Perform individual check-ins with each of 15 group members at weekly meetings
- Independently lead multiple meetings related to five mental health domains: biology, cognition, emotion, social processes, and behavior
- Completion of pilot Student Athlete Mood Lifters program
- Aid in utilization of the Mood Lifters mobile application and point tracking system

LEADERSHIP/VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

The Hidden Opponent (THO)

Campus Captain Program Administrator and Co-Director

September 2022 - Present

Regional Head Campus Captain

September 2021 – May 2022

Wesleyan University Campus Captain

September 2020 – May 2021

- Co-Director of programming for the [Campus Captains](#) student advocacy program at The Hidden Opponent (THO), a non-profit organization that provides mental health resources and programming to high school and college student athletes
- Meet and discuss ideas regularly with co-director, chief operating officer, chief executive officer, and founder of THO
- Lead 400+ high school and college student athletes from 280+ schools in the United States and internationally through the year long mental health curriculum
- Meet monthly with 40+ “Head Campus Captains” to oversee 28 regional groups of students
- Design and develop a year-long [curriculum](#) of resources and stigma reduction programming
- Coordinate monthly panel events, workshops, social media campaigns, mental health trainings, and on-campus activities
- Collaborate regularly with multiple clinicians and professionals in the mental health field, including psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, nutritionists, and sports psychologists.
- Develop administrative and communicative skills such as email communications, creating forms and surveys, meeting with potential partner organizations, and overseeing 10 Google Classroom courses
- Plan and execute a mental health awareness fundraiser at the 2022 Connecticut Cup Swimming Championships, selling custom swim caps, presenting on the importance of student-athlete mental health, and coordinating with 8 NCAA Division III swimming programs in Connecticut
- Represent THO at conferences, mental health awareness events, and virtual panel events
- Develop [blog posts](#) and social media content based on student-athlete shared experiences

Helping Up Mission (HUM), Baltimore, Maryland

Volunteer Scientist and Bridging Science and Recovery Symposium Committee Chair

September 2024-Present

- Assist in facilitating bilingual (English and Spanish) “Science of SUD” lectures at SUD treatment facility in Baltimore City
- Translate informational slides from English to Spanish
- Attend and participate in English and Spanish lectures
- Lead class discussions about diverse definitions of recovery

Wesleyan Swimming and Diving Team

Four-year varsity student athlete

September 2019 – February 2023

Varsity team captain

September 2022 – February 2023

- 14+ hours of weekly training in the pool and weight room
- Collaborate with co-captains to organize team gatherings, social events, and preseason practices
- Facilitate smooth communication between athletes and coaching staff
- Lead team of 60+ athletes as varsity team captain
- New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC) All-Academic Team

- New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC) All-Sportsmanship Team
- Wesleyan University Swimming and Diving “Jones Award” (Most Valuable Female Player)
- Wesleyan University Swimming and Diving “Cardinal Award” (Excelling in Leadership)

Our Minds Matter

Student Intern

June 2020 – July 2020

Club Founding Co-President

June 2018 – June 2019

- Develop mental health curriculum for high school athletic teams
- Establish the Our Minds Matter Alumni Network
- Collaborate with multiple mental health organizations and professionals to host a virtual mental health panel
- Facilitate the Yorktown High School Swimming and Diving Annual Our Minds Matter Challenge to raise funds and teach teammates about the importance of mental health

Arlington County Adapted Aquatics

Volunteer Instructor

September 2016 – March 2020

- Provide free swimming lessons to toddlers, children, and adults with physical and/or intellectual disabilities
- Collaborate with Arlington County educators and swimming instructors to provide water safety skills and swimming stroke technique improvement

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Wesleyan University Department of Hispanic Literature and Culture

Course Assistant

September 2021 – December 2022

- Instruct weekly independent review sessions with students enrolled in Spanish for High Beginners
- Assist professor in weekly instruction and distribution of class materials
- Meet individually with students to provide extra academic support

Farm Hill Elementary School

Volunteer Spanish Instructor

Fall 2020 – Spring 2021

- Collaborate with fellow Wesleyan University students from the Hispanic Literature and Culture Department to facilitate weekly virtual Spanish classes to elementary school students in Middletown, Connecticut
- Independently develop engaging lesson plans and educational activities

WORK EXPERIENCE

Merritt Athletic Club, Baltimore, MD

Swim Coach

Fall 2023 – Present

- Lead and assist competitive and developmental swim practices for children aged 7 to 14
- Attend and facilitate championship swim meets in Maryland and Virginia

HONORS & AWARDS

NIDA Trainee Poster Day Outstanding Poster

May 2024

NIH Stigma Scientific Interest Group Trainee Presentation Competition Winner

October 2023

NIH Postbaccalaureate Intramural Research Training Award

July 2023 -- July 2025

NIDA Scientific Director’s Fellowship for Diversity in Research

July 2023 – July 2025

Wesleyan University Swimming and Diving “Jones Award” (Most Valuable Player)

Spring 2021

Wesleyan University Swimming and Diving “Cardinal Award” (Excelling in leadership)

Spring 2023

New England Small College Athletic Conference All-Sportsmanship Team	Spring 2023
New England Small College Athletic Conference All-Academic Team	Spring 2021, 2022, 2023
Wesleyan University Dean's List	Fall 2019, Spring 2020, Spring & Fall 2021, Fall 2022, Spring 2023
Wesleyan University TedX Competition Finalist	Spring 2021
Arlington Virginia Extraordinary Teen Award	Spring 2019

SKILLS

Language: Spanish (proficient)

Certifications: USA Swimming certified swim coach; Red Cross Child and Adult CPR certified

Statistical Software: SPSS | Python (beginner) | RStudio (beginner)

Technical: Microsoft Office | Google Suite | LaTeX | Canva | iOS and PC