

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

Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana

PhD in Clinical Psychology

August 2025 - Present

Mentor: Brian D'Onofrio, PhD

Developmental Psychopathology Lab

Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut

August 2019 - 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. (2025). Perceived Stigma and its Role in Substance Use Disorder Treatment Completion. *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*. [American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse](#) 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. (In Preparation, Anticipated 2025). Systematic Analysis of Substance Use Discussions on Reddit: A Novel Dataset for Interdisciplinary Research.*Contributed equally

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 Rozo, 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.

- Design and execute analysis plans for large datasets
- Deliver multiple invited talks and poster presentations, both internally to the National Institute on Drug Abuse and at conferences domestically and internationally
- Download, clean, and manipulate national datasets
- Perform ANOVA, Mann-Whitney U tests, and t-tests using SPSS
- Outline, draft, and revise multiple manuscripts to be submitted for peer review
- Perform extensive literature review across diverse subject matter
- Create interactive data visualization tools using Python
- Contribute to creating college application resources for Baltimore City Public Schools high school students
- Shadow clinical visits in the STAR-B protocol under Dr. Lorenzo Leggio

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 Manager

July 2025 – Present

Campus Captain Program Administrator and Co-Director

September 2022 – July 2025

Regional Head Campus Captain

September 2021 – May 2022

Wesleyan University Campus Captain

September 2020 – May 2021

- 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
- Oversee team of 3 program administrators, 15 program alumni, and 28 small group leaders
- Lead 450+ high school and college student athletes from 280+ schools in the United States and internationally through the year long mental health curriculum
- 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 Integrative Predoctoral Training in Drug Abuse Research at Indiana University

August 2025 – Present

Holtzworth-Munroe Fellowship

Summer 2025

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