

Promoting Integrated Care and Mental Health!

Dr. Jennifer Langhinrichsen-Rohling is at the peak of her extensive, far-reaching **Deepwater Horizon** grant which she obtained four years ago as a result of the BP Oil Spill Medical settlement. It focuses on treating residents of the two Lower Alabama counties who may have experienced stress resulting from the spill itself as well as other forms of stress (e.g. family, financial) resulting indirectly from this major disaster or from living conditions along the Gulf Coast. Jenny emphasizes that when disasters occur within the community, it is necessary to have “a community response to trauma” available within the healthcare system so folks can receive treatment quickly and efficiently. The best way to accomplish this is to ENGAGE/ ESTABLISH/ EMBED in an ENDURING manner specific Behavioral Health Programs within existing medical and educational systems. She stresses that BEHAVIORAL and PHYSICAL health are interactive in nature and improving both simultaneously leads to the greatest possible wellness and fosters resiliency for the community at large. 🙌

In addition to a full staff consisting of a Director of Clinical Interventions, a Director of Training and Evaluation, a Project Operation Manager, a Secretary, and numerous Behavioral Health Providers providing services across Mobile and Baldwin Counties, THE TEAM currently includes 4 Graduate Students in Psychology (Selena Jackson, Caitlin Anderson, Shannon Boone, and Mallory Schneider), 3 Psychology Undergrads (Eric Smith, Malaya Richard, & Keagan Smith) 1 Intern (Peyton Williams), and 1 Professor on Sabbatical from Samford (Jonathan Davis). The center promotes numerous active collaborations including: The USA Emerging Scholars Program in partnership with Dr. Ishara Ramkisson and USA Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology, Tulane University, and Dauphin Island Sea Lab; a High School Occupational Health & Safety Training Program in partnership with the Mobile Area Education Foundation and the Mobile County Public School System. This later program is funded by the National Academies of Science.

Other notable accomplishments include:

1. Across the past year, therapeutic services were provided to over 2,000 patients receiving healthcare at one of the areas Federally Qualified Health Care Centers.
2. Three Child Psychiatry Fellows, financially supported by the center, began providing services within high-need schools within Mobile County as part of an effort to facilitate coordinated school care 🙌.
3. New primary care systems were added! As of January, the center is supporting a Behavioral Health Provider (Mary Smith, LGSW) to work in the USA Family Medicine Clinic as part of their integrated healthcare team 🙌.
4. A former intern fluent in Spanish (*Stephen Schottgen, LGSW*) was hired full-time to provide integrated services in Foley, AL in order to work with their large Hispanic population 🙌.
5. A chapter on the Nuts and Bolts of Promoting Integrated Health was co-authored by the Center Team and published in November of 2015.
6. Lots of graduate and undergraduate students associated with the Center received recognition. Candice Selwyn was honored as Graduate Student of the Year. Selena Jackson was voted as the Runner-Up in the University-wide 3 minute thesis competition! Kali Thompson was chosen to give an oral presentation of her honor's thesis to the greater University Community. At this event, Kali was awarded a Psi Chi award for her scientific and academic accomplishments!
7. Youth Mental Health First Aid Trainings took place to provide certification to teachers, administrators, and staff for high-need schools within Mobile County and for all schools in Baldwin County 🙌.
8. Two *Train the Trainers* events (each 40 hours long) for general Mental Health First Aid

(MHFA) and Youth MHFA were held for professionals from three states: AL, FL & MS. Each week-long event trained 27 MHFA instructors. These instructors are now certified to train community members to handle mental health crises and promote the reduction of stigma surrounding mental health needs.

- The Center brought in a nationally recognized expert to train 25 local law enforcement officers in the Crisis Intervention Team model. After completing the 40 hour training, these law enforcement officers will be uniquely equipped to respond to situations in which mental health conditions are a factor; hopefully reducing some of the dangers associated with these calls. Continuous training in CIT will now be a part of the local law enforcement training.

BACK AT THE LAB Jenny is focusing on disasters closer to home, such as working with families disrupted by the **Christmas 2012 tornado** that hit Murphy High School here in Mobile. Luckily, no one was in the building at the time, but – nevertheless - affected families obviously became very **stressed out** due to the loss of the school. Jenny’s **disaster research protocols** includes bringing a family “into the lab” (which looks similar to a living room) where the family completes three tasks together, one of which is to “plan a meal” to simulate how family consensus is made. Conversations are recorded and, after much transcription, data is analyzed as to what kind of issues develop when family members must make decisions together or talk about stressful events with one another. Interestingly, in this initial phase of data analysis, parents rated themselves as more negatively affected by this disaster than the teenagers themselves. Other on-going studies on intimate partner violence and stalking are proceeding nicely!



At left, Eric Smith, USA undergraduate, is presenting findings generated from his thematic coding of family discussions of how the 2012 Christmas tornado impacted them. At right, Kali Thompson is presenting findings from her UCUR research project.



Selena Jackson, USA graduate student in the Clinical-Counseling Program, presenting her findings at the International Society of Traumatic Stress Society