

Sandra J. Llera
Towson University, Department of Psychology
CLA Building, 3126
8000 York Road, Towson, MD 21252
E-mail: sllera@towson.edu
Phone: 410-704-5475

EDUCATION

- 2009-2011 **Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology**, The Pennsylvania State University
Dissertation: An Experimental Examination of Emotional Avoidance in General Anxiety Disorder: Supporting a New Theory of Emotional Contrast Avoidance
- 2004-2008 **M.S. in Clinical Psychology**, The Pennsylvania State University
Thesis: The Effects of Worry on Emotional Avoidance in Generalized Anxiety Disorder: Physiological Reactivity and Subjective Emotional Experience
- 1999-2002 **B.A. (*cum laude*)** in Psychology, University of Delaware

OCCUPATIONAL RECORD

- 2013-p **Assistant Professor of Psychology**, Towson University
- 2011-2012 **Adjunct Professor**, Psychology Department, George Mason University
- 2002-2004 **Pre-Doctoral Research Assistant**, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School Institute for the Study of Child Development
- 2003-2004 **Pre-Doctoral Co-Investigator**, Drexel University College of Medicine, St. Christopher's Hospital for Children

EDITORIAL BOARD

- 2014-p Behavior Therapy

HONORS AND AWARDS

Fellowships

- 2009 **Diversity Research Fellowship**, The Pennsylvania State University
- 2009 **Graduate Teaching Fellowship**, The Pennsylvania State University
- 2006-2008 **Bruce V. Moore Graduate Fellowship in Psychology**

Honors

- 2006-2008 **Research Travel Awards**, Penn State Research and Graduate Office (RGSO)
- 2007 **Student Poster Winner**, Association for Behavioral & Cognitive Therapies, Anxiety Special Interest Group
- 2007 **Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award – Psi Chi**, National Honor Society
- 2005-2006 **Don A. Trumbo Student Research Fund**
- 2004 **Five-Year Graduate Scholar Award**, The Pennsylvania State University

2000-2002 *Certificate of Academic Distinction*, University of Delaware
1999-2002 *Latina Student of Distinction*, University of Delaware

PUBLICATIONS

Peer Reviewed Journal Articles

- Newman, M. G., **Llera, S. J.**, Erickson, T. E., Przeworski, A. (in press). Basic science and clinical application of the Contrast Avoidance model in Generalized Anxiety Disorder. *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration*.
- Llera, S. J.**, & Newman, M. G. (2014). Rethinking the role of worry in Generalized Anxiety Disorder: Evidence supporting a model of emotional contrast avoidance. *Behavior Therapy*, 45(3), 283-299. doi:10.1016/j.beth.2013.12.011.
- Newman, M. G., **Llera, S. J.**, Erickson, T. E., Przeworski, A., & Castonguay, L. G. (2013). Worry and Generalized Anxiety Disorder: A review and synthesis of research on its nature, etiology, and treatment. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 9, 275-297. doi: 10.1146/annurev-clinpsy-050212-185544
- Newman, M. G., & **Llera, S. J.** (2011). A novel theory of experiential avoidance in generalized anxiety disorder: A review and synthesis of research supporting a contrast avoidance model of worry. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 31(3), 371-382. doi: 10.1016/j.cpr.2011.01.008.
- Boswell, J. F., **Llera, S. J.**, Newman, M. G., & Castonguay, L. (2011). A case of premature termination in a treatment for generalized anxiety disorder. *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, 18(3), 326-337. doi: 10.1016/j.cbpra.2010.09.001.
- Newman, M. G., Szkodny, L. E., **Llera, S. J.**, & Przeworski, A. (2011). A review of technology-assisted self-help and minimal contact therapies for anxiety and depression: Is human contact necessary for therapeutic efficacy? *Clinical Psychology Review*, 31(1), 89-103. doi:10.1016/j.cpr.2010.09.008.
- Newman, M. G., Szkodny, L. E., **Llera, S. J.**, & Przeworski, A. (2011). A review of technology-assisted self-help and minimal contact therapies for drug and alcohol abuse and smoking addiction: Is human contact necessary for therapeutic efficacy? *Clinical Psychology Review*, 31(1), 178-186.
- Llera, S. J.**, & Newman, M. G. (2010). Worry and emotional avoidance in generalized anxiety disorder: Effects on physiological and subjective reactivity. *Emotion*, 10(5), 640-650. doi:10.1037/a0019351
- Cole, P. M., **Llera, S. J.**, & Pemberton, C. K. (2009). Emotional instability, poor emotional awareness, and the development of borderline personality. *Development and Psychopathology*, 21(4), 1293-1310.
- Bennett, D., Snooks, Q., **Llera, S.**, Vogel, K., Conklin, D., & Varlotta, L. (2008). Risk factors for internalizing symptoms among youth with cystic fibrosis. *Journal of Children's Health Care*, 37, 278-292.

Book Chapters

Szkodny, L. E., Jacobson, N. C., **Llera, S. J.**, & Newman, M. G. (in press). Generalized anxiety disorders. In G. O. Gabbard (Ed.), *Gabbard's Treatments of Psychiatric Disorders (5th edition)*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Publishing.

Llera, S. J., & Newman, M. G. (in press). Generalized anxiety disorder. In R. Cautin & S. Lilienfeld (Eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Clinical Psychology*. New Jersey: Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Newman, M.G., Koif, D., Przeworski, A. & **Llera, S. J.** (2010). Anxiety Disorders. In M. A. Cucciare, & K. R. Weingardt (Eds), *Using technology to support evidence-based behavioral health practices: A Clinician's Guide*. New York: Taylor and Francis Inc.

Conference Reports

Llera, S. J., & Newman, M. G. (Spring 2008). The effects of worry on emotional avoidance in generalized anxiety disorder: An examination of physiological reactivity and subjective experience. *ABCT, Anxiety Disorders: A Quarterly Report*, 4(2), 8-9.

Manuscripts in Preparation

Jamil, N., & **Llera, S. J.** (in preparation). Examining the Mediation Effect of Contrast Avoidance Tendencies on the Relationship between Attachment Style and Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) in a Clinical and Non-Clinical Sample.

Llera, S. J. & Newman, M. G. (in preparation). Validation of the Contrast Avoidance Questionnaire.

Tarter, N., & **Llera, S. J.** (in preparation). A test of emotion regulation models in the maintenance of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder symptom severity.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Symposia

Llera, S. J., & Newman, M. G. (Nov. 2012). *Examination of the Contrast Avoidance Model in Generalized Anxiety Disorder: Addressing Avoidance as a Central Maintaining Factor*. In L. Alden (chair), *Overcoming Avoidance: A Basic Principle of Behavior Change*. Symposium at the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, National Harbor, MD.

Newman, M. G., & **Llera, S. J.** (Nov. 2012). *A Novel Theory of Experiential Avoidance in GAD: Does Worry Enable Avoidance of Emotional Experiencing?* In J. Mohlman (chair), *Emotional Contrast: Mood Swings and the Challenges They Bring*. Symposium at the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, National Harbor, MD.

Llera, S. J., Newman, M. G., & Szkodny, L. E. (June 2012). *Experimental examination of the contrast avoidance mode in generalized anxiety disorder: Implications for treatment*. In I. Etchebarne (moderator), *Research about approaches to generalized anxiety disorder*. Panel at the 43rd Annual International Meeting of the Society for Psychotherapy Research, Virginia Beach, VA.

Llera, S. J., & Newman, M. G. (Nov. 2010). *Revisiting Emotional Avoidance in GAD*. In **S. J. Llera (chair)**, *Scientific Exploration of Emotional Functioning in Generalized Anxiety*

Disorder (GAD): Emphasis on the Nature and Pathogenic Mechanisms. Symposium at the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, San Francisco, CA.

Newman, M. G., & **Llera, S. J.** (Nov. 2010). *A New Model of Experiential Avoidance in GAD: Does Worry Enable Avoidance of Emotional Experiencing?* In C. Suveg (chair), *Emotion and Psychopathology: Conceptual Foundations and Clinical Applications*. Symposium at the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, San Francisco, CA.

Newman, M.G., Crits-Christoph, P., Szkodny, L E., **Llera, S. J.** (June 2010). *Emotional avoidance in generalized anxiety disorder: Basic findings and clinical implications*. In Castonguay, L. G. (moderator) *Can psychopathology be helpful? Clinical implications of basic research in abnormal psychology*. Paper presented at the 41st International Meeting of the Society for Psychotherapy Research, Asilomar, CA.

Llera, S., Newman, M., Castonguay, L., & Borkovec, T. (Nov. 2005). *Effects of CBT Treatment for GAD on Health Problems and Physical Symptoms*. Symposium at the 39th annual convention of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, Washington, DC.

Newman, M. G., Groff, M. D., **Llera, S.**, Borkovec, T. D. & Castonguay, L. G. (Nov. 2005). *Does self-control desensitization practice predict treatment outcome in GAD clients?* In S. Hayes (Chair) *The role of exposure in anxiety interventions*. Symposium at the 39th Annual meeting of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies. Washington, DC.

Bennett, D., Snooks, Q., **Llera, S.**, Vogel, K., Conklin, D., & Varlotta, L (October, 2004). *Risk Factors for Internalizing Symptoms Among Youth with Cystic Fibrosis*. Paper presented at the 2004 North American Cystic Fibrosis Conference.

Poster Presentations

Jamil, N., & **Llera, S. J.** (Nov. 2014). *Examining the Mediation Effect of Contrast Avoidance Tendencies on the Relationship between Attachment Style and Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) in a Clinical and Non-Clinical Sample*. Poster to be presented at the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, Philadelphia, PA.

Tarter, N., & **Llera, S. J.** (Nov. 2014). *A test of emotion regulation models in the maintenance of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder symptom severity*. Poster to be presented at the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, Philadelphia, PA.

Llera, S. J., & Newman, M. G. (Aug. 2011). *An Experimental Examination of Emotional Avoidance in Generalized Anxiety Disorder: Data Supporting a New Theory of Emotional Contrast Avoidance*. Poster at the 119th annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C.

Llera, S. J., & Newman, M. G. (Nov. 2009). *Worry and Emotional Reactivity in Generalized Anxiety Disorder: Avoidance of Emotional Contrast*. Poster at the 43rd annual convention of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, New York, NY.

Llera, S. J., & Newman, M. G. (Nov. 2008). *Worry and Emotional Avoidance in Generalized Anxiety Disorder: Effects on Physiological and Subjective Reactivity*. Poster at the 42nd annual convention of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, Orlando, FL.

Fisher, A. J., **Llera, S. J.**, & Newman, M. G. (Nov. 2008). *Affect Intensity and Physiological Arousal*. Poster at the 42nd annual convention of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, Orlando, FL.

Llera, S.J. & Newman, M.G. (Nov. 2007). *The Effects of Worry on Emotional Avoidance in Generalized Anxiety Disorder: Physiological Reactivity and Subjective Experience*. Poster at the 41st annual convention of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, Anxiety SIG, Philadelphia.

Llera, S. J. & Newman, M.G. (Nov. 2006). *The Effects of Worry on Emotional Avoidance in Generalized Anxiety Disorder: a Pilot Study*. Poster at the 40th annual convention of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, Anxiety SIG, Chicago, IL.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Faculty and Instructor Positions

F/13, SP/13	Abnormal Psychology
F/13, SP/13, F/11, Sum/09	Introduction to Psychology
F/13	Personality Assessment (graduate level course)
F/13	Cross-Cultural Psychology
SP/12, F/11	Physiological Psychology

Teaching Assistant / Lecturer Positions

2004-2005, 2008	Introductory Psychology
F/05	Abnormal Psychology
SP/10, F/09, F/07	Basic Research Methods
SP/06	Personality Theory
SP/06	Child Psychopathology
2006-2007	Multicultural Psychology
SP/07	Introduction to Social Psychology
F/08	Freshman Psychology Seminar
SP/08	Psychology as a Professional Science

RESEARCH MENTORING

Graduate:

2013-p Nicole Tarter. *A Test of Emotion Regulation Models in the Maintenance of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Symptom Severity*.

Undergraduate:

2014-p Nimra Jamil. *The Contrast Avoidance Model: Mediating the Link Between Insecure Attachment and Generalized Anxiety Disorder*.

2009-2010 Brittany Pasay. *The Effects of Worry on Discrepancy Between Reported Interpersonal Problems in Friendship Dyads*.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Professional Affiliations

American Psychological Association
Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT)
ABCT Anxiety Special Interest Group
Association for the Teaching of Psychology

Ad Hoc Editorial Review

Behavior Therapy (Member of Editorial Board)
Cognitive Therapy and Research
Journal of Abnormal Psychology
SAGE Open

University Service

Counseling Psychology Faculty Search – Member, Towson University (Fall 2013)
Psychology Department Website Improvement Project, Towson University (2013)
Get Psyched about Your Future! – Panel Member, Towson University (April 2013)
Eating Disorders Coalition, CAPS representative, University of Virginia (2010-2011)
Identifying Culture Shock, Student Outreach Presenter, University of Virginia (2010)
Stress Prevention Workshop, Student Outreach Presenter, University of Virginia (2011)
BRIDGE: A Diversity Work Group, Student Retention Committee, Penn State University (2009)
Clinical Training Committee, Student Representative, Penn State University (2006-2007)

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

Intervention

- 8/10- 8/11 Staff Therapist, Pre-Doctoral Intern**
Counseling and Psychological Services, University of Virginia
- 8/08- 8/11 Interpersonal Process Group, Co-Facilitator**
Counseling and Psychological Services, University of Virginia
Psychological Clinic, The Pennsylvania State University
- 8/04-8/10 Staff Therapist**
Psychological Clinic, The Pennsylvania State University
- 1/09-6/09 Consulting Forensic Therapist**
Centre County Correctional Facility, State of Pennsylvania
- 6/01- 8/01 Undergraduate Psychology Intern**
A.I. Dupont Children's Hospital, Division of Behavioral Health, Wilmington, DE
- 9/01- 12/01 Undergraduate Children's Counselor**
College School, University of Delaware

Assessment

- 5/11- 8/11 Bariatric / Spinal Stimulator Pre-Surgery Assessor, Pre-Doctoral Intern**

Behavioral Medicine Center, University of Virginia School of Medicine

- 8/10- 8/11** **Staff Psychological Assessor, Pre-Doctoral Intern**
Learning Needs and Evaluation Center, University of Virginia
- 5/08- 5/09** **Staff Neuropsychological Assessor**
Psychological Clinic, The Pennsylvania State University
- 1/09-6/09** **Consulting Forensic Assessor**
Centre County Correctional Facility, State of Pennsylvania
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REFERENCES

Available upon request