



THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
College of Social Work



Social Work PhD Candidates

Fall 2023

socialwork.utah.edu/phd

PhD Candidates

Abigail Anderson, LCSW

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[Curriculum Vitae](#)



Dissertation: "LGBQ Youth Mental Health and Suicide Risk: Social Safety as Both a Protective and Risk Factor Among Religious Youth"

Abigail is passionate about creating space for children and youth to explore their sexualities without fear of consequences and feel safely supported. Witnessing the same struggle in others compelled her to pursue research on sexual and gender minority youth to help understand their needs and create interventions to protect and support them from the landmines around them. Abigail entered into candidacy in August after passing her dissertation proposal examining the role of religion as a protection or risk factor for suicidality among sexual minority youth and how social support can mediate this relationship. She is a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) in Utah and California and owns two practices serving the LGBTQ community. She says her experience as an LCSW specializing in LGBTQ affirmative therapy approaches in Utah ignited a fire within and fueled her research interests. Abigail's first-hand experience with youth in practice made her keenly aware of the impact of acceptance or rejection received by youth who disclose SSA or identity as LGBTQ. The acceptance or lack of it has significantly affected LGBQ youth's increased risk or resilience to cope with challenges faced in our heteronormative society. She has worked with children, adolescents, and young adults at risk of suicide ideation, planning, and attempted suicide. Her teaching experience at the University of Utah has been in clinical courses, practice, and DSM, both at the undergraduate and master's levels, in person and online.

Karla Arroyo, LCSW

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Dissertation: "Understanding Victim Advocates' Practices and Experiences when Working with IPV Victims who Use Substances: an Exploratory Study"

Karla Arroyo was born and raised in Mexico City where she earned her bachelor's degree in Economics from the Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana (UAM). Karla moved to Provo, Utah in June of 1999 and earned a master's degree in Social Work from the University of Utah in 2006. Karla is currently enrolled in the PhD Program at the University of Utah College of Social Work. Karla has spent the last 10 years working with the Latino community in Salt Lake County and some rural areas within the state of Utah. Her involvement in the community has been direct clinical practice, community organization, and most recently she has focused on developing and expanding pilot programs offering counseling and peer support through telehealth. Her clinical practice has focused on trauma survivors, specifically, domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking victims. Her research interests are in the area of the intersection of domestic violence and substance abuse. Karla is working full-time as the director of the Multicultural Counseling Center (MCC), an agency that provides counseling to individuals, children, families, and couples and that specializes in trauma survivors. Her practice utilizes a multidimensional framework, systems theory, and trauma-informed care when delivering interventions.



PhD Candidates

Misty McIntyre Goodsell, LCSW

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[Website](#)



Dissertation: "Exploring the Relationship between ACES and Pubertal Timing for Adolescent Females: Analysis of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent and Adult Health"

Misty McIntyre Goodsell is a person with a lot of questions. Questions are what led her to pursue her master's degree at the College of Social Work. Notebooks of unanswered questions and ideas for research continue pushing her education forward. In considering her path, earning a PhD in social work was the option that made the most sense to her. "Social work's core values mirror my own," she said. "Social justice and the empowerment of oppressed and/or disadvantaged populations is what drew me to social work. If the only end goal was to be a therapist and researcher, I could have earned my degree in psychology or psychiatry. The values of social work are core to my identity as a social researcher and clinician and, in my opinion, what separates social work from the pack." Her long-term career aspiration is to become a mental health therapist for Doctors Without Borders.

Hanna E. Morzenti, LMSW, MA

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Dissertation: "Treatment Recommendations for Individuals with High Functioning Autism in the Criminal Justice System: A Delphi Consensus Study"

Hanna E. Morzenti is adjunct faculty and a doctoral candidate in the College of Social Work at the University of Utah. She received undergraduate degrees in Sociology and Criminal Justice from the University of Wisconsin, Superior, an MA in Criminal Justice from Washington State University, and an MSW from Northwest Nazarene University. Along with her extensive educational experience, Hanna has nearly two decades of practice experience, including seven years working as an LMSW. Her clinical skillset includes working with non-profit organizations and state governments to provide community-based mental health, skill building, rehabilitation, on-call crisis intervention, and conducting court-ordered evaluations. Hanna's interdisciplinary background provided the framework for her research interests. In addition to her publications on criminal justice reform and sex trafficking, Hanna's dissertation research focuses on alternatives to incarceration and typical criminal justice sanctions for individuals with high functioning autism. Hanna is passionate about sharing her clinical, academic, and personal experiences to enhance the education and critical thinking skills of future social workers.



PhD Candidates

Allison O'Connor, LCSW

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[Website](#)



Dissertation: "Utility of Animal Assisted Therapy for Maltreated Children"

Allison specializes in evaluation design and mixed-method analyses, with a particular focus on outcome measurement. Passionate about supporting community agencies to use data-driven processes for decision making and effective programming, Allison is additionally interested in child welfare, animal-assisted therapy, and field education. Allison is currently earning a PhD in social work, and researching utility of existing child welfare assessments for use in outcome monitoring. She has designed and conducted research studies at the University of Utah since 2009, and additionally provides clinical psychotherapy services to adults and families.

Kyle Rehn

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[Curriculum Vitae](#)

Dissertation: "Chronically Inaccurate? Assessing the Reliability, Validity, and External Influences of the SPDAT Instruments"

Kyle's research is deeply rooted in the study of homelessness, with a focus on leveraging quantitative methods to pinpoint our most at-risk communities. With five years of dedicated work in a shelter addressing homelessness, he cultivated a profound interest in examining vulnerability assessments related to homelessness, exploring disparities in service distribution influenced by intersecting identities, and assessing the consequences of policy choices on shelter service utilization. He was recently honored as the recipient of the prestigious University of Utah Marriner Eccles Fellowship for Political Economy for the 2023-2024 academic year. Kyle's expertise extends to proficiency in R, the development of R Shiny dashboards, and a comprehensive understanding of quantitative techniques, including clustering methods, psychometrics, and survival analysis.

