

The RISE Research Lab is focused on the study of mental and physical health concerns of LGBTQ+ people over the lifespan, identifying factors and processes that contribute to health disparities between LGBTQ+ and heterosexual/cisgender populations, and developing strategies to address these disparities and promote health and well-being among LGBTQ+ individuals, families, and communities. All of our research takes an intersectional and social justice lens. Students in the lab have the additional benefit of receiving mentoring from the Goldblum-Carr CLEAR Postdoctoral Fellow, who will be a lab member as part of their CLEAR work. For more information about the lab's projects, students, postdoctoral fellows, and alumni, please see the RISE Research Lab website. (<https://www.riselab.paloaltou.edu/>)

The RISE lab provides opportunities for students to engage in research projects at all phases, including brainstorming ideas, conducting literature reviews, writing grants, translating research questions into research designs, developing human subjects proposals, developing surveys and interview guides, developing intervention protocols, recruiting and engaging with research subjects, collecting data, managing databases, conducting statistical analyses, and preparing posters, presentations, and manuscripts based on results. Dr. Balsam has a particular interest in mixed-methods research and measure development. Students may also have the opportunity to work with Dr. Balsam on other research-related tasks, such as peer review of manuscripts submitted to academic journals and assisting in her role as a Guest Editor of some forthcoming journal issues related to gender minority health. Dr. Balsam is often asked to write book chapters for edited books on clinically-related topics and students have often co-authored these chapters. Student training experiences are individually tailored to student educational and professional goals.

Currently, we have several active projects, all focused on diverse and under-studied populations, approaches, and topics within LGBTQ+ psychology. Our current Postdoctoral Fellow, Dr. Kiet Huynh, is leading a multi-site collaboration to update and revise the LGBT People of Color Microaggressions Scale, a widely-used measure of intersectional minority stress that Dr. Balsam published in 2011. This project will include qualitative and quantitative data collection with LGBTQ+ people of color across the U.S. As part of Dr. Balsam's work through CLEAR, we have a partnership with Santa Clara County Behavioral Health Services to develop, implement and evaluate an "LGBTQ+ Clinical Academy" to train county-level mental health services providers to become culturally competent with diverse LGBTQ+ populations. We also have qualitative and quantitative data from a large online survey of LGBTQ+ adults at the beginning of the pandemic that we are in the process of analyzing. We recently collected data looking broadly at stressors, trauma, mindfulness and well-being among plurisexual (e.g., bisexual, pansexual, etc.) adults and including oversampling of individuals who participate in kink/BDSM.

We are particularly interested in gender diversity, with several innovative projects focused on transgender and non-binary populations. The Enby Project, led by a former Postdoctoral Fellow in the lab, is a mixed-methods study aimed at understanding and measuring the unique aspects of minority stress experienced by those whose gender identity is under the non-binary umbrella. We conducted online focus groups and interviews with diverse non-binary adults and are currently testing a new empirically-derived model of non-binary minority stress. We also have an ongoing longitudinal study – Gender Kaleidoscope – which is following a large sample of

non-binary, binary trans, and cisgender sexual minority adults who were previously surveyed just prior to the COVID pandemic and then shortly after stay-at-home orders began. The GK study includes a wide range of health, mental health, stress, trauma, and resilience variables that are available for analysis. Additionally, we are interested in research that has direct clinical practice implications, including intervention development and promoting access to culturally competent services. For example, we recently completed a randomized trial of a compassion- and mindfulness-based psychosocial group for LGBTQ+ adults. Other current interests of students in the lab within LGBTQ+ populations include non-human identities and neurodiversity, eating disorders and body image, and the transition to parenthood.

An additional benefit of the lab is that Dr. Balsam has ongoing collaborations with colleagues who are expert researchers and clinicians in LGBTQ+ psychology at other universities nationally and internationally and can facilitate collaborations between students and external projects based on their specific interests. Students are encouraged to participate in local and national service opportunities related to LGBTQ+ psychology in order to enhance their professional development and gain valuable connections that can lead to future career opportunities. We also regularly have lab volunteers (post-bachelor's degree and/or MS and first-year PhD students) which also gives doctoral students the opportunity to learn skills to mentor and train others in research skills and professional development.

During the first year in the lab (typically the 2nd year in the Ph.D. program), students will work with Dr. Balsam and the advanced students in the lab on one or more of our ongoing projects in order to gain hands-on experience with research. By the second year in the lab (3rd year in the Ph.D. program), students will identify their own research questions and will begin to pursue their own dissertation research project under Dr. Balsam's mentorship and guidance. Dissertations may include original data collection or analysis of archival data. In their 4th and 5th years, students focus more on their own dissertation research, which may be part of a larger collaborative lab project or an individual effort, depending on interests. Dissertations may also be conducted with archival data, depending on student interest and availability of appropriate data in the lab or through another source. All students will be expected to familiarize themselves with the current body of empirical literature on LGBTQ+ psychology and will be encouraged to think critically and creatively about the challenges and strengths of this population. This also involves self-reflection on our own positionality and how this shapes the lenses that we are looking through when we conceptualize, conduct, and interpret research.

Lab expectations

- Required attendance at lab meetings. Meetings are held on Wednesday afternoons, weekly, for 90 minutes and include discussion of professional development topics (i.e., practicum and internship applications, goal-setting, navigating professional settings as an LGBTQ+ person or ally, etc.) as well as research. We typically meet as a large group during the regular academic year and meet as needed in smaller groups for ongoing projects over the summer.

- Individual mentoring meetings with Dr. Balsam at least once per quarter, more often upon request or as needed.
- Generating and working on small, concrete, behaviorally-defined dissertation goals monthly
- Completing assigned tasks by agreed-upon deadlines. A research lab works best when expectations are clear and deadlines are respected by all members.
- Willingness to participate in a variety of research tasks as described above.
- Working at least 4-5 hours per week or more, depending on goals and the needs of projects in the lab.
- Willingness to complete readings as assigned. This may involve occasionally purchasing some assigned books – we often read a book together on topics related to academic writing and dissertation support – although I can make one or two copies available to share. We also often have a “journal club” in which we all read and critique an article selected by one student that relates to their dissertation topic.
- Presentations and publications: Students are expected to submit at least one first-author poster or conference presentation by their second year in the lab (3rd year in the program). Students are also expected to serve as a co-author on at least one manuscript submitted for publication during their time in the lab. Other opportunities for presentation and publication, both as first author and a co-author, will be available for students who are interested and willing to do the work.

Lab philosophy/approach

The above guidelines are the minimum requirements for participation in the RISE lab. However, it is Dr. Balsam’s sincere hope that all students in the lab will take advantage of the multiple opportunities for learning that are presented to them. Mentoring is a two-way street, and research skills are best learned through mentored, hands-on experience. Students who approach their work in the lab with a willingness to work hard and a desire to learn will inevitably gain more skills to help launch their careers. While students’ work in the RISE lab will begin with assisting on existing lab projects, they will be expected to begin developing their own ideas by the end of their first year in the lab. The lab has a supportive, collaborative social environment and we all provide feedback to each other in a collegial spirit. We also often reflect on topics related to social justice and current events as they relate to our professional work. As evidenced by the success of RISE lab alumni, students in the lab gain the skills and knowledge to be able to conduct high-quality, publishable research and to become experts and leaders in the emerging field of LGBTQ+ psychology – expertise that is increasingly valued by employers of professional psychologists and consumers of psychology services in the 21st century.

Openings: 3 members to join the lab for 2022-2023. Upon acceptance, lab members may begin attending meetings and working with us in Spring Quarter 2022, time permitting.

Apply: Submit the following items to Dr. Balsam by the PAU deadline:

- Curriculum Vitae
- One-two page cover letter describing past research experience and research interests related to LGBTQ+ psychology, including current/recent RISE lab studies that you would be interested in getting involved in and your tentative idea for a dissertation topic

- Your current PAU transcript
- Your Research Methods proposal paper from Fall Quarter

Notification: Students accepted into RISE lab will be notified by email at the standard notification deadline.