

Mackenzie Sears

Department of Psychology
The University of Texas at Austin
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EDUCATION

- 2019- Present **Doctor of Philosophy, Clinical Psychology**
Degree anticipated in May of 2025
The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX
Lab Affiliation: The Sexual Psychophysiology Laboratory
Advisor: Dr. Cindy Meston
- 2015- 2019 **Bachelor of Arts, Psychology**
The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX
Departmental High Honors
University High Honors
Thesis Title: *Evaluating the Role of Shared Environment in the Etiology of Depression as a Function of Similarity in Monozygotic and Dizygotic Twin Pairs*
Minor: Philosophy

HONORS & AWARDS

- Fall 2020 **Graduate School Continuing Fellowship**
The University of Texas at Austin
- Summer 2020 **Rick and Paula Short Research Fellowship**
- Spring 2020 **Professional Development Award**
The University of Texas at Austin
- Spring 2019,
Spring 2018 **The University of Texas at Austin College Scholar**
The University of Texas at Austin
- Spring 2018 **Eva Stevenson Woods Endowed Presidential Scholarship**
The University of Texas at Austin
- Fall 2018 **Research Assistant Excellence Award**
The Sexual Psychophysiology Laboratory, The University of Texas at Austin

Spring 2016-
Spring 2019

Dean's Honor List
The University of Texas at Austin

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Freihart, B.K., **Sears, M.A.** & Meston, C.M. Relational and Interpersonal Predictors of Sexual Satisfaction. *Curr Sex Health Rep* 12, 136–142 (2020).

PRESENTATIONS

Podium Presentations:

Sears, M.A., Kilimnik, C.D., & Meston, C.M. (2020, March) *Evaluating the role of relationship status in the sexual well-being of women with and without histories of nonconsensual sexual experiences*. Podium presentation at the annual meeting of the International Society for the Study of Women's Sexual Health (ISSWSH).

Kilimnik, C. D., **Sears, M. A.**, & Meston, C. M. (October, 2019). *Undergraduates' understanding of sexual violence labels: The role of nonconsensual sexual experience histories*. Presented at the Canadian Sex Research Forum (CSRF) annual meeting. Victoria, British Columbia.

Sears, M. A., Kilimnik, C. D., & Meston, C. M. (2019, March). *The language of sexual violence: Undergraduates' understanding of sexual violence labels and the role of previous sexual experiences*. Podium presentation, presented at the annual meeting of the International Society for the Study of Women's Sexual Health (ISSWSH).

Freihart, B., **Sears, M.**, & Meston, C. M. (2019, March). *Preliminary evidence for a relationship between physiological synchrony and sexual satisfaction in adult romantic relationships*. Podium presentation, presented at the annual meeting of the International Society for the Study of Women's Sexual Health (ISSWSH).

Poster Presentations:

Sears, M.A., Malanchini, M., & Tucker-Drob, E., (2019, April). *Evaluating the Role of Shared Environment in the Etiology of Depression as a Function of Similarity in Monozygotic and Dizygotic Twin Pairs*. Presented at the University of Texas at Austin's undergraduate research week poster session.

Sears, M.A., Malanchini, M., & Tucker-Drob, E., (2018, December). *Evaluating the Role of Shared Environment in the Etiology of Depression as a Function of Similarity in Monozygotic and Dizygotic Twin Pairs*. Presented at the poster presentation for the Psychology Departmental Honors Program

Ahmed, S.*, Kilimnik, C. D., **Sears, M. A.**, & Meston, C. M. (March, 2020). *Undergraduates' definitions of sexual consent: The role of rape myth acceptance*. Submitted for presentation at the International Society for the Study of Women's Sexual Health (ISSWSH) annual meeting. Orlando, Florida.

Professional Presentations:

Sears, M.A., (2018, August). *Youth Problem Behavior and Interparental Conflict within the Family System*. Oral presentation for the Directors of the Austin Family Institute.

Invited Talks:

2020, 2019 **Professional Development**
Honors Thesis Program
The University of Texas at Austin

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

The Sexual Psychophysiology Laboratory
Department of Psychology
The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX

- 2016- Present Title: The language of sexual violence: Undergraduates' understanding of sexual violence labels and the role of previous sexual experiences
Aim: To gain insights into how undergraduate students who have and have not experienced NSEs define and construe common sexual violence labels. To examine how these definitions vary as a function of NSE history and NSE identification.
Role: Undergraduate Research Assistant, Co-Author on poster presentation; Supervisors: Chelsea Kilimnik, M.S., & Cindy M. Meston, Ph.D.
- 2018- 2019 Title: The Attraction of Risky Behaviors (ARB)
Aim: To elucidate the effect that sexual arousal has on individuals' decision-making processes, determine how this differs by gender, and provide critical information on the adaptational relevance of men and women's sexual strategies when they are sexually aroused.
Role: Undergraduate Research Assistant; Supervisors: Courtney Crosby B.A., David M. Buss, Ph.D. & Cindy M. Meston, Ph.D.
- 2018- 2019 Title: The SEADS Study
Aim: To investigate the efficacy of using an online expressive writing prompt as an intervention for survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse (CSA) and to evaluate any subsequent changes in sexual self-schemas and CSA identification
Role: Undergraduate Research Assistant; Supervisors: Chelsea Kilimnik, M.Sc., & Cindy M. Meston, Ph.D.
- 2018-2019 Title: An Examination of the Relationship Between Physiological Synchrony and Sexual Satisfaction

Aim: To elucidate the relationship between physiological coregulation and sexual well-being among adults in romantic relationships

Role: Undergraduate Research Assistant; Supervisor: Bridget Freihart, MSW, & Dr. Cindy Meston

2017- 2018 Title: Multiple Measures of Sexual Arousal: The MiMOSA Study

Aim: To evaluate whether self-reported lubrication deficits in women with FSAD are attributable to perceptual or physiological impairments.

Role: Undergraduate Research Assistant; Supervisors: Ariel Handy, B.A., & Cindy M. Meston, Ph.D.

2016-2017 Title: Hekate Sexual Arousal Study

Aim: Assessing the efficacy of using Heart Rate Variability biofeedback and autogenic training as a treatment for Female Sexual Arousal Disorder (FSAD)

Role: Undergraduate Research Assistant; Supervisors: Amelia Stanton, Ph.D., & Cindy M. Meston, Ph.D.

2016-2017 Title: The AVA Study

Aim: To examine any implicit avoidance biases toward sexual stimuli in populations of women with previous CSA and to evaluate how these biases may relate to sexual and psychological well-being

Role: Undergraduate Research Assistant; Supervisors: Chelsea Kilimnik, M.Sc., & Cindy M. Meston, Ph.D.

2016-2017 Title: The SST Study

Aim: A Phase II FDA Clinical Trial investigating the efficacy of a drug created to increase vaginal blood flow in women with FSAD.

Role: Undergraduate Research Assistant; Supervisors: Cindy M. Meston, Ph.D.

The Lifespan Development Laboratory

Department of Psychology

The University of Texas at Austin

Austin, TX

2018-2019 Title: Evaluating the Role of Shared Environment in the Etiology of Depression as a Function of Similarity in Monozygotic and Dizygotic Twin Pairs

Aim: To explore the impact of the home environment on the experience of depression in child and adolescent twin pairs.

Role: Principal Investigator; Supervisors: Margherita Malanchini, Ph.D., Elliot Tucker-Drob, Ph.D.

2017-2018 Title: The Texas Twin Study

Aim: To explore academic growth and achievement in child and adolescent twin pairs in order to further understand the role of genetics and environment in human development.

Role: Undergraduate Research Assistant; Supervisors: Elliot Tucker-Drob, Ph.D.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistantships:

Department of Psychology

The University of Texas at Austin

2019, Fall	Emotion
2020, Spring	Emotion
2020, Summer	Abnormal Psychology
2020, Fall	Introduction to Human Sexuality

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

Austin Family Psychiatry

Austin, Texas

2019

Administrative Assistant

- Obtaining consent for treatment, securing releases of information, scheduling appointments, collecting payment
- Protecting Personal Health Information

The Austin Family Institute (AFI)

Austin, Texas

Summer 2018

Undergraduate Intern

- Participated in weekly group supervision sessions and individual supervisions sessions
- Attended monthly lectures on therapeutic techniques and systemic theories given by the Directors of AFI

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

International Society for the Study of Women's Sexual Health

Orlando, FL

Spring 2020

International Society for the Study of Women's Sexual Health

Atlanta, GA

Spring 2019

International Society for the Study of Women's Sexual Health

San Francisco, CA

Spring 2018

International Society for the Study of Women's Sexual Health

Atlanta, GA

Spring 2017

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI)

Volunteer, 2015-2019

- Attended "Goal Ball" matches (a ball game) acting as referee for the players throughout the game

- Volunteered at a monthly, themed parties held for TSBVI students

Guide Dogs of Texas

Volunteer, 2017-2019

- Helped increase awareness about the need for raising, financially supporting, and training guide dogs for people who are blind or visually impaired
- Participated in annual calendar sales to fundraise for guide dog training and placement

NEIGHBORHOOD LONGHORNS PROGRAM (NLP)

Volunteer, 2016-2018

- NLP partners with AISD to provide education incentives to promote learning and encourage children to set and achieve academic goals
- Tutored children in elementary level Math, Algebra, and English (grades 2-8) at various schools in Austin

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

2019- Present Phi Beta Kappa

2017- Present Psi Chi National Honors Society