



JERRY M. LEWIS, M.D. MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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Active Grant Projects and Summary Table September 2024

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Jerry M. Lewis, M.D. Mental Health Research Foundation is a nonprofit organization devoted to research and education. *The primary area of emphasis is on the role of interpersonal relationships in psychological development along the continuum from mental health to mental illness.*

Couple, parent-child, and family system relationships are of special interest. Other relationships such as doctor-patient, teacher-student, or child care provider-child are of interest to the degree that they illuminate basic relationship characteristics and psychological development.

A complementary research interest involves scientific evaluation of relationship-centered service and educational interventions and programs. The Foundation's educational activities are directed at health care professionals, educators, service program professionals, and the public.

Lewis Foundation announced the availability of small grants for certain types of mental health research, education, and service projects in January 1998. The following is a list of active grant projects. Each listing includes the grant title, principal investigator, institution, funding amount, brief summary, date the grant was approved, and anticipated date of completion of the project.

Detailed descriptions of completed research projects funded by the Foundation may be mailed to you by calling 214/388-0451 or e-mailing: JMLewisfoundation@att.net

GA2019-011 *Parental Perception of Child Vulnerability in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and Development Outcomes: A Randomized Control Trial Preventative Intervention with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy*, Margaret “Katie” Hoge, M.D.

The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, \$19,200

Parents who have infants in Neonatal Intensive Care often have a distorted perception of their child’s vulnerability. Such skewed views can lead to parenting behaviors that are overprotective and harmful to the development of their children.

This study assesses whether a series of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) sessions for parents can help them better understand the child’s health and empower them to be better parents. This study will also assess the impact of the intervention on the long-term care and well-being of the children following discharge from the NICU.

At least 54 patients, mothers and fathers will be assigned to a treatment versus control group condition. There will be a randomized control trial of a series of five CBT sessions versus standard of care. Three CBT sessions will take place in the NICU before the infant is discharged and the last two will take place after the infant has been discharged.

Measurements include an assessment of the parental perception of the child’s vulnerability, parental anxiety, depression and stress. Data on medical severity will also be collected. It is thought that this research can lead to interventions that foster and encourage a more positive parent-child relationship and more normal parent bonding with children who have been in the NICU.

January 2020 – November 2025

GA2021-001 *Validation of the Lewis Couple & Family Evaluation Scales in a Community Sample of Families*, Shelly A. Riggs, Ph.D.

Sam Houston State University, \$26,004

This researcher completed a Foundation sponsored project, *Family System Predictors of Psychological Well-Being in Middle Childhood* in December 2011. In this project 86 two-parent families with a child aged 8-11 participated in family discussions which were video recorded and rated with a family interaction measure, the System for Coding Interactive and Family Functioning (SCIFF). The adults also completed measures of psychological distress, coping, and relationship satisfaction.

The purposes of the current study are to evaluate this set of families with the Lewis Scales to determine the degree to which several trained raters agree (inter-rater reliability), and the degree to which those scale ratings agree with other established measures of the same concepts (construct validity).

The Principal Investigator (PI) plans to become certified as a self-trained Lewis Scales rater. Next, she and the Lewis Scales consultant will rate 10 randomly selected cases with the Lewis Scales to assure that her ratings agree acceptably with his. The PI then will Lewis Scales-train three graduate research assistants using that set of 10 cases before moving on to code the remaining families in the data set.

Dr. Riggs hopes to provide both reliability and validity data on the Lewis Scales while also determining whether professionals can adequately self-train to be accurate Lewis Scales raters.

The study results would be the first published data on Lewis Scales reliability and validity, self-training with the Lewis Scales, and both couple and family Lewis Scales findings.

May 2021 – December 2024

GA2022-002 *Understanding the Role of Social Support in Sexual and Gender Minority Youth with Eating Disorders, Kendall Sharp, Carrie Adams, M.D., Ph.D.*

University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, \$21,676

This project aims to 1) investigate how youth with eating disorders seek and receive social support, 2) to better understand how social support may differ between sexual and gender minority (SGM) youth and cisgender and heterosexual (CH) youth and, 3) to determine if there are differences in treatment outcomes between SGM and CH youth.

The study will recruit 30 SGM youth and 30 CH youth who are currently in an inpatient eating disorder treatment program. Participating youth will be evaluated with qualitative measures during treatment, upon release of treatment and three months' post-treatment. In addition, the SGM youth will participate in six optional semi-structured individual interviews exploring how social support impacted their treatment and recovery.

The primary outcome measure will be the differences between the groups in eating disorder symptoms, perceived changes in social support, and reported depression and anxiety.

May 2022 – September 2024

GA2022-004 *Relationship Functioning and Couples' Well-being, Chrystyna Kouros, Ph.D., Naomi Ekas, Ph.D.*

Southern Methodist University, \$44,992.00

Decades of research support that the quality of romantic relationships is associated with individuals' mental health. Yet large scale marital interventions show little effectiveness because such programs do not specify which aspects of couple relationship functioning are targeted. That is, it is unclear which specific dimensions of relationship functioning are most predictive of an individual's mental health and therefore the best targets for interventions.

The purpose of this study is to test a wide range of relationship variables using self-report and observational assessments as predictors of depression in a diverse community sample. Participants will be 150 couples – 75 raising a neurotypical child and 75 raising an autistic child. The research will be conducted using zoom with established practices for remote data collection. Each partner will complete a battery of self-report questionnaires that assess relationship conflicts, satisfaction, security, power dynamics, and depression. In addition, they will collect three samples of couples' interactions. Two of these interactions will involve a conflict resolution discussion and one will be a positive discussion. These couple interactions will be coded using the Lewis Scales coding system in order to test for validity and reliability of the Scales.

These researchers think that this project will lead to greater understanding of romantic couple interactions and other variables possibly associated with depressive symptoms, especially among couples raising an autistic child. They also think that it will provide valuable information on the Lewis Scales.

September 2022 – January 2025

GA2022-005 *Couples Daily Lives Laboratory- Paving the Way to Improved Marital Well-Being, Karen Prager, Ph.D. and Siri Wilder, MS*
University of Texas at Dallas, \$45,000.00

How a couple recovers from conflict may be as important to the ongoing functioning of their relationship as their behavior during conflict. The purpose of this research is to 1) replicate previous research showing significant associations between couples post conflict behavior and their post conflict outcomes 2) to identify the effects of repetitive arguments on a couples post-conflict behavior and whether post conflict behavior enhances partners' optimism about their potential to resolve their conflicts; and 3) to investigate specific skills that a couple has in efforts to recover and reconcile after conflict including mindfulness skills and perfectionism.

Two hundred thirty couples who are at least 20 years old will be evaluated at the UT Dallas Couples Daily Lives Lab. Instrumentation will include self-report measures of relationship functioning and individual partner competencies including interpersonal mindfulness, perfectionism and self-construal. In addition, there will be a fourteen-day diary checklist that will provide daily reports of couples' disagreements and indicators of post-conflict recovery. Objective measures will be obtained by having participants engage in three video recording discussions where trained coders will rate the couple using the Lewis Scales. The first two discussions will involve relationship disagreement and the third discussion involves their discussing their most fun adventure together.

These researchers think that this project will yield important insights into strategies which could lead to new interventions to teach couples important skills that they can practice in their relationships. It will also provide important reliability and validity data for the Lewis Scales. September 2022 – September 2025

GA2022-010 *A Social-ecological Approach to Understanding Sleep Health and Family Functioning in Hispanic/Latino Families with Young Children, Heidi Kane, Ph.D. and Danica Slavish, Ph.D.*

The University of Texas at Dallas \$30,000

This reapplication examines the associations between sleep and family environment. Sleep consistently predicts responses to stress and is related to parenting. After a night of disturbed sleep, individuals have more difficulty concentrating, maintaining attention, and regulating emotions- all of which are essential for effective parenting and family functioning. Up to now, no studies have examined how parental sleep is associated with next day parent/child interactions. This study will use a multimethod interdisciplinary approach to understand how factors across the social context are influenced by Hispanic/Latino parental sleep.

These researchers will assess demographic information and personal, family, neighborhood characteristics during a home visit. During a subsequent ten-day observational period they will assess self-reported sleep, family climate, and stress with daily surveys. Objective sleep will be measured with wrist actigraphy. Parents activity spaces (where they go and what they are exposed to) will be measured with GPS tracking.

The primary aims of this study are:

(1) to determine the association of built family factors (e.g. bedroom features) and the bidirectional associations of social family factors (e.g. support, conflict, routines) with the Hispanic/ Latino parents' sleep. (2) To determine how family social climate (i.e. support and

conflict) interacts with individual (e.g. daily discrimination) and community level factors (e.g., noise, light, housing density, crime) to predict Hispanic/Latino parents' sleep. (3) To determine how family social climate (i.e. support and conflict) interacts with Hispanic/Latino parents' sleep to predict parents' next-day parent-child interactions, parenting stress, and responses to stress.

They plan recruit 150 primary care givers who identify as Hispanic/Latino with at least one child 1-5 years old. These researchers think that this project will produce results which will help develop culturally appropriate and targeted interventions specific to the Hispanic/Latino parents.
January 2023 – December 2025

GA2023-006 Playful Learning and Parenting Supports: Impacts of the Play With Me Program for Young Hispanic Children at Risk and Their Parents, Mayra Padilla Cardoso, M.S., University of Texas at Dallas, \$26,472

The Play With Me program, initiated in 2011 by the University of Texas at Dallas Center for Children and Families, was developed to provide research-based support for children at risk and their parents in the children's earliest years in order to increase child success. An earlier evaluation of the program Play With Me in 2017, supported by the Lewis Foundation, provided evidence for program effectiveness in terms of significant improvements in positive parenting practices, self-efficacy, child independence, and reductions in parenting stress. The study design included pre and post comparisons for program participants and a small single-site comparison group that experienced a 10-week play group that did not include the program's parenting conversations focus.

This proposed evaluation of the new 12-week program will provide important additional information by, 1) measuring changes in the qualities of mother-child interactions found among program participants and among parents in a waitlist control group from video recordings collected in the parents' home, 2) including reliable measures of child outcomes, and 3) studying program implementation processes related to parent and child demographic information and program participation. They will collect data from parents who enroll in the Play With Me program and with those who are put on a waiting list. Measurements will involve parental self-report and observational measures of parenting.

September 2023 – September 2025

GA2023-009 Longitudinal Trajectories of Parent Support and Their Impact on the Mental Health of Transgender Youth, Bree Horrocks, M.Ed., UT Southwestern Medical Center, \$23,372

Transgender youth have different mental health challenges compared to cisgender peers and parental support is a critical protective factor for these youth. This study aims to, 1) identify subgroups of transgender youth with distinct patterns of change in parental support over the course of 3 years, 2) to identify factors contributing to change in parental support, and 3) to explore how changes in parental support impacts the mental and gender dysphoria of transgender youth.

The sample will involve previously collected data from 164 transgender youth age 12-18 who presented to a multidisciplinary gender affirming care program. Participants completed self-report surveys yearly while receiving care. The qualitative sample will be comprised of approximately

20 youth drawn from this group who will be followed for three years. All measures in this study are self-report covering the youth's perceived parental support and assessments of perceived social support from family, friends, and significant others. These researchers feel that this qualitative data will help identify the mechanisms underlying changes in parental support and will inform further studies examining the impact of changes in parental support on the mental health of transgender youth.

September 2023 – November 2025

GA2023-011 Affective Cognition and Interpersonal Functioning Among Adults With and Without Depression, Matthew Hutnyan, B.S., Shawn McClintock, Ph.D.

University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, \$24,000

This project is added on to an ongoing National Institute of Mental Health funded study entitled, "Emotional Cognition: Establishing Constructs and Neurobehavioral Mechanisms in Older Adults with Depression" (ENSURE). The primary objective of this proposal is to determine how affective cognition and interpersonal functioning are related among adults with and without depression. The secondary objectives are to establish whether affective cognition is uniquely associated with interpersonal functioning and how the association differs with age among individuals with and without depression. They aim to enroll 30 participants with MDD and 30 without MDD from the 120 participants enrolled in the ENSURE study.

This project will add measures to the ENSURE study including a Social Adjustment Scale, the Inventory for Personal Problems, a Social Network Index, and an Interpersonal Support Evaluation. These researchers think that investigating the connection between cognitive abilities and interpersonal functioning will provide important information to better understand how a person's cognitive ability impacts relationships and moods.

January 2024 – March 2026

GA2024-001 Understanding the Impacts of Trauma and Family Factors on Treatment for Suicidal Adolescents: A Mixed Methods Approach, Savannah Krantz, B.A., Sunita Stewart, Ph.D.,

The University of Texas Southwestern Children's Medical Center, \$29,115'

This study will investigate family factors that promote or hinder positive outcomes for suicidal adolescents with trauma. Despite evidence that family functioning and resilience are protective against the development of PTSD following trauma, the influence of these factors on treatment outcomes among suicidal adolescents with trauma has not been explored. The aims of this study are 1) to investigate the effects of trauma and symptoms on treatment outcomes of adolescents in an intensive outpatient program for suicidal adolescents, 2) to explore family functioning as a moderator of the relationship between trauma and treatment outcomes, and 3) to investigate adolescent and patient beliefs about the link of trauma to suicidality and to explore the experience of parents responding to trauma and suicidality.

Participants will be adolescents receiving treatment in a six-week intensive outpatient program for suicidal adolescents. Quantitative data will be collected at program entry and exit, and semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a subset of adolescents and their parents who endorsed having expressed trauma. Instrumentation includes quantitative measurements of post-traumatic stress disorder, family functioning, resilience, suicidal ideation, and depression. The

qualitative measure involves a semi-structured interview with each adolescent and their respective parents.

These researchers think that this project will fill gaps in the literature by uncovering the effects of trauma on intensive treatment outpatient for suicidality and the protective effects of family functioning among suicidal adolescents with trauma.

May 2024 – July 2026

2024-006 “Parental Perceptions of the Role of Media in Their Children’s Lives,” Aesha J. John, Ph.D., Texas Christian University, and Samantha Bates, Ph.D., The Ohio State University, \$23,100

This study proposes to examine the link between young children’s media use and the quality of their relationship with their parents. These researchers will gather information from parents of 3–8-year-old children and various aspects of their children’s and their own media use and examine how these factors are related to closeness and conflict in the parent-child relationship. They hypothesize that the more frequently the children are engaged in screen related activities the more likely there will be parent-child conflict and a decrease in closeness.

They will gather data from 100 parents of 3–8-year-old children. Instrumentation will involve self-report of the child’s engagement in screen activities, the parent-child relationship, and parental beliefs about acceptable media use.

September 2024 – January 2026

2024-007 “Infants’ Processing of Vocal Emotions: The Impact of Temperament and Maternal Interaction,” Melanie Spence, Ph.D., University of Texas at Dallas, \$34,501

The purpose of this research is to study if 9-month-old infants can distinguish vocal signals conveying different emotional messages in speech, to explore the contributions of infant and maternal temperament and mother-infant interaction styles to the processing of vocal emotional messages, and to assess if 9-month-old infants’ processing of vocal emotions is related to their communication skills at 15-months.

Seventy-two infants and mothers will participate in two experimental procedures and a free play session at the Callier Research Center. Mothers will also complete a follow-up questionnaire when their infant is 15-months of age.

September 2024 – December 2026

*Summary Description of Funded Projects
May 1998 – September 2024*

Grant Applications Received:	347
Grant Applications Approved:	124
Grant Funding Provided:	2,469,041

Project Topics

Adolescent romantic relationships and psychological health
 Affective cognition and interpersonal functioning among adults with and without depression
 Assessment techniques for interpersonal relationships (2)
 Attachment and self-mutilation
 Brief, acceptance-based therapy for pregnant women with premature rupture of membranes
 Brief intervention programs for school-aged children exposed to intimate partner violence
 Children's responses to peer victimization (2)
 Coherence of relationship narrative and couple competence
 Critical thinking and individual differences
 Developing an intervention to promote lethal means safety in suicidal adolescents
 Development of a web-based intervention for at-risk adolescents for anxiety and depression within schools
 Development of autonomy among youths with diabetes
 Dyadic responding to stress and relationship functioning
 Effects of peer victimization on biological functioning
 Empathy in childhood relationships
 Empathy in destabilizing relationships
 Examining the efficacy of a phone application for safety planning in youth with suicidality
 Examining the feasibility of a resiliency mental health application for adolescents
 Failure of empathy in spousal abuse (2)
 Family feeding relationships
 Family system predictors of psychological well-being in middle childhood
 How children evaluate information
 How children with autism spectrum disorder understand and interpret marital conflict
 Illness perceptions of patients with advanced stage cancer and their partners
 Impact of a motivational interviewing intervention on mothers' visitation patterns in nicu
 Infant emotion regulation within the developing mother-child and father-child relationship
 Infant perception of maternal technological distractions
 Infant understanding of affective messages
 Infants' processing of vocal emotions: the impact of temperament and maternal interaction
 Influence of early victimization upon adult relationships
 Influence of parental yelling
 Influence of the family system on self-injurious behavior
 Interpersonal relationships and depression
 Interpersonal relationships in ptsd and depressive symptomatology in veterans
 Interpersonal theory of suicide treatment approach to improve outcomes in suicidal youth
 Investigations into the nature and consequences of parental yelling
 Language development in children
 Long-term consequences of being bullied: biological functioning effects on physical health
 Longitudinal trajectories of parent support and their impact on the mental health of transgender youth
 Marriage, sleep and health
 Mindfulness meditation to counteract self-control
 Oxytocin as a biomarker of social sensitivity and interpersonal functioning
 Parental perception of child vulnerability in the nicu and developmental outcomes
 Parental perceptions of the role of media in their children's lives

Project Topics cont'd

Paving the way to improved marital well-being
 Peer relationships, gut microbiota, and health
 Prediction of language disorders in children
 Psychological and family factors in social aggression
 Randomized control trial of a cellphone-based intervention to promote lethal means safety in suicidal adolescents
 Relations between parent-child conflict styles and children's well-being
 Relationship healing from infidelity
 Relationships, school performance, and health in adolescence
 Resilience among children and families at risk forum
 Results of childhood versus spousal abuse
 Role of parents' restrictive feeding practices
 Role of parents in diabetes care
 Social-ecological approach to understanding sleep health and family functioning in hispanic/latino families with young children
 Tracking the early bilingual growth of spanish-speaking children
 Transplant as a medical trauma
 Understanding the impacts of trauma and family factors on treatment for suicidal adolescents
 Understanding the role of social support in sexual and gender minority youth with eating disorders
 Validation of the lewis couple & family evaluation scales in a community sample of families
 Value violations and satisfaction in relationships: the value-consistent action measure
 Why caregivers of severely abused children may refuse psychotherapy for the abused child

Treatment program evaluations:

Anger management training for probationers
 Attention training for adhd preschoolers and their parents
 Connections: a program to enhance peer support in refugee youth
 Cooperative small group approach for students with learning differences
 Counseling of voluntary and mandated agency clients
 Couple functioning and treatment of chronic pain
 Equine-assisted therapy in autism
 Evaluation of a dating assertiveness training program for adolescent girls
 Evaluation of an autism intervention (2)
 Evaluation of juega conmigo (play with me) playful learning project
 Evaluation of mindful self-care for caregivers
 Evaluation of the playwisely intervention in autism
 Family disaffiliation and treatment outcome
 Family function and adolescent depression treatment
 Family function and adolescent eating disorder treatment
 Feasibility & pilot study of the ut southwestern virtue inventory for clinician excellence
 Filial therapy training for abusive parents
 Home instruction program for parents and at-risk preschoolers
 Impact of home instruction program participation on maternal self-efficacy
 Improving adolescent suicidal ideation through a standardized brief group sleep intervention
 In-home parental training for abusive parents
 Long term outcome of therapeutic community treatment (2)
 Multimodal program impact on homeless/disturbed
 Playful learning and parenting supports: impacts of the *play with me* program for young hispanic children at risk and their parents
 Psychoeducational group therapy for bipolar patients
 Psychoeducational group therapy for alzheimers caregivers
 Psychoeducational program for caretakers of abused children

Treatment program evaluations cont'd

Psychoeducational program for diabetic adolescents and their parents
 Psychoeducational program for parents adopting abused/neglected children
 Randomized evaluation of a six-week grief curriculum for bereaved parents
 Relationship-centered child care (2)
 Second opportunity for success
 Support program for high risk hispanic families
 Therapeutic assessment and treatment outcome
 Therapy of children with autism

Project Settings

Austin Street Centre (3)
 Autism Treatment Centers (2)
 AVANCE-Dallas
 Child Abuse Prevention Center
 Child and Family Guidance Center
 Child Care Group
 Dallas Children's Advocacy Center (2)
 Dallas County Community Supervision and Corrections Department
 Duke University Medical Center, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
 The Family Place (2)
 First 3 Years – Julie Anne Mason Memorial Lecture (12)
 Galaxy Counseling Center (2)
 Lena Pope Home, Inc.
 Life Net Community Behavioral Health Care
 Sam Houston State University
 Southern Methodist University, Psychology Department (8)
 Texas Christian University, Department of Social Work
 Texas Christian University, Developmental Research Lab
 Texas Christian University, Psychology Department
 Texas Tech University, Couple, Marriage, and Family Therapy (CMFT) Program
 University of North Texas, Department of Rehabilitation & Health Services
 University of North Texas, Psychology Department (6)
 University of Notre Dame
 University of Texas at Arlington, Psychology Department (11)
 University of Texas at Dallas, The Center for Children and Families at UTD (10)
 University of Texas at Dallas, School of Human Development (7)
 University of Texas at Dallas, School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences (12)
 UT Southwestern Medical Center, Center for Autism & Developmental Disorders
 UT Southwestern Medical Center, Center for Depression, Research and Clinical Care
 UT Southwestern Medical Center, Children's Medical Center (3)
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