

LEAH M. HOLLE

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EDUCATION

- PhD** **University of Connecticut** August 2021-Present
PhD in Social Work
- **Dissertation Title:** *A Mixed-Methods Study Investigating the Intersection of Religious Trauma and Disordered Eating in Womxn and Gender Expansive Individuals*
 - **Committee:** Dr. Cristina Mogro-Wilson (chair), Dr. Gio Iacono, Dr. Jennifer Bird
- MAR** **Yale University** May 2018
Master of Arts in Religion
Concentration in Clinical Pastoral Care and Counseling
- MSW** **University of Connecticut** May 2017
Master of Social Work
Concentration in Clinical Casework: Mental Health & Substance Abuse
- BA** **Greensboro College** May 2014
Bachelor of Arts: Psychology and Religion
Minors: French and Humanities
Graduated Magna Cum Laude

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

- Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)**
State of Connecticut Department of Public Health
License #10600
- Certified Eating Disorder Specialist (CEDs)**
International Association of Eating Disorder Professionals (iaedp)
- Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR) Certification**
EMDR International Association: EMDR trained, 2020: certification pending
- Accelerated Resolution Therapy Certification**
International Society of Accelerated Resolution Therapy: Basic Training, 2019
- Supervision in Field Instruction (SIFI) Certification**
Quinnipiac University School of Social Work, 2022-2023

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Young Alumni Award, Greensboro College** 2021
Recipient for demonstrating outstanding service and/or accomplishment in both personal/professional life.

Rootthbert Fellowship Awarded for a strong commitment to social justice through spiritual and holistic care in the field of mental health.	2016-2018
Department of Mental Health (DMHAS) Fellowship, UConn Recipient for clinical services provided to Young Adult Services program.	2016-2017
Distinguished Psychology Student Award, Greensboro College Recipient for research achievement within the field of Psychology.	2014
Excellence in Religious Thought Award, Greensboro College Recipient for distinguished levels of scholarship within the field of Religion.	2014
Community Impact Service Award, Greensboro College Recipient for outstanding leadership and service within Greensboro community.	2013
Taylor Dixon Scholarship Recipient, Greensboro College Awarded for a strong commitment to social justice through spiritual and holistic care in the field of mental health.	2012, 2013
Alpha Chi, Greensboro College Inducted into national honor society for academic excellence and scholarship.	2014
Psi Chi, Greensboro College Inducted into national honor society for significant academic achievements within the field of Psychology.	2014
Theta Alpha Kappa, Greensboro College Inducted into national honor society for significant academic achievements within the field of Religion and Theology.	2014

PUBLICATIONS

- Holle, L.,** (2024). The Emotional Well-Being of Hispanic Immigrants in the United States: Understanding the Impact of Traumatic Experiences and Coping Styles. *Social Work in Mental Health*.
- Iacono, G., **Holle, L. M.,** Loveland, E. K., Wu, E., Pan, C., Haggerty, T., ... & Bietsch, B. (2024). Supporting Sexual and Gender Diverse Young People: Exploring the Potential Benefit of the Tuned In! Intervention. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 1-16.
- Holle, L.,** Longo, E., & Mogro-Wilson, C. (2023). A Comparison in the Importance of Religious and Spiritual Beliefs among Latinx Parents of Children with Disabilities. *Journal of Disability & Religion*, 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23312521.2023.2197438>.
- Iacono, G., **Holle, L.,** Loveland, E., Borel, C., Horton, E., Olson, H., Craig, S. L., & Bietsch, B. (2023). Community-based participatory action research with LGBTQIA+ youth during the COVID-19 pandemic: Reflections from a collaborative autoethnography. *Qualitative Social Work*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/14733250231194783>

- Iacono, G., **Holle, L.**, Smith, J., Lin, H., Bietsch, B., & Watson, R. J. (2023). An exploratory analysis of overeating patterns among sexual and gender minority youth. *Social Work in Mental Health*, , 1-21. 10.1080/15332985.2023.2239409
- Holle, L. (2021).** Take This Bread, Break This Body: Religion as a Risk Factor in the Development of Anorexia Nervosa [Master's thesis, UCONN].
- Holle, L. (2018).** (Re)constructing a Holistic Theology of Liberation: An analysis of the intersection of mental health practice and liberation theology [Master's Thesis, Yale University].
- Holle, L. (2014).** A Psychological Diagnosis of Apostle Paul [Undergraduate Honors Thesis, Greensboro College]. *Greensboro College Honors Archive*.

UNDER REVIEW

- Holle, L. (2025).** Exploring the Role of Social Work in the “Obesity Epidemic”: Christian Ideology, Moralization and Agents of Social Control. *Critical Social Work*.
- Iacono, G., **Holle, L.**, & Aguilar, J. (2024). Unpacking Neutrality in Social Work Education: Exploring Twitter Responses to Anti-Trans Legislation. *Social Work*.
- Bietsch, B., Iacono, G., & **Holle, L.** (2024) Re-constructing the Obesity ‘Epidemic’: Dismantling the Dominant Discourse Through Social Advocacy and Empowerment. *International Journal of Social Work Values & Ethics*.

PEER REVIEWED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Holle, L. (2025, January).** Comparing the Importance of Religious and Spiritual Beliefs and Practices Among Latinx Parents of Children with Disabilities [Poster Presentation]. Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR). Seattle, WA.
- Iacono, G., Evans, S., Loveland, E., **Holle, L.**, Pan, C., & T. Haggerty (2025, January). Exploring the Use of a Critical Mindfulness Pedagogy to Sustain Difficult Dialogue in Social Work Education [Poster Presentation]. Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR). Seattle, WA.
- Holle, L. (2024, October).** Towards a More Comprehensive Understanding of the “Obesity Epidemic”: Implications for Social Workers [Paper Presentation]. Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Kansas City, MO.
- Holle, L.**, Longo, E., & Mogro-Wilson, C. (2024, October). A Comparison of Religious and Spiritual Beliefs Among Latinx Parents of Children with Disabilities [Paper Presentation]. Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Kansas City, MO.
- Iacono, G., **Holle, L.**, Loveland, E., Evans, S., Pan, C., & Haggerty, T., (2024, June). Fostering Mental Health, Embodied Cognition, and Intersubjectivity in LGBTQIA+ Youth Amid Current Anti-LGBTQIA+ Political Attacks: A Pilot Study of Tuned In! - an Affirmative Mindfulness-Based Intervention [Poster Presentation]. International Society for Contemplative Research (ISCR) 2nd Annual Conference. Padova, Italy.
- Iacono, G., Loveland, E., **Holle, L.**, Pan, C., Evans, S., & Haggerty, T., (2024, June). Fostering Mental Well-Being and Empowerment in LGBTQIA+ Youth Amidst Current Anti-LGBTQIA+ Political Attacks: A Pilot Study of an Affirmative Mindfulness-Based Group Intervention [Oral Presentation]. 2024 IASWG International Symposium. Madrid, Spain.
- Iacono, G., Loveland, E., Evans, S., **Holle, L.**, E., Pan, C., & Haggerty, T. (2024, June). CBPAR Autoethnography on Group Intervention Process [Oral Presentation]. 2024 IASWG International Symposium. Madrid, Spain.

- Iacono, G., **Holle, L.**, Evans, S., Loveland, E., Pan, C., & Haggerty, T. (2024, June). Understanding Overeating Patterns Among Sexual and Gender Minority Youth: An Exploratory Analysis of Factors [Oral Presentation]. LGBTQ Research Symposium 2024. Virtual.
- Iacono, G., Pan, C., Haggerty, T., Evans, S., Loveland, E., & **Holle, L.**, (2024, June). Unpacking Neutrality in Social Work Education: Exploring Twitter Responses to Anti-Trans Legislation [Oral Presentation]. LGBTQ Research Symposium 2024. Virtual.
- Iacono, G., Loveland, E., Evans, S., **Holle, L.**, Pan, C. & Haggerty, T., (2024, June). Fostering Joy and Finding Community: Findings from a Collaborative Autoethnography with LGBTQIA+ Youth Community Based Participatory Action Research [Oral Presentation]. LGBTQ Research Symposium 2024. Virtual.
- Iacono, G., **Holle, L.**, Loveland, E., Bietsch, B., Craig, S., Smith, J., & Horton, E., (2024, January). Community-Based Participatory Action Research with LGBTQIA+ Youth in the Time of COVID-19: Findings from a Collaborative Autoethnography [Symposium – Paper Presentation]. Society for Social Work and Research. Washington D.C, United States.
- Iacono, G., Aguilar, J., & **Holle, L.**, (2024, January). Unpacking Neutrality Discourse in Social Work: Exploring Twitter Responses to Anti-Trans Legislation [Poster Presentation]. Society for Social Work and Research. Washington D.C, United States.
- Iacono, G., **Holle, L.**, Smith, J., Lin, H.S., Bietsch, B. & Watson, R., (2024, January). Understanding Overeating Patterns Among Sexual and Gender Minority Youth: An Exploratory Analysis of Factors [Poster Presentation]. Society for Social Work and Research. Washington D.C, United States.
- Iacono, G., **Holle, L.**, Aguilar, J., Switz, M., & Smith, J. (2023, October)., Unpacking Neutrality in Social Work Education: Exploring Twitter Responses to Anti-Trans Legislation [Oral Paper]. CSWE Annual Conference Program Meeting. Atlanta, GA, United States.
- Iacono, G., Smith, J., Carolan, K., Lester-Harriat, R., Loveland, E., & **Holle, L.** (2023, May)., Cultivating Peer Support in Higher Education: Enduring the COVID-19 Pandemic [Presentation]. International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry. Urbana, IL, United States.
- Holle, L.**, & Reim Ifrach, W. (2021, June). The Ethical Treatment of Bodies: Intersectional Social Justice in Multidisciplinary Eating Disorder Treatment [Oral Presentation]. iaedp Annual Research Symposium. Virtual.

ACADEMIC TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Connecticut, School of Social Work – MSW Program

- **Course Instructor:** IGFP 5301 Spring 2025, 2026
 - Practice with Individuals, Groups, and Families- in-person
- **Course Instructor:** BASC 5333 Spring 2024
 - Research Methods- online (synchronous)
- **Course Instructor:** BASC 5391 Fall 2023, 2024, 2025
 - Micro Foundation Practice – in-person

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Clinical Evaluation Specialist | University of Connecticut 2023-2025

Tuned In! Principal Investigators: Dr. Gio Iacono

- **Objectives:** To scale-up previous intervention (see below) to a national RCT study across multiple sites and oversee research team.

Responsibilities: Coordinate all study activities; conduct literature reviews; study design and develop ethics protocols; participating in hiring and training; participating in managing research assistants; assist in the development of funding proposals; participate in developing measures and surveys for online data collection; participant recruitment; conduct interventions; participate in data entry and cleaning, as well as data coding and analysis (qualitative/quantitative); community dissemination; preparing reports and presentations.

Graduate Research Assistant | University of Connecticut 2021-2023
Tuned In! Principal Investigator: Dr. Gio Iacono

- **Objectives:** To provide a virtual mental health group as a COVID-19 rapid-response service, informed by empirically supported mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs), to youth and young adults (16-29) who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, etc. (LGBTQIA) in Connecticut (CT), that are isolated and at increased mental and sexual health risks as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Responsibilities: Coordinate study activities; assist in outreach and recruitment of participants; develop measures for data collection; data entry and cleaning; data coding and analysis (qualitative and quantitative).

Master Thesis | University of Connecticut 2017
 Advisor: Dr. Antonia Cordero

- *Take This Bread, Break This Body: Religion as a Risk Factor in the Development of Anorexia Nervosa*

Honors Thesis | Greensboro College 2014
 Advisor: Dr. Jennifer Bird

- *A Psychological Diagnosis of Apostle Paul*

NBCC Foundation | Greensboro, NC 2014
 Research Intern

- *IMPACT! Research Study*
 - Developed a system of assessment to through mixed-methods to assess the direct impact of scholarship and fellowship recipients. Analyzed collected data, and represented results in reports, and presented to the Board of Trustees to secure funding.

FUNDING & AWARDS

Currently Funded Pre-Doctoral Awards:

University of Connecticut's Sterling Pre-Dissertation Travel Scholarship (\$750)	2024
University of Connecticut's Research Facilitation Fund Fellowship (\$1500)	2024
University of Connecticut's Predoctoral Fellowship (\$1041)	2024
PhD Student Professional Development Fellowship (\$1000)	2024
UConn Graduate School Conference Participation Award (\$750)	2025

Submitted:

UConn Graduate School Summer Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship (\$2000)	2025
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UConn School of Social Work Dissertation Research Fellowship (\$5000)	2025
InCHIP Dissertation Assistantship (\$16,727.69)	2025
Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship (\$30,000)	2025

Submitted, Not Funded:

Holle, L., & Iacono, G. (Co-PI's). National Eating Disorder Association (NEDA) Feeding Hope Fund. “Investigating the Intersection of Religious Trauma and Eating Disorders Among Cisgender, Transgender and Gender Diverse Female Identities: Utilizing Surveys and Photovoice to Inform Clinical Interventions.” 2 years, \$50,000, submitted October 2024.

Holle, L., & Iacono, G. (Co-PI's). National Eating Disorder Association (NEDA) Feeding Hope Fund. “Investigating the Intersection of Religion and Eating Disorders Among Cisgender, Transgender and Gender Diverse Female Identities: Utilizing Surveys and Photovoice to Inform Interventions for Clinical Practice.” 2 years, \$50,000, submitted October 2023.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

BHcare

Clinical Supervisor – Young Adult Services *December* *2023-Present*

| Branford/Ansonia, CT

- Fulfills all tasks of Young Adult Services Clinician while providing clinical supervision and management of YAS Clinicians across sites.
- Completes intakes, enrollments, and coordinate staff assignment of new YAS clients.
- Interviews and hires YAS staff and provides initial orientation and training for clinical staff.
- Participates in on-going development of program policies, procedures, and processes.
- Assists with Quality Assurance and Improvement activities as related to program needs and requirements.
- Formally evaluates staff and assists in improving performance, including introductory and annual performance evaluations.
- Co-founder of LGBTQIA+ affirming committee for youth and young adults.
- Member of person-centered care committee, community advisory board and AFFIRM.

YAS Clinical Team Lead *November 2020-December 2023* | Branford/Ansonia, CT

- Fulfills all tasks of Young Adult Services Clinician while providing clinical supervision to YAS Residential Clinician while focusing on program development.
- Provides training and onboarding for all staff, and serves as point-person across both sites.
- Assists Program Manager with daily operations of the program including employee reviews, auditing, compliance with DMHAS contract, and improving program processes.

Young Adult Services (YAS) Clinician *May 2018-November 2020* | Ansonia, CT

- Performs clinical/risk assessments, intakes, evaluations, and discharge planning.
- Facilitates individual, group, and family psychotherapy with young adults.
- Creates and implements person-centered, integrated and strengths-based recovery plans.
- Provides emergency assessment, mobile involvement and crisis intervention when necessary.
- Leads weekly meetings within the Young Adult Transitional Housing Program to provide clinical training and comprehensive care to clients through support of counseling staff.

Young Adult Services Clinician Intern *September 2016-April 2017* | Ansonia, CT

- Performed clinical assessments, intakes, evaluations, and discharge planning.

- Conducted individual psychotherapy with young adults and facilitated family sessions.
- Conducted group psychotherapy for the Dual-Diagnosis IOP and Symptom Management IOP.

LOTUS COUNSELING OF CONNECTICUT

Eating Disorder Specialist June 2019-September 2021 | Watertown, CT

- Predominantly treats people living with complex trauma, body image issues, and eating conditions.
- Completes trauma-informed care through intakes, individual and family therapy sessions.
- Addresses social injustices through activist and empowerment strategies on micro and macro levels.

THE CONNECTION, INC.

Therapist I October 2017-March 2018 | New Haven, CT

- Served as primary clinician working in a community outpatient setting with chronic psychiatric, substance abuse, and low socioeconomic conditions in adults.
- Provided individual, family, couples, and group psychotherapy, while managing a caseload of over sixty clients.
- Managed and served as a primary clinician within the Women's Trauma-Informed Dual Diagnosis IOP.
- Conducted intake assessments, and implemented person-centered/strengths-based recovery plans.

CENTER FOR DISCOVERY

PHP/IOP Primary Therapist April 2017-October 2017 | New Haven, CT

Consulting Therapist October 2017-March 2018 | New Haven, CT

- Completed the Biopsychosocial assessment, and Comprehensive Treatment Plan upon admission into the eating disorder and/or mental health IOP/PHP for adolescents.
- Conducted individual psychotherapy sessions and conjoint family psychotherapy sessions.
- Led process-oriented, skills-based, and psychoeducational groups.
- Interfaced with insurance companies, providing appropriate clinical information to obtain initial certification and continuing certification as required.

Eating Disorder Coordinator June 2016-April 2017 | New Haven, CT

- Ensured that the staff receives appropriate training and maintain the necessary level on competence required.
- Responsible for assuming that the facility runs smoothly, oversaw staff, and managed supplies.
- Served as liaison between Corporate HR department in delivery of HR services to staff at facility.
- Led psychoeducational, process and holistic group therapy with adolescent clients.

Residential Counselor III February 2015- June 2016 | Fairfield, CT

- Provided effective treatment for adult women with eating disorders and co-occurring diagnoses.
- Supported and assisted clients through entire treatment experience from admission to discharge.
- Led group therapy treatment sessions and engaged in crisis management in the milieu.

NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

High School Social Work Intern

August 2015-June 2016 | New Haven, CT

- Facilitated individual counseling sessions to meet emotional, educational, and psychological needs.
- Created, fundraised, and built a “Coping Corner” based in DBT interventions within Student Services, and led weekly “Coping Skills” groups.
- Conducted necessary intake interviews, assessments, and annual reviews.

ALAMANCE REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

Chaplain

May 2015- August 2015 | Burlington, NC

- Provided spiritual care throughout the hospital for patients, families and staff.
- Offered interfaith counseling, and served as a pastoral caregiver in cultural/faith diversity, advance care planning, major life transitions, end of life medical decision-making, and grief processing.
- Collaborated with multi-disciplinary team members to facilitate comprehensive and integrated holistic care.

PRESENTATIONS, TRAININGS AND LECTURES

Bridgport School District, “The Impact of Trauma and Implementation of Effective Interventions” [Oral Training/Presentation – 5 hours]. Sacred Heart University, Spring 2025.

University of Connecticut School of Social Work, “Survey: U.S Immigrants, Physical health and Emotional Well-Being” [Oral Presentation]. UCONN SSW, Fall 2024.

BHcare, “Young Adult Services Program Spotlight” [Oral Presentation]. BHcare, Spring 2024.

BHcare, “Overview of Young Adult Services” [Oral Presentation]. BHcare—Community Advisory Council, Fall 2023.

BHcare, “The Diet Myth: Role of the Diet Cycle, Culture of Thinness and Food Police within Disordered Eating” [Oral Training/Presentation]. BHcare, Spring 2022.

Lotus Counseling of Connecticut, “ED 101: Learning Comprehensive Clinical Care” [Oral Training/Presentation]. Virtual. 2020.

University of Connecticut, “ED 101” [Oral Training/Presentation]. Clinical Conditions in Adults, Spring 2017.

George Center for Honors Study, “A Psychological Diagnosis of Apostle Paul” [Oral Presentation]. Greensboro College, 2014.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

iaedp Chapter Member | 2020- Present

EMDRIA Member | 2020-Present

Society for Social Work Research Member | 2023-Present

International Association for Social Work with Groups (IASWG) Member | 2024- Present

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Youth-Focused Gender Affirming Care Committee Chair

BHcare | June 2023—Present

AFFIRM Committee Chair

BHcare | January 2023—Present

Person Centered Care Team Member

BHcare | January 2023—Present

Community Advisory Board Co-Leader

BHcare | January 2023 – September 2024

Team-Based Care Work Group Member – Young Adult Services

BHcare | March 2024—January 2025

MSW Intern Supervisor

BHcare | September 2022-Present

Clinical Supervisor

Fair Haven Community Health Center | September 2021-2022

Project Heal Partner

Project Heal | 2020-2022

Research Co-Chair

iaedp New Haven/Hartford Chapter | 2020-2022

Peer Partner

University of Connecticut | 2016

OTHER

Studied abroad at Université de Moulay Ismail in Meknès, Morocco for 2013 fall semester, and studied monotheistic religions, gender and sexuality.