

CURRICULUM VITAE

KRISTEN ALICIA GURDAK, Ph.D., LCSW

CURRENT APPOINTMENT

Assistant Professor

Phyllis & Harvey Sandler School of Social Work, Florida Atlantic University

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work 2023

New York University

Silver School of Social Work, New York, NY

Dissertation: *Stigma in the Context of Communities for Individuals with Serious Mental Illnesses: Unpacking the Why, What, How, and Who*

Committee Chair: Rohini Pahwa, PhD

Committee Members: Deborah Padgett, PhD and Ana Stefancic, PhD

Master of Social Work *Summa Cum Laude* 2014

Barry University

School of Social Work, Miami Shores, FL

Concentration: *Clinical Track*

Bachelor of Social Work 2013

Florida Atlantic University

College of Design and Social Inquiry, Boca Raton, FL

RESEARCH INTERESTS & SPECIALIZATION

- Stigma
- Community Integration
- Mental Illness
- Homelessness
- Participatory Research
- Qualitative Methodology
- Cross-Cultural Analysis
- Global Perspectives

FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AND AWARDS

Pending **Fulbright Scholar Award**
Project: “*Margins Made Visible: Roma Women, Stigma, and the Limits of Policy*”

2018-2022 **Ph.D. Program Research Fellowship**
New York University, Silver School of Social Work

FUNDED RESEARCH

Pending **Youth on the Margins: A Transatlantic Ethnographic Exploration of Youth Experiencing Homelessness**

Pending	<p>Principle Investigator: Dr. Kristen Gurdak</p> <p>Funding: NSF Sociology Program - National Science Foundation</p> <p>Amount: \$207,843</p> <p>Description: This project aims to document the lived experiences, spatial navigation, social capital, and identity formation of youth experiencing homelessness (YEH) through ethnographic methods. Using participant observation, interviews, mapping, and digital ethnography methods, it will explore youth homeless culture, stigma, resilience, spatial navigation, relationships, public resource utilization, and individual expression, contributing to humanities scholarship and informing policies on marginalization and community belonging.</p>
	<p>Building Psychological Safety to Promote Equitable Community Conditions: Narrative Change Around Youth Experiencing Homelessness</p> <p>Principle Investigator: Dr. Kristen Gurdak</p> <p>Funding: Exploring Equitable Futures - Robert Wood Johnson Foundation</p> <p>Amount: \$397,894</p> <p>Description: This project examines how psychological safety can promote healthy community conditions for youth experiencing homelessness. Using Clark's four stages of psychological safety and narrative change methods, we will partner with youth to co-create public messages, shift deficit-based narratives, and develop a toolkit for service providers. Through participatory research and community engagement, the project aims to build trust, reduce stigma, and advance equitable, youth-centered systems of care.</p>
Pending	<p>Recovery Partners: Enhancing Friend and Family Supports for Addiction Recovery Through Co-Produced Digital Education and Media</p> <p>Principle Investigator: Dr. Dane Minnick</p> <p>Co-I: Dr. Kristen Gurdak</p> <p>Funding: RFA-DA-26-024: Engaging Loved Ones in Recovery Processes to Enhance Recovery Capital and Outcomes (R61/R33 Clinical Trial Optional) - National Institute on Drug Abuse</p> <p>Amount: \$1,881,262</p> <p>Description: This proposal aims to develop and evaluate a co-produced digital intervention designed to empower the loved ones of individuals in recovery from substance misuse to become 'Recovery Partners.' The Recovery Partners Program (RPP) combines a self-paced digital curriculum with training videos to equip participants with the knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively support their loved ones in recovery, mitigate vicarious trauma, and promote personal well-being. By leveraging scalable digital platforms, the program enhances recovery capital and improves recovery outcomes.</p>

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2025-Present	<p>Co-Investigator</p> <p>Project: Housing Leadership Academy</p> <p>Principal Investigator: Dr. Dani Groton</p> <p>Funding: Palm Beach County</p>
2024-Present	<p>Co-Investigator</p> <p>Project: Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS</p> <p>Principle Investigator: Dr. Dani Groton</p> <p>Funding: U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development</p>
2020-2022	<p>Dissertation Research</p> <p>Project: Community Integration of Individuals with Serious Mental Illness: A Network</p>

	Perspective from India and United States Principle Investigator: Dr. Rohini Pahwa Title: <i>Influences on Internalized Stigma: Exploring Community Integration Factors and Social Networks.</i>
2020-2022	Dissertation Research Project: Community Integration of Individuals with Severe Mental Illness: A consumer perspective with ACT clients in New York Principle Investigator: Dr. Rohini Pahwa Title: <i>“You got it on you”: How the Experience of Community is Influenced by Stigma</i>
2020-2022	Dissertation Research Project: Community Integration of Individuals with Severe Mental Illness: A consumer perspective with clients on FSP and RRR Principle Investigator: Dr. Rohini Pahwa Title: <i>Who is a Source of Stigma: Examining Sources of Stigma for Individuals with SMIs using Social Network Data and Multiple Case Study Analysis</i>
2018-2019	Research Assistant Project: Effectiveness of Youth Rapid Rehousing Program Principle Investigator: Dr. Robin Petering Funding: Point Source Youth
2017-2018	Research Assistant Program: Pathways Housing First Institute Supervisor: Dr. Sam Tsemberis & Dr. Ana Stefancic
2017-2019	Research Assistant Project: Peer-led Group Lifestyle Balance Effectiveness and Implementation Principle Investigator: Dr. Leopoldo Cabassa & Dr. Robert Fernandez Funding: National Institute of Health R01 Grant

PUBLICATIONS

*-Student Mentorship

1. **Gurdak, K.**, Pahwa, R., & Thorning, H. (submitted). “You got it on you”. How the experience of community is influenced by stigma. *Journal of Community Psychology*
2. **Gurdak, K.**, Pahwa, R., Brekke, J., & Kelly, E. (submitted). The role of stigma within social networks for individuals with serious mental illnesses: An inductive model. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*
3. **Gurdak, K.**, Rood, G.*, Conley, B., & Bond, L. (submitted). Community integration among youth experiencing homelessness: A scoping review. *Journal of Social Distress & Homelessness*
4. Fogel, S., Groton, D., & **Gurdak, K.** (2025). Understanding what makes them stay: Retention in the front-line homeless workforce. *Journal of Social Service Research* (51)2, 529-542.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2025.2460116>
5. Modani, A., **Gurdak, K.**, Al Neyadi, L., Smith, M., Kelly, E., Thorning, H., Brekke, J., & Pahwa, R. (2024). “Because I am a female”: Stigma and safety perspectives from racially/ethnically diverse women with serious mental illness. *Community Mental Health*. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s10597-024-01346-8>
6. **Gurdak, K.**, Bond, L., Padgett, D., & Petering, R. (2022). Transitioning to independent living: Experiences of homeless young adults in rapid re-housing. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 92, 102076. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2022.102076>
7. Padgett, D., **Gurdak, K.**, & Bond, L. (2022). The “high cost of low living”: Substance use recovery among older formerly homeless adults. *Substance Abuse*, 43(1), 56-63.
<http://doi.org/10.1080/08897077.2020.1734713>

8. Stefancic, A., Bochiccho, L., Tuda, D., **Gurdak, K.**, & Cabassa, L. (2021). Participant experiences with a peer-led healthy lifestyle intervention for people with serious mental illness. *Psychiatric Services in Advance*, 72(5), 530-538. <http://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ps.202000311>
9. **Gurdak, K.**, Tiderington, E., & Stefancic, A. (2020). Community integration when moving on from permanent supportive housing. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 48(6), 1913-1928. <http://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.22389>
10. Padgett, D., Bond, L., **Gurdak, K.**, Henwood, B. (2019). Eliciting life priorities of older adults living in permanent supportive housing. *Gerontologist*, 60(1), 60-68. <http://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnz040>
11. Bochiccho, L., Stefancic, A., **Gurdak, K.**, Swarbrick, M., & Cabassa, L. (2018). "We're all in this together": Peer-specialist contributions to a healthy lifestyle intervention for people with serious mental illness. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 46(3), 298-310. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s10488-018-0914-6>

BOOK CHAPTERS & REVIEWS

1. Bond, L. & **Gurdak, K.** (submitted). Assessment & treatment people with substance use disorders who are experiencing homelessness. In L. Straussner & S. Steen (Eds.), *Clinical practice with clients with substance use disorders* (4th Ed.). Guilford Press.
2. Tsemberis, S. & **Gurdak, K.** (2019). Housing First: From streets to homes to the world. In Christian Laval (Ed.), *Housing First: Beyond homelessness and psychiatry*. Paris, France: University Press of France.
3. **Gurdak, K.** (2018). Housing, citizenship, and communities for people with severe mental illness. [Review of the book *Housing, citizenship, and communities for people with severe mental illness*, by Sylvestre, J., Nelson, G., & Aubry, T.]. *Journal of Evidence-Informed Social Work*, 15(1), 95-97. <http://doi.org/10.1080/23761407.2017.1389328>

MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION

*-Student Mentorship

1. Colvin, M., Groton, D., **Gurdak, K.**, George, S., & Lawrence, C.* (in progress). *More than just numbers: Strengthening data collection and reporting in community collaborations*. Unpublished manuscript.

DOMESTIC PRESENTATIONS

1. Modani, A., **Gurdak, K.**, Al Neyadi, L., Smith, M., Kelly, E., Thorning, H., Brekke, J., & Pahwa, R. (2025, January). "Because I am a female": Stigma and safety perspectives from racially/ethnically diverse women with serious mental illness. Presented at the Society of Social Work Research Conference 2025.
2. **Gurdak, K.**, Pahwa, R., Smith, M., Kelly, E., Thorning, H., & Brekke, J. (2025, January). *Who is a source of stigma: Examining stigmatizing social network members for those with serious mental illness using multiple methods*. Presented at the Society of Social Work Research Conference 2025.
3. **Gurdak, K.**, Pahwa, R., & Thorning, H. (2024, January). "You got it on you": How the experience of community is influenced by stigma. Presented at the Society of Social Work Research Conference.
4. **Gurdak, K.**, Tiderington, E., & Stefancic, A. (2020, April). *Community integration and moving on from supportive housing*. Presented at the Housing First Partners Conference.
5. Padgett, D., **Gurdak, K.**, & Bond, L. (2020, January). *Life course perspective on substance use recovery among formerly homeless older adults*. Presented at the Society for Social Work Research Conference.

6. Padgett, D. & **Gurdak, K.** (2019, June). *Implementing community-driven research and evaluation in youth programs*. Presented at the National Symposium on Solutions to End Youth Homelessness.
7. Cabassa, L., Stefancic, A., Bochicchio, L., & **Gurdak, K.** (2019, April). *Clients' experiences with a peer-led healthy lifestyle intervention in supportive housing*. Presented at the Schizophrenia International Research Society.

INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

1. **Gurdak, K.** & Bond, L. (2025, November). *Community integration among youth experiencing homelessness: A scoping review*. Presented at the European Housing First Partners Conference in Berlin, Germany.
2. Bond, L., Dean J., & **Gurdak, K.** (2019, May). Plenary co-speaker at the Ending Homelessness Conference in Amsterdam, Netherlands.
3. Bond, L., Dean, J., & **Gurdak, K.** (2019, May). *Social Action Through Social Media to End Homelessness*. Presented at the Ending Homelessness Conference in Amsterdam, Netherlands.

DOMESTIC TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Fall 2025 – Present	Assistant Professor , Florida Atlantic University, School of Social Work
Spring 2025	Guest Lecture , University of South Florida, Mental Health Law and Policy Department
Spring 2024 – Summer 2025	Visiting Assistant Professor , Florida Atlantic University, School of Social Work
Fall 2020 – Spring 2021	Adjunct Lecturer , New York University, School of Social Work
Spring 2020 & Spring 2021	Guest Lecturer , New York University, School of Social Work
Spring 2020	Teaching Assistant , New York University, School of Social Work,

INTERNATIONAL TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Summer 2019	Guest Lecturer , University of Strathclyde, Glasgow
Spring 2019	Guest Lecturer , Hogeschool van Amsterdam, Social Work

PEDAGOGICAL TRAINING

2024	Certification in Effective Teaching Practice Framework Association of College & University Educators (ACUE)
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ACADEMIC & COMMUNITY SERVICE

2024	FAU Center for Peace, Justice, and Human Rights , Faculty Affiliate
2024	National Alliance on Mental Illness , Ambassador
2024	Mental Health Television Network , Psychology Contributor
2019-2020	PhD Program Committee , Student Representative - NYU
2019-2020	Doctoral Student Association , Secretary - NYU
2018-2019	Doctoral Student Association , Cohort Representative - NYU
2018	National Symposium on Solutions to End Youth Homelessness , Volunteer

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Member, Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA)

Member, Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR)

AD-HOC REVIEWER

2025- present **Ad Hoc Reviewer,** Center for Scientific Review Special Emphasis Panel (ZRG1 NV-U (90)), National Institutes of Health (NIH), Center for Deployment Psychology (May/June 2025)

2025- present **Editorial Board Member,** *Duvall Journal of Family and Community Health*

2025- present **Ad Hoc Reviewer,** *Journal of Community Psychology*

2024- present **Ad Hoc Reviewer,** *Social Sciences*

2024- present **Ad Hoc Reviewer,** *Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness*

2024- present **Ad Hoc Reviewer,** *Substance Use & Addiction Journal*

2023- present **Ad Hoc Reviewer,** *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health & Well-being*

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

2016-present **Owner & Therapist -** Seeking Self, LLC - Private Practice

2022-2023 **Director of Clinical Services -** Lifeskills South Florida - Residential Program

2021-2022 **Associate Clinical Director -** Lifeskills South Florida - Residential Program

2016-2017 **Director of Outpatient Services -** Lifeskills South Florida - Outpatient

2015-2016 **Primary Therapist -** Lifeskills South Florida - Outpatient

2014-2015 **Assistant Clinical Director -** Millenium Clinic - Community Mental Health

2013-2014 **Primary Therapist -** Third Step Behavioral Health - Community Mental Health

2012-2013 **Graduate Intern -** Ft. Lauderdale Behavioral Health Hospital - Psychiatric In-patient

CLINICAL LICENSURE & CERTIFICATIONS

Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) – Florida Board of Clinical Social Work

Qualified Supervisor for Clinical Social Work Interns – Florida Board of Clinical Social Work

Intensively Trained in Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) – A Linehan Institute Training Company

Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing (EMDR) – EMDR International Association