

AKHILA NEKKANTI

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EDUCATION

University of California Riverside
Riverside, CA

B.S. in Neuroscience

2016

Overall GPA: 3.257

AWARDS

Chancellor's Research Fellowship (\$5000)

June 2015 – June 2016

- Project Title: A longitudinal investigation of the effects of mindfulness meditation on stress responses and perceived coping self-efficacy in youth

Highlander Excellence Scholarship (\$4000)

September 2012 – June 2016

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

UC Riverside Emotion Regulation Lab; PI: Dr. Elizabeth Davis

June 2016 - Present

Research Associate and Lab Coordinator (20 hours/week)

- Interviewed, oriented, and trained incoming research assistants
- Established new scheduling and time logging system
- Redesigned and maintained lab website (erlab.ucr.edu)
- Acted as lead contact with research collaborators (Washington Irving Middle School and Tools for Peace) to coordinate data collection logistics and timeline
- Worked closely with research assistants to establish individual research and career goals
- Managed lab-wide data organization and cleaning
- Coordinated training and participant recruitment, contacting, and scheduling for ongoing data collection projects
- Coordinated and participated in data cleaning, processing, and coding
- Assisted the PI (Davis) with HRRB protocol preparation and organization (e.g., project descriptions, roster updates, lab visit logistics)
- Created manuals for data collection procedures and tech protocol
- Managed laboratory supplies and expenses
- Assisted with preparation of manuscripts and presentations

Project Manager and Research Assistant (15 hours/week)

Project: Mindfulness Meditation in Undergraduates

June 2014 – June 2016

- Worked closely with graduate students to improve existing pilot studies
- Created qualitative questionnaires and corresponding coding schemes to measure emotion regulation strategies and perceived self perception
- Collected quantitative (survey), qualitative(open-ended journal entries), and physiological (EKG and cortisol sampling) data from youth and undergraduates in lab, at a middle school, and at a summer setting
- Cleaned and coded EKG data to isolate RSA and PEP values
- Delegated data entry assignments and compiled final data into SPSS
- Analyzed data with SPSS (correlations, t-tests, regressions, mediators, etc.,)
- Coded qualitative responses for emotion regulation strategies
- Interviewed undergraduate and youth participants and collected physiological data
- Maintained participant contact via telephone and email correspondence

UC Riverside Positive Activities and Well-being Lab; PI: Sonja Lyubomirsky

Research Assistant (6 hours/week)

September – June 2015

Project: Mechanisms of Sustainable Change in Long-term Positive Affect

- Interpreted qualitative responses to open-ended questions to code for various aspects of humility
- Administered surveys to faculty and undergraduate participants
- Managed email correspondence with participants of on-going and prospective studies
- Collected physiological data (blood samples)

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Nekkanti, A., Parsafar, P., Shih, E. W., Sillars, A., Nicolaidis, C., Bishara, L., Witcher, L., Broom, N., Tools for Peace, & Davis, E. L. (May 2016). Mindfulness improves youths' emotional awareness by increasing emotion regulation. Poster session presented at: 28th Annual Association for Psychological Science Convention, Chicago, IL.

Nekkanti, A., Parsafar, P., Nicolaidis, C., Shih, E. W., Sillars, A., Bishara, L., Witcher, L., Price, J., Broom, N., Tools for Peace, & Davis, E. L. (April 2016). Mindfulness meditation training increases cognitive control and emotion regulation and decreases school avoidance for youth. Poster session presented at: 96th Annual Western Psychological Association Convention, Long Beach, CA.

Nekkanti, A., Parsafar, P., Shih, E. W., Sillars, A., Nicolaidis, C., Bishara, L., Witcher, L., Broom, N., Tools for Peace, & Davis, E. L. (February 2016). Mindfulness meditation training at a summer camp improves youths' stress management and coping self-efficacy. Poster session presented at: Bridging the Hearts and Minds of Youth Conference, San Diego, CA.

Shih, E. W., Bishara, L., Parsafar, P., Nicolaidis, C., Sillars, A., **Nekkanti, A.**, Price, J., Witcher, L., & Davis, E. L. (February 2016) The Effects of Mindfulness Meditation on Youth's Socioemotional Functioning and Psychophysiology. Symposium presented at the 2016 Annual Meeting of UC San Diego School of Medicine's Bridging the Hearts and Minds of Youth, San Diego, CA.

RESEARCH TALKS AND PUBLICATIONS

Nekkanti, A., Parsafar, P., & Davis, E. L. (2016). The effects of mindfulness meditation on adolescents' stress management. UC Riverside Undergraduate Research Journal.

UC Riverside, Undergraduate Research Symposium

Nekkanti, A. (May, 2016). *Promoting Mindfulness and Acceptance: How a Week-Long Meditation Training Program Influenced Youths' Coping Self Efficacy.*

Invited talk presented at Undergraduate Research Symposium, UC Riverside.

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

California Psychcare

Behavior Therapist (12 hrs/week)

June 2016 – Present

- Provide behavior management, discrete trial training, floor time, social skills, applied behavior analysis, and parent education to families with developmental disabilities
- Collect data and fulfilled program checklist
- Attend family clinic meetings and help improve program for individual cases

NON-PROFIT MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE

Tools for Peace – Mindfulness and Compassion Non-Profit for At-Risk Youth

Pasadena, CA

Management Intern (12 hours/week)

September 2016 - Present

- Build rapport with youth and families in a summer camp and middle-school setting to build strong relationships and improve assessments for research
- Develop methods to better assess emotional competency and stress management in youth
- Performed literature reviews to provide an empirical basis to new curricula and articles
- Lead the reorganization of donor and participant databases
- Lead the implementation and transition into Salesforce software
- Assisted in coding emotion language to improve how users can identify and check in with their emotions on the online app
- Managed social media and networking
- Assisted in creating newsletter