



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
College of Human Sciences

Human Development & Family Studies™

HDFS Spring 2016 COLLOQUIUM SERIES

Thursday, March 24, 2016

3:30 p.m.

Room 102

College of Human Sciences



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Assistant Professor - Psychological Sciences

Exploring an Identity-Related Risk Factor for Alcohol Misuse among Sexual Minority Women

Abstract:

The current research examined an identity-related predictor of heightened risk for the consumption of alcohol among women during sexual identity development, namely sexual self-concept ambiguity (SSA), which entails acknowledging inconsistent or seemingly disparate facets of one's own sexual orientation. Two experimental studies were employed to test the extent to which heightened SSA may contribute to alcohol-approach bias and ad lib alcohol consumption among women in

young adulthood. This first experiment ($n = 36$) showed that women who had been randomly assigned to reflect on their sexuality, as opposed to a control topic, demonstrated greater implicit alcohol-approach bias as their SSA scores increased, especially among those who reported motivations to use alcohol as a means to cope with negative affect. The second experiment ($n = 96$) found that after being randomly assigned to write about their sexuality, women who reported being motivated to use alcohol to cope with negative affect, increased in their actual ad lib alcohol consumption as levels of SSA increased. By contrast, after writing about their sexuality, women who reported lower motivations to drink to cope showed similar levels of alcohol consumption, regardless of levels of SSA. Findings suggest that sexual minority women, who endorse ambiguity with regard to their current sexual orientation, may be at risk for non-conscious approach toward alcohol cues and acute alcohol consumption in situations evoking greater attention toward their sexuality. Implications for substance-related disparities among individuals from LGBT+ communities will be discussed.

About Dr. Talley:

Amelia Talley, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology. She has been funded by NIH, has published 30 articles, and is the director of the Stigma, Health, and Applied Research Center (S.H.A.R.C). Her research activities are experimental psychology (social) with an emphasis in health psychology. She is specifically interested in understanding sexual behaviors that lead to increased alcohol abuse in females. Her research also incorporates projects that seek to understand the causes of HIV stigma and subsequent depression.