

# Janis Whitlock

## Web Bio

### Information

#### Biography

##### Biographical Statement

Janis Whitlock is a Research Scientist in the Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research. She is also the Director of the Cornell Research Program on Self-Injury and Recovery. She is the author of publications on non-suicidal self-injury in adolescence and young adulthood as well as in youth connectedness to schools and communities. She earned a doctorate in Developmental Psychology from Cornell University (2003) and a Masters of Public Health from UNC Chapel Hill (1994). In addition to research, she has worked in adolescent and women's health in a variety of clinical, administrative, and education-related capacities for over a decade. Her primary research focus includes development of early detection and intervention in mental health and wellbeing for youth in college and community settings, recovery from self-injurious behaviors, parental influence in and experience of young people's self-injury and suicidality, the relationship between connectedness and self-injury and suicide behaviors, and development and evaluation of interventions for youth and parents of self-injurious youth. She is currently pursuing a newer line of research related to the sexual health and development in the digital age and the interaction between mental health, development, and social media-linked behavior.

##### Department Website Summary

Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research:

[www.bctr.cornell.edu](http://www.bctr.cornell.edu)

#### Teaching

##### Teaching and Advising Statement

I annually advise 8-10 students through my research lab and another 3-4 in independent studies or honors theses. I see their involvement in my program as a gift to all of us since the vast majority of them are motivated, highly talented, and capable of significant focus when engaged. I believe strongly in coupling cognitive engagement with opportunities for applying concepts learned through development of materials, synthesis, and other concrete products useful for the project (e.g. materials that go onto our website for distribution). Students benefit through acquiring new skills and, in some cases, having reports or other

publications to add to their resume and the program benefits through their fresh perspective, ideas, and finished work. They also work in teams to accomplish these goals so benefit through new relationship ties and the shared learning that happens in this environment.

## **Professional**

### **Current Professional Activities**

My current professional agenda is dedicated to research, outreach, advising, and administration. My research revolves around young adult social and emotional health with a focus on connectedness, self-injury and suicide prevention and intervention development. I am also pursuing a new emphasis on sexual health and development in the digital age and the interaction between social media and wellbeing. I also regularly provide training and talks to youth serving professionals in and outside of university settings on issues germane to college mental health and young adult development.

## **Research**

### **Current Research Activities**

My current research is dedicated to exploration of the relationship between context, development, and behavior, with a focus on longitudinal assessment and development and testing of interventions. Although known for my work in non-suicidal self-injury, my current work focuses more broadly on health and wellbeing trajectories with particular interest in the relationship between meaning making, emotion regulation and development of adverse or productive coping capacity over time. Because of emergent findings from our work, focus on the role of parents in supporting recovery and wellbeing is becoming a new focus of research activity. This has generated international collaboration and local collaboration on the interaction of mental health and social media use. I am also working on two interventions that I anticipate will be released this year; one is geared toward youth professionals and the other to parents.

I have also launched a new research agenda related to adolescent sexual health in the digital era that I anticipate will begin to grow a lot this year.

## **Extension**

### **Current Extension Activities**

All of my research activities contain outreach components of value to the Cornell Extension mission. Since I feel strongly about the importance of disseminating information amassed through the research process, I work hard to find mechanisms for supporting the dissemination and outreach component. For example, students in our lab as well as professionals associated with our team develop "translational" products intended to make cutting edge science accessible to lay audiences through fact sheets, web-based power point presentations, and web accessible video segments. We add materials to this pool of resources every year. Materials have been designed for a broad constituency: individuals with self-injury history, parents, peers, and schools and other youth serving agencies seeking guidance about protocols for handling self-injury in institutional settings. Many of these fact sheets have been translated into multiple languages including French, German, and Spanish. The website receives over 7,000 unique visitors a month and our factsheets are downloaded multiple times a day. In addition, I regularly do talks to local and national groups, academics and non-academics, in areas related to my expertise and much of my youth-development and school climate-related research is conducted as part of university-community partnerships. All research findings are then made available to our partners and, through them, to the larger communities they affect.

## **Education**

### **Education**

2003. Ph.D., Human Development, Cornell University.

Dissertation: Voice, Visibility, Place, and Power: Correlates to School and Community Connectedness Among 8th, 10th and 12th Grade Youth

1994. MPH, Health Behavior & Health Education, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Masters Thesis: Helpless but not Hopeless: Parental Perspectives on Adolescent Dating Abuse

1988 B.A., Social Sciences Field Studies, University of California, Berkeley

Undergraduate Thesis: The Women's Self Help Movement: Ideology and Action.

## **Courses**

### **Courses Taught**

HD 3530: Risk and Opportunity in Childhood and Adolescence (not currently offered)

HD 4170: The Translation of Research Evidence into Practice and Policy

HD 6680: Seminar in translational research: Bridging research, programs and policies

## **Websites**

### **Related Websites**

Cornell Research Program on Self-Injury and Recovery:  
[www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu](http://www.selfinjury.bctr.cornell.edu)

## **Administration**

### **Administrative Responsibilities**

Within BCTR:

- Chair of the student engagement committee
- Liaison for BCTR with the Engaged Cornell initiative

Within Human Ecology:

- Faculty liaison for Cornell College of Human Ecology to Cornell Engaged Learning + Research initiative

Cornell

- Member Council on Sexual Violence Prevention
- Member Council of Sexual Violence Prevention Research and Evaluation Workgroup
- Member Council of Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Member Mental health Programmers workgroup

## **Publications**

### **Selected Publications**

Recent Publications (since 2012)

Whitlock, J. & Lloyd-Richarson, E. (under contract). Parents on the edge: Understanding and living with your child's self-injury. Oxford University Trade Press. New York, New York. Anticipated publication: 2017.

Paul E., Tsydes A., Ernhout C. , Eidlitz L., & Whitlock J. (in press). Associations of non-suicidal self-injury characteristics and suicidal thoughts and behaviors. *Psychiatry Research*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2014.12.026>

Bazarova, N. N., Choi, Y. H., Sosik, V., Cosley, D., & Whitlock, J. (in press). Social sharing of emotions on Facebook: Channel differences, satisfaction, and replies. *Computer-supported Cooperative Work (CSCW 2014)*, March 14-18, Vancouver, Canada.

- Kress, V., Newgent, R., Whitlock, J., Mease, L. (in press). Spirituality, life satisfaction, and life meaning: protective factors for non-suicidal self-injury. *Journal of College Counselling*.
- Whitlock, J.L., Exner-Cortens, D. & Purington, A. (2014). Validity and reliability of the non-suicidal self-injury assessment test (NSSI-AT). *Psychological Assessment* 26(3): 935-946.
- Whitlock, J.L., Wyman, P., & Moore, S. (2014). Connectedness and suicide prevention in adolescence. *Suicide and Life Threatening Behavior*. 44(3) 247-272.
- Whitlock, J.L. & Selekman, M. (2014). Non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) across the lifespan. In *Oxford Handbook of Suicide and Self-Injury*, edited by M. Nock. Oxford Library of Psychology, Oxford University Press.
- Whitlock, J. & Rodham, K. (2013). Understanding NSSI in youth. *School Psychology Forum*, 7(4): 93-110.
- Eisenberg, D., Golberstein, E., Whitlock, J. (2013). Peer Effects on Risky Behaviors: New Evidence from College Roommate Assignments. *Journal of health Economics*, 33: 126-132.
- Whitlock, J. Pietrusza, C. & Purington, A. (2013). Young adult respondent experiences of disclosing self-injury, suicide-related behavior, and psychological distress in a web-based survey. *Archives of Suicide Research*, 17(1): 20-32.
- Whitlock, J., Muehlenkamp, J., Eckenrode, J., Purington, A., Barrera, P., Baral-Abrams, G., Kress, V., Grace Martin, K, Smith, E., (2013). Non-suicidal self-injury as a gateway to suicide in adolescents and young adults. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 52(4): 486-492.
- Eisenberg, D., Golberstein, E., Whitlock, J., Downs, M. (2012). Social contagion of mental health: Evidence from college roommates. *Health Economics*, 22(8): 965-986.
- Muehlenkamp, J., Brausch, A., Quigley, B., Whitlock, J. (2012). Interpersonal features and functions of NSSI. *Suicide and Life Threatening Behavior*, 43(1): 67-80.
- Duggan, J.M., Whitlock, J. (2012). An Investigation of Online Behaviors: Self-Injury In Cyber Space. *Encyclopedia of Cyber Behavior*. IGI Global.