

# MELISSA STIKSMA, M.A.

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Department of Psychology  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, VA

## EDUCATION

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- Ph.D.            Expected 2020            **George Mason University**  
Industrial/Organizational Psychology  
*Advisors:* Lauren Kuykendall, Ph.D.  
Todd B. Kashdan, Ph.D.  
Patrick E. McKnight, Ph.D.
- M.A.            May 2015            **Florida Atlantic University**  
Psychology (Personality)  
*Advisor:* Ryne A. Sherman, Ph.D.
- B.A.            May 2013            **Wilkes Honors College** of Florida Atlantic University  
Major in Psychology, minor in Anthropology

## PUBLICATIONS

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- Kashdan, T.B., **Stiksma, M.C.**, Disabato, D.J., McKnight, P.E., Bekier, J., Kaji, J., & Lazarus, R. (in press). The five-dimensional curiosity scale: Capturing the bandwidth of curiosity and identifying four unique subgroups of curious people. *Journal of Research in Personality*.
- Goodman, F.R., **Stiksma, M.C.** & Kashdan, T.B. (2017). Goodman, F. R., Stiksma, M. C., & Kashdan, T. B. (2017). Social anxiety and the quality of everyday social interactions: The moderating influence of alcohol consumption. *Behavior Therapy*.
- Kashdan, T.B., Goodman, F.R., **Stiksma, M.C.**, Milius, C.R., & McKnight, P.E. (2017). Sexuality leads to boosts in mood and meaning in life with no evidence for the reverse direction: A daily diary investigation. *Emotion*.
- Kashdan, T. B., Doorley, J., **Stiksma, M. C.**, & Hertenstein, M. J. (2016). Discomfort and avoidance of touch: New insights on the emotional deficits of social anxiety. *Cognition and Emotion*.

## MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW

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- Kaczmarek, L., Kashdan, T.B., Kosakowski, J.G., & **Stiksma, M.C.** (invited resubmission). Gratitude booster: A brief technique to motivate individuals to complete a gratitude journaling intervention. *Journal of Research in Personality*.

## MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION

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- Stiksma, M.C.**, Kanai, M., Yukawa, S., McKnight, P.E., Sherman, R.A., & Vernon, L.L., The measurement of mindfulness: insights from a cross-cultural approach in American and Japanese students. Manuscript in preparation.

Goodman, F. R., **Stikma, M. C.**, Kashdan, T. B., & Blalock, D. V. Everyday strivings in people with social anxiety disorder. Manuscript in preparation.

### **SCIENTIFIC CONSULTANT WORK**

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**Thrive Global** (2017 – present). Serving as a co-lead researcher to 1) design and execute studies to improve the measurement and design of recovery, focusing on the role of email during leisure time and 2) test the efficacy of a Thrive Global recovery training program in Hilton Hotels & Resorts employees. *Collaborator*: Lauren Kuykendall

**Merck Group & Rabin Martin** (2016). Latent profile analysis of company measure of curiosity in employee and employer samples in China, Germany, and the United States. Prepared data, ran statistical analyses in Mplus, described profiles with relevant outcomes, prepared graphical representations for weekly phone call check-ins with client, and wrote final white paper report. *Lead Scientific Consultant*: Todd B. Kashdan, *Collaborator*: David J. Disabato

**Time, Inc.** (2016). Directly responsible for the construction and psychometric analysis of a novel five-dimensional scale of curiosity to assess consumers and advertisers' level of curiosity across all Time, Inc.'s products. Worked with data analysts and consultants, collected our own data, and participated in bi-weekly meetings with Time, Inc. representatives. *Lead Scientific Consultant*: Todd B. Kashdan

**National Geographic** (2015). Provided client with definition, related constructs, and measurement recommendations for program evaluation following a detailed literature review across disciplines, specifically for the content area of Observation and Responsibility. National Geographic used these recommendations in evaluating their museum programming. *Lead Scientific Consultant*: Todd B. Kashdan

**NOBA online psychology instruction** (2015). Freelance blog post for psychology undergraduates [Want to be a psychologist? Seek the unknown and get lost!](#)  
*Client*: Robert Biswas-Diener, Ph.D.

### **Invited Talks**

**Stikma, M.C.** & Goodman, F. R. (April 2017). *Perspectives and adaptive ways to respond to conflict*. Department of Health Administration and Policy at College of Health and Human Services, George Mason University.

**Stikma, M.C.** (November 2016). *Becoming the best possible version of yourself: A how-to guide*. Admissions Staff Professional Development, George Mason University.

Disabato, D.J. & **Stikma, M.C.** (September 2016). *An introduction to latent class and profile analysis in Mplus*. Department of Psychology Brown Bag Presentation, George Mason University.

**Stikma, M. C.** (February 2014). *How to succeed in STEM as a woman*. Florida Undergraduate Research Conference at Florida International University.

## **SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

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### **George Mason University, Fairfax, VA**

#### **Graduate Research Associate**

August 2015 – present

Laboratory for the Advancement of Well-Being

*Advisor:* Todd B. Kashdan, Ph.D.

Currently helping execute two funded data collection projects: one involving in-depth qualitative interviews on psychological flexibility and emotion regulation and another involving ecological momentary assessment in individuals with social anxiety disorder. I am also writing manuscripts on archival data on 1) the development of a measure of schadenfreude, 2) the role of daily routine in college students over four years of data, and 3) the measurement of mindfulness. I have also lead numerous projects with lab research assistants such as conference poster submissions and coding projects. Tasks involved: IRB, SONA administration, Qualtrics survey, communicating with collaborators, creative research design, statistical analyses, and manuscript preparation.

#### **Doctoral Research Fellow**

June 2016 – present

Center for the Advancement of Well-Being

*Supervisor:* Nance Lucas, Ph.D.

Coordinate with Gallup for implementation of alumni census and student survey. Analyze and prepare presentations from Gallup data for University task forces responsible for improving the well-being of students. Designed and executed study that examines the effect of resilience and belongingness interventions in freshmen in UNIV 100 courses. Collaborate with Communication Department for piloting strengths-based interventions. Coordinate all sponsored research activities. Administer assessment tool for all CWB academic courses, programs, and sponsored programs. Deliver presentations for departments on campus (i.e., Admissions Department) for increasing resilience and well-being. Serve as a graduate student representative on Learning Community meetings.

#### **Graduate Research Associate**

May 2017 - present

*Advisor:* Lauren Kuykendall, Ph.D.

Servings as lead for two on-going projects: 1) a grant-funded study examining the decision to use (not use) paid time off for vacation using social cognitive theory and 2) a meta-analysis on the relationship between email communication and recovery from work and subsequent well-being. Tasks involved: massive literature review and designing theoretical models, measurement development, IRB, statistical analyses, and manuscript preparation.

### **Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL**

#### **Master's Thesis**

2013 – 2015

*Title:* *An examination of relationships between mindfulness, personality, anxiety, and depression in American and Japanese college students.*

*Advisor:* Ryne A. Sherman, Ph.D.

Independent research utilizing NSF grant as principal investigator. Included design of study and IRB, collaboration with Japanese researchers, collecting data, analyzing the results with “R” statistical program, and writing conclusions based upon tests of measurement invariance, effect sizes, mediations, and correlations. Tasks involved:

independently supervising the survey administration and data collection using Qualtrics in English and Japanese.

**Graduate Research Assistantship - Center for Autism & Related Disabilities (CARD) 2013 – 2015**

*Supervisor:* Jack Scott, Ph.D. – Executive Director of C.A.R.D. & Associate Professor

Tasks involved: assisting events and focus group meetings, literature search and review, experiment design, IRB preparation

**Wilkes Honors College, Jupiter, FL**

**Senior Honors Thesis**

2012– 2013

Title: *Keep calm and carry on: An examination of outcomes following a single-session mindfulness meditation training.*

*Supervisor:* Laura L. Vernon, Ph.D.

Collaborative research project on the effects of a novel mindfulness meditation and psychoeducation session on emotion regulation, anxiety, and social relationships among an undergraduate population. Tasks involved: literature review, research design, designing psychoeducation session, IRB proposal, data collection, analyzing and interpreting data, dissemination at professional conferences

**Honors Directed Independent Research Study**

January 2012 – May 2012

*Supervisors:* Laura L. Vernon, Ph.D. and Julie Earles, Ph.D.

Mindfulness in equine-assisted therapy: aided with measure selection, IRB, literature review and other related research tasks. Senior honors thesis students: assisting with background literature review, IRB proposal, coding complex narratives, and researching equipment for lab.

**RESEARCH GRANTS**

**Funded Grants**

*“No rest for the working: Testing a social cognitive model of employees’ unused vacation days”*

Role: Research affiliate under Lauren Kuykendall, PhD

Agency: **George Mason University – Faculty Research and Development**

Dates: January – December 2018

Amount: \$5,000

*“Profiles of Emotion Regulation Across the World”*

Role: Co-Principal Investigator

Agency: **Psychology Department Diversity Committee – George Mason University**

Date: May 2016

Amount: \$1,700

Collaborator: Fallon R. Goodman

*“Psychological Flexibility in Daily Life”*

Role: Attended advanced statistical training in Applied Latent Class Modeling

Agency: **Psychology Department Research Provost Award – George Mason University**

Date: Spring 2016

Amount: \$2,000

Collaborators: David J. Disabato, Todd B. Kashdan, & Patrick E. McKnight

*“Translation of Japanese Mindfulness Qualitative Responses from Cross-Cultural Work”*

Role: Principal Investigator

Agency: **Psychology Department Diversity Committee – George Mason University**

Date: December 2015

Amount: \$500

*“A Cross-cultural Examination of Mindfulness, Personality, and Levels of Depression and Anxiety”*

Role: Principal Investigator

Agency: **National Science Foundation – East Asia & Pacific Summer Institute**

Dates: June – August 2014

Amount: \$15,000

This grant was co-funded by the National Science Foundation and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. I was funded as the Principal Investigator to design and execute proposed research at the host institution (University of Tsukuba) in Japan.

*“Keep calm and carry on: A multi-method approach to looking at the effects of mindfulness meditation on stress response, emotional regulation, personality, social relationships, and religiosity”*

Role: Co-Principal Investigator

Agency: **Florida Atlantic University – Undergraduate research grant**

Dates: October 2012

Amount: \$600

*“Heart rate responses to the stress of public speaking”*

Role: Co-Principal Investigator

Agency: **Florida Atlantic University – Undergraduate research grant**

Dates: October 2012

Amount: \$600

**SKILLS & TRAINING**

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**Statistical software and training**

SPSS (proficient), “R” (proficient), HLM (proficient), MPlus (novice)

“Applied Latent Class Analysis and Finite Mixture Modeling” - Todd Little’s Stats Camp (2016)

**Survey administration**

Qualtrics, MTurk, Survey Monkey

**Professional Training**

Institutional Review Board Training (May 2017)

*SafeZone Training* – program to maintain safe environments for LGBT individuals (Spring 2013)**CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

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Disabato, D.J. & Stiksmas, M.C. (2017, August). *A Step-by-Step Guide to Using Latent Profile Analysis in Psychological Research*. Presentation given at the American Psychological Association convention, Washington D.C.

Stiksmas, M.C., Goodman, F.R., Mehlenbeck, R. & Lucas, N. (2017, July). *Paying it forward: A brief intervention using college senior narratives to instill belongingness and resilience in freshmen*.

Presentation given at the annual congress of the International Positive Psychology Association, Montreal, Canada.

Milius, C. R., Goodman, F. R., **Stikma, M. C.**, Kashdan, T. B. (2017, January). *Sexuality and well-being in daily life: Nailing directionality*. Presentation given at the annual convention of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Antonio, TX.

**Stikma, M.C.** & Kashdan, T.B. (2016, October). *Touch and social anxiety: Which gender benefits more?* Presentation given at the Annual Data Blitz Meeting for the laboratory of Measurement, Research Methodology, Evaluation, and Statistics. Fairfax, VA.

**Stikma, M.C.** & Kashdan, T.B. (2016, July). *Giving distress tolerance the gift of context: An examination of daily situational factors and quadratic relationships in distress tolerance and psychological functioning*. Presentation given at the 31<sup>st</sup> International Congress of Psychology, Yokohama, Japan.

Quartuccio, J., Disabato, D. J., Franz, S., Alexander, L., Goodman, F. R., **Stikma, M. C.**, Blalock, D., McKnight, P.E., & Kashdan, T. B (2016, July). *Psychometrics of a scenario-based distress tolerance measure*. Presentation given at the 31st International Congress of Psychology, Yokohama, Japan.

**Stikma, M.C.** & Kashdan, T. B. (2016, April). *Being mindful of measurement: Cultural differences between Japan and the United States*. Presentation given at the Annual Data Blitz Meeting for the laboratory of Measurement, Research Methodology, Evaluation, and Statistics. Fairfax, VA.

## **POSTER PRESENTATIONS**

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**Stikma, M.C.**, Disabato, D.J., & Kashdan, T.B. (2018, March). *Well-being in the routine: examining the effects of college students' daily allocation of time on well-being, academic success, and social activity over four years*. To be presented at the Happiness & Well-Being Pre-conference of the annual convention of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Atlanta, Georgia.

**Stikma, M. C.**, Regalario, I., Brown, B., Ashraf, A., Lauber, M. D., Kashdan, T. B. (2018, March). Values and well-being at work: Dissecting the lives of elite government intelligence workers. To be presented at the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Atlanta, Georgia.

**Stikma, M.C.**, Goodman, F.R., Blalock, D.V., Kashdan, T.B. (2017, January). *Adverse ambitions: What types of goals predict lower levels of daily well-being?* Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Antonio, Texas.

**Stikma, M. C.**, Milius, C. R., Goodman, F. R., Blalock, D. V., Lauber, M. D., Whimpey, A. I., Kashdan, T. B. (2016, October). *Interpersonal desire and dysfunction: An analysis of strivings in people with social anxiety disorder*. Poster presented at the annual convention of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, New York, NY.

Goodman, F. R., **Stikma, M. C.**, & Kashdan, T. B. (2016, October). *Liquid antidote: Alcohol attenuates adverse effects of social anxiety during social interactions*. Poster presented at the annual convention of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, New York, NY.

Goodman, F. R., Lauber, M. D., **Stikma, M. C.**, Blalock, D. V., Milius, C. R., Whimpey, A. I., Kashdan, T. B. (2016, October). *Fear of success? When and why people with Social Anxiety Disorder strive for power and achievement*. Poster presented at the annual convention of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, New York, NY.

**Stikma, M.C.**, Kanai, M., Yukawa, S., Sherman, R.A., & Vernon, L.L. (2015, February). *Mindfulness from East to West: An examination of relationships between mindfulness, personality traits, and levels of anxiety and depression in American and Japanese populations*. Poster presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Long Beach, California.

Levy, M.A., **Stikma, M.C.**, & Vernon, L.L. (2014, August). *Acting with awareness: The benefits of mindfulness in college students*. Poster presented at the American Psychological Association Annual Convention, Washington, D.C.

**Stikma, M. C.**, Levy, M. A., & Vernon, L. L. (2013, April). *An examination of immediate outcomes following a single-session meditation training*. Poster presented at the annual Wilkes Honors College Symposium for Research and Creative Projects, Jupiter, FL.

Levy, M. A., **Stikma, M. C.**, & Vernon, L. L. (2013, March). *Right livelihood leads to right mindfulness: Exploring the connections between mindfulness, stress/anxiety, religiosity, and personality*. Poster presented at the annual Southeastern Psychological Association Conference, Atlanta, GA.

**Stikma, M. C.**, Levy, M. A., & Vernon, L. L. (2013, February). *Examining mindfulness meditation effects on anxiety, emotion regulation, and social relationships*. Poster presented at the annual Florida Collegiate Honors Council Conference, Fort Lauderdale, FL.

## **AWARDS & HONORS**

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APA International Conference Travel Award – American Psychological Association  
\$500 (July 2017)

Florida Atlantic University Alumni Endowed Scholarship - Andrew Todd Auster Scholarship  
\$1,400 (Spring 2014)

International Baccalaureate Honors College Scholarship  
\$5,000 per year (2009-2013)

Faculty Award for Outstanding Thesis – Wilkes Honors College of F.A.U. (2013)

First Place Poster – Florida Atlantic University Undergraduate Research Symposium (2013)

## **GRADUATE TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

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### **George Mason University**

#### *Instructor of Record*

Psychological Tests & Measurement (PSYC 320)	Spring 2018
Science of Well-Being (PSYC 417)	Study Abroad in Greece - Summer 2017, Fall 2017
Psychology of Gender (PSYC 362)	Summer 2017
College to Career in Psychology (PSYC 399)	Fall 2016, Spring 2017
Research Methods of Psychology (PSYC 301)	Fall 2015

*Teaching Assistant*

College to Career in Psychology (PSYC 461)

Spring 2016

**Florida Atlantic University***Teaching Assistant*

Research Methods in Psychology

Spring 2015

Social Psychology

Fall 2014

General Psychology

Spring 2014

**EXTERNAL MEDIA COVERAGE**

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Headspace (October 2017). [How having \(or not having\) sex affects your social life.](#)

**CLINICAL EXPERIENCE**

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**Center for Psychological Services, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA** August 2016-May 2017

*Psychotherapist*

Conduct structured and semi-structured psychodiagnostic interviews. Provide weekly psychotherapy using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to children, teenagers, and adults with social anxiety, generalized anxiety, depression, specific phobia, and PTSD. Consult with psychiatrists, physicians, school counselors, and parents to coordinate treatment. Attend didactic training on topics including suicide prevention, transgender and multicultural issues, and substance use disorders. Participate in weekly individual and group supervision. Supervisors: Tara Chaplin, Ph.D., Christine Golden, Ph.D., Keith Renshaw, Ph.D., and Michelle Gryczkowski, Ph.D.

**Center for Psychological Services, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA** August 2016-May 2017

*Psycho-diagnostic Evaluator*

Conduct comprehensive psycho-educational assessments including diagnostic evaluations for Autism Spectrum Disorders, Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Learning Disorders, and other socioemotional disorders in children, adolescents, and adults. Provide assessment reports, feedback, and clinical recommendations.  
Supervisors: Holly Zanville, Ph.D.

**Cognitive Assessment Program, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA** August 2016– May 2017

*Psycho-diagnostic Evaluator*

Conduct assessments of intellectual functioning for children aged 6 – 17 for educational placement. Provide assessment reports and feedback for clients. Supervisors: Mary Beth Ruth, Ph.D., Jerome Short, Ph.D.

**FAU Jupiter Housing & Residential Life, Jupiter, Florida**

2011 – 2013

*Resident Assistant*

Develop a sense of community through programming and executing large-scale educational and social programs, directly responsible for the safety and well-being of 250 residents, and first point of contact for students in crisis or psychological distress, counseling students through minor stressors, and identifying troubled students.



**Honors Internship at “Dr. Fitzpatrick & Associates”, Cambridge, Ontario - May 2011 – August 2011***Intern*

Shadowed Dr. Deb Fitzpatrick Ph.D., gaining knowledge about the day to day responsibilities in a private practice. Proofread case files, researched psychometric tests for clients, wrote research summaries for website blog, and, taking payments and answering questions.

**TeleCare Cambridge Distress Centre, Cambridge, Ontario June 2012 – July 2012**

Attended and completed multiple week training sessions in preparation for providing confidential, non-judgmental, feelings-focused and empathetic listening to distressed individuals

**ADDITIONAL GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS**

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**George Mason University**

Advisor for Psychology Undergraduates

Fall 2015, Spring & Summer 2016

**Florida Atlantic University**

Subject Pool Coordinator

Spring 2015

**SERVICE TO PROFESSION**

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2017 – present	<i>Personality and Individual Differences</i> (reviewer)
2014 – present	<i>Journal of Social Psychology</i> (reviewer)
2014 – present	<i>Stress and Health</i> (reviewer)
Spring 2014	Annual Graduate Student College of Science Research Day (peer judge)
Fall 2014	Outstanding Researcher Award and Student Poster Award for Society of Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP; peer judge)

**PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES MEMBERSHIP**

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2017 – present	Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP) – Student member
2015 – present	Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT) – Student member
2014 – present	American Psychological Association (APA) - Student affiliate
2014 – present	Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) – Student member