

# Curriculum Vitae

## ALEXANDER BELSER

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### EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

#### **Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY**

*Master of Arts Candidate in Clinical Psychology*

Anticipated Date of Graduation, May 2012

Master's Program Special Project: Mobile Assessment and Intervention: Applicability to the Research and Treatment of Mood Disorders

Adviser: Elizabeth Midlarsky, Ph.D.

GPA: 4.0

#### **Cambridge University, Cambridge, United Kingdom**

*Master of Philosophy in Criminological Research*

May 2005

M.Phil. Dissertation Title: Doping the System: Stories of Drug Use by UK Prisoners

Adviser: Ben Crewe, Ph.D.

Graduated in top 10 percent of master's class

#### **Georgetown University, College of Arts and Sciences, Washington, D.C.**

*Bachelor of Arts in English and Government*

May 2002

Honors Thesis in Continental Philosophy

Adviser: Mark Warren, Ph.D.

GPA: 3.81

Graduated *magna cum laude*

Member, *Phi Beta Kappa*

### RESEARCH & CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

#### **Research Assistant & Co-Author**

*Teachers College, Columbia University*

Research Lab of Helen Verdeli, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology,

Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology in Psychiatry, Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University.

New York, NY

2010 to present

- Coauthored a peer-reviewed article examining how stressors relating to deployment to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan may contribute to depression in military spouses and its effects on service members and children. The article was published in the *APA Journal of Family Psychology* (Verdeli, Bailey, Vousoura, **Belser**, Singla, Manos, 2011).
- Coauthored a second peer-reviewed article, outlining a group adaptation of interpersonal psychotherapy for the treatment of depression in military spouses. The article will be published this

December, 2011 in the *Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology* (Verdeli, Bailey, Vousoura, **Belser**, Singla, Manos, 2011).

- Contributed as a research assistant to a soon to be published empirical update in the *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology* that provides a comprehensive review of interpersonal psychotherapy.
- Areas of research include: global mental health; interpersonal psychotherapy; treatment adaptation; treating depression in military spouses; stigma among minority young adults in criminal justice; training of Haitian clinicians to provide mental health interventions in post-earthquake Haiti.
- Relevant Teaching and TA Experience
  - Verdeli, H. & Belser, A. (2011). Cognitive behavioral therapy for Depression: an introduction to behavioral activation and problem-solving. Class co-taught at Teachers College, Columbia University.
  - Vousoura, E. & Belser, A. (2011). Cognitive behavioral therapy for depression: A review. Supplemental class lecture co-taught at Teachers College, Columbia University.
  - Belser, A. & Vousoura, E (2011). Cognitive behavioral therapy for the anxiety disorders: A review. Supplemental class lecture co-taught at Teachers College, Columbia University.

### **Research Assistant, Advisee, & Co-Author**

*Teachers College, Columbia University*

Adviser: Elizabeth Midlarsky, Ph.D., Professor, Teachers College, Columbia University Department of Clinical Psychology

New York, NY

2010 to present

- With Professor Elizabeth Midlarsky and Professor Eva Kahana at Case Western University, I have been co-authoring a chapter in the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Prosocial Behavior*, in which we present a model for altruism in later life (Midlarsky, Kahana, & **Belser**, forthcoming).
- Professor Midlarsky supervised my special project, in which I explore the assessment and treatment of bipolar disorder and other cycling mood disorders using mobile devices such as iPhones.
- This work led to the development of an RCT at NYU and collaboration with faculty at the New York University Bluestone Center for Clinical Research and the University of California at San Francisco School of Medicine. We have developed a mobile app on the iPhone, Android, and java platforms to track pain and assess mood in patients with head and neck cancers.
- Took a leadership role in Dr. Midlarsky's class: Research Perspectives on Critical Social Problems.
- Areas of research include: altruism; prosocial behavior in later life; the health impact of volunteering; philanthropy; bipolar disorder and other cycling mood disorders; mood-monitoring using validated assessments on mobile devices.

### **Administrative Director**

*New York University Psilocybin Cancer Anxiety and Spirituality Study*

*NYU Langone Medical Center*

New York, NY

2006 to present

Supervisor: Stephen Ross, MD, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, NYU School of Medicine; Director, Division of Alcoholism & Drug Abuse, Bellevue Hospital Center; Clinical Director, NYU Langone Center of Excellence on Addiction; Director, NYU Addiction Psychiatry Fellowship

This is a double-blind placebo-controlled crossover study investigating the efficacy of psilocybin-assisted psychotherapy in the treatment of anxiety in advanced cancer patients.

- Authored a brief report on this randomized controlled trial, which was published in the *Journal for the Society of Integrative Oncology*
- Directed website development team ([www.nyucanceranxiety.org](http://www.nyucanceranxiety.org)) leading to enhanced patient acquisition
- Promoted from study volunteer to Administrative Director, having demonstrated five years of commitment to advancing the goals of the study initiative

- Helped to draft proposed study budget of \$1.1mm
- Created the Bridge Group, a network of palliative care professionals to strategize patient recruitment
- Presented an overview of mindfulness clinical interventions: *Mindfulness: Clinical interventions*
- Invited to lecture in the NYU didactic series: *Social and intellectual attitudes toward drug-induced religious experience: A review of the article by James Bakalar*
- Created a study contact database to leverage communications with potential donors and colleagues
- Helped author proposed study budget of \$1.1mm
- Developed participant acquisition strategies leading to increased enrollment
- Produced a data CD package of Psychedelics and Psychiatry course materials taught by Professor Stephen Ross, MD and Professor Jeffrey Guss, MD
- Attended field conferences in San Jose, CA, Madison and Milwaukee, WI, and New York City
- Participated in public relations meetings, leading to a front page article by the *New York Times*, stories by *Scientific American*, *Rolling Stone*, and a documentary by the Discovery Channel
- Presented the study as a lecture at the New York Academy of Medicine at the Conference of the Society for Integrative Oncology

### **Research Assistant**

#### ***Clinical Research Trial***

***Feasibility and validation of a mobile app to assess mood and pain in patients with head and neck cancers***

***New York University Bluestone Center for Clinical Research***

New York, NY

2010 to present

Adviser: Brian L. Schmidt, PhD, MD, DDS, Director, Bluestone Center for Clinical Research and Professor, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

- Proposed the design of a randomized clinical trial of cancer patients using mobile applications
- Developed technical specifications for mobile application on Android and iPhone devices
- Study uses mobile experience sampling assessments of mood, well-being, lifestyle factors, and pain

### **Prison Institutional Researcher**

***Cambridge University Institute of Criminology & HMP The Mount Prison***

Hertfordshire, England

2004 to 2005

- Conducted primary research using semi-structured interviews in a north London men's prison
- Area of research: substance use behaviors and offending behaviors
- Cambridge University thesis title: "Doping the System: Stories of Drug Use by UK Prisoners"

### **Psychiatric Intern**

***Bellevue Hospital Center, Dual Diagnosis Unit***

New York, NY.

2009 to 2010

Supervisor: Steve Ross, MD, Director of the Division of Alcoholism & Drug Abuse at Bellevue Hospital, the Clinical Director of the NYU Langone Center of Excellence on Addiction, and the Associate Director of Addiction Education, NYU Department of Psychiatry

- Worked as a psychiatric intern on this inpatient psychiatric 30-bed unit for patients with dual diagnoses
- Conducted motivational interviewing with patients regarding their substance use behaviors
- Worked with Joe Essig, music therapist in group music and arts therapeutic interventions with patients

### **Volunteer Instructor, Prison Computer Literacy**

***Arlington County Jail***

Arlington, VA

2002 to 2004

### **Program Director**

***Georgetown Prison Outreach Programs***

***Georgetown Center for Social Justice Research, Teaching & Service***

Washington, D.C.

1998 to 2002

- Managed a program providing educational services to over 500 incarcerated men, women and juveniles
- Supervised 100 volunteers and grew the program to become one of Georgetown's largest social justice initiatives
- Recruited professors to teach accredited college courses in prisons and jails in three jurisdictions
- Sites included:
  - Oak Hill Juvenile Detention Facility in Maryland
  - Lorton Prison in Virginia
  - Arlington County Detention Facility in Virginia

**Director and Co-Founder**

***Georgetown University Outreach Programs: Oak Hill Juvenile Detention Center***

Laurel, MD

1999 to 2000

- Supervised a group of ten volunteer mentors and at-risk boys incarcerated at a juvenile detention facility
- Volunteers worked with the boys to provide mentorship and GED tutoring
- Initiated a similar program in the Oak Hill Juvenile Detention Center for Young Women

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**Vice President, Knowledge Management**

***Cantor Fitzgerald***

New York, NY

2006 to present

- Promoted to Vice President from Assistant Vice President, 2009
- Founder, Green Bonds Program
- Founder, Socially Responsible Investing (SRI) Initiative
- SQL programmer, Sybase, MYSQL and SQL Server

**Small Business Owner**

***Bark Slope LLC***

New York, New York

2006 to present

- Incorporated a Limited Liability Company in New York State
- Operated a Brooklyn-based dog-walking and house-sitting bonded business
- Hired and employed two staff associates

**Policy Associate**

***Vera Institute of Justice (formerly Family Justice)***

New York, NY

2005 to 2006

Directed an initiative to design and test a new assessment instrument for use in corrections: the Relational Inquiry Tool (RIT).

- The tool is used as a complement to standard risk and needs assessments
- The RIT is a strengths-based assessment used by corrections officers to engage individuals under criminal justice supervision, including inmates, probationers, and parolees
- The RIT assesses existing familial and social resources that may be utilized in the reentry process
- Formed the National Advisory Board of key stakeholders and academics to shepherd the initiative
- Tested the tool with 100 incarcerated individuals at five sites:

1. Michigan Department of Corrections
2. Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction
3. Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety
4. Oklahoma Department of Corrections
5. Safer Foundation in Chicago

**Manager of Information Technology and Paralegal Specialist**  
*United States Department of Justice, Office of Consumer Litigation*  
2002 to 2004  
Washington, D.C.

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

### **Teaching Assistant**

*Teachers College, Columbia University, Department of Counseling & Clinical Psychology*  
*Course: CCPX 4037, Cognitive Behavioral Theory in Clinical Populations (master's level course)*  
New York, NY  
January 2011 to May 2011  
Professor: Helen Verdeli, Ph.D.

- Co-taught a class reviewing research on the efficacy and effectiveness of CBT as a treatment for depression and CBT clinical techniques
- Facilitated a class on CBT treatment for Panic Disorder & Agoraphobia
- Graded sections of the midterms and final exams, working closely with students in preparation stages
- Co-taught two course review sessions:
  1. CBT for Depression
  2. CBT for the Anxiety Disorders

### **Teaching Assistant**

*Georgetown University, English Department*  
*Course: Composition, Modules on Virtual Writing.*  
Washington, D.C.  
March 2002  
Professor: Patricia E. O'Connor, Ph.D.

- Instructed Georgetown undergraduates in how to successfully adapt their writing to an online platform
- Provided technical guidance regarding website development and deployment

### **Teaching Assistant**

*Georgetown University, Government Department*  
*Course: GOVT-008, United States Political Systems*  
Washington, D.C.  
September 1998 to December 1998  
Professor: Mark Lance, Ph.D.

- Selected as a T.A. for this Georgetown accredited course,
- Taught federal inmates at Lorton Prison in Virginia in a progressive teacher/student exchange model
- Graded student papers to foster better core writing and research skills
- Facilitated weekly small group discussions on United States political systems

## **GRANTS & GRANT WRITING EXPERIENCE**

1. *Carey Turnbull, Private Donor.*  
New York University Bluestone Center for Clinical Research.

\$50,000, 2010. Ross, Stephen, Principal Investigator. [Belser, Alexander: Administrative Director].

2. **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**, *Developing a Relational Inquiry Tool for use in Probation and Parole*. \$200,000, 2005-2007. Awarded to Family Justice, now a part of the Vera Institute of Justice, New York, NY. [Belser, Alexander: contributor and editor].

### CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Belser, A. (2011). *The intersection of substance use and offending behaviors as disclosed by inmates in a United Kingdom prison*. Poster, American Psychology Association's 2011 Convention, Washington, D.C.
- Belser, A. (2011). *Psychosocial distress in advanced cancer patients: an overview of psilocybin-assisted psychotherapy and the ongoing New York University Phase II pilot study*. Poster, American Psychology Association's 2011 Convention, Washington, D.C.
- Belser, A. (2010). *The New York University Psilocybin Cancer Anxiety & Spirituality Project*. Lecture presented at the New York Academy of Medicine, Conference of the Society for Integrative Oncology.

### PRESENTATIONS

- Verdeli, H. & Belser, A. (2011). *Cognitive behavioral therapy for depression: an introduction to behavioral activation and problem-solving*. Class co-taught at Teachers College, Columbia University, course: CCPX 4037, Cognitive Behavioral Theory in Clinical Populations.
- Belser, A. & Voursoura, E. (2011). *Cognitive behavioral therapy for the anxiety disorders: A review*. Class lecture co-taught at Teachers College, Columbia University, course: CCPX 4037, Cognitive Behavioral Theory in Clinical Populations.
- Voursoura, E. & Belser, A. (2011). *Cognitive behavioral therapy for depression: A review*. Class lecture co-taught at Teachers College, Columbia University, course: CCPX 4037, Cognitive Behavioral Theory in Clinical Populations.
- Belser, A. (2011). *Social and intellectual attitudes toward drug-induced religious experience: A review of the article by James Bakalar*. Lecture presented at the NYU Langone Medical Center of Excellence on Addiction.
- Belser, A. (2011). *Mindfulness: Clinical interventions and a review of the physical and mental health benefits*. Lecture presented at the NYU Langone Medical Center of Excellence on Addiction.
- Belser, A. (2010). *World tree on fire: toward a psychological model for engaging large scale Disaster and Death Events*. Lecture presented at the Poetry Science Talks, New York, NY.
- Belser, A. (2009). *Narratives of substance use*. Presentation to the clinical research team, Langone Center of Excellence, Bellevue Hospital.
- Belser, A. (2008). *Making good: sense-making after nadir experiences*. Presentation to the clinical research team, New York University Medical Center.
- Belser, A. & Appelbaum, L. (2005) *Strength-based assessments from intake to parole: Improving reentry outcomes*. Presentation to the Staff of Framingham Women's Prison, Massachusetts Department of Corrections.
- Belser, A. (2005). *Stories of drug use by UK prisoners*. Invited Lecture at the Cambridge University Summer Programme.
- Belser, A. (2004-2005). *Designing community websites using Dreamweaver*. Course Instructor at Byteback, a community technology center (CTC) in Northeast Washington, D.C.
- Belser, A. (2005). *Electronic evidence and data systems management*. Visiting Faculty, Course Presentation, National Advocacy Center, United States Department of Justice, Columbia, SC.
- Belser, A. (2004). *E-Trial presentations*. Visiting Faculty Course Presentation, National Advocacy Center, United States Department of Justice, Columbia, SC.
- Belser, A. (2002). *Service-Learning curriculum: Working with underprivileged populations*. Presentation before the Board of Trustees, Georgetown University College of Arts and Sciences.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

Midlarsky, E., Kahana, E., and **Belser, A.** (In press). Prosocial behavior in later life. In D. A. Schroeder & W. Graziano, (Eds.) *Oxford handbook of prosocial behavior*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Verdeli, H., Bailey, C., Vousoura, E., **Belser, A.**, Singla, D., Manos, G. (In press). A group adaptation of Interpersonal Psychotherapy for the treatment of depression in military spouses: IPT-GMS. *Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology*.

**Belser, A.** (2011). Treating major depression in reentering prisoners: A proposed interpersonal psychotherapy intervention. Published online by the Morton Deutsch Awards for Social Justice on Columbia University's website at: [http://www.tc.columbia.edu/i/a/document/16802\\_Belser.pdf](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/i/a/document/16802_Belser.pdf)

Verdeli, H., Bailey, C., Vousoura, E., **Belser, A.**, Singla, D., Manos, G. (2011). The case for treating depression in military spouses. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 25(4), 488-496. doi: 10.1037/a0024525

**Belser, A.** (2010). Psychosocial distress in advanced cancer patients: an overview of psilocybin-assisted psychotherapy and the ongoing New York University Phase II pilot study. *Journal of the Society for Integrative Oncology*, 8(4): 172.

## **MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATION**

Belser, A. (2011). Mobile assessment and intervention: Applicability to the research and treatment of mood disorders. Manuscript in Preparation.

Belser, A. (2011). Intoxication, criminal transgression, and self-regulation: Sense-making among incarcerated substance users. Manuscript in Preparation.

Belser, A. (2011). Treating major depression in reentering prisoners: A proposed interpersonal psychotherapy intervention. Manuscript in Preparation.

## **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS**

*Student Senator*, Clinical Psychology, Teachers College, Columbia University Student Senate, 2010-2011

*Student Affiliate*, American Psychological Association, 2010-2011

*Affiliate*, American Psychological Association, 2009

*Elected Member*, Committee of Management, Cambridge University Law Faculty, 2004-2005

*Elected Master's Representative*, Master's Degree Committee, Cambridge University Institute of Criminology, 2004-2005

*LGBT Representative*, Master's Committee, Queens' College of Cambridge University, 2004-2005

*Member*, Phi Beta Kappa, Georgetown University, 2002

## **PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

Adobe Flex programming and development: database driven graphic user interfaces

Visual Basic for Applications

Microsoft Access Database: multi-user application development

Advanced Proficiency in MS Office Suite: Excel, Word, PowerPoint

Website Development: Dreamweaver and HTML editing

SPSS Statistical Package

SQL Programming: Sybase, MYSQL and SQL Server

### **Website Development**

Web Director: <http://www.nyucanceranxiety.org>

Webmaster, <http://www.marketekindustries.com>

Webmaster, <http://www.alexbelser.com>

Webmaster, <http://socialjustice.georgetown.edu>

## **STATISTICS AND RESEARCH METHODS QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Statistics Coursework at Teachers College, Columbia University**

HUDM 4120 Basic concepts in statistics: Passed exam to gain credit for this statistics prerequisite

HUDM 4122 Probability and statistical inference: Passed exam to gain credit for this statistics prerequisite

HUDM 5122 Applied Regression Analysis Grade: A

Least squares estimation theory. Traditional simple and multiple regression models and polynomial regression models, with grouping variables including one-way ANOVA, two-way ANOVA, and analysis of covariance. Lab devoted to applications of SPSS regression program.

### **Joint Schools Research Programme**

#### ***Cambridge University: Social Science Research Methods Trainings***

Cambridge, United Kingdom

2004 to 2005

- Completed graduate coursework in social science research methods
- Accredited by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
- Research modules comprised 43 separate graduate research training seminars for social scientists
- Statistical Modules included SPSS, Access and Atlas.ti, survey methods, statistical methods including descriptive statistics, bivariate association and linear regression (OLS) and regression diagnostics, factor analysis and cluster analysis
- Research modules included epistemological foundations of qualitative methods, participant observation and ethnography, interviews, documents and discourse analysis, historical methods and sources, and visual, spatial, and materials sources

Assistant Yoga Instructor, Kusala Studio, Greenpoint, Brooklyn, NY

## **REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**