

CURRICULUM VITAE**Jacob S. Sawyer, Ph.D.**

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Current Position

8/2025	Grand Valley State University Assistant Professor of Psychology (Tenure-Track)	Allendale, MI
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Previous Academic Positions

2022-2025	Alma College Assistant Professor of Psychology (Tenure-Track)	Alma, MI
2018-2022	Pennsylvania State University, Mont Alto Campus Assistant Professor of Psychology (Tenure-Track)	Mont Alto, PA

Education

2017	Columbia University Ph.D. , Counseling Psychology (APA-accredited) <i>Dissertation</i> : "Grieving without God: Comparing posttraumatic growth, complicated grief, and psychological distress in believers and atheists during bereavement" <i>Committee</i> : Melanie E. Brewster, Ph.D. (chair), George Bonanno, Ph.D., Laura Smith, Ph.D., Bryan Keller, Ph.D., Patricia Kitcher, Ph.D.	New York, NY
2015	Columbia University M. Phil. , Counseling Psychology	New York, NY
2008	Central Michigan University B.S. , Psychology	Mt. Pleasant, MI

Peer Reviewed Manuscripts

*Underlined denotes student collaborator.

Sawyer, J. S. (2025). Grief and bereavement beliefs and their associations with death anxiety and complicated grief in a sample of U. S. college students. *Death Studies*. 49(5). 644-655. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2024.2349933>

Sawyer, J. S. & Moore, A. N. (2022). Coping methods and college adjustment in a sample of U. S. undergraduate students during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of American College Health*. 72(8), 2348-2351. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2022.2129976>

Sawyer, J. S., Wilner, L. L., & Ertl, M. M. (2022). Grief and bereavement beliefs among U. S. mental health professionals and the general public. *Death Studies*, 46(10), 2346-2353. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2021.1944399>

- Brewster, M. E., Velez, B., **Sawyer, J. S.**, Motulsky, W., Chan, A., & Kim, V. (2021). Family religiosity, support, and psychological well-being for sexual minority atheist individuals. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 13(3), 266-275. <https://doi.org/10.1037/rel0000356>
- Ertl, M. M., **Sawyer, J. S.**, Martin, J. L., & Brenner, R. E. (2021). The role of objectification in college women's substance misuse and sexual risk. *Journal of Prevention and Health Promotion*, 3(1), 68-96. <https://doi.org/10.1177/26320770211054359>
- Sawyer, J. S.**, Brewster, M. E., & Ertl, M. M. (2021). Death anxiety and death acceptance in atheists and other nonbelievers. *Death Studies*, 45(6), 459-468. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2019.1648339>
- Sawyer, J. S.** (2020). Bereavement outcomes for atheist individuals: The role of spirituality, discrimination, and meaning. *Omega - Journal of Death and Dying*, 86(2), 395-412. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0030222820974536>
- Martin, J. L., Cimini, M. D., Longo, L. M., **Sawyer, J. S.**, & Ertl, M. M. (2020). Equipping mental health professionals to meet the needs of substance-using clients: Evaluation of an SBIRT training program. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*, 14(1), 42-51. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tep0000258>
- Brewster, M. E., Velez, B. L., Geiger, E. F., & **Sawyer, J. S.** (2020). It's like herding cats: Atheist minority stress, group involvement, and psychological outcomes. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 67(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000392>
- Sawyer, J. S.**, & Brewster, M. E. (2019). Assessing posttraumatic growth, complicated grief, and psychological distress in bereaved atheists and believers. *Death Studies*, 43(4), 224-234. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2018.1446061>
- Brewster, M. E., Soderstrom, B., Esposito, J., Breslow, A., **Sawyer, J. S.**, Geiger, E., Morshedean, N., Arango, S., Caso, T., Foster, A., Sandil, R., & Cheng, J. (2017). A content analysis of scholarship on consensual nonmonogamies: Methodological roadmaps, current themes, and directions for future research. *Couple and Family Psychology: Research and Practice*, 6(1), 32-47. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cfp0000074>
- Brewster, M. E., Hammer, J., **Sawyer, J. S.**, Eklund, A., & Palamar, J. (2016). Perceived experiences of atheist discrimination: Instrument development and evaluation. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 63(5), 557-570. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000156>

Book Chapters

- Sawyer, J. S.** (2025). Counseling nonreligious clients experiencing grief. In D. M. Abbott (Ed.), *Culturally Responsive Mental Health Practices with Secular Clients*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Sawyer, J. S.** (2023). How atheists cope with mortality. In T. Taira (Ed.) *Atheism in Five Minutes*. Equinox Publishing.
- Sawyer, J. S.** & Wilner, L. L. (2019). Updated Range L. M. (2000). "Death Anxiety," in P. Roberts (Ed.), *Aging, Vols 1-2*. Salem Press: Pasadena, CA, in P. Moglia (Ed), *Aging Second Edition, Vols 1-2*, Salem Press (print): Ipswich, MA, Grey House Publishing (online), Amenia, NY.

Dubovi, A. & **Sawyer, J. S.** (2018). Evidence-based Peer Health Education: New Paradigms and Opportunities. In M. D. Cimini, & E. Rivero (Eds.), *Promoting Behavioral Health and Reducing Risks among College Students: A Comprehensive Approach*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Wilner, L. L. & **Sawyer, J. S.** (2018). LGBTQ health. In B. C. Auday (Ed.), *Magill's Medical Guide* (8th ed.). Ipswich, MA: Salem Press.

Sawyer, J. S., Wilner, L. L., & Brewster, M. E. (2017). Ethics in gender research. In K. Nadal, (Ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Psychology and Gender*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sawyer, J. S., Breslow, A. S., & Brewster, M. E. (2017). Gender socialization in men. In K. Nadal (Ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Psychology and Gender*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Brewster, M. E., & **Sawyer, J. S.** (2014). Atheism and the American family. In L. Ganong, M. Coleman, & G. J. Geoffrey (Eds.), *The Social History of the American Family*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Presentations

*Underlined denotes student collaborator.

Sawyer, J. S., Kamps, R. A., Maldonado, E., Newton, I., & Ralli, K. (2025, November). *Cultural factors related to disenfranchised grief in college students*. Poster presented at the 2025 GVSU Teach In Event, Allendale, MI.

Servaty-Seib, H. L., Bordere, T., **Sawyer, J. S.**, Cobb, J., & Douglas, R. (2025, April). *Micro and macro support for grieving college students post-COVID*. Panel discussion presented at the annual Association for Death Education and Counseling Conference, Albuquerque, NM.

Sawyer, J. S. (2024, April). *Grief and bereavement beliefs and their associations with death anxiety and complicated grief in a U.S. college student sample*. Research talk presented at the annual Association for Death Education and Counseling Conference, Houston, TX.

Cooney, S. M., **Sawyer, J. S.**, Wallace, B. M., Ludden, A. E., & Flores, B. F. (2024, April). *What do college students think of psychedelics? Examining attitudes, usage, and associations with death anxiety*. Poster presented at the annual Association for Death Education and Counseling Conference, Houston, TX.

Flores, B. F., Wallace, B. M., Kingsley, A. J., Ludden, A. E., & **Sawyer, J. S.** (2023, May). *Coping and bereavement outcomes in a U.S. student sample*. Poster presented at the annual Association for Death Education and Counseling Conference, Columbus, OH.

Sawyer, J. S., & Ertl, M. M. (2021, August). Assessing Correlates and Moderators of Alcohol Use and Drug Misuse in Atheist and Christian Samples. In **J. S. Sawyer (chair)**, *Marginalization and substance use: Examining risk factors and coping methods*. Symposium conducted at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Virtual.

Moore, A. N., & **Sawyer, J. S.** (2021, August). *Coping flexibility and college adjustment in bereaved and non-bereaved students during the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Poster presented at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Virtual.

- Sawyer, J. S.** (2021, April). *Psychological outcomes for atheist individuals during bereavement: The role of meaning, spirituality, and discrimination*. Paper talk presented at the Annual Conference of the Association for Death Education and Counseling, Virtual.
- Sawyer, J. S., Ertl, M. M., & Wilner, L. L.** (2020, August). *Assessing misconceptions in beliefs about death, dying, and bereavement*. Poster presented at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C.
- Sawyer, J. S.** (2020, May). *Psychological outcomes for atheist individuals during bereavement: The role of meaning, spirituality, and discrimination*. Paper talk accepted to the Annual Conference of the Association for Death Education and Counseling, Columbus, OH. (Conference cancelled).
- Sawyer, J. S., & Ertl, M. M.** (2020, February). *Neither religious nor spiritual: Implications for death, dying, and bereavement*. Roundtable conducted at the 37th annual Winter Roundtable Conference at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY.
- Moore, A. N., Hovis, R. M., Burgan, C. N., & Sawyer, J. S., (2020, February). *The impact of adverse childhood experiences and social support on drinking behavior and psychological distress in college students*. Roundtable presented at the 37th annual Winter Roundtable Conference at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY.
- Sawyer, J. S., Brewster, M. E., & Ertl, M. M.** (2019, August). Atheist Research in Psychology: Current Trends and Future Directions. In **J. S. Sawyer (chair)**, *Death anxiety and death acceptance in nonbelievers*. Symposium conducted at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.
- Brewster, M. E., **Sawyer, J. S., & Ertl, M. M.** (2019, August). Atheist Research in Psychology: Current Trends and Future Directions. In **J. S. Sawyer (chair)**, *Forever bowling alone: Community, life satisfaction, and self-esteem for atheist people*. Symposium conducted at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.
- Longo, L. M., Ertl, M. M., **Sawyer, J. S., & Martin, J. L.** (2019, August). *SBIRT knowledge, stigma, and self-efficacy among mental health professionals*. Poster to be presentation at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.
- Boyle, M. A., Ertl, M. M., **Sawyer, J. S., Longo, L. M., Pazienza, R., & Martin, J. L.** (2019, August). *Psychosocial risk factors associated with alcohol and drug use among college student women*. Poster presentation at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.
- Ertl, M. M., **Sawyer, J. S., Sokolowski, K., Longo, L. M., Cimini, M. D., & Rivero, E.** (2018, March). *Racial and sex differences in college student engagement in health risk behaviors*. Poster presentation at the Collaborative Perspectives on Addiction Annual Meeting, Tampa, FL.
- Longo, L. M., Martin, J. L., Cimini, M. D., & **Sawyer, J. S.** (2018, March). *Training of psychology graduate students in SBIRT: Identifying and assessing essential competencies*. Poster presentation at the Collaborative Perspectives on Addiction Annual Meeting, Tampa, FL.
- Spoor, S., Fico, D., Liriano, L., Ojeda, T., Velasquez, K., Dubovi, A., **Sawyer, J. S., & Nolan, S.** (2018, February). *Students helping students: Empowering women student leaders through peer education*. Roundtable presentation at the 35th annual Winter Roundtable Conference at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY.

- Sawyer, J. S., & Brewster, M. E.** (2017, August). *Grieving without God: Comparing grief responses in believers and atheists*. Poster presentation at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C.
- Dubovi, A. S., Slotkin, S., **Sawyer, J. S.**, Sheu, H., Cimini, M. D., Martin, J. L., & Cusick-Brix, M. (2017, August). *Testing the effects of a SCT-based wellness coaching training program in enhancing health-related outcomes among college peer educators*. Poster presentation at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C.
- Cimini, M. D., Dubovi, A., & **Sawyer, J. S.** (2017, June). *Engaging peer educators in delivering evidence-based brief motivational interventions: Innovative training models, benefits, and challenges*. Presentation at the 35th annual Counseling Centers of New York Conference, Buffalo, NY.
- Sawyer, J. S.**, Dubovi, A., Cimini, M. D., Rivero, E., Sheu, H., Martin, S., Nicastro, S., Ojeda, T., Velasquez, K. (2017, February). *Responding to diversity and social justice needs on college campuses using a peer health education model*. Roundtable conducted at the 34th annual Winter Roundtable Conference at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY.
- Beveridge, C., **Sawyer, J. S.**, & Robbins, R. (2017, February). *Multicultural competency training in the red: Strategies for effective training models in conservative U.S. regions*. Roundtable conducted at the 34th annual Winter Roundtable Conference at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY.
- Cheng, J., **Sawyer, J. S.**, & Keum, B. (2016, August). *Internalized language attitudes*. Paper session at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Denver, CO.
- Sawyer, J. S.**, & Brewster, M. E. (2016, February). *Death and loss for atheists: A discussion on grief without belief in god(s)*. Roundtable conducted at the 33rd annual Winter Roundtable Conference at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY.
- Sawyer, J. S.**, Morshedien, N. & Brewster, M. E. (2016, February). *Atheist identity and psychological well-being: Benefits of positive group associations*. Poster presented at the 33rd annual Winter Roundtable Conference at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY.
- Brewster, M. E., & **Sawyer, J. S.** (2015, August). *Loneliness and psychological distress: Exploring outcomes of anti-atheist discrimination*. Paper session at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, ON.
- Brewster, M. E., Soderstrom, B., Esposito, J., Breslow, A., Caso, T., Arango, S., Foster, A., Geiger, E., Sandil, R., Morshedien, N., **Sawyer, J. S.**, & Cheng, J. (2015, August). *Understanding "monogamish" relationships: A content analysis of peer-reviewed scholarship*. Poster presented at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, ON.
- Foster, A., Geiger, E., Caso, T., Arango, S., Breslow, A. S., Brewster, M. E., Cheng, J., Esposito, J., Morshedien, N., Sandil, R., **Sawyer, J. S.**, Soderstrom, B. (2015, February). *Self and social justice: The benefits and drawbacks of hashtag activism*. Roundtable conducted at the 32nd annual Winter Roundtable Conference at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY.

Brewster, M. E., **Sawyer, J. S.**, Eklund, A., Hammer, J., Palamar, J., Foster, A., & Lenaburg, S. (2014, August). *Atheists in America: An extension of minority stress theory to nonbelieving populations*. Poster presented at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C.

Sawyer, J. S., Brewster, M. E., & Lau, M. (2014, February). *An examination of epistemological styles and multicultural counseling*. Poster presented at the 31st annual Winter Roundtable Conference at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY.

Brewster, M., Cheng, J., Foster, A., Breslow, A., Esposito, J., Geiger, E., Keum, B., Leanburg, S., Sandil, R., & **Sawyer, J. S.** (2014, February). *The “me-search” in research: Processing insider/outsider identities when conducting studies with marginalized groups*. Roundtable conducted at the 31st annual Winter Roundtable Conference at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY.

Sawyer, J. S., & Sundberg, C. (2011, June). *Support needs and funding levels*. Poster presented at the national conference of the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, St. Paul, MN.

Media and Other Invited Speaking Engagements

- 2024 *Examining Myths About Grief and Bereavement*. The Academic Minute: WAMC Northeast Public Radio
- 2024 Supporting Individuals Experiencing Grief: An Evidence-Based Approach. Guest speaker at the Child Advocacy Center, Alma, MI.
- 2019 *The Psychology of Death and Loss for Nonbelievers*. Speaker at the 78th annual conference of the American Humanist Association at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburg, PA.
- 2018 *A Comparison of Atheists and Believers during Bereavement*. The Academic Minute: WAMC Northeast Public Radio.

Research Grant Awards and Other Grant Experience

Extending minority stress theory to atheists and other nonbelievers: Implications for substance use.

Role: Principal Investigator

Source: The Pennsylvania State University, Social Science Research Institute (SSRI)

Time Period: May 2020 - May 2021

Total Funding: \$9,166.44

A Comprehensive, Collaborative, Multi-Component SBIRT Training Model in Professional Psychology

Role: Project Coordinator

Principal Investigators: Jessica L. Martin, PhD & M. Dolores Cimini, PhD

Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Time Period: August 2017 - August 2018

Total Funding: \$942,927

Other Honors and Awards

- 2025 GVSU Faculty Teaching and Learning Center Conference Grant (\$600)
- 2025 GVSU Center for Creative and Scholarly Excellence Dissemination Grant (\$700)
- 2025 GVSU Center for Creative and Scholarly Excellence Mini Grant (\$500)
- 2024 Faculty Small Grant Award (\$400)
- 2022 Faculty Small Grant Award (\$420)
- 2020 Penn State Mont Alto Faculty Scholar Award (\$500)
- 2019 Faculty & Staff Collaboration Award: Unity Week Contributing Faculty Member
- 2017 New York State/United University Professions Individual Development Grant (\$680)
- 2016 Dissertation Grant-in-aid (\$5,300)
- 2016 Student Scholarship – Poster Session – The 33rd Annual Teachers College Winter Roundtable on Cultural Psychology and Education (\$100)
- 2016 Student Scholarship – Poster Session – The 32nd Annual Teachers College Winter Roundtable on Cultural Psychology and Education (\$100)
- 2014 Student Scholarship – Poster Session – The 31st Annual Teachers College Winter Roundtable on Cultural Psychology and Education (\$100)
- 2014 Induction to Psi Chi – The International Honor Society in Psychology
- 2011 American Association for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities – Student Scholarship for Outstanding Research (\$600)
- 2010 Induction to the National Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi

Grand Valley State University Course History

Psychology Program

- PSY 300 - Research Methods in Psychology
- PSY 303 - Psychopathology

Alma College Course History

Psychology Program

- PSY 120 - Foundations of Psychology
- PSY 225 - Research Methods
- PSY 280 - Grief and Bereavement
- PSY 314 - Psychopathology
- PSY 315 - Clinical Interviewing
- PSY 386 - Internship
- PSY 399 - Thesis Project
- PSY 421 – Senior Seminar
- PSY 500 - Independent Study

Alma College Service

- 2024 – 2025 Pre-Health Professions Committee (appointed position)
- 2024 – 2025 Academic Organization Task Force (appointed position)
- 2024 – 2025 Core Curriculum Committee (elected position)
- 2023 – 2025 Institutional Review Board, Assistant to the Chair
- 2023 – 2025 Institutional Review Board Member
- 2023 – 2024 Honors Day Committee

Penn State Mont Alto Course History

Psychology Program

PSYCH 100 - Introduction to Psychology
 PSYCH 221 - Introduction to Social Psychology
 PSYCH 270 - Introduction to Abnormal Psychology
 PSYCH 432 - Multicultural Psychology in America
 PSYCH 441 - Health Psychology
 PSYCH 470 - Abnormal Psychology
 PSYCH 494 - Research Capstone
 PSYCH 496 - Independent Study Capstone

Human Development and Family Studies Program

HDFS 411 - The Helping Relationship
 HDFS 414 - Resolving Human Development and Family Problems
 HDFS 448 - Death and Bereavement

Penn State Mont Alto Campus Service

2021 – 2022	Diversity Committee
2020 – 2022	Secretary for the Faculty Senate Executive Committee
2019 – 2022	Faculty Senate Executive Committee (3-year term)
2019 – 2022	HDFS/Psychology Club Faculty Advisor
2019 – 2021	Faculty Affairs Committee
2019 – 2020	Academic Festival Committee

Professional Service

Ad hoc review for academic journals

American Journal of Orthopsychiatry
BMC Nursing
BMC Psychology
British Journal of Guidance and Counseling
Death Studies
Journal of American College Health
Journal of Counseling Psychology
Journal of Religion and Health
Mental Health, Religion, and Culture
OMEGA - Journal of Death and Dying
Psychology of Religion and Spirituality
Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity
Psychology of Women Quarterly (Faculty advisor for doctoral student reviewer)
Secularism and Nonreligion

Proposal review for academic conferences

2020 Counseling Psychology Conference
 APA Division 17 Program Committee
 APA Division 45 Program Committee
 Great Lakes Conference

Professional Memberships

Association for Death Education and Counseling

Clinical Appointments

8/2017 – 8/2018	University at Albany, SUNY Counseling and Psychological Services Staff Psychologist and Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) Grant Project Coordinator	Albany, NY
8/2016 – 8/2017	University at Albany, SUNY Counseling and Psychological Services Doctoral Intern and Peer Wellness Coordinator (APA-accredited)	Albany, NY
8/2014 – 5/2015	Baruch College Counseling Center Clinical Trainee	New York, NY
8/2013 – 5/2014	John Jay College of Criminal Justice Counseling Center Clinical Trainee	New York, NY
8/2011 – 5/2013	Dean Hope Center for Educational and Psychological Services Clinical and Psychological Assessment Trainee	New York, NY