

Lindsay S. Shaffer, Ph.D.

Address: Biomedical Research Center, 251 Bayview Boulevard, Baltimore, Maryland 21224

Email: lindsay.shaffer@nih.gov | **Website:** <https://lindsayshaffer.github.io/>

Academic Appointments

Postdoctoral Fellow

08/2025 – Present

National Institute on Drug Abuse (Baltimore, Maryland, USA)

Principal Investigator: Thorsten Kahnt, PhD

Education

PhD, Psychology – Cognitive & Behavioral Neuroscience

08/2018 – 08/2025

George Mason University (Fairfax, Virginia, USA)

Dissertation: *Hedonic and Motivational Influences on the Reward Positivity*

Advisor: Craig G. McDonald, PhD

BA, Psychology

08/2011 – 12/2013

University of Maryland Baltimore County (Baltimore, Maryland, USA)

AA, General Education

08/2007 – 05/2011

Montgomery College (Rockville, Maryland, USA)

Fellowships

2020 – 2022

NSF DGE1922598 National Research Training (NRT) Program ([About](#))

Principal Investigator: Siddhartha Sikdar, PhD

Role: Graduate Research Fellow

Amount: \$34,000.00/year (salary)

Publications

† corresponding author, ** mentee

In Preparation

1. **Shaffer LS**†, Dumas E**, Effley TM**, Tsang RM**, McDonald CG. Informational content of Pavlovian feedback does not modulate the reward positivity.

Published

1. **Shaffer LS**†, Crowder HD**, Kakalec PA, Duong LT**, McDonald CG, Thompson JC. The reward positivity is insensitive to reinforcer devaluation. *Cognitive, Affective, & Behavioral Neuroscience*. 2025. doi:[10.3758/s13415-025-01306-z](https://doi.org/10.3758/s13415-025-01306-z).
2. Richie-Halford A, Cieslak M, Ai L, Caffarra S, Covitz S, Franco AR, Karipidis II, Kruper J, Milham M, Avelar-Pereira B, Roy E, Sydnor VJ, Yeatman, **The Fibr Community Science Consortium***, Satterthwaite TD, Rokem A. An open, analysis-ready, and quality controlled resource for pediatric brain white-matter research. *Scientific Data*. 2022;9:616. doi:[10.1038/s41597-022-01695-7](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41597-022-01695-7).

*see Appendix 4 for listed co-authorship: **Shaffer LS**, Schneider JT**

3. Sedlak TW, Nucifora LG, Koga M, **Shaffer LS**, Higgs C, Tanaka T, Wang AM, Coughlin JM, Barker P, Fahey JW, Sawa A. Sulforaphane augments glutathione and influences brain metabolites in human subjects: A clinical pilot study. *Molecular Neuropsychiatry*. 2018;3(4):214-222. doi:[10.1159/000487639](https://doi.org/10.1159/000487639).
4. Mills EW, **Shaffer LS**, Goes FS, Sawa A, Nucifora Jr FC. Case of secondary tics associated with olanzapine in an adult. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*. 2017;8:150. doi:[10.3389/fpsy.2017.00150](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2017.00150).

Preprints

1. Thompson JC, Indelele E**, **Shaffer LS**. Identity-specific devaluation of social outcomes. (Preprint: <https://osf.io/preprints/psyarxiv/te3nq>)

Conference Presentations

Symposia presentations

1. **Shaffer LS**, Crowder HD, Kakalec PA, Duong LT, McDonald CG, Thompson JC. Does the reward positivity encode current reward value? Society for Psychophysiological Research meeting. October 23–26, 2024. Prague, Czechia.
2. Kuga H, Faria AV, **Shaffer L**, Crawford J, Ogaru T, Schretlen DJ, Mori S, Sawa A. Abnormality of resting-state functional connectivity in right insular cortex in patients with first episode psychosis. Society for Neuroscience meeting, Washington D.C., November 11–15, 2017.
3. Sedlak TW, Koga M, **Shaffer L**, Fahey J, Snyder S, Barker P, Sawa A. 175.2 A Glu That Binds Inflammation and Neurotransmission: Glutathione as a Glutamate Reservoir. *Schizophr Bull*, 2017;43,suppl_1:S89.

Posters

1. **Shaffer LS**, Crowder HD, Kakalec PA, Duong LT, McDonald CG, Thompson JC. Does reward positivity encode current reward value? Society for Psychophysiological Research meeting. October 23–26, 2024. Prague, Czechia.
2. **Shaffer LS**, Crowder HD, Duong LT, McDonald CG, Thompson JC. The reward positivity does not encode current reward value. Social and Affective Neuroscience Society meeting. Santa Barbara, CA. April 26–29, 2023.
3. **Shaffer LS**, Crowder HD, Duong LT, Thompson JC. Integration of reward value and motivational state in the reward positivity. Social and Affective Neuroscience Society meeting, Virtual meeting. May 4–6, 2022.
4. Thompson JC, Indelele E, **Shaffer LS**. Selective devaluation of identity-specific representations of social rewards. Social and Affective Neuroscience Society meeting, Virtual meeting. May 4–6, 2022.
5. Thompson JC, Hassan E, **Shaffer L**. Identity-specific representation of social reward in orbitofrontal cortex. Social and Affective Neuroscience Society meeting. Virtual meeting. April 28–May 1, 2021.
6. Thompson JC, Hassan E, **Shaffer L**. Expectations of Identity-Specific Social Outcomes in Orbitofrontal Cortex. Organization of Human Brain Mapping meeting. Virtual meeting. June 23–July 3, 2020.
7. Kuga H, Faria A, **Shaffer L**, Crawford J, Ohgaru T, Schretlen D, Mori S, Sawa A. F232. Abnormality of Resting-State Functional Connectivity in Insular Cortex in Patients with First Episode Psychosis. Society of Biological Psychiatry meeting. New York, NY. May 10–12, 2018.
8. Lavoie J, Na CH, **Shaffer LS**, Ward R, Schretlen D, Ishizuka K, Pandey A, Sawa A. Proteomic signatures associated with cognitive deficits in schizophrenia. Society for Neuroscience meeting, San Diego, CA. November 12–16, 2016.

Conference Papers

1. Kakalec PA**, **Shaffer LS****, Roy B, Izquierdo AM, Thompson JC. Amygdala and dmPFC input modulates state dynamics of vmPFC during a naturalistic viewing task. Social and Affective Neuroscience Society meeting. Virtual meeting. May 4–6, 2022. (Paper: [pdf](#))
**authors contributed equally

Awards and Honors

2025	Provost's Summer Graduate Research Assistantship Award , George Mason University (\$9000)
2024	Family Care Grant , Society for Psychophysiological Research (\$500)
2024	Graduate Student Travel Fund , George Mason University (\$1000)
2024	Dept. Chair Travel Award , George Mason University (\$1000)
2023	OSCAR Research Mentoring Excellence Award , George Mason University (About) (Interview) (\$3000)

Leadership and Service

Organized symposia

October 2024

"Hedonic And Motivational Influences On The Reward Positivity: From Circuits To Behavior" (organizer & chair). Society for Psychophysiological Research (SPR) annual meeting, October 23-26, 2024. Prague, Czechia.

Organized workshops

March 2024

"An introduction to writing an effective research proposal", STEM Fellowship Day, Office of Fellowships, George Mason University

Invited talks

July 2025

"Hedonic and motivational influences on the reward positivity", Laboratory of Neuroimaging (LNI), National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

October 2022

"The reward positivity does not encode subjective value", CASBBI Seminar Series, George Mason University

April 2019

"Investigating selective devaluation of social rewards", CASBBI Seminar Series, George Mason University

Professional experience

2023 – 2025

The Writing Center, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA, USA

Department of English

Supervisor: Susan Lawrence, PhD

Role: Thesis/Dissertation Consultant

- Consulted university-wide PhD students and faculty on dissertation chapters, manuscripts, grant applications, and conference submissions across various stages of writing process
- Delivered workshops or tutorials relevant to research output (e.g., grant proposals)

2020 – 2022

Center for Adaptive Systems of Brain-Body Interactions (CASBBI), George Mason University, Fairfax, VA, USA

PI: Siddhartha Sikdar, PhD

Role: NSF NRT Fellow

- Conducted focus group interviews and remote surveys using Qualtrics to identify trends in mobile application use and user behavior to inform various stages of product development and implementation
- Collaborated with community stakeholders from clinical populations (e.g., people with Parkinson's, care partners), healthcare workers, and bioengineering scientists to understand customer needs and opportunities for improving current products
- Mentored early-stage graduate student fellows across stages of product development and stakeholder collaboration

2017 – 2018

Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine (JHU SOM), Baltimore, MD, USA

Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

PI: Akira Sawa, MD, PhD

Role: Research Program Coordinator

- Analyzed resting-state 3T MRI data collected from people with early onset of psychosis and healthy volunteers
- Collected metabolic and 7T MRI data (magnetic resonance spectroscopy; MRS) for a pilot study examining changes in glutathione levels before and after ingesting broccoli sprout extract
- Assisted P50 Silvio O. Conte Center Director in scheduling monthly meetings with investigators and progress reports

2015 – 2017

Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine (JHU SOM), Baltimore, MD, USA

Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

PI: Akira Sawa, MD, PhD

Role: Research Program Assistant

- Recruited participants diagnosed with schizophrenia (early onset, chronic, treatment-resistant) and mood disorders (bipolar disorder) to examine genetic and environmental interactions related to pathophysiology and pathogenesis of psychiatric symptoms
- Collected data from MRI (3T & 7T), neuropsychological testing, smell tests (Sniffin' Sticks Odor Identification & Discrimination Test, Citralva & Lyrval Thresholds), blood draws, lumbar punctures, and biopsies (skin, nasal)

2014 – 2015

Sheppard Pratt Health System, Baltimore, MD, USA

Role: Educational Assistant

- Provided educational and social assistance to adolescents diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders and mood disorders in an outpatient school environment as outlined by student's individualized educational program (IEP)
- Collected data on target behaviors relevant for intervention (e.g., aggression, non-compliance, elopement)

2012 – 2014

Kennedy Krieger Institute, Baltimore, MD, USA

Neurobehavioral Unit

Role: Clinical Assistant

- Supported children and adolescents in an inpatient setting with activities of daily living, educational progress, and social behaviors using applied behavioral analysis (ABA)
- Collected data on target behaviors relevant for treatment progress (e.g., aggression, self-injurious behavior)

Mentorship

2025 – 2025

Rebecca Tsang (Psychology) – Undergraduate Research Assistant

2025 – 2025

Thomas Effley (Psychology) – Undergraduate Research Assistant

2024 – 2025

Erica Dumas (Psychology) – Post-baccalaureate Research Assistant

2023 – 2025

Khang Ly (Physics) – Undergraduate Research Assistant

2023 – 2024

Manahil Malik (Information Systems) – Post-baccalaureate Research Assistant

2022 – 2023

Joseph Boyle (Psychology – CBN) – Master's NSF NRT Fellow

2022 – 2023

Beth Foote (Psychology – Clinical) – Doctoral NSF NRT Fellow

2022 – 2023

Donovan Troy Fontenot (Social Work) – Master's NSF NRT Fellow

2022 – 2023

Kelly Poretti (Kinesiology) – Doctoral NSF NRT Fellow

2021 – 2022

Holly Crowder (Neuroscience) – Undergraduate & Post-baccalaureate Research Assistant

2021 – 2023

Alexa Young (Psychology – CBN) – Undergraduate & Master's Research Assistant

2020 – 2021

Margret Howard (Psychology) – Undergraduate Research Assistant

2020 – 2021

Jonathan Schneider (Psychology) – Undergraduate Research Assistant

2019 – 2022

Egette Indelele (Psychology – CBN) – Undergraduate & Master's Research Assistant

2019 – 2021

Lam Duong (Computer Science) – Undergraduate Research Assistant

2018 – 2020

Leah Downie (Neuroscience) – Undergraduate Research Assistant

2018 – 2020

Amara Olimb (Psychology) – Undergraduate Research Assistant

2018 – 2019

Eslam Hassan (Psychology) – Undergraduate Research Assistant

Training & Professional development

July 2019

UCL Computational Psychiatry Summer Workshop, New York, NY, USA

May 2019

Computational Social & Affective Neuroscience Pre-conference, Miami, FL, USA

Departmental service

2019	Independent Consultant, The 5 th Annual Neurosymposium, George Mason University
2017 – 2018	Organizer, “Mind the Gap” Workshop Series, JHU SOM
2017	Organizer, The 5 th Annual Johns Hopkins Schizophrenia Symposium, JHU SOM
2016 – 2017	Committee Member, Psychiatry Student Training and Research (P-STAR) Program, JHU SOM
2015 – 2018	Organizer, Johns Hopkins Schizophrenia Seminar Series, JHU SOM
2015	Organizer, The 4 th Annual Johns Hopkins Schizophrenia Symposium, JHU SOM

Competitions

May 2022	Social and Affective Neuroscience Society (SANS) Naturalistic fMRI Data Analysis Challenge, Virtual meeting.
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Memberships

2019 – 2023	Social and Affective Neuroscience Society (SANS)
2024 – Present	Society of Psychophysiological Research (SPR)

Teaching

Fall 2018, Spring 2019	PSYC 304 – Psychology of Learning (Lab Section TA)
Fall 2018	PSYC 100 – General Principles of Psychology (Grading TA)
Spring 2019	PSYC 300 – Research Methods in Psychology I (Grading TA)
Spring 2020, Fall 2022	PSYC 372 – Biopsychology (Lecturer)
Fall 2022, Spring 2023, Summer 2023	PSYC 373 – Biopsychology Lab (Lecturer)