

CURRICULUM VITAE
MELISSA L. RINALDI

July 2015

PERSONAL HISTORY

Maiden Name: MELISSA L. ZONA

Business Address: Center for Autism and Related Disabilities
University at Albany – State University of New York
Department of Psychology
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CURRENT POSITION

2009-Present *Adjunct Research Assistant Professor*
University at Albany, State University of New York
Department of Psychology, Albany, NY

2014-Present *Clinical Investigator, Center for Autism and Related Disabilities*
University at Albany, State University of New York
Department of Psychology, Albany, NY

2009-2014 *Research Scientist, Center for Autism and Related Disabilities*
University at Albany, State University of New York
Department of Psychology, Albany, NY

EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

2007-2009 *Postdoctoral Clinical Psychology Fellowship (APA approved)*
Alpert Medical School of Brown University
Providence, RI

2007 Ph.D. *Clinical Psychology (APA approved)*
University at Albany, State University of New York,
Department of Psychology, Albany, NY

Dissertation: *Barriers to successful training in Positive Behavior Support: Predictors of attrition and success.*
Chair: Kristin V. Christodulu, Ph.D.
Committee: V. Mark Durand, Ph.D. & Monica L. Rodriguez, Ph.D.

2006-2007 *Predoctoral Clinical Psychology Internship (APA approved)*

May Institute
Randolph, MA

- 2005** M.A. *University at Albany, State University of New York,*
Department of Psychology, Albany, NY
- Thesis: *Providing social support for siblings of children with autism: An evaluation of the Sibshop model*
Chair: V. Mark Durand, Ph.D.
- 2000** B.A. *New York University*
Department of Psychology, New York, NY
Major: Psychology (cum laude)
Honors: Recipient of Founders Day Award

PROFESSIONAL LICENSES

- 2009-Present** State of New York
Licensure in Psychology, License Number 018335
- 2009-Present** State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
Licensure in Psychology, License Number PS01124

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

- 2014-Present** *Licensed Clinical Psychologist/Director of Clinical Services*
Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, University at Albany – SUNY, Albany, NY
Duties: Provide comprehensive autism diagnostic services to individuals with a suspected or confirmed autism spectrum disorder (ASD) diagnosis, including conducting clinical interviews, administering psychological, developmental, and adaptive assessments, conducting autism specific testing using the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS), providing face-to-face feedback and a written report with detailed treatment recommendations; provide supervision and training to clinical psychology doctoral students in addition to graduate and undergraduate students in related disciplines on assessing individuals with ASD or suspected ASD using gold standard diagnostic tools such as the ADOS; coordinate the clinical operations of the diagnostic clinic.
- 2009-Present** *Trainer/Consultant*
Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, University at Albany – SUNY, Albany, NY

Duties: Assist with the development of training programs related to best practices for school personnel, families, and other community professionals throughout New York State; conduct various training programs (large and small group) across the state; provide technical assistance and consultation to specific constituent groups; assist program and administrative staff in the development and execution of CARD programs (e.g., conferences, family events, autism awareness activities).

2007-2009

Post-Doctoral Fellow

Alpert Medical School of Brown University/Bradley Hospital, Providence, RI

Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities

Duties: Provided individual and group therapy to children and adolescents with combined developmental disabilities and psychiatric conditions on the inpatient unit; conducted cognitive and adaptive assessments of children and adolescents with combined developmental and psychiatric diagnoses; provided consultation services to a residential house consisting of eight individuals on the autism spectrum exhibiting behavioral difficulties.

Supervisor: *Barbara Tylenda*, Ph.D., ABPP, Chief Psychologist, Bradley Hospital.

2006-2007

Pre-Doctoral Intern

May Institute, Randolph, MA

Major Rotation

School Consultation Services

Duties: Provided consultation services to private and public schools for students with learning and/or behavior problems, both on an individual case and whole classroom basis; provided consultation services for students in home and/or community settings as needed; conducted behavioral assessments and diagnostic evaluations.

Supervisors: *Bob Putnam*, Ph.D., BCBA, Senior Vice President of Consultation, May Institute.
Sandra Pierce-Jordan, Ph.D., BCBA, Senior Educational Consultant

Minor Rotation

The National Autism Center

Duties: Conducted diagnostic evaluations of children suspected of having an Autism Spectrum Disorder using state-of-the-art diagnostic instruments, including the Autism Diagnostic

Observation Schedule (ADOS) and tests of cognitive and adaptive functioning; synthesized testing results and provide feedback regarding diagnosis to families; participated in the National Standards Project.

Supervisors: *Jennifer Phillips, Ph.D.*
Laura Fisher, Psy.D., National Autism Center

2005

Therapist

Preventing Challenging Behavior with Positive Family Intervention Study, U.S. Department of Education

University of South Florida St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg, FL

University of Albany, State University of New York, Albany, NY

Duties: Met with parent(s) 1 ½ hours each week for 8 sessions to provide training in Positive Behavior Support (PBS), consisting of conducting functional behavior assessments and assisting in the development of a behavior plan for their child as part of a multi-site research project; provided optimism training using cognitive restructuring techniques to parents in some of the conditions in addition to the education on PBS.

Supervisors: *Kristin V. Christodulu, Ph.D., Site Coordinator*
V. Mark Durand, Ph.D., Project Director
Meme Hieneman, Ph.D., Research Coordinator

2004-2005

Practicum Intern

Berkshire Farm Center and Services for Youth, Canaan, NY

Duties: Provided assessment and individual therapy to adjudicated adolescent males in a residential treatment facility; co-lead and planned weekly group for boys with sexually problematic behaviors; conducted intake assessments for incoming adolescents.

Supervisors: *Sahli A Cavallaro, Ph.D.*
Patricia O’Gorman, Ph.D., Chief Psychologist

2003-2004

Clinical Trainee

Psychological Services Center, University at Albany, State University of New York, Albany, NY

Duties: Provided psychological assessment and individual therapy to a community-based sample of both children and adults presenting with a range of mental health concerns.

Supervisors: *Drew Anderson, Ph.D.*
Leslie Halpern, Ph.D., Director of Clinical Training
George Litchford, Ph.D.

2002***Autism Behavior Therapist*****Irmo, SC**

Duties: Taught adolescent with high-functioning autism in academic areas and social skills; used verbal behavior based therapy as well as applied behavior analysis and structured teaching techniques; developed a reinforcement schedule and behavior modification program to manage self-stimulatory behavior and pica.

Supervisor: *Ashley Collins*, M.Ed., Carolina Autism Resource and Evaluation School of Medicine, Department of Pediatrics, University of South Carolina

2001-2002***Clinical Trainee***

**The Center for Disability Resources Developmental Pediatric Clinic,
School of Medicine, University of South Carolina Affiliated Program,
Columbia, SC**

Duties: Observed children through one-way mirror to assist a team of interns, psychologists, psychiatrists, and genetic counselors in attaining a diagnosis.

Supervisor: *Michael Cuccaro*, Ph.D.

2000-2002***Autism Behavior Therapist*****Columbia, SC**

Duties: Taught a child with autism in a home based program combining applied behavior analysis with structured teaching techniques; provided intensive training in the areas of communication, academics, social skills, emotional identification and expression, and daily living skills; managed behaviors such as aggression and self-injurious behavior using behavior modification; collected detailed data of daily progress; participated in weekly treatment team meetings providing input to program development and consultation with family regarding generalization of behaviors targeted in tutoring session; helped administer educational tests.

Supervisors: *Merv Wagner*, Ph.D., University of South Carolina
Jean Halloran, Advanced Clinical Psychology
Doctoral Student, University of South Carolina

Fall 1999***Teaching Assistant***

**Child Development Center's Therapeutic Nursery,
New York, NY**

Duties: Used the Greenspan model and Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) in assisting with the classroom instruction of three-year-olds with Pervasive Developmental Disorder.

Supervisor: *Margo Bayroff*, M.S., C.S.W.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2009-Present *Research Coordinator*
Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, University at Albany – SUNY, Albany, NY

2007-2009 *Post-Doctoral Fellow*
Alpert Medical School of Brown University/Bradley Hospital, Providence, RI

Brown Center for Children at Risk

Duties: Principal Investigator on study comparing listener's perception of cry samples of infants with and without a later diagnosis of autism; conducted focus group and collected pilot data on descriptors of the cries of infants with autism; study coordinator of a federally funded study examining the acoustic properties of cries from infants later diagnosed with autism; assist with IRB submission, recruitment, data collection, and data analysis.

Supervisor: *Stephen Sheinkopf, Ph.D.*, Assistant Professor (Research), Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior.

Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities

Duties: Principal Investigator on an ongoing multiple baseline study comparing the use of an empirically supported manualized group CBT program for children with anxiety symptoms with and without a diagnosis of high functioning autism (HFA) or Asperger Syndrome; developed research plan and designed study; completed IRB application; recruit subjects for the study; coordinate and lead research meetings.

Supervisor: *J. Zen Meservy, M.D.*, Attending Psychiatrist

2006-2007 *Pre-Doctoral Intern*
May Institute, Randolph, MA

Major Rotation**School Consultation Services**

Duties: Conducted and presented single-subject case design study using data collected from clinical case; co-developer of an assessment tool for school districts to ascertain "inclusion readiness"; performed analysis comparing special education costs on a district-wide level.

Supervisor: *Bob Putnam, Ph.D.*, BCBA, Senior Vice President of Consultation, May Institute.

2002-2006

Graduate Research Assistant

Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, Department of Psychology, University at Albany, SUNY

Duties: Assist in designing and implementing research projects, including administering and scoring assessments, gathering measures, and providing treatment; supervise undergraduate students in research related assessment and treatment; assist in grant writing responsibilities; aid in the development of programs to support individuals with autism spectrum disorders based on current research in the field; develop and conduct trainings for parents and teachers based on the principles of Positive Behavior Support.

Supervisors: *Kristin V. Christodulu, Ph.D.*, Director, Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, University at Albany, State University of New York
V. Mark Durand, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, University of South Florida St. Petersburg

2001-2002

Research Assistant

University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC

Duties: Assisted with ascertainment and determination of clinical aspects of autism in the genetic study of autism project funded by the National Institutes of Health; administered measures of adaptive functioning (Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales) to caregivers; participated in weekly research meetings.

Supervisor: *Michael Cuccaro, Ph.D.*

Fall 1999

Research Assistant

Clinical Psychology Department, New York University

Duties: Administered tests to subjects and collected data for a study looking at the mental representations people store for controlling versus non-controlling significant others.

Supervisor: *Susan Anderson, Ph.D.*, New York University

Spring 1999

Research Assistant

Social Psychology Department, New York University

Duties: Attended weekly meetings and gave input on the final planning of a large research project studying the formation of identity in immigrant children.

Supervisor: *Diane Ruble, Ph.D.*, New York University

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2009** *Invited Guest Lecturer*
Intellectual Disability & Co-Morbid Psychiatric Disorder (Medical Residents), Alpert Medical School of Brown University, Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior
Duties: Presented lecture to medical residents on the field of Intellectual Disability, including assessment strategies, developmental challenges, co-morbid disorders, and treatment approaches.
- 2008** *Invited Guest Lecturer*
Cognitive Development in Autism (Undergraduate Level) Brown University, Department of Cognitive Science
Duties: Presented seminar to undergraduate class on past and present interventions for individuals with autism spectrum disorders.
- 2003-2006** *Graduate Teaching Assistant*
Childhood Behavior Disorders (Undergraduate Level) University at Albany, SUNY, Department of Psychology
Duties: Presented guest lectures to undergraduate classes of approximately 150-200 students on topics of Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Autism, and Conduct Disorder.
Supervisor: *Kristin V. Christodulu, Ph.D.*
- 2005** *Graduate Teaching Assistant*
Experimental Design (Undergraduate Level) University at Albany, SUNY, Department of Psychology
Duties: Responsible for the preparation and presentation of course material; designed, administered, and scored examinations related to lecture material.
Supervisor: *James H. Neely, Ph.D.*

ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPERVISORY EXPERIENCE

- 2009 – Present** *Research Team Coordinator*

Duties: Provide supervision to graduate and undergraduate students on research and administrative duties at the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities; hold monthly supervision meetings.
- 2007-2009** *Intern Supervisor*

Predoctoral Clinical Psychology Internship Program, Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Duties: Provided supervision to pre-doctoral interns during their rotation at the Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities; held weekly supervision meetings.

2002-2006

Practicum Coordinator

Autism Distance Education Network, Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, Department of Psychology, University at Albany, SUNY

Duties: Coordinate between practicum sites and students participating in the practicum portion of the autism distance education courses, *Autism III*; contact supervisors and monitor the student's progress in the practicum; answer questions regarding practicum requirements; disseminate and collect evaluation forms from supervisors regarding student performance.

2003-2006

Sibling Programs Director

Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, Department of Psychology, University at Albany, SUNY

Duties: Responsible for creating, organizing, and leading programs for the siblings of individuals with autism spectrum disorders; conduct research on the effectiveness of the programs and use the information to enhance the curriculum; supervise both staff and undergraduates in the implementation of the programs.

2005

Research Team Leader

Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, Department of Psychology, University at Albany, SUNY

Duties: Organized and set the agenda for bi-weekly team meetings to discuss the progress of ongoing research projects; compiled task analysis for all research projects; supervised team members and ensured timely completion of tasks.

2004-2005

Co-Chair, Fundraising Committee

Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, Department of Psychology, University at Albany, SUNY

Duties: Organized meetings with committee composed of community members, parents, and professionals to discuss mechanisms for raising funds for the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities; created a task analysis for fundraising events including a Comedy Fundraiser and the 2nd Annual Benefit.

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- ❖ American Psychological Association (APA)
- ❖ Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT)
- ❖ Association for Positive Behavior Support (APBS)

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- Durand, V.M., Hieneman, M., Clarke, S., Wang, M., & **Rinaldi, M. L.** (in press). Positive family intervention for severe challenging behavior: A multi-site randomized clinical trial. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*.
- Sheinkopf, S. J., Iverson, J. M., **Rinaldi, M. L.**, & Lester, B. M. (2012). Acoustic properties of pain and non-pain cries in infants at-risk for autism. *Autism Research*, 5(5), 331-339.
- Christodulu, K.V., **Rinaldi, M.L.**, Knapp-Ines, K., Hiruma, L., & Constanzo, V. (2012). *Impact of a multidisciplinary parent education program on families of children recently diagnosed with ASD*. Poster presented at the 2012 International Meeting for Autism Research (IMFAR), Toronto, Canada.
- Hiruma, L., Christodulu, K.V., & **Rinaldi, M.L.** (2012). *Impact of a student's diagnosis of autism on general education teachers' attitudes*. Poster presented at the 2012 International Meeting for Autism Research (IMFAR), Toronto, Canada.
- Rinaldi, M.L.**, Christodulu, K.V., & Durand, V.M. (2012). *Barriers to successful training in positive behavior support: Predictors of attrition and success*. Poster presented at the 2012 International Meeting for Autism Research (IMFAR), Toronto, Canada.
- Christodulu, K.V., **Rinaldi, M.L.**, Knapp-Ines, K., & Hiruma, L. (2011). *Education program for Parents of Children Recently Diagnosed with Autism*. Poster presented at the 2011 OCALI Conference and Exposition, Columbus, OH.
- Hiruma, L., Christodulu, K.V., & **Rinaldi, M.L.** (2011). *Impact of a student's diagnosis of autism on general education teachers' attitudes*. Poster presented at the 2011 OCALI Conference and Exposition, Columbus, OH.
- Knapp-Ines, K.V., **Rinaldi, M.L.**, & Christodulu, K.V. (Summer, 2011). Assisting parents in the struggle to access science-based information and treatment for their children with ASD. *Autism Spectrum News*, 4(1), 14.
- Rinaldi, M.L.**, Christodulu, K.V., Knapp-Ines, K., & Hiruma, L. (2011). *Education program for parents of children recently diagnosed with autism*. Poster presented at the Penn State National Autism Conference. State College, PA.

- Hiruma, L., Christodulu, K.V., & **Rinaldi, M.L.** (2011). *Impact of a student's diagnosis of autism on general education teachers' attitudes*. Poster presented at the Penn State National Autism Conference. State College, PA.
- Simon-Friedfel, L., Christodulu, K.V., **Rinaldi, M.L.**, Costanzo, V., & Damoretcki, N. (2011). *School Consultation Project: Building capacity of school teams to support students with autism spectrum disorders*. Poster presented at the Penn State National Autism Conference. State College, PA.
- Christodulu, K.V., **Rinaldi, M.**, & Malone, T. (Summer, 2010). "So, Now What?" Help for parents of children newly diagnosed with autism. *Autism Spectrum News*, 3(1), 22.
- Hieneman, M., Durand, V.M., Clarke, S., Casper, L., Knapp-Ines, K., Milnes, S., **Rinaldi, M.**, & Christodulu, K.V. (2010). Positive Family Intervention: Addressing parental thoughts to promote PBS. *Association for Positive Behavior Support Newsletter*, 8(1), 2-4.
- Durand, V.M., Hieneman, M., Clarke, S., & **Zona, M.** (2009). Optimistic parenting: Hope and help for parents with challenging children. In W. Sailor, G. Dunlap, G. Sugai, & R. Horner (Eds.), *Handbook of positive behavior support* (pp., 233-256). New York: Springer.
- Zona, M.L.**, Christodulu, K.V., & Durand, V.M. (2008, March). *Barriers to successful training in Positive Behavior Support: Predictors of attrition and success*. Poster presented at the 12th Annual Research Symposium on Mental Health Sciences, Alpert Medical School of Brown University, Providence, RI.
- Zona, M.** & Christodulu, K. V. (2007, March). *Barriers to Successful Training in PBS: Predictors of Family Attrition*. Association for Positive Behavior Support. Boston, MA.
- Kietzman, E., Simon, L., O'Connor, T., Christodulu, K. V., & **Zona, M.** (2007, March). *Bringing Positive Behavior Support Home: Empowering Families to Enhance Their Child's Life*. Association for Positive Behavior Support. Boston, MA.
- Christodulu, K. V. & **Zona, M.** (2007, March) *Evaluating Sibling and Parent Relationships in Families of Children with Autism*. Association for Positive Behavior Support. Boston, MA.
- Hieneman, M. & **Zona, M.L.**, (2006, March). *Working with "Reluctant" Families: Combining PBS with Optimism Training*. Association for Positive Behavior Support. Reno, NV.

Zona, M.L., Christodulu, K.V., & Durand, V.M. (2005). Challenging behavior. In J. Neisworth & P. Wolfe (Eds.), *The Autism Encyclopedia*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

Zona, M.L., Christodulu, K.V., & Durand, V.M. (2005). Functional communication training. In J. Neisworth & P. Wolfe (Eds.), *The Autism Encyclopedia*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

Zona, M.L., Christodulu, K.V., & Durand, V.M. (2005). Functional equivalent alternative behavior. In J. Neisworth & P. Wolfe (Eds.), *The Autism Encyclopedia*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

Zona, M.L., Christodulu, K.V., & Durand, V.M. (2005). Motivation assessment scale. In J. Neisworth & P. Wolfe (Eds.), *The Autism Encyclopedia*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

Zona, M.L., Christodulu, K.V., & Durand, V.M. (2004, October). *Providing Social Support for Siblings of Children with Autism: An Evaluation of the SibShop Model*. Poster presented at the 9th Annual Center for School Mental Health Assistance Conference on Advancing School-Based Mental Health. Dallas, TX.

Zona, M.L. (2004, April). *Siblings of Children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder: Psychosocial Development, Sibling Relationships, and Support Workshops*. Fulton-Montgomery Autism Society of America, Lexington Family Services, Gloversville, NY.

REFERENCES UPON REQUEST

1. Kristin V. Christodulu, Ph.D., Director, Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, Department of Psychology, University at Albany, State University of New York, Albany, NY 12222; kvchristodulu@albany.edu
2. V. Mark Durand, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology, University of South Florida St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg, FL 33701; vdurand@mail.usf.edu
3. Laura Fisher, Psy.D., ASD Diagnostic Clinic Director, National Autism Center, May Institute, 41 Pacella Park Drive, Randolph, MA 02368
4. Robert F. Putnam, Ph.D., Senior Vice President, Consultation Services, May Institute, 41 Pacella Park Drive, Randolph, MA 02368
5. Stephen Sheinkopf, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychiatry & Human Behavior, Brown Center for the Study of Children at Risk, Woman & Infants Hospital, 101 Dudley Street, Providence, RI 02905; Stephen_Sheinkopf@brown.edu; 401-274-1122 x 8906

6. Barbara Tylenda, Ph.D., ABPP, Chief Psychologist, Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities, Bradley Hospital, 1011 Veterans Memorial Parkway, East Providence, RI 02915