

KRISTINA RAY-BENNETT

Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION

Indiana University Indianapolis, IN	Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Social Work In Progress PhD Candidate Ph.D. Minor: Neuro-Psychosocial Wellbeing Dissertation:	
Indiana University Indianapolis, IN	Master of Social Work (M.S.W.) Dual: Health Concentration & Administration	2009
Purdue University—North Central Westville, IN	Bachelor of Arts in Behavioral Science (B.A.) Sociology	2006

LICENSURES & CERTIFICATIONS

State of Indiana	Licensed Clinical Social Worker
State of Indiana	Licensed Social Worker
IDOE	Licensed School Social Worker

SPECIALIZED EDUCATION – MICROCREDENTIALS

National Child Traumatic Stress Network	Certification: Psychological First Aid	2023
Brown University	Certification: Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy	2018
American Red Cross	Certification: Mental Health Disaster Relief Certificate	2015
Theraplay Institute	Certification: Level One: Theraplay and MIM	2012
Medical University of South Carolina	Certification: Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy	2010

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Graduate Research Assistant, School of Social Work Indiana University	05/2023– 12/2025
Adjunct Professor, School of Social Work Indiana University	05/2023 – 12/2025
Graduate Research Assistant, School of Social Work Indiana University	08/2021-05/2023
Adjunct Professor, Department of Allied Sciences Indiana University— Kokomo	08/2015 – 07/2018

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Integrating neuro-psychosocial appraisal processes (Ray-Bennett, 2025) with ecological (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and systemic (Ungar, 2000) resilience frameworks to inform community- and school-based interventions
- Mapping clients' prefrontal-cortex subregion functions of the cognitive and emotional appraisal into systems-level models to optimize personalized, strengths-based supports
- Developing and validating neuro-psychosocial assessment tools that align individual neurological profiles with systemic practice strategies for promoting resilience and social belonging in educational settings
- Investigating how layered system factors (family, school, community) interact with brain-based mechanisms of emotion regulation and cognitive flexibility to enhance intervention efficacy

PUBLICATIONS

- Ray-Bennett, K.** (Forthcoming). Mindfulness Activities and Techniques for Adults and Kids. Federal Mental Health Professional Grant. Scholar Works.
- Ray-Bennett, K. & Poter, M.** (2022). Venezuela: Teen Pregnancy. Venezuelan Initiative.
- Luca-Sugawara, C. L., Matešić, N., Paton, G., & **Ray-Bennett, K.** (2022). Global Solidarity—Voices from Croatian Mobile Social Education Partners. Knowledge on the Move, 91. Retrieved <http://www.somoveed.is.uz.zgora.pl/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/SoMoveEd-Knowledge-on-the-move-ebook.pdf>

BOOKS

Ray-Bennett, K. (2023). Mindfulness Activities and Techniques for Adults and Kids. Federal Mental Health Professional Grant.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Luca Sugawara, C.G., Kim, HW, Modić Stake, K. Krasniqi, V., & Bašić, S. (revised-resubmit status). The role of community-university engagement in strengthening local community capacity in Southeastern Europe. *International Journal of Educational Development*.

PEER REVIEWED PRESENTATIONS

Ray-Bennett, K. & Lipsey, A. (2025, May). Building Resiliene: Investigating Neuro-psychosocial, Ecological, and Systemic Factors within Traditional and Non-Traditional Households. Poster presentation at the Indiana University School of Social Work's 28th Annual Ph.D. Research Symposium, Indianapolis, IN.

Ray-Bennett, K. (2025, May). Digital Dissociation to Resilience: Appraisal-by-Content for Social Anxiety in Youth with Low Support Autism. Poster presentation at the Indiana University School of Social Work's 28th Annual Ph.D. Research Symposium, Indianapolis, IN.

Lipsey, A. & **Ray-Bennett, K. (2025, April).** Building Resilience: Investigating Family and Community Factors in Traditional verse Non-Traditional Households Impacting Child Health Outcomes. Presentation at Resiliency Conference. Nashville, TN.

Ray-Bennett, K. (2025, April). Digital Dissociation to Resilience: Multidimensional Strengths-Based Approaches to Build Resilience in a Child with Autism Through Mindfulness and Appraisal-By-Content (ABC) Theoretical Framework. Presentation at Resiliency Conference. Nashville, TN.

Ray-Bennett, K, Pierce, B. Ressler, J., Walke, K, & Blessinger K. (2025, April). Strengthening Resilience in School Mental Health Social Workers: Indiana/MHSP Learning Circle Strategies. Presentation at Resiliency Conference. Nashville, TN.

Pierce, B., **Ray-Bennett, K.,** Ressler, J., Blessinger, K., & Walke, K. (2024, March). Learning Circles in Education. IUSSW Alumni Continuing Education Conference. Indianapolis, IN.

Pierce, B., **Ray-Bennett, K.,** Ressler, J., Blessinger, K., & Walke, K. (2024, January). Use of Learning Circles to Improve the Education of School Social Workers and School Mental Health Social Workers in Indiana at the Indiana School Mental Health Initiative at Indiana University: Whole Child Summit. Plainfield, IN.

Ray-Bennett, K. (2023, November) Mindful clinicians: Enhancing school-based practice through mindfulness training. Virtual Oral presentation at the Indiana University School of Social Work Doctoral Scholars Speaker Series, Indianapolis, IN.

Ray-Bennett, K. (2023, October). Mindfulness for School Social Workers. Virtual Presentation at Building Mental Health in Schools: An IUSSW-Public School-based Learning Collaborative. Indianapolis, IN.

Ray-Bennett, K. (2023, August). Self-care and wellness. Virtual Presentation at Building Mental Health in Schools: An IUSSW-Public School-based Learning Collaborative. Indianapolis, IN.

Durmaz, S., Funk, K., & **Ray-Bennett, K. (2023, May).** "Something Does Need to Change": Recommendations for. LGBTQ+ Youth Flourishing in Rural Indiana. Poster presentation at the Indiana University School of Social Work's 27th Annual Ph.D. Research Symposium, Indianapolis, IN.

- Ray-Bennett, K.** (2023, May). Social connectedness: An analysis of social connection associated with sleep among urban adolescents. Poster presentation at the Indiana University School of Social Work's 27th Annual Ph.D. Research Symposium, Indianapolis, IN.
- Ray-Bennett, K.** (2023, May). The impact of intrinsic and extrinsic factors and parent, school, neighborhood connections and bullying on sleep quality in urban adolescents. Poster presentation at the Indiana University School of Social Work's 27th Annual Ph.D. Research Symposium, Indianapolis, IN.
- Ray-Bennett, K.** (2023, April). Social connectedness: An analysis of social connection associated with sleep among urban adolescents. Presentation at Resiliency Conference. Nashville, TN.
- Ray-Bennett, K.** (2022, November). Sleep and social connectedness. Virtual Oral presentation at the Indiana University School of Social Work Doctoral Scholars Speaker Series, Indianapolis, IN.
- Ray-Bennett, K.** (2022, May). Association of Social Connectedness with isolation on sleep among adolescents. Poster presentation at the Indiana University School of Social Work's 26th Annual Ph.D. Research Symposium, Indianapolis, IN.
- Ray-Bennett, K. & Lyons, S.** (2022, May). Pathway to solidarity: Youth mobility's impact on social cohesion. Poster presentation at the Indiana University School of Social Work's 26th Annual Ph.D. Research Symposium, Indianapolis, IN.

TEACHING GRADUATE COURSES

Indiana University Courses Taught

Social Work D685: Mental Health and Addictions with Individual and Families

UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

Indiana University—Kokomo (Course Taught)

Allied Sciences: 120 Health & Fitness

Allied Sciences: 190: Yoga

INVITED TEACHING

Social Work: 519 Community and Global Theory and Practice

TEACHING ADMINISTRATION & CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Social Work Pedagogy	IUSSW	2023
Online Course Strategies	IU-Kokomo	2018
Universal Design Guidelines	IU- Kokomo	2017
MERLOT	IU- Kokomo	2017
Crocodoc Video	IU- Kokomo	2017
Auto Commendations	IU- Kokomo	2016
Kaltura	IU- Kokomo	2016
Canvas Modules and Pages	IU- Kokomo	2016
Canvas Speedgrader	IU- Kokomo	2016
Quizlet	IU- Kokomo	2016

RESEARCH & FELLOWSHIP EXPERIENCE

Mental Health School-Based Program

2023-2025

Role: Program Manager 50%, \$5,000,000

Responsibilities: As a Program Manager for a DOE federal grant, I lead initiatives to enhance capacities in targeted schools across Indiana, focusing on implementing strategic programs that address mental health gaps and promote academic excellence. My role encompasses coordinating with stakeholders, managing budgets, and overseeing the execution of grant objectives to ensure impactful improvements in the multi-tiered school system (MTSS) mental health system within schools. Through collaboration with educators, community organizations, and policymakers, I work to create sustainable changes that support student success and school advancement. I fostered an environment where every student has access to quality education through the support of mental health practitioners to aid in allowing every child to flourish.

Indiana University School of Social Work PhD

2021-2023

Role: Research Mentee 20%

Responsibilities: In my research mentee role, supported by a fellowship, I collaborated closely with a professor to advance scholarly projects, contributing to the design, implementation, and reporting of research studies. My responsibilities included conducting literature reviews, collecting and analyzing data, and assisting in the preparation of manuscripts and presentations. This experience not only enhanced my research skills but also provided invaluable insights into academic inquiry and the publication process under the guidance of an experienced mentor in my field of study.

Indiana School of Medicine

2021-2022

Role: Research Assistant 10%, \$719,828

Responsibilities: As a Research Assistant at the Indiana School of Medicine, my role focused on evaluating preschool curricula to identify which ones demonstrably support the flourishing of preschoolers, which involved conducting comprehensive interviews of administrators of existing curriculum frameworks, gathering, and analyzing data on child development outcomes, and collaborating with educational experts to assess the efficacy of various educational strategies. My work contributed to the broader understanding of early childhood education and its impact on children's cognitive, social, and emotional growth, aiming to inform best practices in preschool settings.

CLINICAL PRACTICE APPOINTMENTS

Invoke Counseling & Consultation, LLC.

2015-Current

Role: Owner/ Child & Family Virtual Therapist

Responsibilities: As a dedicated Child and Family Therapist with over 15 years of experience, I specialize in delivering compassionate, evidence-based therapeutic interventions tailored to meet the unique needs of children, adolescents, and their families. My practice emphasizes a holistic and integrative approach to mental health, focusing on building resilience, enhancing emotional literacy, and fostering strong family bonds. Recognized for my commitment to community engagement and mental health advocacy, I actively contribute to the field through educational workshops and collaborative care initiatives, driving positive change and supporting individuals in navigating life's challenges.

Kokomo Centered School Corporation

2012-2014

Role: School Social Worker

Responsibilities: As the school social worker, I served as a critical liaison between the educational environment and students' social-emotional well-being, addressing challenges that affect learning, behavior, and mental health. I created and implemented a mindfulness program for 5th-grade students, which, over a 12-week period, demonstrated positive results by increasing spelling test scores from a C average to an A- class average. In addition to providing direct support through counseling and crisis intervention, I collaborated with teachers, parents, and external agencies to ensure a comprehensive support system. My role facilitated a safe and inclusive school climate and played a pivotal role in removing barriers to education advocating for resource coordination to promote success and development for all students.

Children's Bureau, Inc.

2012

Role: ISP Lead Clinician

Responsibilities: As Lead Clinician for Intensive Wraparound Services, I oversaw a multidisciplinary team dedicated to providing comprehensive, individualized care for individuals with complex behavioral health needs, often integrating services across mental health, education, social services, and community resources. I assessed clients' needs, developing and implementing personalized care plans, and ensuring continuity of care through regular monitoring and adjustment of services. I demonstrated strong leadership, coordination, and advocacy skills to navigate and connect various systems of care aimed at achieving the best possible outcomes for clients and their families. As the Lead Clinician, I ensured that services were delivered in a coordinated, client-centered manner, emphasizing empowerment, resilience, and self-sufficiency in navigating life's challenges to have every child flourish.

Midtown Mental Health

2011-2012

Role: Child & Family Clinician

Responsibilities: I delivered therapeutic services to children and families, employing modalities like cognitive-behavioral therapy to address emotional challenges and enhance family dynamics. My approach included conducting assessments, formulating tailored treatment plans, and fostering a supportive environment aimed at promoting resilience and aiding those to thrive.

Innovative Interventions, LLC

2010-2011

Role: Child & Family Clinician

Responsibilities: As a Child and Family Clinician with expertise in therapeutic services for children and families, I addressed emotional, behavioral, and psychological challenges through tailored modalities like cognitive-behavioral and play therapy. My role extended to assessing needs, crafting treatment plans, and fostering improved family dynamics. Additionally, I served as an expert witness in sexual abuse cases, offering specialized insights to support sensitive legal processes. I aimed at promoting resilience and positive outcomes in challenging family situations, helping children flourish.

Lifeline Youth & Family Services (2009-2010)

2009-2010

Role: Child & Family Clinician

Responsibilities: As a clinician, I specialized in providing comprehensive therapeutic services to children and their families, utilizing modalities like cognitive-behavioral therapy and play therapy to enhance communication, resolve conflicts, and promote resilience. My work involved conducting assessments, developing personalized treatment plans, and collaborating with professionals to create a supportive environment that fosters mental health, helping children to flourish.

CLINICAL SERVICE

Bridges Outreach

2012-2014

Role: Field Coordinator

Responsibilities: As the Field Coordinator for Bridges Outreach from 2012 to 2014, I led the training of volunteers on recognizing signs and red flags for child abuse, ensuring they were well-prepared to support at-risk students. I was responsible for coordinating volunteer-student matches, scheduling their meetings at elementary schools, supervising volunteer activities, and organizing an annual luncheon to celebrate the volunteers' contributions and facilitate connections between them and their student's families.

Sycamore Elementary

2012-2014

Role: Chairman, Title 5 Board

Responsibilities: As the Chairman of the Title 5 Board, I led the oversight and implementation of Title V programs, focusing on enhancing educational opportunities and resources for disadvantaged students. My responsibilities included coordinating with educators, parents, and community stakeholders to develop and execute strategies that promoted equitable access to quality education and support services.

APPOINTMENTS

Academics

IUSSW	Chair	2022
Ph.D. Committee		
IUSSW	Chair	2022
Dean Advisory Committee		

Non-Academics

Riley Children's Hospital	Chair	2009
Riley Patient Safety and Quality Council		
Riley Children's Hospital	Chair	2009
Pediatric Patient and Family Advisory Council		

MEMBERSHIPS

National Association of Social Workers – Indiana Chapter
CSWE

2023 – Present
2022—Present

PROFESSIONAL AWARDS & HONORS

Promising Scholar Award,
Life Path

2025

Jerry Powers Esprit Award,
Indiana University School of Social Work

2024