

Candy L. Beers, Ph.D.

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I am an interdisciplinary family scholar with expertise in qualitative, queer and embodied feminist methodologies. Grounded in Family Science and Women's and Gender Studies, I study maternal shame and social conformity within the relational contexts of mononormativity, cycles of social injustice, and antiracism parenting. I have extensive clinical experience as a dance/movement psychotherapist.

EDUCATION

Virginia Tech 2023

Ph.D., Human Development and Family Science

Dissertation: *Maternal Socialization and Anti-Racism Mothering: A Grounded Theory*

Graduate Certificate: Women's and Gender Studies

Pratt Institute 2006

M.S., Creative Arts Therapy

Specialized Focus Areas: Dance/Movement

Certificate of Excellence for Outstanding Academic Achievement

The Pennsylvania State University 2001

B.A., Psychology

Focus Areas: developmental and social psychology

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Lecturer, Department of Human Development and Family Science, University of Georgia, August, 2024 - Present

HONORS AND AWARDS

1. *Barbera Allen Smith Essay Award*, Virginia Tech WGS Conference [2023].

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Virginia Tech 2022-present

Collaborator

Family Complexity Lab

- Collaborated with PI in the conceptualization of projects exploring stepfamily relationships
- Assisted in recruitment, development of interview protocols, and literature review
- Currently collaborating on manuscript focused on biological mother/stepmother allyship

Virginia Tech 2021-present

Collaborator

CoDeS Lab

- Collaborated with PI and graduate colleague to conceptualize study on maternal shame/guilt and early childhood technology use
- Created draft of literature review on maternal shame
- Created Question Pro Survey and recruitment materials
- Reviewed primary data
- Currently collecting secondary data and drafting manuscript

Virginia Tech
Research Consultant
Embodied Brain Lab

2022-2023

- Collaborated on a transdisciplinary project exploring how mothers navigated parenting during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Offered consultation on a project exploring dyadic dance partnerships and cognitive function
- Trained undergraduate researchers in nonverbal analysis
- Assisted in data collection for an acute dance/movement therapy study
- Consulted on an ITHRIVE study exploring movement interventions with mothers diagnosed with PTSD and their infants

Virginia Tech
Research Consultant
IMAGINES Lab

2020-present

- Offered consultation on using Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) in a grant funded study exploring music therapy and cognitive function in individuals with dementia
- Continued collaboration with director in the creation and training of the use of LMA coding
- Trained undergraduate research assistants in nonverbal analysis, using adapted LMA coding systems
- Mentored undergraduate research assistants during inter-rater consensus meetings

Virginia Tech
Graduate Research Assistant

2021-2022

- Conducted literature reviews on relationship initiation, development, maintenance, and dissolution, within the context of gender and sexuality
- Gained proficiency within this literature and organized data into categories
- Consulted with PI and graduate colleagues to conceptualize a project on the study of CNM and polyamorous relationships within the discipline of family science
- Drafted a manuscript for publication on methodologies engaged in the study of CNM and polyamorous relationships within the discipline of family science

Virginia Tech
Research Assistant
Children's Emotions Lab

2017-2020

- Conceptualized a coding manual to score parent-child nonverbal interactions
- Collaborated with and trained graduate and undergraduate students on the implementation of the manual
- Gained proficiency with scoring parent-child interactions in emotion tasks and free-play task.

Virginia Tech
Graduate Research Assistant
Child Development Center for Learning and Research (CDCLR)

2019-2021

- Assisted in literature review on how gesture relates to early math learning
- Supervised undergraduate and AP high school research assistants
- Supervised development of coding manual for gestures in early math learning

The Pennsylvania State University

2001-2002

Research Assistant

PATHS Project

- Assisted in grant funded research and the development of Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS), a curriculum for children that aids in emotional development and social skills
- Co-coordinated and executed a program for school-aged children to decrease aggression and bullying on the playground
- Organized a program emphasizing rapport building between parents and teachers.
- Collaborated with public schools to apply programs and conduct empirical studies with elementary-aged children
- Created schedule and managed travel arrangements for student assistants.
- Attained proficiency in SPSS

The Pennsylvania State University

2001

Undergraduate Research Assistant

- Examined the effects of efficient communication on developing sexual relationships
- Assigned numerical scores to qualitative written responses to questionnaires
- Met with peer research assistants to check for consensus

The Pennsylvania State University

2000

Undergraduate Research Assistant

- Administered a depression assessment battery to undergraduate participants in a study examining the effects of depression on cognition
- Met with primary investigator weekly to score battery and enter data into SPSS

The Pennsylvania State University

2000

Undergraduate Research Assistant

- Scored visual data collected to examine effective use of nonverbal communication by physicians in order to create a safe sharing environment between physicians and patients.

TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS

Course	Role	Average Teaching Evaluation	Academic Year
HD 1004: Human Development I	Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA)	n/a	2019-2020
HD 3214: Infancy and Early Childhood	GTA	n/a	2019-2020
HD 1004: Human Development I	Instructor of Record (IOR)	5.38 (6-point scale)	2020-2021
HD 4964: Field Study in Human Development	IOR	5.40 (6-point scale)	2020-2021
HD 2314: Human Sexuality	IOR	5.39 (6-point scale)	2021-2022
HD 5974: Teaching Seminar	GTA	n/a	2022-2023
HDFS 3920: Issues in Family Systems	IOR	4.81 (5-point scale)	2024-2025
HDFS 4330: Diversity in Family Systems	IOR	4.59 (5-point scale)	2024-2025

INVITED LECTURES

- Beers, C. (2023, March). *Ethnicity and race as a context for parenting*. Invited lecture for Principles of Effective Parenting, Lipscomb University, Nashville, TN.
- Beers, C. (2022, December). *A critical look at power and agency in human sexuality*. Invited lecture for Human Sexuality (HD 2014), Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
- Beers, C. (2022, March). *Dance professions: Dance/movement psychotherapy*. Invited lecture for Senior Seminar (DNCE 450), Radford University, Radford, VA.
- Beers, C. (2021, November). *Nonverbal analysis in dance/movement psychotherapy and arts-based phenomenology*. Invited lecture for Creative Dance (TA 2204), Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
- Beers, C. (2021, April). *Making sense of children's idiosyncratic behaviors*. Invited lecture for Infancy and Early Childhood Development (HD 3214), Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
- Beers, C. (2020, February). *Cognitive development in early childhood*. Invited lecture for Introduction to Human Development (HD 1004), Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

COURSE AND CURRICULUM DESIGN

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| Behavioral Health Minor | 2024-present |
| University of Georgia | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed objectives for new Behavioral Health Minor • Collaborated with HDFS Undergraduate Coordinator and Ralston Center to create curricula for undergraduate new Behavioral Health Minor • Developed three new undergraduate courses that align with Behavioral Health Minor objectives • Revised five current undergraduate HDFS courses to include Behavioral Health Minor objectives | |
| Human Development | 2022-2023 |
| Virginia Tech | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborated with the faculty teaching mentor and graduate colleague to revise curricula for four undergraduate Human Development and Family Science courses • Gained proficiency in backward design • Created assignments that align with course objectives and specific levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. • Developed clear rubrics to support student performance and sustainable grading • Streamlined Canvas sites for each of the four courses | |

MENTORING EXPERIENCE

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|--|--------------|
| University of Georgia | 2024-present |
| Graduate Advisor | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advised 2 graduate assistants within the contexts of course development and teaching • Collaborated with graduate assistant in the development of new curriculum | |
| Virginia Tech | 2022-2023 |
| Graduate Teaching Mentor | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentored 7 graduate Instructors of Record (IOR) teaching a variety of courses in Human Development and Family Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Development I, HD 1004 • Human Development II, HD 2004 | |

- Intro to Disability Studies, HD 1134
- Human Sexuality, HD 2314
- Family Relations, HD 2304
- Principles of Human Service, HD 2336
- Developed and executed lectures on participatory pedagogy, effective lecturing, critical pedagogy, use of AI in academia and effective use of technology in online teaching
- Co-edited IOR Handbook
- Observed graduate IORs teaching and offered constructive feedback on pedagogical practices
- Assisted graduate IORs in curriculum development and execution, successful assessment techniques and sustainable teaching

Virginia Tech

2018-2020

Research Assistant

Children's Emotions Lab

- Trained undergraduate research assistants in the scoring of nonverbal interactions between parent and child in emotion coaching task
- Mentored undergraduate research assistants during investigation of how parenting behaviors impact child emotion regulation
- Supervised undergraduate honors students' paper and poster presentation, examining how parental responsiveness relates to child emotion regulation

The Pennsylvania State University

2001-2002

Research Supervisor

PATHS Project

- Trained undergraduate students on the implementation of program used to decrease aggression and bullying on elementary school playground
- Assessed student contributions to the lab and assigned grades
- Trained undergraduate student assistants on data collection and data entry

RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS, PEER-REVIEWED

Garnett-Deakin, A., & Beers, C. (2023, April). *Appalachia: An auto-ethnographic exploration of place and oppression*. Paper presented at The ASPECT 2023 Graduate Conference, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

Beers, C. (2023, April). *Mothering, bodily autonomy, and sexuality: A somatic analysis*. Paper presented at The WGS Student Conference, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

Zare, B., Leff, J., Nagai-Singer, M., Beers, C., Velraj, V., & Peacock, H. (2023, April). *Burn it down*. Panel presentation at The WGS Student Conference, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

Reeves, A., Beers, C., & Rugh, R., Hardwig, S., Basso, J., Hernandez-Cabel, C., Jorge, A. (2022, October). *Dancing at and around the tech university: Dance as object and method of research*. Panel presentation at Future Bodies Symposium, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

Beers, C., & Smith, K. N. (2022, April). *Transgressing Appalachian culture: A personal narrative*. Paper presented at The WGS Student Conference, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

Beers, C., Johnson, S., & Rugh, R. (2022, April). *Disparities of emotional labor in critical race parenting: A transdisciplinary study*. Paper presented at Virginia Conference on Race, Roanoke College, Roanoke, VA.

- Rugh, R., Basso, J., Hernandez-Cabel, C., Reeves, A., & **Beers, C.** (2022, March). *It comes in waves*. Choreography presented as It Comes in Waves Percussion and Dance Concert, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
- Beers, C. (2021, April). *Sense of autonomy in aging women: A gender socialization and life- course perspective*. Paper presented at Body Politics Conference, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.
- Beers, C., Shin, E., Smith, C. L., Day, K. L., & Dunsmore, J. C. (2020, November). *A smile can go a long way: How children's temperament relates to parental behaviors*. Poster presented at The 23rd Occasional Temperament Conference, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA
- Beers, C., & Jastrebska, D. (2018, October). *Embodying the postpartum experience*. Invited workshop conducted at 2018 American Dance Therapy Conference, Salt Lake City, UT.
- Tortora, S., Whitley, J., Comte, L., Ellington, J., & **Beers, C.** (2018, October). *Ways of seeing in early parenting*. Invited workshop conducted at 2018 American Dance Therapy Conference, Salt Lake City, UT.
- Tortora, S., Bradley, K., Dekoeyer-Laros, I., Radonovich, K., & **Beers, C.** (2013, October). *Ways of seeing in early parenting*. Invited workshop at 2013 American Dance Therapy Conference, Brooklyn, NY.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS/WORKSHOPS

- Beers, C. (2023, February). *Pediatric sleep and maternal shame*. Invited lecture for Parenting Series, Rainbow Riders, Blacksburg, VA.
- Beers, C. (2018, May). *The effects of maternal development on early parenting*. Invited workshop at MyBirth, Richmond, VA.
- Beers, C. (2018, March). *The science behind pediatric sleep*. Invited workshop at The Virginia Tech Graduate Student Parent Support Luncheon, Blacksburg, VA.
- Beers, C. (2017, December). *Sleep: For mother and child*. Invited panelist at The Motherhood Collective, Lynchburg, VA.
- Beers, C. (2017, October). *Perinatal mood and anxiety disorders*. Invited panelist at The Motherhood Collective, Lynchburg, VA.
- Beers, C. (2017, March). *Parental shame and infant sleep patterns*. Invited workshop at The Virginia Tech Graduate Student Parent Support Luncheon, Blacksburg, VA.
- Beers, C. (2016, August). *Nurturing the bond*. Invited panelist at The Motherhood Collective, Lynchburg, VA.

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed

- Beers, C. (2007). Dance movement therapy and a journey to the corporate world. *DTAA Quarterly*, 5(3-4), 16-17.

Invited

Beers, C. (invited revision). What happens if we stop dancing? *American Journal of Dance Therapy*.

Unpublished Thesis and Dissertation

Beers, C. (2006). *Professional identity as a dance/movement therapist: A story of challenges and revelations*. [Unpublished thesis]. Pratt Institute

Beers, C. *Maternal socialization and anti-racism mothering: A grounded theory*. [Unpublished dissertation]. Virginia Tech

Book Chapters and Vignettes

Beers, C. (2023). Voices from lived experience: Life course theory. In K. R. Allen & A. C. Henderson, *Family theories today: A critical intersectional approach*, (2nd ed), (pp.251-252). Cognella.

Selected Manuscripts in Preparation

Beers, C., & Few-Demo, A. L. Socialization towards the “good” white mother and anti-racism in white families.

Beers, C., Choi, K., & Yu, S. Maternal guilt and screen media use in early childhood.

Beers, C. A call for vulnerability: Exploring internalized white supremacy in antiracism research.

Books in Preparation

Beers, C. Antiracism mothering in white families: Lived experiences. Cognella.

MEDIA PRESENCE

Interview with Virginia Tech News (Clark DeHart), September 22, 2023. *Communicating scientific research through dance*. Article appeared November 1, 2023.

Interview with Dance Informa Magazine (Erica Hornthal), March 8, 2019. *How dance prepared me for motherhood*. Article appeared April 24, 2019.

Interview with The Next Tuesday Podcast (Caroline Fox & Susan Kinahan), May 20, 2018. *How to become the puzzle piece you were meant to be in life and your business*. Published on May 22, 2018.

Interview with the Dance Teacher Magazine (Mary Seidman), April 10, 2012. *Baby steps*. Article appeared May 1, 2012.

SERVICE

Undergraduate Curriculum Development Committee

2024-present

University of Georgia

- Rename and rebrand undergraduate curriculum in HDFS
- Revise objectives for HDFS undergraduate curriculum

Sexapalooza Planning Committee

2023-present

Virginia Tech

- Developed inclusive branding and marketing materials for the inaugural sex-positive campuswide event
- Networked and collaborated with academic departments and student caucuses to plan and deliver campuswide events focused on healthy relationships, power and coercion, sexual assault prevention

and sex-positive education

- Established and maintained successful working relationships with Women's Resource Center and Hokie Wellness personnel

Sexual Citizenship and Rape Culture

2022-present

Virginia Tech

- Organizing and leading a task force with the purpose of creating sex positive and inclusive education and support for Virginia Tech graduate and undergraduate students
- Engaging with current literature on sexual autonomy, agency, power, and coercion
- Becoming familiar with data on sexual assault on college campuses
- Collaborating with campus services in the development and execution of sex-positive and inclusive education and support programs
- Developing and adding sex sex-positive curriculum to existing undergraduate courses (i.e., HD 2314; WGS 1824)

Conference Planning Committee

2022-2023

Women's and Gender Studies

Virginia Tech

- Collaborated with WGS and Sociology faculty and graduate students to create theme for 2023 conference
- Leadership role in guiding the creative process during initial planning meetings.
- Active role in open mic session

Conference Abstract Reviewer

- 2022 NCFR National Conference: *Light and Shadow: Shifting Perspectives Families*
- 2021 NCFR National Conference: *The Science of Families: Nurturing Hope, Happiness, & Health*

Editorial Boards

- *Journal of Family Theory & Review*

Ad Hoc Reviewer

- *Journal of Family Theory & Review*
- *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*
- *Journal of Adolescence*
- *Cognella*

Student Government

2020-2021

Human Development and Family Science

Virginia Tech

- Secretary/Treasurer for HDFS Graduate Student Association
- Acted as liaison between HDFS graduate faculty and students
- Leadership role in event planning, including budget management

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

National Women's Studies Association

2021-present

National Council on Family Relations

2020-present

Society for Applied Research in Memory and Cognition

2019-present

Zero to Three

2018-present

American Dance Therapy Association

2006-2019

Positions Held: Member of PR committee

Virginia Association for Infant Mental Health
 Greater Richmond Maternal Mental Health Coalition
 National Dance Education Organization

2016-2020
 2016-present
 2010-2014

*Positions held: co-chair of early childhood education***POST-GRADUATE CERTIFICATES****Pediatric Sleep**

2015-2017

Two-year training and internship with clinical psychologist, focusing on the impact of maternal mental health on developing pediatric sleep patterns; parenting ideologies and their effects on maternal identity and pediatric sleep practices; parental cognitions surrounding pediatric sleep expectations and parenting practices

Ways of Seeing

2013-2017

Two-year international training intensive with dance/movement therapist and early childhood educator, Dr. Suzi Tortora, focusing on infant mental health, parent-child nonverbal interactions, nonverbal analysis, and early childhood development from an intersectional lens
 Special Topics on infant mental health, protective factors and movement analysis

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE**Owner/Director**

Richmond, VA

Creative Wellness Studio, LLC

2008-2020

- Responsible for program development, operations management, and communication with clients and collaborators for this small business that focuses on current issues in infant mental health, pediatric sleep, early childhood, adjusting to parenting and family dynamics; explores the body-mind connection and the effects of kinesthetic and emotional awareness of parents on the overall wellness and functioning of the parent/child relationship, offers dance/movement therapy to families with young children, and studies development in early childhood through nonverbal analysis
- Supersized dance/movement therapy interns on conducting client assessment, treatment planning, and implementation of clinically indicated interventions
- Trained interns in the use of Laban Movement Analysis and Kestenberg Movement profile in assessment and intervention planning in dance/movement therapy
- Educated interns on early childhood development, specifically sensory processing, motor planning, and emotion regulation

Dance/Movement Therapist

Fredericksburg, VA

Mary Washington Hospital

2007-2008

- Facilitated dance/movement therapy groups for adults, adolescents, and children in an acute psychiatric setting
- Assessed new admissions and wrote progress notes daily
- Collaborated with team members to generate treatment plans for patients
- Created and chaired Unit Improvement Committee and served on Associate Relations and Associate Focus Committee

Intern

2003-2005

The Pennsylvania State University

Counseling and Psychological Services Director:

Benjamin Locke, Ph.D.

- Held in-services to introduce and educate clinical staff on the application of dance/movement therapy in a university setting
- Facilitated dance/movement therapy groups with a focus on stress management and eating disorders

- Counseled individuals with adjustment disorders and stress, specifically graduate students preparing for comprehensive exams and freshman adjusting to university life

CONSULTING EXPERIENCE

Co-Owner

State College, PA

Aptient Research and Training

2004-2007

Researched, designed, and executed curricula for communication, innovation, and leadership training for this small business that provided ground-breaking training for corporate leaders on the importance of observing and understanding non-verbal communication in the business setting and implementing these skills for improving communication and building trust within their team