

## Suzanna Donato

632 Fishermans Bend, Charleston SC 29464  
Email: [sdonato@clemson.edu](mailto:sdonato@clemson.edu) Phone:(843) 568-214

### EDUCATION

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**Clemson University**, *Clemson, South Carolina*  
B.S. in Psychology, Minor in Communications  
GPA: 3.63/ 4.00 Major GPA: 3.83/4.00

**May 2018**

### ACADEMIC HONORS AND AWARDS

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**President's List (4.0)**, *Clemson University*  
**President's List (4.0)**, *Clemson University*  
**President's List (4.0)**, *Clemson University*  
**Dean's List (3.5-3.99)**, *Clemson University*

**Spring 2018**  
**Fall 2017**  
**Spring 2017**  
**Fall 2016**

### RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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**Research Assistant**, *Medical University of South Carolina, Institute of Psychiatry, Charleston, SC*  
May 2018-July 2019 (Full Time Position)

- **Principal Investigator: Howard Becker, PhD**
  - Manage division of research assessing the effects of early childhood stress resultant of maternal neglect on later alcohol use and stress sensitivity in adolescence
  - Conduct operant self-administration work to examine whether prior exposure to stress has an effect on later alcohol seeking behavior during stress induced relapse
  - Responsible for managing and maintaining database of all ongoing research data to present to fellow lab members at weekly laboratory meetings
  - Participate in meetings with principal investigator to plan future studies and monitor the lab's adherence to grant requirements
  - Collaborate with current graduate students to analyze research data and prepare findings for publication

**Research Assistant**, *Medical University of South Carolina, Department of Neuroscience, Charleston, SC*  
May 2017- August 2017 (Volunteer Position, 20 hours per week)

- **Principal Investigator: Peter Kalivas, PhD**
- **Supervisor: Sade Spencer, PhD**
  - Co-conducted research investigating the neuroplasticity of specific regions in the rodent brain underlying drug relapse behavior
  - Managed daily operant self-administration work for ongoing studies involving cocaine-dependent and THC-dependent rodents
  - Updated research database daily with latest data to monitor study progression and identify any problems (such as animal performance concerns, equipment malfunctions, etc.)
  - Executed surgical procedures to prepare animals for study or to fix any equipment malfunctions

**Student Investigator**, *Clemson University, Creative Inquiry Program, Clemson, SC*  
August 2016- May 2018

- **Faculty Advisor: Marjie Britz, PhD**
  - Analyzed different case studies of popular criminals from the 20<sup>th</sup> century to identify common patterns of behavior and mutual characteristics

- Utilized different media outlets to analyze how society differentiates between good and evil in criminal actions.
- Generated several research papers in APA format to practice presenting findings to the academic society

**Student Investigator, Clemson University, Creative Inquiry Program, Clemson, SC**

August 2017- December 2017

- **Faculty Advisor: Benjamin Stephens, PhD**
  - Contributed to ongoing research study titled “Does a Psychology Research Methods Course Enhance Critical Thinking?”
  - Evaluated student’s critical thinking abilities using the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) to determine the effectiveness of the research course in improving critical thinking abilities in undergraduate students
  - Composed abstract of our research findings along with other team members to submit to southeastern psychological association’s annual conference, as well as co-constructed research poster to present at the conference
  - Collaborated with other team members and faculty advisor to formulate research plan for future semesters

**CLINICAL EXPERIENCE**

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**Intern, Medical University of South Carolina, Center for Drug and Alcohol Abuse, Charleston, SC**

May 2016- August 2016 (Intern Position, 20 hours per week)

- **Supervisor: Viktoriya Magid, PhD**
  - Observed outpatient groups focused around adults and adolescents with substance abuse related problems to gain experience in clinical settings as well as working with a diverse community
  - Attended intake assessments for new patients to understand different diagnostic procedures as well as the various treatment options for substance related problems
  - Participated in one-on-one patient appointments between Dr. Magid and various clients to address the underlying issues relating to substance abuse as well as treatment strategies such as identification of negative thought patterns and development of coping skills
  - Towards the end of the experience, directed two adult group therapy sessions and several adolescent group therapy sessions under the limited supervision of Dr. Magid, and helped conduct new client assessments.
  - Conducted research on different psychotherapies such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, mindfulness-based therapy, behavior therapy, and family therapy to prepare for daily group therapy sessions and individual treatment sessions

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

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**Clemson Down’s Retirement Community, Clemson, SC**

Spring 2018

- Participated in a communication’s project titled “Living Learning Community” in which students meet one-on-one with a select resident from the retirement community in order to foster friendships between different generations and mentor one another
- Incorporated topics being learned in Health Communication course in order to investigate what the reality was behind doctor patient care in the field of geriatrics

**Clemson University, Turn It Gold Movement, Clemson, SC**

Fall 2017-Spring 2018

- Participated in local university branch of national campaign “Turn it Gold” aimed at raising awareness for childhood cancer and the lack of national funding dedicated to research in this field

- Collaborated with fellow team members in order to draft innovative ways to catch the attention of our peers in order to communicate the importance of our cause
- Partnered with fellow university organizations such as sports teams and student groups to host fundraisers

### **Patrick B. Harris Psychiatric Hospital, Anderson, SC**

Fall 2015-Spring 2016

- Participated in visits to the local psychiatric hospital with Clemson Psychology Club in order to interact with patients during different events, such as weekly bingo nights
- Conversated with employees and learned the day-to-day duties of working in a psychiatric hospital
- Observed the environment of these patients and gained a better perspective on the reality of being a mental health patient in our society

### **Clemson University Water Drop Project, Clemson, SC**

Spring 2015

- Engaged in university project dedicated to providing free access to water to all school related activities, such as sporting events, club meetings, and Greek functions in order to promote safe drinking environments across campus
- Participated in dialogues with students to articulate the risks of binge drinking and promote safe drinking behaviors

## **POSTER PRESENTATIONS**

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E.M. Anderson, S. Brown, **S. Donato**, M. Lopez, H.C. Becker, C.W. Cowan. (June, 2019) *Knockdown of the epigenetic modifier G9A reduces alcohol drinking and blocks stress-potentiated alcohol drinking*. Poster presented at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual RSA Scientific Meeting, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

W.C. Griffin, S.K. Brown A.N. Lane, S.E. Reasons, **S. Donato**, L.A. Ralston, H.L. Haun, H.C. Becker. (June, 2019). *Influence of the ventral hippocampal to accumbens pathway on ethanol drinking in ethanol dependent and non-dependent mice*. Poster presented at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual RSA Scientific Meeting, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

McKinney, M., Grier, K., **Donato, S.**, Kirchner, C., McWhite, C., & Stephens, B. (March, 2018). *Does a psychology research methods course enhance critical thinking?* Poster presented at the Southeastern Psychological Association 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, Charleston, South Carolina.

## **TECHNICAL SKILLS**

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**Data Analysis:** SPSS, JMP, Prism GraphPad

**Microsoft:** Word, Excel, PowerPoint

**Animal Related (Mice and Rats):** Animal Husbandry, Injections, Brain and Blood Collection, Surgical Procedures including stereotaxic techniques and catheter placement, behavioral testing

**Laboratory:** Brain Slicing (via Cryostat and Vibratome), Histological Techniques, Fluorescent Microscopy, Operant Techniques

**Clinical Familiarity (in relation to addiction):** diagnostic procedures, assessment methods, therapeutic techniques (cognitive behavioral, mindfulness, family therapy)

