

Melanie Willis

(she/her/hers)

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EDUCATION

PhD University of Nebraska- Lincoln Educational Psychology: School Psychology APA-accredited and NASP-approved Advisor: Susan Swearer, PhD, LP	August 2021 - Present
MA University of Nebraska- Lincoln Educational Psychology APA-accredited and NASP-approved Advisor: Susan Swearer, PhD, LP	May 2023
MS University of Iowa Health and Human Physiology: Child Life ACLP-accredited Advisor: Emily Mozena	May 2019
BS University of Iowa Therapeutic Recreation Minor: Psychology	August 2018

PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE/CERTIFICATION

Provisionally Licensed Mental Health Practitioner <i>License #13506</i>	August 2023
Certified Child Life Specialist <i>Certification #1137024</i>	August 2019
Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist <i>Certification #81791</i>	May 2019

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

Student Therapist <u><i>Counseling & School Psychology Clinic, University of Nebraska - Lincoln</i></u> Supervisors: Heather Hruskoci, PhD & Scott Napolitano, PhD Provide individual psychotherapy to children and adolescents for behavioral and emotional concerns. Research and deliver evidence-based treatment and conduct assessments to inform case conceptualization and treatment planning. Consult with caregivers, schools, and medical providers to support treatment planning.	August 2023 - Present
Clinical Coordinator Project Sexual Abuse Family Education (SAFE) <u><i>Psychological Consultation Center, University of Nebraska- Lincoln & BraveBe Child Advocacy Center of Lancaster County</i></u> Supervisors: David Hansen, PhD, LP & Mary Fran Flood, PhD, LP	July 2023 - Present

Updated August 2023

Serve as a mental health consultant for the Lancaster County Child Abuse and Neglect Investigation Team and internal case reviews with the multidisciplinary team of forensic interviewers, medical providers, and family advocates. Coordinate referrals for Project Sexual Abuse Family Education (SAFE) groups and Brief Family Interventions following disclosure of childhood sexual abuse or assault. Provide weekly supervision to an undergraduate student-therapist providing group treatment. Support the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Institute with state and county-wide data collection and promotion of positive childhood experiences (PCEs). Lead significant revisions to the manual for the manualized treatment protocol for Project SAFE.

**Brief Family Intervention and Group Intervention Therapist
Project Sexual Abuse Family Education (SAFE)**

August 2022 - Present

BraveBe Child Advocacy Center of Lancaster County

Supervisors: David Hansen, PhD, LP & Mary Fran Flood, PhD, LP

Serve as co-therapist for multiple 12-week cognitive-behavioral therapy groups for children (ages 7-12), adolescents (ages 13-18), and their non-offending caregivers who have experienced sexual abuse. Provide short-term individual psychotherapy for children, adolescents, and/or caregivers who have experienced sexual abuse. Implement an evidence-based cognitive behavior protocol for group and individual treatment to increase emotional awareness, coping skills, and sexual education. Facilitate sexual education discussions to promote self-confidence, competence, and prevention strategies.

School Psychologist Trainee

August 2022 - May 2023

Clinton & Morley Elementary School, Lincoln, NE

Supervisors: Matthew Gormley, PhD, LP & Philip Rohde, EdS

Provided school-based psychological services at a diverse, Title I elementary school. Conducted comprehensive evaluations, including administering assessments of intelligence, achievement, and behavior. Collaborated with the multidisciplinary team to develop Individualized Education Plans and Section 504 Plans. Provided consultation with teachers and caregivers. Facilitated weekly individual therapy sessions. Organized and facilitated evidence-based social-emotional groups and monitored progress on targeted skills.

Graduate Counselor, Summer Treatment Program

July 2022 - August 2022

Judge Baker Children's Center at Harvard Medical School

Supervisor: Stephani Synn, PsyD, LP

Trained in the Summer Treatment Program (STP) protocol created by the Section on Clinical Child Psychology for the American Psychological Association. Implemented a reward and response cost point system with a group of 14 youth (ages 5-7 years) with ADHD and other behavioral diagnoses in a summer camp setting aimed to improve and sustain prosocial behaviors and positive academic habits. Emphasized group collaboration to improve peer relationships and youth's ability to function effectively in a group. Documented child progress data, created individualized goals, and facilitated communication with caregivers for the continuation of treatment. Implemented PRIDE skills to promote continuity between home and STP. Supervised four undergraduate students and provided

weekly feedback regarding their performance and professional goals.

Interventionist, Target Bullying Involvement Program

August 2021 - Present

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Supervisor: Susan Swearer, PhD, LP

Implement a Tier-III cognitive behavioral, evidence-based intervention and assessment protocol for students referred for bullying behaviors and victimization. Assess common correlates of bullying and victimization (e.g., anxiety, depression, cognitive distortions, and self-concept). Score and interpret assessment data to inform individualized interventions. Provide psychoeducation through interviewing, worksheets, videos, and virtual reality. Write integrated reports with recommendations and conduct corresponding feedback sessions with the students, caregivers, teachers, and school administrators.

Certified Child Life Specialist

October 2019 - August 2021

Children's Hospital Colorado

Supervisor: Jenaya Gordon, MA, CCLS, NCC

Assessed pediatric psychosocial needs to provide therapeutic interventions and collaborate with medical team. Utilized Psychosocial Risk Assessment in Pediatrics (PRAP) to assess patient risk for psychological distress from healthcare encounters. Provided developmentally appropriate preparation, education, and support for patients and siblings undergoing stressful hospital experiences, new diagnoses, or difficult procedures within the Emergency Department and critical care units. Facilitated grief and trauma support for patients and families during critical care encounters and the death of pediatric patients. Collaborated with the Behavioral Health team to provide safe and effective programming for patients experiencing mental health emergencies. Served on the Education Committee, creating educational resources for caregivers and staff regarding best practices with child development (e.g., tips for coping with healthcare-related stressors) and response to COVID-19.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Child Maltreatment Lab

Principal Investigators: David Hansen, PhD, LP

Research Team Member

May 2023 - Present

Collaborate with lab members on research efforts to explore the correlates and consequences of childhood maltreatment to be presented at national conferences. Data were collected from participants in sexual abuse group treatment services for children, adolescents, non-abused and non-offending siblings, and non-offending caregivers. Participate in data management related to the assessment and treatment of families who have experienced childhood sexual abuse or assault.

Nebraska Bullying Prevention and Intervention Research Lab

Principal Investigator: Susan Swearer, PhD, LP

Project Director - @SocialThatSupports

September 2022 - Present

Execute administrative tasks for an international survey assessing the emotional response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Manage International Review Board (IRB) communications and prepare formal documentation for review and updates. Lead recruitment efforts and collaborate with appropriate researchers. Develop a detailed codebook outlining constructs measured and organizing scoring protocols.

Graduate Research Assistant

August 2021 - Present

Engage in weekly discussions regarding research progress and current literature. Receive training for a cognitive-behavioral Tier-III bullying intervention, the Target-Bullying Intervention Program (T-BIP). Implement the assessment and intervention protocol individually with students in any bullying role. Collect assessment data on students involved in bullying to analyze and present at national conferences.

Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, and Families in Schools

Principal Investigator: Susan Sheridan, PhD, LP

August 2021 - July 2023

Project Title: Efficacy of Professional Development in Rural Schools to Enhance Teacher-Parent Partnerships for Students with Behavioral Challenges

Funder: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences (#R324A210166)

Graduate Research Assistant

Provided substantial support to conjoint behavioral consultation research. Administered phone-based assessments with caregivers of students with severe emotional disturbances. Used ObserverXT Noldus software to code behavioral observations. Developed fidelity measures, coding procedures, and codebooks. Facilitated data collection, entry, management, and analyses through SPSS. Acted as IRB point-person for four federally funded projects, liaison for all communication, and bookkeeping on IRB tasks. Managed efforts on cost analysis of consultation intervention.

University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital

August 2018 - May 2019

Supervisor: Emily Mozena, MS, CCLS

Graduate Clinical Research Assistant

Collaborated with pediatric medical professionals, the psychosocial team, school staff, and families to implement a virtual school reentry intervention following a long-term oncology hospitalization. Conducted interviews with children and families enduring cancer treatment before and after a school reentry virtual intervention.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Bullying Specialist

March 2023 - Present

Nebraska Department of Education, Office of School Safety & Security

Collaborate with the state government's school safety team to respond to family crisis calls and guide caregivers on the next steps to protect their children from violence. Provide school aggression expertise to other departments, including

legal and special education. Develop resources to be utilized by statewide institutions to promote mental health interventions, bullying prevention, and suicide prevention.

Group Facilitator

February 2022 - April 2022

Millard South High School, Omaha, NE

Co-led groups for high school freshmen on anxiety, depression, trauma, or study skills. Assisted with goal-setting and progress monitoring.

Child Life Intern

Spring 2019

Blank Children's Hospital, Des Moines, IA

Assessed pediatric patient and family psychosocial needs. Provided education, support, and interventions during stressful hospital experiences.

Therapeutic Recreation Intern

Summer 2018

Link Associates, Des Moines, IA

Planned and implemented recreational and skill-building activities for individuals with developmental disabilities. Completed coursework highlighting the importance of leisure for emotional well-being.

Child Life Practicum Student

Spring 2018

Children's Cancer Connection, Des Moines, IA

Created and implemented child development training for camp counselors. Facilitated recreational programming for children and families affected by pediatric cancer in a camp setting.

Child Life Student Assistant

August 2016 - January 2019

University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital

Provided therapeutic play to inpatient pediatric patients and families. Implemented small groups focused on patient play and connection.

Assistant Preschool Teacher

August 2015 - December 2018

Little Angels Learning Center, Iowa City, IA

Collaborated with co-teachers to provide educational programs for preschoolers. Implemented individual behavior and developmental plans for each child.

Volunteer Coach

January 2018 - August 2018

Special Olympics Iowa

Coached the Winter Olympics event, creating opportunities for athletes with developmental disabilities to participate in skiing. Coached softball practices and tournaments for adults with developmental disabilities.

Wish Trip Volunteer

March 2018

Give Kids the World, Kissimmee, FL

Volunteered with children and families with life-threatening illnesses during wish trips. Empowered families in completing activities focused on legacies and family togetherness.

U.S. Military Camp Counselor

January 2016 - December 2017

Camp Adventure Child & Youth Services

Served on U.S. military and NATO bases in Japan, Holland, and Germany to provide camp experience and programming for children of military personnel. Attended professional training to enhance understanding of cultural humility, child development, and common stressors for military children.

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

National Campus Representative (NCR)

July 2023 - Present

Society of Pediatric Psychology (SPP)

Serve as an NCR on the University of Nebraska - Lincoln's campus to promote awareness of pediatric psychology through presentations to undergraduate psychology students, hosting pertinent events, and facilitating engagement in conferences. Collaborate with representatives nationwide to increase opportunities for pediatric psychology growth in students.

PhD Student Representative

May 2023 - Present

Student Association of School Psychology (SASP)

Serve as an executive member of SASP and act as a liaison between school psychology faculty and students. Gather anonymous feedback from graduate students and present suggestions and concerns at faculty meetings.

First-Year Mentor

August 2022 - August 2023

Student Association of School Psychology

Supported a first-year graduate student in adjustment, time management, career planning, and other as-needed support. Regularly met with a mentee to provide an emotional outlet for first-year graduate student stressors and collaborated on problem-solving issues.

Founder, Co-Chair

March 2022 - Present

Pediatric School Psychology Interest Group

Developed the first pediatric psychology interest group within the School Psychology program at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln to align with the professional aspirations of many students. Disseminate and discuss current literature. Collaborate with pediatric community sites and develop relevant training opportunities. Facilitate educational opportunities, including an alumni panel, Children's Hospital and Medical Center of Omaha grand rounds, and attendance at the Society of Pediatric Psychology's annual conference.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee Member

November 2021 - July 2023

Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, and Families in Schools

Collaborate with colleagues in various disciplines to assess current research practices for optimal cultural sensitivity. Present assessment results to executive leadership and facilitate implementation of resources to improve culturally responsible research practices. Interview keynote speakers hosted by the College of Education and Human Sciences to discuss key elements of cultural humility within research practices.

Volunteer President

January 2016 - December 2018

Iowa Child Life Student Association

Led 50 general members, provided child-focused volunteer opportunities within the community, and mentored undergraduate students.

Volunteer Leadership Member

August 2015 - February 2018

University of Iowa Dance Marathon

Collaboratively led over 3,000 students to raise over \$3,000,000 for pediatric cancer patients. Individually led 60 first-year members to fundraise over \$50,000. Volunteered on a pediatric oncology unit, providing therapeutic play. Served as a member of the Morale Committee and Hospital Committee.

BOOK CHAPTERS

Sheridan, S. M., Witte, A. L., Brower, E. S., & **Willis, M. C.** Conjoint Behavioral Consultation: Conceptual and Empirical Foundations and a Roadmap for Future Research. (In Press). In W.P. Erchul & S.A. Garbacz (Eds.), *Handbook of Research in School Consultation (3rd edition)*. Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

May, G. C., Mii, A. E., Coffey, H. M., Erskine, B. S., **Willis, M. C.**, Flood, M. F., Hansen, D. J. (2023, November). *Caregiver Support Following Child Sexual Abuse: Project SAFE (Sexual Abuse Family Education)*. In G. C. May (Chair), Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies Annual Convention. *Service-Delivery Methods for Building Parent Capacity in the Aftermath of Child Maltreatment*. [Symposium].

Noetzel, J.S., Swearer, S.M., **Willis, M.C.**, & Carney, C.M. (2023, November). *Changes in Levels of Cognitive Distortions After a CBT-Based Intervention for Bullying: Influence of Callous and Unemotional Traits* [Poster Presentation]. Association of Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies Annual Convention. Seattle, WA, United States.

Willis, M.C., Barrett, A.R., Swearer, S.M., Noetzel, J.S. (2023, November). *Intentional Kindness: Exploring a Pathway to Wellbeing for Students Involved in Bullying* [Poster Presentation]. Association of Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies Annual Convention. Seattle, WA, United States.

Witte, A. L., Wheeler, L., Sheridan, S.M., **Willis, M.C.**, Garbacz, S. A., Eum, J., & Escobedo, L. (2023, November). *Testing Technology-Delivered Professional Development: Addressing Rural Student Behavioral Needs* [Research Symposium]. National Forum to Advance Rural Education, Chattanooga, TN., United States.

Witte, A. L., Sheridan, S. M., Wheeler, L., Garbacz, S. A., & **Willis, M.C.** (2023, August). *Conjoint behavioral consultation: Increasing practitioner skills through technology* [Poster presentation]. Annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Washington DC, United States.

Willis, M.C., Noetzel, J.S., Swearer, S.M. (2023, April 26-28). *Body Image Matters: The Relationship between Suicidal Ideation and Sexual Orientation* [Poster Presentation]. Suicide Research Symposium. Virtual conference.

Willis, M.C. & Swearer, S. (2023, February 7-10). *Agreement Among Students, Teachers, and Parents on Bullying Roles* [Poster Presentation]. National Association of School Psychologists Annual Convention. Denver, CO, United States.

Brower, E.S., **Willis, M.C.**, Brown, K.E., Lee, S., Wheeler, L.A., Sheridan, S.M., Gormley, M.G., Clarke, B., Witte, A. (2022, August 4-6). *Enhancing Teachers' Relationships with Latinx Parents and Beliefs about Involvement* [Poster Presentation]. American Psychological Association 2022 Convention. Minneapolis, MN, United States.

Witte, A., Sheridan, S.M., **Willis, M.C.**, Brower, E.S. (2022, July 7-10). *Teachers and Parents as Partners: Increasing Accessibility Through Technology*. [Conference Presentation]. International School Psychology Association 2022 Annual Conference, Leuven, Belgium. <https://ispa2022.be>.

Brower, E.S., **Willis, M.C.**, Sheridan, S.M., Witte, A., & Wheeler, L.A. (2022, July 7-10). *Teachers and Parents as Partners: Strengthening parent-teacher relationships through consultation* [Conference Presentation]. International School Psychology Association 2022 Annual Conference, Leuven, Belgium. <https://ispa2022.be>.

Mozena, E., Niensteadt, R., **Willis, M.C.** (2018, November 10). *Virtual School Reentry and Perspectives on Transitions between Hospital and School* [Conference Presentation]. 23rd Annual Midwest Child Life Conference, St. Louis, MO, United States.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

Crinion, M., Swanson, L., **Willis, M.C.**, & Swearer, S. (2022, February). *Practical ways to deal with bullying across multiple settings*. Presented to 30 middle school students at Sheridan Lutheran Church youth group in Lincoln, NE, United States.

Willis, M.C. (2021, May 12). *Psychological Preparation for Youth Sexual Assault Exams* [Series Webinar]. Pediatric Forensic Nursing National Institutes of Health ECHO Series. Denver, CO, United States.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND AWARDS

Society of Pediatric Psychology, <i>Critical Care Special Interest Group</i>	2023 - Present
Sylvia & Hans Jeans Fellowship Recipient	2022
Bullying Research Network, <i>Member</i>	2021 - Present
Burn and Johnson Fellowship Recipient	2021

SELECTED TRAINING

Trauma-Focused- Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TF-CBT) Training	July 2023
Unified Protocols - Adolescents/Child (UP-A & UP-C) Training	June 2023

Crisis Prevention Institute Training
 Abuse and Neglect Reporting Training
 Conjoint Behavioral Consultant Training
 Children's Disaster Services Overnight Training

July 2022
 November 2021
 August 2021
 September 2019

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Statistical Software: SPSS (Proficient)
Survey Software: Qualtrics (Proficient)
Coding Programs: Noldus (Proficient)
General: Microsoft Office Suite (Proficient)
E-Learning Software: Articulate 360 (Novice)

ASSESSMENTS

Acadience Math
 Autism Spectrum Rating Scales (ASRS)
 Beck's Depression Inventory (BDI)
 Behavior Assessment System for Children, Third Edition (BASC-3)
 Behavioral and Emotional Screening System (BESS)
 Bullying Intervention Rating Profile (BIRP)
 Children's Depression Inventory (CDI)
 Comprehensive Test of Nonverbal Intelligence, Second Edition (C-TONI 2)
 Conners Comprehensive Behavior Rating Scales
 Draw a Bullying Situation (DABS)
 Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)
 How I Think Questionnaire (HIT)
 Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI)
 Inventory of Callous-Unemotional Traits (ICU)
 Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement (KTEA)
 Kindness & Bravery Scale (KBS)
 Multidimensional Anxiety Scale for Children, Second Edition (MASC-2)
 Parent Daily Report Checklist (PDR)
 Parent Practices Interview (PPI)
 Psychosocial Risk Assessment in Pediatrics (PRAP)
 Self-Perception Profile for Children (Harter)
 Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS)
 Swearer Bully Survey System
 Thoughts About School (TAS)
 Treatment Evaluation Inventory (TEI)
 Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales
 Wechsler Individual Achievement Test - III (WIAT-III)
 Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Fifth Edition (WISC-V)
 Wechsler Preschool & Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI- IV)
 Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement (WJ-IV ACH)
 Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Cognitive Abilities (WJ-IV COG)