

Elliot Gavin Keenan

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Key Interests: neurodivergence (neurodiversity), severe mental illness, bipolar disorder, autism, repetitive behavior (stimming), repetitive thinking, catatonia, child psychiatry, improving inpatient settings, dialectical behavior therapy (DBT)

Professional Experience

2024 – 2026 Postdoctoral Fellow
Drexel University, AJ Drexel Autism Institute
Project: “Autism-Adapted Criteria for Manic Episode”

Education

2017 – 2023 University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA
Doctor of Philosophy in Human Development & Psychology
Dissertation: “Making Waves: Dynamic Modeling of Bipolar Disorder”
GPA: 3.6

2014 – 2017 Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY
Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with Departmental Honors
Minor in Creative Writing
Undergraduate GPA: 3.4 | *Psychology GPA:* 4.0

2013 – 2014 State University of New York at Purchase, Purchase, NY

Awards and Honors

2016 - 2017 Honors Thesis Program
Department of Psychology, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY

2014 - 2016 Dean’s List
State University of New York at Purchase, Purchase, NY
Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY

2014, 2016	Academic Achievement Award <i>Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY</i>
2013 - 2014	Presidential Scholarship <i>State University of New York at Purchase, Purchase, NY</i>
2013	Young Scholar Program <i>Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY</i>
2013	Graduate, Alpha Science Fiction Workshop <i>University of Pittsburgh, Greensburg, PA</i>

Grants and Fellowships

2023	Postdoctoral Fellowship. PI. \$150,000. Funded by the Eagles Autism Foundation. <i>Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA</i>
2018 (May 9-12)	Diversity Travel Award. \$1,000. Funded by the International Society for Autism Research <i>Rotterdam, Netherlands</i>
2016	Undergraduate Summer Research Grant. PI. \$3,000. Funded by the Autism Science Foundation <i>Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY</i>

Journal Publications

McNair, M.L., **Keenan, E.G.**, Houck, A., Lerner, M.D. (2023). Seeking Contexts that Promote Neurodiverse Social Success: Patterns of behavior during minimally-structured interaction settings in autistic and non-autistic youth. *Development & Psychopathology*.

Keenan, E.G., Gurba, A.N., Mahaffey, B., Kappenberg, C.F., & Lerner, M.D. (2023). Leveling Up Dialectical Behavior Therapy for Autistic Individuals with Emotion Dysregulation: Clinical and Personal Insights. *Autism in Adulthood*.

Libsack, E.J., **Keenan, E.G.**, Freden, C.E., Mirmina, J., Iskhakov, N., Krishnathasan, D., & Lerner, M.D. (2021). A systematic review of passing as non-autistic in autism spectrum disorder. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*.

Keenan, E.G., Gotham, K., & Lerner, M.D. (2018). Hooked on a feeling: repetitive cognition and internalizing symptomatology in relation to autism spectrum symptomatology. *Autism*.

Academic Symposia

Keenan, E.G. (2027). DBT for Neurodivergent People: who, what, why, and how. Invited Lecture for *Canadian Association of Occupational Therapy*, April 13.

Keenan, E.G., Lerner, M.D. (2024). Adapted DBT for Neurodivergent People. Keynote at the *Society for DBT*, October 3.

Keenan, E.G., Morton, H.E., Gates, J., Miller, C., Kerns, C. (2023). Discussant. In Kerns C. (Chair). Developing Inclusive Clinical Research and Practice for Neurodivergent Youth. Symposium at the *Annual Convention of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT)*, Seattle, WA, November 16 – 19.

Keenan, E.G., Baczewski, L., Robins, D. (2022). Civil Discourse Dialogue Session with a Focus on LGBTQ+. Co-Chair. Symposium at the *International Society for Autism Research Annual Meeting*, Austin, TX, May 11 – 14.

Keenan, E.G., Lerner, M.D. (2017). Hooked on a feeling: repetitive cognition and internalizing psychopathology in autism spectrum disorder. In Gotham K. (Chair). Repetitive thinking as a pathway to anxiety and depressive symptoms in autism spectrum disorder. Symposium at the *Society for Research in Child Development*, Austin, TX, April 6 – 8.

Poster Presentations

Keenan, E.G., Gurba, A., Houck, A., & Lerner, M.D. (2022). Hands on Loop: Repetitive behaviors are increased in transgender and gender diverse autistic adults. Poster at the Autism Spectrum and Developmental Disabilities Special Interest Group Session (ASDD SIG) at the *Annual Convention of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT)*, New York, NY, November 17-20.

Libsack, E.J., **Keenan, E.G.**, Freden, C.E., Mirmina, J., Iskhakov, N., Krishnathasan, D., & Lerner, M.D. (2021). Passing as non-autistic in autism spectrum disorder: a systematic review. Poster at the *Annual Convention of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT)*, New Orleans, LA, November 18-21.

Eigsti, I. M., Coppola, M., Coulter, K., Hector, B., Henner, J., **Keenan, E.G.**, . . . Steiner, R. (2019). Community Engagement in Deafness and Autism Research (CEDAR): Challenges and promises. Poster at the Annual Meeting of the *International Society for Autism Research*, Montreal, Canada, May 1 - 4.

Keenan, E.G., Madison, M.J., Wood, J.J., & Lerner, M.D. (2018). Psychometric Analysis of the Autism Spectrum Quotient Using Diagnostic Classification Modeling. Poster at the Annual Meeting of the *International Society for Autism Research*, Rotterdam, Netherlands, May 9 – 12.

Keenan, E.G., Esposito, C.M., Labozzetta, A., & Lerner, M.D. (2017). Repetitive cognition mediates the relationship between autism symptoms and depression. Poster at the *International Meeting for Autism Research*, San Francisco, CA, May 10 – 13.

Zhou, J., **Keenan, E.G.**, Zinn, L., Burns, A., & Lerner, M.D. (2017). Effect of ASD traits on young adults' romantic relationship experience. Poster at the *International Meeting for Autism Research*, San Francisco, CA, May 10 – 13.

Rosen, T. E., Kang, E., **Keenan, E.G.**, Jin, J., Weber, R.J., & Lerner, M. D. (2016). Do affective processing impairments in ASD extend to non-social stimuli? Findings from an olfaction task. Poster at the *50th Annual Convention of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies*, New York, NY, October 27 - 30.

Culoso, A., Keifer, C., Burns, A., **Keenan, E.G.**, & Lerner, M.D. (2016). Greater sensory arousal impedes affect recognition: evidence across olfactory and auditory domains. Poster at the Annual Meeting of the *Society for Psychophysiological Research*, Minneapolis, MN, September 21 - 25.

Keenan, E.G., Doshi, D., & Lerner, M.D. (2016). Restricted and Repetitive Behavior mediates the relationship between Verbal IQ and Comorbid Symptoms in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Poster at *2016 URECA Undergraduate Research Symposium*, Stony Brook, NY, April 27.

Culoso, A., Keifer, C., Burns, A., **Keenan, E.G.**, & Lerner, M.D. (2016). Greater Sensory Arousal Impedes Affect Recognition: Evidence across olfactory and auditory domains. Poster at *2016 URECA Undergraduate Research Symposium*, Stony Brook, NY, April 27.

Keenan, E.G., Rosen, T.E., Kang, E., & Lerner, M.D. (2016). Sniff check! Adults with greater autism symptoms report odors as being more positive. Poster at the *International Meeting for Autism Research*, Baltimore, MD, May 11 - 14.

Keenan, E.G., Culoso, A., Burns, A., & Lerner, M.D. (2015). Alexithymia partially mediates the relationship between autism symptoms and impaired relationship closeness. M.D. Lerner & C.M. Kerns (Chairs), Poster at *ASDD Special Interest Group meeting at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies Convention*, Chicago, IL, November 11 - 14.

Research Experience

Ongoing projects (2022-present) are listed under “Current Projects”.

2017 – 2022 Graduate Student Researcher

University of California, Los Angeles

Advisor: Dr. Jeffrey Wood; Mentors: Dr. Connie Kasari and Dr. Catherine Lord

→ Studied quantitative methodologies intensively, including multi-level modeling and latent class analysis (LCA)

- Developed an app (Shiny Mood App) using R Script, which aimed to identify and predict mood state in people with rapid-cycling bipolar disorder using LCA and harmonic regression models
- Dissertation focused on a pilot study of Shiny Mood App

2016 – 2017 Student Principal Investigator

Social Competence and Treatment Lab, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY

Director: Dr. Matthew D. Lerner

- Designed and conducted an independent thesis study
- Gained familiarity working with the university's institutional review board process, as well as other practical matters in the development of independent research
- Produced a manuscript, which was then published in *Autism*

2015 – 2016 Undergraduate Research Assistant

Social Competence and Treatment Lab, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY

Director: Dr. Matthew D. Lerner

- Adapted a version of the SELweb paradigm originally developed at Rush University for use with EEG, did extensive debugging of another student's work.
- Ran study visits with participants for a wide range of studies, and for a wide age range of participants (from young school-age children to adults).

Clinical Experience

2014 Volunteer Clinical Assistant

Department of Child Psychiatry, Stony Brook University Hospital, Stony Brook, NY

- Collaborated with supervisors to run therapeutic groups for children on the inpatient psychiatric ward; for example, a weekly goals group
- Supervised recreational and therapeutic activities of inpatient children, while acting as a positive role model and source of interaction
- Enacted behavioral interventions, which targeted problem behaviors, often by utilizing a token economy of points to be exchanged for privileges
- Gained clinical experience working with a diverse group of kids, including kids with autism spectrum disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, pediatric bipolar disorder, and anxiety disorders

Teaching Experience

- 2016 Undergraduate Teaching Assistant
Department of Psychology, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY
PSY 334 Autism. Undergraduate lecture. Professor: Matthew Lerner.
- 2018 Invited Guest Lecture
(Nov. 2) *Department of Psychology, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY*
PSY 334 Autism. Undergraduate lecture. Professor: Matthew Lerner.
- 2018 First-Year Composition Pedagogy Training
UCLA, Los Angeles, CA
- 2021 Biostatistical Consultant Training
UCLA, Los Angeles, CA
- 2021 Invited Guest Lecture
(Mar. 12) *Department of Psychology, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY*
PSY 334 Autism. Undergraduate lecture. Professor: Matthew Lerner.
- 2022 Invited Guest Lecture
(Mar. 4) *Department of Psychology, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY*
PSY 334 Autism. Undergraduate lecture. Professor: Matthew Lerner.

Advocacy and Leadership Experience

2021-2022 LEND Advanced Medium-Term Trainee (MTT)

School of Medicine, Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY

The Stony Brook University LEND program (Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities) is a graduate and post-graduate level interdisciplinary leadership and service training program. As an Advanced MTT, I participated in a 9 month long program and completed many didactic and experiential contact hours.

- Attended weekly didactics on a variety of topics pertaining to neurodevelopmental disabilities, ranging from accessing services in school to issues pertaining to older adults and end-of-life care
- Completed an out-of-discipline rotation in adult psychiatry, where I had the opportunity to evaluate patients in an outpatient clinic setting and discuss my evaluations with an experienced psychiatrist
- Collaborated with families, clinicians, and autistic people, many of whom identified as self-advocates
- Submitted an IACC (Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee) public comment for the April 2022 meeting

Conference Organizing Experience

2018 (Oct. 13) Executive Committee of CEDAR Workshop
(Community Engagement in Deafness and Autism Research)
University of Connecticut, Groton, CT

Skills

- Trained in biostatistics. Achieved an A grade in a class aimed to prepare graduate students to work as statistical consultants for health sciences at UCLA.
- Experienced in “data wrangling” and organization of large datasets.
- Skilled with a variety of software for statistical computing including SPSS, R, MATLAB, and MPlus.
- Trained in advanced quantitative methods including hierarchical/multi-level regression, moderated and mediated regression, latent class analysis, hierarchical clustering, and exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis.
- Programming experience in HTML/CSS, R, SPSS, Mplus, Presentation, Bash, and more. Ability to learn new programming languages quickly.
- Familiar with app development using R Shiny and deployment using Amazon Web Services (AWS).
- Trained to administer the KBIT-2 brief cognitive assessment and EVT expressive vocabulary test to children and adults.
- Operated an EEG system (32 active electrode Brain Products acti32CHamp EEG recording system with licensed BrainVision Recorder and BrainVision Analyzer 2 software).
- Experienced in training undergraduate research assistants in operation of this EEG system, including everything from how to run the right programs and monitor for high-quality data, to how to clean the electrodes when the participant is finished.
- Strong and versatile writing and presentation skills, as evidenced by a track record in creative writing and literary publishing (see “Literary Publications”).
- Experienced in providing mentorship to graduate students.
- Trained in pedagogy, specifically to teach first-year composition at UCLA.
- Skilled in working with children and adolescents as well as adults; worked for a time in the child inpatient psychiatry unit at Stony Brook University (ages approximately 5-12 years old).
- Foundational training in conducting SDARI (Sociodramatic Affective Relational Intervention) social groups for autistic adolescents and young adults.

Literary Publications

- Keenan, E.G. (2026, December). With Love From Israel. *Star 82 Review*, 14(4).
- Keenan, E.G. (2025) *Luminous Mind: lyric essays*. Retrieved from <https://www.amazon.com/dp/BODVSZ6TK6>
- Keenan, E.G. (2022). *On Being Insane (in sane places)* (2nd ed.). Retrieved from <https://www.amazon.com/Being-Insane-sane-places/dp/B09QGB41D7/>
- Keenan, E.G. (2018, Summer/Fall). Notes to Self. *Lunch Ticket*. Retrieved from <https://lunchticket.org/notes-to-self/>
- Keenan, E.G. (2017). *On Being Insane: in search of my missing pieces*. Mississippi: Dreaming Big Publications.
- Keenan, E.G. (2017, February). Everything Else. *Gravel: A literary journal*. Retrieved from <https://bipolarcoaster.blog/2021/09/24/everything-else/>

Current Projects

Autism-Adapted Criteria for Manic Episode. This study aims to identify emergent properties that indicate mania and bipolar disorder in people with autism across cognitive levels (including individuals with profound autism). I have received funding from the Eagles Autism Foundation for this project. I am currently recruiting participants and collecting data.

Views on Neurodiversity in Severe Mental Illness. This study uses a mixed-methods survey based on one used by Dwyer et al. in the autistic population, modified for use with individuals with bipolar disorder and/or schizophrenia. The survey development is complete and the study is pending IRB approval.

Individualized Support for Autistic Young Adults Learning to Thrive Socially: Adding an Individual Component to SDARI. This work builds on Dr. Matthew Lerner's work on SDARI (Sociodramatic Affective Relational Intervention) by adding an augmentative individual therapy component in addition to the group intervention. We are actively looking for grants and/or donors who might be interested in supporting this project.

Apple Watch App for Catatonia. This study would endeavor to use the haptic feedback feature of the Apple Watch to help people who suffer from catatonia to break out of being "frozen". The biggest challenge would be training the watch to identify catatonic episodes. If Apple approves of this project, they will provide Apple Watches for free.