



**ACCREDITATION  
RISK MANAGEMENT**



**RESEARCH  
INTERNAL  
EXTERNAL**



**CONFERENCES**



**INSURANCE**

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# Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare Center

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August 2016 Newsletter



Eight of our graduate students joined other OBH members at the Regional Wilderness Therapy Symposium in Asheville to present on their research and ideas for moving the field forward

## Accreditation

The OBH Center continues to support the process of accreditation by organizing review teams, interfacing with the AEE accreditation staff and Council members, helping to schedule accreditation visits, training OBH Council members in the accreditation process, providing administrative support by sending UNH graduate students to each visit, and helping programs manage their processes. We currently have 13 accredited programs and hope to continue to add programs in the future. In addition, the annual risk management report shows accredited programs to have higher completion rates and lower injury rates among participants.

**13 Accredited Programs:** As of 2016, we have 13 accredited programs including Aspiro, Elements, Redcliff Ascent, Summit Achievement, Open Sky, Evoke at Entrada, Anasazi, Evoke Cascades, New Vision, Elements, SUWS of the Carolinas, Merimed, and Legacy

## Conferences

Since the beginning of 2016, OBH research scientists and affiliated researchers have presented at 25 different conference presentations at 14 different conferences across the globe, with still more to come!

Behrens, E. (2016, April). *Research and Scholarship for Clinicians and Centers: Lessons Learned from the National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs (NATSAP) and the Journal of Therapeutic Schools and Programs (JTSP)*. Invited presentation at the American Association of Children's Residential Centers, Chicago, IL.

Behrens, E. & Balmer, J. (2016, February). *Big Ideas, Backstories and Bold Directions in the 2016 Issue of the Journal of Therapeutic Schools*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference for the National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs, La Jolla, CA.

Behrens, E. & Raleigh, S. (2016, February). *Crisis as Catalyst: Avoiding Pitfalls and Embracing Emerging Practices in Research*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference for the National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs, La Jolla, CA

Behrens, E., Wanlass, J., & Sandor, C. (2016, April). *Teaching Groups: Approaches to experiential small group activity required by CACREP*. Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Counseling Association, Montreal, Canada.

Burdick, M., & DeMille, S. M. (2016, July). *When School Is 'Just Too Much' Comes A Positive Outdoor Solution*. International School Psychology Association, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Chapman, J., Groark, S., Herzer, K., Salzberg, C., Crespo, N., Gillis, H.L., &



OBH members at the NATSAP Conference: Steve DeMille, Anita Tucker, Gil Hallows, Will White, and Derek Daley



Dr. Steven DeMille recently presented in Japan at the International Congress of Psychology.



Dr. Gass accepting his NATSAP leadership award in February

Russell, K. C. (2016, April) *Effectiveness of an Engaged Mind in Wilderness Therapy: Exploratory Research*, Poster presentation at 2016 Southeastern Psychological Association (SEPA) Conference, New Orleans, LA.

DeMille, S. M. (2016, March). *The Impact of Outdoor Behavioral Health Care on Physical and Emotional Health*. American Counseling Association Annual Convention and Expo, Montreal, Canada.

DeMille, S. M., & Burdick M. (2016, July). *Nature as a stage for change: Examining the use of the outdoors in the treatment of adolescents with emotional and behavioral disorders*. International Congress of Psychology, Yokohama, Japan.

DeMille, S. & Hoag, M. (2016, August). *Symposium: Trends in Outdoor Behavioral Health Care---Theory, Research, and Practice*. The American Psychological Association Convention. Denver, CO.

- (1) Fawson, E. *Integrating Narrative Family Therapy in an Outdoor Behavioral Health Care Program*
- (2) Christensen, N. *A Case Study on Healing Sexual Trauma Using Outdoor Behavioral Health*
- (3) Tucker, A.R., & Norton, C.L. *Using an Integrated Care Approach in Outdoor Behavioral Health Care*
- (4) Massey-Combs, K. *Does Change Last Following OBH? A 3-Year Follow Up With Adolescents, Young Adults, and Parents*

DeMille, S. M., Montgomery, M., & Eichas, K. (2016, July). *Do Boys and Girls Respond Differently to Interventions in an Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare Program*. International Congress of Psychology, Yokohama, Japan.

DeMille, S. M., Montgomery, M., & Eichas, K. (2016, April). *Psychosocial Development in Struggling Adolescents in an Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare Program: An Exploratory Analysis*. Regional Wilderness Therapy Symposium. Asheville, NC.

DeMille, S. M., Randal, J., Petree, M., Tucker, A., & Balmer, J. (2016, February). *The Role and Future of Research in NATSAP Programs: A Panel Discussion*. National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs 2016 Annual Conference, CA.

DeMille, S. M., Tucker, A., & Norton, C. (2016, May). *General and Mental Health Outcomes in Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare: An Integrated Care Approach*. American Psychiatric Association Annual Conference, GA.

Gillis, H.L. (2016, August) *How Monitoring Group Process Informs Treatment Outcomes in Outdoor Behavioral Health Care*. Presented at 124th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Denver, CO.

Gillis, H.L., Beale, B., & Gass, M.A. (2016, August) *Creating Active Interventions for Groups*. Presented at 124th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Denver, CO.



OBH presenting at the American Psychological Association: Matt Hoag, Eric Fawson, Katie Massey Combs, Neal Christenson & Steve DeMille



Congratulations to Dr. Norton for earning a Fulbright Fellowship in Taiwan in 2017



Dr. Gass will receive the Golden Eagle award at the 2016 Wilderness Therapy Symposium in Park City, Utah.

Gillis, H.L. & Russell, K.C. (2015, August). *A continuum of care among Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare models ENVIROS' Shunda Creek and Base Camp OBH programs for substance use disorders*. Presentation, American Psychological Association Convention (Division 49), Toronto, Canada.

Groark, S., Crespo, N., Herzer, K., Chapman, J., Salzberg, C., Gillis, H. L., & Russell, K.C. (2016, April) *Mindfulness and Treatment Outcomes in Adventure Therapy: Five Case Studies*, Oral presentation at 2016 Southeastern Psychological Association (SEPA) Conference, New Orleans, LA.

Groark, S., Crespo, N., Salzberg, C., Chapman, J., Herzer, K., Gillis, H. L., & Russell, K.C. (2016, April) *Shining a Light in the Black Box of Wilderness Therapy for Substance Use Disorder*, Poster presentation at 2016 National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR), Asheville, NC.

Groark, S., Herzer, K., Chapman, J., Salzberg, C., Crespo, N., Russell, K.C. & Gillis, H. L. (2016, April) *Exploring Possible Factors of Completion of a Wilderness Therapy Program for Substance Use Disorder*, Poster presentation at the 19th Annual Georgia College Student Research Conference, Milledgeville, GA

Lewis, M., & DeMille S. M. (2016, February). *Using Research to Inform Clinical Practice: Methods for Integrating Data into Clinical Decision Making*. National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs 2016 Annual Conference, CA.

Montgomery, M., DeMille, S. M., & Eichas, K. (2016, March). *Ego Strength Change in Youth in an Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare Program*. International Society for Research on Identity. Baltimore, MD.

Polachi, C., Tucker, A., & DeMille, S. M. (2016, April). *The Wilderness Therapy Process: A Focus Group Evaluation*. Regional Wilderness Therapy Symposium. Asheville, NC.

Russell, K. C. (2016, August) *How Monitoring Group Process Informs Treatment Outcomes in Outdoor Behavioral Health Care*. Presented at 124th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Denver, CO.

Salzberg, C., Crespo, n., Chapman, J., Groark, S., Herzer, K., Gillis, H. L., & Russell, K.C. (2016, April) *Group Engagement and Treatment Outcome in Adventure Therapy*, Poster presentation at 2016 Southeastern Psychological Association (SEPA) Conference, New Orleans, LA.

Santa, J., Gass, M., Petree, M., Tucker, A., Hall, J., Mills, L., & Norton, C.L. (2016, February). *The NATSAP Research Designation Program (RDP): Questions and answers about NATSAP's newest initiative*. The 2016 Annual National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs (NATSAP) Conference. La Jolla, CA.

Presentations for later in the year include:

Tucker, A.R., Gass, M., Norton, C.L., et al. (2016, August). *Wilderness Therapy Symposium Preconference: Closing the Gap: Creating an Evidence Base for OBH*. The 2016 National Wilderness Therapy Symposium. Park City, UT.

Tucker, A.R., Hopkins, T., Karoff, M., Norton, C.L., & Hobson, J. (2016, August). *Female voices in Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare*. The 2016 National Wilderness Therapy Symposium. Park City, UT.

Tucker, A.R., Alvarez, A. T., Lung, M., Beale, B., Stauffer, G., Norton, C.L., Decker, M., & Magle-Haberek, N. (2016, October). *TAPG Professional Development Intensive: Delving Deeper: Intentional Focus on the Therapeutic Environment*. The 2016 Association for Experiential Education's International Conference. Minneapolis, MN.

Gass, M., Gillis, H.L., Russell, K.C., Tucker, A.R., & Norton, C.L. (2016, October). *A review of current findings in adventure therapy*. The 2016 Association for Experiential Education's International Conference. Minneapolis, MN.

## Risk Management

The OBH Center continues to collect yearly risk management data from program members in effort to show an accurate appraisal of OBH Programs as well as help to improve upon the risk management of the programs. OBH Council member programs have been collecting detailed information about incidents that occur during OBH treatment since 2001. It is now the longest-running operational risk management database in the outdoor programming industry.

### 2015 Data.

In 2015, 18 OBH members contributed data to the Risk Management Report including information regarding completion rates, client injuries, client illness, therapeutic holds, runaways, and guide injury and illness rates.

- The OBH-C rate of injury in 2015 was 0.31 injuries per 1000 field days, approximately eight percent below the national average rate for adolescent injuries.
- Members of the OBH-C served 2,162 clients in 2015 with 1,924 completing treatment.
- The 18 OBH-C programs provided 165,117 client filed days and 85,893 guide filed days.
- OBH-C clients in 2015 were exposed to 0.006 hours of therapeutic holds per 1000 hours of client contact time compared to the National Association of State Mental Health Program Director's Research Institute average of 8.4 hours per 1000 hours of client contact for youth in inpatient mental health settings. OBH-C clients in 2015 were exposed to 1,287 times less restraint time than the average 12-17 year old in inpatient mental health care in the US.
- OBH Accredited programs showed higher mean completion rates and lower mean injury rates than programs that were not accredited.

## Research Updates: Internal

**Follow Up Data Collection:** Due to IRB limitations the OBH Center is unable to directly see individual client outcome reports for data monitoring; however, due to ongoing challenges to obtaining post DC data, the OBH Center continues to support Petree Associates to actively monitor data collection for programs. Please do not hesitate to reach out to Mike Petree if you have any questions about data collection status or you need help or clarification. Mike can be reached at [mike@remoteresearchdirector.com](mailto:mike@remoteresearchdirector.com).

**Revising NATSAP Forms:** Representatives from the OBH Council (Neal Christensen), the OBH Center (Anita Tucker and Jessa Hobson), Petree Associates (Mike Petree), and NATSAP (Ellen Behrens and John Hall), have been meeting every two weeks since March in an effort to revise the NATSAP Forms used in data collection to better meet the needs of all types of programs (Residential, OBH, Community-Based) across all types of populations (Youth and Adults). Our revisions are close to final and we will be asking for feedback from research coordinators and programs soon. Your input will be important in making sure these forms are applicable and relevant to our work and the questions we have about the impact of our work on clients. For more information on this feel free to contact Neal Christensen at [neal@elementswilderness.com](mailto:neal@elementswilderness.com)

**NATSAP PRN Database Update:** As of August 2nd, 2016, OBH member programs had contributed data for 4,371 clients who have consented to participate in the NATSAP PRN and have completed at least one clinical instrument (YOQ 2.01, YOQ 2.0 SR, or YOQ 45.2) at intake.

- On average, both adolescent and adult clients arrive to treatment with clinically significant levels of behavioral and emotional dysfunction, with **clinically significant improvements in symptoms at discharge**. These improvements are maintained at 6 and 12 months post-discharge (see attached graph).
- The past year has seen the **largest growth** of OBH clients in the database since the inception of the NATSAP PRN
- **Automation** of program reports has led to significant improvements starting this year. Programs will now receive **progress reports quarterly**. The reports will have significantly more detail than previous versions, including iterative graphs. The first version of this report will be sent out in mid-August.



## Research Updates: External

**Publications:** The OBH Council has had an incredible year publishing literature across various disciplines with many additional articles in press or under review. So far in 2016, the research scientists and affiliated researchers of the OBH Center created 16 new publications, available for reading, plus had an additional 4 new articles accepted (in press) and submitted for review 3 additional papers. That is a total of 23 new pieces of research out in the professional literature! Below are our most recent additions to the field:

### Published in 2016

Becker, S., Russell, K. C. (2016). Wilderness therapy for adolescents. In, R. J. R. Levesque (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of adolescence* (2nd ed.). New York: Springer Books.

- Behrens, E. (2016). Preface: A Tipping Point for the Journal of Therapeutic Schools and Programs, *Journal of Therapeutic Schools and Programs*, 8, 4-5.
- Bettmann, J. E., Gillis, H. L., Speelman, E. A., Parry, K. J., & Case, J. M. (2016). A Meta-analysis of Wilderness Therapy Outcomes for Private Pay Clients. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 1-15.
- Combs, K. M. (2016). What does it take to get post-discharge data? *Journal of Therapeutic Schools and Programs*, 8(1), 18-23.
- DeMille, S. M., & Montgomery, M. (2016). Integrating narrative family therapy in an Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare program: A case study. *Journal of Contemporary Family Therapy*, 38(1), 3-13.
- Gillis, H.L., Kivlighan, D. M., & Russell, K.C. (Online First April 2016) Between-Client and Within-Client Engagement and Outcome in a Residential Wilderness Treatment Group: An Actor Partner Interdependence Analysis. *Psychotherapy*. doi: 10.1037/pst0000047
- Gillis Jr, H. L., Speelman, E., Linville, N., Bailey, E., Kalle, A., Oglesbee, N., ... & Jensen, J. (2016). Meta-analysis of Treatment Outcomes Measured by the Y-OQ and Y-OQ-SR Comparing Wilderness and Non-wilderness Treatment Programs. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 1-13.
- Hoag, M. J., Combs, K. M., & Roberts, S. D. (2016). Pushing beyond outcome: What else changes in wilderness therapy? *Journal of Therapeutic Schools and Programs*, 8(1), 45-56.
- Liermann, K., & Norton, C.L. (2016). Enhancing family communication: Examining the impact of a therapeutic wilderness program for struggling teens and parents. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 38(1), 14-22. doi: 10.1007/s10591-015-9371-5
- Roberts, S., Stroud, D., Hoag, M. J., & Combs, K. M. (2016). Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare: Client and Treatment Characteristics Effects on Young Adult Outcomes. *Journal of Experiential Education [Advanced online publication]*. doi: 10.1177/1053825916655445
- Russell, K. C., Gillis, H. L., & Heppner, W. (2015). An examination of mindfulness-based experiences through adventure in substance use disorder treatment for young adult males: A pilot study. *Mindfulness*, 7(2), 320-328. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s12671-015-0441-4>
- Tucker, A., Combs, K. M., Bettman, J., Chang, T., Graham, S., Hoag, M., & Tatum, C. (2016). Longitudinal outcomes for youth transported to wilderness therapy programs. *Research on Social Work Practice*. [Advanced online edition]. doi: 10.1177/1049731516647486.
- Tucker, A.R., Norton, C.L., DeMille, S., & Hobson. (2016). The impact of wilderness therapy on physical and emotional health: Utilizing an integrated approach in Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 39(1), 15-30. doi: 10.1177/1053825915607536
- Tucker, A.R., Norton, C.L., Itin, C., Hobson, J., & Alvarez, M.A. (2016). Adventure therapy: Non-deliberative group therapy in action. *Social Work with Groups*, 39(2-3), 194-207. doi: 10.1080/01609513.2015.1048416
- Tucker, A., Paul, M., Hobson, J., Karoff, M., & Gass, M. (2016). Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare: Its impact on family functioning. *Journal of Therapeutic Schools and Programs*, 8, 21-40. doi: 10.19157/JTSP.issue.08.01.05
- Tucker, A., Widmer, M., Faddis, T., Randolph, B., & Gass, M. (2016). Family therapy in Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare: Current practices and future possibilities. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 38, 32-42. doi: 10.1007/s10591-015-9370-6

In Press

Avery, M.E., Norton, C. L., & Tucker, A.R. (In press). Blazing a trail...together: The need for mentoring and collaboration among women in outdoor leadership in D. Mitten (Ed.), *Nourishing terrains: Women's contributions to outdoor learning*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillian.

Combs, K. M., Hoag, M., Javorski, S., & Roberts, S. (In press) Adolescent Self-Assessment of an Outdoor Behavioral Health Program: Longitudinal Outcomes and Trajectories of Change. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*. DOI: 10.1007/s10826-016-0497-3

Norton, C.L. & Liermann, K. (In press). Exploring the impact of a therapeutic wilderness program for struggling teens on family relationship outcomes. In J. Christenson & A. Merritts (Eds.), *Family therapy with adolescents in residential settings –Research and interventions*.

Roberts, S., Stroud, D., Hoag, M. J., & Combs, K.M. (In press). Outdoor behavioral healthcare: A longitudinal assessment of young adult outcomes. *Journal of Counseling and Development*.

Under Review:

Bettmann, J., Tucker, A., Behrens, E. (Under review) The impact of wilderness therapy on attachment, separation and mental health functioning in young adults.

Chang, T., Tucker, A., Gass, M., Javorski, S., & Norton, C.L. (Under review). Cultural issues in adventure programming. Revisions submitted to the *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning* on 6/27/16.

Norton, C.L., & Tucker, A.R., Farnham, M., Borroel, F., & Pelletier, A. (Under review). Family enrichment adventure therapy: A mixed methods study examining the impact of trauma-informed adventure therapy on children and families affected by abuse. Revisions submitted to the *Journal of Child and Adolescent Trauma* on 7/3/16.

## Insurance

The OBH Center and in particular Dr. Gass continues to support the funding of OBH programs. Much of his hard work and the research that has been completed in OBH has paid off. On August 16, 2016 a historical precedent was set. A **Revenue Code** was established for funding outdoor/wilderness behavioral healthcare programming and will go into effect on July, 1, 2017. **The new revenue code is 1006**. This hopefully paves the way to make OBH programs more accessible to those in need through third party payment.

**Language.** We continue to encourage OBH programs to use the terms “**INTERMEDIATE CARE**” both in their marketing materials and their websites, and as OBH researchers we have focused on including this language as well in our publications. In addition, we also strongly encourage programs that once they are accredited you "broadcast/strongly publicize" the accreditation achievement.



# OBH In the News

## **News Articles:**

“*Troubled Kids Lose Weight, Boost Mood with Wilderness Tx: Physical fitness tied to emotional wellness*” News article cover Dr. Steve DeMille’s presentation of collaboration research with Dr. Tucker, Dr. Norton and Jessa Hobson. (<http://www.medpagetoday.com/MeetingCoverage/APA/57976>)

“*What is new at the San Marcos Housing Authority: Poder Adventure Groups*” Adventure groups started with youth in public housing by Dr. Norton. (<http://www.smpa.org/Home>)

“*First Eastern Regional Wilderness Therapy Symposium held in Asheville*” News article about the conference, the OBH Center, and others. (<https://mountainx.com/living/first-eastern-regional-wilderness-therapy-symposium-held-in-asheville/>)

## **Other OBH news and awards:**

Dr. Christine Lynn Norton, LCSW serves as the **Adventure Therapy Advisor for Project Rebirth**, a resilience resource for all who serve country and community, and has designed and implemented a wellness-based, trauma-informed adventure therapy curriculum for female veterans. She is working in partnership with Dr. David Scheinfeld and Dr. Jen Woolard of Georgetown University to evaluate this curriculum. (<http://www.projectrebirth.org/women-warriors-curriculum>)

Dr. Christine Norton receives **Fulbright** to Taiwan ([http://www.txstate.edu/news/news\\_releases/news\\_archive/2016/March-2016/Fulbright031616.html](http://www.txstate.edu/news/news_releases/news_archive/2016/March-2016/Fulbright031616.html))

Dr. Christine Norton received a \$20,000 sabbatical research grant from Texas State University to launch the **Foster Care Adventure Therapy Network** this fall, a group of programs and practitioners who utilize adventure therapy with current and former foster care youth. Dr. Norton will be traveling to the Wilderness School in Connecticut to learn about and observe their program and talk with staff about possible research partnerships with the Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare Center.

Dr. Christine Norton has been named to the **Bechtel/Outward Bound Research Council** to assess and develop an evaluation plan and methods to measure character development and social and emotional learning among OB participants.

Dr. Michael Gass received **NATSAP’s Leadership Award** in February 2016 at NATSAP’s Annual Conference in La Jolla, CA.

Dr. Anita Tucker was recently selected to join the Association for Experiential Education’s (AEE) **Board of Directors** in the position of Member at Large (<http://www.aee.org/board-of-directors>)

Dr. Michael Gass has been selected for AEE’s Therapeutic Adventure Professional Group (TAPG) **2016 Heart of Adventure Therapy Award** to be given in October in Minneapolis, MN at the Annual AEE International Conference (<http://www.aee.org/tapg-awards>).

Dr. Anita Tucker recently received the **Distinguished Research Award** from the Association for Experiential Education (AEE) to be given in Minneapolis, MN at the AEE International Conference (<http://www.aee.org/distinguished-researcher-award>).

**Please visit us on our website:  
[www.obhcenter.org](http://www.obhcenter.org)**