

DISTINGUISHED SCHOLAR LECTURE

Center for Social Work Research, The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work

Thursday, April 12, 2012, 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. • UTOPIA Theatre, School of Social Work

Reception to follow. RSVP by April 5th to Linda Solomon: lsolomon@austin.utexas.edu

Social Anxiety and Drinking: A Complex Relationship

Carrie Randall, Ph.D., University Distinguished Professor; Professor, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and Department of Neurosciences, Medical University of South Carolina

Social anxiety, a very common form of anxiety, refers to the marked fear of scrutiny and negative evaluation by others in either social interaction or performance-related situations. Many individuals are fearful of public speaking, but individuals who meet criteria for social anxiety disorder, also known as social phobia, are much more than “shy.” It is this latter group, those with extreme social anxiety, that Dr. Randall has studied for more than 20 years.

Her pioneering research in this area demonstrated that the relationship between social anxiety and drinking is a unique, and very complicated one. Social anxiety disorder is a risk factor for the development of subsequent alcohol dependence, a fact that makes treatment of social anxiety an ideal target for alcohol prevention efforts. However, what sets social anxiety apart from other anxiety disorders is that social anxiety, because of the inherent fear of social interactions

and social situations, interferes with traditional treatments for alcohol addiction (e.g., group therapy, self-help groups).

Dr. Randall will present an overview of her research program in social anxiety and drinking. Her presentation will help shed light on the importance of deliberate drinking to cope and manage social stress, will demonstrate the negative impact of social anxiety on alcohol treatment, and will present the results of her two clinical trials, one of which was recently completed, aimed at reducing alcohol consumption in socially anxious hazardous drinkers. It will become clear that the relationship between drinking and social anxiety is not as simple as Dr. Randall originally thought it was when she embarked on this line of research more than two decades ago.

CEUs available, contact Liz Nowicki:
lbnowicki@mail.utexas.edu

Carrie Randall, Ph.D.

Carrie Randall, Ph.D., was the Director of the Charleston Alcohol Research Center at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) for over 16 years and the founding director of MUSC's Center for Drug and Alcohol Programs. The Charleston Alcohol Research Center is one of 15 centers supported by NIAAA and the only center that includes both basic science and clinical research projects that focus specifically on alcohol treatment and implications for treatment. She is a Distinguished University Professor at MUSC with dual appointment as Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and in the Department of Neurosciences. While her general research interest is in treatment for alcohol problems, especially in women, her specific research expertise is in the comorbidity of alcohol problems and social anxiety disorder. Dr. Randall has had numerous local and national awards, including the Research Society on Alcoholism's Distinguished Research Award, the Henry Rosett Award for her contributions to fetal alcohol syndrome research, AMERSA's Betty Ford Award, and the Mark Keller Award bestowed by the NIAAA for significant and long-term contributions to the field of alcohol abuse and alcoholism research. She has served on numerous study sections, and was a member of the NIAAA National Advisory Council. Dr. Randall devotes a great deal of her time to mentoring the next generation of clinical researchers.

