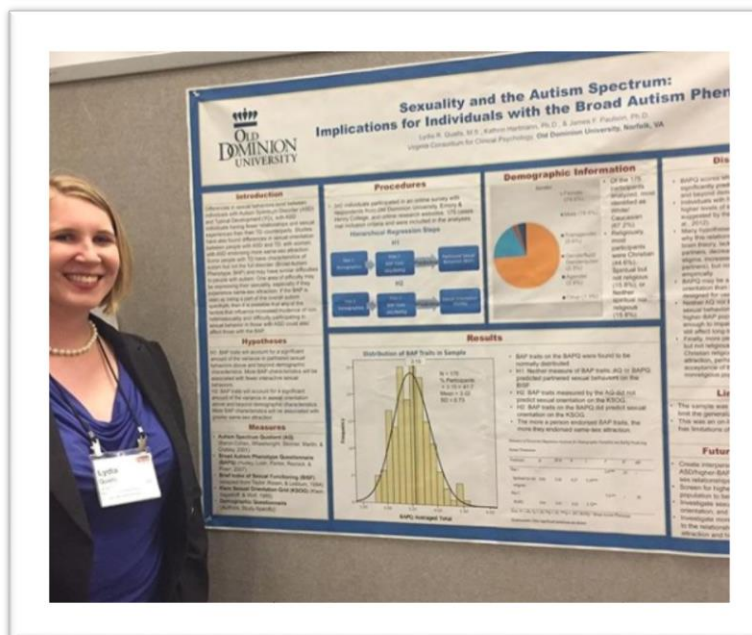
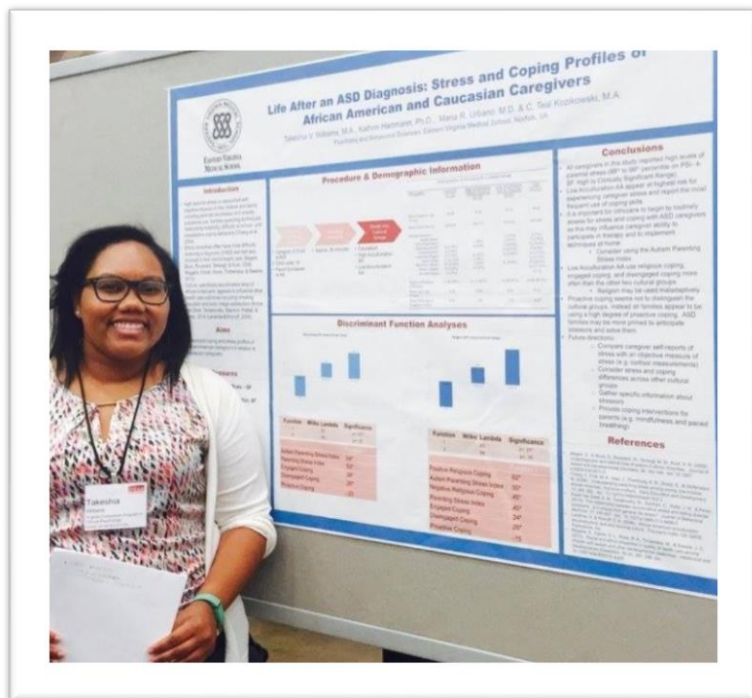


The EVMS Autism Spectrum Disorder Program was started by **Maria Urbano, M.D.**, and **Kathrin Hartmann, Ph.D.**, in 2010 to provide clinical services, research, and community outreach to individuals and their families for Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs). In 2016, they were joined by **Nicole Kreiser, Ph.D.** **Dr. Kreiser** and **Dr. Hartmann** are also both faculty of the Virginia Consortium Program.

Currently, the research lab is focused on investigating the experiences of and treatments to help young adults with ASD. Studies have recently focused on investigating motor coordination in relation to social and sensory traits, focus groups investigating the experience of comorbidities, and the experiences of young adults with ASD with sexuality and communication with their families. Additionally, the development of a Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) informed group treatment, the culmination of over five years of work, is in preparation for publication.

The ASD Research Program has had two recent students affiliated with the Virginia Consortium. **Dr. Takeshia Williams**, a student of Dr. Kathrin Hartmann who graduated from the consortium in 2016, did her dissertation research on a differential comparison of the stress experienced by Caucasian and African American caregivers of children with ASD. Dr. Williams' research found that African American families reported experiencing more stress and utilizing more coping mechanisms than Caucasian families. Additionally, there were differences between high and low acculturated African American families, with low acculturated African American families more likely to report engaging in religious coping. Her dissertation has been prepared for publication and is under review at the Journal for Autism and Developmental Disorders.

**Lydia Qualls**, a third-year student working with Dr. Hartmann, earned her M.S. Degree in Experimental Psychology from ODU in May 2017 by defending her Master's Thesis entitled "Sexuality and the Autism Spectrum: Implications for Individuals with the Broad Autism Phenotype." Her research found that individuals with higher levels of Broad Autism Phenotypic traits were more likely to identify as being attracted to same-sex individuals. The results of the study were presented at the International Meeting for Autism Research in San Francisco, CA



in May, and were included in a manuscript published in the Journal for Autism and Developmental Disabilities in 2018. Ms. Qualls is currently working on her doctoral dissertation, which will focus on the differential pathways of individuals with typical development, the broad autism phenotype, and autism spectrum disorder in identifying with a same-sex attracted sexual orientation.

Students in the ASD Program are working closely with the program's master level research coordinator in addition to its faculty. The program holds weekly lab meetings, monthly research meetings with principal investigators of other institutions and plans an annual ASD conference that students become involved in. The lab offers opportunity to work closely with physicians, psychologists, and other health professionals together. It provides additional opportunities for clinical and journal editorial experiences under supervision.