

Dr. Rory Patrick O'Brien (they/them)

Curriculum Vitae

Assistant Professor of Social Work
San Diego State University

rpobrien@sdsu.edu

Academic Positions, Education & Training

- 2025–*Curr.* Assistant Professor, San Diego State University School of Social Work
- 2024–25 President's Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Michigan School of Social Work
- 2019–24 Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work (PhD), University of Southern California
Dissertation: A multiple comparison case study of school LGBTQ policies, student advocacy, and policy change over time
- 2012–15 Master of Social Work (MSW), Washington University in St. Louis
Master of Public Health (MPH), Washington University in St. Louis
- 2008–12 Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Women's and Gender Studies, Willamette University

Awards and Honors

- 2024–25 President's Postdoctoral Fellowship, University of Michigan
- 2023–24 Oakley Endowed Fellowship, University of Southern California Graduate School
- 2023 Summer Research & Writing Grant, University of Southern California Graduate School
- 2022 Walter J Lear Outstanding Student Abstract, American Public Health Association LGBTQ Health Caucus
- 2022 Fellows Research/Travel Award, University of Southern California Graduate School
- 2020 Sylvia H and Benjamin Novak Endowed Scholarship
- 2019–21 Provost Fellow for Diversity, Inclusion, and Access, University of Southern California
- 2019 Northern California Scholarship Foundation Alumni Aid Award
- 2018 California State Legislature Assembly Certificate of Recognition, 46th District Asm Adrin Nazarian
- 2015 Outstanding Qualitative, Theory, & Mixed Methods Research, Research Without Walls Student Research Symposium, Brown School of Social Work
- 2014 James M. Holobaugh Honor for LGBTQ Community Service, Washington University in St Louis
- 2013–15 Institute Fellow, American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors, & Therapists
- 2012–15 George Warren Brown School Memorial Scholarship
- 2012 Willamette University Senior Certificate
- 2010–11 Willamette Compass Scholarship
- 2011 New York Trust/Annette Kade Scholarship
- 2008–12 Northern California Scholarship Foundation Scholarship

Peer-Reviewed Publications

11. **O'Brien, R.P.** (2025). Public health's defense of pediatric gender affirming care. *American Journal of Public Health*.
10. López, M.L., Parra, L.A., **O'Brien, R.P.**, ten Brummelaar, M., Villar, M.F., Martinez-Jothar, G.A. (2025). Exploring microaggressions among LGBTQIA+ youth in the child welfare system. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 177: 108459. doi: 10.1016/j.childyouth.2025.108459
9. Zachry, C., **O'Brien, R.P.**, Clark, K., Ding, M., & Bloisnich, J.R. (2024). Mortality among sexual and gender minority populations: A systematic review. *PLoS ONE* 20(2): e0307688. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0307688
8. **O'Brien, R.P.**, Rhoades, H., Cabrera, J.R., Jr., Parra, L.A., Rusow, J., Schrager, S.M., Goldbach, J.T. (2024). Associations between state legislative activity, minority stress, and suicide attempt among sexual minority adolescents. *Annals of LGBTQ Public and Population Health*, 5(2): 80-92. doi: 10.1891/LGBTQ-2022-0022
7. Schrager, S.M., Goldbach, J.T., Wood, J.K., **O'Brien, R.P.**, Dunlap, S.L., & Rhoades, H. (2024). Development and validation of the Transgender Adolescent Stress Survey – Dysphoria. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15:1448706. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1448706.

6. Goldbach, J.T., Schrager, S.M., Wood, J.K., **O'Brien, R.P.**, Dunlap, S.L., & Rhoades, H. (2024). Development and validation of the Transgender Adolescent Stress Survey – Minority Stress. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1448693
5. Srivastava, A., Green, D., **O'Brien, R.P.**, Parra, L.A., Schrager, S.M., & Goldbach, J.T. (2024). A proposed taxonomy for categorizing sexual identities in adolescence. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000685>
4. Goldbach, J.T., Parra, L.A., **O'Brien, R.P.**, Rhoades, H., & Schrager, S.M. (2023). Explaining behavioral health differences in urban and rural sexual minority adolescents. *Journal of Rural Health*, 39(1): 262-271. doi: 10.1111/jrh.12706.
3. **O'Brien, R.P.** & Blossnich, J.R. (2022). Refusal rates to sexual orientation and gender identity items in the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2014-2019. *American Journal of Public Health*, 112(3): 443-452. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2021.306625.
2. Parra, L.A., **O'Brien, R.P.**, Schrager, S.M., & Goldbach, J.T. (2021). COVID-19-related household job loss and mental health in a nationwide United States sample of sexual minority adolescents. *Behavioral Medicine*, 47(5): 1-10. doi: 10.1080/08964289.2021.1977604.
1. **O'Brien, R.P.**, Parra, L.A., & Cederbaum, J.A. (2021). "Trying my best": Sexual minority adolescents' self-care during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 68(6): 1053-1058. doi: 10.1016/j.adohealth.2021.03.013.

Manuscripts Under Review

2. **O'Brien, R.P.**, Yu, K., Cederbaum, J.A., Ferguson, L., Goldbach, J.T., Rhoades, H., & Blossnich, J.R. (*Under review*). Adoption and implementation of California state education policies on transgender and nonbinary inclusion in Los Angeles-area public schools. *Journal of School Health*.
1. **O'Brien, R.P.**, Blossnich, J.R., Cederbaum, J.A., Ferguson, L., Hurlburt, M.S., Traube, D.E., Parra, L.A., Rhoades, H., Schrager, S.M., & Goldbach, J.T. (*Under review*). Associations between local and state structural stigma, minority stress, and mental health in a nationwide sample of sexual minority youth. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*.

Manuscripts In Preparation

2. **O'Brien, R.P.**, Yu, K., Cederbaum, J.A., Ferguson, L., Goldbach, J.T., Rhoades, H., & Blossnich, J.R. (*In preparation*). Change in school adoption and implementation of LGBTQIA+ protective education policies and procedures over time.
1. **O'Brien, R.P.**, Hotchkiss, M., Cederbaum, J.A., Ferguson, L., Goldbach, J.T., Rhoades, H., & Blossnich, J.R. (*In preparation*). Student civic engagement in Los Angeles-area public high schools: A focus group study.

Books, Chapters, Reports, and Other Publications

5. ten Brummelaar, M., López, M., Mallon, G.P., **O'Brien, R.P.**, Parra, L.A., González Álvarez, R., Martínez-Jothar, G., et al. (2025). *Queer & In Care: Journeys through care being young and LGBTQIA+*. Open Access Book Fund & Public Engagement Seed Fund.
4. Walker, P.M., **O'Brien, R.P.**, & Taylor, M. (2022). *Journeying Together: The Annual State of LGBTQ Communities*. #Out4MentalHealth: Sacramento, CA. Available at: <https://californialgbtqhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/FinalO4MH2021SOTCReport.pdf>
3. Bakko, M., Kattari, L., & **O'Brien, R.P.** (2020). TNB affirming policy: Current landscape, issues, and change practices. In S.K. Kattari, M.K. Kinney, L. Kattari, & E.N. Walls (Eds.), *Social Work and Health Care Practice with Transgender and Nonbinary Individuals and Communities: Voices for Equity, Inclusion, and Resilience*. Routledge.
2. Walker, P.M., Scanlan, N., McAllister-Wallner, A., Taylor, M., **O'Brien, R.P.**, Parra, L.A., Israel, T., & Esopo, K. (2019). *Surveying the Road to Equity*. #Out4MentalHealth: Sacramento, CA. Available at:

<https://californialgbtqhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Surveying-the-Road-to-Equity-2019-State-of-LGBTQ-Communities-Report.pdf>

1. **O'Brien, R.P.**, Walker, P.M., Poteet, S.L., Wallner, A., & Taylor, M. (2018). *Mapping the Road to Equity: The Annual State of LGBTQ Communities*. #Out4MentalHealth: Sacramento, CA. Available at: <https://californialgbtqhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/O4MH-Mapping-the-Road-to-Equity.pdf>

Presentations at Professional Meetings

17. López, M., Parra, L.A., **O'Brien, R.P.**, ten Brummelaar, M., Foradada Villar, M., & Martínez-Jothar, G. (2025, July). Microaggressions among LGBTQIA+ youth in the child welfare system. Accepted for Oral Presentation at the European Scientific Association on Residential Family Care for Children and Adolescents, Zagreb, Croatia.
16. Lacombe-Duncan, A., **O'Brien, R.P.**, Iyer, H., Underhill, A., Persad, Y., Fung, R., ..., & Loutfy, M. (2025, May). Factors associated with knowing one's HIV status among a community sample of trans women/transfeminine persons taking gender-affirming hormone therapy: Implications for meeting the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets. Oral presentation at the 34th Canadian Conference on HIV/AIDS Research, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.
15. Lacombe-Duncan, A., **O'Brien, R.P.**, Iyer, H., Underhill, A., Persad, Y., Fung, R., ..., & Loutfy, M. (2025, May). HIV status knowledge among trans women taking gender-affirming hormone therapy in Canada: Implications for the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets. Poster presented at AIDS Impact 2025, Casablanca, Morocco.
14. Lacombe-Duncan, A., Mehta, S., Kattari, S.K., **O'Brien, R.P.**, Kluger, H., & Blaszcak, J. (2025, May). Transgender and gender diverse persons' STI testing: Understanding primary care providers' training gaps and desires to promote sexual health equity. Poster presented at AIDS Impact 2025, Casablanca, Morocco.
13. **O'Brien, R.P.** (2025, March). Implementing student name change policies and procedures in your schools. Oral presentation at the True Colors SOGIECon Annual LGBTQ+ Youth Conference. Storrs, CT.
12. **O'Brien, R.P.**, Hotchkiss, M., Cederbaum, J.A., Ferguson, L., Blosnich, J.R. (2025, Jan). Factors That Shape High School Student LGBTQIA Advocacy: A Qualitative Study. Poster presented at the Society for Social Work Research 27th Annual Conference. Seattle, WA.
11. **O'Brien, R.P.**, Yu, K., Cederbaum, J.A., Ferguson, L., Goldbach, J.T., Rhoades, H., Blosnich, J.R. (2024, Sept). Change in school adoption and implementation of transgender and nonbinary youth-protective education policies and procedures over time. Poster presented at the University of Michigan Momentum Symposium. Ann Arbor, MI.
10. Green, D., **O'Brien, R.P.**, Parra, L.A., Schrager, S.M., & Goldbach, J.T. (2023, Oct). Mental health service use among a nationally representative sample of sexual minority youth. Oral presentation at the Council of Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting. Atlanta, GA.
9. **O'Brien, R.P.**, Blosnich, J.R., Parra, L.A., Schrager, S.M., & Goldbach, J.T. (2022, Nov). Effects of county- & state-level structural stigma on minority stress & anxiety & depressive symptoms in a nationwide sample of sexual minority adolescents. Oral presentation at the American Public Health Association Annual Summit. Boston, MA.
8. Green, D., Parra, L.A., **O'Brien, R.P.**, Schrager, S.M., & Goldbach, J.T. (2022, January). School climate and mental health service use among sexual minority adolescents: Adolescent Stress Experiences over Time Study. Poster presented at the Society for Social Work Research 26th Annual Conference. Washington, D.C.
7. **O'Brien, R.P.**, Rhoades, H., Rusow, J., Schrager, S.M., & Goldbach, J.T. (2021, January). Associations between policy and minority stress: Early findings from the Adolescent Stress Experiences over Time Study. Poster presented at the Society for Social Work Research 25th Annual Conference. Virtual.
6. Rusow, J., Green, D., **O'Brien, R.P.**, Goldbach, J.T., & Schrager, S.M. (2020, November). Comorbidity of minority stress experiences with dating violence, sexual assault, and forced intercourse among sexual minority adolescents in the US. Oral presentation at the American Public Health Association Annual Summit. Virtual.
5. **O'Brien, R.P.** & Blosnich, J.R. (2020, November). Decreasing item refusal over time: Evidence supporting continuation of sexual orientation and gender identity in federal health surveys. Oral presentation at the American Public Health Association Annual Summit. Virtual.

4. **O'Brien, R.P.** & Walker, P.M. (2018, November). We count: The policy, research, & practice of counting LGBTQ people in California. Poster presentation at the American Public Health Association Annual Summit. San Diego, CA.
3. **O'Brien, R.P.** & Walker, P. (2018, May). "What if my child is LGBTQ?" What to know & how to respond. Oral presentation at the California Mental Health Advocates for Children & Youth annual conference. Monterey, CA.
2. **O'Brien, R.P.**, Saah, D., & Stiritz, S. (2014, October). "School's interfering with my education!" Bibliotherapy to intervene in cultural competency failures. Oral presentation at the Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting. Tampa, FL.
1. **O'Brien, R.P.** (2012, May). The unlocatable intersections of racial and sexual difference: In the bedrooms of *Another Country*. Oral presentation at the Northwest Women's Studies Association. Corvallis, OR .

Professional Organizations

2019–Curr.	Member, Society for Social Work and Research
2018–Curr.	Member, American Public Health Association
2012–Curr.	Alumni, Northern California Scholarship Alumni Association

Certificates and Trainings

2022–24	Student Trainee, International Partnership for Queer Youth Resilience (INQYR)
2023	Future Faculty Teaching Institute Certificate, USC Center for Excellence in Teaching
2019	Emerging Leader, NextGen LGBTQ Emerging Leadership Program
2018	Field Instructor Training, California State University, Sacramento Division of Social Work
2017	Standard Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths Certificate
2017	National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative Certificate
2016	Planned Parenthood & Community Outreach Group Organizer Training
2015	Certificate in Violence & Injury Prevention, Brown School of Social Work

Teaching Experience

Instructor

San Diego State University School of Social Work, San Diego, CA
SWORK 720.02: Civic Engagement in Social Environments, Fall 2025

Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA
SOWK 627: Policy & Macro Practice in Child, Youth, & Family Services, Spring 2023

Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Program, American University, Washington, DC
WGSS 350.1: Anti-Violence Interventions, Fall 2016
WGSS 496: Transgender Studies, Spring 2016
WGSS 125: Gender in Society, Fall 2015

Teaching Assistant

Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, University of Southern California, Los Angeles
SOWK 627: Policy & Macro Practice in Child, Youth, & Family Services, Fall 2021

Guest Lecturer

Michigan State University School of Social Work, Lansing, Michigan
SW 920: Program Evaluation, April 2025

Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, University of Southern California, Los Angeles
SOWK 790a, 790b: Research, February & March 2023
SOWK 696: LGBTQ+ Psycho/Social/Political Issues, April 2021

Volunteer Service

2017–Curr.	Northern California Scholarship Foundation Advisor to Undergraduate Students
2024	Volunteer at fundraising events (Catfight for the Crown; Voices), Ruth Ellis Center, Detroit, MI

2022–23	Student Section Liaison, Public Health Social Work Section, American Public Health Association
2019–21	Councilor, Health Equity Data Council, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, CA
2020	Volunteer, Los Angeles County Homeless Youth Count, Los Angeles, CA
2018	Field Instructor, California State University, Sacramento, CA
2018	Emcee, Pride & Mental Health Panel, NAMI-CA & Sacramento LGBT Center, Sacramento, CA
2015	Facilitator, Not Your Mom's Sex Talk, American University, Washington, D.C.
2015	Facilitator, Healthy Masculinity Project Dialogues, Men Can Stop Rape, Washington, D.C.
2015	Volunteer organizer, Planned Parenthood Advocates Great Rivers, St Louis, MO
2014–15	Committee Member, Washington University in St Louis Sexual Assault & Relationship Violence Task Force, St Louis, MO
2014	Educator, Adult Sexual Health Course, Paraquad, St. Louis, MO
2013–14	Co-facilitator, Student Intergroup Dialogue Series, Brown School of Social Work, St. Louis, MO

Work Experience

2017–19	Mental Health America of Northern California , Sacramento, CA, <i>Program Coordinator</i> Conducted community-based participatory research on LGBTQ mental health services access. Advocated at state & county levels for policy change to close LGBTQ mental health disparities.
2016–17	Polaris , Washington, DC, <i>Associate, Runaway and Homeless Youth Projects</i> Researched & analyzed trafficking identification and response policies and best practices. Conducted listening sessions with professionals working with vulnerable youth nationwide.
2015–16	Lotus Blooms , Alexandria, VA, <i>Sales Associate & Sex Educator</i> Fostered a body-positive, educational space for adults to learn about sex and sexuality. Designed fun, comprehensive, and medically accurate sex education curriculum for adults.
2014–15	Washington University in St Louis Student Life , St Louis, MO, <i>Graduate Assistant</i> Advised undergraduate student multicultural and advocacy groups. Co-organized and led an undergraduate student week-long retreat on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Languages

English, fluent; French and Spanish, conversational