**James I. S. Tillett**

Email: jillianjamesst@vt.edu

**Education**

2024 **Ph.D. Candidate, Marriage and Family Therapy Program**

Human Development Degree

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

2020 **M.A. Marriage and Family Therapy**

**Systemic Multicultural Counseling Graduate Certificate**

Appalachian State University

2017  **B.A. Sociology with Honors**

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

**Honors and Scholarships**

2023 Services for Students with Disabilities at Virginia Tech’s Sally Bohland Award for Exceptional Leadership in Access and Inclusion

2020-2021 Virginia Tech Graduate School’s Dean’s Diversity Fellowship recipient

2019-2020 Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training for Professionals Stipend

2013-2017 Ida C. Koran Merit Scholar

**Affiliations**

2022-Present National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) Membership

2020-Present Queer and Trans Advocacy Network (QTAN) AAMFT Membership

2019-Present American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Membership

**Academic Presentations**

Shivers, C., Tillett, J., & Apple, R. (2023, April 11th). *Exploring autistic perspectives of adult*

*sibling relationship quality: Clinical implications for the use of quantitative measures in family autism research.* [Paper Presentation]. Gatlinburg Conference, Kansas City, MO.

Tillett, J., Case Pease, J., Fennell, T., Puckett, K., Codecá, L., Bland, K., Shivers, C., & Russon,

J. (2022, November 16th). *Perceptions of relational strengths and stressors among those with siblings with suicidal ideation: A mixed methods study*. [Paper Presentation]. National Council on Family Relations, Minneapolis, MN.

Tillett, J. (2018, October 13th). *Gender, parenting, and intergenerational political belief.*

Extended abstract presented at the Three Minute Thesis competition at Appalachian State

University, Boone, NC.

Tillett, J., & Hagan, J. (2017, March 6th). *Gender, parenting, and intergenerational political*

*belief.* Extended abstract presented at the annual meeting of the Southern Sociological Society, Greenville, SC.

**First-Author Manuscripts in Progress**

Tillett, J., Shivers, C., & Apple, R. (2023). *Exploring autistic perspectives of adult sibling*

*relationship quality: Clinical implications for the use of quantitative measures in family autism research.* Manuscript under review.

Tillett, J., Sanner, C., & Tarantino, M. (2023). *“I don’t want to feel that I have to*

*justify my existence”: How neurodivergent polyamorous and non-monogamous people make meaning of their relationships, identities, and experiences.* Manuscript in preparation.

**Clinical Experience**

**Family Therapy Center at Virginia Tech**

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA

Supervisors: Jenene Case Pease, Ph.D., LMFT, AAMFT-Approved Supervisor,

Megan Dolbin-McNab, Ph.D., LMFT, AAMFT-Approved Supervisor,

Jasmine Ferrill, Ph.D., LMFT, AAMFT-Approved Supervisor,

Jody Russon, Ph.D., LMFT, AAMFT-Approved Supervisor

Summer 2021 – Spring 2023

**Responsibilities:**

Serve as a supervised therapist working with individuals, partners, and families. Independently conduct intake assessments and treatment planning, manage personal voicemail/phone system, coordinate paperwork digitally for telehealth, and other tasks. Utilize an online database tracking client-reported mental health and relational outcomes in order to evaluate and improve therapy practices. Work with a variety client of constellations, with a particular focus on working with neurodivergent, disabled, chronically ill, and LGBTQIA+ clients. Completed Person-of-the-Therapist (POTT) training in Fall, 2022.

**Daymark Recovery Services**

Wilkesboro, NC

Supervisor: Sara Christenbury, MA, LCAS, LMFT, AAMFT-Approved Supervisor Candidate

Fall 2019 – Summer 2020

**Responsibilities:**

Worked as a clinical intern with a caseload that included seeing clients for individual therapy, co-facilitating family and group therapies, and training in walk-in assessment services and mobile crisis work. Worked with a diverse caseload of clients across the lifespan.

**Appalachian Family Therapy Clinic**

Appalachian State University, Boone, NC

Supervisor: Laura Gambrel, Ph.D., LMFT, AAMFT-Approved Supervisor,

& Jon Winek, Ph.D., LMFT, AAMFT-Approved Supervisor

Fall 2019 – Spring 2020

**Responsibilities:**

Served as one of two MFT clinical interns working under the clinic supervisor to provide free on-campus therapy services to university students primarily representing marginalized communities. Additional intern responsibilities included completing full intake assessments with clients, coordinating case management, and managing clinic email and voicemail.

**Research Experience**

**Research Team Member**

*Department of Human Development and Family Science*

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Supervisor: Caroline Sanner, Ph.D.

Fall 2022 – Fall 2023

**Responsibilities:**

Worked with graduate co-researcher under faculty supervision on a grounded theory study seeking to understand the intersection of neurodivergence and polyamory/non-monogamy. Attended research team meetings and collaborated with co-researcher on study preparation, recruitment, and scheduling. Conducted semi-structured virtual/phone interviews with research participants, and followed theoretical sampling protocol. Engaged in interview shadowing, de-briefing, memo-ing, and coding across stages of data collection in order to follow grounded theory guidelines.

**Research Assistant**

*Department of Human Development and Family Science*

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Supervisor: Carolyn Shivers, Ph.D.

Fall 2021 – Spring 2022

**Responsibilities:**

Led teams of undergraduate research assistants in conducting literature searches and building material for a literature review. Collaborated to draft a paper manuscript on adult autistic sibling relationship quality. Worked with supervisor to conduct SPSS data analyses and select findings appropriate for paper topic. Quantified mixed-methods survey data.

**Research Assistant**

*Department of Human Development and Family Science*

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Supervisor: Megan Dolbin-McNab, Ph.D., LMFT, AAMFT-Approved Supervisor

Summer 2021

**Responsibilities:**

Participated on a team of graduate research assistants for the qualitative portion of a mixed-methods study evaluating the impacts of a psychoeducational, relational intervention with grandfamilies (grandparents raising grandchildren). Coded transcripts of dyadic interviews with the grandparents and grandchildren, participated in team meetings to review and discuss coding, and contributed to the development of a study codebook.

**Research Assistant**

*Department of Human Development and Family Science*

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Supervisor: Jody Russon, Ph.D., LMFT, AAMFT-Approved Supervisor

Fall 2020 – Spring 2021; Fall 2023

**Responsibilities:**

Participated on a student research team under faculty supervision for several studies seeking to address suicide risk and mental health disparities for underserved communities (with a focus on sexual and gender minoritized youth), and testing effective interventions. Assisted in the research, writing, and revision of content for research articles, reviews, and presentations. Attended research assistant meetings and collaborated with other team members on tasks. Conducted virtual interviews of research participants for a mixed-methods study on mental health, stigma, and help-seeking in underserved college students. Addressed mental health safety concerns during interviews.

**Research Volunteer**

*Department of Human Development and Psychological Counseling*

Appalachian State University

Supervisor: Kristen Benson, Ph.D., LMFT, AAMFT-Approved Supervisor

Fall 2019 – Spring 2020

**Responsibilities:**

Participated on a student research team under faculty supervision for a study seeking to learn about the impacts of the HB2 bathroom law on transgender-identified individuals in North Carolina. Responsibilities included contributing to volunteer research team meetings and reviewing interview tapes and transcriptions.

**Senior Honors Thesis in Sociology**

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Title: *The Hand that Rules the World: Gender, Parenting, and Intergenerational Political Belief*

Advisor: Jacqueline Hagan, Ph.D.

Fall 2016 – Spring 2017

**Responsibilities:**

Developed and submitted research proposal to the university IRB while completing a literature review on gender and political socialization in the family. Consulted faculty to create a brief online Qualtrics survey about demographics, family, gender norms, and political beliefs and practices. Administered survey to over 100 student participants on social media. Utilized STATA software to create a quantitative analysis of collected data, and defended a 55-page thesis.

**Summer Research Assistant**

*Department of Sociology*

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Supervisor: Sarah Gaby, Ph.D.

Summer 2016

**Responsibilities:**

Assisted doctoral candidate with a dissertation on the political socialization of youth. In this position, I was responsible for reading and coding transcripts of interviews and observation notes. The process required a working knowledge of approximately 200 codes, and the use of ATLAS.ti software.

**Sustainability Strategic Planning Intern**

Sustainability@UNC

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Supervisor: Cindy Shea, Director of Sustainability@UNC

Summer 2015- Summer 2016

**Responsibilities:**

Researched sustainability-related topics for the implementation of the UNC Strategic Sustainability Plan and Chancellor Folt’s Three Zeros initiative. Over the summer of 2016, led the development of a survey to assess student recycling behavior and collaborated on waste and water-related pilot projects with UNC staff and faculty. Supervised two waste audits, analyzed collected data, and created presentation graphics.

**Teaching and Academic Mentoring Experience**

**Graduate Instructor of Record**

*Department of Human Development and Family Science*

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Supervisor: Megan Dolbin-MacNab, Ph.D.

Courses: HD 1134: Intro to Disability Studies & HD 1004: Child and Adolescent Development

Fall 2021-Fall 2023

**Responsibilities:**

Prepared online synchronous courses on Canvas platform for instruction of about 85 students per fall/spring semester and about 40 students per winter/summer semester. Designed or adjusted course assignments and rubrics. Graded student submissions and offered feedback and resources. Provided weekly office hours and answered student questions. Supported honors students in completing semester-long projects. Contributed to HD 1134 curriculum development in collaboration with course coordinator.

**Teaching Assistant**

*Department of Human Development and Family Science*

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Supervisor: Erika Grafsky, Ph.D.

Summer 2021

**Responsibilities:**

Assisted faculty supervisor with the development of an undergraduate course on LGBTQ+ individuals, relationships, and families. Gathered course readings, media, and other instructional materials.

**Teaching Assistant**

*Department of Human Development and Family Science*

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Supervisors: Crystal Duncan-Lane, Ph.D. and Victoria Lael, M.S.

Course: HD 1004: Child and Adolescent Development

Fall 2020

**Responsibilities:**

Regularly coordinated with faculty course instructor to make decisions about the instruction of an online asynchronous class. Graded student assignments and offered feedback. Developed and recorded two brief online lectures on gender socialization. Contributed to the development of a pilot assignment. Provided weekly office hours and answered student questions.

**Athletic Educational Mentor Graduate Assistant**

Academic Services for Student Athletes

Appalachian State University

Supervisors: Tracy Keller, ASU Football Academic Advisor

Fall 2018 – Fall 2019

**Responsibilities:**

Worked at the Student Learning Center to offer academic advising support for football student-athletes. Met with students individually to help develop time management and study skills, connect them with campus resources, and mentor them in advocacy on-campus. Supervised team study halls, compiled regular student grade reports, and completed various data, planning, and scheduling tasks during office hours.

**Student Organizations**

**HDFS Graduate Student Representative and GPSS Senator**

Human Development and Family Science Graduate Student Association (HDFS GSA)

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Fall 2021-Spring 2022

**Responsibilities:**

Served as interim Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) Senator for the HDFS Department in Fall 2021, and voted resolutions being considered. Served as the first Graduate Student Representative for HDFS GSA in Spring 2022. Participated in faculty Graduate Committee Meetings and served as a liaison for communication between the committee and graduate students.

**Disability Alliance at Virginia Tech Member and Treasurer**

Virginia Tech Disability Alliance & Caucus (DAC)

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Fall 2021-Present

**Responsibilities:**

Participate in weekly meetings when able and discuss topics of disability activism relevant to the Virginia Tech campus. Serving as treasurer for academic year 2021-2022.

**Community Outreach**

**Event Moderator**

*InclusiveVT Welcome Keynote Speech with Judith Heumann*

Discussion incorporating both audience and moderator questions for speaker presented to a live audience of about 300 people to facilitate learning about history, systemic barriers, and activism relevant to disabled communities.

Live and recorded virtual discussion presented in Fall, 2022

Discussion with Judith Heumann moderated by James Tillett for Virginia Tech affiliates and the public at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia

**Professional Guest Speaker**

*Affirming Autistic Children in Human Service Work*

Presentation of recorded interview developed for learning how to affirm the neurodivergence of autistic youth in case work, including a brief introduction to the neurodiversity paradigm.

Recorded virtual interview presented in Fall, 2021

Interview of James Tillett presented by Jessica Barner for case worker staff at The Salvation Army of Wake County in Raleigh, North Carolina

**Presenter and Presentation Co-Developer**

*Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth in Foster Care*

Presentation developed for learning how to affirm LGBTQ+ youth in the child welfare system, and understanding suicide and mental health risk in this population.

Adapted for foster parents in Spring, 2021

Presented virtually by James Tillett and Krista Bland for StepStone’s Braley & Thompson Foster Care Agency in Lynchburg, Virginia

**Professional Service**

**Guest Lecturer**

*LGBTQ+ Family Science course at Virginia Tech*

Presented on the intersection of neurodivergence and queerness, introduced the concept of neuroqueer(ing), and answered student questions.

Developed and presented in Spring, 2022

Presented by James Tillett for undergraduate students studying HDFS at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA

**Professional Guest Speaker**

*Social and Cultural Diversity course at Appalachian State University*

Shared personal experiences as a transgender, queer therapist in the field of systemic therapy. Discussed issues pertinent to trans client experiences, including health care access, the heterogeneity of trans communities, and provider knowledge.

Virtual Q&A presented in Fall, 2021

Q&A of James Tillett presented by Dr. Laura Gambrel for Master’s of Marriage and Family Therapy students at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina

**Marriage and Family Therapist Reviewer**

*AAMFT Systemic Ethics Textbook*

Reviewed chapters on developing an international MFT code of ethics, ethics of religion and spirituality in therapy, ethics in supervision and teaching, therapy termination ethics, and the overview of MFT ethics.

Conducted reviews from Spring, 2021 – Summer, 2021

**Media**

Robertson, J. (2022, November 8). Doctoral student takes a new approach to research with

autistic communities. *Virginia Tech News.* <https://liberalarts.vt.edu/news/articles/2022/11/liberalarts-doctoral-student-research.html>

Stewart, R. (2022, September 14). Doctoral student and disability studies professor to moderate

InclusiveVT Welcome event. *Virginia Tech News.* <https://vtx.vt.edu/articles/2022/09/doctoral-student-and-disability-studies-professor-to-moderate-in.html>

**Workshops, Webinars, & Conferences Attended**

**Gender, Bodies, and Technology Conference**

“Gender, Bodies, and Technology: Post-Dobbs Precarity”

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

March 16, 2023 – March 17, 2023

**NCFR 2022 Annual Conference**

“Light and Shadow: Shifting Perspectives and Families”

National Council on Family Relations

November 16, 2022 – November 19, 2022

**Virtual Book Launch Symposium**

“Collaborative-Dialogic Practice Across Contexts and Cultures: Conversations with the Authors”

Therapy that Works Institute

Presented by Harlene Anderson & Diane Gehart

October 15, 2022 & October 22, 2022

**Human Development and Family Science Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Webinar**

“Working with Neurominority Students: An Integrative Approach”

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Presented by Nick Walker, Ph.D.

March 25, 2022

**Family Process 60th Anniversary Conference**

“The Heart of the Matter: Systemic Imperatives to Address Health Disparities and Racism in the Time of COVID”

Family Process Institute

September 23, 2021 – September 26, 2021

**Incorporating Strengths into Effective Autism Assessments Across the Lifespan**

University of Washington Autism Center

Presented by Sara Woods, Ph.D.

October 20, 2020

**Graduate Teaching Assistant Workshop**

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

University faculty and staff presented subtopics on course instruction, campus safety, and ethics

Workshops ongoing from August, 2020 – October, 2020

**Al Greene Appalachian Addictions Institute**

Appalachian State University

Department of Human Development and Psychological Counseling

Local and national faculty and professionals presented subtopics on addiction and mental health

June 3, 2019 – June 7, 2019

**Proficiencies**

**Survey Software:** Qualtrics, QuestionPro

**Coding Software:** MAXQDA, ATLAS.ti

**Statistical Analysis:** Excel, SPSS