

Iris Ryn Olson, MPH

they/them and he/him

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Selected Professional Experience

The University of Pittsburgh

EMBRACE Research Associate

October 2024 – Present

Initiated and manages communications and dissemination efforts for EMBRACE, a research center focused on maternal mortality and morbidity in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. Collaborates with community partners

Key Accomplishments:

- **Initiated and Leads the Communications and Dissemination Working group** in collaboration with community organizations and members for the EMBRACE Center.
- **Manages staff members across components and working groups** to create inclusive and fluid workflows across EMBRACE.
- **Writes grants and funding applications** to federal institutes and foundations to continue work and initiatives of EMBRACE.

Kinky Queeries

Podcast Co-host and Researcher

January 2022 – Present

Co-hosted podcast on various LGBTQIA+, BDSM, and kink discussion topics. Developed content and material for podcast discussions, including in depth research reviews to answer community questions. Created and publishing social media content for Twitter, Fetlife, Instagram, and Tumblr.

Key Accomplishments:

- **Co-created over 30 episodes of original content** readily available on Spotify and Apple Podcasts.
- **Developed strategic marketing tactics** to increase social media engagement and listenership.

The Alternative Sexualities Health Research Alliance (TASHRA)

Research Assistant

June 2023 – March 2025

Research support staff to the Kink and Flourishing study, the first large-scale scientific exploration of flourishing through kink.

Key Accomplishments:

- **Developed recruitment materials and campaign** for the Kink and Flourishing study.
- **Mentored communications team on innovative methodologies** for online research recruitment and bot detection.
- **Supported and co-wrote IRB materials** for Kink and Flourishing study.

The University of Pittsburgh

CONVERGE Center Manager

February 2021 – September 2024

Developed recruitment campaigns and promotional materials for CONVERGE and affiliated research efforts. Collaborated with entities across the University of Pittsburgh to create educational events and special seminars. Informed state and regional policymakers on current research and its impact on state and local health initiatives.

Key Accomplishments:

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- **Built an interdisciplinary grassroots statewide coalition** focused on supporting abortion and reproductive health access across Pennsylvania.
- **Originated newsletter and multiple social media feeds** creating original content focused on reproductive, sexual, and gender health disparities based on CONVERGE faculty member's research findings. This increased content engagement by 1000% on social media and 9100% through the CONVERGE website.
- **Developed a strategic plan and rebranded the research center** to better represent the goals and initiatives of the leadership team as well as the trajectories of CONVERGE moving forward.

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Transgender Health Advisory Group Member

August 2019 – August 2022

Provided input on prioritizing local public health responses to end the HIV epidemic through novel and innovative strategies to reduce new HIV infections. Reduced persistent health disparities among affected populations, notably among transgender identified individuals Expanding peer health navigation services for at risk and HIV+ transgender individuals in all regions of the state.

Key Accomplishments:

- **Developed and helped implement sexual orientation and gender identity (SO/GI) data collection standards** across publicly funded health and social service programs.
- **Promoted transgender cultural competency** among health department staff and Office of HIV/AIDS (OHA)-funded providers through education campaign.

Harbor Health Services

Prevention Specialist

December 2019 – February 2021

Planned, implemented, and coordinated educational outreach and programs focused on food insecurity, healthy relationships, sexual health, and substance use prevention. Programs included a weekly food pantry, nutrition and cooking education, healthy relationships education, community outreach events, and health center based community services. Facilitated community health education curricula for schools, clinical settings, and community-based organizations on topics such as HIV/ AIDS, STIs, birth control methods, healthy relationships, consent, and LGBTQIA+ community topics.

Health Educator

February 2018 – December 2019

Created comprehensive communications and outreach programming regarding nutrition, substance misuse, and healthy relationships. Performed rapid HIV and Hepatitis C testing and counseling at community health centers, partner organizations, and at community events.

Key Accomplishments:

- **Established and led the Sexual And Gender Acceptance (SAGA) committee** to better the experience of employees and patients at health centers in collaboration with Fenway Health Institute and Thundermist Health.
- **Expanded Food Pantry support services** to match the community needs of Southern Boston area through increased amount of food provided and frequency of services.

Academic Public Health Volunteer Corps

Central Communications Volunteer

April 2020 - February 2021

Led and built health equity campaigns in collaboration with community partners and local boards of health. Created informational graphics, images, and videos for local boards of health across Massachusetts on COVID-19, substance misuse prevention, and personal hygiene.

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Boston University School of Public Health

Teaching Assistant

January 2019 – May 2020

Assisted and mentored students in groups and on an individual basis pertaining to class topics in the health communication field. Presented and taught visualization and creation of various media executions.

Queer Alliance Executive Board Member

March 2018 – January 2020

Planned social events for LGBTQIA+ students and allies on the Boston University Medical Campus. Collaborated with other identity and affinity groups at Boston University to organize events and create social support for student minority groups.

Activist Fellow

December 2017 – November 2018

Educated community members on the impacts of The Massachusetts Transgender Anti-Discrimination Veto Referendum and Yes on 3 campaign. Campaigned and led volunteer trainings at phone banks, canvasses, in-person recruitment, and fundraising events.

Additional Relevant Experience:

Director of Publicity and Diversity – New England Leather Alliance (1 year)

Directory of Publicity – Twisting Culture (3 years)

Research Assistant – Boston Children's Hospital (1 year)

Writer – Sexistential Joy (2 years)

Education and Training

PhD, Behavioral and Community Health Sciences – UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH | PITTSBURGH, PA | In Progress

MPH, Health Communication and Promotion – BOSTON UNIVERSITY | BOSTON, MA | 2019

BA, Visual Arts – ANTIOCH COLLEGE | YELLOW SPRINGS, OH | 2017

Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Trainee – MCH Center of Excellence at the University of Pittsburgh (2025-2026)

The New Science of Sexual Fantasies – The Kinsey Institute (2025)

Implementation Science Institute – Penn Implementation Science Center (2025)

The Community-Academic Consortium for Research on Alternative Sexualities (CARAS) Mentorship Program – The Community-Academic Consortium for Research on Alternative Sexualities (2023-2024)

Full Spectrum Doula – Birth Advocacy Doula Trainings (2022)

Abortion Doula – Birth Advocacy Doula Trainings (2022)

Activist Academy Fellow – Fenway Health (2020-2021)

Community Advocate and Leadership Fellowship – Vital Village (2020-2021)

Miller Fellowship – Yellow Springs Arts Council (2014-2015)

Horace Mann Fellowship – Antioch College (2013-2017)

Published Manuscripts

Mendez D, Simhan H, Tukur S, Bartlett S, Haggerty C, Hill A, Oghifobibi O, Salter C, Shirriel J, Tibbs N, Foster L, Adoadji L, **Olson I**, Birru Talabi M. Advancing Maternal Health through The EMBRACE Research Center of Excellence: Foundations, Approach and Protocol. *In Review*. British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

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Olson I, Westlake B. Holes in Kinky Education: The Role of Pornography in Learning About BDSM Sexualities. *Journal of Sex Education*. doi: 10.1080/14681811.2025.2461301

Moseson H, **Olson I**, Foster A, Han L, Harris M, Shuster S, Levandowski B. Approaching the Concepts of Gender and Sex in Family Planning Research. *Contraception*. doi: 10.1016/j.contraception.2024.110708.

Kislovskiy Y, Pino N, Crawford N, Woitas T, Cason S, Konka A, Kimble T, **Olson I**, Villarreal D, Jarlenski M. Pre-exposure and post-exposure prophylaxis access in rural versus urban pharmacies in Georgia and Pennsylvania. *Journal of the American Pharmacists Association*. doi: 10.1016/j.japh.2024.102084.

Ellison J, Pudasainy S, Bellerose M, Quinn D, Borrero S, **Olson I**, Chen Q, Shireman T, Jarlenski M. Contraceptive use among Medicare enrollees with a disability. *Health Affairs*. doi: 10.1377/hlthaff.2023.00286.

Olson, I. Dildo or Dildon't – A Plug for Sex Toy Regulation in the U.S. *The Harvard Kennedy LGBTQ Policy Journal*. July 25, 2021.

Additional Publications

Ratcliff E, **Olson I**, Levy A, Sprott A, Chadwick K, Lehman J, Helmer J, Sunassee, A (2024). Introducing the kink and flourishing study: Help our community-based, volunteer study find its folks! *Association of Counseling Sexology & Sexual Wellness Newsletter*, 5(2), 11-18.

Manuscripts in Review

Olson I, Schorr K, Jarlenski M, Coulter R, Quinn D. The Use of Community Advocacy Educational Toolkits: Explaining 'Explanation of Benefits' to Support Adolescents and Young Adult Health in Pennsylvania. *In Review*. *Health Promotion Practice*.

Casas A, Kiyanda A, Jarlenski M, McClure C, Salter S, Sanders S, Adodoadji Linda, Lama C, **Olson I**, Director H, Mairson E, Hacker K, Sharp S, Lusardi E, Bilfield J, Smalls M, Méndez D. "Listen": Doula As Facilitators to Black Birthing People's Needs in the Context of Medicaid Coverage. *In Review*. *Health Equity*.

Manuscripts in Preparation

Smith A, **Olson I**, Mitchell S, & Quinn D. A Media Analysis of Chronic Illness and Abortion Pre- and Post-Dobbs Decision. *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*. MANUSCRIPT IN PREPARATION.

Olson I, Mairson E, Ellison J, & Jarlenski M. Out of the Closet and Into Our Data: An Analysis of LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Questions in National Health Surveys. MANUSCRIPT IN PREPARATION.

Westlake B, **Olson I**, & Ratcliff S. Exploring Drop and Aftercare Among Kink and BDSM Practitioners. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. MANUSCRIPT IN PREPARATION.

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Olson I, Korkodilos R, Conti J, Katz – Wise S, Gordon A, Ranker L, Xuan Z, & Nelson K. Questioning Queeries: Assessing Youth Understanding Of A Forced-Choice Sexual Orientation Question. Journal of Research on Adolescence. MANUSCRIPT IN PREPARATION.

Olson I, Kusz J, & Westlake B. “I would do anything for love, but I won't do that”: Safeword Use Among Kink and BDSM Practitioners. Journal of Health and Social Behavior. MANUSCRIPT IN PREPARATION.

Olson I, Cummings K, Ratcliff S, & Kislovskiy Y. A Fertile Ground for Study: A Step Towards Understanding Breeding Kinks in the United States. Archives of Sexual Behavior. MANUSCRIPT IN PREPARATION.

Upcoming Presentations

Pan C, Salter C, Bartlett S, Lama C, Clarke K, Méndez D, Simhan H, Birru Talabi M, Buchanich J, Foster L, **Olson I**, Tukur S, Mercado N, Bowden A, Shirriel J, Casas A, Barry B, Watkins T, Buefort A, Olivis M, Walker-Tibbs N, Adodoadji L, Hill A, Haggerty C, & Oghifobibi O. Advancing equitable postpartum care through the EMBRACE Center: Co-developing a community-informed equity-centered model of postpartum care for Black birthing people with community health advocates in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. American Public Health Association 2025 Public Meeting.

Sweet S, **Olson I**, Coulter R, Egan J, Myers J, Shumway M, Tolou-Shams M, Dauria E. Refining an eHealth Enhanced Peer Navigation Intervention to Link Young Adults Surveilled by the US Criminal Legal System to Substance Use and HIV Related Services. European Society for Prevention Research Annual Conference.

Presentations

Olson I, Kusz J, & Westlake B. “I would do anything for love, but I won't do that”: Safeword Use Among Kink and BDSM Practitioners. CARAS Conference: Leather-Kink Research and Clinical Knowledge (C2C)-East 2025. April 18, 2025.

Olson I, Cummings K, Coulter R, & Kislovskiy Y. A Cross-Sectional Study of Contraception Uptake of those with Breeding Kinks in the Era of Dobbs. CARAS Conference: Leather-Kink Research and Clinical Knowledge (C2C)-East 2025. April 17, 2025.

Bienvenu R, King K, **Olson I**, & Fanghanel A. Researching a Kink-Leather Community: Lessons Learned. CARAS Conference: Leather-Kink Research and Clinical Knowledge (C2C)-East 2025. April 17, 2025.

Olson I. Developing Infographics and Social Media Content for Public Health Professionals. Virtual presentation at Boston University's School of Public Health. March 18, 2025.

Olson I, Korkodilos R, Conti J, Katz – Wise S, Gordon A, Ranker L, Xuan Z, & Nelson K. Questioning Queeries: Assessing Youth Understanding of A Forced-Choice Sexual Orientation Question. The Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality. Oral presentation. November 16, 2024.

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Lehman J, Sprott R, Chadwick K, **Olson I**, Randall A, & Ratcliff S. Healing and Flourishing through Kink: Initial Findings from a Community-Based Mixed Methods Study. The Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality. Oral presentation. November 15, 2024.

Olson I. Developing Infographics and Social Media Content for Public Health Professionals. Virtual presentation at Boston University's School of Public Health. October 30, 2024.

Olson I. Kink and BDSM Research Updates. University of Wisconsin Madison. Oral presentation. October 23, 2024.

Medez D, Birru Talabi M, & Simhan H. (Presented by **Olson, I**). Equity in Maternal and Birthing Outcomes and Reproductive Health through Community Engagement (EMBRACE) Center. Implementing a Maternal health & PRegnancy Outcomes Vision for Everyone (IMPROVE) Initiative 5th Anniversary Meeting. Poster presentation. October 15, 2024.

Olson I. The Research Process for A Fertile Ground for Study: The Sexual and Reproductive Health Reality of Those with Breeding Kinks in the Era Post-Dobbs. The Community Academic Consortium for Research on Alternative Sexualities. September 8, 2024.

Olson I, Ratcliff S, Cummings K, & Kislovskiy Y. Give Me Liberty and Leave Me Bred: The Sexual and Reproductive Reality of Breeding Kinks Post-Dobbs. AASECT. Seminar. June 14, 2024.

Lehman J, **Olson I**, & Chadwick K. Kink and Flourishing Study: Healing and Growth Through Kink Involvement. AASECT. Workshop. June 14, 2024.

Olson I, Mairson E, Ellison J, & Jarlenski M. Out of the Closet and Into Our Data: An Analysis of Gender and Sexuality Questions in National Health Surveys. How to Incorporate Sex and Gender as Variables in Your Research (SGRV 2023) at Emory SCORE. Poster presentation. December 13, 2023.

Olson I, Ellison J, & Jarlenski M. Out of the Closet and Into Our Data: An Analysis of Gender and Sexuality Questions in National Health Surveys. The Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality Annual Conference. Poster presentation. November 16, 2023.

Kislovskiy Y, Pino N, Crawford N, Woitas T, Cason S, Konka A, Kimble T, **Olson I**, & Jarlenski M. Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) pharmacy access in Georgia and Pennsylvania counties by rural and EHE designation: A cross-sectional simulated patient caller study. Roundtable session. American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting. Atlanta, GA. November 14, 2023.

Olson I. Creating Infographics for Public Health Professionals. Virtual presentation at Boston University's School of Public Health. October 18, 2023.

Olson I. Rooted and Amplified: Sex Toys. New Voices for Reproductive Justice. Pittsburgh, PA. May 15, 2023.

Schorr K, **Olson I**. Use of Community Advocacy Toolkits: Explaining 'Explanation of Benefits' to Support Adolescents and Young Adults in Pennsylvania. Poster presentation at the 2023 SRA Annual Meeting, San Diego, California. April 20, 2023.

Olson I. Sex Toys: The Science of Sexual Pleasure Devices and Current Policy Implications in the U.S. Virtual presentation at University of Pittsburgh's School of Medicine. March 3, 2023.

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Olson I. Un-gendering Language. Virtual presentation at University of Pittsburgh's CONVERGE Seminar. August 6, 2021.

Olson I. Infographics for Public Health Professionals. Virtual presentation at Boston University's School of Public Health. March 15, 2021.

Olson I. Trans Competent Care: Gender Inclusive Language. Virtual presentation at Harbor Health Services, Boston, Massachusetts. January 18, 2021.

Olson I. Graphic Design Basics for Public Health Professionals. Virtual presentation at Boston University's School of Public Health. October 15, 2020.

Dunn M, **Olson I**, Siegel J, & Godley S. Transgender Rights Ballot Battle: What's at Stake? Dean's Seminar at Boston University's School of Public Health, Boston, Massachusetts. September 12, 2018.

Brandi M & **Olson I.** Polyamory 101. New England Leather Alliance's Fetish Fleamarket, Providence, Rhode Island. February 16, 2018.

Olson I. Impact Play 101. Month of Sex at Antioch College, Yellow Springs, OH. October 22, 2017.

Olson I. Impact Play and Pervtables. Month of Sex at Antioch College, Yellow Springs, OH. November 17, 2016.

Bates J & **Olson I.** Ethical Pornography. Month of Sex at Antioch College, Yellow Springs, OH. May 17, 2016.

Service and Review

Film Review, American Public Health Association 2025 Annual Meeting & Expo

Abstract Review, The Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality 2025 Annual Conference

The Society for the Scientific Study 2025 Undergraduate Student Research Grant Subcommittee

Honors and Awards

Nomination, Early Career Chancellor's Award for Staff, University of Pittsburgh, 2024

Nomination, UPSIDE Award, University of Pittsburgh, 2022

Nomination, UPSIDE Award, University of Pittsburgh, 2021

Jack McGeorge Living Leadership Academic Awardee, Leather Leadership Conference, 2018 - \$2,000

Advancing Public Health Excellence Award, Boston University School of Public Health, 2017 - \$25,000

Miller Fellowship, Antioch College, 2014 - \$7,000

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Horace Mann Fellowship, Antioch College, 2013 – \$132,000

Current Membership

Member, International Academy of Sexuality Research, 2025 – Present

Member, Society of Family Planning, 2024 – Present

Member, The Community-Academic Consortium for Research on Alternative Sexualities (CARAS) Research, 2023 – Present

Member, The Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality, 2023 – Present

Member, American Public Health Association, 2017 – Present

Member, oSTEM, 2017 – Present