

Exponent®
Engineering & Scientific Consulting

Laura Wolter, Ph.D.

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Professional Profile

Dr. Laura Wolter is a Human Factors Scientist at Exponent with more than eight years of experience in behavioral science and human-subjects research. She specializes in risk perception, decision-making, warnings and risk communication, survey research, and health behavior across consumer, healthcare, and safety-related contexts.

Dr. Wolter applies experimental, survey, qualitative, and mixed-methods research to evaluate how people perceive risk, respond to safety and health communications, and make decisions in real-world settings. Her expertise includes research on compliance, social norms, behavioral interventions, and prevention messaging. At Exponent, Dr. Wolter applies these specialties to consulting matters involving warnings and instructions, consumer understanding, product labeling, patient and user behavior, healthcare communications, driver behavior, and medical-device use.

Dr. Wolter earned her Ph.D. and M.S. in Psychology from Lehigh University and her B.A. in Psychology from George Washington University. She has published peer-reviewed research on risk perception, social norms, health behavior, communication, and behavioral interventions, with a particular focus on factors that influence how people perceive risk, interpret information, and make decisions. Dr. Wolter continued her research in positions at the University of Michigan, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Lehigh University. She managed federally funded research on health behavior and translated quantitative and qualitative findings for funders, schools, community partners, and academic audiences. Her expertise includes the design, implementation, and evaluation of longitudinal, intervention, and survey-based research involving diverse youth and adult populations.

Academic Credentials & Professional Honors

Ph.D., Psychology, Lehigh University, 2024

M.S., Psychology, Lehigh University, 2020

B.A., Psychology, George Washington University, 2018

Prior Experience

Data Management Advisor, Project LIVE, University of Michigan School of Social Work, 2026

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Michigan School of Social Work, 2025

Postdoctoral Research Scholar, Department of Educational Psychology, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2024

Project Coordinator and Doctoral Researcher, Psychology, Lehigh University, 2018-2024

Instructor of Record, Introduction to Health Psychology, Lehigh University, 2021, 2023-2024

Instructor of Record, Introduction to Psychology, Lehigh University, 2022

Recitation Instructor, Research Methods and Data Analysis I, Lehigh University, 2023

Recitation Instructor, Social Psychology, Lehigh University, 2022

Professional Affiliations

Human Factors and Ergonomics Society

Research Society on Alcoholism

Society for Personality and Social Psychology

Society of Experimental Social Psychology

Eastern Psychological Association

Psi Chi

Publications

Selected Publications

Napper LE, Khan B, Fox GQ, Wolter LC, McChargue DE. "Exploring college students' compliance during a 60-day alcohol-related ecological momentary assessment using location- and time-based questions: Prospective observational study," JMIR mHealth and uHealth 2026; 14:e81713.

Napper LE, Kenney SR, Wolter LC, Johnson NL, Orchowski LM, Bhuptani PH, Barnett NP. "Assessing the feasibility, acceptability, and initial efficacy of a multiple behavior change intervention addressing alcohol use, sexual risk-taking, and bystander intervention," Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs 2025; 86(2):246-260.

Kenney SR, Napper LE, Johnson NL, Wolter LC, Orchowski LM. "Looking out for you and me: College students'

Napper LE, Kenney SR, Johnson NL, Wolter LC, Orchowski LM. "College students' perceptions of positive and negative drinking-related sexual experiences," Journal of American College Health 2024.

Wolter LC, Napper LE. "(Mis)Perceptions of bystander behaviors and approval: The role of sex-specific perceived norms," Psychology of Violence 2023; 13(4):329-337.

Napper LE, Wolter LC, Ebersole DS. ""Mama Don't Preach": Young adults' perceptions of maternal messages about underage drinking," Journal of Family Communication 2020; 20(2):160-174.

Selected Presentations

Napper LE, Maramag G, Wolter LC, Fox GQ. “We talked and talked”: Parents’ perspectives on alcohol harm-reduction communication. Poster presentation, Research Society on Alcoholism Annual Scientific Meeting, 2023.

Wolter LC, Napper LE, Montes KS, Zamboanga BL, Ford K, Maramag G, Jacobs N. The use of

spontaneous implementation intentions in the context of college drinking. Poster presentation, Society for Personality and Social Psychology Annual Convention, 2023.

Munley Stone M, Napper LE, Neely P, Wolter LC. A picture is worth a thousand words: Using photovoice to assess belonging among first-generation students. Invited presentation, Lehigh Board of Trustees Student Affairs Committee Meeting, 2022.

Wolter LC, Napper LE. Assessing college students' sense of belonging and alcohol use during the COVID-19 pandemic. Poster presentation, Research Society on Alcoholism Annual Scientific Meeting, 2022.

Wolter LC, Napper LE. A personalized normative feedback intervention for bystander behavior: Investigating intervention efficacy and specificity. Poster presentation, Research Society on Alcoholism Annual Scientific Meeting, 2021.

Wolter LC, Napper LE. The role of gender-specific norms for alcohol bystander behaviors. Poster presentation, Research Society on Alcoholism Annual Scientific Meeting, 2020.

Wolter LC, Napper LE. Normative misperceptions related to sexual-assault bystander behaviors in alcohol contexts. Poster presentation, Research Society on Alcoholism Annual Scientific Meeting, 2019.

Napper LE, Wolter LC. A qualitative study of maternal harm-reduction communication. Poster presentation, Research Society on Alcoholism Annual Scientific Meeting, 2019.

Wolter LC, Molloy BK, Stock ML. Impact of non-prescription stimulant user prototypes and outcomes on decisions to use. Poster presentation, Eastern Psychological Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA, 2018.

Molloy BK, Stock ML, Wolter LC, Hagerman C. The impact of nonmedical prescription stimulant prototypes and academic consequences on risk cognitions. Poster presentation, Society of Behavioral Medicine Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, 2018.

Wolter LC, Zaken M, Molloy BK, Stock ML. HIV testing avoidance: The relationship between perceived exclusion and HIV testing interest among African American young adults. Poster presentation, George Washington University Research Days, Washington, DC, 2017.

Project Experience

Warnings, Instructions & Risk Communication

- Evaluated how individuals interpret and respond to warnings, safety information, behavioral recommendations, and risk-related communication using experimental, survey, and qualitative methods.
- Investigated factors influencing risk perception, message comprehension, behavioral intentions, and protective actions across health and safety contexts.
- Synthesized behavioral evidence into reports, presentations, publications, and stakeholder-facing recommendations for technical and nontechnical audiences.

Health, Healthcare & Medical Applications

- Investigated participant compliance during a 60-day mobile health ecological momentary assessment using location- and time-based data collection methods.

- Evaluated the feasibility, acceptability, and initial efficacy of behavioral interventions addressing alcohol use, health-related decision-making, and risk-reduction behaviors.
- Examined how risk perceptions, social norms, and health-related communications influence decision making and protective behaviors.

Survey Research & Human-Subjects Studies

- Developed survey instruments, interview guides, study protocols, recruitment materials, consent procedures, and longitudinal data-collection workflows for federally and university-funded research.
- Managed data collection and evaluation activities across concurrent NIH- and CDC-funded studies, coordinating study implementation, analysis, dissemination, and stakeholder communication.
- Trained and supervised research staff on study procedures, data collection methods, qualitative coding, confidentiality practices, and protocol compliance.

Data Quality, Program Evaluation & Research Operations

- Led research operations and data management activities for a CDC-funded, multi-site school-based violence-prevention evaluation, developing REDCap workflows, participant tracking systems, and quality-control infrastructure.
- Cleaned, linked, and validated multi-source data for more than 5,000 eligible students across multiple sites to support analytic readiness and data integrity.
- Developed reports, dashboards, visualizations, and tracking tools summarizing recruitment, participation, implementation progress, and data quality metrics.

Research Grants

Evaluating Potential Approaches for Enhancing the Efficacy of Normative Feedback, Lehigh University Faculty Research Grant, Co-Principal Investigator, 2022, $6,000.

Exploring Perceived Norms for Bystander Behaviors, Health, Medicine, and Society Research Supplement Grant, Principal Investigator, 2021, $400.

Peer Reviews

Reviewer for Journal of American College Health, Substance Use & Misuse, Psychology of Violence.