

Jennifer A. Kam  
Doctoral Candidate, ABD  
226 Sparks Building  
jak513@psu.edu  
(814) 865-0945

### **Research:**

Jennifer Kam's research focuses on interpersonal health communication involving three main areas: (1) culturally-grounded family- and school-based substance use prevention, (2) informal caregiving across the lifespan, and (3) research methods. More generally, she studies how interpersonal processes (e.g., parent-child communication) may buffer the impact of culturally-based stressors (e.g., discrimination, cultural brokering, parentification) on individuals' psychological and physical health. She has manuscripts accepted for publication at *Prevention Science*, *Health Communication*, *Western Journal of Communication*, and *Journal of Drug Education*. She also has several book chapters published or in press.

### **Grant Experience:**

Jennifer is a research assistant on a \$4,149,418 NIDA-funded grant (R01 DA005629; Drug Resistance Strategies; Michael Hecht: PI) and a pre-doctoral fellow with the Prevention and Methodology Centers at Penn State, a two-year training grant (T32 DA017629; Mark Greenburg: PI) funded by NIDA.

### **Teaching Experience:**

In addition to Jennifer's research assistantship and training grant fellowship, she currently teaches CAS 271: Intercultural Communication. Her past teaching experiences at Penn State include CAS 203: Interpersonal Communication and CAS 100A: Effective Speech. In her Master's program at San Diego State, she taught COMM 103: Oral Communication and she has been a teaching assistant for a number of classes, such as COMM 371: Intercultural Communication, COMM 408: Mass Communication, and COMM 471: Communication among U.S. Cultures.

### **Dissertation Research:**

For her dissertation, she is using role theory and general strain theory as frameworks to test cultural brokering's indirect effects on Mexican-heritage youth's substance use and other risky behaviors through parentification and acculturation stress (i.e., strain). Cultural brokering occurs when family members, often children, interpret and serve as intermediaries for other family members who have difficulty interacting in the mainstream language or culture. The first study investigates whether parent-child closeness works as a protective factor to decrease the likelihood that these youth will engage in substance use and other risky behaviors to manage their strain. With longitudinal data, she will use structural equation modeling to test this model. The second study uses latent growth curve modeling to evaluate a culturally-grounded, school-based substance use prevention program's effects on trajectories of cultural brokering in

association with substance use trajectories. Finally, the third study involves latent profile analysis to identify subgroups of Mexican-heritage youth based on their responses to parent-child communication, parent-child closeness, and parental monitoring to determine whether these subgroups differ in cultural brokering and substance use experiences.

**Education:**

Ph.D., *The Pennsylvania State University*, Expected Graduation: August, 2009 (Communication)

M.A., *San Diego State University*, 2004 (Communication)

B.A., *University of California, Davis*, 2002 (Double Major: Communication and English)