

USC INSTITUTE FOR ADDICTION SCIENCE SPEAKER SERIES



“Straight Up with a Twist: Alcohol Harm Reduction as a Public Health Priority”

KATIE WITKIEWITZ, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology, University of New Mexico

**Friday, 04.19.19 | 1:00-2:30 pm | MRF Hamovitch
Montgomery Ross Fisher Building – 669 W 34th Street – University Park Campus**

Dr. Katie Witkiewitz is a Regents’ Professor of Psychology at the University of New Mexico with a joint appointment at the Center on Alcoholism, Substance Abuse, and Addictions. The underlying theme of her research is the development of empirically-based models of addiction, with an emphasis on applying advanced quantitative research methods to better understand changes in addictive behavior over time. Dr. Witkiewitz is also a licensed clinical psychologist and has worked extensively on the development of a theoretical model of biopsychosocial influences on alcohol and drug relapse. She has conducted numerous empirical studies on the prediction of alcohol and drug relapse following treatment for substance use disorders, mechanisms of successful alcohol treatment outcomes, as well as the development of interventions to treat addiction. Her research has been supported by grants from the National Institute on Mental Health, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism and the National Cancer Institute, totaling over \$20 million in research funding since 2004.

Alcohol use is highly prevalent in society and, yet, only a minority of individuals develop problems with alcohol. Of those who develop problems with alcohol it is commonly believed that abstinence is the only option for successful functioning, however most people who develop problems with alcohol are not interested in abstaining from alcohol. The focus on abstinence as the only available option has created a treatment gap, whereby the majority of individuals with alcohol use disorder never receive treatment. The current talk will provide data on the prevalence of alcohol use disorder, the possibility of drinking reduction as a treatment goal, the sustainability of reductions in drinking up to 3 years following treatment, and discuss alternative treatment options for drinking reduction.

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