Eating Disorders & Obesity Programs

Lisa J. Merlo, PhD
Division Chief,
Undergraduate Education
Director, Eating Disorders Research
Assistant Professor
Licensed Clinical Psychologist

Lisa J. Merlo, PhD is an Assistant Professor at the University of Florida College of Medicine Department of Psychiatry, and is the Chief of Undergraduate Education. Dr. Merlo graduated from Wayne State University with a Master of Arts in Psychology and a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology. She completed her Internship and Postdoctoral Fellowship in Clinical Child/Pediatric Psychology at the University of Florida, and has completed a second Postdoctoral Fellowship in Substance Abuse Epidemiology and Prevention at Washington University.

Dr. Merlo is actively involved with the Washington University Epidemiology and Prevention Research Group training and research programs. As the Division Chief for Undergraduate Education in the Department of Psychiatry at UF and the Director of Eating Disorders Research, her work focuses primarily on psychosocial factors related to compulsive and addictive behaviors. The scope of her studies includes obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), eating disorders, substance abuse/dependence, and behavioral addictions (e.g., food, sex, technology). Dr. Merlo is particularly interested in resiliency among individuals who display risk factors for these disorders. Much of her research relates to prevention, early identification, education, and psychological intervention.

Clinically, Dr. Merlo specializes in cognitive-behavioral therapy and motivational interviewing treatments, particularly with children and adolescents. Her clinical research is based in these theories, and examines outcome for patients receiving psychological treatments. Such clinical research has helped define what therapy works and for whom.

Dr. Merlo also implements public health interventions to improve public knowledge regarding mental health issues. She has worked on campus to raise awareness of eating disorders and been featured as an expert in eating disorders public service announcements.

Dr. Merlo is extremely involved in the education of future healthcare professionals. She directs the very highly regarded and rated UF undergraduate course “Diseases of Eating” and serves as research mentor to UF students considering academic careers.

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From Discovery To Recovery5

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