

Jennifer M. First, MSW, PhD
College of Social Work
University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Henson Hall
1618 Cumberland Ave
Knoxville, TN 37996
Email: jfirst@utk.edu

Education

- PhD (2019), University of Missouri, School of Social Work, Columbia Missouri
- MSW (2012), University of Missouri, School of Social Work, Columbia, Missouri

Research Interests

- Mental health impacts of disasters, community crisis, and environmental challenges
- Social vulnerabilities and disparities during disaster
- Individual and community resilience
- Media and communication in the disaster/crisis context

Teaching Interests

- Community trauma and resilience
- Creating social responses to a changing environment
- Macro social work
- Research methods

Academic Positions

2020 - present	Assistant Professor, College of Social Work, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee
2019 - 2020	Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, University of Maine System, Portland, Maine
2019 - present	External Associate, Climate Change Institute, University of Maine, Orono, Maine
2019 - present	Faculty Fellow, Disaster and Community Crisis Center, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri

Peer Reviewed Journal Articles

17. **First, J**, Bonifay, W, Houston, JB (accepted). Gender Differences in Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms After a Disaster: A Differential Item Functioning Analysis of the Impact of Event Scale-Revised (IES-R). *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research*.
16. **First, J.**, Yu, M., Houston, J.B. (2020). Development and Validation of the Disaster Adaptation and Resilience Scale: A Measure to Assess Individual Disaster Resilience. *Disasters*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/disa.12452>.
15. **First, J**, Danforth, L., Frisby, C. M., Warner, B.R., Ferguson, M. W., & Houston, JB (in press). Posttraumatic Stress Related to the Killing of Michael Brown and Resulting Civil Unrest in Ferguson, Missouri: Roles of Protest Engagement, Media Use, Race, and Resilience. *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research*.
14. Houston, JB, **First, J**, Danforth, L (2018). Student Coping with the Effects of Disaster Media Coverage: A Qualitative Study of School Staff Perceptions. *School Mental Health*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-018-9295-y>.
13. Houston, JB, Spialek, M, **First, J** (2018). Disaster Media Effects: A Systematic Review and Synthesis Based on the Differential Susceptibility to Media Effects Model. *Journal of Communication*. DOI:10.1093/joc/jqy023.
12. **First, J**, Check-Zamora, N, Teit, M, Maurer-Batjer, A, First, NL (2018). Youth perceptions of stress and coping when transitioning to adulthood with autism: A photovoice study. *Qualitative Social Work*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325018757078>
11. **First, J**, First, NL, Stevens, J, Mieseler, VL, Houston, JB (2017). Post-traumatic growth 2.5 years after the 2011 Joplin, Missouri tornado. *Journal of Family Social Work*. DOI: 10.1080/10522158.2017.1402529.
10. Houston, JB, Spialek, ML, **First, J**, Stevens, J, First, NL (2017). Individual perceptions of community resilience following the 2011 Joplin tornado. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*. DOI: 10.1111/1468-5973.12171.
9. **First, J**, First, NL, Houston, JB. (2017). Intimate partner violence and disasters: A framework for empowering women experiencing violence in disaster settings. *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*. DOI: 10.1177/0886109917706338.
8. Anderson, KA, Danforth, L, **First, J** (2017). Nonviolent Adult Sons of Abused Women: Ending the Cycle of Violence. *International Journal of Social Work and Human Services Practice*, 5, 105-117. DOI: 10.13189/ijrh.2017.050303.
7. **First, J**, First NL, Houston, JB (2017). Resilience and Coping Intervention (RCI): A group intervention to foster college student resilience. *Social Work with Groups*. DOI:

10.1080/01609513.2016.1272032.

6. Houston, J.B., **First, J.**, Spialek, M.L., Sorenson, M.E., Mills-Sandoval, T., Lockett, M., First, N.L., Nitiéma, P., Allen, S.F., & Pfefferbaum, B. (2017). Randomized controlled trial of the resilience and coping intervention (RCI) with undergraduate university students. *Journal of American College Health*, 65, 1-9. DOI:10.1080/07448481.2016.1227826.
5. Houston, JB, **First, J.**, Spialek, M, Sorenson, M, Koch, M. (2016). Public disaster communication and child and family disaster mental health: A review of theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence. *Current Psychiatry Reports*, 18(6) DOI: 10.1007/s11920-016-0690-5.
4. **First, J.**, Cheak-Zamora, NC, and Teti, M. (2016). A qualitative study of stress and coping when transitioning to adulthood with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Family Social Work*, 19(3):220-236. DOI:10.1080/10522158.2016.1185074.
3. Houston JB, Spialek ML, Stevens J, **First J.**, Mieseler VL, Pfefferbaum B. (2015). 2011 Joplin, Missouri tornado experience, mental health reactions, and service utilization: Cross-sectional assessments at approximately 6 months and 2.5 years post-event. *PLOS Currents Disasters*, 26(1). DOI:10.1371/currents.dis.18ca227647291525ce3415bec1406aa5.
2. Houston, J.B., Spialek, M.L., Cox, J., Greenwood, M., & **First, J.** (2015). The centrality of media and communication in fostering community resilience: A framework for assessment and intervention. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 59(2), 270-283. DOI: 10.1177/0002764214548563.
1. Cheak-Zamora, NC, Teti, M, **First, J.** (2015). “Transitions are scary for our kids, and they're scary for us”: Family member and youth perspectives on the challenges of transitioning to adulthood with autism. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*. DOI:10.1111/jar.1215

Manuscripts in Process

First J. & Houston, JB (in process). Posttraumatic stress and depression following Hurricane Harvey: Roles of disaster exposure, gender, intimate partner violence, and resilience.

First, J., Yu, M., Houston, JB (analysis). The mediating role of disaster adaptation and resilience on disaster stress and depression

First, J., Yu, M., Houston, JB (in process). Unmet needs reported by disaster survivors: Analysis of open-ended responses following the EF-5 tornado in Joplin Missouri.

Intervention Manuals

First, J., Mills-Sandoval, T., Czapinski, H., First, N. L., Houston, J.B. (2016). *Disaster media intervention: Helping students cope with disaster media coverage—a guide for teachers and school staff*. Columbia: Disaster and Community Crisis Center at the University of Missouri. Available at <http://tdc.missouri.edu>

First, J., Mills-Sandoval, T., First, N.L., Houston, J.B. (2016). *Picturing Resilience Intervention: Using photovoice for youth resilience*. Columbia: Disaster and Community Crisis Center at the University of Missouri. Available at <http://tdc.missouri.edu>

Grant Funding

- 2019 – 21 **Co-Investigator**, University of Maine System, Pillar Grant. *Homelessness in Portland, ME: Integrating Service Learning, Social Policy Analysis, and Research in Social Work from A Social Justice Perspective*. Amount: \$25,000
- 2018 - 19 **Co-Investigator**, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. *Facilitating community stakeholder groups surrounding the opioid crisis*. Amount: \$14,270
- 2018 -19 **Co-Investigator**, University of Missouri, Patient Centered Outcomes Research Grant. *Assessing and Promoting Health-Related Independence in Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder*. Amount: \$5,000
- 2017 - 18 **Co-Investigator**, Boone County Children Services Grant and the Boys and Girls Club of Columbia, Missouri. *Picturing Resilience Intervention*. Amount: \$20,000
- 2016 -17 **Co-Investigator**, Boone County Children Services Grant and the Boys and Girls Club of Columbia, Missouri. *Picturing Resilience Intervention*. Amount: \$20,000
- 2012 -16 **Program Manager**, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. *Disaster and Community Crisis Center*. Amount: \$2,400,000

Awards and Scholarships

- 2018 **Outstanding Ph.D. Student Award**, University of Missouri, School of Social Work Alumni Organization
- 2016 -18 **Graduate Student Conference Travel Scholarships**, University of Missouri, School of Social Work, Columbia, MO. Fall 2016, Spring, 2017, Fall, 2017, \$1500, total awarded

2016 **Graduate Teaching Scholarship**, University of Missouri, School of Social Work, Columbia, MO. Spring, 2016, \$4,000, awarded

Peer Reviewed Presentations

First, J., Yu, M., Houston, J.B. (2020). Development and Validation of the Disaster Adaptation and Resilience Scale. Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research, Washington, D.C.

Danforth., L., Anderson, K., Miller, J., **First, J.**, Hairston, T. (2020). Closeness, Commitment, Investment: African-American Males' Perceptions of their K-12 Teachers. Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research, Washington, D.C.

First, J. & Danforth, L., (2019). Examining Gender Differences in Post-traumatic Stress Symptoms after a Major Disaster. Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting, Denver, Colorado.

First, J., Danforth, L., Houston, J.B. (2019). Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms Following the 2014 Events in Ferguson, Missouri: A Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Analysis. Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research, San Francisco, California.

First, J., Bonifay, W., Houston, J.B. (2019). Screening for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder after a Major Disaster: A Differential Item Functioning (DIF) Analysis of the Impact of Event Scale-Revised (IES-R). Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research, San Francisco, California.

First, J & Danforth, L (2018). Identifying disaster-related needs following the 2011 Joplin, Missouri tornado. Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting, Orlando, Florida.

Danforth, L & **First, J** (2018). Individual and Social Network Correlates of Racial "Colorblindness" among Social Work Students. Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting, Orlando, Florida.

First, J, Houston, JB, First, NL (2018). Post-Traumatic Growth 2.5 Years after the 2011 Joplin, Missouri Tornado. Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research, Washington D.C.

Pelts, M, Freese, R, Danforth, L, **First, J** (2018). Lessons Learned in Social Work Intervention Research with Diverse and Marginalized Populations: A Discussion about Planning, Theory, Adaptability, and Dissemination. Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research, Washington D.C.

- First, J, Yu, M, Carnahan, M, Houston, JB (2018).** Disaster-Related Needs Reported at 6 Months and 2.5 Years after the 2011 Joplin, Missouri Tornado. Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research, Washington D.C.
- Houston, JB, **First, J, Danforth, L (2017).** Effects of Disaster Media Coverage on Students: School Staff Perceptions of Student Reactions and Communicative Coping. National Communication Association Annual Convention, Dallas, TX.
- Houston, JB, Thorson, E, Frisby, C, Galarza, R, **First, J (2017).** Protest Communication Ecology and Community Racial Crisis: The Case of the Michael Brown Shooting Death and Subsequent Civil Unrest. Annual Conference of the International Communication Association, San Diego, CA.
- First, J, Cheak-Zamora, N. & Maurer-Batjer, A, Teti, M. (2017)** Using Photovoice to Identify Factors That Support Resilience Among Youth Living with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research, New Orleans, LA.
- First, J (2017)** “Am I Not Human?”: Using Photovoice to Examine Homeless Women's Experiences of Coping with Social Stigma. Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research, New Orleans, LA.
- Thompson, E., Connors, K., **First, J., & Dunn, J. (2016)** “No Justice, No Peace”: Supporting communities to become sustainably trauma informed and resilient. National Child Traumatic Stress Network Annual Conference, Washington, D.C.
- First, J. (2016)** Picturing Resilience: Using Photovoice to Promote Youth Resilience. National Child Traumatic Stress Network Conference, Washington, D.C.
- First, J, Houston, B., & Danforth, L. (2016)** Teacher and School Staff Perspectives on the Effects of Disaster Media Coverage on Students. Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research, Washington, D.C.
- First, J. & Cheak-Zamora, N. (2016)** “Becoming an Adult Is a Big Step for Me”: Youth and Caregiver Perspectives on Coping with the Challenges of Transitioning to Adulthood with Autism. Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research, Washington, D.C.
- Anderson, K., Danforth, L., & **First, J. (2016)** Nonviolent Adult Sons of Abused Mothers: Ending the Cycle of Violence. Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research, Washington, D.C.
- First, J. (2015).** Enhancing Resilience in Children and Adolescents using the Resilience and Coping Intervention (RCI). Annual Pathways to Resilience III Conference, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Anderson, K., King, L., & **First, J.** (2015) Nonviolent Adult Sons of Abused Mothers: Ending the Cycle of Violence. Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting, Denver, CO.

Houston, J.B., Spialek, M.L., Cox, J., Greenwood, M., & **First, J.** (2014) Community resilience: A public relations and strategic communication approach to community well-being in the face of crisis. Annual Convention of the National Communication Association, Chicago, IL.

Cheak-Zamora, N.C., Teti, M. & **First, J.** (2012) “Transitions are scary for our kids and they’re scary for us”: Family member and youth perspectives on the challenges of transitioning to adulthood with autism. American Public Health Association. San Francisco, CA.

Invited Presentations and Workshops

First, J. (2019). Responding to the Mental Health Impacts of Climate Change and Disasters. Climate Change Institute, University of Maine, Orono, ME.

Houston, J.B. & **First, J.** (2015). School Disasters and Mental Health: Reactions and Resources. Safe Schools and Colleges Conference, Missouri School Board Association, Osage Beach, MO.

Houston, J.B. & **First, J.** (2014) Resilience and Coping Intervention (RCI), Best Practices Booths at the Children and Youth in Disasters Summit: Shaping the Future of Missouri, Columbia, MO.

First, J. & Houston, J.B. (2014). Effects of Media Coverage of Disasters on Children and Youth. Presentation at the Missouri Department of Mental Health’s Spring Training Institute, Osage Beach, MO.

First, J. (2014) Preparing and Responding to Disasters: Helping Students and Families Cope with Traumatic Events presentation for Columbia Public Schools, Early Childhood Special Education Department, Columbia, MO.

Houston, J.B., Perreault, M., Spialek, M., Czapinski, H., **First, J.** & Seboldt, B. (2014) Community and Youth Resilience: Communication Perspectives and Intervention Department of Communication Spring Colloquium Series, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO.

First, J. & Williams, S. (2014) Disaster Mental Health: An Introduction, Continuing Education Workshop at the National Social Workers Association (NASW), Kansas City and St. Louis, MO.

First, J. (2013) Domestic Violence and Natural Disasters. Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Annual Conference, Columbia, MO.

Media and Press Coverage

Morcom, Jake (2019). *Why Climate Change is a Mental Health Crisis*. Think: Sustainability: <https://player.whooshkaa.com/episode?id=307483>

Suarez, Cyndi (2018). *As the World Heats Up, It Becomes More Violent for Women*. Nonprofit Quarterly: <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/as-the-world-heats-up-it-becomes-more-violent-for-women/>

Kuz, Martin (2018). *After the hurricane, the storm within*. San Antonio Express News: <https://www.expressnews.com/news/local/article/After-the-hurricane-the-storm-within-12813259.php>

Moran, Greta (2018). *What does the Violence Against Women Act Have to do with Climate Change?* Grist: <https://grist.org/article/what-does-the-violence-against-women-act-have-to-do-with-climate-change/>

Levin, Koby (2018). *Study: Many Survivors of Joplin Tornado Experience growth alongside stress*. Joplin Globe: https://www.joplinglobe.com/news/local_news/study-many-survivors-of-joplin-tornado-experienced-growth-alongside-stress/article_1fb1ade4-5b68-5602-97ac-ac0b07bf8df4.html

Berland, Christopher (2018). *Post-Traumatic Growth and Stress can Coexist*. Psychology Today: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-athletes-way/201801/post-traumatic-growth-and-post-traumatic-stress-can-coexist>

Jones, Erica. (2018). *Media coverage of disasters can have lasting effects on children's mental health*. MU News: <https://munews.missouri.edu/news-releases/2018/1205-media-coverage-of-disasters-can-have-lasting-effects-on-childrens-mental-health/>

Ladd, Aaron. (2017). *MU researchers raise awareness for domestic violence following disasters*. KOMU news: <https://www.komu.com/news/mu-researchers-raise-awareness-for-domestic-violence-following-disaster>

Houston, J.B., First, J. (2017). *The Mental Health Impacts of Disasters like Michael, Irma, and Maria*. Salon: https://www.salon.com/2017/09/15/the-mental-health-impact-of-major-disasters-like-harvey-and-irma_partner/

First, J. (2017). *Protecting women and girls from violence in disasters*. UNISDR Prevention Web, Expertise Services: <https://www.preventionweb.net/experts/oped/view/56044>

Rice, Sheena (2017). *Why Disaster Recovery Shouldn't Overlook Domestic Violence*. Futurity: <https://www.futurity.org/domestic-violence-natural-disasters-1532152-2/>

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Assistant Professor

- Fall, 2020 *Macro Social Work*, MSW course, College of Social Work, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
- Spring, 2020 *Advanced Research II*, MSW online course, School of Social Work, University of Maine System
- Advanced Research III*, MSW course, School of Social Work, University of Maine System
- Fall, 2019 *Advanced Research II*, MSW course, School of Social Work, University of Maine System
- Introduction to Social Work*, BSW course, School of Social Work, University of Maine System

Instructor

- Fall 2016 *Exploration in Social and Economic Justice*, writing intensive BSW course, School of Social Work, University of Missouri
- Fall 2015 *Resilience and Solution-Focused Practice*, advanced practice MSW course, School of Social Work, University of Missouri
- Fall 2014 *Social Policy and Social Justice*, writing intensive course, Human Services Department, Columbia College

Field Instructor

- 2014- 2016 *Graduate Field Social Work Practicum II*, School of Social Work, University of Missouri, supervised MSW students

Guest Lecturer

- 2014-17 *Covering Traumatic Events*, Journalism Department, University of Missouri
- 2016 *Death, Grief, and Loss*, School of Social Work, University of Missouri, Fall, 2016

2016 *Narratives in and about Relationships*, Department of Communication, University of Missouri, Fall 2013, Summer 2016

2013 *Crisis Communication*, Department of Communication, University of Missouri, Spring 2013

Professional Work Experience

2013 - 2017 **Mental Health Program Manager**
Disaster and Community Crisis Center, Columbia, Missouri
Developed, implemented, and evaluated mental health resources and interventions; administered group intervention activities (e.g., training, consultation, implementation, evaluation, and product development), and supervised staff and students. Managed research protocols and databases, assisted in the design and implementation of experimental and survey research projects, conducted data analysis, and collaborated with principle investigator on writing manuscripts and grant applications

2012 - 2013 **Case Manager**
Women's Crisis Shelter, Columbia, Missouri
Provided crisis counseling to women experiencing domestic violence and sexual assault; provided information on legal services related to assisting in protection orders, victim's compensation, and court appearances; assisted in training and coordinating volunteers; conducted shelter intakes and assessments.

Academic Service

2019- 2020 **MSW Thesis Chair**, Emily Callahan, MSW, Social Work, University of Maine, Portland

2019 - 2020 **Member**, Research Committee, School of Social Work, University of Maine Portland

2019 - 2020 **Member**, Diversity Committee, School of Social Work, University of Maine Portland

2017 **Student Representative**, Search Committee for Director of School of Social Work, University of Missouri, Columbia

2016 – 2018 **Doctoral Student Representative**, Doctoral Program Committee, School of Social Work, University of Missouri, Columbia

Review Service

Editorial Board Member:

- *Traumatology*

Ad hoc reviewer:

- *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*
- *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research*
- *Journal of Applied Communication*
- *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters*
- *Journal of Family Social Work*
- *PLOS One Currents*
- *Violence Against Women*

Community Service

2014 - 2018 **Member**, Trauma Round Table, Department of Mental Health, State of Missouri

2015 – 2018 **Co-Chair**, Pediatric Disaster Behavioral Health Workgroup, Department of Health, State of Missouri Health and Human Services

Professional Memberships

2015 – current Council on Social Work Education
2015 – current Society for Social Work and Research

Data Analysis Training

2018 Structural Equation Modeling, *Software: R*
2018 Psychometrics and Scale Development, *Software: R*
2017 Item Response Theory, *Software: R*
2017 Multivariate Analysis, *Software: R*
2016 Qualitative Analysis, *Software: nVivo*