

Kristen Pleil, Ph.D.



Dr. Kristen Pleil is an Assistant Professor of Pharmacology at Weill Cornell Medicine, Cornell University in New York, NY. She earned her Ph.D. from Duke University studying how sex hormones during development and in adulthood alter the organization of and plasticity of neural circuits controlling cognitive behaviors. Kristen did her postdoctoral training in the lab of Thomas Kash at UNC School of Medicine, examining how chronic exposure to stress and alcohol causes persistent adaptations in neuropeptide modulation of circuits that regulate alcohol drinking and anxiety behaviors.

Dr. Pleil's lab is currently focused on understanding mechanisms of sex differences in the prevalence and comorbid expression of neuropsychiatric diseases, such as addiction and mood disorders. Her lab identifies neural circuits that control emotion- and reward-related behaviors and examines how sex-specific hormone signaling regulates neuropeptide function within these circuits. Further, the Pleil lab investigates how plasticity in these sex-dependent mechanisms contributes to the expression of maladaptive behaviors leading to disease states. Kristen is a member of several professional societies including the Research Society on Alcoholism, the Organization for the Study of Sex Differences, and the American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics.