

Deena Walker, Ph.D.



Dr. Walker is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Behavioral Neuroscience at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU). She received her Ph.D. from The University of Texas at Austin under the mentorship of Dr. Andrea Gore where she focused on how gestational exposure to environmental contaminants affects sex-specific hypothalamic gene expression throughout development and alters the timing of reproductive transitions - both puberty and reproductive senescence. As a postdoc, Dr. Walker built on her expertise on adolescent development to study how adolescent experience reprograms the transcriptome and sex-specific anxiety- and reward-associated behaviors in adulthood. As an assistant professor, Dr. Walker has combined her interests in neuroendocrinology, molecular biology, adolescent development and sex-specific behavioral reprogramming to develop a research program that is focused on understanding the cellular and molecular mechanisms through which sex differences in addiction develop, emerge, and are maintained in adulthood. Her laboratory at OHSU is particularly interested in how hormones act through their cognate receptors to influence sex differences in transcription and addiction vulnerability both in adolescence and adulthood.