



Debra Safer

Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences (General Psychiatry and Psychology-Adult)

CLINICAL OFFICE (PRIMARY)

- **Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences**

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Bio

BIO

Dr. Debra L. Safer specializes in treating eating and weight disorders. More recently, she has broadened her clinical focus by leveraging her understanding of human behavior to help address the mental health impacts of climate change. She obtained her MD from U.C. San Francisco and completed her residency as well as a post-doctoral fellowship in eating disorder intervention research within the Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University. In addition, she obtained a master's degree from U.C. Berkeley's School of Public Health focused on the intersection of fiction narratives & medicine. She has practiced psychiatry for more than 20 years. Dr. Safer is the Co-Director of the Stanford Adult Eating and Weight Disorders Program. Her research and clinical work in eating disorders and obesity focus on improving patient outcomes by developing and conducting clinical intervention trials to establish evidence-based treatments. She has co-authored multiple peer-reviewed articles, books, and book chapters, and presented her work both nationally and internationally. In addition to her research on clinical interventions and medication trials for patients with eating disorders, other research interests include designing interventions for post-bariatric surgery patients, the use of virtual reality in treating eating disorders, and evaluating the outcomes of evidence-based treatments for eating disorders in "real world" settings. More broadly, her research, writing, and community involvement focus on addressing both the physical and mental health impacts of climate change, with a particular emphasis on the use of serial drama methodologies, or prosocial entertainment-education programs, based on the theoretical models of self-efficacy and social modeling developed by the renowned (and recently deceased) Stanford social psychologist Albert Bandura.

CLINICAL FOCUS

- Psychiatry

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Professor - University Medical Line, Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
- Member, Bio-X
- Member, Maternal & Child Health Research Institute (MCHRI)
- Member, Wu Tsai Neurosciences Institute

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- Fellowship: Stanford University Medical Center (1999) CA
- Residency: Stanford University Medical Center (1998) CA
- Board Certification: Psychiatry, American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (2000)
- Internship: Stanford University Medical Center (1995) CA
- Medical Education: UCSF Medical Center (1994) CA
- Graduate Education, UC Berkeley , MS in Health Sciences from School of Public Health. Focus on Medicine & Literature (1992)

Research & Scholarship

CURRENT RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY INTERESTS

Primary research interests include the nature and treatment of eating disorders

(particularly bulimia nervosa and binge eating disorder), the development and treatment of obesity, and the development and treatment of problematic eating patterns in patients following bariatric surgery.

CLINICAL TRIALS

- Adding Guided Self-Help Group Therapy to the Alli Weight Loss Program in Treating Binge Eating Disorder, Not Recruiting
- Comparing Two Group Therapy Treatments for Binge Eating Disorder, Not Recruiting
- FDA Approved Medication to Reduce Binge Eating and/or Purging, Not Recruiting
- Parent-Based Intervention Following a Weight Loss Surgery, Not Recruiting

Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- **Do early indicators of euthyroid sick syndrome predict later post-bariatric weight loss? Exploring a novel hypothesis** *MEDICAL HYPOTHESES*
Safer, D. L., Fowler, N., Adler, S., Rowsemitt, C. N., Najarian, T.
2024; 183
- **A Pilot Multisensory Approach for Emotional Eating: Pivoting from Virtual Reality to a 2-D Telemedicine Intervention during the COVID-19 Pandemic.** *Journal of clinical medicine*
Malighetti, C., Schnitzer, C. K., YorkWilliams, S. L., Bernardelli, L., Runfola, C. D., Riva, G., Safer, D. L.
2023; 12 (23)
- **Correction: Treating binge eating and food addiction symptoms with low-carbohydrate Ketogenic diets: a case series.** *Journal of eating disorders*
Carmen, M., Safer, D. L., Saslow, L. R., Kalayjian, T., Mason, A. E., Westman, E. C., Sethi, S.
2023; 11 (1): 171
- **Coping with eco-anxiety: An interdisciplinary perspective for collective learning and strategic communication** *The Journal of Climate Change and Health*
Wang, H., Safer, D. L., Cosentino, M., Cooper, R., Van Susteren, L., Coren, E., Nosek, G., Lertzmann, R., Sutton, S.
2023
- **Pilot study of responsive nucleus accumbens deep brain stimulation for loss-of-control eating.** *Nature medicine*
Shivacharan, R. S., Rolle, C. E., Barbosa, D. A., Cunningham, T. N., Feng, A., Johnson, N. D., Safer, D. L., Bohon, C., Keller, C., Buch, V. P., Parker, J. J., Azagury, D. E., Tass, et al
2022
- **Aberrant impulse control circuitry in obesity.** *Molecular psychiatry*
Barbosa, D. A., Kuijper, F. M., Duda, J., Wang, A. R., Cartmell, S. C., Saluja, S., Cunningham, T., Shivacharan, R. S., Bhati, M. T., Safer, D. L., Lock, J. D., Malenka, R. C., de Oliveira-Souza, et al
2022

- **Can responsive deep brain stimulation be a cost-effective treatment for severe obesity?** *Obesity (Silver Spring, Md.)*
Mahajan, U. V., Ojukwu, D. I., Azagury, D. E., Safer, D. L., Cunningham, T., Halpern, C. H.
1800; 30 (2): 338-346
- **Rescripting emotional eating with virtual reality: a case study** *ANNUAL REVIEW OF CYBERTHERAPY AND TELEMEDICINE*
Malighetti, C., Schnitzer, C., Potter, G., Nameth, K., Brown, T., Vogel, E., Riva, G., Runfola, C., Safer, D.
2021; 19: 117-121
- **Translating Virtual Reality Cue Exposure Therapy for Binge Eating into a Real-World Setting: An Uncontrolled Pilot Study** *JOURNAL OF CLINICAL MEDICINE*
Nameth, K., Brown, T., Bullock, K., Adler, S., Riva, G., Safer, D., Runfola, C.
2021; 10 (7)
- **Opioid use among patients with pain syndromes commonly seeking surgical consultation: A retrospective cohort.** *Annals of medicine and surgery (2012)*
Kin, C., Chou, L., Safer, D. L., Morris, A., Ding, Q., Trickey, A., Girod, S.
2021; 69: 102704
- **Bringing Virtual Reality From Clinical Trials to Clinical Practice for the Treatment of Eating Disorders: An Example Using Virtual Reality Cue Exposure Therapy.** *Journal of medical Internet research*
Brown, T., Nauman Vogel, E., Adler, S., Bohon, C., Bullock, K., Nameth, K., Riva, G., Safer, D. L., Runfola, C. D.
2020; 22 (4): e16386
- **The offspring of parents undergoing a weight loss surgery: asystematicreview.** *Surgery for obesity and related diseases : official journal of the American Society for Bariatric Surgery*
Dickens, C. E., Safer, D. L., Runfola, C. D., Gibbs, E. L., Welch, H., Sadeh-Sharvit, S.
2020
- **Solutions Stories: An Innovative Strategy for Managing Negative Physical and Mental Health Impacts from Extreme Weather Events** *Climate Change, Hazards and Adaptation Options*
Coren, E., Safer, D. L.
edited by Leal, W. F., Nagy, G., Borga, M., Chavez, D., Magnuszewsk, A.
Springer Nature Switzerland AG.2020
- **Solutions Stories: An Innovative Strategy for Managing Negative Physical and Mental Health Impacts from Extreme Weather Events** *CLIMATE CHANGE, HAZARDS AND ADAPTATION OPTIONS: HANDLING THE IMPACTS OF A CHANGING CLIMATE*
Coren, E., Safer, D. L., Filho, W. L., Nagy, G. J., Borga, M., Munoz, P. D., Magnuszewski, A.
2020: 441-462
- **Body Image Disturbance and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder Symptoms Improve After Orthognathic Surgery.** *Journal of oral and maxillofacial surgery : official journal of the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons*
Häberle, A. n., Alkofahi, H. n., Qiao, J. n., Safer, D. n., Mittermiller, P. n., Menorca, R. n., Trickey, A. W., Girod, S. n.
2020
- **Parent-based prevention after parental weight loss surgery: a pilot case-series trial.** *Surgery for obesity and related diseases : official journal of the American Society for Bariatric Surgery*
Sadeh-Sharvit, S. n., Runfola, C. D., Welch, H. A., Gibbs, E. L., Dickens, C. E., Lock, J. n., Safer, D. L.
2020
- **Brain-Responsive Neurostimulation for Loss of Control Eating: Early Feasibility Study.** *Neurosurgery*
Wu, H. n., Adler, S. n., Azagury, D. E., Bohon, C. n., Safer, D. L., Barbosa, D. A., Bhati, M. T., Williams, N. R., Dunn, L. B., Tass, P. A., Knutson, B. D., Yutsis, M. n., Fraser, et al
2020
- **Treating binge eating and food addiction symptoms with low-carbohydrate Ketogenic diets: a case series.** *Journal of eating disorders*
Carmen, M., Safer, D. L., Saslow, L. R., Kalayjian, T., Mason, A. E., Westman, E. C., Sethi Dalai, S.
2020; 8: 2
- **A randomized, placebo-controlled crossover trial of phentermine-topiramate ER in patients with binge-eating disorder and bulimia nervosa.** *The International journal of eating disorders*
Safer, D. L., Adler, S., Dalai, S. S., Bentley, J. P., Toyama, H., Pajarito, S., Najarian, T.

2019

- **Dialectical behavior therapy guided self-help for binge-eating disorder.** *Eating disorders*
Kenny, T. E., Carter, J. C., Safer, D. L.
2019: 1–10
- **PILOT OF A REMOTELY-DELIVERED INTERVENTION TO IMPROVE DIETARY ADHERENCE AND WEIGHT-LOSS OUTCOMES IN POST-BARIATRIC PATIENTS**
Salcido, L., Osipov, L., Runfola, C. D., Barrett, M., Safer, D. L., Adler, S.
OXFORD UNIV PRESS INC.2019: S95
- **Replication and extension of dietary adherence as a predictor of suboptimal weight-loss outcomes in postbariatric patients** *SURGERY FOR OBESITY AND RELATED DISEASES*
Wakayama, L., Nameth, K., Adler, S., Safer, D. L.
2019; 15 (1): 91–96
- **Parenting after Weight Loss Surgery: A Conceptual Model and Two Case Reports.** *Family process*
Gibbs, E. L., Runfola, C. D., Dickens, C. E., Welch, H. n., Safer, D. L., Sadeh-Sharvit, S. n.
2019
- **Working With Transcripts An Underutilized Supervisory Approach** *SUPERVISION IN PSYCHIATRIC PRACTICE: PRACTICAL APPROACHES ACROSS VENUES AND PROVIDERS*
De Golia, S. G., Williams, K. E., Safer, D. L., DeGolia, S. G., Corcoran, K. M.
2019: 57–62
- **Replication and extension of dietary adherence as a predictor of suboptimal weight-loss outcomes in postbariatric patients.** *Surgery for obesity and related diseases : official journal of the American Society for Bariatric Surgery*
Wakayama, L., Nameth, K., Adler, S., Safer, D. L.
2018
- **A Standardized Preoperative Group Intervention Is Feasible and Acceptable to Orthognathic Surgery Patients** *JOURNAL OF ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGERY*
Li, X., Safer, D. L., Paz, I., Menorca, R., Girod, S.
2018; 76 (7): 1546–52
- **Correlates of Dietary Adherence and Maladaptive Eating Patterns Following Roux-en-Y Bariatric Surgery** *OBESITY SURGERY*
Adler, S., Fowler, N., Robinson, A., Salcido, L., Darcy, A., Toyama, H., Safer, D.
2018; 28 (4): 1130–35
- **Study protocol and rationale for a randomized double-blinded crossover trial of phentermine-topiramate ER versus placebo to treat binge eating disorder and bulimia nervosa.** *Contemporary clinical trials*
Dalai, S. S., Adler, S. n., Najarian, T. n., Safer, D. L.
2018; 64: 173–78
- **The DBT Solution for Emotional Eating. A Proven Program to Break the Cycle of Bingeing and Out-of-Control Eating**
Safer, D. L., Adler, S., Masson, P. C.
Guilford Press.2018
- **A Standardized Preoperative Group Intervention Is Feasible and Acceptable to Orthognathic Surgery Patients.** *Journal of oral and maxillofacial surgery : official journal of the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons*
Li, X., Safer, D. L., Paz, I. C., Menorca, R., Girod, S.
2017
- **Shifts in the Enjoyment of Healthy and Unhealthy Behaviors Affect Short- and Long-Term Postbariatric Weight Loss** *BARIATRIC SURGICAL PRACTICE AND PATIENT CARE*
Vuorinen, A., Strahilevitz, M. A., Wansink, B., Safer, D. L.
2017; 12 (1): 35-42
- **Shifts in the Enjoyment of Healthy and Unhealthy Behaviors Affect Short- and Long-Term Postbariatric Weight Loss.** *Bariatric surgical practice and patient care*
Vuorinen, A., Strahilevitz, M. A., Wansink, B., Safer, D. L.

2017; 12 (1): 35–42

- **Follow-up of selective eaters from childhood to adulthood.** *Eating behaviors*
Van Tine, M. L., McNicholas, F., Safer, D. L., Agras, W. S.
2017; 26: 61-65
- **Early Adherence Targeted Therapy (EATT) for Postbariatric Maladaptive Eating Behaviors** *COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL PRACTICE*
Robinson, A. H., Adler, S., Darcy, A. M., Osipov, L., Safer, D. L.
2016; 23 (4): 548-560
- **Does implicit emotion regulation in binge eating disorder matter?** *Eating behaviors*
Robinson, A., Safer, D. L., Austin, J. L., Etkin, A.
2015; 18: 186-191
- **Internet-based preventive intervention for reducing eating disorder risk: A randomized controlled trial comparing guided with unguided self-help** *BEHAVIOUR RESEARCH AND THERAPY*
Kass, A. E., Trockel, M., Safer, D. L., Sinton, M. M., Cunning, D., Rizk, M. T., Genkin, B. H., Weisman, H. L., Bailey, J. O., Jacobi, C., Wilfley, D. E., Taylor, C. B.
2014; 63: 90-98
- **Internet-based preventive intervention for reducing eating disorder risk: A randomized controlled trial comparing guided with unguided self-help.** *Behaviour research and therapy*
Kass, A. E., Trockel, M., Safer, D. L., Sinton, M. M., Cunning, D., Rizk, M. T., Genkin, B. H., Weisman, H. L., Bailey, J. O., Jacobi, C., Wilfley, D. E., Taylor, C. B.
2014; 63C: 90-98
- **What variables are associated with successful weight loss outcomes for bariatric surgery after 1 year?** *SURGERY FOR OBESITY AND RELATED DISEASES*
Robinson, A. H., Adler, S., Stevens, H. B., Darcy, A. M., Morton, J. M., Safer, D. L.
2014; 10 (4): 697-704
- **Change in emotion regulation during the course of treatment predicts binge abstinence in guided self-help dialectical behavior therapy for binge eating disorder.** *Journal of eating disorders*
Wallace, L. M., Masson, P. C., Safer, D. L., von Ranson, K. M.
2014; 2 (1): 35-?
- **Do end of treatment assessments predict outcome at follow-up in eating disorders?** *International journal of eating disorders*
Lock, J., Agras, W. S., Le Grange, D., Couturier, J., Safer, D., Bryson, S. W.
2013; 46 (8): 771-778
- **A randomized wait-list controlled pilot study of dialectical behaviour therapy guided self-help for binge eating disorder.** *Behaviour research and therapy*
Masson, P. C., von Ranson, K. M., Wallace, L. M., Safer, D. L.
2013; 51 (11): 723-728
- **Race/Ethnicity, Education, and Treatment Parameters as Moderators and Predictors of Outcome in Binge Eating Disorder** *JOURNAL OF CONSULTING AND CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY*
Thompson-Brenner, H., Franko, D. L., Thompson, D. R., Grilo, C. M., Boisseau, C. L., Roehrig, J. P., Richards, L. K., Bryson, S. W., Bulik, C. M., Crow, S. J., Devlin, M. J., Gorin, A. A., Kristeller, et al
2013; 81 (4): 710-721
- **Group dialectical behavior therapy adapted for obese emotional eaters; a pilot study** *NUTRICION HOSPITALARIA*
Roosen, M. A., Safer, D., Adler, S., Cebolla, A., van Strien, T.
2012; 27 (4): 1141-1147
- **Moderators of dialectical behavior therapy for binge eating disorder: Results from a randomized controlled trial** *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EATING DISORDERS*
Robinson, A. H., Safer, D. L.
2012; 45 (4): 597-602
- **Racial/Ethnic Differences in Adults in Randomized Clinical Trials of Binge Eating Disorder** *JOURNAL OF CONSULTING AND CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY*
Franko, D. L., Thompson-Brenner, H., Thompson, D. R., Boisseau, C. L., Davis, A., Forbush, K. T., Roehrig, J. P., Bryson, S. W., Bulik, C. M., Crow, S. J., Devlin, M. J., Gorin, A. A., Grilo, et al

2012; 80 (2): 186-195

- **Suprathreshold duloxetine for treatment-resistant depression, anorexia nervosa binge-purging type, and obsessive-compulsive disorder: a case report.** *Innovations in clinical neuroscience*
Safer, D. L., Arnow, K. D.
2012; 9 (3): 13-16
- **Anorexia Nervosa as a Disorder of Emotion Dysregulation: Theory, Evidence, and Treatment Implications** *CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY-SCIENCE AND PRACTICE*
Safer, D. L., Chen, E. Y.
2011; 18 (3): 203-7
- **Does rapid response to two group psychotherapies for binge eating disorder predict abstinence?** *BEHAVIOUR RESEARCH AND THERAPY*
Safer, D. L., Joyce, E. E.
2011; 49 (5): 339-345
- **Appetite-Focused Dialectical Behavior Therapy for the Treatment of Binge Eating with Purging: A Preliminary Trial** *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EATING DISORDERS*
Hill, D. M., Craighead, L. W., Safer, D. L.
2011; 44 (3): 249-261
- **Use of Mirtazapine in an Adult with Refractory Anorexia Nervosa and Comorbid Depression: A Case Report** *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EATING DISORDERS*
Safer, D. L., Darcy, A. M., Lock, J.
2011; 44 (2): 178-181
- **Anorexia Nervosa as a Disorder of Emotion Dysregulation: Theory, Evidence, and Treatment Implications** *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*
Safer DL, Chen EY
2011; 18: 203-207
- **Outcome From a Randomized Controlled Trial of Group Therapy for Binge Eating Disorder: Comparing Dialectical Behavior Therapy Adapted for Binge Eating to an Active Comparison Group Therapy (vol 41, pg 106, 2010)** *BEHAVIOR THERAPY*
Safer, D. L., Robinson, A. H., Jo, B.
2010; 41 (3): 432-432
- **Outcome From a Randomized Controlled Trial of Group Therapy for Binge Eating Disorder: Comparing Dialectical Behavior Therapy Adapted for Binge Eating to an Active Comparison Group Therapy** *BEHAVIOR THERAPY*
Safer, D. L., Robinson, A. H., Jo, B.
2010; 41 (1): 106-120
- **Outcome from a randomized controlled trial of group therapy for binge eating disorder: Comparing Dialectical Behavior Therapy adapted for binge eating to an active comparison group therapy** *Behavior Therapy*
Safer DL, Robinson AH, Jo B
2010; 41 (1): 106
- **A comparison of ethnic groups in the treatment of bulimia nervosa.** *Eating behaviors*
Chui, W., Safer, D. L., Bryson, S. W., Agras, W. S., Wilson, G. T.
2007; 8 (4): 485-491
- **The relationship of weight suppression and dietary restraint to binge eating in bulimia nervosa** *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EATING DISORDERS*
Lowe, M. R., Thomas, J. G., Safer, D. L., Butryn, M. L.
2007; 40 (7): 640-644
- **Dialectical behavior therapy modified for adolescent binge eating disorder: A case report** *COGNITIVE AND BEHAVIORAL PRACTICE*
Safer, D. L., Lock, J., Couturier, J. L.
2007; 14 (2): 157-167
- **Dialectical Behavior Therapy modified for adolescent binge eating disorder: A case report** *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*
Safer DL, Couturier JL, Lock J
2007; 14: 157-167

- **Designing a control for a behavioral group therapy** *BEHAVIOR THERAPY*
Safer, D. L., Hugo, E. M.
2006; 37 (2): 120-130
- **Weight suppression is a robust predictor of outcome in the cognitive-behavioral treatment of bulimia nervosa** *JOURNAL OF ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY*
Butryn, M. L., Lowe, M. R., Safer, D. L., Agras, W. S.
2006; 115 (1): 62-67
- **Comparing two measures of eating restraint in bulimic women treated with cognitive-behavioral therapy** *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EATING DISORDERS*
Safer, D. L., Agras, W. S., Lowe, M. R., Bryson, S.
2004; 36 (1): 83-88
- **Women in psychiatric training** *ACADEMIC PSYCHIATRY*
Bogar, A. M., Safer, D. L.
2004; 28 (4): 305-309
- **Psychological predictors of patient satisfaction with laser skin resurfacing.** *Archives of facial plastic surgery*
Koch, R. J., Newman, J. P., Safer, D. L.
2003; 5 (5): 445-446
- **Predictors of relapse following successful dialectical behavior therapy for binge eating disorder** *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EATING DISORDERS*
Safer, D. L., Lively, T. J., Telch, C. F., Agras, W. S.
2002; 32 (2): 155-163
- **Early body mass index and other anthropometric relationships between parents and children** *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF OBESITY*
Safer, D. L., Agras, W. S., Bryson, S., Hammer, L. D.
2001; 25 (10): 1532-1536
- **Prolonged bottle feeding in a cohort of children: Does it affect caloric intake and dietary composition?** *CLINICAL PEDIATRICS*
Safer, D. L., Bryson, S., Agras, W. S., Hammer, L. D.
2001; 40 (9): 481-487
- **Dialectical behavior therapy adapted for bulimia: A case report** *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EATING DISORDERS*
Safer, D. L., Telch, C. F., Agras, W. S.
2001; 30 (1): 101-106
- **Dialectical behavior therapy for bulimia nervosa** *AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHIATRY*
Safer, D. L., Telch, C. F., Agras, W. S.
2001; 158 (4): 632-634
- **Risperidone in the treatment of delusional parasitosis: A case report** *JOURNAL OF CLINICAL PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY*
Safer, D. L., Wenegrat, B., Roth, W. T.
1997; 17 (2): 131-132
- **AFFINITY LABELING OF BOVINE LIVER GLUTAMATE-DEHYDROGENASE WITH 8-[(4-BROMO-2,3-DIOXOBUTYL)THIO]ADENOSINE 5'-DIPHOSPHATE AND 5'-TRIPHOSPHATE** *BIOCHEMISTRY*
Ozturk, D. H., Safer, D., Colman, R. F.
1990; 29 (30): 7112-7118

PRESENTATIONS

- Streamlining Global Climate Communication. - International Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) Summit (3/1/2020)
- Accelerating public health solutions for climate change - International Society of Exposure Science (ISES). (2020)