

Wired for Social Relationships

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Abstract: Close relationships are critical in most aspects of our lives, acting as sources of comfort as well as anguish. Neuropeptides act as key modulators of circuitry which promote cognition, emotion, and behavior ascribed to social interactions. Our lab is focused on revealing many of the neural mechanisms that give rise to social behavior. We focus on developing ethologically-relevant animal models of many social encounters to better understand how mammalian brains are wired to engage in social interactions, cope with social stress, and cultivate meaningful relationships. This presentation will include description of some of the neurocircuitry that underlies social behavior and will provide examples of how to use current neurogenetic and pharmacological tools to measure and manipulate neuronal activity governing social interactions.