

University
of Regina



2025 Honours Psychology
Poster Symposium

Program Symposium Schedule

Monday, April 14th, 2025, 9:00 a.m. -
12:00 p.m.

Welcome	9:00 a.m.
Symposium begins	9:10 a.m.
<i>* Presenters will be available to discuss their project and answer any questions</i>	
Lunch	11:00 a.m.
Award Presentation	11:30 a.m.
Poster takedown	12:00 p.m.

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Message from the Department

Dear Honours Graduates,

Being in a period of growth is a gift, often disguised as a challenge. In September you were presented with a challenge—several tasks and ways of thinking that you were not completely familiar with—which may have led to feelings of uncertainty, overwhelm, and maybe even the unsettling but ubiquitous academic “imposter syndrome”. Maybe there were times when you wondered if you were really cut out for this.

The insider knowledge you are now privy to is that asking yourself this question is not an indicator to turn around; instead, it’s a sign to dig in. It is a sign to dig in because it is through facing such challenges and finding solutions that you develop a sense of competence and mastery—key predictors of feeling your work is meaningful.¹ Simply put, challenging work is meaningful work, and each challenge you overcome adds more evidence that you are capable of handling the next. This is the gift!

It is worth noting, however, that even more than competence, relatedness predicts meaningful work. Relatedness refers to the sense that others care about you, and that you care about them in return. With this in mind, my colleagues and I hope you have had the opportunity to make meaningful connections with your cohort, your supervisor/mentor, other professors, and the graduate students in the Department. We invite you to stay in touch with us, as we care about you and maintaining these connections enriches your career.

The third predictor often considered when determining what gives people a sense of meaning in their careers is autonomy, the extent to which one has authority over choices they make in their work. While this may still

¹ Nikolova, M., & Cnossen, F. (2020). What makes work meaningful and why economists should care about it. *Labour economics*, 65, 101847.

be developing, a research career—whether within or beyond academia—is a promising path toward autonomy. As you discovered this year, the choices to be made in research are endless—what constructs to investigate, which measures or designs to utilize, how to analyze your data, how to interpret your findings, and how and where to share your work. The possibilities and creative solutions are endless and, as your sense of competence and mastery grows, so too will your confidence in using your agency.

In this vein, I eagerly anticipate hearing about your career trajectory and your future contributions and I am confident you will leave a significant mark wherever your path may lead. But, for today, take a moment to celebrate your accomplishments. You have demonstrated that you belong here!

On behalf of my colleagues in the Department of Psychology, I extend my heartiest congratulations to you. We are proud of how far you have come, and excited to see how you will continue to grow.

Gordon J. G. Asmundson, OC, SOM, PhD, RD Psych, FRSC, FCAHS
Professor and Head of Psychology

Project Titles and Abstracts

ADHD and Adolescent Criminal Justice Involvement: Risks and Interventions

Zarrin Ananna

Supervisor: Dr. Susan Yamamoto

The purpose of this study is to explore the link between Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and criminal justice system (CJS) involvement among Canadian adolescents using data from the Criminal Justice Relational Database (CJRD). By analyzing socio-demographic, educational and mental health variables, the research aims to identify factors contributing to increased CJS interactions in this population. We predicted that adolescent with ADHD face higher rates of legal involvement and more severe outcomes compared to their peers, influenced by factors such as low social support and heightened stressors. The study highlights the necessity for early interventions and comprehensive support system to mitigate these challenges.

Examining Gender Bias in Juror Decision-Making on a Sexual Assault Case

Brooke Armstrong

Supervisors: Dr. Susan Yamamoto and Katie MacDonald, MSc

To examine gender bias in juror decision-making on a sexual assault case, we had 134 participants read a 216-word vignette depicting an ambiguous sexual assault scenario. Participants were asked to render a dichotomous verdict, rate their confidence in their verdict, and answer a series of questions regarding the situation they read. In addition, participants completed the Gender-Inclusive Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Urban & Porras Pyland, 2022) and the Punishment Orientation Questionnaire (Yamamoto & Maeder, 2019). What participants did not know was that we manipulated the pronouns of both the defendant and complainant in a 3 (defendant: she, he, they) x 3 (complainant: she, he, they) design. We predicted that there would be a main effect for both defendant and complainant gender on continuous verdict confidence, yet neither effect was supported with a statistically-significant result. We also predicted that there would be an interaction effect between defendant and complainant gender on continuous verdict confidence, but this was also not supported. A key issue in this study was the small sample size which significantly reduced power. It is encouraged that future research continues to investigate how non-binary actors are perceived by mock jurors in the context of sexual assault since it is a significant gap in the literature. Finally, future research should also examine different gender combinations when looking at mock juror decision-making in sexual assault cases to ensure all possible gender combinations within a sexual assault case are researched thoroughly to avoid a gender bias in a real courtroom.

Validation of the Disorganized Thoughts Scale

Brian Cao

Supervisors: Dr. Gordon G. J. Asmundson & Blake Boehme, MSc

Formal thought disorder (FTD) is a key diagnostic criterion of schizophrenia, marked by unstructured, illogical, and incoherent thinking. Although FTD has been observed in both clinical and non-clinical populations, no widely accepted self-report measure currently exists for assessing disorganized thinking in the general population. This study aimed to examine and validate the new Disorganized Thoughts Scale (DTS), a 20-item self-report measure developed to address this gap. To achieve this, a sample of 142 psychology students from the University of Regina completed a Qualtrics survey consisting of the DTS, demographic questions and two additional psychological measures. It was hypothesized that the DTS would show a two-factor structure via confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and that the DTS scores would be positively correlated with neuroticism and maladaptive metacognitive beliefs. CFA was used to test whether the DTS followed a two-factor model, and correlational analyses were conducted to examine potential relationships between DTS scores with personality traits (BFI-44), metacognitive beliefs (MCQ-30), and demographic variables. The model showed modest fit, with SRMR being within acceptable limits, but CFI, TLI, and RMSEA were under ideal cutoffs. The DTS scores were positively correlated with neuroticism and maladaptive metacognitive beliefs, consistent with the hypotheses. Overall, these findings supported the DTS's internal structure and convergent validity. However, future studies could benefit with further testing using larger and more diverse samples.

Do Cultural and Pseudoneglect-Related Factors Predict Professional Race-Driving Collision Biases?

Nicholas Flaman

Supervisor: Dr. Laurie Sykes Tottenham

Pseudoneglect is a phenomenon found in neurologically typical individuals wherein more attention is paid to the left side of space than the right during visuospatial tasks, which is thought to be due to right hemisphere dominance. Many studies show individuals collide more often with objects on their right than their left during walking tasks, which is believed to be a consequence of this leftward over-attendance. This rightward collision bias has also been found in some driving research. However, the driving collision research has been done in Western countries, so the potential impact of cultural differences is not yet known. The goal of this study was to determine if pseudoneglect-related factors (age, gender, handedness) and cultural factors (reading direction and driving side) are predictive of collision biases in a real-world setting. To do so, videos of Formula 1 driver collisions ($N = 54$) were examined for collision side, after which culture and demographic data on the at-fault driver were obtained. Formula 1 was specifically chosen as it has both international locations and drivers, relatively high rates of collisions, and a variety of both left and right turns in its tracks. While not finding any factor to be a statistically significant predictor of collision side biases, a trend showed drivers from left-side-driving countries had an overall rightward collision bias, while those from countries that drive on the right had a slight overall leftward bias. This trend illustrates the importance of extending collision research into a broader range of cultures.

Prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences in Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Cadets Beginning the RCMP Training Program

Kennedy P. Flegel
Supervisor: Dr. Nicholas Carleton

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are potentially psychologically traumatic events occurring before the age of 18 years. There are 10 ACEs organized under three categories (i.e., neglect, abuse, and household dysfunction). ACEs are associated with poor mental (e.g., posttraumatic stress disorder [PTSD]) and physical health (e.g., diabetes) outcomes, with four or more ACEs increasing the risk for these adverse outcomes. Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) report experiencing an average of 5.84 ACEs; accordingly, understanding the interactions among ACEs and RCMP mental health symptoms may provide important insights for innovative, proactive, and ongoing career supports. RCMP cadets ($n=697$; 25.9% female) completed the Childhood Stressor Screen, a self-report measure of ACEs, and the PTSD Checklist for DSM-5 (PCL-5), a self-report measure of PTSD symptoms. Odds ratios were calculated to assess for associations among sex, ethnicity, and ACEs. Published data were used to compare differences in ACEs among RCMP and the general population. RCMP cadets reported an average of 2.06 ACEs, most (82%) reporting at least one ACE and many (18%) reporting four or more ACEs. Results evidenced statistically significant associations among sex, ethnicity, and ACEs. RCMP cadets with ACEs had higher PCL-5 total scores than RCMP cadets without ACEs. Compared to the general population, RCMP cadets reported statistically significantly more physical abuse, emotional neglect, household substance use, and household mental illness. RCMP cadets with ACEs and certain sociodemographic characteristics may experience more mental health sequelae and require more mental health supports during their careers.

Examining Health Anxiety and Associated Constructs in Children with Cystic Fibrosis

Ella Forrest

Supervisor: Dr. Kristi D. Wright

Cystic fibrosis (CF) is a life-threatening genetic disorder affecting 105,000 people worldwide (Dickinson & Collaco, 2021; Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, n.d), caused by mutations in the CFTR protein that disrupt chloride ion transport, leading to ionic imbalances and mucus throughout major organ systems (Rowe et al., 2014). CF's multisystemic impacts require intensive treatments, (Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, n.d.) and patients with the disorder demonstrate 2-3 times higher anxiety and depression symptoms than the general population (Quittner et al., 2014). Beyond anxiety and depression, few other mental health constructs have been examined in CF populations. Health anxiety – worries that one has a serious illness without evidence of an underlying health condition (Wright et al., 2016) – has been observed to be elevated in other health populations but has not been studied in CF. The current study explored health anxiety and related constructs in children with CF, compared to established rates in typically developing children. Ten participants aged 8-12 completed self-report measures of health anxiety, depression, state and trait anxiety, anxiety sensitivity, and intolerance of uncertainty. Study results demonstrated significantly higher levels of state and trait anxiety in children with CF compared to typically developing children, but no differences in health anxiety and other constructs. These results have mixed consistency with pre-existing literature, highlighting the need for future research with a larger sample size. Nevertheless, the study's findings highlight the urgent need for early identification of mental health symptoms and implementation of tailored mental health intervention programs for children with CF.

The Illusion of Affection: Unravelling the Process of Love Bombing

Teagan Goulden-Markusson
Supervisor: Dr. Donald Sharpe

Love bombing is a new term that has emerged in the discussion of emotional abuse and modern dating culture. The current study explores the relationship between love bombing, ghosting, attachment styles, and narcissism among female undergraduate students. Participants ($n = 97$) completed surveys and answered questions assessing their experiences with love bombing, ghosting, attachment styles, and narcissistic traits in their partners. Result showed that many participants have experienced love bombing and ghosting. A relationship was found being love bombed and using ghosting as a tactic to end the relationship. Attachment styles also played a role, with anxious attachment being associated with being a recipient of love bombing, and avoidant attachment being related to one being less likely to ghost. Recipients of love bombing rated their partners as higher in narcissistic traits, consistent with previous research that found love bombing is driven by those who have narcissistic traits which may stem from a need for control and external validation. The present study's findings contribute to the growing literature on manipulative relationship behaviors, shining light on ghosting as a potential response to being overwhelmed in a relationship or toxic relationship patterns. Future research should explore these behaviors across a larger and more diverse sample to better understand their impact on romantic relationships and one's emotional well-being.

The Effects of Imagined and Auditory Directionality on Spatial biases.

Mofasshal Hossain
Supervisor: Dr. Austen Smith

Representational pseudoneglect refers to the leftward bias observed in neurotypical individuals when recalling or imagining spatial layouts, reflecting right hemisphere dominance in visuospatial processing, which can be observed in perceptual pseudoneglect when lines are bisected to the left of centre in the line bisection task. In contrast, auditory cues have shown rightward spatial bias. Spatial biases were examined in eighty participants using a computerized line bisection task where trials were either non-cued or preceded by left-to-right or right-to-left directional auditory or imagination vignette cues. Prior to the blocks, participants completed the VVIQ2, handedness and footedness questionnaires. I hypothesized that LTR-Imagination cues would produce the strongest leftward deviation while RTL-Auditory cues would produce the strongest rightward deviation on the line bisection task. Imagination cues were predicted to induce stronger deviations than auditory cues. A significant leftward bias in the non-cued condition confirmed inherent spatial bias. Paired-sample t-tests showed this bias was significantly attenuated under LTR-Imagination and LTR-Auditory cues. One-sample t-tests revealed that leftward deviation persisted in all conditions except LTR directionalities, contradicting the initial directional hypotheses. Multiple regressions showed handedness significantly predicted deviation under Neutral directionalities and RTL-Auditory cues. Overall, imagination cues produced greater leftward deviation than auditory cues, except in the LTR directionalities, partially supporting one of the hypotheses. These findings highlight modality-specific effects of directional cues on spatial bias and offer potential applications for environmental design and navigational training.

Assessing a new teaching method for Point-of-Care Ultrasound

Ana Carolina Martinez Perez
Supervisor: Dr. Katherine Robinson

Point-of-care ultrasound (POCUS) uses small ultrasound devices that can be used at patients' bedsides. POCUS can lead to faster diagnoses and treatment but requires extensive training to use effectively. This study evaluated whether eye tracking can differentiate between experts and novice POCUS users to help develop better teaching methods. This can demonstrate this tool would be useful as a teaching method for POCUS. Ten novices (medical students) and 1 expert (ER physician) had their eye movements recorded while they viewed POCUS lung videos of three different types: Pneumothorax (collapsed lung), Healthy Lung, and Potential False Diagnosis (pseudopneumothorax) to determine the presence of Pneumothorax. The expert had 100% accuracy but the novices' accuracy did not go above 60%. Novices' performance was best on the Pneumothorax videos. The expert had high confidence in their decisions while the novices had low to moderate confidence levels. Heat maps showed that the expert has a much more focused gaze on the area of interest (AOI) while novices missed the AOI or had more scattered gaze patterns. This study showed that gaze patterns and accuracy did not always match. Instead of inferring skill only from gaze, this can tell about specific level of both ultrasound knowledge and visual search strategies, and provide personalized feedback to learners. It also tells expert gaze involves fixating only the correct area, then making correct diagnostic decision. Novices need training on both to advance towards expertise.

Children's Emotional Reactions to Being Lied To

Kylee Matravolgyi
Supervisor: Dr. Sarah Zanette

Whether they realize it or not, children are frequently lied to (Heyman et al., 2009). Previous research has utilized hypothetical scenarios and vignettes to explore children's beliefs surrounding lying (Bussey, 1999; Cheung et al., 2015; Smith & Rizzo, 2017) and emotions as lie-tellers (Smith & Rizzo, 2017), rather than children's everyday experiences with being deceived. To address this, the current study explored children's lived experiences with being deceived, particularly their emotional experiences. Child participants ($n = 509$, ages 6-11, 56% male) were asked to recall a time when they were lied to and how being lied to made them feel. Specifically, the emotion(s) they felt, and how intensely they felt those emotions. As anticipated, children were significantly more likely to report feeling negative emotions (e.g., sadness, anger) after being lied to than neutral (e.g., okay, fine; $p < .001$) or positive emotions (e.g., happiness, amusement; $p < .001$). Children who reported experiencing negative emotions tended to be younger than children who reported neutral emotions ($p = .016$). Younger children also reported more intense emotions ($r = 0.13, p = .005$). Girls were more likely than boys to feel negative emotions ($p = .016$) and reported feeling their emotions more intensely than boys ($p < .001$), whereas, boys reported more neutral emotions than girls ($p = .003$). This has implications for parenting practices such as parenting by lying which use lying to control children's behaviour and emotions (Heyman et al., 2009) as this can be harmful to children's short-term emotional states.

Adverse Childhood Experiences and the Acute Stress Response

Carissa Melnyk

Supervisors: Dr. Natasha Gallant and Kelsey Haczewicz, MSc

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are linked with many negative outcomes in adulthood and long-term stress response alterations may contribute to this relationship. However, the influence of ACEs on autonomic nervous system and psychological stress reactivity within laboratory settings remains under-researched. The Trier Social Stress Test (TSST) is a well-established approach to inducing stress, but comparative control conditions are not as well documented. This study aimed to validate a control TSST (C-TSST) and examine whether ACEs predict autonomic and psychological stress reactivity. In this two-part study, participants first reported the number of ACEs to which they had been exposed. Subsequently, a within-subjects experimental design was employed, and eligible participants ($N = 58$) completed the TSST and C-TSST while physiological (i.e., heart rate, heart rate variability, skin conductance level) and psychological (i.e., stress appraisals, state anxiety) responses were measured. Repeated measures *t*-tests showed that, compared to the C-TSST condition, participants had significantly higher heart rate, skin conductance, and stress appraisal levels and lower heart rate variability in the TSST condition. Simple linear regressions with ACEs as the independent variable and stress reactivity measures as the dependent variables revealed no significant findings. These results provide support for use of the C-TSST as a comparative control condition for the TSST. Contrary to our hypotheses, ACEs did not predict heart rate, heart rate variability, skin conductance level, stress appraisal, or state anxiety scores. Future research should continue to explore the potentially more nuanced effects of ACEs on stress reactivity with larger and more representative samples.

COVID-19-Associated Impacts on the Mental Health of Canadian Adults in the Late Pandemic Period

Mikaela Muscoby

Supervisor: Dr. Richard MacLennan

During the COVID-19 pandemic, research in Canada reported increased rates of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and suicidal ideation. Pandemic impacts, including infection or hospitalization of oneself or a loved one or death of a loved one, have been associated with negative mental health symptoms. Most research investigating COVID-19 impacts on Canadian mental health collected data during the height of the pandemic (2020-2021), with less research from 2022 and early 2023. Moreover, most research focuses on specific populations (e.g., healthcare workers) and not on the general Canadian adult population. The present study aims to address these research gaps by exploring COVID-19-associated mental health impacts on the general Canadian adult population within the late stage of the pandemic. Cross-sectional data from Statistics Canada's Survey on COVID-19 and Mental Health (SCMH) Cycle 3 (Feb. 23–May 31, 2023) will be used, which invited 36,000 households to participate and resulted in a 46.5% response rate. The SCMH uses the PHQ-9, GAD-7 and PCL-5 to assess symptoms of depression, anxiety, and PTSD (respectfully), and a single question regarding suicidal ideation. The results of this study will inform the degree to which COVID-19 pandemic impacts influenced specific mental health symptoms within the late stage of the pandemic.

Exploring Participant Engagement in the Coping with Infertility Program

Ufuoma Hannah Odaware

Supervisor: Dr. Jennifer L. Gordon

Infertility affects approximately 15% of reproductive-aged couples worldwide, with significant physical and psychological consequences. Individuals experiencing infertility report elevated distress, particularly the intended pregnant parent who often bear greater physical burdens related to conception difficulties. The Coping with Infertility (CWI) Program is a cognitive behaviour therapy-based self-guided intervention that was co-created with patients to target infertility-related distress. The CWI program consists of 7 brief weekly module videos, paired with post-module homework assignments. While a recent randomized controlled trial (n = 170) has confirmed the program's efficacy in improving mental health outcomes, the current analysis examined 1) which baseline characteristics predicted the number of module videos viewed and self-reported homework engagement, as assessed using the Homework Rating Scale and 2) the degree to which these markers of engagement predicted pre-to-post changes in fertility-related quality of life (FertiQoL), anxiety symptoms (GAD-7), and depressive symptoms (PHQ-9). Results revealed that program engagement was high, with 78% of participants watching all 7 module videos. Younger age and greater perceived program credibility and expectations of benefit predicted greater homework engagement. A higher number of modules viewed predicted pre-to-post improvements in quality of life while greater homework engagement predicted improvements in all three mental health outcomes assessed. These findings suggest that, in the context of a self-guided mental health intervention, increasing users' perceptions of the intervention's credibility and potential efficacy may optimize intervention efficacy through greater homework engagement.

Face Memory and Executive Functioning in Adults

Erika Reichel

Supervisor: Dr. Kaila Bruer

Motivated by applied applications (e.g., eyewitness identification), a great deal of research has been done to understand people's ability to recognize unfamiliar faces. Most research on face memory to date aims to see under what conditions memory for unfamiliar faces is at its most accurate. Despite great knowledge gained in this area, there is still not a full understanding of the mechanisms that drive unfamiliar face memory recognition. To investigate these mechanisms, this thesis investigated how individual differences and executive function (EF) relate to the ability to remember faces. Using a within-subjects design, 52 adult participants completed an old/new face memory task and eight tasks designed to measure three elements of EF: working memory, inhibitory control, and metamemory. Face memory performance was measured by calculating discriminability (d') and bias (C). In line with the hypothesis, participants with higher scores on one working memory task (List Sorting Working Memory test) showed better face memory performance (d'). Contrary to hypotheses, we did not find evidence that participants' scores on inhibitory and metamemory tasks were predictive of face memory performance in adults. The significant relationships between working memory and face memory performance are likely driven by the fact that both the List Sorting Working Memory test and face memory rely on systems in visual working memory.

Examining the Impact of Student Estimated GPA on Retrieval-Induced Forgetting

Jenna Sabiston

Supervisor: Dr. Tom Phenix

According to Anderson et al. (1994), Retrieval Induced Forgetting (RIF) enables successful memory retrieval at the cost of forgetting related, competing items. Previous research suggests integrating or connecting the items to each other in a meaningful way, can act as a safeguard against the effects of RIF (Anderson and McCulloch, 1999). This study assessed individual rates of RIF associated with estimated GPA. The measurement strategy includes a mixed methods design which examines the impact of the RIF effect and integration strategies on students' GPA. The participants went through a three-step paradigm which included presentation of all category-exemplar memory items, a retrieval-practice phase of a subset of the items, and a final memory test phase of all items. The retrieval-practice phase included RP+ items (i.e. practiced items in the practiced category). The other items consisted of RP- (i.e. the unpracticed items in the practiced category), and NRP (i.e. the unpracticed items in the unpracticed category). Recall rates of RP- and NRP items were compared. We hypothesized RIF would have a negative correlation with GPA. Our results revealed an RIF effect between RP- and NRP items, where NRP items were remembered more often than RP- items. Further, there was a correlation found between higher GPA associated with retrieval study strategies compared to re-reading/re-writing notes. Although there was a trend observed, there was no statistical significance correlating GPA with an RIF effect suggesting RIF might not impact GPA.

The Supportive Sideline: Understanding Parental Impact During Athletic Transitions

Sydney A. Schenn
Supervisor: Dr. Kim D. Dorsch

The purpose of this study is to explore how parental involvement, pressure, and support are communicated to athletes during their transition into high-performance sports. Parents play a crucial role in athletic development by providing opportunities for early sport sampling and eventual specialization. However, there is a lack of research on how these factors are communicated to athletes. Using qualitative interviews with six high-performance athletes, it was revealed that while parents initially played a strong role in decision-making, athletes gradually gained autonomy over time. Parental involvement shifted from active participation to a spectator role as the athletes matured. Parental support was primarily financial, but emotional support, including attendance, non-verbal cues, and verbal affirmations, was also crucial. Athletes who shared the pressures of high-performance sports with their parents found relief, though many struggled to open up. While parental pressure was generally perceived as supportive and expectations were reasonable, most athletes internalized pressure. Athletes typically led conversations regarding their performance, with most valuing honest feedback. The importance of parental communication is highlighted in shaping an athlete's experience during a critical transition in their athletic career.

Emotion Regulation Under Pressure

Ayesha Shafiq

Supervisors: Dr. Natasha Gallant and Kelsey Haczewicz, MSc

Acute social stress, a common type of stress faced in situations of intense pressure and social evaluation, induces both psychological and physiological responses. When these responses are prolonged or poorly managed, they can have detrimental effects on one's health. Emotion regulation, the capacity to control and modulate one's emotional responses, is a central mechanism that shapes how individuals experience and recover from stressors. This study aimed to examine how two prevalent emotion regulation strategies, cognitive reappraisal (CR) and expressive suppression (ES), influence stress responses. Participants (N=58) completed the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire as part of an online survey to assess their use of each strategy. They then participated in the Trier Social Stress Test (TSST) and control (C-TSST) in a counterbalanced design. Physiological markers (heart rate [HR], heart rate variability [HRV], and skin conductance level [SCL]), along with subjective stress ratings, were collected through both tasks. Through a manipulation check, it was concluded that the TSST successfully induced more stress than the C-TSST. Multiple linear regression analyses and linear mixed-effects models assessed associations between regulation strategies and stress responses. ES was significantly associated with higher perceived threat and showed a slight trend towards slower HR recovery. CR was not found to be significantly linked to physiological or subjective stress markers, although slight trends were present. These findings highlight the potential impact of emotion regulation on stress reactivity. By gaining a deeper understanding of adaptive and maladaptive emotion regulation strategies, interventions that promote healthier coping mechanisms can be implemented.

Suitability of Internet-Delivered Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Public Safety Personnel with Subthreshold Symptoms

Paige Sivell

Supervisors: Dr. Jill Price and Dr. Heather Hadjistavropoulos

Public safety personnel (PSP) face a high risk of developing mental health challenges due to frequent exposure to potentially psychologically traumatic events (PPTs). Subthreshold PSP, who experience symptoms that do not meet diagnostic criteria, may benefit from proactively using mental health programs such as the PSP Wellbeing Course, an internet-delivered cognitive behavioral therapy (ICBT) program tailored for PSP. This mixed methods study examined the suitability of the PSP Wellbeing Course for subthreshold PSP by exploring treatment engagement, mental health outcomes, resilience, treatment satisfaction, and participant feedback. Quantitative data were collected from 174 pre-existing clients and analyzed using descriptive statistics, paired-samples t-tests, and Hedges' *g* to evaluate symptom change from pre-treatment to 8-weeks post-enrollment. Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with 10 current clients were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis to capture participant perspectives. Findings revealed statistically significant reductions in anxiety, depression, and posttraumatic stress symptoms, with maintained subthreshold symptom levels and stable resilience scores. Participants expressed high satisfaction with the course's structure, flexibility, and relevance, and reported both professional and personal benefits. Qualitative themes highlighted the value of relatable materials, proactive support, therapist involvement, and the importance of early access to mental health tools. These findings support the use of ICBT as a proactive intervention for subthreshold PSP and offer recommendations for refining ICBT delivery in high-stress occupations.

Adult's Awareness of Coaching in Child Sexual Abuse Cases

Amy Wark

Supervisors: Dr. Kaila Bruer and Shaelyn Carr, MSc

Child sexual abuse (CSA) victims often withhold disclosure due to the perpetrator coaching the child to deny abuse (Kellog, 2016; Schaeffer et al., 2011). Coached reports are often consistent and recent research suggests that this makes them believable (Gillingham, 2023). CSA victims are perceived as credible by adults (McCauley & Parker, 2001; Nunez et al., 2011). Taken together, this suggests that a child coached to deny sexual abuse would be perceived as highly believable. However, the believability of coached reports may be influenced by victim-perpetrator relationship. This study explored how adults' perceptions of CSA victims and awareness of coaching differed as a function of the consistency of evidence (i.e., consistent or inconsistent) and victim-perpetrator relationship (i.e., stepfather, peer, stranger). Specifically, we were interested in how these variables impact perceived credibility of the child and awareness of coaching. Jury-eligible participants ($N = 149$) read one of six CSA mock-forensic interview transcripts involving a twelve-year-old boy giving testimony containing evidence of coaching. Transcripts varied the child's relationship to the perpetrator and how consistent the child's report was. As hypothesized, children with more consistent reports were found to be perceived as more credible, but this perceived credibility was not influenced by the victim-perpetrator relationship. Though results for awareness of coaching indicated there may be a trend where adults are skeptical of coaching, there were no main effects. These results indicate that children that are more consistent with evidence are perceived as more credible by adults, and that adults can recognize signs of coaching.

Special Thanks To ...

Annaleigh Baker, Administrative Assistant, Department of Psychology

Jane Ardelan, Administrative Assistant, Department of Psychology

Dr. Richard MacLennan, Honours Thesis Course Instructor

Dr. Sarah Sangster, Undergraduate Coordinator

Our Judges,

- Dr. Chris Oriet, Professor, Department of Psychology
- Louise Castillo, PhD Student, Clinical Psychology
- Kelsey Haczekwicz, PhD Student, Clinical Psychology
- Siham Hagi Hussein, PhD Student, Experimental and Applied Psychology
- Andrew McLennan, PhD Student, Clinical Psychology
- Kirby Maguire, PhD Student, Experimental and Applied Psychology

The Undergraduate and Honours Committee

All of the parents, partners, children, friends, research participants, and supporters of our wonderful Honours students—without you, this celebration wouldn't be possible!