



Charles Allen

Doctor of Psychology in
Leadership Psychology
June 2016

Exponential Leadership: A New Framework for 21st Century Leadership Success

“In this doctorate project, the researcher provides a theoretical leadership development model that helps leaders build the psychological capabilities they need to meet the demands of the 21st century. The researcher proposes that the adoption of this new theoretical model called Exponential Leadership best meets the needs of leaders striving for success in the current environment as the model helps address key psychological dynamics inherent in contemporary leadership development work. The Exponential Leadership model comprises of both the key competencies that leaders need to develop (Expansive Vision, Adaptive Learning, Collective Intelligence, and Resilient Foresight) and the respective barriers that need to be overcome (Protective Instinct, Defensive Narcissism, Command Isolation, and Short-Term Biased Cognition). The researcher provides support for the model via academic literature and discusses implications for further research and development.”

Robert Hill

Doctor of Psychology in
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Disruption's Birth: The Relentless Search for Best-Fit Value

“The term disruption has become ubiquitous since it was first introduced in 1995. Since the theory's inception, it has been applied and, often, misapplied in a wide variety of settings. As Christensen, Raynor, and McDonald, (2015) have noted, there is a gap in knowledge as to the mechanisms that bring disruptive innovation to bear. This doctoral project is a qualitative study using case analysis and grounded theory methodology on Match Beyond, a disruptive innovation in higher education. From this research, a model emerged of the factors that bring disruptive innovation to bear. The results show that the prowess and culture of the organization and the skills and attitude of its employees are significant factors which can help bring disruptive innovation to fruition. The results of this research suggest that the birth of disruptive innovation is an organic one which is driven by true understanding of the needs of fringe customers, combined with a relentless desire to pursue value which best meet those needs of the fringe customers. The researcher has termed the value which results from this process as best-fit value. This model is a departure from current theory which emphasizes the supply and demand features of the market which are present when disruptive innovation occurs.”

Maria Katsarou

Doctor of Psychology in
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Increasing Trust and Oxytocin levels in a Leadership Team through Structural Dynamics

“Several studies have shown that the neuropeptide oxytocin is associated with increased trust in humans. However, most of those studies have focused on intranasal administration of synthetic oxytocin and measured trust levels of participants before and after the administration in specific contexts like trust games. This study was a quasi-experiment and measured the existing levels of oxytocin and perceived trust in an intact leadership team of an organization. Oxytocin levels were measured through saliva samples via an enzyme immunoassay (EIA) using the EIA kit from Assay Designs (Ann Arbor, Michigan) prior to and after an organizational development intervention using the Kantor model of Structural Dynamics. Perceived trust was likewise

measured twice, prior to and after the intervention through the Interpersonal Trust at Work Scale (Cook & Wall, 1980). It was hypothesized that Structural Dynamics, a model that describes the interplay of structures within a communication system and provides compelling insight into how individuals and teams can operate more effectively together, when used as an organizational development intervention would improve perceived trust amongst team-members and increased oxytocin levels. Oxytocin levels rose dramatically, followed by an increase in perceived trust levels, which however, was not directly correlated, i.e. higher levels of oxytocin did not imply similar high levels in perceived trust.”

Miranda Ralston
Doctor of Psychology in
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June 2016

A Neurological Perspective on the Effects of Resonant and Dissonant Leadership Behaviors on Followers and Perceived Psychological Safety

“The use of neurological technology is a relatively new area of study within leadership research. Therefore very little is known about the neurological activity that is evoked within the brains of followers as they experience different leadership styles. This study aimed to extend previous research on the neural activity of leaders, as well as examine the under researched model of Resonant and Dissonant Leadership styles to explore the neural experience of followers under these specific leadership conditions. The study used the Cognision System QEEG technology to study the neural activity stimulated in participants under the leadership conditions in an attempt to understand the neural responses followers have to Resonant and Dissonant Leaders. The study further explored the QEEG data as it is related to the level of perceived psychological safety experienced by participants in response to resonant and dissonant leadership conditions.”

“Additionally, a link between resonant and dissonant leadership styles and individual level psychological safety was established showing that resonant leadership resulted in higher perceived psychological safety. Further, a connection between psychological safety and neural responses was found indicating that the perception of psychological safety results in differing neural responses. Finally, a statistically significant difference between response timing in a button press task between resonant and dissonant leadership conditions was found. Together, these findings have unveiled a broad range responses followers have to resonant and dissonant leadership styles. The data analysis revealed several significant and novel findings. First, there was a statistically significant difference in the neural responses between resonant and dissonant leadership styles.”

Krystal Bartley Machado
Doctor of Psychology in School
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June 2016

Experiencing School with a Life-Threatening Food Allergy

“This project investigated the phenomena of middle and high school students’ school experience with life-threatening food allergies, specifically the effects on learning and social-emotional well-being. The purpose of this project was to give students with food allergies a voice and inform intervention in the school setting. Nine middle and high school students and parents participated in a face-to-face interview and storytelling activity and survey, respectively. Qualitative analysis and In Vivo coding (Saldaña, 2013) yielded three themes: (1) perception of awareness and understanding, (2) self-advocacy, and (3) feelings experienced by students with life-threatening food allergies. Each activity yielded similar and overlapping themes and subthemes. Participants’ perception of threat and locus of control differed based on their perception of their condition and support and safety at school. Some factors interpreted as contributing to student comfort level and decrease fear of reaction include: (1) awareness of

school policy, (2) no food eaten in the classroom, and (3) permission to carry life-saving EpiPens at school. Another important finding was the food-allergic student's empathy for others around them, acknowledging that their condition also affects those they are around. Parent and children reports were in agreement regarding the severity of the food allergy, lack of impact on learning, lack of utilization of school mental health services, and a decrease in support as students enter middle and high school. Disagreement between parent and child reports of the school food allergy policy, negative peer interactions, and the child's ability or desire to self-advocate, was noted."

Meghan Hudson
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June 2016

Outcomes of a School-Based Suicide Prevention Program for Middle School Students

"This project investigates the impact of the SOS Signs of Suicide Prevention Program on middle school students' knowledge of appropriate steps to take if a peer expresses suicidality, their attitudes about this help-seeking behavior and the likelihood that they would engage in it if a peer were to express suicidality. It reviews literature pertaining to risk and protective factors for suicide, types of suicide prevention programs and a summary of previous evaluations of the SOS Program with high school students. Comparison of pre- and post-intervention surveys yielded statistically significant increases from pre- to post-intervention in students' knowledge of appropriate steps to take and their self-reported likelihood of engaging in help-seeking behavior if a peer expresses suicidality. There was not a statistically significant increase from pre- to post-intervention in students' self-reported attitudes about this help-seeking behavior. Following comparison of pre- and post-intervention surveys, this study included qualitative interviews with students whose self-reports did not indicate positive overall changes in knowledge of, attitude toward and likelihood of engaging in help-seeking behavior in response to peers' expressing suicidality. These interviews identified the need for increased teaching of coping strategies for those students who may be experiencing depression, the absence of and need for examples of actual events related to students experiencing suicidality and the need for subtlety and nuance in the scenarios depicted in the SOS video."

Toni-Marie Kelly
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June 2016

Increasing the Relevance and Value of the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation System for School Psychologists

"The Massachusetts educator evaluation system is used to determine the effectiveness of educators. For school psychologists, this evaluation serves as administrative supervision; and often is the only type of supervision provided despite research indicating its need in order to deliver best practices. The process of providing meaningful and relevant feedback to school psychologists needs further investigation. This study aimed to identify ways to enhance school psychologists' experience with educator evaluation through an alternative approach. Participants consisted of school psychologists (n=24) who completed a survey about their past evaluations, attended two seminars, and completed a follow-up survey about their experience developing an educator plan using the alternative approach. The research design measured participant understanding of the evaluation system, degree of relevance and meaning behind the process, and impact on daily practice. Results indicated a significant difference between the level of understanding before and after attending the seminars. No statistically significant differences were found between participant responses pre- and post- seminar in regard to the relevance and meaning of the process, or the impact it had on daily practice. Participants indicated the alternative approach resulted in greater reflection, connection

between goals and practice, and tools more representative of their role. Implications of the study suggest the need for continued training at the educator and supervisor level in order to maximize the impact of the process.”

Jaclyn Kinsman
Doctor of Psychology in School
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June 2016

The Social and Emotional Effects of Substantially Separate Language-Based Classrooms on Elementary-Aged Students

“An important area of emphasis on educational research over the past several years has been the impact of classroom placement on students with disabilities. Although recent research has indicated that students in substantially separate classrooms often perceive their teachers and classmates as significantly more emotionally supportive than students in regular education classrooms, little research has explored one’s lived-experiences of the social and emotional effects of full-inclusion classrooms versus substantially separate language-based classrooms. The researcher used a qualitative methodology and a semi-structured interview to collect data from 20 elementary-aged participants that were currently being educated in substantially separate language-based classrooms, but had also been educated in full-inclusion general education classrooms within the past two years. Results from this study indicated that classroom placement, specifically full-inclusion versus substantially separate placement, affects individuals’ social and emotional experiences, both positively and negatively. A major finding revealed the importance of substantially separate classrooms for language-based learners in that they often reported feeling more emotionally supported while they were being educated in substantially separate classrooms. The current study aimed to close a gap in the literature by researching the lived-experiences in these classroom settings, as they related to an individual’s social and emotional experiences. This researcher hopes that future studies will continue the investigation into this phenomenon.”

Kimberly Lessard
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June 2016

Online Professional Development: Impact on Treatment Integrity of ABA Interventions for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

“Given the rise in prevalence of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and the legal requirements for public school districts to implement evidence-based educational interventions, there is an increased need for school districts to train staff to implement these interventions with fidelity. The National Professional Development Committee (2014) and the National Autism Center (2015) have identified multiple evidence-based interventions for children with ASD. Many of these evidence-based practices are based in the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA). One of these ABA interventions is discrete trial training. The present study assessed the impact of an online professional development program on treatment integrity during discrete trial training. The current study utilized a mixed methods design including both a single subject multiple baseline approach and qualitative analysis of an exit interview. The purpose was to determine if the online training impacted the overall integrity with which discrete trials were being implemented. In addition, the study also sought to understand the participants’ perceptions of the training. The results suggest that the training had limited impact on the fidelity of implementation of discrete trial training. However, the participants did report improvements in their ability to implement DTT lesson plans with greater levels of integrity. Suggestions for future research are discussed.”

Christine Moley
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June 2016

Examining Growth Mindset in an Inpatient Population: Do Youth with Significant Emotional and Behavioral Challenges Think Change is Possible?

“Considerable prior research has explored implicit theories of personality and their relationship to various domains of life functioning. These implicit theories, more contemporarily referred to as mindsets, have been found to manifest predominantly as either fixed (believing individual characteristics to be “set in stone”) or growth-oriented (believing in the malleability of personal traits). The present study sought to examine the mindsets held by youth receiving inpatient psychiatric care, explore possible correlations between mindset and degree of clinical acuity, and determine if an intervention which taught a growth mindset impacted treatment outcomes as compared to a different positive intervention. Participants were youth aged 12-17 (N=21). Assessment of mindset occurred at pretest and post-test. Acuity of symptoms was measured at intake with parent and youth self-report ratings, and at discharge with youth self-report ratings. Significant correlations ($p < .05$) were found at pretest between violent ideation and fixed mindset, as well as inattentive/hyperactive symptoms and growth mindset. Assessment of mindset at post-test indicated a significant ($p < .05$) move towards a growth mindset for the entire sample, regardless of the intervention received. Analysis of treatment outcomes in relation to the intervention received were inconclusive, though all participants showed a reduction in symptoms. Limitations are discussed in terms of the small sample size and other potentially confounding variables. Discussion highlights the need for further research and emphasizes the potential utility of these brief positive interventions in promoting optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience during times of mental health crisis.”

Crystal Mims
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January 2016

Effectiveness of the FRIENDS Program in Reducing Anxiety Symptoms Among Female High School Students

“In light of the occurrence of anxiety disorders among children and adolescents, it has become increasingly important to investigate the effectiveness of anxiety prevention and intervention programs in schools. In response, this study examined one such program: the FRIENDS prevention program (Barrett, 2004). The primary goal of this study was to evaluate the effects of the FRIENDS universal anxiety prevention program within a sample of tenth grade female students. Pre and post anxiety levels were assessed using paired sample t-tests. Significant improvements were realized in overall Adolescent Stress Questionnaire results, specifically in the domains of Resolving Conflict and Performance/Expectations subscales. This was supplemented with similar reduction in anxiety, as indicated by the physical symptoms subscale of the Multidimensional Anxiety Scale for Children-Second Edition. The FRIENDS program should be considered as a proactive means for ameliorating the elevated levels of anxiety and sources of stress that affect high school students in the very environment where many of these stressors are derived from the academic environment.”

Tess Powell
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Intervention Efficacy of a Social Learning Curriculum to Improve Social Skills of At-Risk Kindergarten Students

“The purpose of the current study was to assess the impact of a brief, social-cognitive model of social skills intervention on student social attendant behavior, monitoring behavior, and social skills. Student participants ranged in age between 5.7 and 6.3 years old and were enrolled in kindergarten classrooms at a low-income, urban school. Teacher ratings and referral identified all student participants as demonstrating

below average social skills. Two intervention groups, composed of four kindergarten age students, were selected in a wait-control design. Both groups received 12, 40-50 minute sessions of The Incredible Flexible You Social Thinking® curriculum over the course of six weeks. Three data collection periods included teacher ratings of students' social skills using the SSIS, SRS-2, and BRIEF. The results of the study did not provide evidence of the program's ability to improve social attendant behaviors, monitoring behaviors, or social skills in kindergarten students identified as demonstrating below average social skills."

Rachel Dale
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January 2016

Exploring the Experiences of Grandchildren of Holocaust Survivors

"The purpose of this study was to investigate the unique experiences of adult grandchildren of Jewish Holocaust survivors, filling an important gap in the literature concerning intergenerational consequences of trauma. The design of this study was qualitative and exploratory in nature, allowing for a deeper understanding of how grandchildren of survivors understand and make meaning of their Holocaust background as well as exploring the psychological impact of growing up in a family with a Holocaust history. Ten participants (aged 24-36) completed background questionnaires and participated in semi-structured interviews designed to explore their experiences as grandchildren of survivors. Participant interviews were transcribed and analyzed for recurring themes."

"The findings from this study suggest that grandchildren of survivors are strongly affected by their family's Holocaust past and aspects of trauma and resilience are intertwined in the unique psychological experiences they describe as members of the third generation. The topic areas addressed in this study include the following from the perspective of grandchildren of survivors: family communication patterns pertaining to their Holocaust history; the development of Holocaust narratives and knowledge; emotions associated with bearing witness to grandparents' stories; relationships with survivor grandparents; perceptions of how the second generation was affected; the process of emotionally understanding the gravity of the Holocaust; identity and Holocaust relevance in daily life; and the messages, expectations and perceived effects of being grandchildren of survivors. Implications for clinical practice stress the importance for therapists to signal an openness to hearing about grandchildren of survivor's family history of Holocaust trauma and how they are personally impacted by this history."

Helen Fucci
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January 2016

A Guided Therapeutic Activity Book for School-Aged Pediatric Transplant Recipients

"Organ transplantation in school-aged children and the medical conditions preceding transplantation affect thousands of children in the United States. Previous research and clinical findings have demonstrated adolescence as a particularly psychologically challenging time for transplant recipients, who tend to adhere less to needed medical regimens. There is a paucity of psychological resources to help children cope well with transplantation as they transition into adolescence. Utilizing a demonstration research design, a draft therapeutic activity book was constructed for use by children post-transplantation with a caregiver or therapist's help. Theoretical foundations guiding this activity book's construction include: narrative therapy and Reflective Network Therapy, as well as developmental and health psychology, particularly in relation to the psychosocial impact of pediatric organ transplantation. After the activity book was drafted and repeatedly revised in response to research committee feedback, feedback on its utility and appropriateness was solicited from four consultants, who

offered recommendations on improving the draft. Each consultant had substantial experience in at least one of the areas of theoretical and clinical focus used to develop the activity book. The consultants all reported finding the activity book to be both clinically beneficial and appealing to children. Consultants' feedback was categorized and analyzed by the researcher and her research committee. Recommendations included changes to the language, organization, and clarity of specific pages and in the overall tone of the activity book. Consultants' recommendations were presented in Results, along with the researcher's process of determining which recommendations to incorporate into the final draft. Both the original and final versions are included in the present study. This activity book is a preventive intervention to help children make meaning of their experiences and enter adolescence with greater responsibility and personal agency over their health needs. It invites children to write and draw about many aspects of their lives as well as about their transplants, emphasizing their strengths, resources, and values in the service of building and solidifying a sense of mastery. It provides a much-needed intervention for a growing population of pediatric transplant recipients. Future studies should evaluate the effectiveness of the activity book with the target population."

Toni Mahowald

Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
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The decision-making process of child clinicians: When and how to involve parents

"Parental involvement in child therapy has been widely acknowledged as a valuable component of successful therapeutic treatment. There are, however, multiple views on when and how parents should be involved in treatment. The current study sought to examine how child clinicians make these important treatment decisions through the use of hypothetical clinical vignettes and a semi-structured interview aimed at elucidating the decision-making process. Ten child clinicians with an average of 25 years of experience provided insights into their decision-making processes regarding hypothetical vignettes of a seven-year old child and an adolescent female. Qualitative analysis of the transcribed interviews indicated that developmental issues (e.g., behavioral management for the child, and adolescent separation) played an important role in the decision-making of this group. Interestingly, these clinicians did not speak specifically about the role of diagnosis in their decision-making process, and future investigations might explore this question in more detail."

Paulina Moad

Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
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Vive Con Vida: A Suicide Awareness Campaign for Mexican Adolescents and Young Adults

"Given the escalating suicide rates among Mexican youth and the dearth of information about mental health in Mexico, this project developed an online suicide awareness campaign for adolescents and young adults between the ages of 15 and 29 years old in Mexico. With the literature review as a guideline, a website with social media presence was created. The website aimed to be attractive to the target population through its design, its use of videos and images, and by allowing users to interact with others through some of its features. It includes recommendations on how to get help in moments of crisis, information about suicide and other mental health topics, and a link to additional help and resources. It also allows users to get involved in the project by creating psycho-education campaigns in their communities, and to express their feelings through artistic expressions that can be published in the website. The website includes links to social media presence and has a feature that allows its translation to Spanish and Portuguese. Seven reviewers from different backgrounds provided diverse feedback that will help enrich future versions of this website. Future research includes

integrating the reviewers' feedback, replicating the study with a bigger sample, and expanding its usability to other countries and settings, such as schools and medical offices."

Hilary Novak

Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
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An Evaluation of the Impact of Locus of Control on Public Perceptions and Support of Policies that Govern Sexual Offenders

"This study analyzed the impact of locus of control and fear of crime on attitudes and perceptions of the sex offender registry policies. The US sample of 206 participants represented different geographic regions, religious perspectives, socioeconomic status levels, and levels of education well, but the vast majority (86.4%) of respondents identified as white/Caucasian. Respondents completed an online survey including Rotter's Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966), the Fear of Crime Scale (Williams, McShane, & Akers, 2000), and the Attitudes and Perceptions of the Sex Offender Registry Policies measure (Levenson & Cotter, 2005), among supplemental and demographic questions. Overall, the results indicated that respondents often were unaware of the policies that take place in their communities and that they tend to overestimate the frequency of the sexual offenses compared to known base rates. Female participants reported greater fear of crime, taking more general precautions against crime, and having a greater belief in the negative consequences associated with the sex offender registry policies. Older individuals reported taking greater precautions when traveling, and younger individuals reported greater fear of crime both during the day and at night. Individuals with masters or doctoral degrees reported a reduced belief that the policies are helpful in reducing offending. Unexpectedly, an external locus of control did not predict greater fear of crime or more strict attitudes toward policies governing sexual offenders. Instead, individuals with a more internal locus of control were more likely to agree that residency restrictions and the public reporting of sexual offender personal information were fair and that such policies are effective at preventing re-offense. Curiously, respondents who reported sharing the same values as their neighbors (community cohesion) also were more likely to say such policies were fair and effective. The relationship between locus of control and community cohesion is not well understood and bears further investigation. Differing views of the utility and efficacy of the sex offender registry policies, including concerns that they may be counter-productive, make understanding the factors that influence public support of these policies particularly timely and relevant to investigate."

Debra Olszewski

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The Seven C's of Change: How to Successfully Initiate and Maintain an Exercise Plan

"This demonstration project was designed in order to create a multi-intervention, psycho-educational presentation for new fitness club members entitled "The Seven C's of Change: How to Successfully Initiate and Maintain an Exercise Plan." The primary purpose was to develop a presentation in order to introduce seven key components of behavioral change and present a corresponding intervention for each of them. The presentation was created as a short, easy-to-understand power point format and was delivered at the time of joining. It was hoped that the presentation would aid in the new members' initiation and maintenance of an exercise plan. After a four week period, the new members comprehensively assessed the presentation, each of the seven components, and the corresponding interventions. To compare and contrast their assessment, the multi-intervention presentation was also shown to two professional trainers from the same club who were also asked for feedback after the same four week period.

A review of literature on the initiation, maintenance and drop off of exercisers suggested that the empirically validated components which formed the multi-intervention presentation were the seven most catalyzing and motivating agents for behavior change in the study of exercise initiation and maintenance. An effort was made to distill this literature into the most effective multi-intervention presentation possible.

This power point presentation introduced these seven components as “The Seven C’s of Change”: Control, Connection, Confidence, Cueing, Conquering, Compensation and Charting and suggested a simple, intervention for each of the C’s which would potentially aid in the participant’s exercise initiation and maintenance.

After a four week period, each of the four participants was interviewed using a one on one semi-structured interview format to assess the presentation. At this time they were also administered a brief rating scale questionnaire to further assess each of the seven components and corresponding interventions. Based on feedback from the participants, modifications were suggested to improve the presentation.”

Carla Pimentel
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
January 2016

The Experience of Microaggression Against Latina Graduate Psychology Students

“This study was a qualitative exploration of perceived microaggressions in the academic experiences of Latina psychology students using a phenomenological method. The nine participants were self-identified Latinas enrolled in clinical, counseling, school, developmental, organizational, experimental, or other psychology programs in the northeastern United States. Through semi-structured interviews, these women discussed their experiences of microaggressions in their academic programs and training sites and the protective factors that had enabled them to proceed despite encountering microaggressions. Interview data were categorized and coded which led to the identification of seven meta-themes, each of which was then divided into several sub-themes. Each of the participants identified multiple protective factors that had enabled her to pursue her degree despite experiencing both subtle and overt incidents of discrimination. In addition to protective factors, other meta-themes that emerged from the data included others questioning their competence, the ambiguity inherent in microaggressions, the expectation that they were experts on all Latino culture, feelings of isolation and lack of support, and stereotypes about Latinos they had encountered.

The women interviewed offered insights that may be important to the training community if it is to attract and retain Latina graduate students. Faculty should be aware of the many subtle ways in which they can unintentionally communicate disdain for women who may learn or speak differently from Eurocentric expectations. School administrators should recognize the importance of increasing the number of women and persons of color in the faculty and should find ways to increase contact between Latino faculty and students to reduce the isolation these women feel.”

Laura Davis
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June 2016

Staff Perspectives of Family Involvement in Adolescent Residential Treatment

“The field of residential treatment is becoming more focused on family involvement, yet historically there has been a tension between direct care staff members and clients’ families. The current study investigated the perceptions of 31 direct care staff members in residential treatment facilities for children and adolescents in Massachusetts. More specifically the goal of this study was to explore the views of direct care staff members about their skills, their relationship to the clinical staff and to the families of their clients. The researcher designed a survey to solicit staff perceptions. The survey

was distributed to willing agencies across the state of Massachusetts and their non-supervisory direct care staff members were asked to volunteer to complete the online survey. Volunteer participants ranged from 20 to 54 years-old and reported higher educational levels than those in previous studies of the direct care staff population. Most were college educated and many had a master's degree. Approximately half had received some training related to their job prior to being hired and approximately four out of five reported that they had received training while on the job, but most reported that this training was not related to working with families. Given that there are state mandated training regulations focused on safety, the quality and type of training they received may not have been clinical in nature. As in previous studies of this nature, respondents saw themselves as well qualified to perform their job, but questioned the competence of co-workers. While they reported enjoying their work with clients, they were more reluctant to interact with families, while recognizing that family work was essential for client reintegration after they were discharged. Several hypotheses were offered for staff resistance to engaging with clients' families. Despite the evidence that it is important to involve families in the treatment process, the current results suggest that more training and supervision will be essential to overcoming the barriers that contribute to direct care staff resistance to working with families. Future research of this nature should include a larger sample across a broader geographical region and should ask more pointed questions about the sources of staff resistance, their motivations for choosing this type of employment, and their thoughts about how their expertise might be used in clinical work with families."

Doug Frew

Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
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License Portability: Opinions and Potential Barriers According to Licensed Psychologists

"The present study explored the current opinions of a sample of practicing psychologists about increasing portability of psychologist licensure across states/jurisdictions in the United States of America. Thirty one psychologists practicing in ten different states were surveyed with a number of questions pertaining to licensure portability. All thirty-one psychologists agreed with the statement "I believe that the psychologist license should be made more portable between U.S. jurisdictions/states." Five common themes emerged from the phenomenological analysis of the rationales for increasing portability. These included reduced burden on psychologists, the similarity between competencies and requirements for licensure between states/jurisdictions, greater mobility and increased opportunities for psychologists, increased accessibility of mental health services and advances in the use of technology, and personal experiences and frustrations with obtaining licenses in another state/jurisdiction. Four common themes emerged from the phenomenological analysis of the potential barriers to increase portability. These included developing and agreeing on national standards, bureaucratic issues needing to be addressed, the coordinating of the roles of states/state licensing boards and the field of psychology, and no legitimate barriers to increasing portability. Interpretations and implications of these results are discussed."

Emily Hotz

Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
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Trajectories and Turning Points within the Stepchild-Stepparent Relationship

"The purpose of this study was to develop a better understanding of the currently under researched stepchild-stepparent (SCSP) relationship from multiple perspectives within individual families. A review of the literature examined relevant theories in stepfamily research, stepfamily relationships, stepfamily integration, as well as turning points and trajectories. The method consisted of an opportunistic sampling technique and semi-structured interviews that asked questions about the participants'

experience as a stepchild or stepparent, questions regarding the stepchild-stepparent relationship, questions to help categorize the trajectory of the SCSP relationship, and questions regarding specific turning points in the relationship. Using a consensual qualitative research approach, themes were extrapolated from the data by two researchers in attempt to increase validity. The results suggested that stepparents and stepchildren identify different factors as being significant to relational change from their perspective. The noncustodial parent relationship was much more significant for stepparents than for stepchildren. Themes that occurred more prevalently for stepchildren included: roles, the custodial parent relationship, and medical issues. The data regarding trajectories did not fit any preexisting categorization system. The positive and linear trajectories were described as those that experienced acceptance of the stepparent as a parent, had an accelerated trajectory, and demonstrated stepfamily awareness. The families that had a more turbulent or slowly developing relationship trajectory eventually became a comfortable step-relationship based on either: stepparent intrinsic change or stepchild return and repair behavior. This may suggest a new way of categorizing data relating to the trajectory of step-relationships. However, future research should be conducted to research this topic further.”

Adam Arsenault
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June 2016

Work-Related Stress and Trauma for Emergency Medical Services Personnel: Coping and Recommendations for Mental Health Providers

“Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and paramedics providing emergency medical services and rapid ambulance transport are exposed to direct and indirect trauma on a frequent basis. This interpretative phenomenological analysis of face-to-face interviews with ten EMS providers sought to better understand their experiences of doing pre-hospital emergency medical services. Participants filled out a brief demographic form and then were interviewed about their experiences, including what they found stressful in their work as first responders, how they coped with that stress, and what recommendations they had for mental health providers to better meet their needs.

Participants unanimously reported that EMS was a positive and fulfilling experience for them, and that the reason that it was so positive was that it involved helping people. They further reported that, while they experienced many stressors, the effects of those stressors were buffered by the sense of purpose and calling they felt. Strikingly, the great majority of the benefits that participants reported involved a sense of relationship to patients and coworkers, as well as a relational call to serve. Similarly, the majority of stressors that participants named were also relational, for instance, with regard to losing patients, the distress of patients’ families, their own distress when children, elders, or people with other vulnerabilities were seriously sick or injured. While financial, organizational and workload problems were reported, they received much less emphasis that the relational stressors.

Participants made several recommendations for mental health providers who work with EMS employees, including developing knowledge of EMS culture, developing a personal connection with EMS workers, and the development of a fitness for duty evaluation. Participants reported that EMS as a field involves many significant interpersonal experiences (both positive and negative), but that that many EMS workers are not very open to talking about difficult experiences. They urged mental health providers to consider both these issues in working with EMS personnel.”

Laura Zakreski
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June 2016

“Abuela Tells Me to Stop and I Can’t!”: Cultural Considerations for Latinos with Chronic Tic Disorders

“Tic disorders can have significant impacts on children’s social, academic, and family functioning. While research based in the United States shares general information about tic disorders, Latinos have been significantly underrepresented in the literature. This study examined Latino parents’ conceptualization of their children’s tics through data collected from semi-structured interviews and quantitative surveys. Themes from the interviews (n = 4) were phenomenologically reviewed, cross-analyzed, and interpreted. Many of the core ideas were present among the majority of participants. Latino families that have been in the United States for more generations tended to describe their child’s tics using a medical model, while one participant who is a first-generation Latino described his stepson’s tics as “mañas” or habits, as they are commonly referred to in parts of Latin America. Further analysis of how acculturation affects the understanding of tics is prudent as these preliminary results are not generalizable. Areas of future research, such as culturally-sensitive, evidence-based treatments for tic disorders, and clinical implications, such as the importance of advocacy and psychoeducation about tic disorders, are discussed.”

Sarah Young
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June 2016

Primary Care Physicians’ Identification and Management of the Behaviorally Challenging Older Adult Patient

“For the older adult patient with Personality Disorder (PD), the synergistic effect of PD pathology and the usual stressors associated with aging are poised to create an even more complex presentation in medical settings, though vastly understudied. The current research study addressed the following question: How do Primary Care Physicians (PCPs) identify and manage their behaviorally challenging older adult patients with PD? The study sought to answer this question through utilization of a mixed method design. Thirty-five PCPs enrolled in the study and completed a survey of quantitative and qualitative questions based on a vignette of a behaviorally challenging older patient. Sixty percent (n=21) correctly included Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) or Personality Disorder (PD) as a diagnosis, and 40% of participants (n=14) indicated coming across patients with similar profiles often. Three primary management strategies were identified, including referring to a mental health specialist, involving members of the care team to complement treatment, and allotting greater appointment length and/or frequency. Furthermore participants identified a need for greater training in geriatrics and in working with behaviorally challenging patients.”

Jennifer Brownstein
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

Cultivating Self-Compassion through a Youth Resiliency Program

“This demonstration project describes the development of a 12-session manual for middle school students, aged 12-15, who attend McLean Hospital’s Program in Education, Afterschool & Resiliency (PEAR). The program is based on the Clover model, which focuses on four elements necessary for youth to thrive: Active Engagement, Assertiveness, Belonging and Reflection. This project details the rationale and development of the new manual for the Reflection “leaf” of the Clover model. The approach that this manual highlights will be especially useful for adolescents with well-developed skills in analysis, insight, observation and understanding, but who are at risk for rumination and over-analysis. The goal of this group curriculum is to amplify the participant’s well-honed ability for self-reflection and wed it with self-compassion. Positive psychology research indicates that this is likely to increase resiliency by strengthening protective factors such as optimism and social connection. Increasing

one's self-compassion will not only be used to cultivate self-reflection, but it is also expected to increase optimism and connectedness. An interview was conducted with an expert in the field, Dr. Gil Noam. The preliminary curriculum was revised to address some of the questions he raised. The results of this project include the revised Reflections manual and recommendations for future research.”

Maria Zapater-Raberov
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
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June 2016

Testing the Cultural Fairness of the Spanish Version of the Addenbrooke's Cognitive Examination-Revised (ACE-R) Through Item Analysis with a Peruvian Population

“There is a gap in the literature with regard to the impact culture has upon neuropsychological testing performance. Further, there is scant evidence that popular assessment measures are being validated and normed with culturally-diverse populations. Using testing tools that are not culturally sensitive can often lead clinicians to over-pathologize individuals from diverse populations. This is becoming a problem, particularly in the United States of America, where growing minority populations are accessing neuropsychological testing services with greater frequency. The purpose of this study was to test the relevance of the Spanish version of the Addenbrooke's Cognitive Examination-Revised (ACE-R) in a population other than the one for which it was developed. An archival data base was used in this quantitative study. The scores obtained by 86 participants of Peruvian origin on the Spanish version of the ACE-R were analyzed. Their familiarity with the items that composed this test, as well as the differences in performance between this cohort and the control group used to validate the ACE-R were examined. The effects of the Peruvian sample's age, years of education, and gender upon the total scores obtained on the Spanish version of the ACE-R were also analyzed. The findings suggested that the Peruvian sample's lack of familiarity with many of the test items translated into poorer performances. Also, the construct validity of the Spanish version of the ACE-R for this Peruvian cohort was challenged given that together, “age” and “years of education” accounted for more than 55.7% of the variance found with this sample. That is, these two variables provided more than half of the information needed to predict how the Peruvian participants would do on this test. This was not the case when examining the data from the original control groups who were administered the English versions of the test. The validation of the ACE-R found no significant effect of age in relationship to the ACE-R total score, and the validation of the ACE found no significant effect of age, years of education, and gender in relationship to the ACE total score. In sum, this study suggests that simply translating a test does not preserve the construct validity of the instrument. More resources need to be spent in the area of cross-cultural neuropsychology in order to better inform theories of brain functioning and clinical practice with people of diverse backgrounds. This type of work is crucial in order to better be able to serve the needs of growing minority groups in the United States.”

Elysha Greenberg
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

Destination Imagination: An Examination of Highly Creative Children's Experiences on Their Journey Through Imagination.

“Destination Imagination (DI) is a creative problem-solving program that allows children in grades 2-12 to extend the typical thought process and delve into a world of creativity and imagination. The goal of this study was to understand middle school (grades 6-8) students' understanding of the impact that participation in DI has on their mental health and well-being. Previous literature provides valuable insight into the impact that DI has on academic achievement, creative thinking, divergent thinking, critical thinking, creative problem solving, collaboration, and teamwork skills.

However, little is currently known about the impact that DI has on the mental health of students. Ten middle school students (mean age 12.8 years; 50% male, 50% female) who have participated in DI for at least one year (mean of 4.7 years) participated in 45-60 minute in-person interviews. Results revealed that, through the promotion of friendship, coping skills, and perseverance, DI appears to have a significantly positive impact on important domains of mental health and well-being for middle school students. Experiences in DI provide students with a tool set of skills that support them across all life experiences, both in and out of Destination Imagination. This research also provides insight into the ways in which DI participation can be used as a clinical intervention and to aid in the development of Social-Emotional Learning curricula in schools.”

Evan Bick
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

Strength of Veteran Identification Moderates Mental Health Stigma in Male Post-9/11 Veterans

“The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which identity strength in veterans may influence attitudes about mental health and mental health treatment. Based on a review of literature encompassing identity theory, military identity, and attitudes towards mental health, it was predicted that veterans with a stronger sense of identification with their military service would have more negative attitudes towards mental illness and mental health treatment, consistent with increased mental health stigma.

A correlational design was used to assess the relationship between mental functioning and multiple constructs of mental health stigma. Veteran identification, the degree to which veterans view their military service as a key element of their self-identity, moderated the relationship between mental functioning and beliefs about mental health treatment, and the relationship between mental functioning and beliefs about treatment seeking. Respondents with higher veteran identity reported a stronger relationship between mental functioning and endorsed stigma. No significant moderating effect was found for beliefs about the mentally ill. Limitations, implications for clinical treatment and outreach to veterans, and suggestions for further research are also discussed.”

Trudi Pugatch
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

The Relationship between Specific Cognitive Deficits, Behavioral Problems and Psychosocial Issues in Children with Learning Difficulties

“Children with learning deficits demonstrate an array of behavioral, emotional and social skill problems that can negatively impact academic and social development. The current study investigated the relationship between specific cognitive deficits and behavioral outcomes in children with learning difficulties in order to gain a better understanding of the symptomatology associated with certain cognitive profiles. Based on previous research in this area, the following was hypothesized: 1) children with verbal deficits will demonstrate higher Total Problem Scale (TPS) scores and higher rates of externalizing symptoms, 2) children with non-verbal deficits will have higher Social Problem Scale (SPS) scores, 3) children with automatic processing deficits will show higher Internalizing Scale (IS) scores and higher Social Problem Scale (SPS) scores, and 4) children with working memory deficits will demonstrate more attentional difficulties. Archival data of children who had been administered the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Fourth Edition (WISC-IV) and the Child Behavioral Checklist (CBCL) was collected from The Walker School in Needham, Massachusetts. Forty-five participant profiles qualified for this study. Independent t-tests and Pear-

son correlation analyses were conducted. Results yielded no statistically significant relationships between specific cognitive deficits and behavioral outcomes, though a relationship was found between scores on the IS and SPS among the group. All profiles showed high clinical elevation across numerous scales, regardless of the identified cognitive deficit. Findings illustrate the level of pathology and comorbidity seen in children with learning difficulties at specialized school settings, and highlight the need for multifaceted interventions that target cognitive, behavioral, emotional and social avenues.”

Kayla Agar

Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

The Experience of Obtaining a Tattoo in Relation to the Emotional Healing Process for Cancer Survivors

“The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand how the experience of getting a tattoo contributes to the healing process for people who have gone through cancer treatment. The participants in the study were eight breast and thyroid cancer survivors who had completed all relevant medical treatment for their cancer. Participants ranged in age from 27 to 65 with a mean age of 51.87 years. There were seven female participants and one male. All participants identified as white. Participants completed a structured interview that was later transcribed and coded for themes using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. Three themes emerged from the data: cancer experiences, supports, and tattoos. All participants felt as if their cancer experience impacted their life perspective and outlook. Many participants felt their relationships with loved ones was changed through their cancer experience, and many participants sought support from other cancer survivors and participated in cancer awareness and/or fundraising events. Tattoo meanings varied but themes included pride about their tattoo, empowerment over their bodies after cancer, and visual reminders of survival and resilience.”

Christopher Chiverton

Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

The Development and Feasibility of a Motivational Interviewing Program to Improve the Communication Skills of Undergraduate Students

“The purpose of this study is to evaluate the feasibility and usefulness of a skills development training for effective communication skills and to introduce motivational interviewing techniques to address necessary and helpful organizational communication. This study created a skills development training for business students that is based on Motivational Interviewing principles. The specific skills included promoting engagement, avoiding disengagement, reflective listening, accurate empathy, forming reflections, core interviewing skills, and focusing. The training tool was administered in a didactic and skills practice format to undergraduate business students, and was 90 minutes in duration. Despite the continued assertions that communication and interpersonal skills among business school graduates is lacking, the importance of these skills tends to be significant in the literature. Through an extensive review of literature, a rationale for providing training in basic MI skills for undergraduate business students is provided.”

Matthew Lundeberg
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

Teaching Healthy Masturbation Skills to Adolescent Males with Autism Spectrum Disorder Level 1

“Research has demonstrated that masturbation is a common form of sexual expression for adolescent boys with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). However, issues related to ineffective technique and problems related to the social components of masturbation, such as appropriate time and place, are also issues adolescent males with ASD often experience. This demonstration doctoral project was undertaken to create a psycho-educational instructional video to be used by parents as an aide for comprehensively teaching the topic of masturbation to their adolescent sons with ASD Level 1. Based on a review of 14 available products, including tools designed for neurotypical individuals, tools for individuals with an intellectual disability (ID), and tools for individuals with ASD, no product covered all the major components of masturbation, including relevant anatomy, effective masturbation techniques, and pertinent social components. In addition to a review of products, a review of available research on ASD and sexuality was conducted to inform the content and structure of an effective psycho-educational instructional video designed to teach masturbation. Following the review of literature and available products, a rough draft version of the video was produced. Two expert reviewers then provided feedback on the video and this feedback was incorporated into a revised and final version of the video. Following completion of the final video, the project’s expert reviewers again provided feedback to evaluate the perceived effectiveness of the video at comprehensively addressing the topic of masturbation as appropriate for adolescent males with ASD Level 1. This Feedback indicated that the final video addressed the topic of masturbation in an accessible way that is likely to effectively convey the intended information to adolescent males with ASD Level 1.”

William Jackson
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

Chronic Pain, Mindfulness and Measures of Physical Function: A Systematic Review

“The importance of improved physical functioning as a primary outcome in the treatment of chronic pain is widely accepted. Mindfulness Skills Training (MST) targeting pain acceptance and engagement in increased activity is becoming increasingly popular for the treatment of chronic pain. This paper presents the supporting literature review and systematic review of published randomized control trials (RCTs) using MSTs that also assess physical functioning (objective or self-report) as primary or secondary outcomes, describes the instruments used, and summarizes the results. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) criteria was used to identify, select, and assess eligibility of studies for inclusion and follow established guidelines for best practice of systematic reviews in reporting results. Published reports of original RCTs were included in the systematic review if they described functional outcomes after a MST in the chronic pain population, and met methodological quality according to a list of predefined criteria. Of the 2818 articles identified from the original search of 4 electronic databases, inclusionary criteria were met by 15 studies published as of August 10th, 2015, totaling 1,199 patients. All included studies used self-report measures of physical function, while only 2 studies employed performance based measures of function. Overall, the quality of the studies was rated as high. We found inconclusive evidence for small improvements in the subjective self-reported physical function after MSTs. However, we found strong evidence for the objective performance physical function, based on results from two high quality studies, which showed no improvement in function. This review draws attention to the importance of addressing physical function and assessing it with quality measurements within MSTs for chronic pain. The use of performance based measures of function and potential strategies to address physical function in this population are discussed.”

Janet Price
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

Identity Development of Adoptees who Become Adoptive Mothers

“The development of identity occurs and evolves throughout one’s life. Major life events contribute to the shaping of one’s identity, such as the life event of becoming a mother. The purpose of this study was to examine the impact on the identity development of adoptees when they became mothers through adoption. Previous research on adoptees becoming adoptive mothers was not found as this research study commenced. Therefore, this study was ground-breaking in beginning to understand the complexities inherent for adoptees adopting. The literature review focused upon areas relevant to this topic, including a history of adoption, the development of motherhood, stages of adoptee development throughout the lifespan, an understanding of adoptive mothering, meaning-making through a narrative lens, and historical perspectives on identity development.

The present study used a qualitative research design in which the researcher interviewed five female adoptees who had become adoptive mothers. Each participant had adopted a minimum of five years before the start of this study. Participants engaged in an appreciative inquiry interview consisting of open-ended questions about their experiences of becoming an adoptive mother.

The results of this study reveal two large categorical themes and eight subcategories. The large categorical themes are (1) a growing awareness of the impact motherhood had upon identity development for adoptees and (2) an understanding that the experience of adopting could affect the adoptee’s sense of self. The subcategories include the following: the impact being an adoptee had upon the experience of becoming a mother; the ways in which the experience of adopting stimulated memories of growing up as an adoptee; the manner in which adopting generated memories of their own mothers’ mothering, as well as creating the new shared experience of both being adoptive parents; the surprises that arose when the adoptee became a mother; the new experience of motherhood influenced by growing up as an adoptee; the deepening of self-understanding through the process of becoming a mother; the ways that becoming an adoptive mother brought both healing and pain; and loss and gain revisited through the lens of new motherhood.

These themes are discussed within the context of the literature reviewed in Chapter II. Limitations of the present study, clinical implications, and recommendations for future research are also addressed.”

Elizabeth Apkin
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

Emerging Adults’ Experiences of Having an Older Sibling with High Functioning Autism

“The purpose of this study was to develop a better understanding of the experiences of individuals in emerging adulthood who have an older sibling diagnosed with high functioning autism, a disorder formerly labeled Asperger’s syndrome. While a breadth of research currently exists on sibling relationships, the literature review focused on influences of relationship quality on sibling adjustment across the lifespan. This includes the role of birth order and different variables that affect the relationship in dyads both with and without a sibling diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. Additionally, the review included a discussion of autism spectrum disorders, including the diagnostic differences between autistic disorder and Asperger’s syndrome. Lastly, the review detailed the facets of the developmental phase emerging adulthood, including the importance of identity formation during this time.

The present study utilized a qualitative research design in which seven females between the ages of 18 and 29 with an older sibling diagnosed with high functioning

autism were interviewed. Participants engaged in a semi-structured interview consisting of open-ended questions about their experiences of this sibling relationship.

From the results of the study, three larger categorical themes and ten subcategories emerged. The first theme is on the impact the participants' experiences have had on their lives, addressing facets from childhood, young adulthood, and how these experiences have impacted their conceptualizations of the future. The second category consists of the different relational experiences that permeated the emerging adults' lives (i.e., relationship with self, peers, romantic partners, parents, sibling with high functioning autism, other siblings, and extended family members). The final theme is related to the participants' use of coping and ability to make meaning of their experiences. Themes are discussed within the context of related literature, with interpretations of the results relating to facets impacting identity development and conceptualizations of the future. Strengths and limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and clinical implications are also addressed."

Mary Grabowski
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

The Relationship between Siblings with a Brother or Sister Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Anticipated Caregiving.

"Objective: This study examined anticipated future caregiving by a typically-developing sibling for a brother or sister diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). It looked at the factors of the sibling relationship through warmth/ closeness, relative status/ power, rivalry, conflict and negative behaviors of antisocial behavior, anxious/ depressed mood, hyperactive behavior, peer conflict/ social withdrawal and headstrong expressed by the sibling with ASD as contributing to the future caregiving relationship. Method: A self-report survey was constructed using the Sibling Relationship Questionnaire (SRQ) and Behavior Problems Index (BPI) measures, as well as, questions about caregiving. Participants were recruited through social media and residential/ boarding schools. Correlational analyses were conducted to understand if significance existed in the possible relationships with caregiving. Logistic regression analyses were conducted to test predictions of BPI behavioral factors or SRQ relationship factors had on anticipated future caregiving. Results: While many correlational relationships existed across the measures, neither the behavior factors or relationship factors were predictive of anticipated caregiving. An unexpected finding was noted and warrants further research. When the SRQ sibling rivalry factor was manipulated to identify a parental preference, the anticipated caregiving by participants decreased when paternal preference existed. This study aims to better understand the factors which may influence future caregiving where one sibling is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and the other is typically-developing. Clinicians can use this information to be better informed for work with family systems. It is optimistic that the negative behaviors expressed by the sibling with ASD do not necessarily deter a typically developing sibling from anticipating caregiving. Furthermore, typically-developing siblings report that they expect their sibling to have a job, relationship and enjoyable activities."

Zachary Delcambre
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

Development of a Self-Paced Computer Based Training Module of Motivational Interviewing for Spanish-Speaking Clinicians

"The rapid increase of the Latino population within the US creates a significant need for well-trained mental health clinicians who are capable of working with Latinos in Spanish. However, despite this growing need, there are few Spanish training programs developed to teach clinicians how to use evidenced based practices. In this demonstra-

tion study, this author developed a self-paced training module to teach Spanish-speaking clinicians the relational and technical facets of Motivational Interviewing (MI) in order to address these needs. An accompanying workbook was created that will allow future participants to practice MI skills within the modules. Two expert reviewers examined and critiqued all versions of the module and their feedback was incorporated to create a finalized version of the modules in Spanish. The results of this study detail the incorporated critique and how it improves the accessibility and dissemination of information within the modules for Spanish-speaking clinicians.”

Nicole Parkes

Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

**High School Personnel's Perceptions of How Stigma Impacts Adolescents
Accessing Mental Health Services in a Public School Setting**

“There are many children and adolescents who struggle with emotional difficulties, and these challenges can affect their ability to learn as well as to be socially engaged in the classroom. While there often are services provided by mental health staff members in public school settings, such as social workers, guidance counselors, and school psychologists who can provide individual treatment, some students are not utilizing the treatment available. There is a large body of literature about stigma and how the fear of feeling judged for seeking help may cause an adult to not seek treatment for a mental health issue. There is far less research available to explain how stigma may impact adolescents' willingness to seek help for emotional problems. This study interviewed five public high school counselors, using a semi-structured interview format. The data was analyzed using a modified Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) method. The main findings of this study were that gender, culture, and family beliefs influence adolescents, specifically in terms of how they view mental health and treatment seeking behaviors. Further research is needed to ask adolescents directly about what factors, such as stigma, influence whether or not they seek help in a public school setting.”

Chalini Jayasekera

Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

**A Quantitative Study of the Impact of Optimism on Self-Blame in Parents of
Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

“The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of optimism on parental self-blame in parents of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Additionally, this study sought to explore the effect of time since diagnosis on levels of both optimism and self-blame. In doing so, this study aimed to help service providers better understand how to support parents of children with ASD. The study utilized an online, self-report survey, which asked parents of a child with ASD to complete a number of questionnaires. The Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R) assessed participants' level of optimism, while the ASD Parental Self-Blame Scale was utilized to measure their level of self-blame. Participants also provided demographic information, which provided data on the length of time that had passed since their child's ASD diagnosis. In all, 32 parents completed the study. A significant negative correlation was found between scores on the measure of optimism and self-blame. Specifically, parents who reported higher levels of optimism, reported lower levels of self-blame, and parents who reported lower levels of optimism, reported higher levels of self-blame. Additionally, a significant positive correlation was found between optimism scores and the length of time since the child's diagnosis of ASD. That is, parent's level of optimism increased the longer that time had passed since the child's ASD diagnosis. No significant relationship was found between the measure of self-blame and time since diagnosis, which could be attributed to the small sample size. These findings suggest that parental self-blame may be an important factor for service providers to target in treatment,

and that this can be addressed by increasing optimism. Future research would need to further explore the relationship between self-blame and time since diagnosis. Additionally, future research could continue to explore the relationship between optimism and self-blame. Furthermore, additional exploration into what causes optimism to increase over time and what variables could be mediating this relationship would be beneficial and could assist in developing treatment for this population. The variables examined in this study could also be investigated in relation to parents of children with other mental disorders or disabilities.”

Catherine Barba
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

The “Contemporary Father”: A Quantitative Study of Factors that Contribute to Father Involvement

“Fathers play a vital role in their children’s lives and development. Previous research has linked father’s involvement with better social, emotional and cognitive functioning. Over the past few decades, as more women began entering the workforce, the family structure changed dramatically, given rise to the notion of the “Contemporary Father,” who is viewed not only as a breadwinner, but also as a caretaker and a nurturer. While there is a vast body of research on fathers and their lack of involvement, there is a scarcity of research on contemporary fathers who are actively involved in the caretaking and nurturing of their children. By focusing on fathers’ parental bonding, identity salience and parental meta-emotion philosophy, the current research aimed to identify the variables that play a significant role in predicting father’s involvement with their children. This quantitative study used an online survey, which was administered to participants who identified as being a father and having a child between the ages of 0-7 years old. A total of 74 geographically diverse participants completed the survey.

There were five main findings that emerged in this study: 1) fathers who experienced parental warmth tended to engage in emotion coaching parenting; 2) fathers who engaged in emotion coaching parenting tended to be more involved with their children; 3) fathers who rejected their children’s negative emotions or felt uncertain and/or ineffective in handling their children’s emotion tended to be less involved in the lives of their children; 4) fathers identified work-related responsibilities as a barrier to their involvement with their children; and 5) fathers’ early attachment with their mother and their identity as a father most strongly predicted their degree of involvement with their children. These findings have significant implications for families, practitioners and employers alike. Mental health professionals working with fathers should focus on interventions that enhance fathers’ identity and satisfaction with being a father through more emotional engagement with their children. Employers should also encourage more work-life balance and recognize the importance of fathers’ caregiving roles. Moreover, given the shifting dynamics of women’s careers and broader societal changes and expectations, organizations must take on a more active role by adopting policies that support and promote fathers’ involvement in the lives of their children.”

Greg Cesarini
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

Developing a Motivational Interviewing Training Program for Clinicians Completing Neuropsychological Assessments

“The purpose of this doctoral project was to create a brief model of a motivational interviewing training module for psychologists and practitioners completing neuro-psychological assessments. This project reviewed and selected material for the proposed training module from relevant motivational interviewing (MI) and neuro-psychological assessment literature. The training module includes skills training

and education in MI for psychologists and practitioners completing neuro-psychological assessments. MI is an empirically-validated and effective form of psychotherapeutic treatment suggested by research to improve the therapeutic alliance. This can serve to increase the client's adherence to recommendations in the feedback process of neuro-psychological assessment. The proposed training module was reviewed by four licensed psychologists with relevant professional training and experience; their feedback was incorporated into the final draft of the training module. The final version of the training module is designed as a full day workshop. The proposed training module would need to field tested to evaluate its efficacy with regard to improved clinical knowledge and clinical skills with MI and improved client outcomes.”

Sinéad McCarthy
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

Moderating Effects of Personality Characteristics on the Relationship between Facebook Use, Social Relationships, Self-Esteem, and Mood in First Year College Students

“Social networking sites such as Facebook are becoming more commonplace for people to connect with people around the world ranging from family members, peers, and even strangers. These websites have often been criticized due to their seemingly isolated nature; are people becoming disconnected as they connect in online forums? While people across generations now utilize these websites, it is critical to investigate how these sites will impact future generations. This study was the first to explore whether the Big Five Personality traits impacted Facebook usage among freshman college students to investigate how their affect, self-esteem, and life satisfaction were impacted by the website during the fall and spring semesters. Survey responses from 48 college freshman (40 females and 8 males) were included in the data analyses. Multiple linear regression analyses sorted by type of Facebook use and time of semester (i.e., September and March) were completed. There were significant correlations found between the measures of student life satisfaction and the Big Five Personality Traits, specifically in regard to life satisfaction and conscientiousness as well as the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and Facebook interactions between pre-college and college friends throughout the academic year. Interpretations and implications of these results are discussed.”

Glavielinys Cruz
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

The Impact of Stereotype Threat on Latino Adolescents' Academic Performance: A Qualitative Examination

“Not much is known about the associations between racial/ethnic stereotype threats and its impact on the academic performance among Latino adolescents. In this exploratory study, Consensual Qualitative Research methods were utilized to analyze interviews from nine parent/adolescent dyads from Massachusetts and New Hampshire. All participants identified ethnically as Hispanic/Latino. Findings revealed the most prominent idea endorsed was that participants' identities were positively defined by their country of origin and/or Latino/Hispanic heritage. The second most endorsed core idea revealed participants' beliefs that Latinos/Hispanics are commonly subjected to discrimination and negative stereotypes. Lastly, the third frequently reported core idea noted that negative stereotypes about Latinos/Hispanics may have a disproportionate negative impact on adolescents' distal occupational performance, instead of their proximal academic performance. The current study augments the limited existing research on stereotype threat among Latinos. Results highlight the centrality of heritage and ethnic identity among Latino parents and adolescents. Furthermore, although experiences of discrimination are prevalent, family support and ethnic pride buffers against psychological distress associated with those experiences.

Finally, stereotype threat was not endorsed as a critical influence on Latino adolescents' academic performance. However, participants shared concerns that stereotyping and stereotype threat may have a long-term impact on occupational success during adulthood. Although this exploratory examination of stereotype threat among Latinos has been informative, however, our small sample requires cautious interpretations of the results."

Rachel Weiskopf
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

Exploring the Subjective Experience of Ultra-Orthodox Defectors

"The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of men and women during their process of leaving the ultra-Orthodox community in which they were embedded. The factors and circumstances that facilitated their decision to leave, the stages of change, and the presence of turning point experiences were explored. The design of this study was qualitative and exploratory in nature, allowing for a deeper understanding of participants' personal experiences of defection from an ultra-Orthodox community. Eight men and women participated in semi-structured interviews designed to explore and understand the process of leaving. The results of this study suggested that individuals leaving an ultra-Orthodox community follow a process of change that can be described in reference to the transtheoretic model. This model captures how defectors engage in a process of moving from a stage of precontemplation to contemplation, to preparation and then on to action and maintenance as they exit from religious communities. Participants described engaging in a stage of precontemplation when they were fully involved and dedicated to the community of their origin. This was followed by a stage of contemplation and struggle with practice and belief as they grappled with internal conflicts and feelings of anxiety and depression. During the preparation stage participants described seeking to engage with the secular world. Exiting from their communities was accompanied by a change to the sense of self and a progression through to the final stage of the transtheoretic model, that of maintenance. The stories collected in this study should provide a resource for clinicians treating this population through its delineation of the stage process of change."

Michelle Solomon
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

Social Media and Self-Evaluation: The Examination of Social Media Use on Identity, Social Comparison, and Self-Esteem in Young Female Adults

"Social media has had a tremendous impact on our culture and the world-at-large. Social media websites have revolutionized the ways in which people communicate and socialize, and it is important to better understand the ways in which this virtual social phenomenon is having an impact on how we think and feel about others and ourselves. The purpose of this study was to investigate young adult females' experiences of social media use in order to explore the effects of comparing themselves to others as they integrate and respond to the online identities of others. This study examined the ways in which one is impacted by social media participation and exposure to media images, which in turn, has the potential to affect the individual's evaluation of self. This was a qualitative, phenomenological study. Eight young adult females, ranging in age from 24-30 years, participated in semi-structured interviews exploring the self-evaluative effects of social comparison in the context of social media use (e.g., Instagram and Facebook). Several key themes emerged and were explored including participants' descriptions of their selection and manipulation of content posts, their presentations of an idealized self, their process of engaging in impression management, the comparison between their real and online selves, their varying experiences when viewing profiles of unknown and known others, their affective responses when viewing, and to what degree online social comparison can affect the view of self. Finally, limitations of this study and implications for future research are discussed."

Continuous Traumatic Stress, Attachment Style and Parenting Style for Jewish-Israeli Parents in Israel and the United States

“The ongoing exposure to violence created by the Palestinian-Israeli conflict challenges families in Israel. While the effects of trauma, attachment style and parenting style have been investigated, few studies have considered the relationships among continuous traumatic stress (CTS), interpersonal relationships and parenting style. The goal of the present study was to compare the relationships among geographical location and distress level, attachment and parenting style for Jewish-Israeli parents in Israel and the United States.

This study examined five hypotheses, that: (a) the CTS, attachment styles and parenting styles of Jewish-Israeli parents in Israel and those in the United States would differ; (b) having fewer symptoms of CTS would correlate with more secure attachment styles, and higher levels of CTS would correlate with insecure attachment styles; (c) higher levels CTS symptoms would correlate with a more authoritarian parenting style, and conversely, lower levels of CTS symptoms would correlate with authoritative parenting; (d) more secure attachment styles would correlate with more authoritative parenting styles, while less secure attachment styles would correlate with more authoritarian parenting styles; (e) CTS would be a moderating variable between attachment and parenting styles.

To explore these relationships, this study used a quantitative, correlational design. Participants completed an online questionnaire, including demographic information, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) scales, and questionnaires related to parenting styles and attachment styles.

Jewish-Israeli parents living in Israel endorsed more PTSD and GAD symptoms than their counterparts in the United States, but the groups showed no differences in attachment style. Contrary to the hypothesis, Jewish-Israeli parents living in the United States were more authoritarian in their parenting style than those living in Israel. Lastly, PTSD and GAD served as moderators of the relationship between anxious attachment style and authoritarian and permissive parenting styles.

This study has important clinical implications to clinicians working with Jewish-Israeli parents living in both countries. Bringing awareness to the possible impact of continuous stress on parenting style can help foster positive parental coping skills to manage distress. Future research should further address the impact that life under continuous stress has on parenting and interpersonal relationships.”

Mental Health Promotion Within a Virtual World: A Feasibility Study

“The mental health needs of many young people continue to remain undetected and unaddressed on a national and global level. Furthermore, children and adolescents today are situated within a culture of increasing stress and may not have models for adaptive coping. This mixed methods study provided an initial evaluation of the WhyWellness Project, a mental health promotion program within a virtual world, Whyville. This is the first study to examine the virtual delivery of mental health promotion programming to children and adolescents. Overall, the results indicate the WhyWellness Project is a feasible, acceptable, and adaptable way to deliver mental health promotion programming to youth. Results also support the creation of games to facilitate emotional awareness, problem solving, and coping skills among users. Virtual worlds can play a crucial role in the creation of environments that promote mental health and well-being. The virtual world context is a dynamic space in which mental health professionals, researchers, and game and software developers can come

together to develop creative mental health promotion programming that can reach thousands. This study also demonstrates several opportunities for research, particularly evaluation research, and yields several implications and models for virtual world program evaluation in this unique setting. These findings yield exciting implications for clinical and research practice within the fields of psychology, psychiatry, education, public health, and public policy.”

Robert DiGiammarino
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

Effects of Parental Divorce on the Quality of Children’s Adult Romantic Attachments

“Research has demonstrated that parental divorce serves as a profound risk factor, often resulting in negative outcomes for children. This Doctoral Project addresses the ways in which experiencing parental divorce or separation during developmental years contributes to altered romantic relationships later in life. The purpose of the present study was to determine the degree to which attachment to parents and caregivers following parental relationship dissolution is consistent with future attachment to romantic partners. The first hypothesis stated that parental divorce or separation may affect attachment processes in children of divorce/separation. The second hypothesis argued that when post-divorce/separation parent-child attachment is altered, future romantic attachments would be consistently altered. To test these hypotheses, the researcher solicited adult children of parental divorce/separation to confidentially respond to three questionnaires using online survey software. Consenting participants were asked to classify themselves demographically and to respond to two empirically-valid measures of attachment: the Attachment to Parent/Caregiver Inventory (APCI) and the Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised Scale (ECR-R). After all data were collected, bivariate correlations were run to determine the nature of the relationship between post-divorce attachment to caregivers and attachment to romantic partners. One-way analyses of variation (ANOVA) were also used to determine which demographic variables moderated this relationship. Results demonstrated that insecurity in the parent-child relationship was positively correlated with anxiety and avoidance in adult romantic relationships among children of divorce/separation. It was also found that marital conflict was the only statistically significant co-variant among a multitude of demographic variables. These findings inform both clinical and legal practice surrounding families experiencing high conflict divorce, suggesting that such families should pursue therapeutic services immediately to mitigate the long-term effects of marital conflict on children. Moreover, legal professionals should pursue swift marital terminations in an effort to put an end to marital conflict as quickly as possible, thereby reducing the likelihood that children will be affected. If such interventions are employed, it is likely that children of parental divorce/separation may be shielded from the negative effects of parental conflict and separation, reducing the likelihood of future romantic problems and diminishing the probability of the intergenerational transmission of divorce.”

Nicole Baum
Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
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June 2016

Learning Disabilities and Self-Concept: A Phenomenological Study

“This phenomenological study investigated the circumstances shaping the academic, social, and emotional lives of children with learning disabilities and the effects on their self-perception and self-esteem. Eight college and graduate students 18 to 25 years old diagnosed with a specific learning disability before high school graduation participated in a semi-structured interview. Results showed that participants recognized that they were academically different from peers before being diagnosed with a learning disability, and learning to read was emotionally upsetting. Receiving a

diagnosis was not traumatic, but confusion about what their learning disability meant about them and for their lives was persistent. “Being pulled” from a mainstream classroom for support was a source of shame, while attending schools specializing in learning disabilities had life-changing benefits and extracurricular activities fostered positive self-perception and self-esteem. Parents were supportive, with reasonable expectations of individual siblings; however, mainstream teachers were either understanding or insensitive, as well as preoccupied by large classes and untrained in supporting learning differences. By the high school years, self-perception and self-esteem improved. This study demonstrated that throughout childhood and adolescence, there is a profound negative impact on self-perception and self-esteem from living with a learning disability. Results will guide individuals with learning disabilities and their parents, teachers and school administrators, clinicians, and legislators in making decisions that support the child’s best interests. Further research is needed in all areas affecting the learning disability experience.”

Cara Picano

Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

Predicting Success in Advanced Law Enforcement Personnel

“The purpose of this study was to investigate psychological factors that contribute to positive adaptation to highly stressful police special operations selection courses. More specifically, it hoped to determine the predictive effect of psychological hardiness on successful selection in a federal tactical law enforcement program. A review of the literature discusses police selection more generally, and then addresses the purpose of psychological assessment for police selection. Specifically, it focuses on hardiness as a predictor for successful performance in high-risk, high-stress environments. Because this study hoped to bridge the gap in the literature of applying hardiness to advanced law enforcement groups, the review concludes with a comparison between military and police populations. This quantitative study used archival data that was collected as part of the screening process for candidates who were assessed for entry into a highly specialized federal tactical law enforcement organization. Results from this study indicate that high levels of hardiness correspond with successful selection for advanced law enforcement populations. However, other known predictors (i.e., age and cognitive ability) moderate the effects of hardiness, which suggests that relationships between hardiness and successful selection may be subtle and complex in advanced operational personnel. This study yielded an unexpected finding that hardiness-control was the most salient hardiness facet in predicting successful selection in this sample.”

Elena Tillman

Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
Psychology
June 2016

The Effect of Search Engine Availability on Semantic Memory Processes

“This study contains a quantitative design to deepen the understanding of the memory processes involved in Internet searches within the adult population. Specifically, this study aims to learn if readily and instantaneously accessible information impacts the function of the short-term memory process for semantic information. Understanding factors that contribute to changing memory processes with the use of Internet searches can be applied to improve the current knowledge base of semantic memory. The results of the study may also help clinicians further understand cognitive deficits in patients with high frequency usage of Internet searches. Because this is an applied project with connections to practical use, the results of this study will not need to be generalized much beyond the scope of the research. However, the specificity of the sample population is fairly broad, which indicates that the data will likely need to be repeated in further research. Survey responses from 114 adult participants were included in the data analyses. To determine if group differences existed across lev-

els of the access variable on each of the measures of memory, independent samples t-tests were performed. No significant differences were found on any of the dependent variables. To determine the amount of shared variance between variables, a series of bivariate correlations were completed. While significant correlations were found, none involve the memory tasks. This may imply that, contrary to popular culture, short-term memory for semantic information may not be impacted by the knowledge that Internet search engines are available for use.”

Arica Austin

Doctor of Psychology in Clinical
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Ethnic Identity Development and the Effects of Perceived Discrimination on Academic Achievement and Psychological Well-Being among METCO and Boston Public Schools Students

“The purpose of the current study was to explore the experiences of ethnic minority college students who participated in the METCO Program compared to those who attended the Boston Public Schools. This topic is relevant, given that it has been 40 years since the start of the busing program in Boston. The study used a quantitative survey design that included participants’ demographic characteristics and various measures of ethnic identity development, experiences of discrimination, academic achievement, self-esteem, and the imposter phenomenon. The final sample was comprised of 19 former METCO students, due to lack of participation by former Boston Public School students. Four key findings emerged from the study. First, the experience of ethnic discrimination in the past year was positively correlated with lifetime experiences of ethnic discrimination and the stress associated with ethnic discrimination. Specifically, METCO students who reported being discriminated against in the past year were more likely to endorse experiencing ethnic discrimination in their lifetime and discrimination-related stress. Second, participants who engaged in an ethnic identity search were more likely to experience stress related to ethnic discrimination. Third, there was a significant correlation between GPA and self-esteem in that respondents who had a high GPA were more likely to report a high self-esteem. Fourth, a significant positive correlation was observed between respondents’ GPA and feelings of the imposter phenomenon. Namely, respondents who had a high GPA were more likely to experience the imposter phenomenon. Contrary to the stated hypotheses, there were no significant relationships between ethnic discrimination, overall ethnic identity, and psychological well-being. Based on the qualitative data, by and large, the METCO participants reported having a positive experience in the METCO schools that they attended. While they indicated that the METCO program afforded them various educational opportunities, there were several aspects that the participants found to be unfavorable. This included feeling disconnected from their home community and the host school, the long commute from home, and the negative stereotypes and racism that they experienced from their host school. The results of this study contribute additional information to the relatively small body of research on the experiences of students in the METCO Program. Moreover, the findings have significant implications for METCO school administrators, teachers, and school counselors who are committed to providing a rich educational experience to ethnic minority students and ensuring that they are able to succeed in a supportive and welcoming academic setting.”