Thesis abstracts from the graduating class of the
Honours Bachelor of Behavioural Psychology program
St. Lawrence College, 2017
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Welcome

The Honours Bachelor Behavioural Psychology (BPSYC) graduating class of 2017 would like to welcome you to this year’s Building Behavioural Solutions Conference and Behavioural Psychology Poster Gala event. The posters presented during the gala are representations of the growth we have all experienced as students throughout this program, and a chance for us to share the endless hours of work that went into completing our theses. Without the support of our college supervisors, agency supervisors, second readers, BPSYC faculty, and peers, these theses would not have been possible.

We would like to extend an appreciative warm welcome to the professional speakers that will be sharing their wealth of knowledge within the Behavioural Psychology field at this year’s conference. These speakers will provide many opportunities to branch out and share strengths, challenges, and treatments in ABA. We hope you are looking forward to each session as much as we are.

This document contains the abstracts of all the students’ applied thesis projects. The abstracts are arranged alphabetically by field of study, and the posters in Davies Hall follow the same order. This booklet allows you to read about each project prior to viewing the posters and allows you to formulate questions and comments for the students if you wish. The poster gala begins at 4:00, and students will be pleased to discuss their work with you.

Finally, we welcome you to the conference and hope you enjoy the projects that we have worked diligently to prepare for you. A heartfelt thank you to our guests for participating in this event; we are optimistic that our theses will spark new interests and networking opportunities that can help clients within our community.
Message from Associate Dean, Louise Chatterton-Luchuk

Congratulations to the graduating class of 2017

Your time in the Honours Bachelor of Behavioural Psychology program is represented in the posters you have created. During the course of this program, you have experienced a rigorous curriculum and a significant number of placement hours, in a variety of settings, to solidify your learning. You have researched, read about, discussed and engaged in activities to broaden your knowledge and skill base preparing you to enter your chosen field of behavioural psychology. You have also gained other important skills for your future success: working within groups, contributing to the community, learning about yourself, building relationships, utilizing critical thinking skills, digital citizenship, public speaking, and so on.

At St. Lawrence College our values are: students first, teamwork, innovation, and integrity. These values are not unique to SLC so take them with you as you move on to the next stage of your journey - whether it be further education or the workforce. Look for ways to be other-centred and contribute to the wellbeing of others. Be a positive contributor and team player. Use the strong foundation of what you learned here as a springboard for being innovative and thinking about new ways to respond to situations. Always act with integrity.

The quality of the posters you have created demonstrate not only your research findings but the culmination of what you have put into and received from this program. Congratulations on a job well done!

Louise Chatterton Luchuk, M.A. (Educational Studies)
Associate Dean – School of Community Services
St. Lawrence College ~ Kingston Campus
Addictions
Individuals seeking treatment for a substance use disorder (SUD) frequently have secondary diagnoses, and often these diagnoses can have negative impacts on the individual’s reading and comprehension skills. Many primary care settings do not provide alternative treatments for individuals with a learning disability and, are not able to offer extra attention to assist these individuals as they navigate their SUD treatment. Asking the counsellors in these settings to provide more individual attention, would be adding extra strain on the counselors and their resources, and typically is not possible. This issue highlights a significant gap in substance use disorders treatment. As a result, this thesis focused on bridging this gap at the Addictions and Mental Health Services – Hastings and Prince Edward County Residential Treatment Centre. A set of guidelines was created and applied to modify existing therapy related documents to be more accessible to individuals with reading and comprehension difficulties. This method, and these guidelines were based on empirical evidence as determined through a thorough search of the literature. A major limitation of this thesis is that the modified documents were not implemented during the development of this thesis, nor was the efficacy of this method measured. A recommendation for future research would be the empirical testing of these methods and the effectiveness of the modifications for improving comprehension for individuals with a SUD and a learning disability.
Human-Canine Interaction and its Impact on Women in Long-Term Addictions Treatment

by Mariah LaBelle

The present study takes place in a women’s long-term addictions treatment centre in Eastern Ontario. The aim of this exploratory study was to determine if the presence of a dog has a positive impact on the clients in the treatment centre. A literature review was completed, where it appears that there is a lack of research in this area pertaining to this particular population. The participants were 11 current clients between the ages 22 and 58, and 10 current staff members. One-on-one semi-structured interviews were completed with client participants and staff participants completed questionnaires independently. Information regarding wellbeing was sought. The information provided by all participants resulted in 8 themes, namely unconditional love, grounding, responsive to distress, safety, a home environment, responsibility, comfort, and teacher. The results of this study indicated the potential benefits a dog can provide to the women in these long-term addictions treatment centre and offers many avenues for future research. Many limitations were identified in this study, such as a small sample size and self-report data, but as this study is exploratory, it also offers many recommendations or future research.
Addiction refers to an individual’s use of mood altering substances or engaging in activities that interfere with health, relationships and/or work. Every year, millions of people struggle with addiction issues and there are numerous treatment models available, including detox, residential rehabilitation programs, support groups (i.e. Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous) and counselling services. The present study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of adding a mindfulness training program in collaboration with the existing Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) approach at Harbour Light Centre. It was hypothesized that the addition of mindfulness training would be effective in increasing participants’ Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) scores and subsequently increase participants’ emotion regulation. The study included 16 males, all of whom were currently receiving treatment at Harbour Light. The independent variable present in this study was the mindfulness training program which included class discussions, group exercises and a lecture style component. The dependent variable was the participants’ score on the FFMQ’s five subscales: observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judgemental, and non-reactivity. This study utilized a pre-test post-test design to analyze the data. Results from the study showed no statistical significance; the results were as follows: Observe ($t = -1.34$, $p > 0.05$), Describe ($t = -0.81$, $p > 0.05$), Act with Awareness ($t = -1.46$, $p > 0.05$), Non-judgemental ($t = -0.57$, $p > 0.05$) and Non-react ($t = -1.25$, $p > 0.05$). Future research would benefit from a 3 or 6 month follow up, a larger sample size and additional training classes.
Efficacy of Thinking Things Through: A precontemplation and contemplation addictions group at a community treatment agency.

by Justin Tudor Price

This research study was conducted at an addictions team of a community-based addiction and mental health agency, which aimed to assess the effectiveness of a psychoeducational program called Thinking Things Through (TTT). This program runs in partnership with the local probation office and primarily works with probation-mandated clients in the precontemplation and contemplation Stages of Change who have been referred for substance abuse treatment. The purpose of the study was to assess whether a brief psychoeducational program reduces client issues in social roles, interpersonal relations, and symptom distress using the Outcome Questionnaire for Adults (OQ-30.1). The study used pre-test and post-test data from 18 participants (n=18) who completed all four weekly sessions of the program consecutively without the use of a make-up session. It was found that after 4 sessions, scores on the OQ-30.1 decreased denoting a decrease in participants’ overall distress as a result of treatment. Using a related-samples t-test found statistical significance [t(17)=7.02, p<0.05]. Furthermore, using the scoring manual for the OQ-30.1, clinical significance was also found from pre-test to post-test with scores decreasing 10 points or more. Additionally, 9 participants were in the clinically dysfunctional range at pre-test but only 5 participants remained in that range at post-test. Brief mandated psychoeducational programming for substance abuse may be effective in reducing participant distress. Future research should take a further in-depth analysis using instruments that assess changes in substance use and subscales that analyze psychiatric symptomology. Moreover, it is proposed that follow-up data be collected on participants to assess the durability of intervention effects. While adding to the existing literature regarding both the additions and offender populations, the results of this study may also support mental health professionals in communicating the potential value of rehabilitative practices to policy makers and probation officers.
Applied Behaviour Analysis
Western Lowland Gorilla Bachelor Group: Daily Observations of Two Males for Stress and Social Behaviours

by Zoe Andrews

The need to house maturing male gorillas in captivity as they develop into silverback status is becoming increasingly imperative. In the wild, there is a natural process of forming all-male groups, known as bachelor groups, where males can wait out their maturation until they are ready to take on a family of their own and be the sole dominant male. However, this process is not as easily mimicked in captivity. The Species Survival Plan (Bergl et al., 2008) and zoo keepers are working continuously to ease the transition of male gorillas into fabricated bachelor groups. The issue, however, is the growing number of males and the limited ability to house them. After researching relevant literature on the topic of gorilla bachelor groups, daily observations over 40 days were conducted on two male gorillas who had recently been placed together to form an all-male group in captivity. It was hypothesized that they would demonstrate a decrease in proximity, aggression, and stress behaviours, and an increase in social interaction, cohesion, and play. The results from the daily observations were then analyzed using descriptive analysis and regression analysis, which demonstrated that the hypothesis was partially supported. Sadiki and Nassir showed no change in social affiliative behaviours; however, there was a decrease in stress behaviours for both gorillas. Future research should continue to focus on behaviours reflective of stress and on techniques to improve transitions in bachelor groups.
Increasing Academic Productivity and Accuracy Using Positive Reinforcement and Self-Management Techniques for a 13-Year-Old Boy in Grade Eight

by Briana Faroldi

Homework is often assigned during class time in elementary schools. Many empirical articles have demonstrated the effectiveness of self-management techniques and positive reinforcement to help increase homework completion. Lack of work completion may lead to a variety of academic problems. This study included a single subject design with one 13-year-old student in grade 8 at a regular elementary school. Two self-management techniques were used, which included self-monitoring and goal setting. Positive reinforcement was used in order to strengthen the target behaviour. The results of the study showed the intervention, including both self-management techniques and positive reinforcement, very effective at increasing academic productivity and academic accuracy for the student. Limitations, recommendations, and future research are all addressed.
Using Errorless Learning and Individualized Task Analyses to Teach Adults with an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) to Increase Communication with Family Through Technology

by Vincent Szenteczki

Increasing the quality of life for individuals with an acquired brain injury (ABI) is an essential step in rehabilitation post-injury. Communicating with family and friends after an ABI becomes an anticipated challenge which negatively affects quality of life. There is little research that investigates if social media technologies could effectively facilitate communication between families and increase quality of life in clients with an ABI. This thesis investigated whether there was an improvement of quality of life in individuals with ABI who learnt to send attachments through e-mail to their families. Three participants with a severe ABI between 40-60 years of age took part in this study. Each participant was taught how to send an e-mail with an attachment to their families through a task analysis paired with errorless learning (EL) procedures. Outcomes of each participant were evaluated by pre-test and post-test measures, which included an adapted version of the Behaviour and Symptom Identification Scale (BASIS-32), as well as a Technology Proficiency Questionnaire assessment. Results from this study suggested that all participants who engaged in e-mail attachment communication with their families moderately increased their quality of life, and reduced the frequency and level of prompts needed to independently send an e-mail. For future research, a larger sample size with longer treatment duration and follow-up would be beneficial. Additionally, other forms of social media technology should be examined to assess their potential in rehabilitation for the ABI community.
Autism & Developmental Disabilities
Using Behavioural Skills Training (BST) and a Token Economy to Teach Cooking Skills to an Adult with Dual Diagnosis in an Assisted Living Residence

by Alexander Glecoff

The current study used behavioural skills training (BST) and a token economy to teach cooking skills to an individual with dual diagnosis living in an assisted living residence. The participant was a 28-year-old woman who lacked independent cooking skills, and who was living in assisted living residence specifically for individuals with dual diagnosis and developmental disabilities. The researcher hypothesized that BST would be an effective method for teaching cooking skills in this case and this hypothesis was derived from previous research in the field of skills training. The results showed that the percentage of independent and prompted skills increased following treatment, and the percentage of incomplete skills decreased significantly. The current study addresses the impact that these results have on the field of behavioural psychology, specifically, how this study has shown the effectiveness of BST as an effective teaching method for individuals with dual diagnosis. In addition, the author describes how BST can be strengthened by adding other behavioural techniques to the intervention. Finally, it is suggested that further research on BST with this population include a larger sample size and longer baseline and treatment phases, which include a maintenance or follow up phase. These additions would help strengthen this line of research.
Evaluating the Effect of Using the Premack Principle and Social Stories on On-Task Behaviour for a 23 Year-Old Male with an Intellectual Disability and an Autism Spectrum Disorder

by Jonathan Hanson

The overall purpose of the study was to examine the effectiveness of the Premack principle and Social Stories to increase on-task behaviour in a 23 year-old adult male with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and an Intellectual Disability (ID). The Premack principle involves increasing the likelihood that a low rate behaviour will occur by making access to a high likelihood behaviour contingent on the low rate behaviour (Mazur, 1975). Typically, this entails pairing a very powerful reinforcer with the occurrence of an otherwise low rate behaviour. Social Stories involves developing a short story that combines pictures and words and seeks to describe the core components of a social situation, as well examples or descriptions of ways to react in a socially appropriate manner. During the intervention, the participant was provided with positive reinforcement for remaining on-task during a non-preferred activity at or above a specific criterion. Additionally, a Social Story was developed for the purpose of teaching the participant what on-task behaviour looked like. In order to be considered on-task the participant had to remain in close proximity to the group activity and either be engaged in the activity, listening or speaking to one of the other group or staff members. The participant was expected to remain appropriately seated/standing in order to earn reinforcement. The intervention was implemented over a 3-week period. The study utilized an AB research design due to time limitations and no follow up could be conducted after the study was completed. Momentary time sampling was used to record data for a period of 30 minutes during an activity where on-task behaviour occurred at a low rate. The results indicated that there were no significant changes in the percentage of time spent on-task during non-preferred activities when comparing baseline to intervention. Staff members did not notice any changes in the participant’s behaviour as well. The results gathered from the study do not support the usage of the Premack principle and Social Stories in order to increase on-task behaviour. There were several limitations to the study including the use of questionnaire based preference assessments, the length of baseline and intervention, and chosen recording methods. Recommendations for future research includes using a control group, increasing the length of the study, a baseline reversal, as well as collecting Inter Observer Agreement (IOA) data.
The Treatment of Object Mouthing and Pica Through the use of Differential Reinforcement of Appropriate Play

by Emeline Hopwood

Individuals who are diagnosed with a neurodevelopment disorder such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) can exhibit problem behaviours such as object mouthing (Roane, Kelly, & Fisher, 2003). Object mouthing can be considered a component of pica which can advance to be life threatening (Roane et al., 2003). Although object mouthing is less dangerous than pica it can lead to health problems such as choking, aspiration, and contracting an infectious disease (Roane et al., 2003). Pica is defined as continuous ingestion of substances that have no nutritious value such as paint or dirt (Matson, Hattier, Belva, & Matson, 2013). The rate of prevalence of this problem behaviour in individuals diagnosed with neurodevelopment disorders ranges from 4% to 26% (Matson et al., 2013). Individuals with pica may ingest relatively harmless items, however this can progress to the ingestion of harmful items (Naplitano et al., 2007). The current study set out to reduce object mouthing and pica through the use of differential reinforcement of alternative behaviour and response blocking. The participant was a four-year-old girl diagnosed with ASD who displayed high levels of object mouthing as well as moderate levels of pica. Appropriate play was taught as the alternative behaviour using modeling and prompting. Differential reinforcement of alternative behaviour and response blocking was implemented during two different play sessions (kitchen set and playdough) during her therapy. Initially she received edible reinforcement on a fixed interval of 30 seconds contingent on the absence of object mouthing and pica for a total play duration of five minutes. The results indicated that there was no significant change in both problem behaviours when intervention was implemented. Response interruption and teaching an appropriate alternative behaviour did not reduce pica or object mouthing.

A Comparison of Personal Palmtop Computer System Instruction (MagnusCards©) Paired with Behavioural Skills Training and Behavioural Skills Training Alone to Teach Independent Meal Preparation Skills to an Adult Male with Intellectual Disabilities and Low Literacy
Using a Manual Approach to Improve Digital Literacy Skills in Adults with Developmental Disabilities

by Kamar Simmonds

In today’s digital world, technology has become a prime source of communication. For adults with intellectual (IDD) and developmental disability (DD) who have limited opportunity to communicate through the use of technology, they often find it challenging to communicate with the rest of society. Because of this phenomenon, adults with IDD and DD are at an even greater disadvantage. Therefore, it has been hypothesized that if this population was able to communicate through the use of technology they would be able to increase their social skills, digital literacy skills, and overall quality of life. The aim of this facilitator’s manual was to provide the agency with an in-depth 11-session workshop that taught basic digital literacy skills (i.e. how to operate an iPad and how to email). Through these 11-sessions, participants would learn how to operate an iPad, format an email, and attach documents and pictures to their emails. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, the manual could not be implemented. Therefore, the student researcher administered a Likert Scale questionnaire to the agency’s supervisor and to two other staff members to assess the usefulness, organization, and content of the facilitator’s manual. The results and feedback provided by the agency indicated that this manual would be a great asset to their programming because of its usefulness, organization, and content. Because the majority of the agency’s clientele enjoyed using iPads and technology, but needed assistance to operate them, the agency made the recommendation to add an additional session to assist in teaching clients how to use the iPad effectively. For future research, it is suggested that the agency considers implementing the facilitator’s manual to determine the effectiveness of the student researcher’s findings.
A Comparison of Personal Palmtop Computer System Instruction (MagnusCards©) Paired with Behavioural Skills Training and Behavioural Skills Training Alone to Teach Independent Meal Preparation Skills to an Adult Male with Intellectual Disabilities and Low Literacy

by Nicole Therrien

Activities of daily living (ADL) are routine activities normally completed on a daily basis as a part of independent living, such as the ability to prepare meals independently (van het Bolscher-Niehuis, den Ouden, de Vocht, & Franke, 2016). Individuals with intellectual disabilities display deficits in adaptive functioning that have negative impacts on their ability to perform the ADL. It was important to explore, select, and compare alternative methods of teaching to identify what would accelerate skills acquisition. Previous studies have noted that deficits in the ADL reduced quality of life, increased dependence on others, reduced participation in daily activities, and led to learned helplessness (Parmenter; Peterson & Bossio, as cited in Sigafoos et al., 2005). To mitigate these unwanted effects, ADLs, like cooking, should be taught in a way that meets the needs of the learner and takes advantage of their strengths. Previous studies explored the use teaching techniques such as task analyses, total task chaining, least-to-most prompting, graduated guidance, behavioural skills training (BST), picture-based systems, video-based systems, auditory systems, and personal palmtop computer systems. This thesis project hypothesized that an alternating treatments single subjects experimental design would reveal that BST paired with MagnusCards© would be superior to BST alone in generating faster and greater skills acquisition. The intervention was implemented over a 7-week period. Training occurred twice weekly. In one session the participant learned to cook a meal using BST paired with MagnusCards©. In the other session he learned to cook a different meal using BST alone. The results of this study showed that both teaching methods were effective yet BST paired with MagnusCards© was vastly superior in producing faster and higher skills acquisition. Future research might explore the conditions that dictate when additional prompts like the MagnusCards© app would accelerate BST or other teaching methods.
Using the Zones of Regulation Curriculum to Increase Self-Identification and Self-Regulation of Emotions in Males Ages 11-14 with Autism Spectrum Disorder

by Hannah Vance

Emotion dysregulation is the number one reason for treatment referrals for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (Swain, Scarpa, White, & Laugeson, 2015). It is also one of the earliest difficulties that parents of children with ASD encounter (Gomez & Baird, 2005). An inability to regulate emotions can cause stress between the parent-child relationship, increase the likelihood for aggressive behaviours, and impair someone’s ability to cope with life changes and challenges. One well-known emotional regulation intervention is The ZONES of Regulation (2011) curriculum, designed by Leah Kuypers. This curriculum specifically attends to the needs of children with ASD and Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder. The ZONES curriculum encompasses many principles, resources, and tools from various theories and therapies. Some of which include cognitive behavioural therapy, the empathizing-systemizing theory, and the central coherence theory. The current study set out to determine if implementing 10 sessions of the ZONES of Regulation Curriculum with five male youth, ages 11-14, all with a diagnosis of ASD, would be effective in increasing emotional regulation. More specifically, components of emotional regulation for the purposes of this study included both self-identification and self-regulation of emotions. The treatment consisted of teaching lessons, and practicing activities from the ZONES curriculum in addition to using systematic prompting and reinforcement procedures, during contrived check-ins, and naturally occurring events. Parents of the participants completed the CANS-DP-ASP as an outcome measure and the results showed that most participants experienced improvements in at least one or more of the following areas: temperament, emotional/bodily control, and self-expression, while others remained consistent throughout treatment. Similarly, parent reports from the Skill Streaming Checklist indicated that all participants experienced improvements in one or more of these following areas: dealing with feelings, skill alternatives to aggression, and dealing with stress. Direct observation data indicated that throughout treatment, all participants demonstrated increased percentages of unprompted self-identifying, and self-regulating during the contrived check-ins. Similarly, participant’s demonstrated similar gains during non check-in occurrences, with the exception of one participant. At follow-up, most parents indicated maintenance of the skill acquisitions. Potential limitations to this study included a small sample size, limited time, and potentially subjective data collection measures. Future research should focus on generalization and maintenance of emotional regulation skills in the participants’ homes and schools.
Evaluating the Effectiveness of Personalized Pleasant Activities and Validation Therapy to Increase Mood in a 65-year-old Man with Intellectual Disability

by Shayna William-Banaszak

The purpose of this case study was to examine the effectiveness of the combination of Validation Therapy (VT) and Personalized Pleasant Activities (PPA) to increase mood in a participant with dementia and an intellectual disability. It was hypothesized that the participant’s mood would increase after 2 weeks of intervention which included 5 sessions of VT and 5 sessions of PPA. The participant was a 65-year-old white male who had a diagnosis of dementia and an intellectual disability. Results indicated the clients’ mood increased from baseline mean of 2.8 to post-intervention mean of 3.8 as measured on a likert scale. The statistical significance of the increase in mood was p. < 0.002. The Becks Depression Inventory II was used to assess depression at the pre-and post intervention. Pre-intervention test indicated a result of 27 on the BDI-II, moderate depression, and post-intervention test indicated a result of 20 on the BDI-II, borderline clinical depression. It was recommended that future studies explore using VT and PPA to increase mood in a larger sample size to enhance research on this topic. Limitations, strengths, future recommendations, and contributions to the field of behavioural psychology were also discussed.
Corrections
Treatment Manual Developed for Male Offender Substance Users with Trauma-Related Symptoms

by Megan Antoine

Individuals who suffer from substance–use issues and trauma–related symptoms can experience major negative impacts on various aspects of their lives. It is important for individuals who experience substance–use issues and trauma–related symptoms to learn effective and positive coping skills that will decrease the effects of negative coping strategies on different aspects of their lives. It was indicated that substance–use issues and trauma–related symptoms have been identified as an issue throughout the male offender population. It was also identified that the male offender population could benefit from learning positive coping strategies and techniques to deal with substance–use issues and trauma–related symptoms which can be adapted to fit their environment and promote successful community reintegration. This applied thesis was designed to provide adult male offenders serving time at a federal institution an individual treatment manual that focuses on positive coping strategies to use when experiencing substance–use issues and trauma-related symptoms. The techniques and psychoeducation provided were empirically–based and included mindfulness training, emotion regulation worksheets, progressive muscle relaxation, and automatic thought records. The results section of the thesis includes the final product of the manual that will be used at a federal institution. Any changes made to the manual were based on feedback from the staff working in the mental health department in a federal institution, however; the purpose of the thesis was not to measure the manuals’ efficacy. This created the major limitation to the applied thesis, although; the manual included simple exercises that can easily be adapted to the offender’s environment. Testing the manual using a control group and a treatment group was a major recommendation for further research in terms of increasing evidence of efficacy of the manual.
Youth in transition from a treatment setting to a community based placement are in need of continuous support and proper assessment in order to heighten the potential for success in the community based setting. This success can increase the overall quality of life for youth and lead to living a fulfilling, prosocial life. Increasing community reintegration success requires the identification of criminogenic/violent risk and protective levels unique to each individual; as such levels may contribute to the formulation of appropriate treatment strategies and accurate assessment of an individual’s readiness for transition. Criminogenic, violent, and protective levels were assessed for a sample of youth who had either succeeded or failed a local agencies Family Based Care transitional program. The risk and protective levels were then entered into a logistic regression analysis in order to establish a potential predictive relationship between risk/protective levels (independent variables) and Family Based Care success and failure (dependant variable). The logistic regression failed to establish a significant relationship between the risk/protective levels and Family Based Care success and failure. The protective level measured by the SAPROF-YV performed stronger than the risk based measures, meaning that a relationship between protective factors and community reintegration success may exist. Further research is needed to expand the exploratory findings of the current study.
Promoting Program Participation with Adolescent Males in a Youth Justice Setting

by Barry Hogeboom

Young offenders receive counselling and educational services to decrease recidivism and increase the likelihood of occupational success (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). Personal and environmental factors can limit motivation towards facility programming (Williams & Murray, 2009). Framing personalized goals as client directed and autonomous can improve engagement (Lambie, & Randell, 2013). This study examined the impact of goal setting on male youth motivation during personal counselling, group counselling and educational periods in an open custody male population. Motivation was divided into the categories of participation, initiative, goal setting and positive attitude. The hypothesis was that overall motivation would increase as a result of the goal setting intervention. Four youths (n=4) participated in the goal-setting sessions and added to their personal calendars throughout intervention. Two participants increased and two participants decreased motivation from baseline to intervention phase. Three of the participants demonstrated positive trends during intervention. The combined percentage of change was -2.715%. Intervention demonstrated an ability to increase the goal-setting techniques attained and motivation to a limited degree. Further research is required to evaluate the intervention effectiveness and the correlation between goal setting youth motivation.
Creation of Participant Relaxation Training Manuals for Facilitators & Adult Male Offenders with Symptoms of Anxiety

by Zyeleika McTague

The prevalence of anxiety disorders is significantly higher in incarcerated populations, in comparison to the general population in Canada. This suggests that there is a need for effective treatments to target symptoms of anxiety in offenders. However, a review of the current research identified a gap in the literature pertaining to treating symptoms of anxiety in offenders using evidence-based treatment methods; specifically designed to meet the needs of this population. In addition, there is a gap in the use of relaxation training as a stand-alone treatment for anxiety (i.e., without CBT) and in the use of a combination of the three specific relaxation techniques, outlined in this thesis. Therefore, this thesis sought to develop a comprehensive treatment manual for correctional staff to use with clients with anxiety, using three effective relaxation techniques. Thus, permanent products in the form of a facilitator relaxation training manual and a participant relaxation manual were created. The primary skills described in the manuals are progressive muscle relaxation, cognitive imagery, and mindfulness meditation. These skills were chosen based on an extensive literature review, input from correctional staff, and input from offenders. It was hypothesized that these manuals would allow staff members to later treat symptoms of anxiety in their clients. However, due to time constraints, the author was not able to formally evaluate the effectiveness of the manuals. Therefore, this thesis focuses on the development of the treatment manuals, guided primarily by current research. Furthermore, strengths, limitations, multilevel challenges to service implementation, and recommendations for future research are discussed.
Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Manage Your Money Program with Adult Male Offenders

by Caley Penford

Providing education in correctional institutions is the number one tool for lowering rates of recidivism (Esperian, 2010). It is difficult to pinpoint what individual offenders will need in order to successfully reintegrate into society, though many studies found that financial problems are a pressing issue affecting offenders after release from an institution (Zamble & Quinsey, 1997). Enactus, a team of students and staff at St. Lawrence College, developed the Manage Your Money (MYM) program in 2009, which was modified to meet the specific needs of the correctional population. The MYM financial literacy program was provided during 4, 2-hour sessions with 10 participants in a minimum-security institution. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the MYM program in increasing offenders’ financial literacy knowledge. All 10 participants completed four questionnaires: the Financial Capabilities Scale-Short Version, the Financial Attitudes and Behaviors Measure, the Manage Your Money Content Questionnaire, and the Participant Feedback Survey. Results from the measures identified the participants’ baseline levels of financial capabilities, financial attitudes in regards to money management, financial literacy knowledge acquisition, and areas of financial literacy that should be incorporated into the future delivery of the program. Although results from the paired sample t-test were found to be non-significant, 70% of the participants showed an increase in financial literacy skills ($z = -1.55$, $p = .122$) from pre ($M = 18.44$, $SD = 2.87$) to post test ($M = 20$, $SD = 2.54$). Results from the feedback survey show that participants found the information relevant, helpful, accessible, and essential to learn prior to being released into the community. Future recommendations for facilitating the MYM program include incorporating more guest speakers, increasing amount of active learning activities, and providing the course to offenders just prior to release from the institution.
Literature Review
Drama therapy (DT) and psychodrama techniques have great potential as interventions in the mental health field. These interventions show that arts and science can be combined to create successful interventions for various clientele. The current review explored philosophical, anecdotal, and empirical sources to demonstrate the clinical efficacy of DT. A literature search was conducted using the EBSCOhost databases that are available to Kingston’s St. Lawrence College (CINAHL with full text, ERIC, MEDLINE, Health Source: Nursing/Academic Edition, PSYCARTICLES, PSYCGOOGLE, PSYCINFO, and SOCINDEX with full text). The literature was scrutinized and compared using Kozlowski’s checklist of guidelines for evaluating research and research claims. Overall, the articles aligned with Kozlowski’s criteria with an average of 81.67%. Anecdotes were collected from past drama therapist, Peter Belton; high school drama teacher, Steven Graham; Puppeteer, Penny Langlois; and a undergraduate who engaged in drama since the age of four. Their anecdotes highlighted the therapeutic success and pitfalls of drama as an adjunct to therapy, regardless of whether or not they were implemented as therapies. The review concluded that philosophically one can see the practicality of using drama therapy, as there are experts in the field who have seen it work; however, there is still a large gap in the research that needs to be filled to create a balance between the arts and science for this form of intervention.
Evaluating the Effectiveness of Non-Pharmacological Interventions for Decreasing Behavioural and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia

by Rachel Lavigne

Dementia is a disease that affects a large portion of the geriatric population. Dementia is not a specific disease, however many diseases can cause dementia. The diseases include, Alzheimer’s disease, Lewy Body disease, frontotemporal dementia, vascular dementia, Parkinson’s disease, Huntington’s disease, and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (“Normal aging vs dementia,” 2015). The disease affects individuals differently however the most common symptoms are both behavioural and psychological. It is found that 60-90% of individuals with a diagnosis of dementia will portray distressed symptoms and behaviours (Mitchell & O’Donnell, 2013). Lately, non-pharmacological interventions have become a popular method for decreasing Behavioural and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia. The purpose of this thesis is to evaluate the effectiveness of a variety of non-pharmacological interventions used in both long-term care and adult day centres. Non-pharmacological interventions in dementia care are stated as best practices and should be primarily pursued before pharmacological interventions are implemented (Douglas, James, & Ballard, 2004). Peer reviewed literature was examined from online databases accessed through St. Lawrence College and Queens University. The existing literature suggests that the discussed non-pharmacological interventions including Doll Therapy, Validation Therapy, Music Therapy, Aromatherapy, Multi-sensory Therapy, Montessori Based Activity Therapy, and Reminiscence Therapy can be used to both decrease behavioural disturbances as well increase an individual’s quality of life and independence. For the purpose of any future research, it is suggested that future studies include pairing intervention methods to determine the level of effectiveness in decreasing behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD), increasing quality of life and increasing independence.
Enhancing Montessori Methods with Music for the Treatment of Individuals Diagnosed With Dementia and Living in Long-Term Care: A Review of the Literature

by Rana Linden

Dementia is a term used to cover any number of different ailments that affect the elderly. Once just known as senility or forgetfulness and a considered a normal symptom of aging, dementia is now known to be considerably more than just forgetting things. Dementia is a term used to describe a set of symptoms that may be related to severe illness, head trauma, Lewy body disease, Alzheimer’s, and others. According to the Alzheimer’s Society of Canada, the prevalence of dementia is 3% of those aged 65-74, 12% of those aged 75-84, and 37% of those over age 85. With a significant number of our population living well into their 90s, there is a need for better dementia care and treatment. This literature review explores the wide use of music therapy and various methodologies to determine an effective or efficient means of decreasing agitation and depression, which commonly accompanies dementia. This paper also considers the methods used in Montessori training used in dementia care to determine if it is effective and if it can be enhanced in any way by choosing one of the musical techniques to combine with the Montessori training.

This paper is a search for a novel solution to the long-standing concern of helping a person maintain skills contributing to the activities of daily living (ADLs), or perhaps even to train the elders new skills using Montessori training. This thesis also considers where the training might take place, who would conduct the training, and what resources would be needed to ensure that the training was conducted properly. While this is a theoretical framework, there is sufficient evidence to support a combination of Montessori and music as a trial project to verify the hypothesis that this would increase the positive effects. Finally, there are considerations of multilevel challenges that would need to be overcome in order to make this combination approach a possibility.
Literature Review on the Effectiveness of Augmentative and Alternative Communication Tools

by Jamiee Pifer

Over the years augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices have been used with various disorders and disabilities that affect speech. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the research that examined the effectiveness of AAC methods to increase communication skills in adults with developmental disabilities. Peer-reviewed articles were gathered from online databases accessible to St. Lawrence College. Articles that were relevant to the thesis were chosen, and the method and results sections were summarized in a table. The literature conveys that AAC is effective with various populations such as people with aphasia, autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disabilities, and developmental disabilities. Moreover, it was discovered that important factors such as motor ability and language comprehension need to be considered when choosing an appropriate AAC device to use. For future research it is recommended that studies need to have more clinical data on AAC with adults who have developmental disabilities. Also, more research needs to be conducted on the barriers that agencies and families may face in regards to using AAC.
Mental Health - Adults
Borderline personality disorder (BPD) is a pervasive and complex mental illness that has serious personal and society consequences. Empirically supported treatment for BPD has been developed within the last decade and a half. Individuals (n = 53) that participated in a 14-week modified DBT group treatment plan were assessed for emotional regulation improvement using the DERS and SAQ. The results indicate that participant’s scores decreased on the DERS from pre- (M = 119.69, SD = 25.17) to post testing (M = 96.15, SD = 8.49; t(52) = 6.77, p < .001, d = .96 (two-tailed) and increased on the SAQ from pre-test (M = 26.42, SD = 8.49) to post-testing (M = 31.50, SD = 7.76, t(41) = -2.61, p < .001, d = 0.62 (two-tailed). The current thesis contributes to the growing literature supporting the use of DBT treatment for individuals with BPD or emotional dysregulation. Recommendations for future research were to include a control trial and larger sample sizes. Strengths, limitations, multilevel challenges to service implementation, and recommendations for future research are discussed.
Evaluating the Efficacy of Group Acceptance and Commitment Therapy with Adults with Various Mental Health Disorders

Erin Kimble

For individuals with mental illness, there are many day-to-day challenges that can dramatically affect their overall quality of life. Traditional and third-wave behavioural therapies are being used to address these challenges to support those struggling with mental health concerns. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is a third-wave therapy that seeks to alter an individual’s response to maladaptive thoughts or private events rather than the thoughts themselves. The purpose of the current study was to re-evaluate the effectiveness of group ACT with adults with various mental health disorders. Researchers hypothesized that group ACT would increase participants’ psychological flexibility and mindfulness, while subsequently decreasing experiential avoidance and mental health symptomology. Participants included four adults with a variety of primary and secondary mental health diagnoses. ACT sessions were 3 hours in length and took place once a week for 12 weeks. All six ACT processes were covered, and one-on-one sessions and review sessions were also included. Data were collected using three self-assessments, which were delivered pre- and post-treatment. Assessments included the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire II (AAQ-II) to measure psychological flexibility/experiential avoidance, Depression Anxiety Stress Scale 21 (DASS-21) to measure mental health symptomology, and the Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) to measure mindfulness levels. Individual participant results showed varying inconsistent findings that were not statistically analyzed. Overall, participants increased mindfulness and decreased mental health symptomology. Limitations of this study included its small sample size, participant attrition, and the sole use of self-report data. Future research may benefit from including larger sample sizes, additional measures to assess weekly client progress, and follow-up assessments to determine maintenance post-treatment.

*Statistical analysis of overall group scores not available at the time of printing*
Discounting and Forms of Aggression Exhibited by Forensic Inpatients

by Bria Wannamaker

Inpatients with complex mental illness who are found Not Criminally Responsible on Account of Mental Disorder (NCRMD), may engage in aggression while receiving recovery and rehabilitation treatment services. Inpatient aggression may be detrimental for staff and clients within a therapeutic environment. Client aggression may affect staff through physical injury and emotional trauma. Clients who engage in steep delay discounting, or more impulsive behaviour, involving selection of smaller sooner rewards, versus larger later outcomes, may be more likely to display aggression. This pilot study involved participants ($N = 16$) diagnosed with complex mental illness. Subjects resided on minimum or medium secure units in a forensic rehabilitation setting. The aim of the current study was to evaluate the relationship between delay discounting $k$ scores, as measured by the Monetary Choice Questionnaire (MCQ; [Kirby, Petry, and Bickel, 1999]), and aggression in the forms of verbal intimidation or threats, physical aggression towards property or furniture, and physical aggression towards others, as recorded on the Dynamic Appraisal of Situational Aggression – Inpatient Version (DASA-IV; [Ogloff and Daffern, 2006]). Pearson correlation analyses did not reveal statistically significant correlations between inpatient delay discounting $k$ scores from the MCQ, and aggressive incidents. These results suggest that the ability to delay gratification, and to select immediate, monetary rewards may not have a direct impact on the forms of aggression exhibited by this inpatient sample. Secondary findings revealed some statistically significant correlations between scores on the Psychopathy Checklist Revised (PCL-R; [Hare, n.d.]) and some forms of aggression. Results indicated that inpatients with high scores on the PCL-R may be more likely to engage in some forms of aggression. Implications for future research include further examining the relationship between delay discounting and aggression with a more normal distribution of $k$ scores.
Mental Health - Children & Youth
Youth substance use is a growing societal concern (Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman, & Schulenburg, 2008). With substances, specifically prescription drugs, becoming increasingly accessible to youth and increasing in risk due to strengthened potency levels, it is imperative to determine an effective preventative measure to assure the neurological and behavioural development of youth are not compromised (Compton & Volkow, 2006). The Rebound Choices program is a current, empirically supported preventative approach toward youth substance use (Smythe, 2013). This program includes a variety of interactive, knowledge-based activities for youth to engage in with their peers, which helps them to retain positive social and life skills. In relation to this thesis, the staff within the agency identified a need for the Rebound Choices program to be updated and more interesting for the youth. The present study focused on redesigning the prescription drug lesson, content, and delivery approach, to be presented in a more informative and interactive manner while presenting the most current content available. In addition to the redesigned lesson the content and delivery of the lesson was evaluated by the youth participants and the facilitators through the completion of a feedback questionnaire, which consisted of Likert-scale rating questions and short answer written questions. It was hypothesized that using this manual to deliver the prescription drug lesson would allow the session facilitators of Rebound Choices to provide a more engaging and informative lesson to the youth while allowing the facilitators to feel more confident in the information that they are presenting. The findings gathered from the youth participant and the facilitator feedback questionnaires support the hypothesis in that the information and activities in the redesigned lesson were reported to be up-to-date, engaging, useful, and age-appropriate for the youth. In conclusion, the hypothesis was proven true in that using the new lesson material rather than the program's original material to deliver the prescription drug lesson would allow the session facilitators of Rebound Choices to provide a more engaging and informative lesson to the youth participants. Overall, the prescription drug lesson was successfully delivered and will continue to be implemented the Rebound Choices program.
Using Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy to Help Manage Symptoms of Anxiety and Depression for an Adolescent with Gender Dysphoria

Ryan Walsh

There is a high prevalence for anxiety and depression symptoms in youth with Gender Dysphoria, who often do not receive the necessary treatment to manage these symptoms. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has been proven to be able to treat mental health issues including anxiety and depression in a variety of cases. In this research study, CBT treatment for a client with GD was evaluated. During the study a single client aged 14 with comorbid symptoms of severe anxiety and depression undergoes eight CBT treatment sessions. The effectiveness of the treatment was evaluated using Becks Anxiety Inventory (BAI) and Becks Depression Inventory 2nd edition (BDI-II) during pre and post-treatment. The results indicated that CBT was successful in treating anxiety symptoms and unsuccessful in treating the depression symptoms. Limitations included a small sample size, limited measurements and lack of follow up.
Assessing the Impact of DBT Informed Therapy with Mindful Self-Compassion for Adolescents with Emotional Dysregulation

Samantha Turner-Pike

Emotional dysregulation is associated with borderline personality disorder (BPD), but there remains an ethical debate regarding the appropriateness of diagnosing adolescents with BPD due to stigma and developmental stage (Laurensen, Hutsebaut, Feenstra, Busschbach, & Luyten, 2013). Regardless of the controversy, treatment is recommended for adolescents with severe emotional dysregulation as they may experience life threatening symptoms (Miller, Muehlenkamp, & Jacobson, 2008). Dialectical behavioural therapy (DBT) has been modified for adolescents and spans across 24 weeks (Rathus & Miller, 2015). The out-patient hospital adapted DBT for adolescents to DBT informed therapy, which spans across six weeks. Recently however, studies have indicated that mindful self-compassion (MSC) may also be effective for reducing emotional dysregulation symptoms (Diedrich, Hofmann, Cuijpers, & Berking, 2016). The purpose of this study was to compare two group therapies: DBT informed therapy and DBT informed therapy with MSC. It was hypothesized that the inclusion of MSC would result in greater decreases in anxiety and depression compared to DBT informed therapy only. A second hypothesis was that MSC would increase self-compassion among participants. Male and female participants between the ages of 13 and 17 with emotional dysregulation were sequentially selected from Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Division’s referral process. Thirty participants, 15 in each treatment group, completed pre- and post-questionnaires including the Beck Anxiety Inventory–Youth (BAI-Y) and the Beck Depression Inventory–Youth (BDI-Y; Beck, Beck, Jolly, & Steer, 2005). The participants in the DBT informed therapy with MSC also completed the Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003). Statistical analysis revealed the inclusion of MSC with DBT informed therapy did not decrease scores of anxiety and depression more than DBT informed therapy alone. The inclusion of MSC did not result in increases in self-compassion scores among participants who completed DBT informed therapy with MSC. Limitations of the study included small sample size and reduced treatment length, which may have impacted the results. Recommendations for future research include randomized controlled trials and larger sample sizes.
Training Manuals & Workshops
Training Manual to Improve Social Skills in Children Aged Three to Seven Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Jessica Bass

Social skills have a large impact on an individual. Children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) can experience difficulties with social skills from a young age. The current training manual aims to assist primary caregivers in teaching social skills to children with ASD by providing them with the necessary steps and materials. The training manual is written in language that can be understood by primary caregivers and is aimed at children between the ages of three and seven diagnosed with ASD. Five core social skills are addressed to meet the developmental needs of this age group. The five core social skills are, gaining attention, requesting, saying “Hi” and “Bye”, turn taking, and being a good sport. The training manual is divided into five modules, each targeting one of the five core social skills. This template was chosen so that staff members could provide primary caregivers with specific modules based on their individual needs. Each module contains a brief summary of the skill and how to determine whether a child may be struggling with it. There are also sample activities and social stories that can be used to teach the skill.
Youth who are visually impaired are strikingly underrepresented in the work force compared to their same-aged peers (Mohler, 2012). According to the National Coalition for Vision Health (2010), approximately 68% of Canadian adults with visual disabilities are unemployed. Studies have indicated that employment preparation among these youth should begin early to encourage successful transition to the workplace (Duquette, 2013). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to create a psychoeducational program that focused on teaching youth with vision loss job readiness and self-management skills, by developing a facilitator manual with a matched participant manual that focused on these two skill areas. The author hypothesized that provision of the job-readiness and self-management psychoeducation program to agency staff would better equip them to teach relevant skills to youth living with vision loss. The manuals were created to be used with young adults, aged 13-18, who have vision loss and demonstrate a need in the area of employment skills. Furthermore, the manuals included psychoeducational and skill development components focused on teaching youth with vision loss a variety of skills in areas involving job readiness and self-management. The facilitator manual consists of three major parts. The first part is the introduction. The second part is divided into two treatment modules. The first treatment module is employment skills and the second is self-management skills. The third part of the manual is the participant feedback questionnaire and additional resources. Due to time constraints, the manuals were unable to be implemented. However, the facilitator manual was reviewed by one staff member at the agency. Overall, the staff member indicated that she was very pleased with the design and content of the manual. It was noted that the content provided in the manual was meaningful and relevant to the agency staff and its clients. It is hoped that the manual will provide the staff at the agency with an effective resource that can be used to strengthen job readiness and self-management skills of its clients who are youth with vision loss. In conclusion, it is recommended that the manual be implemented and evaluated as part of a pilot study, in order to determine its effectiveness.
The rapid increase in dementia rates will only continue rising as Canada’s population ages. Unfortunately, there is currently no cure. One important implication is providing effective treatment to decrease or prevent cognitive decline. The Montessori Methods for Dementia (MMFD) is a novel approach, rooted in the principles developed by Maria Montessori, that have been shown to increase engagement and reduce symptoms associated with dementia. MMFD is being utilized in many long-term care facilities (LTCFs) across Canada. Currently, the Life Enrichment Aide (LEA) team has been working on creating a cultural change for putting the MMFD approach into practice; however, opposing staff perceptions have been an importunate barrier. LEA staff are responsible for developing and implementing activities that meet the individual needs of residents. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to develop a manual that highlights the benefits and practicality of the approach. The student researcher hypothesized that developing a manual that provides information on MMFD would educate staff members, and advocate for the use of Montessori in the facility. The manual consisted of four sections that focused on the development, rationale, guidelines, and resources for an MMFD intervention. In particular, the guidelines were a summarized and condensed version of the manual to facilitate to the staff members. Due to time constraints, the manual could not be implemented; however, a Satisfaction Survey was used to obtain feedback. The Satisfaction Survey was completed by 4 LEA team members, as a 50% response rate was demonstrated. Positive feedback was received, as all survey’s indicated that the LEA team was completely satisfied with the manual. Despite providing guidelines and resources to implement the MMFD intervention being a major strength, a recommendation for future research is to not only determine the validity of the manual, but for staff members to directly see the results of Montessori.
Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Workshop to Increase Knowledge of Anxiety and Coping Skills in Young Mothers

by Kylie Castro

Young mothers are at an increased risk of developing anxiety during pregnancy or parenthood due to the lack of support and resources at their disposal. There is a gap in the current literature on providing the best care to young women who experience anxiety during motherhood. The present thesis hypothesized that by providing a workshop on anxiety and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) techniques, young mothers would increase their understanding of anxiety and coping strategies. The present thesis was created at the request of the placement agency to provide more information and training materials for staff on anxiety. The training series included a manual for staff members, a psychoeducation workshop, and a workbook for clients. The manual, workshop, and workbook focused on providing information about anxiety, relevant triggers, unique stressors to parenting at a young age, as well as how anxiety can affect the child. It also included three CBT techniques including a thought log, progressive muscle relaxation, and behavioural activation. Three participants took part in the workshop and completed pre-and post-test assessments to evaluate their understanding of anxiety and CBT coping strategies. The small sample size was a significant limitation in this study, and ultimately was a factor into the insignificant change between pre-and post-test assessments. Two of the participants did increase their understanding of anxiety in a positive way. The purpose of creating the workshop and training series was to teach the clients of the agency three useful techniques to decreasing their anxiety. Future research should include follow-up data to determine if the participants’ level of anxiety decreased over time as a result of participating in the psychoeducation workshop.
Development of a Facilitator’s Manual for The Family Table Program: Adult Edition

by Scott Denison

In the modern age, families are sacrificing health, nutrition, bonding, and skill development by abandoning cooking and gathering together for meals. We live in a quicker world full of demanding schedules and expectations, which adds to the stress faced by families today. Both low-intensity family therapy and culinary skill development have been shown to be effective ways to strengthen the family unit, but a gap exists in the literature regarding a treatment program combining the two. The Family Table program was developed to address this gap. Combining cognitive-behavioural skills and cooking classes, the Family Table Program aims to increase family meals prepared and eaten together, while reducing stress in family relationships. To assist facilitators in running this new program, two manuals were created, one for adult and the other for child participants. The development of the adult manual is outlined in the present report, including weekly breakdowns of lessons, discussion topics, rationales, handouts, activity sheets, and suggestions for cooking activities. The intended participants, design, setting, and measures for the pilot implementation of the Family Table program are also described, and the manual is presented. The major recommendations for this program are that future implementation should include a comparison group, e.g. waitlist control, and that it has the potential to be modified and adapted for use with a wide range of populations.
Families are struggling to find time to cook and even to schedule routine family meals. Both family meal preparation and meal sharing have been shown to boost protective factors in youth and strengthening family relationships. The present thesis describes the development and design of a program and accompanying manual created to address a gap in the literature regarding a treatment combining quality time spent together and culinary skill development. The Family Table Program aims to increase time spent as a family and in preparing meals together through family cooking classes and low-intensity family therapy rooted in cognitive behavioural therapy. The facilitator’s manual has been written in two parts, one for children and one for adults. The development of the manual for children is outlined. It includes: weekly lessons, discussion topics, rationales, handouts, activity sheets, and suggestions for cooking activities. The target participants, design, setting, and measures for the pilot trial study of The Family Table Program are also described. Major recommendations and future areas of study include adapting the program for different populations, using a wider range of assessment measures, and expanding culinary curricula.
Self-Respect Workshops for Aboriginal Adolescents and Adults

by Zoe L. Howlett

Aboriginal communities have seen a recent increase in youth and adult suicide attempts and completions in rural areas. This has led the Canadian government to declare a state of emergency within this population. Suicide interventions should attempt to increase protective factors and decrease risk factors for suicide. The current thesis consists of two workshops that focus on increasing one such protective factor, self-respect. The workshops focus on helping to educate both youth and adults on the definition of self-respect, and how to increase their own and other’s self-respect. A lack of culturally specific resources to address relevant need areas in Aboriginal communities was identified as a gap in services by the agency. As such, the workshop presented in this thesis was designed to incorporate aspects of the Aboriginal culture. These workshops can then be shared with other Aboriginal community health organizations as they both were created with comprehensive facilitator and participant guides. Strengths and limitations as well as results are addressed.
This thesis explores the development of a manual centring on the accessibility features of the Apple iPad. The purpose of the manual was to help staff at a local brain injury rehabilitation agency help clients in the community use the handheld technology as an electronic assistive device for activities of daily living. Literature involving different assistive and rehabilitative technologies and their uses in the field of acquired brain injury (ABI) as well as research on rehabilitative iPad use is explored. The manual was created in order of appearance by features (i.e., first time use walkthrough, accessibility menu, and alphabetical order of additional information such as assistive apps and gestures). The manual was developed at staff request and was initially presented to the full staff team via PowerPoint presentation. Feedback survey data on manual structure, the usefulness of content, and the probability of implementation was collected from staff members at the agency and used to prepare the final manual. Results indicate that rehabilitation staff at the brain injury service perceive the manual to be a useful tool for integrating iPads into a rehabilitative role for programs with clients with varying severity of brain injuries. The research examined in the literature review suggests that ABI rehabilitation staff are open to integrating new technologies into existing programs, however the literature is limited in regards to the develop of technical training manuals for these technologies. This thesis highlights a need for staff training in the use of assistive technology before it can be implemented in programs with clients. Limitations of this thesis include a limited sample size for feedback on manual use in the agency. This thesis adds to the limited research on iPad efficacy as it relates to ABI rehabilitation. Continued studies to assess the depth of possibility for the iPad as an assistive technology in various areas of brain injury rehabilitation is recommended.
Arrival to a new country and having to create a whole new life can cause large amounts of stress (Walsh, Shulman, & Maurer, 2008). Decreasing stress in new immigrants has been known to provide for an easier acculturation period. The “Newcomer Services Guide” was developed to provide support to both the agency and its clients. The main goal of the manual was to reduce overall stress in new immigrants. The literature that was reviewed supported the idea of creating a resource to aid in the transition for new Canadians. The resource manual consisted of six sections, which were all supported by previous research. The six sections of the manual were: Employment Services, Counselling Services, Language Instruction, Housing Help, Educational Assistance, and General Information. All agency staff members were trained on the use of the manual to make it easier to facilitate and to offer as much help as possible. However, due to time constraints the manual could not be implemented; therefore, an evaluation survey was used to gather ratings. The evaluation survey focused on the usefulness, the organization, and the readability of the manual. The results indicated that the resource would be effective to use with newcomers. Future research should focus on the implementation of the manual in order to receive more feedback on its effectiveness.
Society acknowledges that youth face a multitude of barriers as the educational and employment sectors evolve to accommodate the needs of the current time. Barriers may vary or compound depending on the youth and their medical and/or social ecological history. The barriers of a youth with autism may align and/or differ from those of a youth with severe depression, therefore creating a need for supports on an individual level through the employment process. Peer-reviewed literature supports how a user-friendly and well-organized manual can assist in the support and mentoring of youth with barriers during each stage of employment. Mentoring Support Resource Kit (MSRK) is a synonym for manual for the purposes of this thesis, and youth is classified as between the ages of 16 and 29. The present thesis aimed to identify ways a community employment agency can support youth with singular or multiple barrier(s) through engaging community employers and enhancing the hiring process. Agency staff noted that many of the youth have a variety of barriers that are unique to the individuals. Due to the nature of the agencies obligation to meet ministry guidelines, barriers are identified as: Aboriginal persons, person with disability, age, recent immigrant, educational level attained, English/French language proficiency, essential skills including literacy, work experience, family/household circumstances, socially marginalized, and source of income. Agency staff suggested that an employer resource kit would be the most effective way to maintain continued support to each of the youth, as it could be adapted into already existing programs at the agency. The MSRK was compiled from literature for all of the barriers identified above, with a focus on supporting youth with autism. The MSRK addresses pre-employment processes (i.e. interviews, job advertisements), employment training supports, maintenance strategies, conflict resolutions, professional development, community supports, termination strategies, and post-employment supports. The MSRK also utilizes a detachable appendix that educates and offers employers templates to assess and identify ways to support youth with autism and create employment positions based on individual assessments. The MSRK consists of various assessments, roleplays, and worksheets spread out over the entire manual. The major assessments were feedback forms using Likert scales that were given to employers and service providers to complete, in order to determine the areas of improvement and/or strengths of the MSRK. Due to time constraints the MSRK could not be implemented and initial use is recommended to determine whether employer’s needs are met.
Dudley, Ahlgrim-Delzell, and Calhoun (1999) state that aggression, self-injury, social withdrawal, eating non-edibles (Pica), elopement, and poor self-grooming were common behaviours exhibited in people with a dual diagnosis. A team of professionals must work together to create a recovery plan that benefits the individual most and works on improving these behaviours. The professionals included in this team are psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurses, and occupational therapists (Borge, Angel, & Røssberg, 2013). Being able to collaborate on ideas with staff members who have a variety of backgrounds can make it harder to come to similar solutions. That is why the purpose of this study was to create a resource for nursing staff to aid in their learning in the field of behaviour therapy. The researcher’s hypothesis was that creating a accessible resource for nursing staff would help increase their knowledge about behaviour therapy and potentially help them feel more competent when assisting behaviour therapists with patient’s behaviour interventions. There were 3 resources created in the form of a double-sided laminated handout/flyer. The handouts consisted of descriptions and guidelines for applied behaviour analysis competencies such as Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), antecedent interventions, and reinforcement schedules. A satisfaction survey was handed out to the nursing staff once they were able to review the resources. Ten staff members reported back, giving positive feedback about the resources visual appeal, readability, and accessibility. Overall, the agency was satisfied with the product. It is recommended that the nursing staff members continue to use the resources to aid in their learning processes.
Stress can be a commonplace experience for most people within their lives. Having the skills to manage stress can be vital in diminishing distress and lessening an individual's vulnerability towards the development of mental and physical health concerns. During my professional development at House Of Hearts, a residency for offenders who served federal sentences, the value of stress reduction and management is well recognized. Accessible resources, treatment, and/or support services, post-incarceration aids in the reduction of recidivism rates (Bayse et al., 1991). Equal opportunity and access to employment, family education, addressing communication and stress management skills, counseling services, therapy, and treatment programs are all helpful in relapse prevention and reducing recidivism rates (Spohn et al., 2001). Moreover, acquiring this skill set assists clientele in their reintegration into society. The aim of this thesis is to develop a manual to give elective and versatile stress management skills for offenders who are on parole within the community residing at House Of Hearts in Ottawa, Ontario. This manual is a compilation of empirically validated approaches to stress management and best practice and includes: assertiveness training, positive self-talk, and progressive muscle relaxation. It is aspired that this manual be used within the House Of Hearts as a resource tool for both staff and clients alike. Modifications to this manual had been based on dynamic feedback. However, due to the scope of this project, this thesis is a focus of a manualized approach to stress reduction and not measurement of its efficacy in practice. Future recommendations for a thesis within this study area would be the empirical analysis of the treatment manual in order to determine its effectiveness of reducing stress within male offenders under community supervision.
Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) is an innovative and efficacious approach used to address cognitive, emotional, and behavioural challenges in children, adolescents, and adults. Despite the positive outcomes of CPS, barriers to the implementation of CPS do exist. The thesis explored an alternative way to implement CPS to minimize such barriers. The student researcher developed a workbook entitled *Strengthening Problem Solving Skills using the Collaborative Problem Solving Approach: A workbook for Primary Caregivers and Children*. The workbook provided an overview of the CPS approach. Particularly, chapters 3, 4, and 5, explained the three stages of Plan B: Empathy, Define the Problem, and Invitation. Finally, the workbook included a list of book and website resources for primary caregivers and children. Staff at the agency completed a three-part questionnaire about workbooks. Part I of the questionnaire asked about the current use of workbook features (e.g., diagrams) in the home-based services. The results indicated that staff used features of the workbook in the delivery of home-based services. Further, in Part II of the questionnaire, the student researcher developed a list of criteria to determine staff satisfaction with a workbook (e.g., concise language). The results indicated that staff found each of the listed criteria to be important. Part III of the questionnaire examined the perceived benefits and use of a workbook. It is recommended that a satisfaction survey is developed to determine staff satisfaction with the produced workbook. Finally, it is recommended that experimental research be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the workbook in minimizing barriers to the implementation of CPS and in strengthening problem solving skills in primary caregivers and children. Moreover, further research should continue to explore alternative methods to implementation of CPS.
A Resource Manual of Cognitive Behavioural Strategies for Professionals to Help Manage Anxiety in School-aged Children

by Britney Thacker

Anxiety is a common mental health problem among youth that can lead to intrusions in normal daily functioning. Intrusions can be carried into adulthood if treatment is not received. More specifically, the school environment may cause much anxiety to young people. In order to reduce symptoms of anxiety, it is imperative that effective treatments be implemented. Literature on treating anxiety in youth suggests that cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) is an effective treatment. The present study aimed to develop a resource manual, using CBT strategies that would aid professionals within an educational setting to help students who experience anxiety. Materials created within the manual were supported by the research found in the literature review, along with support for the use of a manual as a treatment delivery. The final resource manual consisted of psychoeducation on CBT and anxiety, as well as CBT strategies that could be facilitated by the professionals. A feedback questionnaire (FQ) was created in order to examine the manual’s clarity of information, the usefulness of the manual, visual appeal and organization. The education professional was able to complete the FQ after using the manual with at least one student. Collection of the FQ was analyzed and the manual was determined to be a beneficial tool within the classroom in order to support students with anxious symptoms. Future research may include a further analysis of providing CBT to students who experience anxiety using the manual, as well as incorporating further modifications to the manual.
Evaluations & Assessments
Scales of Daily Functioning: Development of A Pilot Program and a Life Skills Pre- and Post-Assessment

by Nicole Baggaley

Life skills are the skills that help an individual function on a daily basis, from cooking to social skills. Mental health professionals recognize that youth, especially at-risk youth, are lacking the social skills needed to thrive independently (Navickas, Gudaitis, & Kranjnakova, 2014). This is a growing concern as these youths will eventually become adults in society and will be raising children, seeking employment, and hopefully contributing to society in a positive way. Furthermore, it is being seen that schools are having difficulty engaging youth in programs which teach the skills necessary to survive independently (Sherraden & Grinstein-Weiss, 2015). As such, the purpose of this thesis was to create a pre- and post-test assessment for a pilot program being provided by Youth Diversion, Kingston, to determine the effectiveness of the program. The pilot program involved five different agencies within the city limits of Kingston. The program focused on five main domains: dietary health, community engagement, team building, financial literacy, and employability. The assessment is a five point Likert rating scale based on the five domains to assess the effectiveness of the pilot program. Statistical analysis suggested that the pilot program was not significant in increasing life skills for the sic participants that completed the entire program. For future research, a larger sample size would be beneficial to provide a clearer picture of the impact of the program. However, despite statistical analysis proving that the pilot program was not statistically significance, visual analysis of the completed graphs showed that each participant had an increase in life skills after completing the post-test.
Program Evaluation of a Youth Residential Substance Treatment Centre: Using Grounded Theory

by Sasha Kathron

The purpose of the current study was to complete a program evaluation at a youth substance abuse treatment centre. The researcher, using grounded theory, examined youth satisfaction surveys implemented by the centre. The results revealed major and minor trends in the following areas: previous residential treatment, safety of residents in treatment, bullying, changes since arriving at treatment, continuing variables to positive change, nutrition, and contingency management system. A minimum of 3 reoccurring responses was required to denote a trend. The data was considered a major trend if it has 30 or more reoccurring responses. A total of 10 major trends were found throughout the data. Similarities and differences were then identified between genders. Areas in which clients wanted change or improvements were identified. The main issue for males was that they would like changes made to the contingency management system while females desired increased consistency between the staff.
An Evaluation and Manual Composition of the Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Home and Community-Based Services

by Christy McCance

Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) is a well-established treatment for a wide range of clinical and psychological disorders (Farmer & Chapman, 2016). This applied thesis project has two separate components. The first component is designed to evaluate the current home and community-based CBT services at the Ottawa Institute of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (OICBT). The project addresses current inputs, outputs, activities, and outcomes the program offers. The second goal of this project was to develop a manual for the Home and Community Program to include current practices and findings. The manual was designed to assist therapists and staff in conducting CBT procedures outside of the traditional office setting. Overall, the evaluation component indicated that the program would benefit from using an evaluation method used to track client progression such as the Personal Planning Tool (PPT) created by Webster and Hadwin (2015). The results also indicated that without formal assessment of the manual it is unclear whether the manual will be effective. Regardless, it is suggested that providing clear expectations in a formalized manual will benefit therapists working within the Home and Community Program at OICBT.
Mismanaged stress can produce or exacerbate harmful physiological and psychological health outcomes (Lindsay, Paulhus, & Nairne, 2008). Chronic stress is a prevalent concern in the medical student and professional populations. Relationships were examined between participation in a Mindfulness-Based Stress-Reduction (MBSR) program and perceived stress level, use of adaptive and maladaptive coping skills, and self-compassion in a sample of 131 adults who were either medical students, residents, or worked in health care as physicians or support staff. The MBSR programs were 6-weeks in length, implemented between 2008 and 2015, and targeted individuals’ challenges associated with stress through an array of mindfulness exercises. Participants completed outcome measures pre- and post-MBSR intervention that evaluated perceived stress, self-compassion, and use of adaptive and maladaptive coping techniques. Additionally, program evaluation forms were used to assess social validity. Paired-sample t-tests showed statistically significantly improved self-compassion ($p<0.00001$, $d=-0.69$) and use of adaptive coping techniques ($p<0.00001$, $d=-0.68$) in addition to significantly decreased perceived stress ($p<0.00001$, $d=0.7$) and use of maladaptive coping techniques ($p<0.0005$, $d=0.33$), from pre- to post-tests. Evaluation forms also suggested social validity, with participants reporting that MBSR was useful for managing stress, managing life overall, and pursuing personal goals. Administering follow-up measures at 6-month and 1-year periods to assess long-term outcomes as well as accounting for influences of moderator variables on outcome scores are suggested as recommendations for further research.
Evaluation of a Mentoring Based Program Delivered to At-Risk Youth in an Alternative Educational Setting.

by Nicola Turcotte

Only 69% of adolescents graduate high school on time (Editorial Projects in Education Research Centre 2009; as cited in Henry, Knight, & Thornberry, 2012), which leads researchers to believe that these students are disengaged from school early on in life (Dean & Jolly, 2012). A newly developed program in the Brockville community, labeled Connections, aims to address the community gap of students demonstrating educational disengagement that is negatively affecting their home, school, community, and social lives. The purpose of this thesis is to analyze current program practices by using the logic model which identifies program inputs, outputs, and outcomes on a multilevel scale. A secondary purpose of the thesis was to conduct research of considered best practices when working with at-risk youth in an alternative educational setting. Research indicates best practices of working with this population are incorporating vocational training, character development, addressing mental health, and building healthy rapports between students and servicing staff members. Using these components while working with at-risk youth in an alternative educational setting is hypothesized to improve symptoms of educational disengagement while promoting and improving a youth’s mental health, social skills, life skills, vocational skills, and appropriate community behaviours and engagement. The logic model identified various components of the Connections program in regards to inputs, outputs, and outcomes. Areas of strength of the program include the involvement of character development, vocational learning, academic support, and diverse staff with various experiences and educational backgrounds. Main limitations include areas of recommendation for the program to further improve success, which is to more actively involve a mental health worker on a more regular basis within the program.
Gold of Wisdom from the BPSYC Faculty

"Everything has a crack in it; that's how the light gets in (Leonard Cohen)"

Colleen Cairns, MSc., ABA, BCBA
Professor, Honours Bachelor of Behavioural Psychology
St. Lawrence College

"Life is like riding a bicycle, one has to keep pedaling or you will lose your balance." This quote should always ring true. Never stop learning, never stop trying, for this will make you the best that you can be, which is what the clients we serve need and deserve.

Pamela Shea, M.Ads, Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA)
Professor, Honours Bachelor of Behavioural Psychology
St. Lawrence College

“A person who has been “made aware of himself” by the questions he has been asked is in a better position to predict and control his own behavior” (Skinner, 1974, p. 35).

If you take away only one important piece of information from your BPSyc journey, it should be this…never stop asking questions. Ask questions of others, about what you read or hear and, most importantly, of your self!

As Skinner once said, “the rat is always right”…or, to translate this to the clinical situation, the client is always right! The person’s response to your treatment will always let you know if you are on the right track.

And, as I always love to say, “The data will set you free!”

Andrew McNamara, Ph.D., BCBA
Program Coordinator
Professor, Honours Bachelor of Behaviour Analysis Program
George Brown College
Graduates

As you enter the workforce, have confidence in the knowledge and skills that you have acquired, but also approach every situation humbly and with curiosity. I challenge you to take every opportunity to learn, to network, and to challenge yourself in ways that are outside of your comfort zone. Finally, never forget that you are being given the privilege to significantly impact the lives of people, and this is something that should never being taken for granted. Wishing you all the best of success in this next stage of your learning journey.

Laura Campbell, MA, BCBA
Coordinator, Years 1 & 2
Professor, Honours Bachelor of Behavioural Psychology
St. Lawrence College

If we only try to learn and understand things that we perceive to be important, we become self-limiting and insulated within our own environments. Be genuinely curious about all aspects your existence and embrace the notion of life-long learning. Ask thoughtful questions, listen to and be respectful of others’ opinions, critically evaluate your understanding, look for value in both enjoyable and trying experiences; and, by all means, ride a bicycle!

Hal M. Cain, Ph.D.
Professor in Honour’s Bachelor’s Behavioural Psychology Program
St. Lawrence College

To the graduating class of 2017

As your communications instructor, it has been my privilege to watch you all progress from first year (and some from the pre-BPSYC program) through to your final year of the program. This booklet is a physical representation of the hard work, dedication, at times frustration, but in the end, the considerable accomplishments that you have achieved at SLC. Well done, all of you. As you prepare to enter the work force in your new roles as graduates of the Bachelor of Behavioural Psychology Honours program, I hope you remember a few things:

● Words are powerful; use them carefully.
● Always aim to write with clarity and respect for your audience.
● Commas have meaning, spelling always counts, and passive voice is written by zombies.
● Most importantly, to ensure that exclamation points retain their impact, be sure to use them only for the most important occasions.

Congratulations! (You have earned it.)

Sara Beck, MAJ, B.Ed.
Professor in Honour’s Bachelor’s Behavioural Psychology Program
St. Lawrence College
Graduating Class of 2017

It is with great honour that we celebrate your accomplishments. We have been blessed to be part of your learning journey. You have invested hours of study, hard work, and overcame challenges to successfully learn the foundational theory and applied skills to provide evidence-based behavioural services. You have developed professional skills and learned to work in collaboration with other professional disciplines. In addition, you have acquired research and critical thinking skills, which are shown by the excellent quality of the theses presented at this Poster Gala. You will continue to grow as professionals and will make a difference in our community. I commend your perseverance and dedication to learning! “There is no end to education. It is not that you read a book, pass an examination, and finish with education. The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of learning” (Jiddu Krishnamurti)

Coordinator, Years 3 & 4
Professor, Honours Bachelor of Behavioural Psychology
St. Lawrence College

Class of 2017,

Transition and Generalization

It’s almost time for us to move on to the next phases of our lives: Retirement for me, and for Graduation for you!

I’m ‘going rogue’ to finally get to move from Fixed Time schedules, which required me to plan every minute of my days, for 11 months of the year, to?? You are also leaving the ‘safety’ and structure of the BPSYC degree timetables, and due dates for assignments, and tests to ?? So, we all are transitioning and moving into uncharted territory…but we are not ‘flying blind’! Beyond the BPSYC CONTENT that you’ve learned, remember that you now have transferable SKILLS that can be generalized to other settings. You know how to set goals and plan how to achieve them, manage your time, prioritize, problem solve, assess new environments, build up a personal supports and use ‘positive scanning’ to look for the strengths in the social ecology! So, wherever you go and whatever paths you follow in careers, further education and life choices, you take BPSYC with you! Remember to keep in touch with faculty so we too can get vicarious reinforcement from your successes.

Personal Growth and Impact on Others
I ‘enjoyed the ride’ of teaching you, and loved the opportunity to get to know some of you more while mentoring you on placement. It’s been a pleasure watching you grow over time and a special pleasure seeing how the ‘quiet ones’ in the class, blossomed on placement and ‘knock the socks’ off your agency supervisors as you showed them what you could do. You’ve all taught me a lot about human behaviour, not in textbooks!!
You’ve shown human services agencies that a behavioural perspective, techniques and empirical evidence has the power to help them understand and create positive changes in their clients. Overall, you’ve ‘done BPSYC proud’!

**Next Steps**

Remember my fav quote on PERSISTENCE by former US president Calvin Coolidge:

> NOTHING in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan “press on” has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.

Now, you have the key skills and knowledge tools to MAKE A DIFFERENCE, so what’s left is for you to BELIEVE in yourself and show the world what BPSYC can do!

As you deal with obstacles in your career, use the behavioural skills we taught you and stay true to your principles & values. Remember that YOU can be the catalyst for change the world desperately needs. But the key feature of a catalyst is to initiate change in others, without being consumed in the process. So, take care of yourself to prevent compassion fatigue.

Finally, remember what Greek Philosopher Heraclitus said on INTEGRITY:

> The soul is dyed the colour of its thoughts. Think only on those things that are in line with your principles and can bear the full light of day. The content of your character is your choice. Day by day, what you choose, what you think and what you do is who you become. Your integrity is your destiny…it is the light that guides your way.

To paraphrase Buzz Lightyear, “TO GRADUATION… AND BEYOND!”

Gary Bernfeld, PhD,
BPSYC Professor, 2004-2017; Coordinator, 2004-2010
Conclusion

Again, we would like to say thank you to everyone for attending this year’s Building Behavioural Solutions Conference. We sincerely hope you have enjoyed learning about the work we have completed during our studies, as we have enjoyed sharing them with you.

This event and poster gala signifies the end of our time in the Behavioural Psychology program for the graduating class of 2017. This cohort has always been inclusive and supportive of one another, like one big family, and we will look back on our accomplishments and the struggles we have overcome together, and remember where it all began four years ago. We also would like to thank the amazing professors we have had over the past four years. You have all shaped us from students into intelligent, fair, and hardworking professionals.

THANK YOU
BPSYC class of 2017
For inquiries regarding the Honours Bachelor of Behavioural Psychology degree program and the theses listed in this booklet, please contact MJobin@sl.on.ca

Full copies the theses will be available in the St. Lawrence College library at the Kingston campus in June of 2017.