Thesis abstracts from the graduating class of
the
Honours Bachelor of Behavioural Psychology
program
St. Lawrence College, 2019
Welcome

On behalf of the Honours Bachelor of Behavioural Psychology graduating class of 2019, we would like to welcome you to this year’s Behavioural Psychology Poster Gala. The posters on display show the hard work and dedication that the BPSYC students have put in, not only over the past eight months, but also over the past four years. We would not be here today presenting our theses without the support and encouragement of our college supervisors, agency supervisors, second readers, BPSYC faculty, and peers.

The BPSYC program provides core courses in Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA), Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), and Behavioural Counselling, in addition to other related areas in behavioural psychology. BPSYC students also participated in over 1,100 hours of supervised placement experience, across three community agencies, which is what makes our undergraduate degree unique. The knowledge and skills acquired over this four-year program can be applied in a variety of employment areas such as ABA, acquired brain injury, addictions, corrections, counselling and more.

This booklet contains the abstracts of the theses being presented at the poster gala. The abstracts are outlined alphabetically, by field of study, with the posters being organized in the same manner.

Thank you to everyone participating in today’s poster gala and supporting us as we showcase our concluding projects. Please feel free to ask students any questions you may have regarding their posters or related topics. We are eager to share our projects and experiences with you all.

~The Graduating Class of 2019~
Table of Contents

Welcome .................................................................................................................. 2
Table of Contents .................................................................................................... 3
Message from Associate Dean Louise Chatterton Luchuk ........................................ 6
ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY ...................................................................................... 7
  Christina Quesnel ................................................................................................... 7
ADDITIONS .............................................................................................................. 7
  Drake Deline ......................................................................................................... 7
  Megan Edwards ..................................................................................................... 8
  Ashley Gellert ....................................................................................................... 8
AUTISM AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ...................................................... 9
  Heidi Boulard ....................................................................................................... 9
  Sheridan Chiasson ............................................................................................... 9
  Ashley Kearney .................................................................................................... 10
  Bailey Kimball .................................................................................................... 10
  Leah McCumber .................................................................................................. 11
  Rebecca Seward .................................................................................................. 11
  Elizabeth Smith ................................................................................................. 12
  Cierra Vandermeer .............................................................................................. 12
  Emma Whelpley ................................................................................................. 13
CORRECTIONS ........................................................................................................ 14
  Stephany Bathurst .............................................................................................. 14
Message from Associate Dean Louise Chatterton Luchuk

Congratulations to the graduating class of 2019! Your time in the Honours Bachelor of Behavioural Psychology program is represented in the posters you have created. 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!

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 in groups, contributing to the community, learning about yourself, building relationships, utilizing critical thinking skills, digital citizenship, public speaking, and so on.

You should be proud of your accomplishments and I wish you all the best as you finish up your studies and move into the next phase – whether it be continued education or entering the workforce. #ProudtobeSLC

Louise Chatterton Luchuk, M.A. (Educational Studies)
Associate Dean – School of Community Services
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ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY

Anger Management Training for the Acquired Brain Injury Population
Christina Quesnel

In the field of acquired brain injury (ABI), there are many different components of treatment and rehabilitation that staff target; specifically, anger problems can afflict an individual and impede their functional living if the problem goes unaddressed. The purpose of the current academic thesis and literature review is to examine anger management programming and find modifications suited to the target population of individuals with an ABI. Journal articles and books from various sources were compared to a specific set of inclusion criteria. Pertinent studies and books were organized into a summarized table. While there is a shortage of research pertaining to ABI-specific anger-based group programming, information was collected regarding different components to treatment including: duration fatigue, homework and assessments, memory recall, therapist delivery and emotional recognition, and control. It was determined that further research is required to better support individuals with an ABI. In addition, the results concluded that modifications to typically-delivered anger management programming would benefit this community. It is recommended that future research extends the inclusion criteria to incorporate veterans and military personnel into the information-gathering process to acquire more information on a wider spectrum.

ADDITIONS

Revision of a Self-Sabotage Group Based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Techniques for Adult Male’s Seeking to Abstain from Drug and Alcohol Use
Drake Deline

Approximately 8 million Canadians experience substance abuse issues within their lifetime (Smith, 2018). The effects substance abuse may have on individuals include mental, physical, and behavioural concerns and the annual cost to society to support these concerns is approximately $22.8 billion (Gifford, & Humphreys, 2007; Rehm et al., 2007). The purpose of this thesis was to first evaluate the use of group Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) techniques in men’s residential programs for the treatment of substance abuse. Secondly, self-sabotaging behaviours were addressed in relation to substance abuse and CBT techniques. However, the main purpose of this thesis was to produce the updated Self-Sabotage facilitators notes used at the Addictions and Mental Health Services: Hastings Prince Edwards (AMHS: HPE) men’s residence program. The updated notes were created to ensure that best practice and up to date information is being used as well as to create a standard layout for future updated groups. This layout included a rationale, goals, time frame, materials, process, worksheets, and additional facilitator’s notes. Attached is the PowerPoint and a copy of the handout and worksheet needed to facilitate the group discussion. It is expected that by re-evaluating and incorporating newer, more detailed, and best practice policies for the self-sabotage group facilitator notes, AMHS: HPE staff will be better equipped to lead the group sessions and improve the clients’ success rates of treatment. Additionally, strengths, limitations and challenges, multilevel challenges to service implementation, and contributions and recommendations for future research are discussed.
Measuring the Effectiveness of the GAIN-SS as an Assessment for the Thinking Things Through Program: A Substance Abuse Intervention
Megan Edwards

A research study focused on a substance abuse group, called the Thinking Things Through (TTT) program, held at an addiction and mental health agency in south-eastern Ontario. The Global Appraisal of Individual Needs – Short Screener (GAIN-SS) assessment was used as a pre- and post-test to measure 16 mandated clients’ progress in the TTT program, and the effectiveness of this assessment measure was evaluated. This research study examines whether the GAIN-SS would demonstrate similar results to the Outcome Questionnaire 30.1 (OQ-30.1). A previous study, conducted by Tudor Price’s (2017), has illustrated TTT to be an effective program by using the OQ-30.1. Therefore, it was hypothesized that the GAIN-SS would also confirm the efficacy of the TTT program by evaluating the participants’ pre- and post-test scores within the substance use domain of the assessment. At the conclusion three rounds of intervention, a paired sample t-test was used to measure whether the participants’ scores were statistically significant. The statistical analysis did not show a decrease in the participants’ pre- and post-test scores, which indicated that the study did not exemplify a statistical significance [t(15) = -2.9, p = .774]. Despite the results not confirming the study’s hypothesis, the findings of the study contributed important additional literature. Further discussions of the study’s findings are provided at the end of the paper with recommendations for future research.

Modifying an Addiction Group Treatment Program into an Individual Psychoeducational Program for Released from Custody Population
Ashley Gellert

As a result of the strong empirical evidence of a positive relationship between substance use and criminal behaviour, individuals from the release from custody population are typically mandated to engage in addiction and mental health treatment. In order to address the relationship between substance use and crime, the present study attempted to transform a pre-existing addictions drop-in treatment group into an individual psychoeducational program for released offenders. In order to successfully reduce recidivism rates, the individual psychoeducational program aimed to provide participants with the skills required to increase confidence in managing substance use and move through the stages of change. The individual psychoeducational program consisted of eight 45-minute sessions that varied in topics and ultimately targeted substance use. The major addition to the study was the emphasis on components of cognitive-behaviour skills, development, the adherence to the principles of the Risk-Need-Responsivity model, and the target of substance abuse as a criminogenic need. In addition, the research program included principles of motivational interviewing and a strength-based approach. The dependent variables of the study were assessed using pre-and-post self-assessment measures, including the Drug-Taking Confidence Questionnaire (DTCQ-8) and the Stages of Change Readiness and Treatment Eagerness Scale (SOCRATES-8A). Furthermore, the Adverse Consequences Substance Use Scale (ACSUS) was used as a secondary-measure the evaluate the correlation between the participants’ substance use and criminal behaviours. The statistical analysis of the results indicated that the hypothesis of the individual psychoeducational program was rejected, indicating that the program was ineffective at increasing participants’ confidence regarding managing substance use and moving through the stages of change. It is recommended that future studies explore the efficacy of the individual psychoeducational program, as there were several limitations and multilevel challenges involved in the present study.
AUTISM AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Positive Parenting: Development of Facilitator and Participant Manuals

Heidi Boulard

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and other disruptive behaviour disorders are one of the most prevalent referrals to the child and adolescent mental health services. Due to the detrimental long-term effects of untreated ADHD, it is vital that an effective and holistic treatment approach is available. Positive effects have been found in individualized treatments and in a pharmacological approach; however, often parent involvement is crucial. Often parent groups can require a large time commitment from parent and caregivers leading to high attrition rates. Brief and condensed groups have demonstrated a lower participant dropout resulting in higher retention rates. The aim of the current study is to develop a 5-week facilitator and participant manual for a parent treatment group, called Positive Parenting, to be implemented with parents who have a child with behavioural issues. The manuals were developed with the goal to decrease attrition rates and increase the fidelity of the psychoeducational treatment group. The manuals were created through expert consultation, consultation of the research, and derived from the Incredible Year Parenting Program. The manuals focus on concepts such as how to help children learn to regulate emotions, strategies for increasing positive behaviour, strategies for managing problem behaviours, and strategies to promote the child’s social and emotional competence. The facilitator and participant manual correspond and are designed to be implemented in unison with each other. Future research should examine the efficacy of the manuals, parent knowledge acquisition, frequency of the children’s problem behaviors, and facilitator feedback.

Using TAPit® Technology to Teach Daily Living Skills to Adults with Developmental Disabilities: A Manual

Sheridan Chiasson

People with developmental disabilities often require more help to learn and use information than people without cognitive deficits. Individuals with developmental disabilities, such as autism spectrum disorder, often struggle to learn essential skills to daily living, such as meal preparation, money management, or personal hygiene, which are essential for independent living. The current thesis discusses the development of a manual that focuses on increasing daily living skills using interactive technology to educate adults with developmental disabilities. In particular, the manual aims to teach staff how to educate clients on how to create budgets, use an ATM/debit card, and cook a healthy meal. These skills were identified to be important by the agency as they felt their clients were capable of the skills but lacked the knowledge. A lack of specific resources to address relevant need areas in teaching adults with developmental disabilities was identified by the agency. As such, the manual presented in this thesis was designed to incorporated aspects of independent living skills with aspects of gamification, as a teaching tool. It was hypothesized that the manual would allow staff members to be able to effectively implement teaching these skills if the manual was flexible. Due to time constraints, the author was not able to formally evaluate the effectiveness of the manual, but there was perceived effectiveness through feedback from the agency staff. It is thought this manual can be generalized to different agencies as the technology used is interchangeable. Strengths, limitations, multilevel challenged to service implementation, and recommendations for future research are addressed.
The Use of a Robot to Teach Social Skills to Children With Characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder in a School Setting
Ashley Kearney

The use of social robots to teach social skills to individuals who are diagnosed with or display symptoms of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is being evaluated and compared to a human teaching the same skills. This study sought to investigate how social skills can be effectively taught with two individuals, and how the use of technology in the form of a robot can be used to deliver lessons on social skills when compared to a human delivering the same lessons. Two participants were given the opportunity to learn two social skills: greetings and leave-taking. The first participant was taught greetings by the robot (Milo) and the second participant was taught leave-taking by a human. The conditions were then switched such that the human taught participant one leave-taking and Milo taught participant two greetings. The sessions took place twice a week at an elementary school and lasted 20 to 45 minutes each. It was hypothesized that the participants would have an increase in correct responses when asked questions regarding greetings and leave-taking skills in the robot condition compared to the human condition. This was measured by averaging the percentage of correct responses of the participants under both conditions and comparing results by the mean, median, and standard deviation. Overall, the hypothesis was supported. The participants showed an increase in correct responses in the robot condition compared to the human condition. The results of this study suggested that the use of robots to teach social skills is slightly more beneficial to those with or who display characteristics of ASD compared to a human teaching the same skills. However, limitations such as participant attendance and inconsistence between both conditions occurred in the study. Therefore, more research is needed in this area as the results were not statistically significant. Further studies should examine using larger sample sizes so that the results can be generalized to a larger number of participants and to ensure that the skills being taught can be generalized to the classroom and to social situations.

Education Curriculum for Pre-teen Girls with Developmental Disabilities
Bailey Kimball

Sex education is a common component in the public school curriculum, however, for individuals with developmental disabilities accessible resources are difficult to find. Many schools do not provide the appropriate and easily accessible resources for individuals with developmental disabilities. In clinical settings, the need for sex-education has risen among pre-teen girls with developmental disabilities. This is because pre-teen girls with developmental disabilities are considered vulnerable in society and are not always thought of when they reach the age of sexual maturity. Research has been very limited on this subject and the need for a program to teach sex-education to this population is growing. This project aims to meet the needs presented above through the use of a program curriculum. This curriculum is predicted to assist the agency staff in running an 8-week program on sex education, personal hygiene, health, self-esteem, safety, and assertiveness in the community. The hope is that the girls who are involved gain the appropriate knowledge and self-confidence they need, as they grow older.
Using Differential Reinforcement of Alternative Behaviour and Response Blocking to Increase Appropriate Mouthing
Leah McCumber

Object mouthing has been categorized as a form of self-injurious behaviour due to the damage it can cause to the mouth. Individuals who engage in object mouthing can be vulnerable to biological and chemical contaminants through skin absorption, inhalation, or ingestion. This study investigated the treatment of inappropriate mouthing behaviour with the combination of differential reinforcement of alternative behaviour (DRA) and response blocking. DRA was used in the form of prompting an exchange of an inappropriate mouthing item for an appropriate mouthing item; when the participant was engaging in the use of Chewelry®, that’s when they were given positive reinforcement. The exchange process and the use of Chewelry® act as the alternative behaviour to inappropriate mouthing behaviour. Due to mouthing behaviours being dangerous, response blocks were used by placing a hand in between the participant’s mouth and the inappropriate mouthing item. The treatment was conducted at a daycare centre, that the participant attended full-time, in the mornings. The results of this treatment found that the use of DRA and response blocks was effective in decreasing inappropriate mouthing behaviour in the participant. Some key recommendations for this study includes a more clinical setting for beginning of the treatment phase, and then generalizing the skills to a classroom; more consistency with the delivery of reinforcement, response blocks, and exchanges; and promoting maintenance and generalization. This adds to the research to support the use of DRA, positive reinforcement, response blocking, and Chewelry® as potential effective strategies at decreasing mouthing behaviour.

Using Habit Reversal Therapy, Positive Reinforcement and Visual Prompts to Decrease Hair Pulling Behaviour in a Child with Trichotillomania, Tics, and ADHD
Rebecca Seward

Individuals with trichotillomania (TTM) have urges to engage in hair pulling behaviour. Much of the research on TTM has been conducted with adults despite the fact that the majority of people with this disorder start engaging in hair pulling behaviour during childhood (Snorrason, Walther, Elkin, & Woods, 2016). Frequently pulling of hair affects a person socially, physically and psychologically. Treatments have been shown to be effective to reduce hair pulling, such as Habit Reversal Therapy (HRT), however, little research has been conducted on the effects of this type of treatment with children. In this study HRT and positive reinforcement were used to treat TTM in a child. The HRT included providing the participant with education about TTM and awareness about emotions, discovering possible triggers that created the urge to pull one’s hair and demonstrating different relaxation techniques and alternative behaviours. Positive reinforcement was provided by the participant’s guardian when the participant expressed the urge to pull their hair but instead used one of the coping methods that was taught in session. A valuable reinforcer was also provided to the participant after they had abstained from pulling their hair for a week. One on one sessions with the participant where scheduled weekly for a total of eight sessions, however participant absences was a limitation. HRT and positive reinforcement together were effective in decreasing hair pulling behaviour in a child with TTM. Recommendations for future research and limitations of the current study are discussed.
Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Skillstreaming Group to Improve Social Skills in Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Elizabeth Smith

Social skill deficits are considered the one of the most significant defining characteristics of individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Current literature suggests teaching and improving social skills can improve the overall quality of life for individuals with ASD. The literature suggests that best practice for teaching individuals with ASD includes a small group setting, breaking skills down to smaller, isolated skills, and using role-play and modeling to teach. Skillstreaming is a curriculum published in 2017 to teach individuals with ASD social skills. Due to the novelty of the manual, there is a lack of research to support its effectiveness. The following study measured the efficacy of the curriculum using a pre and post-test design with four participants between the ages of 11 and 14. The results were measured using a self-report and parent-report assessments which assessed the use of skills taught throughout the curriculum. The skills were divided into six categories: relationship skills, social comprehension, self-regulation, problem solving, understanding emotions, and school-related skills. Overall, the results were inconsistent and therefore inconclusive. Three out of four participants showed minor improvements in scores on the post-treatment test, while one of four parents showed an increase in score on the post-treatment test. Limitations to the study include small sample size, it is recommended that future studies include larger sample size in order to collect more reliable and significant results.

It Takes Two: The Dyads Program Manual for Staff and Parents

Cierra Vandermeer

Children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) have many characteristic behaviours and social skills that are different than peers who are typically developing in the same age range. Children within the intensive behavioural intervention (IBI) program at this agency currently receive one-on-one intensive treatment with a therapist that helps develop a wide range of skills. While IBI services are beneficial to children with ASD in the beginning, when a child graduates from this program, transitioning from one-on-one IBI services into a classroom setting with many students to fewer staff supports may be particularly difficult for some children to adjust to. The Dyads working group was developed recently to support children within the IBI program who are ready to transition into a classroom setting, but it is a relatively new program that the agency has implemented. This program seeks to provide the child with transitional support, teaching of appropriate classroom and social skills, as well as adjustment from being one-on-one to a two-on-one setting with a peer. The Dyads Staff Manual was created for this newly implemented Dyads program during a 15-week thesis placement for staff at the agency to use to run the Dyads program smoothly and consistently between all staff. The manual included descriptions of effective techniques, and effective skill building programs for transitioning children based on current literature and a survey of needs from current stakeholders such as teachers and instructor therapists. A parent information brochure was created for parents of children attending the dyads program, and it included guidelines for parents, a description of challenges, along with literature to support it. A feedback survey was distributed to members of the agency who used the manual to determine effectiveness, and while responses were limited, the manual was deemed helpful and effective overall.
Best Practices for Positive Behaviour Support Plans to Promote Adequacy and Efficacy

Emma Whelpley

Positive Behaviour Support Plans (PBSPs) are documents based on functional assessments that encompass all components of the bio-psycho-social model related to the individual with a developmental disability and promote positive improvements in the individual’s daily life (QAM, 2008). It is essential that PBSPs incorporate best practices and legal regulations in order to achieve maximum efficacy. The purpose of this research was to devise recommendations for the content required in PBSPs and to create tools to facilitate the development and modification of PBSPs to incorporate best practices. This study involved the revision of an evaluation tool based on the review of current literature, legal regulations, and agency policies. The evaluation tool was used to evaluate the adequacy and comprehensiveness of 24 existing PBSPs in a community agency providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities. Overall, the PBSPs adherence average score on the evaluation tool was 70.76%. Furthermore, 87.50% of the PBSPs were considered to have good levels of adequacy, while 12.50% had underdeveloped levels of adequacy. Interobserver agreement calculations revealed low levels of agreement between raters, indicating that the evaluation tool requires further revision. Based on these findings a model PBSP and template with instructions were created to facilitate the development and revision of PBSPs to increase adherence to best practices and current regulations. Discussion of the findings and recommendations to increase PBSP adherence to best practices are also included. Potential limitations include the small sample size and use of an evaluation tool that has not yet been assessed for its psychometric properties. Contributions to the field of behavioural psychology and future areas of research are also identified.
CORRECTIONS

Identifying and Managing Symptoms in Adult Male Offenders with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: A Resource Manual for Correctional Program Officers
Stephany Bathurst

Individuals with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) exhibit a wide range of cognitive, social, and physical deficits following prenatal alcohol exposure. Currently, there is a gap in the literature surrounding evidence-based services and interventions for the adult population. Prevalent research reports an overrepresentation of individuals’ with FASD in correctional facilities. The literature highlights the importance of staff training and other health related services to assist those affected by alcohol-related disorders. Therefore, a resource guide and student presentation were developed for Correctional Program Officers to recapitulate the current research in managing symptoms and providing support to adult offenders with FASD. While there are mixed findings in relation to the effectiveness of manualized training in clinical practice, the results obtained from the Manual Evaluation Survey report advantageous outcomes. Participants evaluated the clarity, organization, and educational aspects of a resource guide and student presentation. Based on their observations and interpretations of the information that was provided, they circled their level of agreement regarding statements that were reflective of a user-friendly product. Results show that the respondents were in strong agreement that the guide and student presentation could be used as an educational tool to enhance viewers’ knowledge on FASD. Although learning outcomes were not measured, the response rate was positive when evaluating the relevance and feasibility of the resource guide. This thesis highlights the limited research that is available to diagnose and support adults with FASD. Further research on validated screening tools and interventions is needed for individuals with FASD in order to manage and reduce the risk of secondary disabilities.

A Facilitator’s Manual for Effective Intervention on Best Practice Approaches for Substance Abuse Amongst Offenders
Jori Bird

Approximately 70% of offenders incarcerated in a federal institution demonstrate symptoms of a substance use disorder fluctuating in severity between use and dependency. Furthermore, substance use is one of the top three factors contributing to increased recidivism rates. Therefore, effective intervention is essential in order to effectively reduce and manage the risks and needs of this population. However, correctional programs staff identified this to be a gap in service. Therefore, it was hypothesized that increasing staff awareness and knowledge regarding best practice approaches proven effective at treating substance abuse within the offender population will enable correctional programs staff to be better equipped to understand substance abuse in offenders. Conceivably, this will enable staff to work more effectively with offenders who display symptoms of substance abuse. This thesis sought to develop a comprehensive treatment manual for correctional programs staff to use in the supervision and treatment of offenders incarcerated in a federal institution who display symptoms of substance abuse. The contents of this manual were selected following an in-depth literature review and feedback from correctional staff. Based on the research, best practice approaches amongst offenders include Motivational Interviewing, Pharmacotherapy, the Risk Need Responsivity Model, and the Transtheoretical Model. Best practices that should be given consideration to improve treatment efficacy include solution-focused therapy and cognitive behavioural therapy. The resource manual provides an overview, rationale for use, and instructions on how to effectively implement each best-practice approach within a correctional environment. Due to time constraints, the effectiveness of the manual was not formally evaluated. Therefore, the focus of this thesis pertains to the development of the resource manual, directed primarily by current research. In conclusion, strengths and limitations of this thesis in addition to multilevel challenges to service implementation and recommendations for future research are discussed.
The Development of a Workplace Wellness Manual to Manage Workplace Stress in a Correctional Federal Institution
Amanda Coneybeare

A federal correctional institution can be an extremely stressful environment for employees, presenting with unique challenges that can impact mental health. Due to the nature of the environment, Correctional Service Canada (CSC) employees experience high volumes of stress. While reviewing the literature there was an absence of information about workplace wellness programs or resources for CSC staff members. Thus, this thesis focused on identifying effective strategies for coping with workplace stress. A manual was created, as a resource, to aid CSC employees with their experiences of a stressful and challenging work environment. The contents of the manual included information about cognitive processing, CSC’s critical incident stress program, effects of stress, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), relaxation techniques, substance misuse, coping strategies, and self-care assessments. The resource was evaluated by CSC employees and feedback was given regarding the material. The feedback was incorporated into the final product. It is hoped that the development of this resource would improve CSC employees’ management of workplace stress, therefore contributing to workplace wellness. Due to time constraints, the effectiveness of the manual was not evaluated or measured. As a result, this thesis reviews the creation of the resource informed by evidence-based treatments. A major recommendation is the need for evaluation of the effectiveness of the manual. Another recommendation is that the distribution of the manual is incorporated with the implementation of a workplace wellness seminar. Moreover, strengths, limitations, multi-level challenges, and contributions to the field of behavioural psychology are addressed.

Compassion Fatigue and Burnout: A Staff Manual and Presentation
Dana McParland

In recent years, researchers are observing a rise in compassion fatigue and burnout levels within the helping profession but specifically within the correctional environment. Researchers also note that it is of the upmost importance for the helping profession to be well informed and educated on the associated risks and the overall impact that compassion fatigue and burnout has on mental health. This thesis reviews empirically supported literature regarding compassion fatigue, burnout, correctional mental health professionals, as well as the proponents and criticisms of manualized approaches. The purpose of this research project was to develop a correctional staff manual on compassion fatigue and burnout and create a presentation of the material for a psychoeducational group session. The objective was to increase professionals’ knowledge and understanding of compassion fatigue and burnout. It was hypothesized that a presentation regarding the manual content will be an effective tool for educating correctional staff on compassion fatigue and burnout. This thesis used a non-experimental design because there were no independent or dependent variables to be manipulated. The thesis resulted in the creation of an 11-chapter educational staff manual and 1-hour presentation on compassion fatigue and burnout. The Student Feedback Survey used a 5-point Likert scale and was comprised of two categories, evaluating the facilitator and the presentation. Overall, the results from the Student Feedback Survey demonstrated positive outcomes overall. One recommendation for future research is examining the diverse effects of compassion fatigue and burnout on numerous occupational groups. Another recommendation is to investigate the differences between minimum, medium, and maximum-security institutions and the rates of compassion fatigue and burnout. Overall, the hypothesis was supported in that the presentation regarding the manual provided staff at the institution with an academic resource on compassion fatigue and burnout. Moreover, the information was limited by minimal research on psychoeducational sessions for correctional staff, facilitators notes were not added to the presentation materials, and the Student Feedback Survey did not incorporate questions specifically pertaining to the manual. Furthermore, the substantial evidence on compassion fatigue and burnout point towards an increasing problem within the helping profession. Therefore, the need for education, awareness, and a general understanding regarding this topic is crucial.
A Review of Empirical Literature on the Incarcerated Transgender Population

Louise Noonan

Within Correctional Services Canada (CSC), transgender offenders have endured many hardships to have their needs and rights met within the criminal justice system. For many years the transgender population have been denied their human rights and have suffered a great deal. Because of this lack of rights, the incarcerated population face many challenges and barriers while residing both in the community and while incarcerated. Transgender offenders have a variety of additional mental health concerns stemming from substance abuse, discrimination, and victimization. As a result of these concerns, transgender individuals find themselves turning to criminal behaviour to obtain many basic life necessities such as housing or money. Once incarcerated, this paper analyzes the transgender population experiences surrounding placement, accessing appropriate health care, and available treatments. Throughout this literature review there will be comparisons illustrating the lack of policy around housing transgender inmates, which builds the grounds for additional abuse. The lack of healthcare training offered to care providers results in inadequate care delivered to the transgender offenders. Finally, in combination with the poor healthcare, transgender offenders are often mandated to discontinue current hormone treatment. In addition to the discontinuation, transgender offenders are not provided with any resources or adequate treatment to begin the transition or even obtain assistance in managing the hardships of being a sexual minority in prison. There are major areas within CSC that need improvements and this literature review leads to recommendations on future policies and improvements to enhance the quality of life for those incarcerated transgender individuals.

A profile on youth in conflict with the law that have undergone a court ordered psychological assessment

Anastasia Reid

The aim of this study was to better understand the lives of youth who have suspected mental health concerns and who engage in criminal behaviour. Data from court-ordered psychological assessments that assessed behavioural and psychological functioning and risk of future criminal offending were used. A descriptive statistical profile was created for a sample of 367 youth in conflict with the law and with a suspected mental health concern, who underwent a court-ordered psychological assessment between 2005 and 2018. Archival assessment data were summarized from 245 variables on family background, social relations, criminal behaviour and mental health concerns. Frequency analyses were used to identify characteristics that were widely shared, partially shared, or rarely shared by these youth. Problems with supportive peer and family relations were widely shared, as were poor behavioural management at home and in the community. Having a diagnosis and not taking medication were very common among the youth. Effective treatments for psychological/behavioural functioning and drug use were lacking. It was also identified the youth lacked protective factors against antisocial behaviour. These results help to better understand the lives of youth with suspected mental health concerns and who engage in criminal behaviour. These data point to ways in which earlier preventive and treatment supports could be implemented to reduce the likelihood of engaging in criminal behaviour.
DEMENTIA

The Effects of Montessori Methods on Agitation and Self-Feeding in Individuals with Dementia: A Literature Review
Alyssa Castonguay

Dementia is not a healthy part of aging. However, it is a disease that is becoming more prevalent within the geriatric population and can affect people as young as 45 years old. As a person’s age increases, their ability to care for themselves decreases. Most long-term care homes become residence to many people with dementia as many families are not able to provide care for their loved one with dementia. It is important that individuals who live in long-term care homes are engaged and stimulated by activities. Montessori methods are becoming utilized more within long-term care home, especially by those homes that care for individuals with dementia. The purpose of this thesis was to review literature and studies that examined the use of Montessori methods in dementia care to manage agitated behaviours and preserve self-feeding skills. Montessori methods are sensory activities that are used to engage individuals learning new skills or maintaining skills that have already been acquired. Montessori activities are used in many ways within the geriatric population; to improve quality of life, to provide meaningful activities, and to maintain a variety of declining skills. The literature selected consisted of case studies and meta-analyses. It was found that though Montessori methods cannot bring back self-feeding skills, the activities are successful tools that can help the individual preserve the skill (Lin et al., 2011). The literature was convincing and demonstrated that Montessori methods can be utilized to provide more independence at meal time and relieve agitation when it occurs. This literature review not only supported the use of Montessori methods with individuals with dementia to ameliorate self-feeding and to decrease agitation, but also provided support for techniques to increase engagement in meaningful activities. Further research is required to determine whether there are long-term effects of applying Montessori methods at the beginning of the cognitive decline.

A Review of the Implementation of Effective Music Intervention with Dementia Residents
Brittany Patriquin

The interest in music therapy as a cost-effective treatment for long-term dementia care is increasing. Additionally, clients and caregivers are continuing to search for non-pharmacological alternatives to traditional dementia care. This literature review analyzed the key elements of music interventions to determine the most effective implementation in long-term care settings. Based on the findings of the review, the author will propose suggestions to improving music therapy implementation. This thesis included content from two available online databases and 32 journal articles. Any research in which the full article was not available was excluded from this literature review. The student was limited in what research was accessible; therefore, there may be research excluded that can refute some of the claims made in this review. Currently, there are no definitive guidelines for music therapy, nor are there agreements on an appropriate definition among professionals. Many authors make a point of defining the term in the context of their research. However, consensus among study leads indicates that an interactive music design is more effective than a passive approach to therapy. A list of benefits to music therapy were included as well as a suggestion for session length. In the future, it may be beneficial that researchers include more databases and search to determine a standardized definition of music therapy. Given the constraints of dementia funding and staffing, it may be beneficial to determine group treatments that require minimal staffing.
Caregiver Self-Care Manual
Tessa Pidgeon

Family caregivers of individuals with dementia typically experience high rates of stress and burnout. The practice of stress management techniques has shown to reduce stress amongst this population. The current thesis outlines the evolution of a self-care manual developed to respond to the gap in literature for family caregiver resources. The Caregiver’s Guide to Self-Care aims to reduce stress levels by providing them with information in regards to dementia, how to access funding and community resources, stress identification, and management techniques. The stress management techniques in the manual were chosen based on empirical literature. The intended participants, setting, and design are each described within the current thesis. The results section includes the final version of The Caregiver’s Guide to Self-Care. Future recommendations include collecting data to evaluate manual’s effectiveness in reducing stress.

Electronic Training Program to Increase Knowledge and Confidence in Staff Members Supporting Seniors and Adults Experiencing Symptoms of Dementia and Stroke
Bronwyn Wardhaugh

Strokes are very prevalent occurrences that can cause irreversible damage. Following the occurrence of a stroke, some survivors may subsequently develop dementia, which is referred to as Post-Stroke Dementia (PSD). The diagnosis and symptoms of stroke, dementia, or PSD can encourage patients to seek treatment, information, or support from local agencies. Conducting research and providing agencies that support individuals with stroke and dementia with information about PSD can be beneficial to clients and their families. The current study aimed to increase knowledge of risk factors, preventative measures, and treatment options of PSD for staff members of two agencies. The second objective of the thesis study was to increase staff confidence, specifically when initiating conversations and offering education and support for PSD to current or future clients. An electronic training program was implemented at both agencies. The training was accompanied by a pre-and post-test survey designed to determine the effectiveness of the training program at increasing knowledge and confidence of PSD risk factors, preventative measures, and treatment options among staff members at the agencies. It was hypothesized that participants from both agencies would have greater understanding of PSD and increased comfort in discussing and training others about PSD following the implementation of the electronic training program. The pre-and post-test surveys consisted of 13 questions and were divided into multiple choice knowledge questions and Likert scale confidence items. The electronic training program consisted of PowerPoint slides and voice-overs to present the information. Survey data was gathered anonymously, and a visual analysis and descriptive statistics were used to analyze trends and treatment effectiveness. Overall, the hypotheses were supported, and the electronic training program was deemed effective at increasing staff knowledge of PSD and confidence to share information with PSD with clients. Future studies should examine the effects of dementia prior to having a stroke as well as the effects of PSD among a variety of demographics. Further, more studies should be conducted emphasizing the use of behavioural interventions for a multitude of cognitive and physical disorders in the geriatric population.
EDUCATION

An Examination of Experiential Learning to Expand Knowledge of Interprofessional Collaboration Among Behavioural Psychology Students

Jacqueline Gauvreau

Despite evidence supporting the benefits of experiential learning, many educational institutions do not regularly emphasize its use in the classroom. For graduates to reliably demonstrate the essential employability skills (EES) upon graduation, students should engage in as many experiential learning activities as possible to enhance these skills. Collaborative experiential learning may be especially important for students preparing to enter into the Human Services field, where working as part of interprofessional teams is essential while providing client-centered care. Behavioural psychology students participated in an Interprofessional Collaboration Experiential Learning Event (ICELE) that was hypothesized to enhance their overall knowledge of interprofessional collaboration, development of EES, and confidence in working as part of an interprofessional team. The ICELE was facilitated by alumni of the program who shared their real-world experiences working as members of interprofessional teams. The study’s overall goal was to determine if student knowledge acquisition of interprofessional collaboration and EES increased following participation in the ICELE and whether students and alumni shared similar opinions about the ICELE’s perceived usefulness. Results were analyzed using pre and post knowledge questionnaires. Feedback surveys were also used to determine if the ICELE’s perceived usefulness varied between students and alumni. Results suggest that students prefer to learn material through the use of experiential learning methods and that all participants believed that the ICELE was beneficial in increasing students’ confidence, ability, and skills to work as part of an interprofessional team while developing EES. Engagement in experiential learning activities, specifically relating to interprofessional collaboration, may benefit the Human Services field, as graduates will be more equipped with the skills needed to effectively work as interprofessional team members as they enter the workforce.

The Use of a Group Contingency Token Economy in a 4/5 Grade Classroom to Increase On-Task Behaviour During Independent Reading

Heather McILquham

The diagnosis rate is steadily increasing in disorders such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other learning disabilities. One common result of these disorders in the classroom is off-task behaviours, which can include: talking-out, standing up, not listening, defiant behaviour etc. This study used a token economy with a group contingency to increase on-task behaviour during independent reading. A preference assessment was conducted to identify highly preferred items which were then utilized as back-up reinforcement. Data was collected once a day, for 15 minutes during independent reading time. A visual token board was utilized so the students could see their progress towards their back-up reinforcement which was provided at the end of each week. The intervention was an AB design, baseline data was collected for one week with an average of 0.00% on task behaviour. The intervention then took place for 6 weeks, which resulted in an increase of on task behaviour with an average of 41.60%. The hypothesis was confirmed using the use of visual analysis to thoroughly analyze the results of the intervention.
Current medical and psychological health understanding of transgender persons and their needs is changing at such a rapid pace, it is difficult to keep up. From an ally and care provider perspective this is a growing concern. It can make it difficult to keep informed of up-to-date terminology and best practices, possibly hindering the ability to properly interact and provide services to the growing and changing needs of the transgender community. Gaps within educational resources make it necessary to consolidate current information about pronoun use, dead names, and inter muscular hormone injection into an accessible resource for care providers and allies who seek to expand their knowledge on transgender issues. Relevant research shows that harm reduction techniques, as well as a transgender specific approach to education surrounding these skills are the most effective ways to fill in these gaps in services. This thesis applies current literature on transgender issues such as dead names, pronoun use, and safe medical techniques for intermuscular hormone injections with the purpose of providing a practical resource in the form of a brochure for care providers and allies. This brochure attempts to fill in the gaps in educational resources specific to transgender issues. The brochure is a one-page resource that is an inexpensive educational piece that can be provided to all who seek to expand their knowledge of transgender matters. For future research, a more expansive and in-depth resource could be compiled as the psychological research begins to be on par with the needs of the transgender community.
MENTAL HEALTH – ADOLESCENTS AND CHILDREN

Intensive Child and Family Services: In-Home Service Guidelines
Aislinn McAllister

One of the most important components of starting a new job is the training. Without proper training and clarification of roles, responsibilities, objectives, and timelines, the job cannot be completed with efficacy (Bauer, 2010). Manuals are one way for employees to access essential job information without requiring assistance from superiors. The Intensive Child and Family Services in-home team at the placement agency was lacking such training materials. The purpose of this project was to improve service cohesiveness, role clarity, and overall job performance. Following the completion of an extensive literature review, conducting informal interviews, and on-the-job experience, a guidelines manual was created as a starting base towards a training manual. The manual was comprised of eight chapters providing an outline of service delivery with resources and suggestions for each step along the way. These steps included, but were not limited to, observation, rapport-building, assessments, treatment planning, implementation, and teaching caregivers. In addition to the service delivery itself, paperwork requirements and some cultural norms of the agency were included. A survey was provided to all agency employees for feedback pertaining to the manual to evaluate the quantity, quality, accuracy, helpfulness, and selection of components. The survey responses indicated that the manual was helpful and well-done overall, with constructive critiques that aided in making adjustments to best suit the needs of the agency and its staff. It is recommended that an in-depth training manual be developed in the future, with a potential interactive component, and additional evaluation including follow-up.

Human Trafficking Data Collection and Analysis for Staff Resources Within Child Protection
Elizabeth Moses

Human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation has been prevalent amongst society for decades. Studies have identified that children involved with the child protection agency are at a risk of being predisposed in becoming involved in human trafficking. The local child protection agency identified a growing need in information to be complied for staff to utilize when working with children, youth or families where the issue of human trafficking may be or is a current issue. Using an online survey, data was collected on staff’s current knowledge levels, their perceived need of resources, and specifically how that could be completed. Once the data was analyzed, the purpose of the thesis was to create a resource package that covered a wide variety of topics addressing the needs identified by staff to best assist them in supporting children, youth and families who may be or are involved in human trafficking. The topics included in the resource are age of consent, contacts for Provincial and Territorial hotlines, applications for specific treatment housing, special referral applications for housing, special referral applications for specific treatment housing, informative pamphlet, identification tools, help sheets for parents on indicators of involvement, ABC data collection sheet to identify common behaviour patterns, frequently asked questions on human trafficking, legal support for restraining orders, relevant information accumulated by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and training modules. The results of the survey exemplified that staff at the child protection agency were actively managing cases where human trafficking was a known or suspected issue and had insufficient resources to support them. Due to time constraints, the resources were not implemented or tested for efficacy. The student expected that the resources compiled would provide staff with tools to assist them in their approach to manage and support individuals who may be or are involved in human trafficking. It is recommended that future research examine the efficacy of the resource.
Using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy to Increase Self-Esteem in Boys Aged 11-13

Emily Myers

Adolescent boys may experience low self-esteem, especially in the early years of adolescence, as pressure from social media, peers, and role models have become increasingly prominent and influential in society. The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of a psychoeducational group based on acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) principles to increase self-esteem in three male participants who were between 11- and 13 years-old. Although ACT is an effective form of psychotherapy with adults, there is little research on its use with children, as it has not been used before to increase self-esteem in children. It was hypothesized that participants’ self-esteem would increase following six 30-minute sessions of ACT for six weeks. A mindfulness-based approach to ACT was used, teaching the participants to accept negative thoughts, as well as how to change their thought patterns based upon their own values. The study used a pre-post quasi-experimental design with no control group. The small sample size did not allow for testing of statistical significance. On the pre-test, all three participants rated themselves as having low self-esteem on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. On the post-test, all three participants rated their self-esteem as higher (5-6 points, about a 20% increase), and in the average range of self-esteem scores. The consistency of increases in self-esteem ratings suggests that a psychoeducational group format based on ACT and mindfulness could be a promising intervention to increase self-esteem in boys. Future studies should replicate this format with larger samples and different age groups to assess the reliability and validity of the effect observed in the present study.

Substance Abuse Manual for At-Risk Youth

Zachary Revell

Early initiation of tobacco and marijuana use is an increasing concern among health care workers because these substances are most commonly abused by adolescents. The results found within the literature suggest that substance abuse among adolescents is a world-wide health problem. During the current study, the staff at Ventures Group Home confirmed that tobacco and marijuana abuse was problematic with the youth residing within the home. Staff noted a lack of empirical resources available for the purpose of education, identification, and program delivery of substance abuse. In order to meet this need, a staff resource guide on tobacco and marijuana use was developed from relevant information and empirical evidence from current literature. The goal of the resource guide was to provide simplistic, practical, and understandable educational material with evidence-based resources on substance abuse. This will aid in enhancing program efficiency. The goal was to increase staff awareness of risk factors, knowledge of substances, and to identify and intervene in substance abuse issues. It is commonly understood that staff who work with at-risk youth require the most current and validated information to demonstrate best practices for successful results. It was hypothesized that the resource guide would enhance staff awareness while motivating the youth to attain their goals and make positive changes to successfully reintegrate into various settings. Due to time constraints there was limited feedback, however the feedback provided was positive. Future recommendations would be determining the efficiency of the resource guide in increasing staff awareness and decreasing substance abuse among the youth in the home.
Using Psychoeducation to Teach Youth at Risk the Benefits of Cognitive Restructuring and Positive Self-Talk
Melissa Ross

This research in the current study evaluated the effectiveness of using psychoeducation to increase the knowledge and understanding of topics in at-risk youth at risk such as cognitive restructuring and self-talk. The participants of the study were youth ranging from 15-18 years of age. The phase participants were shown to demonstrate frequent struggles with their mental health, substance abuse, and interpersonal effectiveness. Two of the four participants completed the full research study. One participant dropped out after one week, and the other participant joined the study during week three. The psychoeducational workshops took place over 6 weeks and consisted of 45-minute weekly sessions. The workshop was provided to participants at the community agency which they were attendees of and was implemented by the student researcher. The agency programming that was provided to participants was not on a mandatory basis, however it was recommended that they attended every day to ensure the best results. Each group workshop had an open group format where participants could join as needed. The Cognitive Restructuring and Self-Talk Questionnaire was used as a pre and post-test assessment administered throughout the study and there was a pre and post workshop over the all 6 weeks. The questionnaire was created by the student researcher and included five Likert-scale rated questions which evaluated multiple facets of self-talk and self-confidence. Results indicated that all of the participants demonstrated increased knowledge of important topics such as cognitive restructuring and self-talk and showed a positive progression in data. This study’s methodology, implications, multilevel challenges to the field of behavioural psychology, and future recommendations were discussed.

Psychoeducation Workshops to Increase Academic Motivation
Bailey Seddon

Motivation is an essential trait when looking at aspects such as academic success, self-confidence, and overall psychological drive. While motivation is an imperative aspect to assess when determining factors affecting success in varying areas, there is little information regarding the potential effects that systematically increasing motivation can have on at-risk youth. The purpose of the current study is to determine the effects of motivational workshops to increase motivation and self-confidence in high school students. Workshops were conducted with five participants from a student success facilitation program affiliated with a local high school. Each student demonstrated depletions in motivation, academic engagement, and success in regular academic settings. Each workshop took place once a week and incorporated aspect of cognitive behavioural therapy and motivational interviewing in order to teach the skills required to increase participants’ motivation. The results demonstrate that there was a preliminary change in participants’ motivation and self-confidence. The Motivation Engagement Scale (MES) was used as a pre-and post-test measure to determine positive changes. The results from the MES demonstrate that over the 6-week period participants demonstrated positive changes in majority of the facets included on the MES. It was found that the use of motivational workshops demonstrated slight positive changes in regards to participants’ motivation, however further exploration on the matter would be effective. There were few limitations involved in the current study, however those that occurred demonstrated potential effects on the study such as time constraints and student disinterest in motivational workshops. Addressing these changes in further work would positively benefit the study. The result from this study do not determine any significant changes, thus further work to address the effects of workshops on motivation should be conducted.
Analysis of the Global Treatment Duration of Clients with an Eating Disorder
Stephnie Selvazzo

The criterion for an eating disorder is based on physiological and behavioural characteristics that are often associated with atypical eating patterns and negative effects on the person’s mental and physical health (Davidson, 2015). The prevalence and severity of eating disorders emphasizes the importance of furthering the scope of research on the topic of eating disorders. The purpose of the research study was to minimize the gaps in research by developing a research survey to be used to collect global data surrounding the average treatment duration for clients with a diagnosis of an eating disorder, funding practices, and discharge criteria. The survey was created through an online survey company. The survey included six questions, made up of two multiple choice, three short answer, and one Likert scale question. The questions within the survey allow anonymous data to be collected on demographic, duration of treatment, and finally the success of treatment. This survey was created to collect data from the population of clinicians working with clients with a diagnosis of an eating disorder. The recommendations for the future distribution of this survey are as follows. It has been recommended that any further research and data collection using this survey should be conducted through the Academy of Eating Disorder website. As well future recommendations for data analysis include using the data collected to answer the primary and two secondary questions stated above. The creation of the survey and recommendations will assist the field of eating disorders by building a foundation for future research on the topic of eating disorders in order to develop treatment integrity based on researched best practice standards.
MENTAL HEALTH - ADULT

The Effectiveness of Gradual Exposure Therapy and Goal Setting in Managing Anxiety: A Case Study Involving a 60-Year-Old Female Client
Cindy Chong

Anxiety disorders have a high prevalence rate and can have a significant impact on daily functioning. Therefore, finding ways to help clients manage their anxiety is needed, particularly in community mental health settings. There are many individuals who experience anxiety and with the long waitlists, helping those in a timely manner would be beneficial. Based on the existing literature, gradual exposure is identified as an effective way to treat those with anxiety. The current study sought to test the efficacy of gradual exposure with goal setting in an older adult woman with anxiety, specifically around the goal of leaving the area of her apartment. Therefore, gradual exposure, goal setting, and coping skills were used together with the client. The results showed that these strategies were effective in decreasing symptoms of anxiety and depression. Symptoms of anxiety were monitored through the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A) and depression though the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI). Behavioural goals of distance traveled from her apartment was measured alongside symptoms of anxiety and depression. This study focused on one client who benefitted from the treatment; therefore, future studies could be conducted using a larger sample to allow for more conclusive results and for generalizations to be made.

Evaluating Occupational Burnout and Use of Coping Strategies for Front Line Employees at Veterans Affairs Canada
Jennifer Dawson

Canada has made substantial contributions to help stabilize failing countries over the past decade. A substantial number of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members have deployed to war-torn countries such as: Afghanistan, Bosnia and Iraq. Due to their duty and devotion of service to the country, they have developed an array of mental health and physical health issues. The organization responsible for the care of these individuals is the Veterans Affairs of Canada. While these employees are deeply invested in helping the veterans their workload has increased exponentially. Current studies show that Veterans Affairs workers are experiencing increased rates of stress and burnout amongst the front-line workers. These studies have exclusively focused on the American Veterans Affairs workers and there is a tremendous void in the Canadian literature for their counterparts within Canadian Veterans Affairs. This research study involved front-line employees of Veterans Affairs Canada (N = 40), all participants were working for Veterans Affairs Canada throughout the central district of Ontario. The aim of the current study was to evaluate burnout and stress related factors among front-line employees at Veterans Affairs Canada utilizing a qualitative online survey. The results of this study indicated that the participants engage in self-directed burnout and stress reduction strategies outside of the workplace. This study also revealed that participants had numerous suggestions related to how stress reduction and reducing burnout could be addressed within their workplace. The totality of their responses revealed the need for programs and skill building workshops to increase awareness of burnout and stress related factors. Future studies are needed to identify the prevalence of burnout and stress within this vital government organization, Veterans Affairs Canada as well as, the programs, initiatives, and policies needed to address this concern.
ACTive Living: How Does Participating in A Fitness Group Impact Quality of Life in Clients Receiving Community-Based Mental Health Services?
Shawnacee Loxton

The construct of “quality of life” is a constantly evolving and is a diversely defined term among researchers and service providers approach and understand of quality of life. Current research has focused on the debilitating impact persistent mental illness has on an individual’s functioning and life variables, which leads to a decreased quality of life. Previous research has demonstrated physical activities’ positive impact on physical health and reducing clinical symptoms. Assertive community treatment (ACT) is an intensive but cost-effective case management service that provides symptom management, recovery support, advocacy, and physical care. Although ACT employs cognitive-based strategies to foster a positive quality of life, it is unknown how effective an exercise-based group would be at positively impacting the quality of life of clients living with persistent mental illness. This study explores the effectiveness of a group fitness program, the ACTTive Living Group, on improving the quality of life and life satisfaction of clients of ACT. Five participants completed the Social and Activity Satisfaction Survey, a pre-/post-measure created for the purpose of determining the effectiveness of the twice-weekly ACTTive Living Group hosted at a local community centre. Data collected focused on the level of satisfaction with determinants of quality of life and highlighted any changes as a result of attending the ACTTive Living Group. Overall, the results demonstrated that the ACTTive Living Group had the strongest impact on participant’s satisfaction level with how often they were engaging in activities they enjoy and minimal impact on their satisfaction with their relationships. It was determined that mental and physical health had minor influence on the participants subjective quality of life, with relationships and social support being strongest determinant. Studies are needed to further understand how the implementation of exercise-based programs impacts the determinants of quality of life in those suffering from mental illness.

Intake Assessment Training Manual
Olivia Lundy

An intake assessment is the first interview a client receives when they are referred to the mental health agency. It is of critical importance that mental health workers are trained effectively in administering an intake assessment during intake interviews. Due to a lack of intake assessment training for new staff and unfamiliarity regarding intake assessment procedures in existing staff of the agency, the Intake Assessment Training Manual was created. The purpose of the manual is to fulfill the need for intake assessment training and to facilitate continuity of conducting the assessment between staff. The Intake Assessment Training Manual is broken down into eleven sections which provide guidelines, rationales, and examples of the administration process of the intake interview, followed by eleven appendices that can be utilized as helpful tools. The manual was administered to five staff members of the agency to review. Each participant was asked to complete the Intake Assessment Training Manual Satisfaction Survey and return it to the researcher for feedback. The satisfaction survey included nine questions, five of which provide a Likert scale designed for quick and easy choices for how useful, detailed, necessary, and easy to understand they found the manual to be. Participants also had an opportunity to provide comments along with other feedback on the manual. The data and responses from the satisfaction survey were utilized as feedback to improve the manual. Results from the satisfaction survey indicated that all participants felt that the manual was necessary to be created and a useful tool to add to the agency’s training procedures and orientation.
The Use of Dialectical Behavioural Skills Training Modules to Increase Emotion Regulation and Address Criminogenic Risk Factors for Individuals Involved in the Legal System

Nikki Way

Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) is a form of empirically validated individual treatment for those who struggle with emotional dysregulation and mental health symptoms. In sum, Linehan (1993) completed 4 modules which focus on Mindfulness, Emotional Regulation, Distress Tolerance and Interpersonal Effectiveness skills (using both individual and group formatting). For purposes of this research, five participants were chosen to participate in this study. The participants attended 6-weekly sessions, that were one hour long. It was hypothesized that the DBT training modules that were distributed over the course of 4 sessions would show a decrease in mental health symptoms such as stress, anger, sadness... etc. All results were gathered based on a questionnaire with a Likert scaler of 1-4 (1 being Poor and 4 being Excellent) based on their skills acquired and the efficacy of same. All of the scores were compared between the 4 modules. Descriptive statistics were completed to determine that there was an overall decrease in mental health symptoms based on the mean, median, and mode of the results from the questionnaire. Future studies should examine the time length needed to conduct the DBT modules so that the individuals will have time to learn all of the materials.

Evaluating the Efficacy of an Outpatient Anger Management Course Using a Standardized Psychometric and 1:1 Interviews: A Multiple Baseline Across Subjects Design

Jamie Wensink

Anger Management programs are a widely used intervention for those who have demonstrated disordered or aggressive conduct. They are further often mandated for individuals as part of a court punishment, condition of parole, or condition of custody with Children’s Aid Society (CAS). To this, the effectiveness of a treatment is often contingent on the effectiveness of the program being administered. Yet, organizations implementing anger management and other programs do not often scientifically measure the efficiency or impact of the course. In adding to the validation of such programming an evaluation of efficacy was administered using a local agencies anger management program. The research question ‘Does the anger management group effectively function to decrease self-reported intensity and frequency of individual anger experiences, and to increase participants individual quality of life ascribed by the functions of personal wellness and interpersonal functioning’ was assessed using repeated measures assessments and one-on-one interviews. A modified version of the Clinical Anger Scale was implemented to record quantitative data on the individual levels of anger. One-on-one interviews following grounded theory approach were used to record and contrast qualitative data on the impact and implications of the program. Quantitative findings demonstrated no significant change in participant levels of anger over time. Using statistical assumptions for absent data variables identified the possibility for significant findings in further testing. Qualitative findings identified that the form of individual anger had changed; individual participants had stated increases to the use of coping, de-escalation, and emotional regulation strategies. Further, all interviewed participants had stated improvements to their current interpersonal relationships, that the program was effective, and an increase to their overall quality of life. The anger management program was found to be moderately effective at treating individual anger. It had not demonstrated for decreases of individual levels, but had demonstrated the potential to were further research conducted. The highlighting strength of the program was in improving individual regulations of anger. It can be concluded that this program is effective for teaching the skills required to appropriately regulate the emotion of anger, leading to improved conduct, interpersonal relationships, and quality of life.
Time spend outside of school presents opportunities for both negative and positive outcomes in the lives of children and families. After-school programs, if properly structured, have the opportunity to provide children with a safe and nurturing environment that can provide benefits to the growth and development to the children who attend. A review of current research identified a gap in the research literature pertaining to best practices of after-school program curriculum. The benefits to growth and development that an after-school program can provide to children suggested that there was a need for determining elements of after-school programming that provide the most impact on children’s emotional, physical, and cognitive skill growth and development. Therefore, this thesis sought to determine what benefits after-school programs have on children who were of regular attendance, and what specifically defines an after-school program that is considered to be of high-quality. In addition, a research-based resource manual for program staff to utilize while designing and implementing after-school program activities was developed. The manual created focuses on specific after-school program activities that research has determined to provide the most opportunity for the development of essential skills for elementary school aged children. Taken into consideration the commonalities in the literature that has been reviewed in this thesis, it indicates that key characteristics can and do define what is considered quality in relation to after-school programming. It was hypothesized that the creation of this manual would assist program staff by establishing a comparatively consistent set of after-school program quality indicators, so that program management and staff can effectively plan, implement, and engage in activities that are beneficial to all children and aspects of after-school programs.
Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is an empirically-based approach used for treating anxiety. Motivational interviewing (MI) is designed for clients experiencing doubt in regard to a change. While CBT and MI are often used in combination, it is unknown if the pair can be used concurrently within a population of clients seeking vocational assistance. The hope was to create a stronger impact in reducing anxiety symptoms and increasing motivation to work compared to using CBT or MI alone. This study investigated the impact of CBT and MI on anxiety symptoms and motivation in a group setting. Twelve participants, who experienced anxiety symptoms and were seeking assistance with employment were chosen from a community vocational rehabilitation agency. The participants attended two sessions a week for four weeks of group CBT and MI. Participants received psychoeducation surrounding anxiety and engaged in CBT based activities while a vocational rehabilitation specialist provided MI techniques. It was hypothesized that participants’ symptoms of anxiety would decrease and motivation to work would increase. Several assessment tools were used in a pre and post intervention design. Anxiety symptoms were measured using the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale 42 (DASS 42) and Penn State Worry Questionnaire (PSWQ). Motivation to work was measured using a modified version of the Vocational Change Assessment (VCA). The Wilcoxon Signed Rank test was used to identify if the intervention had a statistically significant impact on anxiety symptoms from pre-test to post-test. The group mean and standard deviation were used to measure the change in scores. The results partially support the hypothesis. There was a slight decrease in anxiety symptoms from the DASS 42 and PSWQ, but these results did not show statistical significance. The results for the VCA did not support the hypothesis as some participants’ pre-test scores were already high leaving limited room for improvement. Based on the results it is unclear if the interventions are helpful. However, small sample size, and limited exclusion criteria were limitations identified. Further examination into the relationship between CBT and MI on anxiety symptoms and motivation to work should be completed in future studies.

Employment is something that most people will have in common, however finding employment is proven to be a difficult task for many youths. In order to assist youth with job search, there are pre-employment services such as the Youth Job Connection (YJC) program to provide necessary workplace skills. Implementation of effective feedback has been shown to improve job performance. However, there is a gap in the literature with regards to testing the effectiveness of feedback with a youth population in a pre-employment training program and in entry-level jobs such as customer service. Such feedback is often experienced as threatening. Due to the confrontational nature of feedback, it tends to be avoided in the workplace. YJC participants were often observed responding to feedback by displaying defensive, panicked, or anxious behaviours. The goal of the thesis was to use the research and direct observations to observe how youth interpret feedback, and present information based on these findings to develop a solution. A manual was developed to provide youth in the YJC program the information and skill steps to appropriately accept and respond to on-the-job feedback. With the development of a manual to use as a resource that included a task analysis, the ability to understand the purpose of feedback, and implement behaviour change is attained.
Conclusion

We would like to extend a warm thank you to all attending this year’s Behavioural Psychology Poster Gala. We hope this year’s event has provided you with lots of new information expanding across different behavioural psychology fields, and we hope you have enjoyed learning about the work we have completed during our time at St. Lawrence College.

The event and work shared in this poster gala marks the ending of our time in the BPSYC program. The inclusive and group-oriented nature of the BPSYC program has made lasting memories and friendships for the years to come. A big thank you to all of our professors and support staff for sharing your knowledge and experiences to help shape us as contributing members to the behavioural psychology field. Congratulations to the class of 2019 for the completion of our program, we should all be proud of ourselves as we embark into our new adventures.

“Often when you think you’re at the end of something, you’re at the beginning of something else”
~Mr. Rogers

A Final Word from Staff...

Class of 2019, it is with great pleasure that we celebrate your successful completion of the Honours Bachelor of Behavioural Psychology program! These past four years reflect a continued perseverance through challenges, a willingness to acknowledge and address areas for growth, and a commitment to making positive change in the community. Along the way, you have been immersed in the practices of Applied Behavioural Analysis and Behavioural Counselling, become intimately acquainted with the APA Manual, and calculated, step-by-step, standard deviations and t-statistics. These, and numerous other experiences and achievements, are not merely lessons in procedures and protocols (or exercises in frustration tolerance), rather opportunities to explore the uniqueness of each individual, effectively express your ideas, and cultivate confidence in your ability to solve unfamiliar problems. Wherever you go from here, whether graduate studies, the start of a career, or a trip around the world, we hope you will continue to strengthen these skills and values. But in the meantime, you just wrote a thesis and finished college – let’s celebrate!

~BPSYC Faculty team
Class of 2019

**Back Left:** Cierra Vandermeer, Rebecca Seward, Melaney Huller, Taylor Macdonald, Bronwyn Wardhaugh, Jenny Dawson, Olivia Lundy, Megan Edwards, Jamie Wensink, Alyssa Castonguay

**Middle:** Emily Myers, Gemma Sloan, Amanda Coneybeare, Lyz Moses, Anastasia Reid, Haley Smith, Louise Noonan, Zack Revell, Jori Bird, Emma Whelpley, Stephenie Selvazzo, Ashley Gellert

**Bottom Left:** Tessa Pidgeon, Brittany Patriquin, Ashley Kearney, Nikki Way, Shawnacee Loxton, Cindy Chong, Heather McIQuham, Leah McCumber, Sheridan Chiasson, Jacqueline Gauvreau, Heidi Boulard

**Missing from photo:** Stephany Bathurst, Drake Deline, Bailey Kimball, Samantha Mader, Aislinn McAllister, Dana McParland, Melissa Ross, Bailey Seddon, Elizabeth Smith, and Christina Quesnel
SLC Honours Bachelor of Behavioural Psychology 2019