



Thesis abstracts from the graduating class of the  
**Honours Bachelor of Behavioural Psychology**  
**program**

St. Lawrence College, 2022

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## Introduction

Hello Readers,

The Honours Bachelor Behavioural Psychology (BPSYC) graduating class of 2022 would like to present to you our thesis abstract booklet. This abstract booklet contains the unique and interesting work of our entire graduating class. Furthermore, these abstracts represent the hard work and dedication that each and every student has put in over the past four years.

Our graduating class had the unique opportunity of completing our theses during a global pandemic. During this time, students faced a variety of challenges and barriers. However, the support that we received from our college supervisors, agency supervisors, second readers, BPSYC faculty members, and fellow peers helped us to overcome those challenges and successfully complete our theses.

The BPSYC program was the first of its kind in Canada. It focuses on providing students with advanced knowledge within the field of Behavioural Psychology. The program also provides students with 1,100 hours of supervised placement experience within a variety of community agencies. Students also learn numerous behavioural approaches that have become an important element within many social service settings, such as corrections, addictions, mental health, education, child welfare, long-term care, and many more.

This booklet contains the abstracts of the theses written by this year's graduating class. The abstracts are arranged alphabetically by the field of study.

Thank you for taking the time to review our abstract booklet. If you have any further questions for students about their thesis abstracts or related topics, please feel free to contact those students directly.

Sincerely,

The BPSYC Graduating Class of 2022

## Addictions & Mental Health

### **Evidence-Based Practices to Support Families of Individuals with Addiction and Mental Health Issues**

Annie Peralty

When individuals live with severe mental illness, addiction issues, or a combination of addiction and mental illnesses, the wellbeing of their families may be affected. Family members have been an underserved population, and there is a gap in the literature regarding the best practices to help the family navigate their mental wellbeing while a family member is living with severe mental health concerns. Family members often experience higher perceived stress than their peers without a loved one facing these mental health concerns. This stress can have physical, social, and psychological effects on the family. As family members are now being seen as clients by some mental health service providers, this piece of research examines what kind of services, interventions, and resources are currently available for families. The research also aimed to determine the best care practices for family members to help them achieve wellness. This systematized literature review examined articles between 2015 and 2021 related to family experiences or interventions to improve wellbeing. Literature also had to concentrate on adult families above 16-years-old to qualify for the review. It was found that families tend to have similar areas of concern regardless of whether their loved one is living with addiction issues, mental illness, or a combination of these. Areas of concern included gaining insight into loved ones' conditions, dealing with aggression, overcoming stigmatization, recognizing codependency, and navigating the medical and mental health system. It was also found that families' experiences appear similar across many geographical areas and cultures. The literature demonstrated that families benefit from group or individual interventions. There was also an indication that alternative delivery methods may benefit the family. Both support and psychoeducation proved to increase the family's mental wellbeing effectively. Psychoeducation should focus on the identified areas of concern. Future research should determine the comparative effectiveness of family-specific support-based and psychoeducation-based interventions and if individual or group interventions prove superior.

Contact information: [aperalty@gmail.com](mailto:aperalty@gmail.com)

## **Development of a Wellness-Oriented, Behavioural-Informed Workshop Series for Marginalized Youth and Young Adults: The Growth Group**

Bethany Long

Marginalized youth and young adults (MYYAs) were defined as those 16 to 24 years old who identify as a member of one or more minority social group(s), contributing to social inequity and leading to the experience of systematic oppression. Intersecting social inequalities and systematic barriers place MYYAs at increased risk for adverse childhood experiences, health disparities, and homelessness. Such inequalities and barriers also contribute to MYYAs' decreased engagement in community-based mental health programming. The common challenges resulting from intersectional social inequalities and systematic barriers often contribute to MYYAs independently transitioning into adulthood, which is a critical stage in human development, without appropriate supports. As such, this thesis described the preparation and creation of a behavioural-informed, and wellness-oriented transitional workshop series named The Growth Group for MYYAs in the Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox, and Addington area. The Growth Group workshop series aims to increase program engagement for a hard-to-engage population to promote wellness-oriented skill development opportunities for MYYAs independently transitioning into adulthood, which could positively impact developmental trajectories among this diverse cohort. The development of the Growth Group added to previous research on evidence-based program development for MYYAs using second- and third-wave behavioural approaches to promote positive behaviour change. This thesis also demonstrated how empirically-supported behavioural protocols and principles could be adapted to promote flexibility and responsiveness when developing transitional programs for MYYAs with complex needs. The setting for the workshop series, the open-group format, the workshop series format, the session structure, and the behavioural approaches within the workshop series were discussed within the context of the literature review findings. The Growth Group workshop series used a multidimensional, integrative approach to development; accounted for potential ethical concerns; filled research gaps on program development and program gaps in community; integrated various components to promote participant engagement and require low resources (e.g., human and financial). However, the program could have concerns related to facilitator fidelity or participant acceptability. There were also hypothesized ethical and practical concerns. Implications for the agency, contributions to the field of behavioural psychology, and recommendations for future research were also discussed.

Contact information: [bethanyelong@hotmail.com](mailto:bethanyelong@hotmail.com)

## **Creation and Implementation of a Mental Health Class to Increase Awareness of Concurrent Mental Health Problems**

Cassandra Kramer

A concurrent disorder is a complex disorder involving both a substance use disorder and mental illness which, when combined, require intensive, integrated treatment. Treatment, however, is challenging due to the need to target multiple disorders, as well as many gaps in research regarding this form of service delivery. The overall purpose of this research project is to create a Mental Health Class for clients residing within an addiction rehabilitation/half-way house concurrent disorder treatment facility to improve awareness on their diagnoses and the development coping skills. With the total number of participants varying per week, inclusion criteria are adult males from across Canada who have self-identified as substance users or individuals diagnosed with a concurrent disorder. The participants must be residing within the treatment facility where the research is taking place and are actively partaking in programming. The required materials vary per week, however, participants will always require a pen or pencil, a copy of the Client Feedback Questionnaire, their class binder and the corresponding handouts. The results displayed positive data with an increase in understanding and comprehension of mental illness and concurrent disorders. The staff feedback indicated that all eight modules were relevant and successful additions to programming. Recommendations for the future include implementing the research in a more consistent facility revolving around clients to ensure everyone is partaking in the full eight weeks. To effectively treat concurrent disorders, it is crucial to address both the mental health and addiction portion of the disorder for ultimate success.

Contact information: [cassandra.kramer@student.sl.on.ca](mailto:cassandra.kramer@student.sl.on.ca)

## **Fear of Public Speaking: College Student Perspectives and Evidence-Based Interventions**

Chelsea Cayer

Many students experience a fear of public speaking that negatively affects one's post-secondary studies, career, and everyday life (Asher et al., 2017; Grieve et al., 2021). Furthermore, the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities (n.d.) lists oral communication as an essential employability skill (EES), and they also state that post-secondary students are expected to learn to communicate in a clear and concise manner. This research aimed to determine the experiences and needs of St. Lawrence College (SLC) students regarding their fear of public speaking, and to determine current best-practices used to address this fear. In total, 558 students completed a 20-question online survey sent to their SLC email. The survey consisted of three sections: public speaking fear-related factors, program development for the Public Speaking Confidence Building Group (PSCBG), and demographics. The majority of participants were domestic students between the ages of 18 and 24 who spoke English as their first language. The results from the public speaking fear-related factors section demonstrated that students most commonly experience thoughts and physical reactions contributing to their fear of public speaking. In addition, students noted poor presentation skills and engaging in avoidance behaviours as contributing to and maintain their fear. Furthermore, results from the program development section showed that 49.56% of participants experience more distress speaking in-person than virtually, 41.13% of participants were likely or very likely to participate in a fear-reducing public speaking program, and 48.85% of participants were likely or very likely to participate in a group that uses virtual reality. Additionally, a literature review of existing evidence-based interventions to address public speaking fear and increase skills was conducted. The results suggested that acceptance and commitment therapy in combination with both virtual and in-vivo exposure are the current best-practices to address fear of public speaking. The recommendations include implementing a PSCBG at SLC based on the best-practice findings to reduce public speaking fear and help students attain the EES. Future research should explore factors related to student motivation to engage in fear-reducing or skill-building groups and evaluate the effectiveness of the PSCBG.

Contact information: [chelsea-cayer12@hotmail.com](mailto:chelsea-cayer12@hotmail.com)



## **Exploring Effectiveness of Alternative Therapy Delivery Methods for People with Mental Health Disorders**

Erin Boily

With the pandemic limiting access to mental health services, alternative delivery methods have increased in popularity as a means to access services. However, alternative delivery methods such as online, video, text, or phone calls for mental health services are new and efficacy is not clear for these methods. Further research into whether alternative delivery is accessible, ethical, and satisfactory to clients is needed. Current research indicates alternative delivery is a promising innovation for the psychological field. However, studies have shown that alternative delivery methods vary in treatment effect size and client satisfaction. Client satisfaction was the main factor in assessing efficacy of alternative delivery. Clients' levels of satisfaction with treatment often leads to a greater treatment compliance. A survey was completed to assess client satisfaction. The survey explored delivery methods, demographics, and client satisfaction levels. Using statistical analysis, the results displayed moderately high client satisfaction. This research found that alternative delivery was supported by clients, but in person delivery was still important to people with mental health disorders. Ethics, confidentiality, and accessibility were considered and found to be satisfactory to the clientele. These results were consistent with literature reviewed in this thesis. Suggestions for future research include a longitudinal design and pre and post designs.

Contact information: [Kimberboily@gmail.com](mailto:Kimberboily@gmail.com)

## **Developing a Talking and Activity Based Drop-In Peer Support Program to Promote Personal Wellness**

Jenna McParland

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused many individuals to experience increased mental health and substance use issues. The pandemic has not allowed for sustainable resources to assist these individuals with their problems, as the regulations caused many of the community agencies to shut down for long periods of time. The aim was to create a drop-in peer support group manual that outlined relevant self-care topics and activities to teach individuals how to take better care of themselves. Past research showed the efficacy of peer support groups in decreasing symptoms associated with mental health issues and substance use over time (Bean et al., 2013) for individuals with disabilities (Purcal et al., 2018), suffering from homelessness (Bean et al., 2013), and various health issues (Faulkner & Basset, 2012). One prominent gap in research was that most of the articles on peer support groups were published between 2012 and 2016, making the findings almost too old to be deemed valid. Seven participants completed questionnaires to give insight into how the groups should look, then thematic analysis was used to find patterns in the collected data. Coping strategies, mindfulness, and boundaries were used as the three module topics in the manual, and each session within the modules included discussion topics and activities. Some recommendations for future research included having more time for preparation and running the groups with the participants, designing more than five sessions for each module, and attaching a list of online resources that the group facilitators can access for more activities.

Contact information: [jenna.mcp@hotmail.com](mailto:jenna.mcp@hotmail.com)

## **Incorporating the Medicine Wheel into Healing Circles for Addictions Treatment Workshop**

Luciano Del Gobbo

The Indigenous peoples of Canada have used the Medicine Wheel teachings and the sacred circle since Creation to help them achieve balance within themselves and the community. It is an Indigenous belief that for anyone to be well, the entire community must be well and have everything they need for survival. The people of the community helped each other by sharing resources physically, but also by talking things out in a sacred circle until an agreement was reached. The talking stick ensured everyone could speak as long as they needed. The results of the sacred circle talks were emotional, spiritual, and mental balance among the participants and thus the community. According to Conant (2020) and Vicks et al. (1998) a novel way of looking at addictions, such as through the Medicine Wheel, is needed to better reach Indigenous clients. The four elements of Indigenous wellness are well researched and are foundational teachings within the Medicine Wheel as taught by Métis-Algonquin Knowledge Keeper Tim Yearington (T. Yearington, Métis-Algonquin, Kitchizibi region. Lives in Kingston. Oral Teaching. Personal Communication. 2017). Workshops and a manual were created using these teachings with research into best practices for passing on the teachings. This manual is designed to help Knowledge Keepers pass on their traditional knowledge to mental health practitioners to both conserve the knowledge and help non-Indigenous mental health workers better understand and respect the culture of their Indigenous clients.

Contact information: [Ldelgobbo06@gmail.com](mailto:Ldelgobbo06@gmail.com)

## **Skill Building in Emotion Regulation for Clients with Personality and Substance Use Disorders in a Comprehensive Housing Environment**

Rachel Lord

The Comprehensive Integrated (CI) Housing program aims to prepare individuals with serious mental illness for independent living through supportive transitional housing services. As the name suggests, the CI Housing program offers comprehensive support in all areas of life that are necessary for independent living. This may include cooking, cleaning, or social skills in addition to mental health support. The current population in this program is very diverse in terms of diagnoses, however, a common issue that many clients face is emotion dysregulation. Emotion dysregulation is especially prevalent in clients who are diagnosed with either a substance use or personality disorder. As a result, an education module about helping clients cope with emotion dysregulation through dialectical behavioural therapy was created for the staff at CI Housing to review in order to add to their repertoire of coping skills they can offer to clients. Literature about emotion dysregulation, personality and substance disorders, dialectical behavioural therapy, and trauma-informed approach were all reviewed throughout this thesis. The literature highlighted the correlation between personality disorders, substance use disorders, emotion dysregulation, and trauma, thus, the education module was created. After the module was created, it was sent to all primary case managers in the program along with additional DBT worksheets. This module was saved on all agency computers as well as a USB drive for future use and for all staff within the agency. There was no data collected on the effectiveness or satisfaction of the module due to time restraints, however, it is recommended to include this step in future research or replications of this project.

Contact information: [rachellord998877@gmail.com](mailto:rachellord998877@gmail.com)

## **Evaluating Online Services Through the COVID-19 Pandemic in Addiction and Mental Health Services – Hastings and Prince Edward County**

Rachelle Joubert

Since the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a demand for mental health care to transition to online service delivery. Due to the mandates from government and local public health officials, restrictions made it hard for workers to access their office, and clients go to their in-person appointments. Luckily, with the introduction to online service delivery it provided clients and workers a way to access mental health and addiction services from anywhere. Although virtual services delivery provided clients with an alternative approach to access services it also caused barriers for some clients. For example, online service delivery made it harder to access reliable technology and a confidential environment to attend meetings. The study evaluated client satisfaction since the introduction of online services to see if client satisfaction has remained the same or decreased from the year of 2019 to 2021. To evaluate client satisfaction the Ontario Perception of Care for Mental Health and Addictions (OPOC-MHA) questionnaire was used to gather information on client satisfaction. The OPOC-MHA measure has a 4-point *Likert* scale and included responses of “*Strongly Agree*”, “*Agree*”, “*Disagree*”, and “*Strongly Disagree*”. Twenty randomly selected questionnaires from the year of 2019 and 2021 were selected for this study and averages of each question were provided. This research was limited because there was an insignificant amount of data to represent reliability and validity in the results for online service delivery. A different assessment tool specifically designed for online service delivery may have created accurate results. It is recommended that mental health care providers continue to gather feedback from their clients and enhance online services to ensure this mode of communication and connection to services are provided in accordance with best practices and evaluated yearly to ensure continual improvements are made.

Contact information: [Rachelle.joubert@yahoo.ca](mailto:Rachelle.joubert@yahoo.ca)

## **The Effectiveness of Virtual Treatment: Examining the Delivery of Day Treatment Programs for Adults with Addiction**

Tessa Ambrose

Coronavirus (COVID-19) has had a significant impact on addiction therapies and treatment delivery methods. As a result of COVID-19 restrictions, a community-based addictions agency had to offer an alternative delivery method for day treatment (DT) addiction groups. Individuals accessing services were offered virtual delivery of the DT addiction group. Research surrounding the effectiveness and benefits of virtual delivery is limited, as it is currently evolving. Current research does offer support for community-based interventions in addiction treatment and significant change for individuals engaging in day treatment programs (Bergman et al., 2015). Research suggests strategies offered in day treatment promote healthy and adaptive coping techniques, which increase the likelihood and promote maintaining abstinence (Herremans & Baeken, 2012). As well, studies provide support for the importance of engagement in treatment for a successful recovery and the risk factors associated with low levels of engagement (i.e., risk of dropout; Brorson et al., 2013). The current study examined historical data provided by the community-based agency on DT sessions from both an in-person treatment group (pre-COVID-19 restrictions) and a virtual treatment group (post-COVID-19 restrictions). Attendance was reported from four cohorts (two per treatment group) to examine how many participants attended in-person DT sessions compared to virtual DT. Engagement levels were also examined by assessing the total number of participants who completed each DT cohort in each treatment group. Independent t-tests were conducted to further analyze the difference in attendance and completion rates between treatment groups. Results indicate that there is a statistical difference in attendance rates and completions rates between in-person and virtual treatment groups. It is hypothesized that participants are more likely to engage and attend in-person DT compared to virtual. This suggests that there are environmental factors which impact participant's likelihood to engage in DT sessions. As a result of virtual treatment remaining relatively new, this study offers valuable insight into the effectiveness of virtual delivery and promotes future empirical research to continue examining virtual delivery as a treatment method. Future recommendations for research are to continue evaluating the effectiveness and impact of virtual delivery.

Contact information: [tessa.ambrose@hotmail.com](mailto:tessa.ambrose@hotmail.com)

## Applied Behaviour Analysis

### **Examining the Effectiveness of Social Skills Program Delivery for Adolescents with Autism**

Carolyn Olson

Social skills training has been used to assist individuals with autism spectrum disorder and many other diagnoses adaptive social skills. These skills are important for supporting an individual's independence and dignity, as it allows for proper communication between themselves and those around them. There are many different manualized programs focused on teaching social skills in various formats. These programs often have a similar structure but have heavier focus on different aspects of socialization and communication methods. Researching the differences between how these programs effect the individuals' social skills is important for analysing how to improve upon and create efficient social skills programs. This review focuses on identifying three different manualized training programs and comparing their effectiveness within the context of assisting adolescents with autism spectrum disorder. Each program has a differing focus for their teaching methods and emphasize social skills in various ways. This review analyzes the differences between how these programs approach different topics, as well as their accessibility to clients and service providers. It is found that all the programs are effective in teaching their targeted social skills, and it is suggested that future research focus on alternative methods of service delivery, as well as identifying the differences between external factors that influence treatment outcomes, such as setting, culture, and parental or guardian involvement.

Contact information: [Caro.jolson@gmail.com](mailto:Caro.jolson@gmail.com)

## **Creating Valid Direct Measures of Social Skills within PEERS® Training for Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

Erin Cote

This multiple-probe single-subject research study sought to utilize direct and indirect measurement tools to examine the effectiveness of the UCLA Personal Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS®) program at increasing appropriate conversation skills in adolescents with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Research suggests an overreliance on indirect measures to assess changes in behaviour which can potentially introduce bias and limitations to the validity of the results. This research study hypothesized that direct observation tools would allow for more sensitive detection of changes in behaviour across sessions as well as provide more clinically relevant information about participants. Participants included three adolescents with a diagnosis of ASD and their corresponding caregivers. Direct observation of conversation skills took place across baseline, intervention, and generalization probes across multiple settings. Direct observation results indicated PEERS® as an effective intervention for increasing conversation skills, however paired-sample t-tests revealed no significant changes in scores on the three indirect questionnaires. Overall, direct methods of observation allowed for more sensitivity to change and provided valuable information on the application of the in-vivo skill, while indirect methods focused on adolescents' self-reported measure of the behaviour.

Contact information: [eriincote@gmail.com](mailto:eriincote@gmail.com)



## **Manual Training on Basic Behavioural Analysis and Learning Disabilities**

Hailey Forestell

The most common disability among children in Canada is a learning disability (LD). Teachers and educators tend to play a large role in recognizing this disability as well as they are responsible for helping accommodate students in the classroom who are diagnosed with an LD. There is a gap in the literature showing that teachers and educators need more training, information, and techniques able in order for them to feel more confident in helping students with LDs. Manual and workshop training was created and used to educate teachers and staff on LDs, how to make their classrooms more inclusive, and basic applied behaviour analysis (ABA). The chapters in the manual and the workshop were: manual training, workshop training, using behavioural skills training (BST), post-then-pre measurement, inclusion, learning styles, reinforcement and punishment, applied behaviour analysis (ABA) practice, functions of behaviour, motivating operations (MO), behaviour-specific praise (BSP), token economy, and the good behaviour game (BGB). It is recommended that future research conducts a similar study with more participants to ensure the accuracy of the results. It is also recommended to review the participation of staff members to see if participation has an effect the participants perceived knowledge on the manual and workshop topics.

Contact information: [haileyforestell00@gmail.com](mailto:haileyforestell00@gmail.com)

## **Using Routine-Based Interventions with Backward Chaining to Increase Independence in an Adult with a Dual Diagnosis in Residential Services**

Mack Quick

Individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) often face challenges surrounding their independent living routines. Challenges include the inability to complete routines or not possessing the knowledge of how a routine is performed leading to others assisting with or completing the routine for the individual. Teaching daily living skills (DLS) is important for individuals with DD to gain responsibilities, motivation, and confidence without relying on others which contributes to their independent living. Residential services are designed to suit the physical needs of individuals with DD. Group homes are a type of residential service that are staffed to assist individuals with DD with routines to function independently. Furthermore, routine-based interventions, such as video modeling, activity schedules, task analyses, backward chaining, and token economies are implemented for individuals with DD to independently follow steps in routines. It was hypothesized that implementing routine-based interventions would increase the participant's independence skills during DLS of bed making and laundry. The hypothesis was not supported as the routine-based interventions did not increase the participant's DLS performance. The length of the intervention was diminished due to interruptions which was seen as a limitation. The results indicated that the participant independently completed more DLS steps at the end of the intervention compared to the end of baseline, however the overall baseline average was higher for bed making and laundry when compared to the intervention. To make recommendations for future studies, it would be helpful to target different DLS, increase the sample size, and use a different type of data collection.

Contact information: [mackquick14@gmail.com](mailto:mackquick14@gmail.com)

## **Use of Mand Training and Proloquo2go® to Increase Communication in Children with Autism**

Tamara Bellemore

Children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) often have difficulty with communication, more specifically asking for items, help or attention. This multiple baseline across participant study evaluated the effectiveness in using Proloquo2go® and mand training to teach children with skill deficits in manding skills as identified through The Verbal Behaviour Milestones Assessment and Placement program (VB-MAPP). Intervention was conducted using two teach days and a data collection day that consisted of hour-long sessions. During the session participants were encouraged to engage in manding through positive reinforcement, modeling and prompting techniques. Independent, dependent, speech generated device (SGD) and verbal mands were recorded. Data were recorded outside of the manding sessions and demonstrated an increase in independent mands, and speech generated device mands. Variability on preference of verbal and SGD mands across participants was noted. It was speculated that using a SGD to produce a mand contains a higher response effort and requires access to Proloquo2go®.

Contact information: [tamaratwo3@gmail.com](mailto:tamaratwo3@gmail.com)

## Corrections and Justice Services

### **Reducing Recidivism in Dual Diagnosed Individuals: A Best Practices Manual**

Abbigayle Woods

Following release from incarceration, social challenges can pose a barrier to a smooth transition into society for many individuals. Unfortunately, dually diagnosed individuals are at greater risk of recidivism when compared to other sub-groups. The purpose of the thesis is to explore literature and outline evidence based best practices for Dually Diagnosed previously incarcerated individuals who are residing at a justice transition home, in order to reduce rates of recidivism to aid in a successful reintegration into the community. Research has shown that with use of certain practices, rates of recidivism among the Dually Diagnosed can be reduced. Therefore, it was thought that development of a manual that includes these best practices, would provide an effective tool to have for justice transition homes to reference when working with this specific population. Literature regarding reducing rates of recidivism, dually diagnosed individuals and the incarcerated population was reviewed prior to the creation of the manual. The literature highlighted many tools and practices that are effective in reducing rates of recidivism among this population. The final manual consisted of the best practices found within the literature and were put into seven sections which included: Intake requirements, individualized programming, behavioural therapy, skills training, community resources, staff, references and ended with a survey. The results concluded that this manual can be used as a reference when developing future Justice Transition homes and within current homes to aid in outlining what specific programs and practices could be incorporated when working with the DD population on reducing rates of recidivism. Future recommendations would include, testing the overall scientific effectiveness of the manual as well as further research on the correlation with gender and the assessments and practices included.

Contact information: [abbi.woods2000@gmail.com](mailto:abbi.woods2000@gmail.com)

## **Teaching Consent to Young Offenders with Deficits in Executive Functioning: A Manual**

Adelynn Ploughman

The focus of this thesis was to develop a manual to teach consent that was tailored to youth who have deficits in executive functioning (DEF). DEF is not a formal diagnosis in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), therefore there is limited research on this topic. Through an extensive literature review there was three main areas of focus to determine that the most effective treatment styles were being used in the creation of the manual. The three main areas are consent, DEF, and youth offenders. These topics were then applied to the creation to the manual entitled Teaching Consent to Young Offenders with Deficits in Executive Functioning. The manual contains five lessons that outline DEF, a basic understanding of consent, consent with a romantic partner, consent with your family, and consent while engaging in online activity. Worksheets and extra resources are provided with the manual for facilitators to access. In the future the manual should be used and assessed through feedback surveys to assess the effectiveness of the lessons. Further research would suggest that a formal assessment be created as identify an individual's level of EF this will allow the facilitator to properly assess the clients functioning to ensure they are using the correct teaching method with their client.

Contact information: [aploughman.10@gmail.com](mailto:aploughman.10@gmail.com)

## **Integrating Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Informed Strategies into the Structured Intervention Unit Program**

Becca Fowler

This paper aims to develop a Dialectical Behaviour therapy (DBT) informed module for offenders residing in a Canadian federal Structured Intervention Unit (SIU). A secondary aim of this paper is to address gaps in the literature concerning alternative interventions for offenders in Structured Intervention Units. A key point is that DBT, specifically the skills group component, may be effective at addressing characteristics that offenders display while incarcerated, such as impulsive anger-related emotions, lack of distress coping skills, and interpersonal skills (Bottos, 2007; Fitzpatrick et al., 2020; McKay et al., 2019). Offenders in an SIU may display higher rates of these characteristics (O’Keefe, 2008). For the method, psychology websites, textbooks, empirical articles, and other online resources were used. The scope of this research is to ensure that the module is evidenced-based and that DBT is a feasible strategy to apply within the correctional system. The results of the research were a module that exists within a pre-existing manual that includes seven sessions that cover the four main skills of DBT: mindfulness, distress tolerance, interpersonal effectiveness, and emotion regulation. A limitation of this project is that it was not delivered to offenders. Therefore, the effectiveness of the module cannot be determined. Recommendations for future research would be to determine if DBT skill group concepts have positive outcomes when delivered individually instead of in a group setting. In conclusion, this paper and sequential module could be used as a preliminary tool to explore the feasibility and benefits of DBT for offenders in SIUs.

Contact information: [Beccafowler11@gmail.com](mailto:Beccafowler11@gmail.com)

## **The Impact of Incarceration on a Female Offender's Mental Health and Substance Use**

Callista Bennet

Within the correctional system in Canada, there are notable difference between female and male populations. There are several common risk factors and challenges that female offenders may endure throughout their lifetime. These risk factors can potentially influence the lives of female offenders. So, this study aimed to explore the lived experiences of three formerly incarcerated females living in community residential housing. This study utilized qualitative research analysis and semi-structure-interviews were recorded and then transcribed in order to develop a thematic analysis using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six step guide to extract the different themes. Quotes from the participants were provided to support the themes that were developed. Afterwards, three thematic maps were created: before incarceration, during incarceration, and after incarceration. The thematic maps provided a visually appealing way to display the data collected. The interviews offered a client-centred subjective lens to this vulnerable population and provided recommendations and adaptations for future programming and policies. Additionally, the interviews were aligned with current literature regarding substance use and mental health amongst female offenders.

Contact information: [calbennett99@gmail.com](mailto:calbennett99@gmail.com)

## **Assessing and Implementation of Life Skills Workshops with Justice-Involved Youth**

Kelly MacPherson-Mathews

It is important for youth to learn life skills at a young age as they are a foundational component of a youth's development and they are valuable throughout the entity of a person's life (According to Prajapati et al., 2016). This paper will examine the efficacy and the implementation of life skills workshops with justice-involved youth. There were 3 participants from Youth Diversion in Kingston Ontario who were between the ages of 16 and 18 years old. The life skills workshops were from the Foundry BC website, an online resource for youth aged 12-24, and the topics included online safety, work, school, housing, and money. Two youth participated in the online safety workshop and one youth participated in the school workshop. The online safety workshop addressed social media, the digital footprint, and the dangers of the internet. While the school workshop examined post-secondary including; how to choose a college or university, how to choose a program, how to apply, and how to find financial assistance. The Casey Life Skills assessment was completed pre and post workshops to analyze the participants' learning of the life skills taught in the workshops. The workshops were completed one on one with the youth and the facilitator either at the youths school or home. After the assessment was done the percentage of change was calculated by finding the difference between the assessment scores pre and post workshop. The results indicated that all 3 of the participants had a higher assessment score after the workshop was completed, therefore all of the participants showed increased knowledge of the life skill. The strengths of the study included; contributions to the field, Youth Diversion, and local agencies, and the cost effectiveness. Since there was no previous research on the Foundry BC workshops being used with justice-involved youth, this is valuable research for the field and the agency because it shows that the workshops can teach youth these life skills. This gives the agency a free resource to use with their clients. The limitations of the study included; the sample size, the assessment used, and the age range of participants.

Contact information: [kelly\\_macpherson\\_mathews@hotmail.ca](mailto:kelly_macpherson_mathews@hotmail.ca)



## Developmental Disabilities

### **Assisting Adults with a Neurodevelopmental Disorders in Learning Occupational Skills: A Manual**

Bekah Brownlee

In continuance of the research around neurodevelopmental disorders and daily functioning abilities. This thesis presents current literature surrounding the specific accommodations required for adults with neurodevelopmental disorders to learn occupational skills. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) lists several known neurodevelopmental Disorders, all of which have similar symptoms in relation to a minimal ability to learn (American Psychiatric Association 2013). An extensive literature review was conducted to determine how this population of adults learn, the most effective forms of adult learning, and potential behavioural learning strategies. The project attached to this thesis focuses on developing a structured, alternative educational delivery intended to be used for either self-directed learning, social-mediated learning, or both. The manual contains 12 chapters, divided into 5 sections targeting a specific occupational skill. Each chapter provides a task analysis; instructions including the importance of the skill, a demonstration of how and when the skill is used, and a description, followed by a template tracker, to guide the reader through practicing the skill. The current evaluation of this manual includes an individual feedback survey on the content resulting in a high probability of effectiveness for future use.

Contact information: [bboobekahbrownlee@OUTLOOK.COM](mailto:bboobekahbrownlee@OUTLOOK.COM)

## **Modified Emotional Regulation Training for Youth with Intellectual Disability**

Gillian Goody

This thesis focuses on the development of a therapeutic resource to teach emotional regulation skills, modified for youth with intellectual disability (ID). ID is defined as a significant impairment in cognitive functioning, as well as limited abilities in adaptive behaviour displayed before age 18. Emotional regulation is defined as the ability to modulate emotions through various strategies. Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) has shown promise in the treatment of emotional regulation, however traditional DBT is not apt for the ID population. An extensive literature review was conducted to determine the most successful modifications to traditional DBT for the ID population. Several approaches and strategies for modifying DBT concepts and aspects were reviewed, evaluated, compared, and integrated together into one evidence-based resource for counselor implementation and facilitation. The online module entitled *Understanding Our Emotions* was created to generate an appropriate resource that combines various evidence-based strategies that are modified for the cognitive abilities of the ID population. The module provides a short introductory section, followed by three DBT based sessions. Content ranges from, psychoeducation, recognizing emotions, exploring emotional patterns, along with strategies, activities, and prompts to plan for an emotional episode. Positive professional feedback on the module was obtained. Strengths and limitations of the project are explored through a multilevel systems perspective. Due to agency policies the module could not be clinically evaluated. Future recommendations for research include the formal evaluation of this online module. Data collection is recommended in both quantitative and qualitative methods and potential measures are provided.

Contact information: [gillian.goody1@gmail.com](mailto:gillian.goody1@gmail.com)

## Geriatrics

### **Montessori Methods for Dementia in a Long-Term Care Setting: A Systematized Review**

Alyssa Hawley

Montessori methods for dementia have been researched and evaluated as an effective intervention for individuals with dementia. The research gap identified was the lack of studies surrounding person-centred care and Montessori methods as an intervention in long term care as well as with individuals who have moderate to severe dementia. Therefore the aim of this project was to develop recommendations for intervention based on a systematized literature review of person-centered care and Montessori methods for individuals with moderate to severe dementia in a long-term care setting. Literature was obtained from PSYCInfo, MEDLINE, CINAHL, and ScienceDirect databases, as well as Google Scholar. Person-centred care approaches were found to significantly decrease behavioural symptoms of dementia. Montessori methods have been found to be effective in increasing participation in activities of daily living and in recreational activities. Programs such as Resident Assisted Montessori Programming (RAMP™) provide opportunities for persons with dementia to participate in activities and social roles that are meaningful to them. Additionally, other Montessori-based activities have shown positive affect and engagement in persons with dementia. Future research with data collection is needed to draw stronger conclusions around the effectiveness of Montessori methods for people with moderate to severe dementia. Recommendations for future service delivery were presented in a PowerPoint presentation to the agency and attached in the appendices.

Contact information: [alyssahawley11@gmail.com](mailto:alyssahawley11@gmail.com)

## **Incorporation of Play Therapy During Move-in Assessments in Long-Term Care**

Emily Robertson

Play therapy is a psychotherapeutic intervention that is often used as a treatment method for children who have experienced trauma. In recent years play therapy has been explored as a treatment method for many other populations, such as residents in long-term care. The move-in process while transitioning into long-term care has been described by residents and families as lengthy and tedious (Personal Communications, 2021). To make the transition process less stressful play therapy has been introduced to the recreation staff using a training program and manual. When play therapy is used in older populations it can help to improve cognitive function, social skills, behaviour, and mood (Physiopedia, accessed October 2021). Literature discusses how the use of play therapy in a health care setting has been beneficial at Improving morale in the long-term care home as well as decreasing the occurrence of potentially harmful behaviours (Dickinson & Kottman, 2021). To incorporate play therapy into the long-term care home, a training program, including a PowerPoint, YouTube videos, and interactive activities, was developed and offered to the recreation therapy staff. A manual was given to the long-term care home for use as a reference guide by recreation staff. Include sections dedicated to activities to use during the 'How About You?' game and ways to adapt activities to meet needs of most residents. A digital copy of the PowerPoint from the training program is kept in the recreation managers office for training new staff members. The manual is stored as a PDF in the agency data base for recreation staff to use as needed. In the future it is recommended that play therapy should be used to reduce the stress of moving into long-term care.

Contact information: [Robertsonemily99@gmail.com](mailto:Robertsonemily99@gmail.com)

## Housing & Homelessness

### **Available Healthcare Resources in the Homeless Population: A Systematized Literature Review**

Courtney Mullins

There is an overrepresentation of the homeless population worldwide. The majority of these individuals that are living homeless need accessible healthcare. This thesis examines the limited number of healthcare resources that are accessible to the homeless population and how often the homeless community faces barriers while trying to access resources for healthcare. The studies that were examined revealed that individuals who are not homeless are able to access healthcare resources easily. This demonstrates a major gap in the literature when homeless individuals have difficulty accessing healthcare resources. This thesis addressed how each homeless subpopulation; females, pregnant females, males, adolescents, LGBTQ+ community and Indigenous are treated differently when accessing healthcare resources. A Prisma Flow chart was used during the article screening process to organize which articles were relevant for this current research. Inclusion criteria included articles published between 2000 and 2021, and the articles had to discuss homeless individuals that were having difficulty accessing healthcare. An Empirical Articles Analysis Table allowed for categorizing the key elements of the study to allow for better understanding. It is recommended that the healthcare system and Government provide healthcare resources within the homeless community such as shelters and warming centers to allow for accessible healthcare for the homeless. This new method should help elevate stress on the emergency care departments and allow homeless individuals to feel less vulnerable when trying to access healthcare resources.

Contact information: [courtney.mullins18@gmail.com](mailto:courtney.mullins18@gmail.com)

## **Using Relaxation Techniques to Reduce Stress and Anxiety in Female Supportive Housing Residents**

Sabrina Ponte

Over the years, homelessness has grown to become a social concern in many developed countries around the world. It is estimated that, in any given night, almost 250,000 Canadians experience homelessness (Strobel et al., 2021), and approximately 25% of these individuals are women (Winetrobe et al., 2017). Homelessness has been linked to chronic pain and other physical health concerns as well as psychological concerns such as chronic stress and anxiety. Interventions such as psychological therapy and medication or exercise have been researched numerous times amongst differing populations, but there is limited research identifying the effectiveness of relaxation techniques as an intervention to reduce stress and anxiety in previously homeless women. The goal of the current study was to determine if the implementation of a relaxation training program teaching deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation (PMR), visualization, guided imagery, grounding, and colouring would significantly reduce perceived stress and anxiety amongst participants. The results of the study were not statistically significant due to the limited number of participants (n=4). However, a case study approach was taken to interpret the findings and demonstrate an overall reduction of both perceived stress and anxiety amongst participants. A feedback survey concluded that participants had a preference towards specific relaxation techniques. Although the results are not significant, these findings may be used as a pilot study for future research regarding treatment interventions for previously homeless women. Implications and future research considerations are also discussed.

Contact information: [sabrinaponte@live.ca](mailto:sabrinaponte@live.ca)

## Mental Health – Children & Adolescents

### **Using Thematic Analysis to Assess Adoptive Parents Understanding and skills in Nurturing Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural Identity After Adoption Finalization**

Jane Hotner

Cultural, racial, and ethnic identity are elements that shape a person's development across personal, social, academic, and professional domains of life beginning in childhood. The goal of this study was to assess adoptive parents' ability to nurture their child's cultural, racial, and ethnic identity after adoption finalization, specifically, parents who had adopted children through Family and Children's Services of Frontenac, Lennox, and Addington. Quantitative data was collected using an online survey to determine the cultural, racial, and ethnic composition of each participants' family, as well as their post-adoption relationship with the child's biological family. Qualitative data was collected using a semi-structured interview that assessed the adoptive parents' ability to access community resources to support their child's cultural, racial, and ethnic identity as well as their ability to navigate relationships with their child's biological family to remain connected to their culture, race, and ethnicity. A thematic analysis of the data provided insight into the skills adoptive parents have to nurture their adopted child's identity including and understanding the importance of identity for their child. Further, the thematic analysis highlighted barriers limiting parents' ability to nurture their child's identity including a lack of awareness regarding community supports and a lack of identity related information provided in the Parent Resources, Information, Development, and Education (PRIDE) training. Limitations to the study include a small sample size that lacked in diversity and a limited geographical location. Recommendations for future studies include broadening the geographic region to capture adoptive families across Ontario and to include input from adoptees who have been raised in a transracial family. This study met its goal in identifying the skills and knowledge that adoptive parents have to help preserve their child's identity as well as detecting barriers limiting their ability to nurture the identity needs of their children. The results of this study could be used to strengthen training for adoptive parents and child welfare agencies in order to support the development of healthy cultural, racial, and ethnic identity in adopted children.

Contact information: [Janehotner@live.ca](mailto:Janehotner@live.ca)

## **Evaluating the Effectiveness of ACT Informed Strategies to Increase Use of Coping Techniques in a 15-Year Old Boys**

Ariana Denis

This project aimed to develop, implement, and assess a program of ACT-informed psychoeducation strategies and supportive counselling for highest risk youth in the Youth Job Connection program who experience high levels of anxiety. Exposure to aversive childhood experiences (ACEs) is associated with an increased risk for developing mental illnesses. ACEs can significantly impact the direction of an individuals' mental health, which makes it important to provide mental health support for youth transitioning from adolescence to adulthood (Jurewicz., 2015). An ACT-informed intervention was developed with a 15-year-old male participant referred by the agency who displayed high levels of anxiety, difficulty regulating emotions, and obtaining and maintaining employment. Sessions ran for 6 weeks, for a total of 12 sessions. Each session outlined a different ACT strategy for the client to practice and included an overview, worksheets, activities, and home practice. The client completed 4 self-report measures: Coping Oriented Problems Experienced (COPE), the Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Skills (KIMS), The Acceptance and Acquisition Questionnaire (AAQ-2), and the Knowledge and Understanding Survey (KUS) both at pre-test and post-test to assess levels of understanding of the ACT strategies. At the post- test, the participant reported substantial increases in the use of positive coping skills, acceptance, mindfulness, and values. As dysfunctional coping methods decreased, acquisition and use of positive coping increased. Based on these reported improvements, ACT skills training had a positive impact on increasing the client's coping skills and reducing his anxiety. Moreover, this research may be modified or adapted for incorporation into other programs and services to meet the needs for youth which may minimize hardships faced. meet the unique needs of clients across multiple settings such as the workplace, school, and in general situations not within one's control.

Contact information: [adenis1412@gmail.com](mailto:adenis1412@gmail.com)



## **Development of a Classroom Manual: Enhancing Emotion Regulation Strategies Among Adolescents With ASD**

Cassandra Bell

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder which often becomes evident within the early stages of one's development, often portrayed through deficits in one's social communication or interactions, and restricted and/or repetitive behaviours, interests, and activities. As adolescents presenting with ASD often experience higher rates of anxiety, depression, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and anger rumination, it is common to see high rates of emotion dysregulation. Research on ASD, and emotion regulation support the use of educational manuals, and video modeling in skill acquisition. Focusing on the emotions of anger, anxiety, and sadness, the proposed manual addresses emotion regulation in a novel way. Through didactic group activities, individualized reflections, and informative videos, the manual guides and supports adolescents through the implementation of adaptive emotion regulation strategies within the classroom setting. In addition, the manual was developed alongside the agency to ensure ease of use for both staff and students accessing this resource. Future recommendations include a clinical evaluation outlining the manual's effectiveness in the acquisition of emotion regulation skills, and potential adaptation to a larger range of generalized settings.

Contact information: [Bellic1121@gmail.com](mailto:Bellic1121@gmail.com)

## **A Systematic Review of the Best Mental Health Practices for Children and Youth Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

Darby McMunn

Individuals who have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) were more likely to experience comorbid mental health (MH) disorders as compared to the general population. The content of the current literature indicated that there was a gap in the MH services that were available for this specific population. This thesis examined the best MH practices available to support children and youth diagnosed with ASD and encouraged these practices. A Prisma Flow Chart was developed to visually represent the screening process of the 20 literature review articles. The relevant research and key findings from the literature review were summarized in an Empirical Article Analysis Table. The strategies that were identified in the literature review and the Empirical Article Analysis Table were organized into an information brochure. This brochure encouraged effective and ethical interventions to manage common behaviours associated with ASD. The information obtained in the systematic literature review confirmed that the treatments most commonly used to reduce the symptoms of depression and anxiety in individuals with ASD were CBT and medication, with mindfulness strategies following closely. Another collective theme of the literature was the importance of parental involvement in services, which demonstrated the need for increased psychoeducation opportunities for parents. Overall, this research created a foundation to build upon and close the current gap in available services. Changes must be made to increase these services for individuals with more specific needs to remain accessible. This research provided insight into how caregivers and clinicians can help to manage common MH symptoms in this population and as a result, the potential maladaptive behaviours which may be associated.

Contact information: [Darbymcmunn@gmail.com](mailto:Darbymcmunn@gmail.com)

## **Brief Psychoeducational Workshop Sessions Targeting Children's Self-Regulation Skills**

Jillian Noyes

The global pandemic has caused the world to undergo immense change and it has also had a negative impact on children's mental health and overall wellbeing. As a result, this has emphasized the need to provide children with tools and knowledge that will allow them to effectively recognize, communicate, and regulate their challenging emotions. However, there are gaps within the literature with regards to the availability of brief psychoeducational programs that can be used to provide children with information and skills regarding emotion regulation and coping strategies. This thesis presents a comprehensive workshop manual consisting of five workshop sessions that teach children about emotions, thoughts, emotion regulation, and coping strategies. The workshop sessions were designed to be completed in community settings with groups of children between the ages of 8 and 12. The workshop sessions are interactive and use a skill-building and psychoeducational approach. These workshop sessions did not collect data from human participants, and thus, further research is required to determine their effectiveness and feasibility. It is recommended that the fields of mental health and education continue to develop more accessible and brief programs that can be used to teach children critical skills, such as emotion regulation.

Contact information: [jillian.noyes00@gmail.com](mailto:jillian.noyes00@gmail.com)

## **Group Mindfulness and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Informed Strategies to Target Coping Skills in Adolescence Attending Alternative Schooling**

Samantha Power

**Purpose:** Adolescents attending alternative high-school programming are categorized as at-risk youth and are deemed as highly vulnerable due to experienced stressors. A side-effect of the COVID-19 pandemic has been increased mental health and coping implications on adolescents and at-risk youth. These stressors can affect mental health, substance use, physical, social, and cognitive development in adolescents without access to adaptive coping mechanisms.

**Hypothesis:** It was hypothesized that the implementation of school-based group mindfulness and CBT informed strategies will improve scores on the Brief-COPE assessment for adaptive coping skills. **Method:** This thesis utilized a quasi-experimental design, and a pre- post-test assessment.

Participants were five high-school students (Mage= 16.6) in an alternate education program.

Group intervention sessions occurred for 30 minutes, twice per week, for a total of 6-weeks.

Group intervention utilized mindfulness strategies (progressive muscle relaxation; meditation; body scan; guided imagery) and CBT informed strategies (behavioural activation; gratitude journaling; cognitive restructuring) to improve adaptive coping skills.

**Results:** Two Wilcoxon Signed Rank Tests compared participants' pre- and post-test scores on the Brief-COPE assessment for adaptive and maladaptive coping. The Wilcoxon tests determined no statistically significant differences in mean scores for both adaptive and maladaptive coping categories ( $z = 0.00, p = 1.0$ ). **Conclusions:** Participant attendance was a limitation. Although no statistically significant differences in group means were found, participants with high attendance (<8 sessions) did reveal positive changes in one or both coping categories. Future research should explore the relationship between group attendance and positive changes in scores on the Brief-COPE assessment.

Contact information: Sampower471@hotmail.com

## Professional Resources

### **A Manual of Support Strategies for Youth and Families**

Adalyn Goodfellow

Youth seeking to access long term supports experience long wait times and barriers such as, cost of services, high expectations, inflexible amenities, complex programming, and lack of information (Anderson et al., 2017). These factors increase the drop out rates to services for youth (Anderson et al., 2017). The goal was to create a manual to help agency workers assist youth and families with receiving temporary supports. This was to decrease the amount of drop out rates and increase interaction within programming. Correlations were found between benefits of using intervention techniques within households with increasing engagement within youth (Place et al., 2021; Anderson et al., 2017). Interventions used within the manual were supported by literature and agency resources. The manual contains four sections of, mental health, behavioural, developmental, and family based interventions. The mental health section covered interventions such as cognitive behavioural therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, mindfulness, spirituality, and coping strategies. The behavioural section covered interventions such as pre-mack principle and token economies. The developmental section covered interventions such as picture exchange communication systems, social skills training, and functional skills training. Lastly, the family-based section covered interventions such as rule setting, communication, positive parenting, helping youths' school life, and resilience. Future recommendations include creating a satisfaction survey for agency workers to complete to assess the benefits of the manual. The next study should assess the benefits of the manual within the population to determine further validity.

Contact information: [adalyngoodfellow@gmail.com](mailto:adalyngoodfellow@gmail.com)

## Teaching Emotional and Social Skills using Behavioural Skills Staff Training Manual

Brianna Glenn

It has been suggested that children may be at a greater risk for biopsychosocial stressors as a result of the Covid-19 public health measures and restrictions (Figueiredo et al. 2020). Therefore, it is critical to research and develop strategies to lessen the long-term developmental impact on children. Research has demonstrated that behavioural skills training (BST) is an effective strategy for increasing social skills in socially isolated children (Galindo et al., 2018). Moreover, research has shown that the use of BST as a training procedure can increase educator's accuracy in implementing behavioural procedures with students (Kirkpatrick et al., 2019). Therefore, a staff training manual using BST was developed to teach social and emotional skills to students. A review of the literature has indicated that engagement in social emotional learning (SEL) competencies can enhance school performance and overall well-being (Durlak, 2011). The SEL framework consists of five core competencies which are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (Durlak, 2011). Therefore, this framework was used to develop five skills to teach children within each of the SEL domains. The manual consisted of nine chapters, including videos which modelled the use of BST to teach social and emotional skills to students. Feedback regarding the manual was collected through the development of a staff feedback survey. A Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) was used to collect anonymous feedback from staff. Results from the survey indicated that staff found that the manual was organized, contents included were considered useful, and staff felt that they had gained the skills and knowledge to implement BST. The implications of this staff training manual on children's behaviour were not examined. Therefore, it is recommended that a scientific research method is used to determine the effectiveness of this manual in changing children's deficits in SEL.

Contact information: glennbrianna22@gmail.com

## **Developing a Biopsychosocial Mental Health Intake Assessment for Women at Community Residential Program**

Britney McArthur

This is a thesis that overviews the process of developing a tool to assess mental wellbeing at a residential facility. The objective in creating this assessment tool was to demonstrate the effect that gaining further information on client's biopsychosocial health has on the pursuance of their highest quality of support plausible. To assess the impact that a mental health assessment has on staff's ability to support their client's needs, quantitative and qualitative measures were put in place. Prior to using the assessment, staff disclosed their perspective on their ability to provide support to clients through documents on file in a quantitative questionnaire. After implementing the intake assessment at the program level, the mental health support worker provided feedback in a qualitative manner. Changes in data collection are a result of time restraints. Completing the quantitative data would require additional time in order to accurately measure changes caused by the implementation of the assessment tool in clinical practice. The quantitative data indicated room for improvement in case management, while the qualitative data proposed that having an in-depth assessment of offender clients provided staff with information necessary in helping staff address crisis prevention, skill deficits or proficiencies, internal/external referrals among other areas. Further research should implement experimental designs to empirically support the importance of assessment tools in agencies that address mental health and other related concerns.

Contact information: [mcarthurbritney@hotmail.com](mailto:mcarthurbritney@hotmail.com)

## **Signs of Safe: Challenges Faced by Child Protection Workers**

Christine Coe

The Signs of Safety framework (SoS) has been widely adopted in child protection agencies in Ontario since mandating the use of differential response models to service delivery. The SoS framework is implemented simultaneously with the requirements of the Ontario Child Protection Standards and both require collaboration with caregivers and the family network. Parental engagement continues to be a challenging aspect of child protective services (CPS). This study explores the current literature on how SoS should be implemented and how to engage resistant families in the context of CPS. A survey designed to explore child protection workers' (CPW) implementation of SoS principles, CPW's confidence in applying SoS, and CPW's perceptions of SoS effectiveness in engaging families was distributed within a child protection agency in Ontario. A total of 14 respondents completed the survey. Respondents highly rated their use of the SoS principles and reported high confidence in their ability to collaborate with families. The biggest reported benefits of implementing SoS included the use of clear communication, safety networks, and empowering families. The most significant barrier to the implementation of SoS was reported as the time requirement. Reported confidence ratings were low for the use of SoS assessment and planning forms as well as the use of words and picture documents. Mixed confidence ratings were found for mapping a case, suggesting the need for additional training. Results of the survey are compared to literature findings and contribute to the existing evidence base. Future studies may wish to extend the study population to all agency departments regardless of the contact periods with families.

Contact information: [Christinemcoe@outlook.com](mailto:Christinemcoe@outlook.com)



## **Strategies for Correctional Program Officers Working with Offenders with Learning Challenges: A Resource Manual**

Jessie-Ann Johnston

Adult offenders with learning challenges raise concerns and provide a rationale for increased educational support compared to individuals in the general population (Taylor & Lindsay, 2018). The literature states that manuals are effective in helping to increase participation, strengthen therapeutic relationships, and reduce recidivism rates within the correctional population. Learning challenges can be complex and diverse; therefore, the purpose of developing a resource manual for correctional program officers (CPOs) was to organize relevant information to improve the ability to access it in an efficient and effective manner. The resource manual consisted of six chapters which all follow a similar format starting with an overview of the learning challenge and ending with strategies to assist this population. A survey was distributed to gather data on the user-friendliness and appearance of the resource manual. The survey results determined that the resource manual yielded a satisfactory response from CPOs but could have been improved by including more strategies that would be adaptable in a correctional environment and by including explanatory graphics to better demonstrate strategies. The research used to guide and create this manual helped to summarize learning challenges in both the general population and correctional environment while helping to define some of the gaps in the literature. Limited research was found pertaining to manuals with strategies specifically for CPOs to help offenders with learning challenges therefore, connections were made to literature in the general population.

Contact information: [jessie-ann\\_3@hotmail.com](mailto:jessie-ann_3@hotmail.com)

## **Evaluating the Effects of a Staff Training Manual to Increase Staff Knowledge and Confidence on Child Protection Services**

Katelyn Davison

The current thesis project focuses on the development of a training manual to aid staff in their acquisition of knowledge and increase confidence surrounding the topic of child protection services (CPS) within the childcare setting. Research surrounding the use of manuals support the use of this tool to help foster knowledge acquisition. Additional research suggests that progress is enhanced when a manual is paired with further elements such as video and interactive components within the manual itself. The key themes highlighted within this manual included an overview of concepts relevant to CPS, neglect, abuse, stigma, and bias as they relate to early childhood education within the daycare setting. All concepts and topics found within this manual were developed alongside the agency and sought to address a concern highlighted among new and current staff. To test the effectiveness of this tool among staff within the early childhood setting, pre- and post-testing was done to assess the current knowledge and confidence of staff prior to and following their engagement with the manual. The results of this research demonstrate that through using this manual, staff were able to attain higher levels of knowledge and confidence on the content found within this tool.

Contact information: [katelyndavison0214@gmail.com](mailto:katelyndavison0214@gmail.com)

## **Breaking Free Addictions Application Implementation Best Practices: A Staff Training Manual**

Mackenzie Forsythe

Substance use disorder (SUD) is one of the many disorders that resulted in an increase due to the pandemic. To combat the issue of increased substance use and the challenge of providing in person services, addiction agencies began seeking alternative modes of service delivery. This ensured services were abiding by the restrictions while simultaneously providing interventions and supports to individuals. This project focused on developing a staff training manual to teach clients how to effectively use the Breaking Free Online application and website to aid in their recovery journey. Breaking Free Online is an addiction-based application that uses cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) techniques to decrease individuals' substance use while concurrently increasing prosocial coping skills. The manual consists of five sections including an introduction to the manual, a background and overview of Breaking Free Online, instructions to use its features, guidelines for implementation with clients on the waitlist, enrolled in services, or being discharged from services, and additional supports including who to contact to troubleshoot potential issues/concerns and additional resources including links to evidence-based research. The information included in the manual was gathered through an extensive review of the existing literature and by incorporating feedback from agency staff. The manual was provided to the staff as an instructional tool to teach clients to use Breaking Free Online application. In the future it is recommended to assess the effectiveness of the manual by collecting feedback from agency staff and clients on the teaching and learning experience. Additionally, future research should examine the long-term effects of Breaking Free Online on substance use and explore barriers that may prevent individuals from accessing and effectively using Breaking Free Online.

Contact information: [kenzie\\_forsythe@yahoo.ca](mailto:kenzie_forsythe@yahoo.ca)

## **Development of a Staff Manual: Prevention and Management of Compassion Fatigue When Working With High-Risk Youth**

McKenzie Andrews

Compassion fatigue is common in many helping professions, but it has been shown to be the most prevalent in individuals who work with youth (Denne et al., 2019). Compassion fatigue occurs when individuals take on the struggles of their clients as their own. This can result in reduced empathy towards clients, and therefore increase their compassion fatigue. Many individuals who experience compassion fatigue lack insight into their condition and are unaware of the signs and symptoms. The aim of this manual is to provide individuals who work with high-risk youth in a shelter setting with an informational resource to help prevent and reduce their compassion fatigue. The aim of the manual is also to provide individuals with more knowledge around compassion fatigue as many individuals are unaware of the warning signs. An extensive literature review was conducted to determine the most effective strategies to prevent and reduce individuals compassion fatigue. Research showed that engaging in self-care activities and mindfulness were the most effective. It was also found that providing individuals with accurate information around compassion fatigue was effective in preventing and reducing it. The manual contains five parts which include topics such as definitions, signs, symptoms, and causes. The manual also provides individuals with information on the impacts of compassion fatigue, ways to identify compassion fatigue, and ways to prevent and reduce it. For future research, it is recommended that more studies be conducted to determine how working with high-risk populations can impact compassion fatigue.

Contact information: [Mckenzieboston33@yahoo.ca](mailto:Mckenzieboston33@yahoo.ca)

## **Development of Discharge Planning Program for Inpatients with Psychiatric Disorders**

Morgan Gates

**Purpose:** The purpose of this thesis was to develop a discharge planning program that consisted of a facilitator manual for staff at a community hospital. The manual is intended to guide six psychoeducation and social skills training (SST) group sessions for patients typically diagnosed with a schizophrenia spectrum disorder. **Method:** A comprehensive literature review was conducted to identify relevant and reliable sources related to psychosocial rehabilitation, discharge planning, and psychosocial interventions. In addition, ongoing consultation with hospital staff and the unit manager was incorporated throughout the development of the program. The purpose of the consultation was to inform the development of a relevant and practical final product. **Results:** The final product was a manualized discharge planning program that outlined psychoeducation sessions including the following: feelings relating to discharge, managing money, leisure activities, problem-solving, and community resources. The main theme identified in the literature review was as follows: psychosocial interventions can have positive outcomes for those diagnosed with a severe mental illness. **Conclusion:** No formal implementation of the program was conducted. Future research should target the evaluation of the program's effectiveness through the collection of feedback from participants prior to and following the six sessions. Future research should also explore conducting sessions with different patient populations and incorporating additional interventions.

Contact information: [morgangates@hotmail.com](mailto:morgangates@hotmail.com)

## Trauma Informed Care

### **Treatment Options for Male and Female Victims Who Have Experienced Intimate Partner Violence: A Systematized Literature Review**

Madicen Brown

Intimate partner violence (IPV) has become more prevalent in society over the years. The debate in society continues in regard to if women are as violent as men in intimate relationships. This thesis examined the impacts that IPV has on both men and women's wellbeing as well as the treatment strategies accessible to them. A Prisma Flow Chart was used during the screening process to determine what articles required further evaluation. Summaries of the findings for effects and treatment options for men and women are included in the Empirical Analysis Table. Based on the review of available literature, current research focused on the negative experiences men have faced while help-seeking and does not address effective or available treatment strategies for them. Studies completed with female victims have shown mainly positive experiences and results from treatment. This displayed a gap in the literature specifically for men who have experienced IPV and are seeking support from professional, friends, or family. This thesis focused on the comparison of the effects men and women experience from IPV, the barriers men face when help-seeking, and the experiences men and women have when accessing treatment. In the literature it was found that men and women often share similar impacts of IPV however, the experiences they have when accessing treatment is often very different. It is recommended that professionals work towards increasing awareness for men who have experienced IPV within the community. It is also suggested that professionals participate in education or training programs surrounding IPV for men.

Contact information: [madicencbrown\\_55@live.ca](mailto:madicencbrown_55@live.ca)

## **Exploring the Treatments of Trauma in Early Childhood**

Megan Wotherspoon

Experiencing one or more traumatic events in early childhood can lead to lifelong mental health challenges. These challenges include, but are not limited to, depression, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and anxiety disorders. Experiencing trauma in early childhood also puts victims at higher risk for developmental delays, lower cognitive functioning, and skill regression. Research indicates the early childhood the stage to be the stage in development where trauma is most likely to occur and is most likely to be untreated. When trauma is left untreated, the effects can persist throughout an individual's lifetime. The goal of this systematized literature review was to determine which methods of treatment are appropriate for treating trauma and its related symptoms during the period of early childhood. Inclusion criteria for articles relevant to the topic maintained that articles had to be published between 2004 and 2021 and outlined the effects of trauma, symptoms related to trauma, and treatment methods of trauma or trauma related symptoms. Exclusion criteria for the systematized literature review were articles that discussed the treatment of trauma that occurred during adolescence or later. The empirical evidence found that there are four main treatment approaches that are most appropriate for treating trauma during early childhood. These treatment approaches include trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy (TF-CBT), parent child interaction therapy (PCIT), child parent psychotherapy (CPP), and child centered play therapy. Research indicates that each treatment approach is effective in treating the symptoms of trauma during the period of early childhood and the treatment approach used with a child should be determined on an individual basis.

Contact information: [wotherspoon240@gmail.com](mailto:wotherspoon240@gmail.com)

## Conclusion

The graduating class of 2022 would like to thank you again for taking the time to review and read our thesis abstract booklet. We hope that you enjoyed reading our abstracts, and that they provided you with new insight or information regarding the growing field of Behavioural Psychology.

This thesis abstract booklet represents the end of our four-year journey at St. Lawrence College. The past four years have challenged us as students and as people. The global pandemic changed our college experience and caused us to adapt to a very different style of learning. However, we persisted through this unprecedented time and finished our final years of the program.

We want to thank our professors and support staff for providing us with the skills, techniques, and knowledge that will be essential to our success in the future. We also want to thank you for all of the technical issues and the laughs that came along with them.

Congratulations to the graduating class of 2022. We did it! We should all be very proud of ourselves for overcoming the challenges of the pandemic and for working extremely hard to earn our degrees.

Sincerely,

The BPSYC Graduating Class of 2022