

# IMPACT 2026

## BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Edited by  
Clara Pracana  
Michael Wang



**International Psychological  
Applications Conference  
and Trends**

**(InPACT) 2026**

**Edited by:**

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## FOREWORD

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Dear Participants,

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the International Psychological Applications Conference and Trends (InPACT) 2026, held in Madeira Island, Portugal, from 18 to 20 of April 2026. This conference serves as a platform for scholars, researchers, practitioners, and students to come together and share their latest findings, ideas, and insights in the field of psychology.

Over the next few days, we will be exploring some of the most cutting-edge research and theories in psychology. We have a diverse range of topics and speakers lined up for you, covering eight key areas: Clinical Psychology, Educational Psychology, Social Psychology, Legal Psychology, Cognitive and Experimental Psychology, Environmental Psychology, Health Psychology and Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytical Psychotherapy.

InPACT 2026 received 472 submissions, from more than 43 different countries all over the world, reviewed by a double-blind process. Submissions were prepared to take the form of Oral Presentations, Posters and Virtual Presentations. 157 submissions (overall, 33% acceptance rate) were accepted for presentation at the conference.

As we all know, psychology is a vast and complex field that encompasses a wide range of topics, from the study of human behaviour to the workings of the brain. It is a field that has made enormous strides in recent years, and it continues to evolve at a rapid pace. At this conference, we hope to not only share the latest research and developments in psychology but also to foster a sense of community and collaboration among attendees. We believe that by working together, we can continue to advance the field of psychology and make important contributions to our understanding of the human mind and behaviour.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all of our speakers, sponsors, and attendees for making this conference possible. This book includes an extensive variety of contributors and presenters that are hereby sharing with us their different personal, academic, and cultural experiences.

The conference also includes:

- A Keynote presentation by Dr. Jaime Craig, Chair of the Association of Clinical Psychologists UK (ACP-UK);
- A Special Talk by Prof. Clara Pracana, Full and Training Member of the Portuguese Association of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, Lisbon, Portugal.

This volume is composed of the abstracts of the International Psychological Applications Conference and Trends (InPACT 2026), organized by the World Institute for Advanced Research and Science (WIARS).

We hope that this book with the abstracts of this conference will be a valuable resource for those in attendance, as well as for those who could not join us. Thank you for your participation, and we look forward to a productive and stimulating event!

Lastly, we would like to thank all the authors and participants, the members of the academic scientific committee, and, of course, the organizing and administration team for making and putting this conference together.

Looking forward to continuing our collaboration in the future,

Prof. Clara Pracana

*Full and Training Member of the Portuguese Association of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, Portugal  
Conference and Program Co-Chair*

Prof. Michael Wang

*Emeritus Professor of Clinical Psychology, University of Leicester, United Kingdom  
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## KEYNOTE LECTURE

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### THE APPLICATION OF PSYCHOLOGY IN THE FAMILY COURTS – CONTROVERSIES, PSEUDOSCIENCE AND PSEUDO EXPERTS

**Dr. Jaime Craig**

*Chair of the Association of Clinical Psychologists UK (ACP-UK)  
United Kingdom*

#### Abstract

For many years, psychological opinion has been pivotal in some of the most life changing decisions for children and their families in family courts worldwide. Nowhere has this been more evident, and the evidence more polarised and controversial than in cases which include allegations of ‘parental alienation’ / alienating behaviours. This paper will consider how in these cases psychology theories and the evidence from psychologist experts has been utilised to either promote or erode children’s rights, to safeguard or silence victims.

Serious loopholes in the regulation of psychologists in the UK persist and this has allowed for the evidence from unregulated and unqualified psychologist ‘experts’ to be admitted in these cases and promote pseudoscience unfettered. Successive efforts to improve the rigour of psychologist expert evidence and its use in the family courts led to the development of joint Family Justice Council & British Psychological Society guidance for psychologist expert witnesses (Craig et al., 2023) and in December 2024 new family court guidance for how allegations of ‘parental alienation’/alienating behaviours are responded to.

This presentation will chart the development of these guidelines and engagement with policy makers as an example of wider attempts to safeguard the public when accessing psychological advice and services.

The growing standing, influence and recognition of psychological science brings with it huge responsibility for how this power is wielded. Psychology is inherently impactful and as a discipline we need to take this seriously, call out its misuse and insist on rigour and accountability.

**Keywords:** *Pseudoscience, regulation, justice, ethical practice, accountability.*

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#### Biography

Jaime is Chair of the Association of Clinical Psychologists UK (ACP-UK) and has many years of experience as an expert witness in the Family Courts in the UK. He is a qualified clinical psychologist and former Chair of the Children and Young People Faculty of the Division of Clinical Psychology of the British Psychological Society. He has led ACP-UK’s campaign to expose and prevent the appointment of bogus psychological expert witnesses who claim expertise in the “diagnosis” of “parental alienation” leading to the scandalous removal of children from the custody of their mothers. This is an international problem being repeated in courts in many other countries outside the UK.



## SPECIAL TALK

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### **ANTONIO DAMÁSIO'S THEORIES VS. PSYCHO-ANALYTICAL THEORIES: BODY, AFFECT, AND SUBJECTIVITY IN CONTRAST WITH MATURANA AND VARELA**

**Prof. Dr. Clara Pracana**

*Portuguese Association of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytical Psychotherapy,  
Lisbon (Portugal)*

#### **Abstract**

Over the past decades, psychological theory has increasingly moved away from purely cognitive models of mind toward frameworks that place the body, affect, and biological processes at the center of mental life. Among the most influential contributions to this shift are the neurobiological theories of António Damásio, the long-standing psychoanalytic tradition, and the biological epistemology of Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela. Although these approaches share a rejection of disembodied cognition, they diverge significantly in their accounts of affect, subjectivity, and psychological suffering. This paper contrasts Damásio's theory of natural intelligence and consciousness with psychoanalytic models of the mind, and further situates both in relation to the autopoietic theory of cognition proposed by Maturana and Varela. The aim is not theoretical integration, but conceptual clarification: identifying what each framework explains, where its limits lie, and why psychoanalysis retains a distinct relevance for clinical psychology.

**Keywords:** *Neurobiology, Damásio, psychoanalysis, consciousness, autopoietic theory of cognition, Maturana & Varela.*

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#### **Biography**

Clara Pracana is a psychoanalyst, psychotherapist, coach, author and lecturer. She was born in the Azores, Portugal. She has a Ph.D. in Applied Psychology and a Masters in Clinical Psychology and Psychopathology. She is a founding and full member of the Portuguese Association of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytical Psychotherapy, Portugal. She is a regular lecturer on psychoanalytical topics and has published several papers and four books. She is also a certified coach with the International Coaching Community (ICC). As a psychoanalyst, counselor, and coach, she has a private practice in Lisbon. Her research addresses anxiety, guilt and shame, depression, emotional intelligence, leadership, change, motivation, and group dynamics.



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# Oral Presentations





## CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### PROCESS EVALUATION OF THE KID'S CLUB AND MOM'S EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS ADAPTED FOR CANADIAN INDIGENOUS FAMILIES

Caroline Piotrowski<sup>1</sup>, Lubna Anis<sup>2</sup>, Margherita Cameranesi<sup>3</sup>, Jaime Cidro<sup>4</sup>, Sandra A. Graham-Bermann<sup>5</sup>, Pam Heavy Head<sup>6</sup>, Leslie Hill<sup>6</sup>, & Nicole Letourneau<sup>7</sup>

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#### Abstract

Intimate partner violence (IPV) afflicting Indigenous women in Canada is a significant public health concern. It is estimated that approximately six of every ten Indigenous women experience some form of IPV, which also impacts their children. In spring 2024, a pilot intervention based on two existing evidence-based programs (Kid's Club and Mom's Empowerment Programs) adapted specifically for Indigenous women and their children who have experienced IPV was implemented. For ten weeks, five mothers and six children participated in two separate groups with two co-facilitators in each group to discuss a variety of important topics; Indigenous ways of knowing and being were integrated into these discussions, with some led by an Elder. The aim of this process evaluation was to investigate the perspectives of the mothers who participated in the pilot program, and the staff who delivered the program, using open-ended questions. Their responses were coded into three main themes, including 1) positive aspects of the program, 2) negative aspects of the program, and 3) unintended benefits and consequences. Examples of positive aspects for mothers included appreciation of the cultural teachings in the program, and feeling that their parenting skills improved, while positive aspects for staff included feeling proud and gratified by the learning demonstrated by mothers and children. Examples of negative aspects for mothers and staff included the length the program. The unintended benefits and consequences of the program were also discussed.

**Keywords:** *Process evaluation, intimate partner violence, Indigenous families, culturally safe intervention.*

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### METAPHORS AND EMOTIONAL AWARENESS: ARTS AS MULTIMODAL COMMUNICATION IN PSYCHOTHERAPY

Isabel Figueira

*Sociedade Portuguesa de Grupos de Análise e Psicoterapia Analítica de Grupo (SPGPAG) (Portugal)*

#### Abstract

We will reflect on the use of arts, or symbolic expression, in Psychotherapy, focusing on the value of metaphor to enhance emotional awareness. Using examples of her own clinical practice with psychotic, depressive, borderline or anorectic patients, the author will bridge psychoanalytic theory and arts therapies principles. With the use of art production from patients, over the years, we will reflect on the idea that somatic and creative communication can constitute the foundation for a broader concept of therapeutic listening, a way that integrates senses, imagination, affection and thinking. Having in mind the works of Winnicott, Bion, Stern, Damasio, Pankseep and Solms, the arguments will be supported by clinical examples from groups oriented in psychiatric hospitals, both in London and Lisbon, in order to suggest that we need to integrate verbal and nonverbal approaches, especially with patients presenting difficulty in relating and identifying or expressing emotions.

**Keywords:** *Creativity, emotions, non verbal communication, psychotherapy.*

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## IMPROVING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH AND COPING IN SCHOOLS

**Sandra A. Graham-Bermann, & Ellie Maly**

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### **Abstract**

Given the serious mental health crisis for children in America and the need for available resources, a newly developed preventive intervention program focused on promoting emotional well-being was provided to children in school settings and evaluated to assess its effects on mental health outcomes of anxiety, depression, and emotion regulation skills. Two groups were compared on standardized measures evaluated at twelve-week intervals—children who participated in the (Name) program and a comparison group that participated in the program after the second evaluation. Children were ages 6–10 ( $M = 8.20$ ; 53.5% girls), with the majority (69%) Caucasian from educated families whose self-rated financial status was average compared to peers. Four schools located in southeast Michigan, representing a mix of public and charter schools, had classrooms allocated to intervention (9 classrooms) or wait-list comparison (5 classrooms) based on scheduling availability. A total of 194 parent-child dyads enrolled in the study. Using complete data from 114 dyads we hypothesized that children in the program would have less anxiety and depression over 12 weeks relative to those in the comparison group. Results showed a significant decrease in child-rated anxiety for the intervention group, but not for the comparison group while no significant change in depression was noted for either group. The intervention group showed a significant decrease in maladaptive coping over time, with no such change in the comparison group. Regression analyses revealed children who reported less use of maladaptive coping strategies also reported a significant reduction in both their depression and anxiety symptoms. We also found that intervention children showed significant increases in the proportion of adaptive to maladaptive coping skills over twelve weeks, relative to controls. Further, in order to ascertain what might contribute to change in children's mental health, we tested whether children who increased adaptive coping skills and decreased maladaptive coping skills experienced a greater reduction in depression and anxiety over the 12-week period compared to those who showed no change or a different change in coping skills. This assumption was supported. Thus, empirical evidence underscores the effectiveness of the (Name) program in strengthening adaptive coping skills as a mechanism for reducing anxiety and depression in children. Our results suggest that it is possible to address some of children's mental health challenges in school settings.

**Keywords:** *Child mental health, emotion regulation, intervention, resilience, schools.*

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## EXTERNALIZING AND INTERNALIZING PROBLEMS AMONG NORTHERN CHILEAN STUDENTS

**Alejandra Caqueo-Urizar<sup>1</sup>, Patricio Mena<sup>1</sup>, Diego Henríquez<sup>1</sup>, & Alfonso Urzúa<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*Universidad de Tarapacá & Centro de Justicia Educacional CJE (Chile)*

<sup>2</sup>*Universidad Católica del Norte (Chile)*

### **Abstract**

**Background:** This study sought to analyze differences in externalizing and internalizing problems among adolescents in Northern Chile in a pandemic context.

**Methods:** A recurrent cross-sectional design was used. The sample consisted of 475 students from educational establishments in the city of Arica, aged between 12 and 18 years. Externalizing and internalizing mental health problems were measured before and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Results:** The findings indicate a decrease in aggressive behaviors and an increase in attention and hyperactivity-impulsivity problems and also an increase in the symptomatology levels of depression, anxiety, social anxiety, and problems with the family, while a decrease in problems with school and peers was observed. In addition, contextual issues and the COVID-19 pandemic are factors that may impact the increase in externalizing and internalizing problems, according to multiple linear regression models.

**Conclusions:** The observed increase in some of the externalizing and internalizing problems requires improved coordination and integration of mental health professionals in educational institutions.

**Keywords:** *Externalizing and internalizing problems, children, adolescents, mental health, COVID-19.*

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## **'I'M SO TIRED, I CAN'T GO ON!' CHRONOTYPE AND ACADEMIC LIFE: THE ROLE OF SLEEP FOR HIGH SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

**Angelika Kleszczewska-Albińska**

*Department of Psychotherapy and Psychological Counseling, Institute of Psychology,  
The Maria Grzegorzewska University (Poland)*

### **Abstract**

According to the literature during the developmental stages of adolescence and early adulthood crucial changes within brain systems lead to the shift in sleep patterns. Young people experience problems with falling asleep before late hours, and report difficulties getting up early mornings. At the same time the school and university schedules do not change in order to meet students' biological needs corresponding to the sleep pattern mentioned above. It is therefore important to verify whether this mismatch between young people's needs and the environmental expectations corresponds to their well-being in the area of stress levels and symptoms of burnout. It is also interesting to check whether intrapersonal factors such as resilience help young people to maintain high levels of well-being and protect them from burnout despite the adverse environmental conditions. The research was conducted with the main aim to assess the correspondence between resilience, stress and symptoms of academic burnout levels among high school and university students with different chronotypes. In the study participated 60 respondents aged 16-27 enrolled at different high schools or universities, who voluntarily and anonymously answered questions concerning their chronotype (Morningness-Eveningness Questionnaire), the levels of resilience (Resilience Measurement Scale), intensity of stress (Stress Feeling Questionnaire), and academic burnout symptoms (Student Burnout Inventory). Results obtained in the study prove that the duration of sleep of the research group is shorter than recommended 8-10 hours, and it is connected to higher indicators of stress and academic burnout. It was also discovered that morning chronotype and resilience served as protective factors lowering the levels of stress and academic burnout. Additionally, it was proved that high school students present higher than university student's indicators of both stress levels and academic burnout symptoms. The results obtained in the study can serve as a starting point for the discussion on some institutional and organizational changes for the education system. Gathered data can also serve as a basis for preventive programs aimed at enhancement of sleep hygiene, and coping with stress strategies. It can also serve as an opening point for further studies on high school and university students' well-being.

**Keywords:** *Chronotype, resilience, stress, school and academic burnout, adolescents and young adults.*

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## **INFANTS AS PROACTIVE COMMUNICATORS: AUTONOMIC SIGNALS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY COMMUNICATION AND LEARNING**

**Ronny Geva<sup>1,2</sup>, & Or Burstein<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

Theoretical developmental psychology models have traditionally centred on intentional verbal behavior, while leaving major gaps in the study of nonverbal channels. Current models emphasize the role of nonconscious behaviors and autonomic contingent signals that transmit affect, motivation, and a sense of connection, thereby laying the foundation for early social bonds. Aiming to understand how preverbal infants convey their emotions and drive through nonverbal channels, we propose a developmental framework that extends this perspective by examining the interplay of three levels of communication—autonomic, behavioral, and symbolic—each following a distinct maturational pathway. The objective of this project was to bridge theory, research, and practice by providing initial empirical evidence supporting this framework. More specifically, an observational study was conducted to explore the dynamics of mother-infant heart rate changes during a semi-structured play interaction in which infants are offered the opportunity to play curiously and joyfully with novel toys alongside their caregiver. Participants were 32 caregiver–infant dyads: 16 with moderately to extremely preterm infants (GA range: 27–35 weeks) and 16 with full-term infants who enrolled in a one-armed 8-week intervention program designed to support parents' mindful infant parenting. The behavioral measure was infant- and parent-focused attention (FA, intensity, and frequency)- a key component vital for learning, and the physiological measure was heart-rate synchrony strength dynamics. Results showed that Parental focused

attention was associated with both autonomic synchrony indices (peak:  $r_{\text{mm}} = .72$ ,  $df = 8$ ,  $p = .019$ ; lag-0:  $r_{\text{mm}} = .72$ ,  $df = 8$ ,  $p = .020$ ), and child FA showed similar associations (peak:  $r_{\text{mm}} = .80$ ,  $df = 8$ ,  $p = .005$ ; lag-0:  $r_{\text{mm}} = .71$ ,  $df = 8$ ,  $p = .021$ ) with comparable strengths, indicating that higher parental and child FA co-occur with stronger parent–infant autonomic synchrony. Increases in synchrony from pre- to post-intervention were observed in both indices (peak:  $b = 0.17$ ,  $p = .041$ ; lag-0:  $b = 0.20$ ,  $p = .036$ ), suggesting bidirectional relationships between the physiological level of parent–infant communication and behavioral nonverbal communication during infancy. These results validate three aspects of the proposed framework. First, they confirm that physiological signals form part of infants’ communicative toolbox. Second, they, for the first time, support the added contribution of autonomic synchrony to behavioral parent–infant synchrony in ways that support infant learning. Third, they illuminate the cascading processes that shape socio-emotional and cognitive development from its earliest stages. Integrating developmental psychobiology with applied psychology, the model bridges theory, research, and practice. Beyond its theoretical contributions, this work has practical implications for developmental psychology, offering new avenues to support parent–infant bonding. The ease of measuring interpersonal heart rate synchrony facilitates early detection of communication difficulties in the very early phases of development and informs interventions that foster healthy social development.

**Keywords:** *Infant, non-verbal communication, synchrony, focused attention*

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## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ANXIETY AND SUBSTANCE USE: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY AMONG MALTESE EMERGING ADULTS AGED 18-30 YEARS**

**Rebecca Overend, Anna Grech, & Marilyn Clark**

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### **Abstract**

Emerging adulthood represents a critical developmental period marked by heightened emotional volatility and an increasing prevalence of anxiety. During this stage, ongoing identity exploration and life transitions can intensify psychological distress and increase vulnerability to substance use, making it a peak period for the onset of both anxiety and substance use disorders. This quantitative study investigated the occurrence and severity of anxiety and substance use among young Maltese adults, while examining sociodemographic influences. A cross-sectional design was used with a convenience sample of 375 individuals aged 18–30 years. Anxiety was measured using the Generalised Anxiety Disorder scale (GAD-7), originally developed as a screening tool for generalised anxiety disorder but now widely validated as a general measure of anxiety symptom severity. Substance use was measured using the EU Drug Agency (EUDA) standard General Population Survey items on lifetime, recent, and current use, while substance use severity was measured using the Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST-10). Just over half of the participants (51.4%) had moderate to severe anxiety scores, with 18.9% falling within the severe GAD range. In terms of substance use, 40.8% said they had used substances in the last 12-months and 27.2% in the last 30 days, with cannabis, cocaine and ketamine reported as the most commonly used substances. Among those who used substances, 8.0% and 0.8% fell within the substantial use and severe use categories, respectively. Anxiety severity and substance use severity were positively correlated with regression linear analysis, accounting for 22.8% of the variance, indicating that substance use severity was significantly predicted by anxiety severity, male gender, age (25-27 years), and relationship status (casual dating). The findings highlight the importance of early, coordinated interventions that target co-occurring anxiety and substance use to reduce risk and support healthier adjustment in young adults.

**Keywords:** *Anxiety, substance use, severity, emerging adulthood, Malta.*

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## **BURNOUT SYMPTOMS AND WORK-RELATED GOAL DIMENSIONS AMONG RESEARCHERS AND HELPING PROFESSIONALS**

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*Department of Psychology, Pavol Jozef Safarik University in Kosice (Slovakia)*

### **Abstract**

Although burnout syndrome has been extensively studied, only a limited number of studies have specifically examined which characteristics of work-related goal attainment are associated with burnout symptoms. Therefore, this online cross-sectional study investigated the associations between burnout symptoms and selected goal dimensions in two distinct occupational groups. Sample 1 consisted of 122 health professionals and social workers (86% female). Sample 2 included 154 researchers (53% female). Participants completed the Burnout Assessment Tool and measures assessing selected goal dimensions (goal attainability, goal self-efficacy, and goal motivation in Study 1; goal effort, goal commitment, goal self-efficacy, and goal motivation in Study 2). Correlation analyses showed that core burnout symptoms (exhaustion, mental distance, emotional impairment, and cognitive impairment) were significantly associated with decreases in goal self-efficacy, goal attainability, goal effort, goal commitment, and autonomous motivation, as well as with increases in controlled motivation. These findings highlight the importance of goal-related processes in the development of burnout and suggest that strengthening adaptive goal dimensions may play a key role in burnout prevention and in promoting healthy work environments.

**Keywords:** *Burnout symptoms, work goals, goal attainment, goal self-efficacy, goal motivation.*

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## **RETROGRADE AMNESIAS WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT BRAIN DAMAGE IN YOUNG VERSUS OLD AGE**

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<sup>1</sup>*Department of Physiological Psychology, University of Bielefeld (Germany)*

<sup>2</sup>*Oberberg Clinic Hornberg (Germany)*

### **Abstract**

Retrograde amnesia is a severe, but rarely diagnosed disorder. Most retrograde amnesias primarily affect the episodic-autobiographical domain. This means that events or episodes that are emotionally connotated and that can be traced back with respect to the time, when they occurred, and with respect to the place, where the event happened. Retrograde amnesia usually occurs in the context of traumatic brain damage, in patients with epilepsy, or in patients with a condition of dementia. However, there are also disease conditions that lead to retrograde amnesia of a more transient nature. This holds true for two prominent disease conditions: *transient global amnesia* and *dissociative amnesia*. Transient global amnesia is considered to be a neurological condition, while dissociative amnesia is a psychiatric condition. Transient global amnesia usually occurs after stressful somatic or psychic incidents (e.g., sudden change in temperature, strenuous physical effort, emotional stress) and lasts only a few hours (up to a day). With more sophisticated imaging methods, brain damage may be found especially in the hippocampal region, but seems to be more transient in nature. Aside from memory problems, no other major behavioral symptoms are present. So, there is full consciousness and personal data are present. Dissociative amnesia, on the other hand, is characterized by a loss of personal data – the patient no longer remembers who he or she is. Furthermore, there may be an altered state of consciousness (“self-awareness”). The disease appears suddenly, usually because of overwhelming stress. The disease may last short-term or long-term. Long-term disease conditions seem to be accompanied by brain hypometabolism, especially in the right fronto-temporal cortex, as measured by fluoro-deoxy-d-glucose metabolism with positron-emission-tomography. The two disease conditions consequently demonstrate that psychic or physical stress or trauma events may have a major impact on the brain, resulting in amnesia in the episodic-autobiographical domain. Both kinds of diseases are potentially reversible – transient global amnesia per definition always within a day, dissociative amnesia depending on circumstances, sometimes quickly, sometimes not at all.

**Keywords:** *Transient global amnesia, dissociative amnesia, neurological disorders, psychiatric disorders.*

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## **MOTHER–ADOLESCENT CONFLICT AND ADOLESCENT DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS: THE MODERATING ROLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SENSITIVITY AND NEUROTICISM**

**Andreja Brajša-Žganec, Marija Džida, Ljiljana Kaliterna Lipovčan,  
Marina Kotrla Topić, & Tamara Bolić**

*Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar, Zagreb (Croatia)*

### **Abstract**

Adolescent depressive symptoms are shaped by both parenting experiences and individual differences in personality and sensitivity. The present study examined whether mother–adolescent conflict predicts adolescent depressive symptoms above and beyond maternal warmth, involvement, and autonomy support, and whether adolescents' environmental sensitivity and neuroticism moderate this association. Participants were 241 adolescents (M age = 16.86 years; 59% female) who completed measures of perceived conflict with their mothers, maternal parenting behaviors, environmental sensitivity, neuroticism, and depressive symptoms. Regression analyses indicated that mother–adolescent conflict significantly predicted higher depressive symptoms even after controlling for adolescents' age, gender, personality characteristics, and mothers' parenting behaviors. Furthermore, this association was moderated by environmental sensitivity: highly sensitive adolescents reported greater depressive symptoms under conditions of high conflict, whereas less sensitive adolescents were relatively unaffected. In contrast, neuroticism did not moderate this link. These findings are consistent with a diathesis–stress model, suggesting that environmental sensitivity functions as a vulnerability factor that heightens the emotional impact of conflict with mothers. Results underscore the importance of considering both contextual stressors and individual susceptibility when examining risk for adolescent depression.

*Keywords:* Depressive symptoms, environmental sensitivity, neuroticism, parenting behaviors.

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## **THE TRAJECTORY FROM RECREATIONAL TO PROBLEMATIC USE: PERSPECTIVES OF INDIVIDUALS WITH A COCAINE USE DISORDER**

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### **Abstract**

The widespread use of cocaine, particularly in recreational settings, is a growing public health concern. The numbers of individuals presenting for treatment with cocaine-related problems have also increased. While public health data provides insight into prevalence and trends, it offers little understanding about subjective experience and substance use trajectories. This study aimed to explore how individuals in treatment with problematic use of cocaine perceive their transition from recreational to problematic use, with a focus on the biopsychosocial processes that shape this trajectory. Nine participants were recruited through purposive sampling from rehabilitation services across Malta. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, and Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) was used to analyse and interpret recurrent themes across participants' experiences. Findings revealed that cocaine use often began in socially sanctioned contexts, with initial use perceived as manageable or recreational. However, a gradual shift toward psychological and physical dependence and interpersonal deterioration was consistently described. The transition to problematic use was marked by accumulating vulnerabilities including trauma, emotional dysregulation, and comorbidity. For women, this was tied to male partners or significant male "others." Participants identified social reinforcement, denial, rationalisation and minimisation as key perpetuating factors. These findings highlight the importance of targeted psychosocial interventions that encourage earlier engagement, particularly targeted at capturing subgroups who exhibit the riskiest patterns of use accompanied by other biopsychosocial vulnerabilities. This study contributes to local and international addiction literature and emphasises the need for evidence-based policies that address the role of social norms in shaping disordered patterns of substance use.

*Keywords:* Cocaine use disorder, substance use trajectories, reflexive thematic analysis, biopsychosocial factors, Malta.

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## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DURATION AND INTENSITY OF SELF-HARM AND THE OCCURRENCE OF ITS COMORBIDITIES

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<sup>2</sup>Department of Theory of Law and Philosophy of Law, Comenius University in Bratislava (Slovakia)

### Abstract

Self-harm represents a highly prevalent, multi-etiological psychopathological phenomenon associated with numerous psychiatric comorbidities, yet the extent to which it alleviates psychological distress remains unclear. This pilot study examined whether the intensity of self-harm increases with the number of comorbidities, whether these relationships differ by gender, and whether longer duration of self-harming behavior is associated with a reduction in psychological difficulties. A cross-sectional design was employed. Data on 135 individuals who engaged in self-harm (18 men, 115 women, 2 nonbinary excluded from subgroup analyses; M age = 18.57 years) were retrospectively reported by 135 mental health professionals via anonymized questionnaires. Intensity of self-harm (7-point scale), duration (months), and the number of DSM-5 comorbidities were assessed. Due to non-normal distributions, Spearman correlations and linear regression analyses were conducted ( $\alpha = .05$ ). The number of comorbidities was positively associated with self-harm intensity ( $\rho = .210$ ,  $p = .008$ ), accounting for 4.3% of variance; this relationship was significant only among females. Duration of self-harm was positively associated with the number of comorbidities ( $\rho = .340$ ,  $p < .001$ ), explaining 5.5% of variance, again significant only in women. Although effect sizes were modest and the cross-sectional design precludes causal inference, the findings are consistent with functional and cyclical models of self-harm, suggesting that longer engagement is not associated with a reduction in psychological difficulties. Within the methodological limits of this pilot study, the results do not support the assumption that self-harm leads to sustained alleviation of psychological distress; rather, they indicate that any perceived relief may be short-term, while prolonged engagement may be associated with less favorable mental health outcomes, warranting further investigation.

**Keywords:** *Self-harm, comorbidity, duration of self-harm, intensity of self-harm, gender differences.*

## CONSTRUCTION AND VALIDATION OF THE MOTIVATIONS TO PURSUE A CAREER IN PSYCHOTHERAPY SCALE (MPCPS)

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### Abstract

This paper describes the construction, piloting and validation of a questionnaire aimed at assessing motivations to become psychotherapists. A previous study using the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT) which taps into tacit knowledge and unconscious motivations, found that besides altruistic motives to pursue the profession, psychotherapists may also be driven by “darker” motives. These include a need for power, financial gain and self-affirmation. The results of this study also point to the existence of traits which could potentially interfere with the outcome of psychotherapy, such as unethical attitudes and behaviours, an inflated sense of self, and difficulties with empathy. Understanding these factors is crucial, as they influence therapeutic relationships, the effectiveness of interventions, and therapists' own well-being. This study reports the final stage of a three-phase study, consisting of the administration of this scale to a sample of 211 psychotherapists in order to conduct quantitative piloting and confirm the factor structure of the scale using Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis. Following further studies linking this validated scale to outcome variables, the finalised instrument could be used as a screening tool when prospective psychotherapists are being selected for entry into professional programmes. It could also prove useful in informing the personal psychotherapy and supervision of existing psychotherapists. Additionally, the questionnaire prompts reflection and self-awareness, which remain fundamental as motivations evolve throughout a psychotherapist's career.

**Keywords:** *Questionnaire development, motivations, psychotherapists, career choice.*

## **ADOLESCENT ORPHANS AND PARENTAL DEATH FROM HIV/AIDS: THE MENTAL HEALTH AND COPING STRATEGIES OF A SAMPLE FROM RURAL AFRICA**

**Comfort B. Asanbe**

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### **Abstract**

*Objective:* The study explored whether orphanhood status as well as coping strategies predicted mental health outcomes in orphans and vulnerable adolescents who participated in a non-governmental organization (NGO)-supported program in rural South Africa.

*Method:* Data were collected on several indicators of psychological health and coping resources in a sample of Black South African orphans and vulnerable adolescents, impacted by parental HIV/AIDS. The participants included 175 adolescents (ages 11-18) from a low-resource rural community and consisted of three groups: non-orphans who make up the comparison group (Group1; n = 57), orphans due to AIDS (Group2; n = 62), and orphans by other causes (Group3; n = 56). They rated themselves on the age-appropriate Youth Self-Report scales and 95 also completed the Children's Coping Strategies Checklist (CCSC). Little's test of missing data, completely at random, revealed that the CCSC missing data did not display a specific pattern. The inclusion criteria for the orphan groups were as follows: (1) the adolescent is a participant in an NGO program; (2) parental death is due to AIDS or other causes; (3) the adolescent is living with a family member and not with a foster parent; and (4) parental death occurred at least six months before the study to minimize acute bereavement symptoms. For the non-orphan group (Group1), the adolescent had to meet criterion #1 and live with biological parent(s). These adolescents were from poor families, accounting for their vulnerability designation. Participants in the NGO program who had been diagnosed as HIV-positive were excluded to minimize a major confounding variable of medical health status. To the best of our research team's knowledge, our sample consisted of participants who were not HIV-positive. The study protocol and consent forms were approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria, South Africa.

*Results:* The results showed that Active Coping negatively predicted internalizing, externalizing and general psychological problems, while Avoidant Coping predicted general psychological problems. Orphanhood group status, gender and age did not predict coping strategies used. A higher proportion of orphans by AIDS had elevated scores on internalizing problems, and all participants had higher scores on somatic complaints. The findings will be discussed.

*Conclusions:* Based on our findings, we suggest that government agencies and NGOs that provide services to this population facilitate active coping skills to enhance psychological well-being. The findings also offer a viable rationale for the inclusion of mental health screening in the protocol of welfare agencies.

**Keywords:** *Orphanhood, low-resource community, emotional health, Sub-Saharan Africa.*

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## **TWO-EYED SEEING IN ACTION: A MIXED-METHODS EVALUATION OF WRAPAROUND TO PROMOTE RESILIENCE AND WELL-BEING AMONG INDIGENOUS YOUTH IN CANADA**

**Margherita Cameranesi<sup>1</sup>, & Carla Kowal<sup>2</sup>**

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*<sup>2</sup>NorWest Co-op Community Health (Canada)*

### **Abstract**

Indigenous youth in Canada experience disproportionate health and social inequities linked to the intergenerational impacts of colonialism, systemic racism, and service fragmentation. Wraparound – a holistic, youth-driven, team-based service model – has shown promise in supporting young people with complex needs; however, few evaluations embed Indigenous worldviews or center youth voices in defining outcomes of success. We worked in collaboration with service providers, youth with lived experience, and an Indigenous Elder to develop a culturally grounded mixed methods evaluation of an adaptation of Wraparound for Canadian Indigenous youth involved with multiple systems that was grounded in the Two-Eyed Seeing framework, the Five Rs of Indigenous research, and the Medicine Wheel. This presentation reports the results of this realist-informed evaluation that integrated both

quantitative and qualitative approaches and involved six Indigenous youth (ages 16–21) living in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Quantitative measures included pre- and post-program indicators of wellbeing, such as school engagement, housing stability, self-harm behaviour, and system involvement. Qualitative methods included post-program storytelling interviews, photovoice projects, and a talking circle. These activities created safe spaces for youth to narrate their healing journeys, articulate culturally meaningful definitions of wellness, and engage in collective reflection. Findings demonstrated significant improvements across several objective indicators, including better mental health support, greater school attendance, increased housing stability, and reduced involvement with child welfare and justice systems. Youth narratives and photovoice projects further highlighted enhanced self-confidence, stronger identity, and increased connection to culture, family, and community. Youth stories revealed that access to cultural practices – such as smudging, medicine picking, and teachings from Elders – was experienced as central to promoting healing and resilience. Together, these findings point to Wraparound’s effectiveness when adapted in ways that honour Indigenous values of relationality, balance, and collective strength. This evaluation contributes to growing evidence that embedding Indigenous knowledge systems in programming not only produces better outcomes but also affirms youth agency and promotes systemic change. Methodologically, the study demonstrates the feasibility and value of integrating Western and Indigenous methods in applied psychology research. The evaluation findings support Wraparound as a culturally safe, strengths-based, and transformative intervention for Indigenous youth navigating multiple systems. By centering Indigenous youth voices and integrating multiple ways of knowing, this work provides critical insights for psychologists, other service providers, and policymakers seeking to reduce inequities and foster resilience.

**Keywords:** *Indigenous youth, wraparound intervention, two-eyed seeing, resilience and well-being, decolonizing evaluation.*

## **PSYCHOLOGISTS’ EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF ONLINE PSYCHOTHERAPY IN SAUDI ARABIA: A QUALITATIVE STUDY**

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### **Abstract**

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of online psychotherapy has increased worldwide, including in Saudi Arabia, where over 22 applications and free Ministry of Health online services are available for the public. This study aimed to explore psychologists’ perceptions of and experiences with online psychotherapy in Saudi Arabia. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven licensed psychologists (three men and four women), all of whom provided psychological services both face-to-face and online via mobile applications. Their experience ranged from 5 to 11 years, with therapeutic orientations including cognitive-behavioral (n=4), psychodynamic (n=2), and integrative (n=1). Ten open-ended questions addressed their clinical practice, client characteristics, therapeutic alliance, therapeutic process, effectiveness, and difficulties. The data were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The findings revealed that all participants considered online therapy helpful, particularly for clients in rural areas, those who fear stigma, and those unable to attend face-to-face sessions, such as clients diagnosed with mild or severe depression. Furthermore, participants noted that online help-seeking was common among women suffering from issues in romantic relationships outside of marriage. Regarding practice and effectiveness, differences emerged by orientation: psychologists with psychodynamic training preferred in-person therapy, citing challenges in building therapeutic alliances online. Additionally, none of the participants had received formal training in online therapy; instead, they relied on self-directed learning, which sometimes led to confusion, especially in the absence of verbal and nonverbal cues and gaze behavior. In conclusion: Online therapy can provide support without fostering shame regarding mental health or sensitive issues that may be difficult to discuss in person in Saudi Arabia. The findings also highlight the need to develop training courses and skill-enhancement interventions for psychotherapists to ensure effective online practice

**Keywords:** *Engagement, digital infrastructure, stigma, training programs, accessibility.*

## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIFE VALUES IN RUSSIA AND THEIR ATTACHMENT STYLES TO PARENTS AND ROMANTIC PARTNERS**

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### **Abstract**

The contemporary world, characterized by dramatic events, exacerbates the problem of life values, particularly among the younger generation. Values instilled during early childhood determine an individual's attitude toward the world, others, and oneself; subsequent life circumstances facilitate a reevaluation of these values. Depending on their perception of the importance and achievability of various values, individuals develop their interactions with others. The concept of attachment also reflects perceptions of the significance and approachability of fundamental human needs – security and affiliation. We believe that examining the young people's values in relation to their attachment styles will help clarify the mechanisms underlying the development of their value systems and the strategies used to achieve them. The study involved 124 people aged 18 to 35 years, all of whom had been in romantic relationships lasting more than one year at the time of the study. The main research methods: «The Values Importance – Approachability Ratio...» by E. Fantalova, ECR by K. Brennan et al., MIMARA by K. Brennan & F. Shaver, and the Attachment to Parents Scale of IPPA by G. Armsden & M. Greenberg. Findings revealed that the majority of young people in contemporary Russia lack harmony in their value sphere, 70% demonstrated a high or moderate discrepancy between their evaluations of the importance and achievability of different life values. The most highly prioritized values among young people are love, a happy family life, and health. However, value conflicts are observed in the domains of family and health: while individuals aspire to build happy family relationships and maintain psychological and physical health, they currently consider these goals difficult to achieve. Values are more closely associated with adult attachment styles than with parental attachment. Secure attachment correlates with the realization of core values such as cognition, family and love. For individuals with anxious attachment, material values tend to be more important, whereas those with avoidant attachment, prioritize self-confidence and assign less significance to love. Disintegration within the value sphere is strongly associated with attachment. Regression analysis indicate that while values are reliable predictors, they are not the primary determinants of overall adult attachment style. Anxious attachment is largely determined by relationships with parents, particularly the mother, whereas avoidant attachment is shaped by romantic relationships and values, as well as — to a lesser extent — relationships with the father. These findings provide insights that can refine approaches to psychotherapeutic work with different attachment disorders in couples.

**Keywords:** *Life values, value conflict, attachment style, parental attachment, romantic attachment.*

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## **MOTIVATION AND WELL-BEING OF EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS IN CROATIA: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

**Maja Tadić Vujčić**

*Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences (Croatia)*

### **Abstract**

Early career researchers (ECRs) often work under conditions of high pressure and job insecurity. In such environments, not only the level but also the quality of motivation for work can play a crucial role in sustaining work engagement, productivity, and work-related well-being. Drawing on the self-determination theory, the present study examines how different types of work motivation are associated with work engagement and burnout among Croatian ECRs. The study represents findings from the first wave of the longitudinal *Well-Being and Mental Health of Early Career Researchers in Croatia* (ECR-WELL) project, conducted between March and June 2025. The sample included 531 doctoral candidates and postdoctoral researchers working in with Croatian universities and research institutes. Participants completed an online questionnaire assessing their work motivation (Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale), well-being and emotional experiences at work (such as measures of work engagement

and burnout), as well as sociodemographic variables. The analyses included confirmatory factor analysis of the MAWS, followed by structural equation modelling to test associations between different types of work motivation and well-being, while controlling for age and gender. The results showed support for the hypothesized six-factor structure of work motivation and showed that intrinsic motivation was the strongest positive predictor of work engagement and a robust protective factor against burnout, whereas amotivation was consistently associated with lower engagement and higher burnout. Identified regulation was positively related to engagement but showed no significant association with burnout. In contrast, controlled forms of motivation (introjected and external regulation) were not uniquely associated with either engagement or burnout when all motivational regulations were considered simultaneously. Overall, the model explained a substantial proportion of variance in work engagement and a meaningful proportion of variance in burnout. These findings suggest that, despite challenging structural conditions, many Croatian ECRs remain engaged when their work is experienced as intrinsically meaningful. The results show the importance of academic environments that support autonomy, competence, and meaningful engagement. By following this cohort longitudinally, the ECR-WELL project will be able to examine how motivational orientations evolve over time and how they predict future trajectories of well-being, engagement, and retention in academia.

**Keywords:** *Early career researchers, motivation, well-being, engagement, burnout.*

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## **BEYOND THE GAMBLER: ASSESSING THE DIFFERENTIAL IMPACT OF GAMBLING HARM ON SPOUSES VS. PARENTS**

**Neven Ricijaš<sup>1</sup>, Dora Dodig Hundrić<sup>1</sup>, Sanja Radić Bursač<sup>2</sup>,  
Sabina Mandić<sup>1</sup>, & Martina Lotar Rihtarić<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>2</sup>*Teaching and Clinical Centre, University of Zagreb - Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences (Croatia)*

### **Abstract**

Gambling Disorder (GD) is a significant public health concern, recognized for causing severe negative psychological, financial, and social consequences. This "ripple effect" of harm extends beyond the individual, profoundly impacting the well-being of concerned significant others (CSOs). Despite a growing body of international literature documenting this "hidden burden", research about the harm experienced by CSOs within the Croatian context has been absent. The primary objective of this study was to investigate the types and severity of gambling-related harms experienced by CSOs engaged with the Daily Clinic for Gambling Addiction at the Psychiatric Clinic Sv. Ivan, Zagreb (Croatia). A secondary aim was to delineate the differential impact of harm within the family system by comparing the perceptions of spouses/partners with those of parents. This pilot study was conducted with a convenience sample of N=182 CSOs. A comprehensive assessment battery was administered, which included: a standardized sociodemographic questionnaire, the Gambling Harms Scale – Affected Others (GHS-20-AO) (Browne et al., 2023), an additional 17-item questionnaire on gambling-precipitated problems (Ricijaš et al., n.d.), as well as measures assessing the psychological correlates of affiliate stigma, guilt, and shame. Results indicate that CSOs are most acutely exposed to harms within the emotional and psychological domains, followed by significant relationship discord and financial distress. An interesting finding of this pilot study emerged from the comparative analysis: spouses and partners reported statistically significantly higher levels of perceived harm across multiple domains than did parents. This discrepancy was observed even though this subgroup did not report greater levels of codependency. Furthermore, the findings highlighted a significant underutilization of formal psychological support by participants, indicating a substantial unmet need despite the high prevalence of reported harm. This study, the first of its kind in Croatia, illuminates the substantial and multifaceted burden carried by the CSOs of individuals with GD. The findings underscore a critical need for public health initiatives and clinical frameworks that formally recognize and address this secondary harm. There is a clear imperative to integrate family-inclusive treatment models and targeted support services within existing addiction care systems to mitigate the adverse effects on this vulnerable population.

**Keywords:** *Gambling disorder, concerned significant others, gambling-related harm, treatment.*

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## **RESILIENCE TRAINING FOR PEOPLE WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS (MS): THE READY FOR MS PROGRAM**

**Kenneth Pakenham**

*School of Psychology, The University of Queensland (Australia)*

### **Abstract**

This presentation provides a narrative review of a novel acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) resilience training group program for people with multiple sclerosis (PwMS) called READY for MS. The intervention targets the six ACT psychological flexibility (PF) skill sets: acceptance, mindfulness, defusion, self-as-context, values and committed action. READY for MS has 7 modules plus a booster. Quantitative and qualitative data from 8 studies (n = 628) evaluating the intervention impacts on psychosocial outcomes for PwMS will be summarised. These studies include 4 randomised control trials (n = 384), one effectiveness trial (n = 137) and 3 feasibility studies (n = 137). Studies have evaluated in-person group, self-directed digital and video conferencing delivery formats across different cultures (Australia, UK, Greece, Italy, Germany) and settings (e.g., hospitals, community clinical care centres). Qualitative and statistical results show significant improvements in quality of life (QoL), mental health and PF in PwMS who undertake READY for MS. Evaluations of the effects on healthcare professionals of training in READY for MS show significant improvements in resilience, wellbeing, and PF in trainees. Mediation analyses show that PF, the theoretical putative change mechanism, mediates the post-intervention improvements in mental health and QoL for PwMS and healthcare trainees. Overall, research evidence supports the efficacy and effectiveness of the READY for MS program in promoting mental health, QoL and PF in PwMS, with potentially similar benefits for healthcare professionals trained in the intervention. Evidence supports the theoretical integrity of the intervention and its efficacy across different delivery formats. The efficacy of READY for MS across cultures supports its applicability internationally. Evidence also suggests that the program can be effectively delivered to other chronic illness groups without significant changes to intervention content (e.g., cancer, heart disease).

**Keywords:** *Resilience, quality of life, mental health, acceptance and commitment therapy, chronic illness.*

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## **HOW TO MEASURE RETROGRADE AMNESIA**

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### **Abstract**

Retrograde amnesia principally is divided into autobiographical and semantic retrograde amnesia. Autobiographical retrograde amnesia refers to personal events and episodes of the past which are usually emotionally connotated, can be remembered with respect to the time, when they occurred, and to the place, where they happened. Semantic retrograde amnesia refers to knowing of facts that had been learned in the past. Semantic facts usually cannot be traced back in time and place: One just knows that the Eiffel tower is in Paris. Retrograde amnesia is found in patients with neurological and psychiatric diseases. Neurological patients with retrograde amnesia frequently have traumatic brain injury, are intoxicated, have epileptic attacks, or suffer from a process of dementia. Psychiatric patients with retrograde amnesia may have endured psychic shock condition, or may suffer from conditions of depression. Other psychiatric disease conditions with major retrograde amnesia in the autobiographical domain are found in patients with dissociative conditions, in particular dissociative amnesia and dissociative identity disorder. The great majority of all patients shows deficits only in the episodic-autobiographical domain of retrograde memory. Reliable and valid measurements of retrograde memory are – compared to measuring anterograde memory – particularly difficult, as all individuals have a unique repertoire of retrograde memories, especially, of course, in the episodic-autobiographical domain. Therefore, instruments, using a score system that allows a gradation between individuals, were developed only lately. At present, however, a number of test instruments exists (Markowitsch et al., 2023). These will be analyzed and compared with respect to their qualities, cultural aptness, and psychometric properties.

**Keywords:** *Episodic-autobiographical memory, semantic memory, neurology, psychiatry.*

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## WEIGHING THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIORS IN EATING PATHOLOGY: A CANONICAL CORRELATION BETWEEN THE EDE-Q AND EPSI SUBSCALES

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### Abstract

Nearly one-third of Canadians reported having thoughts and behaviours that are associated with eating disorders (Mental Health Research Canada, 2025). Although the best population level assessment of the prevalence of eating disorders are wide-scale national studies, Raffoul et al. (2025) critiqued national census procedures in Canada for their inconsistency and lack of appropriate assessment of eating disorders, leading to large gaps in understanding prevalence in Canada. Researchers interested in attitudes, thoughts and behaviours associated with disordered eating typically use the Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire (EDE-Q; Fairburn & Beglin, 1994) and the Eating Pathology Symptoms Inventory (EPSI; Forbush et al., 2013), which are established reliable and valid measures used to assess eating disorder pathology. Although these scales vary in their uses, the EDE-Q has been used as an indicator of the presence and severity of an eating disorder (Levinson et al., 2023; Velkoff et al., 2023). The EPSI focuses on different aspects of disordered eating and may be a better indicator of eating disorder symptoms and behaviours associated with different aspects of disordered eating. Further, the EPSI is more general and suitable for more diverse populations, including male samples (Levinson et al., 2023). Although both scales have strong convergent validity (Coniglio et al., 2018; Forbush et al., 2013), a more in-depth examination of the subscale relationships has yet to be done. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the linear relationships between the EDE-Q (Fairburn & Beglin, 1994) and EPSI (Forbush et al., 2013) using canonical correlation analyses. The EPSI subscales (Body Dissatisfaction, Cognitive Restraint, Binge Eating, Excessive Exercise, Purging, Restraint, Negative Attitudes Towards Obesity, and Muscle Building) were entered as the dependent variables and the EDE-Q subscales (Restriction, Eating Concern, Shape Concern, and Weight Concern) were entered as covariates to determine how disordered eating cognitions and concerns related to eating disorder symptoms. In total, 646 cases were used in this analysis, and the relationship between the sets of variables was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ). The first function accounted for approximately 79.3% of the explained variance and was associated with greater shape, weight, and eating concerns, and restrictions. The first dependent function was associated with greater body dissatisfaction, cognitive restriction, and binge-eating. Taken together, the first function indicated that greater concern over appearance was predictive of more compensatory behaviors. These results indicate that both scales represent general eating disorder pathology and is supported by the Transdiagnostic Cognitive Behavioural Model of Eating Disorders (Fairburn et al., 2004).

**Keywords:** *Disordered eating, canonical correlation, body dissatisfaction, scale assessment.*

## TOWARDS AN INTEGRATIVE CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF GOOD MENTAL HEALTH IN PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

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### Abstract

People with intellectual disabilities (ID) are characterised by limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour. They are also disproportionately affected by health inequalities. Despite strong normative frameworks, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), and international commitments to health equity, people with ID are frequently excluded from mainstream health promotion and prevention initiatives and conceptual frameworks of mental health. Consequently, conceptualisations of good mental health for people with ID remain underdeveloped from a theoretical perspective. While recent research increasingly calls for participatory

and inclusive approaches, there is still limited integration of lived experience, professional knowledge, and theoretical perspectives into coherent conceptual frameworks. The present contribution addresses this gap by offering an integrative synthesis across multiple empirical studies to advance conceptual and theoretical understanding of good mental health in people with ID. We conducted a secondary synthesis across four complementary studies: a systematic review of the literature (including 37 studies); participatory focus groups with adults with ID (n=20); qualitative interviews with mental health experts (n=12); and an inclusive Delphi study to develop cross-stakeholder consensus (n=60). Findings were comparatively analysed and interpreted in relation to established theoretical approaches. Across data sources, good mental health emerged as a multidimensional and relational construct extending beyond the absence of psychopathology. People with ID emphasised autonomy, belonging, emotional safety, meaningful participation, and respectful relationships. Experts similarly highlighted relational and contextual dimensions but placed greater emphasis on functioning, adaptation, and service-related outcomes. Importantly, the systematic review identified no explicit conceptualisations of good mental health for people with ID; although wellbeing was frequently referenced, good mental health was not defined as a distinct construct, nor were lived-experience perspectives incorporated. Based on this synthesis, we propose a multidimensional conceptual model of good mental health for people with ID foregrounding psychological, relational, environmental, and capability-related dimensions. This model bridges lived experience and professional knowledge and can inform future theory development, inclusive research practices, assessment frameworks, and the design of mental health promotion and support services aligned with the priorities and rights of people with ID.

**Keywords:** *Intellectual disability, learning disability, mental health, participatory research, wellbeing.*

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## **INTOLERANCE OF UNCERTAINTY AS A PERSONAL VULNERABILITY FACTOR IN WORK ENGAGEMENT AND BURNOUT**

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### **Abstract**

Personal resources are among the most effective predictors of work engagement and serve as important protective factors against job demands and burnout. In contrast, higher intolerance of uncertainty (IU) is associated with negative self-evaluations and reduced self-efficacy, which may limit individuals' ability to effectively mobilize these personal resources. Based on this background, the present study examined whether baseline intolerance of uncertainty predicts initial levels and longitudinal changes in work engagement and burnout. The sample consisted of 353 employed participants (mean age = 47.17 years; 64.3% women) who completed all three waves of data collection. Measurements were conducted approximately four months apart (T1: October 2024; T2: January 2025; T3: May 2025). Work engagement was assessed using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), burnout using the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT), and intolerance of uncertainty using the Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale (IUS). Latent growth curve models (LGCMs) were estimated separately for work engagement and burnout using robust maximum likelihood estimation. Linear intercept and slope factors were specified, and baseline IU was included as a predictor of both initial levels and change over time. Results showed that higher baseline IU was associated with lower initial levels of work engagement, indicating that individuals who perceive uncertainty as threatening tend to report lower engagement overall. However, IU did not significantly predict changes in engagement over time. For burnout, higher baseline IU was associated with higher initial burnout levels, reflecting an opposite pattern compared to engagement. Moreover, IU showed a small but negative association with the burnout slope, suggesting slightly less favorable burnout trajectories among individuals higher in IU. Across both models, average linear change was modest and individual differences in change were limited. Overall, intolerance of uncertainty appears to function primarily as a baseline vulnerability factor for employee well-being rather than as a strong driver of longitudinal change. These findings highlight IU as a relevant individual difference linked to sustained levels of work engagement and burnout, with potential implications for interventions aimed at supporting employee well-being in uncertain work contexts.

**Keywords:** *Intolerance of uncertainty, burnout, engagement.*

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## **FAITH AS A WAY TO FIND MEANING IN PREGNANCY LOSS: REPORT FROM THE INTERVIEWS WITH COUPLES AFTER MISCARRIAGE**

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### **Abstract**

Child loss is one of the greatest losses reported (Sanders, 2013). A particularly specific form of child loss is loss during pregnancy. Among these types of losses, miscarriage is one of the most controversial. For some people it represents a profound loss; for others it is perceived as biology doing its work. This makes it an especially interesting topic, considering that nearly 20% of all pregnancies end in miscarriage. In his book *Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief* (2022), David Kessler expands on Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's (2021) concept of the stages of mourning. He demonstrates that it is quite common for people to move beyond Acceptance. In presented research four couples after the experience of miscarriage were interviewed. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with both partners simultaneously. The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) qualitative method was used to interpret the data as it is particularly well suited to sensitive topics of this kind (Piętkiewicz & Smith, 2012). The couples who believed in God were recruited by the snowball method. God was described as the one who gave the child and had the right to take the child back; as a source of consolation and hope; and as a force that is not entirely understandable. In this article it will be discussed that for couples interviewed, the faith may represent the deeper sense and meaning described by Kessler. The conclusions from the interviews will be used to show how these findings may be particularly useful for therapists working with couples after miscarriage.

**Keywords:** *Miscarriage, interview, couple, faith, meaning.*

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## **EMOTION REGULATION NETWORKS IN YOUTH WITH CHRONIC ILLNESSES: A NETWORK ANALYSIS**

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### **Abstract**

Chronic illnesses in youth affect not only physical health but also emotion regulation and psychological well-being. This study examined differences in emotion regulation networks between young individuals with chronic conditions and healthy peers. Data from 460 participants aged 8–25 years (160 with chronic illness, 300 healthy) were analyzed using Gaussian Graphical Models. Networks included cognitive emotion regulation strategies and symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress. Results showed that the chronic illness group exhibited a more densely interconnected network, with maladaptive strategies strongly linked to depressive and anxiety symptoms. Adaptive strategies displayed lower centrality, suggesting limited regulatory influence. In contrast, the healthy network was less dense and more balanced, with adaptive strategies more central and weaker associations between maladaptive cognition and negative affect. Stress emerged as a key node in both groups, while irrational thinking acted as a bridging node in the chronic illness network. These findings highlight the role of maladaptive cognition in emotion regulation difficulties among youth with chronic illness and suggest potential targets for psychological interventions.

**Keywords:** *Emotion regulation, chronic illness, network analysis, youth.*

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## PSYCHOMETRIC EVALUATION OF THE CAREER DECISION AGENCY SCALE (CDAS) IN CROATIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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### Abstract

This two-study research examined the psychometric properties of the newly developed Career Decision Agency Scale (CDAS), designed to assess adolescents' active role in career decision-making. Drawing on the concept of agency, the CDAS captures both proactive engagement and avoidant tendencies across four theoretically proposed dimensions: Readiness (preparedness for decisions), Confidence (belief in decision-making ability), Disengagement (tendency to withdraw), and Autonomy (self-directedness in the process). The scale was administered in the first study to Croatian high school seniors ( $N = 424$ ) and in the second study to first-year students from secondary vocational schools in Croatia ( $N \approx 1290$ ). The CDAS consists of 16 items, four per subscale, rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). In Study 1, exploratory factor analysis using principal axis factoring with Oblimin rotation did not confirm the originally proposed four-factor structure. Instead, a three-factor solution emerged, explaining approximately 60% of the total variance. The first factor combined Readiness and Confidence, reflecting their conceptual and empirical overlap; the second represented Disengagement; and the third corresponded to Autonomy. Moderate intercorrelations among factors suggested related but conceptually distinct components. The three-factor structure was confirmed in Study 2 via confirmatory factor analysis, with good model fit indices ( $CFI = .910$ ,  $NFI = .902$ ,  $RMSEA = .075$ ). Internal consistency was satisfactory for all subscales and the total scale in both studies. Reliability was highest for the combined Readiness–Confidence scale, followed by Disengagement and Autonomy. The total scale demonstrated good internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha > .800$ ), supporting the use of a composite score as an overall indicator of career decision-making agency. Construct validity was examined through correlations with the Autonomous Career Motivation Scale (Babarović, Šverko, & Krpanec, 2024) in Study 1 and the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS; Savickas, 2009) in Study 2. CDAS results moderately correlated with the autonomy continuum, while correlations with CAAS were low to moderate, with the strongest associations observed between conceptually related subscales, supporting both construct validity and divergence. Overall, the findings indicate that the CDAS is a reliable and valid instrument for assessing adolescents' career decision-making agency. Its structure is best interpreted through three dimensions—Readiness–Confidence, Disengagement, and Autonomy—with the option of a total score to capture overall agency. The CDAS provides a valuable tool for evaluating adolescents' engagement in career decision-making, particularly in vocational education contexts.

**Keywords:** *Career decision-making, agency, adolescents, psychometric validation, vocational education.*

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## EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### **“HOW GROUP CARE SETTINGS CAN FAIL IN CHILD AND YOUTH WELFARE”: INDIVIDUALIZED PEDAGOGICAL INTERVENTIONS FOR KIDS AT HIGH RISK**

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#### **Abstract**

A critical view on current conditions in working with challenging children and adolescents in child and youth welfare. On basis of an internal study of a care facility in Vienna, AKs Noah, which evaluated data of 89 minors, it shows risk factors in early childhood which leads into problem behavioral patterns in out of home care, which is challenging care takers and the environment. Instead of viewing these young people merely as symptom-bearers of their histories and placing them in a problem-oriented focus as “unreachable” and “system crashers”, it is time to establish alternative flexible forms of care, with psychological and trauma-oriented case analysis, as “state of the art” for and with kids at high risk.

*Keywords: Individual care, kids at high risk, child and youth welfare, social psychology, young delinquents.*

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### **EMOTIONALLY RESPONSIVE VIRTUAL PATIENTS FOR PSYCHOTHERAPY TRAINING A PROOF-OF-CONCEPT USING FINE-TUNED LARGE LANGUAGE MODELS**

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#### **Abstract**

Traditional soft-skills training in psychology and mental healthcare depends strongly on role-play with peers or actors. While valuable, it is resource-intensive, offers limited scenario diversity, and cannot fully capture the complexity of real patients. Consequently, students have insufficient exposure to realistic patient interactions. Virtual patients provide a scalable and flexible alternative, but existing systems often fail to produce consistent, realistic clinical interactions. As part of the TherAvatars project, this explorative study investigates the potential of large language models (LLMs) to generate interactive patient dialogues by fine-tuning open-source generative LLMs on therapist–patient conversations. We further examine retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) as a mechanism to enhance contextual grounding across dialogue turns. Model performance was evaluated using both expert assessments by psychology professionals and NLP-based similarity metrics. Our initial findings suggest that fine-tuned open-source LLMs have the potential to simulate virtual patients capable of supporting psychotherapy training, but substantial challenges remain in achieving robust dialogue structure, consistency, and long-term conversational coherence for autonomous clinical training scenarios.

*Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, psychotherapy training, LLM fine-tuning, evaluation.*

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## **BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON COGNITIVE, EMOTIONAL AND LEARNING ABILITIES**

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### **Abstract**

Behavioural difficulties during childhood and adolescence, particularly externalising symptoms such as aggression, impulsivity, and oppositional behaviour, can negatively affect academic achievement, emotional well-being, and social functioning. These difficulties are frequently associated with deficits in executive functions (EFs), including inhibitory control, working memory, and cognitive flexibility, as well as maladaptive academic emotions and reduced school engagement. Despite their relevance, few studies have examined these associations longitudinally using multi-informant designs. The present study investigated relationships between externalising behavioural difficulties, EFs, academic emotions, and school well-being in Italian students from 4th grade of primary to 8th grade of middle school (~700 participants; 53% female), at two time points. Students completed self-report questionnaires on behavioural difficulties, learning difficulties, academic emotions, and school well-being, alongside tasks assessing inhibitory control, working memory, and cognitive flexibility. Teachers and parents provided parallel evaluations of students' school well-being, and parents also completed evaluations of students' executive functioning. Correlations revealed that behavioural difficulties were significantly associated with lower school satisfaction, reduced self-efficacy, poorer teacher relationships, and higher negative academic emotions. T-tests confirmed that students with higher behavioural difficulties reported lower concentration, whereas no significant differences emerged for cognitive flexibility. GLM analyses of the BRIEF subscales indicated significant effects of behavioural difficulties on student-reported EFs, with parent-reported EFs confirming similar patterns. Regression analyses further showed that behavioural difficulties at T1 negatively predicted school satisfaction and self-efficacy at T2. These findings underscore the critical role of executive functioning and emotional regulation in explaining the impact of behavioural difficulties on school experiences. Results support early, targeted interventions aimed at enhancing executive functions and fostering adaptive academic emotions to improve students' learning, engagement, and well-being, particularly for students with behavioural difficulties.

**Keywords:** *Behavioural difficulties, executive functions, academic emotions, school well-being, longitudinal study.*

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## **PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AS A PROTECTIVE FACTOR FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' MENTAL WELL-BEING: THE ROLE OF DEPRESSION AND LONELINESS**

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### **Abstract**

**Background:** Given that the demanding university transition often leads to elevated distress and loneliness, impacting student well-being, this study addresses the current research gap by hypothesizing that Psychological Capital (PsyCap) enhances well-being specifically through its buffering effects against these negative emotional states. **Aims:** This study examined the relationships between PsyCap, depression, loneliness, and well-being, accounting for sociodemographic factors (gender, age). A further aim was to investigate whether depression and loneliness mediate the relationship between PsyCap and well-being. **Methods:** The research sample consisted of 213 university students (mean age = 23, 89.2% female). The data were analyzed using hierarchical regression and parallel mediation analysis in JASP and SPSS software. **Results:** The results showed that PsyCap is positively related to well-being, whereas depression and loneliness were negatively related to this construct. Moreover, the mediation analysis revealed that depression and loneliness partially mediated the relationship between PsyCap and mental well-being. **Conclusions:** Overall, these findings support the notion of psychological capital as a

protective factor associated with higher well-being, both directly and indirectly through reduced negative emotional states. Strengthening PsyCap among students could therefore represent a promising direction for interventions aimed at enhancing mental health and academic functioning in the university context.

**Keywords:** *Psychological capital, mental well-being, university students, depression, loneliness.*

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## **A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS THROUGH INTERACTIVE CO-CREATION**

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### **Abstract**

The shift to Industry 6.0 demands not only technological advancements but also societal changes, like new methods for education and employment. The educational shift from lecturer-centered (Education 1.0) to student-focused (Education 5.0), particularly during the Industrial Revolution, highlights the importance of skills beyond academics. This continuum has underlined the need for “Future Skills” in the job market. Skills related to cognition and decision-making are an essential requirement for the future workforce. To find out how co-creation in academic settings influences various cognitive outcomes in emerging professionals through interactive learning, a Systematic Literature Review was conducted. The PRISMA framework was utilized for selecting literature, followed by methodological assessments using the JBI Critical Appraisal and CASP (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme) tools to examine different instructional processes, their testing methods, and the cognitive outcomes. The research objectives and questions were formalized using the PICO method. A total of 30 pieces of literature were included in the SLR from APA PsychNet, Scopus, and Sage. Part of the search string used in this study to identify existing research on students developing case studies within interactive learning settings. However, the SLR reveals there is little to no research addressing this topic. This gap indicates a need for future research to explore how educators can design systematic and methodological approaches that actively engage students in the co-creation of case studies. Such research could contribute to a better understanding of the participatory learning process and support the development of more interactive and learner-centered educational practices.

**Keywords:** *Future skills, case-study development, cognitive engagement, co-creation, intervention.*

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## **TOWARDS A CONFIRMATIVE EVALUATION OF TRAINING TRANSFER: TRANSLATION, CULTURAL ADAPTATION AND VALIDATION**

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### **Abstract**

Training transfer evaluations have gained in interest. Indeed, evaluating to which extent training knowledge and skills are applied is valuable. It establishes training effectiveness and return on investment (Phillips, 2012), identifies barriers to application (Burke and Hutchins, 2007) and supports improvement of training designs (Salas et al., 2012). Two evaluation approaches are commonly accepted. First, the objective-based that focuses on the application of the skills after training (e.g. Kirkpatrick, 1976). Although shown to be effective (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006), this approach relies on self-reported data which can be biased in terms of social desirability, recall and objectivity (Holton, 1996; Arthur et al., 2003; Alliger et al., 1997). Second, the system-based approach that analyses the predictors of training transfer (i.e. Holton et al., 2005). Literature suggests that the predictors are effective in divers contexts (Bates et al., 2012) but critics claim that this approach lacks to analyse training transfer itself (Holton et al., 2005). Thus, Zinovieff (2008) theorized a confirmative approach that combines the before-mentioned to a questionnaire that focuses on systems and objectives. A first attempt by Gonzáles et al. (2022) relying on scales proposed by Kirkpatrick (1976) and Holton et al. (2005) has been validated in Spanish. The analysis shows motivation to transfer as a weak predictor of training transfer. This is inconsistent with current findings and thus further research is needed. The aim of our paper is to include a validated motivation to transfer scale by Gegenfurtner and Quesada (2022) and to culturally adapt and validate the

scales in French in order to propose a confirmative evaluation. The scales have been culturally adapted and translated according to Corbière & Fraccaroli (2020). Data collection takes place at firefighters' training department with 590 participants planned. The study follows a longitudinal repeated measure design, so participation is requested at the end of the training and one week after for the system-based evaluation and four months after that for motivation to transfer and objective-based evaluation. The analyses includes descriptive statistics and exploratory factor analysis. Data collection will be launched beginning of November 2025. We will present the preliminary results of the survey. The latter is expected to provide information on whether the evaluation is valid or if adjustments are needed. The study is intended to contribute a confirmative training transfer evaluation and may reveal efficient factors for this approach. Results should contribute to training effectiveness.

**Keywords:** *Confirmative evaluation, training, transfer.*

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## **PERCEIVED AND ACTUAL DETECTABILITY OF AI-GENERATED STUDENT WORK ACROSS THREE COHORTS**

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### **Abstract**

The everyday use of generative artificial intelligence by students has made it increasingly difficult to know who actually authored an academic homework assignment. This paper presents findings from a three-year, three-cohort mixed-methods research program conducted between 2023 and 2025, examining both perceived and actual ability to distinguish between student-authored and AI-generated academic assignments. The first research wave (2023), previously published, examined university teachers' (N = 12) ability to identify AI-generated versus student-authored assignments across multiple course types. Results showed detection accuracy only slightly above chance level (M = 53.75%), accompanied by moderately high confidence in judgments. One year later, a second wave (2024) replicated the procedure with a convenience sample of educational psychologists (N = 16), yielding comparable results: detection accuracy remained low (M = 52.31%), while confidence remained moderately high. The third research wave (2025) focused on first-year university students (N = 27) from two study programs (business informatics and cyber communication). A mixed-methods design combined an anonymous questionnaire with four focus groups. Quantitative findings indicate that students assessed teachers' detection accuracy with striking precision (M = 52.73%), closely matching actual performance observed in the two previous waves. At the same time, students estimated their own ability to produce AI-assisted assignments that would remain undetected at a substantially higher level (M = 71%). Focus-group discussions further revealed that, despite this confidence, students themselves struggled to reliably identify AI-generated work when presented with concrete examples. Participants agreed that AI can be a valuable tool to support learning, but not a substitute for producing entire assignments. Students emphasize the need to develop their own writing, research, and critical thinking skills to ensure the quality of their learning. Because students may struggle to resist the temptation of taking the easier path, institutions need to offer clear guidance and support that promotes responsible and learning-oriented uses of AI. Taken together, the findings reveal a growing asymmetry in higher education: students appear to have developed high confidence in their ability to produce AI-assisted work that remains undetectable, along with an experience-based sense that teachers generally struggle to identify such work—an impression that closely reflects teachers' actual detection performance. Although students are aware of its possible negative consequences, many still report continued and intended use of AI tools. These findings raise urgent questions for assessment design, clearer institutional guidance, and the sustainability of current approaches to academic integrity.

**Keywords:** *Academic integrity, AI detectability, higher education, mixed-methods research.*

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## **COHEN-EMERIQUE'S CULTURAL SHOCK METHOD AS A RESEARCH TRAINING APPROACH FOR DEVELOPING CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN EUROPEAN CONTEXTS**

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### **Abstract**

Deardorff (2006) defines intercultural competence as the “ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes.” Over the past two decades, intercultural competence has been a central element in the Council of Europe’s vision concerning diversity, where it is understood as a competence addressed to all citizens, and not only to those with a migratory background (Council of Europe, 2008, 2013, 2018). This has led to the development of a wide range of training tools across different disciplines within the social sciences. The paper broadens this perspective by presenting the cultural shock method, introduced by social psychologist Cohen-Emerique (2011, 2017) in the field of social work, which builds on the critical incident technique (Flanagan, 1954). To address the difficulties practitioners encounter when integrating theoretical knowledge into everyday professional practice, the scholar emphasized the importance of perceiving and recognizing differences through a participatory approach rooted in the lived experiences of trainees. The method conceptualizes experiences of emotional and/or cognitive disorientation—so-called cultural shocks—as opportunities to decenter from implicit representations, stereotypes, and prejudices. Only after this initial stage does the process move toward questioning the interlocutor’s frame of reference, understood as that of a real, embodied person rather than an expression of national culture, and finally toward negotiation aimed at concrete solutions rather than ideological stances. The paper presents key findings from the application of the method in research-training programmes conducted over the past two years with social workers, cultural mediators and healthcare professionals in Genoa, highlighting its potential for fostering intercultural competence. These findings align with empirical studies that point to a growing and widespread need for support in the development of reflexive capacities, in order to construct professional pathways within relational dynamics that are specific to each setting (Martorana, Rania & Lagomarsino, 2021).

**Keywords:** *Social psychology, research-training, intercultural competence, cultural shock method.*

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## SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### UNPRODUCTIVE WORK HOURS AND RELATED FACTORS IN SOUTH KOREA: STATE OF IDLE TIME UNRELATED TO WORK

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#### Abstract

South Korea continues to display some of the longest annual working hours among OECD countries, yet its labor productivity remains substantially below the OECD average (OECD, 2021a; OECD, 2021b). Prior studies suggest that cultural norms surrounding overwork, presenteeism, and hierarchical relations exacerbate inefficiencies (Kim, McLean, & Park, 2018; Lee & McCann, 2011; Kim et al., 2018). This study investigates deliberate idle time—non-work-related activities undertaken during paid work hours—as a measurable component of unproductive work hours in Korean organizations. Using a stratified national survey (N = 1,200), the study examines demographic, organizational, and health-related antecedents of idle time. Results indicate that approximately 24% of working hours are spent in deliberate idle time. Age, job status, organizational size, sector, and health show statistically significant associations with idle-time share, whereas gender effects are modest. The findings highlight the embeddedness of idle time within South Korea’s institutional, cultural, and managerial systems and point toward implications for HR practices, organizational culture, and public policy.

**Keywords:** *South Korean work culture, idle time, unproductive work hours, demographic and organizational factors.*

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### FOMO, CLICKTIVISM AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT – THE CASE OF GEORGIA

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#### Abstract

In today’s digital era, social media has become a central arena for political discourse and activism. Platforms now serve as critical tools for shaping narratives, connecting politicians, activists, and citizens, and mobilizing collective action. In Georgia, for instance, Meta groups have been used to coordinate resistance campaigns and protests against government decisions; X functions as a space for real-time political commentary; while Instagram and TikTok are increasingly leveraged for campaign movements, particularly targeting younger audiences. On one hand, these platforms enhance political participation by enabling rapid communication and the spread of messages to wide audiences. On the other hand, they raise concerns about “clicktivism”—forms of online activism that may substitute for meaningful political involvement (Christensen, H. S. (2011)—and the risk of fostering political apathy, including disengagement from public events and elections (Zhelmina, A. (2020)). An additional psychological factor that may shape this dynamic is the fear of missing out (FOMO). Research by Przybylski et al. (2013) shows that FOMO is associated with higher levels of behavioral engagement with social media. This suggests that political activity online may not always stem from deliberate civic motivation but rather from an anxiety-driven desire to remain included in digital conversations. This study seeks to examine the mediating role of FOMO and clicktivism in the relationship between social media use and political engagement in Georgia. By focusing on this context, the research will provide the systematic attempt to explore how digital habits, psychological drivers, and forms of online participation intersect to shape political engagement. The first step is to provide a sound framework.

**Keywords:** *Clicktivism, FOMO, political engagement, political psychology, social media.*

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## THE HIDDEN TOLLS OF NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT IN FRANCE: REFORM PERCEPTIONS, EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION AND TURNOVER

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### Abstract

Since the 1990s, and in line with most Western public administrations, the French civil service has experienced the gradual introduction of New Public Management (NPM) (Bezes, 2012). This reform agenda aimed to promote the adoption of private-sector management practices within public organizations. By the early 2000s, a variety of counter-models emerged, seeking to address the shortcomings of NPM (Klenk & Reiter, 2019), but they generally represent a continuity rather than a clear distinction from it (Christensen & Fan, 2018; Reiter & Klenk, 2019). Accordingly, reforms stemming from these paradigms have been associated with a continuous and accelerated transformation process, sometimes described as a structural crisis, profoundly affecting both public organizations and their civil servants (Guenoun & Matyjasik, 2019; Mouele, 2023; Rossano, 2018). Indeed, reforms inspired by NPM have fostered the development of new professional demands, notably an increased workload, and have contribute to the emergence of a climate of psychological strain (Abord de Chatillon & Desmarais, 2012; Diefenbach, 2009; Rivière et al., 2019), with significant consequences for employees' psychological health (Abord de Chatillon & Desmarais, 2012; Kirkpatrick et al., 2005). These health impacts have, in turn, been consistently linked to professional disengagement and turnover (e.g., Ducharme et al., 2007; Kim, 2015) which are critical issues for the French civil service. Indeed, in the context of a broader crisis of workforce attractiveness, retention and employee commitment have become major strategic priorities as attested to by several official administrative reports. This study examines the extent to which perceptions of NPM-related changes lead French civil servants to consider leaving their organizations, with emotional exhaustion as a mediating mechanism. Data were collected from a sample of 1851 civil servants across the three branches of the civil service (i.e., state, territorial, and hospital). The analysis relies on a mediation model to test the indirect influence of reform perceptions on turnover intentions via emotional exhaustion. The results confirm the presence of significant indirect effects, whereby perceptions of managerial reforms heighten emotional exhaustion, subsequently increasing the intention to leave the organization. These findings emphasize the importance of considering the psychological repercussions of public-sector transformations, which can paradoxically undermine retention goals. They highlight the need to rethink human resource and change management strategies to safeguard employees' psychological well-being while reducing turnover in the public sector.

**Keywords:** *French civil service, New Public Management, emotional exhaustion, turnover intention.*

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## THE ROLE OF FUTURE-DIRECTED UNCERTAINTY FOR WORK MOTIVATION AND VOLITION AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

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### Abstract

This exploratory qualitative study examines the motivational and volitional processes underlying goal-directed behaviors of young adults under conditions of uncertainty. Using the Rubicon Model and Expectancy-Value Theory as the primary frameworks, and drawing on PSI Theory as a complementary perspective, in-depth data was collected from four participants using uncertainty-based scenarios and open-ended questions. The findings emphasize that the subjective value attributed to the goal plays an important role in sustaining motivational commitment, while volitional strategies and social support facilitate the continuation of the action. Despite the limited number of participants, the study offers theory-based and application-oriented insights into motivation and volition processes under uncertainty. The findings expand motivation models by framing uncertainty not only as a risk factor but as an active factor shaping motivational and volitional dynamics, and offer practical implications for supporting goal-directed behaviors among young adults in the workplace.

**Keywords:** *Uncertainty, motivation, volition, Rubicon Model, goal-directed behavior.*

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## SETTING THE TONE AT THE TOP – POWER AND PERIL OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

**Thomas Bryant**

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### **Abstract**

Political leadership is analyzed as a complex interplay of individual characteristics, social psychological mechanisms, and institutional frameworks. It becomes apparent that power does not result solely from formal position, but also from the perception of objectives and the reaction of the public. Leadership is understood as a behavioral concept that encompasses activities that influence and coordinate the actions of others. The importance of emotional competencies and authentic behavior is emphasized, as is the role of power distribution and institutional structures. Historically, the understanding of political leadership has evolved from personalistic approaches to processual and interactionist models that integrate normative and biological factors. Social psychological aspects such as authoritarianism, peer pressure, and diffusion of responsibility shape leadership processes and influence the quality of political decisions. Influence processes and communication are closely linked to cultural and institutional contexts and require bidirectional interaction. Ethical responsibility and self-reflection are essential for sustainable political leadership, especially in crisis situations that require flexible role understandings and integrative strategies. Finally, it is emphasized that political leadership is always caught between individual agency and systemic constraints and requires a continuous balance between efficiency, legitimacy, and moral integrity.

**Keywords:** *Political leadership, social identity theory, emotional contagion, legitimacy, governance.*

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## REDUCING CHILDREN'S RACIAL BIAS: THE EFFICACY OF INDIVIDUATED INTERPERSONAL SYNCHRONY

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### **Abstract**

Despite the development of numerous interventions to reduce racial bias, only a handful have received empirical validation and are viable for large-scale implementation. This study combined two evidence-based approaches, synchronous movement with out-group members (to reduce explicit bias) and individuation training (to reduce implicit bias), into an integrated intervention called *Individuated Interpersonal Synchrony* (IIS). We examined whether a brief (~15-minute), video-based IIS could reduce both explicit and implicit racial bias in young children and compared the effectiveness of one-on-one versus small-group intervention formats. A sample of 136 children (53 girls) aged 5–6 years was assigned to one of three conditions based on their pretest D-scores to ensure baseline equivalence: (a) own-race one-on-one IIS (control), (b) other-race one-on-one IIS, or (c) other-race small-group IIS. The intervention involved synchronized movements with racially distinct partners, who were individually identified by learning their names via video. Results revealed no significant changes in implicit racial bias across conditions, suggesting that implicit bias may be less sensitive to brief, single-session interventions. In contrast, explicit racial bias decreased significantly in both other-race conditions (Cohen's  $d = 0.70$ – $0.83$ ), with no change in the control condition. This study indicates that a brief, video-based IIS intervention can successfully reduce explicit racial bias in early childhood, a critical period for attitude formation. The comparable effectiveness of the small-group intervention format demonstrates its potential for practical, large-scale implementation in school settings.

**Keywords:** *Racial bias, individuation, interpersonal synchrony, early childhood, school-based intervention.*

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## THE INFLUENCE OF THREAT NARRATIVES ON ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRATION: THE ROLE OF OPEN-MINDEDNESS AND INTELLECTUAL HUMILITY

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### Abstract

Public attitudes toward immigration are significantly influenced by perceptions of threat posed by immigrant groups. The present study examined how different narratives about immigrant groups influence attitudes toward immigration and whether individual differences in open-mindedness and intellectual humility are associated with these attitudes. A stratified sample of 374 participants from Georgia was randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions describing a fictitious immigrant group: economic competition, social threat, disadvantaged group, or neutral control. The participants evaluated the group and expressed their attitudes toward its potential immigration to Georgia. In addition, measures of open-mindedness and intellectual humility were administered. The results of a one-way analysis of variance revealed significant differences in attitudes across conditions,  $F(3, 370) = 19.59$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2p = .14$ . Participants exposed to economic competition and cultural threat narratives exhibited a markedly stronger opposition to immigration than those in the control or disadvantaged conditions. The results of the correlational analyses indicated that open-mindedness was negatively associated with opposition to immigration in several experimental conditions. However, intellectual humility was not significantly related to immigration attitudes. The findings underscore the significance of threat framing in influencing public responses to immigration and posit that open-minded cognitive dispositions may serve as a mitigating factor against exclusionary reactions. The implications of these findings for intergroup relations and public discourse about immigration are discussed.

**Keywords:** *Prejudice, immigration attitudes, intellectual humility, open-mindedness, intergroup threat.*

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## STRENGTHENING EVIDENCE IN PUBLIC POLICY EVALUATION: ETHICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES IN SOCIAL IMPACT MEASUREMENT AND THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGY

**Rui Serôdio<sup>1</sup>, Alexandra Serra<sup>1,2</sup>, Sofia Brito<sup>1</sup>, Sofia Matias<sup>1</sup>, Catarina Mano<sup>1</sup>, & Sandra Nogueira<sup>1</sup>**

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### Abstract

Over the past decade, increasing demands from national and European funding bodies for reliable and scientifically grounded evidence have reinforced the importance of Social Impact Measurement (SIM) in the evaluation of public policies. Within this context, SINCLab – Social Inclusion Laboratory has conducted several SIM studies applied to socio-educational innovation policies implemented at both local and regional levels in Portugal. This paper discusses the ethical, operational, and methodological challenges associated with the use of control groups in SIM studies conducted in real public policy contexts. While quasi-experimental designs are often considered the most appropriate approach for establishing causal inference in policy evaluation, the nature of socio-educational programmes, their universal implementation, and ethical constraints frequently limit the feasibility of control groups. Drawing on the evaluation of programmes such as the Integrated and Innovative Plan to Combat School Failure (PIICIE) and the Action Plan for Disadvantaged Communities (PACD), the paper discusses methodological alternatives that allow for robust impact inference. Ultimately, the paper argues that strengthening the methodological rigor of social impact measurement is essential for ensuring that socio-educational public policies are both scientifically grounded and capable of producing meaningful societal outcomes.

**Keywords:** *Social impact measurement, public policy evaluation, quasi-experimental designs, evidence-based policy, socio-educational inclusion.*

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## CAREER RESOURCES FOR CONTEMPORARY WORLD OF WORK

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### Abstract

The dynamic, rapidly changing, and unstable contemporary world of work places high demands on career construction. As individuals now hold primary responsibility for their own growth, career planning, and engagement in the career-construction process, personal strengths—understood as broad resources that underpin modern careers—are becoming increasingly important. In addition to general career preparedness, being well informed about career opportunities is essential. Equally crucial are strong social ties, an optimistic outlook on one's future career, and the ability to manage career demands without allowing them to spill over into private life. To capture these aspects, we applied the Career Futures Inventory (CFI; Rottinghaus et al., 2012) to a nationally representative sample of 1,500 young Croatian employees aged 19 to 35. Our data indicate adequate reliability and validity of the CFI. The five dimensions—career agency, negative career outlook, occupational awareness, support, and work–life balance—were clearly confirmed, with only a minor deviation from the model observed for one item. All scales demonstrated good reliability (alphas ranging from .84 to .92). Job satisfaction and subjective job performance showed weak to moderate positive associations with all career-resource dimensions, except for negative career outlook, which was negatively correlated with both outcomes. Overall, the findings confirm the validity of the Career Futures Inventory and underscore the importance of career resources for effective career construction in the contemporary world of work.

**Keywords:** *Contemporary world of work, career construction, career resources, Career Futures Inventory.*

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## EMPOWERING ADOLESCENTS IN DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT: NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE “TOOLS FOR MODERN TIMES” PROGRAM

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### Abstract

The daily experiences of young adolescents are increasingly shaped by the widespread presence of digital technologies. Although online environments offer a range of opportunities, they also expose youth to various risks, particularly those associated with social networking and gaming. These challenges highlight the need for psychosocial interventions aimed at strengthening competencies for safe and responsible online behaviour. The “Tools for Modern Times” program was designed to address these issues by targeting early adolescents (ages 12–14) and preventing behavioural addictions and risk-taking in digital contexts. Based on evidence-based psychosocial intervention standards, the program contributes to responsible online engagement through the development of socio-emotional skills. It is implemented in elementary schools and consists of 11 structured workshops for students, as well as thematic lectures for parents and for the Teachers' Council. Program evaluation is carried out through a comprehensive model combining outcome, process, and implementation assessments. Across two school years (2023/24 and 2024/25), the Program has been implemented nationwide through 14 training sessions, preparing 488 program leaders from 217 schools. Following the training cycles, the Program has been delivered to more than 6,000 students, with coverage expected to continue expanding. In addition to describing the program's development, this presentation will focus on findings regarding short-term effectiveness after the national dissemination. A two time points measurement design (pre-test and post-test) was used to assess short-term effects on knowledge, social networks and gaming intensity, addiction-related symptoms, motivation, online behaviour habits, and emotional problems. These findings will be discussed in the context of evaluation challenges, opportunities for program modification, and implications for further national dissemination.

**Keywords:** *Adolescents, digital environment, tools for modern times, short-term effectiveness.*

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## HOW TO MEASURE COMPASSIONATE LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

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### Abstract

Compassionate leadership has emerged as a strategical issue in promoting well-being, and retention within healthcare organizations (Trzeciak & Mazzei, 2019; West et al., 2017; Paakkanen et al., 2021). Despite its growing relevance, the measurement of compassionate leadership effectiveness remains a complex and relatively unexplored area. This study aims to identify the key indicators and variables that can be used to assess the effectiveness of compassionate leadership. To achieve this objective, a comprehensive review of existing measurement tools and frameworks related to compassionate leadership has been conducted. We referred to the two prominent models by West et al. (2017), developed in UK (King's Fund), and Schuck et al. (2019), developed in USA. We examined how these models operationalize compassionate leadership and which dimensions are most frequently assessed. Beyond the review of most recent research on this topic, we explored which organizational and individual indicators are most likely to be influenced by compassionate leadership. Our findings suggest that Psychological Well-being and Burnout are key mediators in the relationship between Compassionate Leadership and two critical outcomes: Job Satisfaction and Intention to Leave. Compassionate leadership directly affects Compassion at Work (Lilius et al., 2008), as a climate dimension measured on team level. And it indirectly enhances Job Satisfaction and reduces Turnover Intentions by positively affecting employee's well-being. We also consider the potential role played by Supportive Learning Environment (Garvin et al., 2008) as moderator between well-being and intention to leave. For each selected indicator, we identified a set of validated measurement tools and conducted a pre-test with a sample of Italian healthcare professionals. The aim was to assess the reliability of these instruments using Cronbach's Alpha. The results confirmed the internal consistency of the selected scales, supporting their use in future empirical studies on compassionate leadership effectiveness. This study contributes to the ongoing discourse on leadership in healthcare by offering a structured approach to measuring compassionate leadership effectiveness. It highlights the importance of integrating compassion into leadership assessment tools and encourages further empirical research to validate the proposed indicators. Ultimately, understanding how to measure compassionate leadership can support the development of more humane and effective healthcare organizations.

**Keywords:** *Compassionate leadership, compassion at work, job satisfaction, healthcare organization, research design.*

## POWER, PURPOSE AND PERSONALITY: DARK TRAITS AND MOTIVATIONAL PATHWAYS TO CAREER ASPIRATION

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### Abstract

**Background.** Personality traits are recognized as influential factors in shaping academic and professional interests and aspirations (Schneider et al., 2017). Recent research has focused on the role of the “darker” side of personality in shaping professional goals. The Dark Tetrad traits include narcissism (entitlement), Machiavellianism (manipulation), psychopathy (callousness), and everyday sadism (cruelty; Paleczek et al., 2018), which are associated with the desire for power, status, and social dominance (Vedel & Thomsen, 2017). Further, these traits are associated with distinct motivational styles (Góis et al., 2020), which could affect career choice. **Rationale.** Our primary objective was to determine if the Dark Tetrad traits and motivational styles were significant predictors of career aspirations. **Methods.** In total, 229 participants completed an online questionnaire package that included a demographics questionnaire; the Short Dark Tetrad (SD4; Paulhus et al., 2021); the Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale

(WEIMS; Tremblay et al., 2009) to assess intrinsic (enjoyment), extrinsic (control), integrated (alignment), introjected (obligation), identified (value), and amotivation (disengagement) motivation styles; and the Career Aspiration Scale-Revised (CAS-R; Gregor & O'Brien) to assess career aspirations, with subscales assessing achievement, education, and leadership aspirations. *Results.* Three hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted to examine if SD-4 traits and WEIMS motivation styles predicted CAS-R subscales. Across models, age and gender were entered in Block 1 as control variables, Block 2 included SD4 traits, and WEIMS subscales were entered in Block 3. In the first regression predicting CAS-R Achievement, SD4 accounted for a significant increase in explained variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .230$ ,  $p < .01$ , with Machiavellianism and narcissism contributing to the model. Further, Block 3 was statistically significant,  $\Delta R^2 = .049$ ,  $p < .01$ , WEIMS extrinsic motivation contributing to the model. The second regression predicting educational aspiration, was also statistically significant; Block 2 was significant,  $\Delta R^2 = .110$ ,  $p < .01$ , with narcissism contributing to the model. Block 3 was also significant,  $\Delta R^2 = .055$ ,  $p < .05$ , with introjected motivation contributing to the model. Finally, the model predicting leadership aspiration was statistically significant, with Block 2 contributing to the model,  $\Delta R^2 = .244$ ,  $p < .01$ ; narcissism emerged as the significant predictor. Block 3 WEIMS did not contribute to this model. *Conclusion and Impact.* These results highlight the significant influence that the Dark Tetrad traits, specifically Machiavellianism and narcissism, and specific motivational pathways have on career aspirations. This research has the potential to inform career guidance, educational programming, and academic and workplace interventions to support individuals and organizations.

**Keywords:** *Dark Tetrad, motivational styles, career aspirations.*

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## WHEN PROTECTION BECOMES WEAPONIZATION: PREVAILING FALSE ACCUSATIONS UNDER SOUTH KOREA'S WORKPLACE BULLYING LAW

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### Abstract

This study synthesizes survey evidence and qualitative observations to examine the dynamics, impacts, and policy implications of false workplace bullying reports in South Korea. Using a 2023 quota-sampled workforce survey aligned to the Economically Active Population Survey and qualitative case material, we compare victim demographics and organisational positions, document consequences for accused workers and witnesses, and analyse the evolving tactics and demands of alleged false reporters. Descriptive statistics from the 2023 Employee Work Environment Survey capture age and rank distributions and multi-response outcomes among workers who report being falsely accused or threatened with false reports; qualitative patterns are derived from researcher case intake and reanalysis of the 2023 survey. In 2023, 64.7% of those accused who perceived the report as false were in their 20s–30s, and 59.1% were rank-and-file workers, indicating concentration among relatively young, lower-status employees. Reported impacts on accused workers include decreased trust in colleagues (78.1%), decreased organisational trust (48.1%), reduced concentration/productivity (42.3%), psychological stress disorders (50.0%), increased turnover intent (34.6%), and somatic stress symptoms (23.1%). In the 2023 quota sample, 3.3% had ever reported bullying; with ~19% classified as victims, roughly 1 in 6 victims report. Experiences of being falsely accused (1.4%) and threats of false reporting (1.6%) were non-trivial; threats were about three times more commonly reported by women. Workers categorise false reports as fabrication, distortion, or exaggeration. Behavioural features among alleged false reporters include resigning before/after filing (~59%), highly emotive/overstated language (45.5%), distortion (40.9%), complete fabrication (34.1%), external-first filing or threats (22.7%), and frequent demands for public or written apologies (31.8% / 13.6%) and monetary or career benefits. Findings support the hypothesis that false reporting targets organizationally vulnerable groups and imposes significant psychosocial and organisational costs. Policy implications include clearer behavioural criteria for bullying and harassment, early education on evidence-keeping and due process, independent monitoring of employer handling, strengthened ethical standards for HR/industrial-relations professionals, and proportionate sanctions for serial false reporting.

**Keywords:** *South Korea, workplace bullying, false accusations, organisational psychology, the weak attacking the vulnerable.*

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## **CONVERSATIONAL AGENTS AS TOOLS AND BEINGS: HOW PEOPLE ANTHROPOMORPHIZE CHATBOTS**

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### **Abstract**

A key challenge in research on text-based chatbots concerns the tendency to anthropomorphize them: chatbots can mimic certain human qualities, and users in turn often ascribe human traits to them. The perception of humanness plays a crucial role in human-chatbot interactions because it strongly shapes how users experience the conversation. At the same time, users may make potentially harmful decisions and experience negative psychological impacts when they “collaborate” with a chatbot they believe possesses human-like abilities: projecting human qualities onto an artificial agent can foster the misleading perception that the agent truly “understands” them and “feels for” them, which may lead to overreliance and overtrust. In this article, I examine how people ascribe humanness to both Large Language Model (LLM)-based chatbots and pre-LLM chatbots. Building on a literature review on human-chatbot interaction and empirical findings, I explain how people tend to anthropomorphize conversational agents, conceptualizing conversations with them as interactions with entities whose humanness is continuously ascribed and denied by human users, who may attribute or withdraw specific human-like traits, like emotions, intelligence, and agency.

*Keywords: Anthropomorphization, HCI, humanness, human-computer interaction, conversational agents.*

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## **CHILDREN’S CRITICAL ATTITUDE TOWARD SOCIAL NETWORKS: DO THEY CONSIDER THE RISKS?**

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### **Abstract**

In the Croatian national context, recent research on digital literacy among primary school children is lacking, particularly regarding their critical thinking in digital environments. Meanwhile, studies indicate an increasing prevalence of mental health difficulties, specifically anxiety and depressive symptoms, in this population, raising concerns among health, education, and social welfare professionals. As the digital environment is integral to children's daily lives, it is essential to investigate their behavioral patterns and critical attitudes toward social networks. Building on Burton et al.'s (2017) categorization of ICT-related harm, which includes risky content, contacts, and behaviors, this study examines social networks from two perspectives: (1) their structural and design features and (2) the characteristics of risky content and interactions. Both aspects can negatively affect the subjective well-being of children and adolescents. This presentation is part of the scientific project “Digital Literacy and Improving Critical Thinking for Empowering Children's Mental Health,” conducted at the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Zagreb, with support from the Adris Foundation. The research aims to answer three key questions: (1) How do children perceive and critically reflect on the structural and design features of social networks? (2) How do they perceive and reflect on risky content and interactions? (3) To what extent do they recognize the potential harmful consequences of these features? The study used a qualitative approach, conducting eight focus groups with N=64 students in grades 5 to 8 in the cities of Zagreb and Split. The discussions were categorized to examine critical thinking about both risky structural/design features, and risky interaction dynamics. Results show that while children demonstrate a relatively critical attitude toward risky content and interactions, there is a significant lack of awareness and critical reflection regarding the risky structural and design mechanics of these platforms. The findings are contextualized within the development of evidence-based preventive interventions aimed at empowering children's critical thinking.

*Keywords: Critical attitude, social networks, focus groups, children.*

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## **PERPETRATORS, VICTIMS AND BYSTANDERS: PREVALENCE AND KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF CYBERBULLYING AMONG YOUTH**

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### **Abstract**

The virtual environment has become an integral part of everyday life, particularly for adolescents who spend increasing amounts of time online, most often on social media platforms. While the digital space offers opportunities for learning, social interaction, and entertainment, it also enables the emergence of various risky behaviours (Trompeter et al., 2022; Zhu et al., 2021). Findings from numerous studies indicate a rise in risky online behaviours and cyberbullying (Patchin, 2023; Polanin et al., 2022), with 5-15% of adolescents having been victims and 3-12% having been perpetrators (Calmaestra et al., 2020; Patchin & Hinduja, 2022; Henares-Montiel et al., 2022). When studying the phenomenon of cyberbullying, it is necessary to consider the different roles involved – victims, perpetrators, and bystanders. However, a substantial portion of the literature primarily focuses on victims, while the other roles have been less explored and remain, to some extent, marginalised. Accordingly, the aim of this study is to examine the prevalence of risky behaviours on social media among high school students from three perspectives, i.e., roles (bystander, victim, perpetrator), and to identify differences in such behaviours with respect to gender, grade level, and type of school. The study included N=216 students from three high schools (grammar, three- and four-year vocational schools) in the City of Zagreb, Croatia (*Mean Age*=16.02; *SD Age*=1.135). To address the study aim, several instruments were used: the Questionnaire on Basic Personal Characteristics, the Social Media Use Frequency Questionnaire (adapted from Mandić, 2022), as well as the Questionnaire on the Frequency of Perpetration, the Questionnaire on the Frequency of Bystander Behaviour, and the Questionnaire on the Frequency of Experiencing Risky Behaviours on Social Media, all developed specifically for this study. The key findings indicate a high prevalence of experiencing, perpetrating, and witnessing electronic violence among adolescents. The most common reactions when witnessing cyberbullying were analysed, and differences were examined with respect to their personal characteristics. The results are interpreted in the context of developing interventions in this area, with the aim of preventing cyberbullying and promoting personally responsible behaviour in the digital environment.

**Keywords:** *Adolescents, digital environment, risky behaviours, cyberbullying, perpetrators, victims, bystanders.*

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## **WHAT DOES IT MEAN LEADERSHIP IN ITALIAN HEALTHCARE: A RESEARCH ACTION**

**Sara Cervai<sup>1</sup>, Marianna Ginocchietti<sup>1</sup>, Giosuè Facin<sup>1</sup>, Giovanni Scuor<sup>1</sup>, Gabriele Blasutig<sup>1</sup>, Elisa Ducoli<sup>1</sup>, Elisa Ambrosi<sup>2</sup>, Federico Lega<sup>3</sup>, & Claudio Costa<sup>4</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

This research is part of a wider project called CompAct (Compassionate Leadership: an Italian model) funded by the Veneto Region (Italy) as part of its strategic initiatives to improve healthcare workforce retention, explores the meaning and practice of leadership within the Italian healthcare system. The present study involved healthcare managers (physicians and nurses) from two public hospitals, focusing on three key departments: Emergency, Internal Medicine, and Primary Care. This phase of the project aimed to investigate how healthcare leaders interpret their roles and responsibilities, particularly in supporting their teams. Through a series of participatory meetings following the Participatory Action Research approach (Kemmis et al., 2014), participants were encouraged to reflect on their leadership experiences, challenges, and strategies. The qualitative data collected revealed a shared understanding of

leadership as a relational and supportive function, rather than a purely managerial or directive one. One of the most significant findings was the emphasis placed on the concept of compassion as a central dimension of effective leadership, involving the capability of noticing, understanding, empathizing, helping (Dutton et al., 2006). However, the way the support is enacted varies considerably depending on the department and professional role. In Emergency departments, leadership is often expressed by a close synergy between the two leaders (physician and nurse) supporting each other to manage the whole team. In Internal Medicine, two different approaches between physician and nurse arose: physicians focus more their leadership on clinical supervision, and managing complex patient care pathways; nurse leaders are more oriented to create mutual trust and collaboration, as a family. In Primary Care, leadership takes on a more distributed and delegative form, emphasizing the need to understand situation where they cannot be physically present. Overall, the research underscores the need for healthcare organizations to recognize and invest in leadership development as a key factor in workforce retention. By fostering a culture of support and compassion (West, 2021), healthcare leaders can contribute significantly to psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and retention. These results represent a first step toward understanding and enhancing leadership practices in Italian healthcare, offering insights that can inform future policies and training programs aimed at strengthening the healthcare workforce.

**Keywords:** *Action-research, physicians and nurses, healthcare leadership, compassionate leadership.*

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## **WHAT PREDICTS TEACHERS' LIFE SATISFACTION? DATA FROM 30 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

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### **Abstract**

Research shows that teachers' life satisfaction is directly related to the quality of their work, student achievement, and job satisfaction (is associated with work quality and job-related outcomes). In addition, national context, including cultural factors, may play an important role in shaping individuals' life satisfaction. Although life satisfaction is a well-established psychological construct, its determinants remain insufficiently researched in a cross-national perspective. This study examined cross-national differences in teachers' life satisfaction using data from the European Social Survey (ESS) Round 11, including 2,229 teachers from 30 European countries. Data from the European Social Survey (ESS) Round 11, covering 30 European countries (n = 2229 teachers), were used for the analysis. Life satisfaction was measured by asking participants to rate "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole nowadays?" on a scale from 0 (extremely dissatisfied) to 10 (extremely satisfied). Multi-level modeling revealed significant differences in teachers' life satisfaction between countries. The model fits the data well (AIC = 8898.70, BIC = 8966.76, Pseudo-R<sup>2</sup> for fixed effects = .47, Pseudo-R<sup>2</sup> total = .52). Country-level differences accounted for 15% of the total variance in life satisfaction (ICC = 0.15), indicating that national context plays a meaningful role, although most variation occurs at the individual level. Mixed-effects linear regression analysis showed that self-transcendence values, happiness, positive affect, lower negative affect, and gender significantly predicted teachers' life satisfaction (p < .001). When individual predictors were included in the regression model, the results showed that approximately 10 % of the variance in life satisfaction is attributable to between-country differences (ICC = 0.10). This explanatory decrease of country differences essentially indicates that life satisfaction is a more personal-level phenomenon and individual factors are more predictive of life satisfaction than country characteristics. Overall, the findings indicate that teachers' life satisfaction is primarily shaped by individual-level characteristics, while national context still plays a secondary but relevant role. This highlights valuable insights for practical implications and further research on teachers' well-being.

**Keywords:** *Teachers, life satisfaction, European Social Survey.*

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## **SHADOW DRAMA: REFRAMING AND INTEGRATING THE SHADOW FOR IDENTITY TRANSFORMATION THROUGH CREATIVE ART-BASED PSYCHODRAMA**

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### **Abstract**

Disowned or marginalized aspects of experience may shape emotional responses, self-evaluation, and identity outside conscious awareness. This participatory action research study aimed to develop and examine Shadow Drama, a structured experiential exercise integrating drawing, mask-based dialogue, role enactment, and symbolic representation. The exercise was iteratively refined across three action–reflection cycles and implemented as a single dedicated session, introduced when disowned aspects became salient within a broader one-to-one intervention program (12 sessions, approximately 90 minutes each). Six participants contributed to protocol development across four phases, with in-depth qualitative analysis focused on Phase 4, representing the fully developed version of the exercise. Data included session transcripts, participant feedback forms, and researcher reflexive and analytic memos. Inductive reflexive thematic analysis identified three recurring processes: reinterpretation of previously rejected traits, identification of unmet emotional and somatic needs, and symbolic integration of latent strengths. Results were associated with increased expressions of self-compassion, emotion regulation, identity coherence, and greater confidence in participants' capacity for self-directed growth.

**Keywords:** *Shadow work, identity transformation, art-based practice, embodied enactment, shadow drama.*

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## LEGAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF VICTIMS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IN THE MALTESE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

**Roberta Mifsud, & Chantal Avellino**

*Department of Psychology, University of Malta (Malta)*

#### **Abstract**

Despite significant legislative reforms addressing intimate partner violence (IPV) in Malta, survivors continue to report distressing and complex experiences when engaging with the criminal justice system. This qualitative study explores the lived experiences of IPV survivors navigating Maltese legal processes from initial reporting through to case closure. Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), semi-structured interviews were conducted with six survivors (four women and two men) who had direct contact with the criminal justice system. Analysis identified five interconnected group experiential themes: systemic betrayal and institutional distrust, navigating the courtroom as a victim, the lingering impact of trauma, silencing, self-blame and the fight for agency, and pathways to support and closure. Participants described early experiences of dismissal and disbelief, prolonged procedural delays, ineffective protective measures, and repeated exposure to perpetrators that intensified fear, exhaustion, and psychological distress. Legal processes were frequently experienced as re-traumatising, contributing to feelings of powerlessness and self-doubt. While some survivors accessed meaningful support through non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or individual therapy, emotional recovery and closure were often pursued outside the justice system. These findings reveal a persistent gap between legislative intent and lived reality, underscoring the need for trauma-informed, coordinated, and survivor-centred reforms within the Maltese criminal justice system to reduce secondary victimisation and support survivor recovery.

**Keywords:** *Intimate partner violence, criminal justice system, Malta, interpretative phenomenological analysis, trauma-informed practice.*

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### RISK ASSESSMENT IN PSYCHOLOGY: PAST MISTAKES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

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#### **Abstract**

Forensic risk assessment has been a cornerstone of psychological research and practice since the beginning of the 20th century. Early risk appraisals relied on clinical judgment to predict outcomes like violent or criminal behavior, but these methods often lacked accuracy. The subsequent shift to actuarial approaches introduced empirically derived tools that aimed to provide objective assessments, thereby minimizing the subjectivity of clinical judgment and increasing accuracy. However, these actuarial methods were criticized for being atheoretical and failing to address criminogenic risks and needs, which became increasingly relevant as penal systems emphasized the resocialization of incarcerated individuals. In response, risk and need assessments and structured professional judgment (SPJ) tools emerged, integrating empirically established correlates of criminal behavior with clinical expertise. Despite these advancements, persistent methodological and theoretical issues remain largely unaddressed. This review critically reexamines the evolution of forensic risk assessment, highlighting a key shortcoming in existing approaches to risk assessment. We propose a roadmap for future research to enhance the validity, applicability and ethical use of risk assessment instruments in forensic psychology.

**Keywords:** *Forensic risk assessment, latent variable modeling, psychometrics, recidivism.*

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## WHEN PROTECTORS BECOME PERPETRATORS: A FEMINIST ANALYSIS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMONG ISRAELI POLICE OFFICERS

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### Abstract

Domestic violence perpetrated by police officers represents a critical yet underexamined manifestation of gendered power, wherein state-sanctioned authority converges with intimate partner abuse. This article offers a feminist analysis of domestic violence committed by Israeli police officers, addressing a significant gap in Israeli scholarly literature. Drawing on qualitative analysis of court verdicts, media reports, and interviews with mental health professionals, the study examines the structural, psychological, and institutional dynamics that distinguish police-perpetrated intimate partner violence from abuse in the general population. Situated within feminist theories of patriarchal control, hegemonic masculinity, and coercive control, the analysis demonstrates how police culture—characterized by militarized masculinity, emotional suppression, access to weapons, and the “blue wall of silence”—intensifies both the severity of violence and barriers to victim protection. The Israeli context, shaped by mandatory military service and chronic occupational stress, further reinforces these dynamics. Findings reveal patterns of weaponized professional knowledge, institutional minimization, and victim silence, producing what is conceptualized as compound trauma rooted in both intimate and institutional betrayal. The article argues that police-perpetrated domestic violence should not be understood as individual deviance but as a predictable outcome of institutionalized patriarchy embedded within law enforcement structures. The study concludes by calling for feminist-informed structural reforms, including independent accountability mechanisms, trauma-informed support systems, and a fundamental transformation of police culture toward gender equality and care-oriented practice.

**Keywords:** *Policemen, domestic violence, feminist analysis, qualitative research, Israel.*

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## THE COST OF WORKING DIRECTLY WITH OFFENDERS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE MENTAL HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

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### Abstract

Working with offender populations imposes a high cost of caring, exposing professionals to unique psychological and emotional demands that may culminate in compassion fatigue (CF) – a multidimensional construct encompassing burnout, secondary traumatic stress (STS), and vicarious trauma (VT). Although CF has been widely examined across helping professions, evidence remains comparatively underexplored among professionals working directly with offenders. This systematic review synthesizes empirical evidence on the prevalence of CF and its components and associated mental health outcomes in this workforce. Following PRISMA guidelines, searches were conducted in EBSCOhost, PubMed, and Web of Science, supplemented by manual searching. Of 2,911 records, 16 studies published between 2001 and 2024 met the inclusion criteria. Most were conducted in the USA ( $n = 8$ ) and UK ( $n = 4$ ), with additional evidence from Brazil ( $n = 2$ ), Canada ( $n = 1$ ), and Australia ( $n = 1$ ). Across professional groups (healthcare professionals, correctional officers, probation/parole officers, and counsellors), findings consistently indicated moderate-to-high burnout, STS, and/or VT, alongside clinically relevant traumatic stress and depressive symptoms in meaningful subgroups. Adverse outcomes were most evident where offender-facing exposure (e.g., violence, distressing material, complex caseloads) co-occurred with organisational strain (e.g., workload pressure, role conflict, limited supervision). Overall, findings support an occupational and structural framing of CF and related mental health difficulties in offender-facing services, underscoring organisational responsibility and the need for preventive, trauma-informed support infrastructures.

**Keywords:** *Compassion fatigue, burnout, secondary traumatic stress, vicarious trauma, offender-facing professionals.*

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## COMPASSION FATIGUE IN CHILD WELFARE SPECIALISTS: EFFECTS OF SELF-CARE, COGNITIVE RIGIDITY AND EMOTIONAL CLARITY

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### Abstract

Child welfare specialists work in high-stress environments and psychologically demanding roles, which can lead to high attrition rates, burnout, decreased mental health, secondary trauma, or compassion fatigue. Some studies suggest that self-care may help mitigate these negative effects. However, research specifically focused on child welfare specialists is scarce, and findings regarding the role of self-care remain inconclusive. Additionally, scientific literature suggests that other cognitive and emotional factors may also be important when addressing compassion fatigue in this population. The aim of this study was to identify predictors of compassion fatigue among child welfare specialists in Lithuania. It was hypothesized that higher cognitive rigidity, lack of emotional clarity, and lower levels of personal and professional self-care would predict higher levels of compassion fatigue. Child welfare specialists completed this self-reported survey after participating in a brief competency training based on simulated questioning of child avatars. Compassion fatigue was measured using the Compassion Fatigue Inventory. Self-care was assessed using the Self-Care Practices Scale, which distinguishes between professional and personal self-care. Cognitive rigidity was measured using the Cognitive Rigidity subscale from the Detail and Flexibility Questionnaire, and emotional clarity was assessed using the Lack of Emotional Clarity subscale from the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale. Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine these relationships. Preliminary results from the first two waves ( $n = 107$ ) of this ongoing study indicate that all three variables significantly predicted compassion fatigue. Higher cognitive rigidity and lack of emotional clarity were associated with increased compassion fatigue. Lower levels of professional self-care also predicted reduced compassion; however, personal self-care did not have any significant effect. These findings highlight the importance of cognitive and emotional factors in high-stress work environments that may be related to compassion fatigue. Furthermore, they underscore the complex role of self-care as a potential protective factor in maintaining healthier boundaries at work. The practical implications of these findings will be discussed in detail.

**Keywords:** *Compassion fatigue, self-care, cognitive rigidity, emotional clarity.*

## SCARRED EARTH, SCARRED SOULS: HOW CHILDHOOD ABUSE SHAPES ECOLOGICAL ANXIETY AND REPRODUCTIVE DESIRES IN LITHUANIAN YOUNG ADULTS

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### Abstract

Young people globally experience psychological distress about environmental crises (Hickman et al., 2021), which may be intensified by childhood abuse experiences that increase vulnerability to mental health problems through heightened threat sensitivity and compromised emotion regulation (Bacouni et al., 2022). These vulnerabilities can significantly affect important life decisions. Environmental crises might activate feelings of insecurity in those with abuse histories, potentially manifesting as eco-anxiety and influencing childbearing intentions. While previous research has examined eco-anxiety independently, limited attention has been given to how early trauma experiences might shape environmental concerns and subsequent life planning decisions. Therefore, the current study aims to explore the relationships among childhood abuse, risk perception associated with environmental crisis, eco-anxiety and childbearing intentions in Lithuanian young adults. This study is part of an ongoing project on building resilience in young adults facing environmental crisis. The sample consists of 600 Lithuanian young adults recruited from universities and community settings ( $M_{age}=22.56$ ,  $SD_{age}=5.57$ ), of which 68% were women. Participants completed validated measures assessing childhood abuse experiences (emotional, physical, and verbal), perceived risks associated with environmental crisis, eco-anxiety symptoms, and intentions regarding future childbearing. Path analysis revealed distinct patterns for different abuse types. Verbal abuse emerged as the strongest predictor, showing significant positive associations with environmental risk perception and eco-anxiety, while demonstrating a negative

association with childbearing intentions. This suggests that verbal abuse may create particularly pervasive effects on how young adults perceive and respond to future threats. In contrast, physical abuse predicted only heightened risk perception, without direct effects on eco-anxiety or childbearing intentions, suggesting differential psychological pathways through which various abuse types influence environmental concerns. Mediation analyses revealed that eco-anxiety partially mediated the relationship between verbal abuse and childbearing intentions, indicating that childhood verbal abuse may reduce desire for children partly through increased environmental distress. Risk perception also served as a significant mediator, though to a lesser extent. These findings contribute to understanding how early adverse experiences shape responses to environmental threats and have several important implications. First, they suggest the need for trauma-informed approaches when addressing eco-anxiety among young adults. Second, mental health professionals should consider childhood experiences when designing interventions for environmental distress. Third, policy makers addressing demographic concerns should recognize how intersecting personal and environmental vulnerabilities influence reproductive decisions.

**Keywords:** *Childhood abuse, eco-anxiety, perceived risk of environmental crisis, reproductive desires, young adults.*

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## **QUALITY IN EXPERT WITNESS REPORTS – PEER REVIEW AND COMPUTERIZED EVALUATION: A WAY FORWARD?**

**Martina Feldhammer-Kahr<sup>1,2</sup>, Johannes Woschizka<sup>1</sup>, Nina Kaiser<sup>2</sup>, Markus Sommer<sup>1</sup>, & Martin Arendasy<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Psychology, University of Graz (Austria)*

<sup>2</sup>*Department of Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure Law and Criminology, University of Graz (Austria)*

### **Abstract**

Under Austrian Criminal Law, courts are required to appoint expert witnesses whenever special knowledge is required to conduct investigations or to take evidence, and such expertise is not available within the court or judicial institutions. These experts must possess special expertise and be impartial, whereby the required expertise may derive from a variety of disciplines depending on the needs of the particular case. However, in proceedings concerning the placement of an individual in a forensic therapeutic institution, it primarily has to be a psychiatric expert, preferably one who is also registered in the field of psychiatric criminal prognosis or if a psychiatric expert is not available or cannot be appointed in due time, an expert in clinical psychology may be designated instead. If – in the court’s opinion - the expert witness report is indeterminate, or the opinion, contradictory or otherwise flawed or the statements of two experts differ significantly, the court must appoint a further expert if the doubts cannot be removed by questioning. However, if the court needs an expert witness because it lacks the expertise in forensic psychology, how should the court have the expertise to assess the quality, validity and thus the evidential value of expert witness reports – let alone decide between the opinions of two or more disagreeing experts? For many years – especially due to the limited availability of qualified experts and high case numbers - there is an ongoing discussion about the quality of the expert witness reports in these cases and the standards they should meet. Although there is plenty of literature in this field it still seems to be unclear for legal and forensic professionals, which criteria should be met and how this should be evaluated in daily court practice. Kannegiesser et al. (2021) seem to show us a way. While this study does not pertain directly to criminal law issues, it nonetheless offers points for discussion, especially given that the fundamental questions of quality standards and their evaluation by “non-experts” apply equally to all branches of law. They propose a peer-review procedure in family related matters. However, fewer expert witnesses are available than courts and other state authorities require, compounded by the additional issue of escalating costs that would come along with a peer-review procedure. A long-term cost-effective and less time-consuming alternative could be a computerized program. The challenges of the construction of such a program will be discussed in this paper.

**Keywords:** *Quality, expert witness reports, peer-review, computerized program.*

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## **QUEERING JUSTICE: A STUDY OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF LGBTIQ+ OFFENDERS IN MALTA**

**Dylan Santillo, & Chantal Avellino**

*Department of Psychology, University of Malta (Malta)*

### **Abstract**

This study explored the lived experiences of LGBTIQ+ individuals who had contact with the Maltese criminal justice system, focusing on how sexual orientation and gender identity intersect to shape encounters with justice institutions. Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), semi-structured interviews were conducted with five LGBTIQ+ offenders aged 18-54, representing diverse gender identities (cisgender and transgender) and sexual orientations (lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual). Participants had engaged with various institutions across the criminal justice pathway, including police, criminal courts, probation services, prison, and drug rehabilitation services. Analysis identified themes of marginalisation, resistance, identity negotiation, and professional engagement. Participants described navigating justice systems as perceived 'others,' encountering stigma, discrimination and hyper-visibility linked to their identities. While some professional interactions provided affirmation and support, others reflected experiences of systemic betrayal and practices that failed to recognise or accommodate their identities. Despite these challenges, participants' accounts reflected resilience, agency and acts of resistance aimed at preserving dignity and maintaining identity coherence within constrained environments. Overall, the findings suggest that identity-based marginalisation and broader structural inequalities continue to shape LGBTIQ+ individuals' experiences within the Maltese criminal justice system. This study underscores the need for intersectional and identity-affirming reforms, emphasising the importance of moving beyond tokenistic inclusion towards more equitable justice practices.

**Keywords:** *LGBTIQ+, offenders, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), lived experiences, Maltese criminal justice system.*

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## COGNITIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### A HYBRID MODEL OF EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS, MATHEMATICAL ABILITIES AND TIME PROCESSING SKILLS

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#### Abstract

Time processing (TP) skills are fundamental functions in human beings, supporting different activities in daily life. These time-related abilities can facilitate both time monitoring and the sense of time, including time management and time orientation (Buzi, Eustache, Droit-Volet, Desaunay, & Hinault, 2024). An impairment in TP skills can affect the functioning of various life contexts, ranging from structured settings (e.g., school and work) to less structured ones (e.g., relationships, family, sports). According to the literature, deficits in TP skills are mainly observed in children with neurodevelopmental disorders, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and developmental dyscalculia (Moll, Göbel, Gooch, Landerl, & Snowling, 2016). This study aims to analyse the relationships between four latent constructs: executive functions (EF), mathematical abilities, time monitoring and sense of time (SoT). A total of 768 children (5-13 years, mean age:  $8.61 \pm 1.5$  years; 50.8 % female) completed ad-hoc computerized time monitoring tasks, self and proxy-report questionnaires about the SoT, EF tests (e.g., auditory attention, auditory inhibition and working memory, and visual attention) and mathematical tests (e.g., mental calculations, numerical reasoning, numerical search and numerical line). A test was also administered to assess non-verbal reasoning. All assessments were conducted during school hours in group and individual sessions lasting 45 minutes. The proposed hybrid model, which combines confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with pathway analysis, shows good fit indices (RMSEA = 0.05; CFI = 0.920; TLI = 0.896; SRMR = 0.06; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Using age and non-verbal reasoning as control variables, EF significantly predict time monitoring, and mathematical abilities significantly predict SoT. Age significantly predicts only SoT. The results suggest a significant connection between EF and mathematical abilities and time processing abilities. The implications of the results of this model are discussed from a dimensional point of view, considering how the potential presence of time-processing impairment in clinical populations, such as children with ADHD and Developmental Dyscalculia (e.g., Skagerlund & Träff, 2014). In future, it would be interesting to test the model for multiple groups by comparing typically developing populations with atypically developing populations.

**Keywords:** *Time processing skills, ADHD, developmental dyscalculia, executive functions, mathematical abilities.*

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### HOW IS “MEANING MAKING” DEFINED IN PUBLICATIONS LISTED IN THE PSYCINFO DATABASE (APA PSYCNET) BETWEEN 1991 AND 2025?

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#### Abstract

Analysis of the 65 entries in the PsycINFO database (APA PsycNet) provided some descriptions of the meaning-making process and the identification of some of its components that can support future research, but which also raise questions that could guide such research.

**Keywords:** *Meaning-making processes, meaning-making components, mental operations, museums.*

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## **THE ROLE OF DISPOSITIONAL SELF-AWARENESS IN IDENTIFYING GOAL-RELATED OBSTACLES AND PERCEIVED GOAL PROGRESS**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigated the relationship between dispositional self-awareness, identification of goal-related obstacles, and progress in the pursuit of a current personal goal. Based on theoretical assumptions proposed by Kreibich, Hennecke, and Brandstätter (2020), self-awareness is expected to facilitate the identification of obstacles that hinder goal attainment. The present study extends this framework by examining the broader relationship between dispositional self-awareness, obstacle identification, and their consequences for perceived goal progress. A total of 235 participants reported on a current personal goal and completed measures assessing obstacle identification (Kreibich, Hennecke, & Brandstätter, 2020), goal progress (Werner et al., 2016), and dispositional self-awareness using the Self-Reflection and Insight Scale–Short Form. As theoretically expected, dispositional self-awareness positively predicted the identification of goal-related obstacles. However, increased identification of obstacles was associated with lower subjective perceptions of goal progress. These findings challenge assumptions regarding the uniformly beneficial role of heightened self-awareness and suggest that, in the context of achievement difficulties, greater awareness of obstacles may come at a psychological cost rather than facilitating goal attainment.

**Keywords:** *Self-awareness, goal obstacles, goals.*

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## **EYE-TRACKING ANALYSIS OF VISUAL DESIGN PREFERENCES IN BOARD GAME SELECTION: INTEGRATING COGNITIVE ATTENTION AND MEMORY RETENTION FOR EFFECTIVE LUDIC INTERFACE DESIGN**

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### **Abstract**

This empirical study examines the relationship between visual design preferences and cognitive retention in board game evaluations using eye-tracking technology combined with structured recall interviews. Sixty participants (N = 60) viewed four distinct illustration styles (cartoonish, modern, doodle drawing, and animated/3D) while gaze data were recorded using the Tobii VT3 Mini and iMotions software, followed by a cognitive recall assessment 10 minutes post-exposure. Participants subsequently evaluated four board game designs differing in illustration style, color saturation, and visual complexity. Results show that cartoonish illustrations were the most liked style (30%) and that Animated/3D styles achieved perfect recall (100%), while Modern and Doodle Drawing styles also demonstrated high engagement and memory performance. High-saturation warm-color designs were consistently preferred and more memorable than low-saturation alternatives, with simplified, visually clear designs (Design 4) recalled with the highest accuracy. Qualitative feedback highlighted simplicity, clarity, and color vibrancy as primary drivers of preference. These findings provide empirical evidence for how visual design elements influence attention and memory in simulation board interfaces and offer actionable recommendations for optimizing visual aesthetics to enhance user engagement and cognitive retention. The study contributes to the emerging field of neuro-ludic design, with implications for both analog and digital game design practices.

**Keywords:** *Eye-tracking, simulation board design, visual preferences, cognitive retention, design aesthetics, user experience, memory recall, illustration styles.*

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## THE BENEFIT OF EXPERIENCE-BASED LEARNING IN DEVELOPING EMOTIONALLY COMPETENT LEADERS

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### Abstract

*Motivation of study.* The recruitment and development of emotionally competent leaders has become an important priority for organizations seeking to sustain growth, maintain a dedicated workforce, or operate in environments requiring leaders to manage personnel under conditions of risk, stress, and emotional strain. This aligns with long standing efforts within leadership research to identify common traits and factors associated with effective leadership (Stogdill, 1974; Yukl, 1989; Zaccaro, 2018; Lacarenza et al., 2017). Developing emotional competence may be facilitated through opportunities to experience, reflect on, and regulate one's emotions in practice oriented, experiential learning contexts. Research on developing emotional competence in leaders through education is very limited.

*Objective.* This study investigates whether an experience based military exercise can influence the development of emotional competence among young military leaders participating in a military bachelor leadership training program.

*Context of Study.* The military bachelor students completed a week-long exercise designed around staged crisis scenarios, serving alternately in roles such as operations room/crisis staff, force protection, first aid responders, bereavement support to next of kin, and observers. Each day concluded with Holistic debrief sessions emphasizing reflection on emotional responses, peer feedback, and clarification of challenges related to collaboration and interpersonal dynamics.

*Method.* Data were collected through semi structured, in depth interviews with participants from the training program. All respondents provided informed consent. The material was analyzed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis.

*Results.* Respondents expressed strong support for continued use of experience-based learning exercises. Through a detailed Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019), three central themes were identified: (1) Benefit from realistic training and sharing vulnerable experiences, (2) Benefits of Experience Based Learning in Relation to Theoretical Instruction, and (3) Emotional Preparedness for Leadership. Although methodological considerations were acknowledged, they were assessed as inconsequential to the core findings. The study recommends future research that explores the perceived long-term effects of such experiential training. Overall, the findings suggest that experiential learning activities that expose students to stress inducing scenarios contribute meaningfully to the development of emotional competence in leadership.

**Keywords:** *Experiential learning, leader education, developing emotional competence, holistic debrief.*

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## ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### EXPLORING THE LINKS BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH, SOCIAL HEALTH AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT: A PROSPECTIVE NETWORK ANALYSIS IN A NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE

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#### **Abstract**

The rise in mental health issues, urbanization, and loneliness presents significant societal challenges. It is imperative to comprehend the complex relationships among the various factors influencing mental health. This prospective study examines the relationships between mental, physical, and social health, as well as the physical environment, considering individual sociodemographic characteristics and objective macro-factors related to the Sustainable Development Goals, using a network approach. Moreover, the Multidimensional Mental Health Model was validated using a nationally representative sample of 1,610 participants (49% women) over a three-month period. The measurements used for assessing mental health included the PHQ-9, GAD-7, PSS-10, and SWLS; for assessing social health included the neighborhood cohesion scale and R-UCLA3; and for assessing physical health included the SRH. The network analysis revealed that the model was robust and stable over time. Social health (loneliness and neighborhood cohesion) acted as a mediator between mental health and the physical environment. Moreover, urbanicity was positively associated with neighborhood belonging but negatively with social cohesion. Additionally, depression symptoms and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions emerged as key risk factors, while forest areas and urbanicity served as influential protective factors. The centrality of neighborhood cohesion and green areas increased over time, highlighting their importance. The findings underscore the significance of a multifaceted approach to mental health that considers the interplay among social, environmental, individual, and objective macro-factors. This understanding can help develop more effective mental health prevention programs and provide valuable insights for policymakers and urban planners in creating supportive environments.

**Keywords:** *Mental health, urbanicity, social health, neighborhood cohesion, network analysis.*

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## STIMULATING CHILDREN'S OUTDOOR PLAY IN UNDERPRIVILEGED URBAN AREA. MAPPING PHASE OF THE B-CHALLENGED PROJECT

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### Abstract

*Introduction.* Outdoor play is one of the facilitators of children's wellbeing and healthy development, contributing to better focus, resilience and lower stress. The international B-challenged project aims to stimulate children's outdoor play by creating, implementing and evaluating interventions in cooperation with children and adult actors.

*Method.* Following the participatory action research model, in the first phase of the project the situation is mapped from the perspectives of adult stakeholders and children. Data collected through individual interviews and working meetings with adults, workshops, and photovoice sessions with children are collaboratively analyzed to formulate conclusions useful in intervention planning.

*Results.* The project's location in Poland is a district of Warsaw characterized by high levels of social problems (including drug problems) and low neighborhood cohesion. Adults recognize the need and importance of outdoor play for children's well-being and see opportunities for action primarily in areas such as improving safety, modernizing existing playgrounds and sport facilities, and organizing regular outdoor events. According to the children, key factors encouraging them to play outdoor are the proximity to home, school, and community center, the opportunity to meet peers there and play with them.

*Conclusions.* Despite the general consensus on the importance of outdoor play for children's health and development, implementing appropriate measures in underprivileged urban environments is difficult, often for reasons beyond the control of local stakeholders. However, with the involvement and good cooperation of various groups and acknowledgement of children's perspective, positive changes are possible.

**Keywords:** *Outdoor play, underprivileged urban area, participatory action research.*

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## HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

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### PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS: EVALUATING NON-PHARMACOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS IN URUGUAY

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#### Abstract

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a systemic autoimmune disease that, beyond its biological manifestations, constitutes a paradigmatic case of chronic illness with profound psychological and social implications. The hallmark of RA is erosive arthritis, which frequently leads to irreversible joint deformities and functional limitations, with a global prevalence of approximately 1%. While in Uruguay care has been predominantly oriented toward the biomedical dimension—specialized units, rheumatology consultations, and pharmacological treatment—less attention has been paid to the psychological processes, coping strategies, and social contexts that shape the experience of living with RA. From the perspective of health psychology, considering illness-related beliefs, adaptation to chronic pain, and quality of life is essential for understanding adherence to treatment and promoting long-term well-being. There is increasing evidence that adherence improves when interventions integrate therapeutic strategies addressing social support networks, coping with anxiety, family dynamics, self-care, and self-esteem. Furthermore, motivation for change, peer support, and the adoption of healthy habits are strengthened when incorporated into the therapeutic process. Thus, RA provides a relevant scenario for analyzing how biopsychosocial interventions can complement standard medical treatment. The general objective of this study is to evaluate the effect of non-pharmacological interventions in people with RA under standard treatment. The specific objectives are: (i) to describe the health status of participants across psychological and social dimensions; (ii) to assess quality of life in relation to disease activity and (iii) to examine the relationship between biopsychosocial dimensions, treatment adherence, and the effects of the interventions. This is a prospective experimental study in a cohort of patients with RA receiving standard treatment. Three groups will be formed: a control group, a group that will participate in remote non-pharmacological activities, and a group that will engage in face-to-face exchanges. Participants are followed in the Systemic Autoimmune Diseases Units (UEAS) and rheumatology polyclinics of public and private providers. Biological, psychological, and social indicators will be measured at baseline (T0) and follow-up (T1) to enable comparative analyses. By the time of the Congress presentation, final results from baseline and follow-up (T0–T1) will be available, allowing discussion of the psychological and social impact of the interventions. This study is funded by the Comisión Sectorial de Investigación Científica (CSIC) of the Universidad de la República, Uruguay, and contributes to expanding biopsychosocial approaches within health psychology for chronic illness.

**Keywords:** *Rheumatoid arthritis, biopsychosocial approach, non-pharmacological interventions, quality of life, treatment adherence.*

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## **LIFESTYLE AND PSYCHOSOCIAL CORRELATES OF OBESITY, HYPERTENSION AND PCOS: A HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY STUDY IN URBAN INDIAN ADULTS**

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### **Abstract**

Rapid urbanization in India is driving a "nutrition transition" linked to rising metabolic and psychological distress. This study examined behavioural–psychological profiles and psychosocial correlates of obesity, hypertension, and Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) in 205 urban adults (120 women, 85 men) from Mumbai, Kolkata, and Bangalore. Results indicate that 48.78% had an abnormal Body Mass Index (BMI) and 38.53% reported hypertension. Psychological distress was prevalent, with 14.1% reporting depression and 16.6% reporting anxiety. Notably, 43.95% of those reporting distress also presented with an irregular BMI. Short sleep duration (<7 hours) and frequent fast-food consumption were common, particularly among younger participants. Among women, PCOS prevalence was 15%. These findings suggest that obesity, hypertension, and PCOS in urban India are embedded in interrelated behavioural-psychological patterns involving distress, disrupted sleep, and dietary habits. Integrated interventions combining sleep hygiene, nutrition, and psychological support are suggested.

*Keywords: Obesity, sleep, psychological distress, health psychology, India.*

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## **FROM STIGMA TO RESILIENCE: CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEER SUPPORT AS PSYCHOSOCIAL CARE FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV**

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### **Abstract**

People living with HIV (PLWH) continue to face stigma, identity disruption, and psychological distress that can undermine quality of life and engagement in care. Peer-led support groups are widely used, yet their psychological functions and cultural expressions are still under-specified. This qualitative cross-cultural study examined how peer support groups operate as psychosocial care for PLWH in Denmark and Indonesia, focusing on emotional regulation, identity reconstruction, and empowerment. Forty adults living with HIV were interviewed (20 in Denmark; 20 in Indonesia) between 2024 and 2025 using semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Participants were recruited via community organizations and networks and reflected diversity in age and gender identity. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed thematically using a phenomenologically informed approach to capture lived experience and meaning-making. Across both settings, peer groups were described as psychologically safe spaces that enabled emotion-focused disclosure and reduced shame. Peer dialogue supported identity reconstruction, helping participants move from self-blame to resilience by normalizing HIV as a manageable condition and strengthening self-worth. Participants also reported increased empowerment, including confidence in treatment self-management, communicating with healthcare providers, and navigating disclosure and intimate relationships. Cultural variations shaped how these processes were expressed: spirituality and collectivist support were more prominent in Indonesia, while autonomy, boundary-setting, and self-affirmation were emphasized in Denmark. Findings indicate that peer support can function as culturally adaptable psychosocial care that complements clinical services, with implications for integrating peer-led models into stigma-informed mental health and HIV care pathways.

*Keywords: HIV, peer support, stigma, psychosocial care, cross-cultural psychology.*

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## WHEN JUSTICE REMAINS UNRESOLVED: EMBODIED HARM AND PHYSIOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES AMONG CO-VICTIMS OF COLD-CASE HOMICIDES

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### Abstract

*Motivation for the paper.* Co-victims of unsolved homicides endure a prolonged form of traumatic bereavement marked by legal and emotional limbo, without answers, accountability, or closure. This ongoing uncertainty intensifies grief, sustains trauma, and can undermine trust in legal institutions. While psychological impacts of homicide loss are well known, its physical consequences remain understudied. Broader research shows that trauma and bereavement are associated with cardiovascular, immune, gastrointestinal, and endocrine problems through chronic stress and allostatic load. Yet little is known about how cold-case loss becomes embodied over time, especially amid institutional inaction. This qualitative study addresses that gap by examining how Israeli co-victims describe emerging physical symptoms and link them to prolonged uncertainty and stalled investigations. Using the lens of Ambiguous Loss theory, Trauma theory and the Allostatic Load Model, it conceptualizes cold-case bereavement as a chronic, justice-related uncertainty that keeps families in an ongoing state of crisis with potential biological costs.

*Methods (objectives, what was done, how it was done and validated).* This study analyzes the perceived physical health consequences of traumatic loss among co-victims of unsolved homicide cases. Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Using a qualitative design and Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA), we examined how bereaved family members articulate perceived connections between prolonged unresolved grief, institutional inaction, chronic stress exposure, and perceived physiological health deterioration.

*Major Results.* Participants reported a wide range of chronic health problems including cardiovascular illness, autoimmune disorders, chronic pain, hypertension, diabetes, migraines, and disrupted sleep. They consistently attributed their physical decline not only to the trauma of the homicide itself but to the persistent absence of justice and ongoing interaction with inert legal systems, which they described as physiologically corrosive. According to participants' subjective interpretation, the unresolved status of their case maintained a long-term state of biological threat activation, manifesting in immune dysregulation, sleep disorders, and severe fatigue.

*Conclusions.* Findings demonstrate that cold-case homicide bereavement extends beyond psychological trauma and constitutes a significant yet neglected public health burden. The study underscores the need to integrate trauma-informed healthcare within criminal justice responses and calls for official recognition of the embodied consequences of unresolved homicide, both clinically and legally.

**Keywords:** *Unsolved homicide, ambiguous loss, somatic symptoms, institutional inaction, chronic stress, co-victims, embodied trauma.*

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## AN OPINION SURVEY ON ATTITUDES TOWARD MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING IN UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to survey opinions on Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) and to examine factors that correlate with its acceptance or rejection. Participants received questions that asked about demographic information (such as age and gender), and were asked their opinions on positive and negative attitudes toward MAiD. We measured participants' fear of death, religiosity, social connectedness and assurance, depression, anxiety, stress, self-efficacy and satisfaction with life. A total of 168 undergraduate students at an eastern Canadian university participated in the study. The average age was 21.15 years ( $SD = 5.68$ ; range = 18-46 years). We received scores across the range (strongly disagree to strongly agree) on all MAiD questions, indicating varied opinions. Several gender differences were noted. Women were more likely to agree that MAiD reduced the stigma of end-of-life thoughts whereas

men were more likely to be neutral in this area. Men were less likely than women to fear death. Both men and women were neutral on whether they thought the legalization of MAiD was a slippery slope that could go further than planned. Other results indicated that Canadian-born participants (versus those born abroad) were less religious and were more agreeable to MAiD; they also scored higher on fear of death. Participants were asked if they would consider MAiD for themselves if they were suffering from an incurable disease in the future. A hierarchical regression analysis indicated that those who scored higher on agreement were less likely to be religious, but more likely to be born in Canada and score higher on social assurance. These results provide a snapshot of the opinions of young adults and can be used for future comparisons.

**Keywords:** MAiD, Medical Assistance in Dying, opinions, attitudes.

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## **PRELIMINARY DATA FROM A FEASIBILITY TRIAL OF AN ONLINE RESILIENCE INTERVENTION FOR PEOPLE WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS: READY FOR MS**

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### **Abstract**

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic disease of the central nervous system, leading to significant physical burden and psychological challenges. The unpredictable nature of MS, characterized by relapses and progressive disability, further exacerbates psychological distress and negatively impacts quality of life. Although many people with MS (PwMS) experience significant psychological distress, there is a lack of psychotherapeutic options. In addition, only few interventions target resilience. As resilience, the ability to “bounce back” from adversity, is a key factor in coping with chronic diseases like MS, we developed and feasibility-tested an adapted German online version of the group-based resilience-enhancing program READY for MS. The program consists of a 7-module program with an additional booster session, which included videos, exercises, a personal plan and a workbook. In a single-arm feasibility study with n=19 PwMS (mean age 39.01 years; sex: 79% female) we collected data to assess program usability, perceived personal experiences and benefits, impressions and suggestions for improvement using a post-intervention survey. With a structured qualitative interview in a subset of n=5 participants we collected additional data on program satisfaction, usability and applicability. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed using qualitative content analysis, and survey data were subjected to descriptive analyses. Exploratory quantitative data on resilience, health-related quality of life, and psychological flexibility were also collected by an online survey pre- and post-intervention. Statistical analyses (Shapiro-Wilk test) were run by IBM SPSS (version 30.0). The program was well accepted, and both qualitative and quantitative findings indicated high satisfaction and perceived benefit. Participants reported greater self-reflection, awareness, and stress-resistance, and suggested minor structural and technological improvements. Quantitative results (n=19) indicated positive effects of the program on resilience (CD-RISC  $p<.05$ ), quality of life (HAQUAMS  $p<.05$ ), and psychological flexibility (MPFI flexibility  $p<.05$ ; inflexibility  $p<.05$ ). The German online version of READY for MS appears to be a feasible and well-accepted intervention to support resilience in PwMS. Preliminary data indicate significant beneficial effects on psychological flexibility and inflexibility. The next step is a randomized controlled trial to study the effectiveness of READY for MS (started in January 2026).

**Keywords:** Multiple sclerosis, resilience, quality of life, mental health, acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT).

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## **EXPLORING BREAST HEALTH EDUCATION AND KEY EDUCATIONAL PROVIDERS FOR WOMEN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN AUSTRIA**

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### **Abstract**

Women with intellectual disabilities (ID) show lower participation rates in breast cancer screening than the general population. This leads to cancer being diagnosed at a later stage and higher morbidity. Studies previously highlighted the importance of education targeted at women with ID. Being educated on and understanding the importance of leads to higher utilization of breast cancer screening. However, it is yet to be explored what proportion of women with ID received breast health education in Austria. Moreover, it remains unclear who is delivering breast health education. In order to successfully target educational providers when designing educational measures, it is crucial to identify them first. This study aims to explore breast health education in women with ID in Austria. First, we aim to assess the proportion of women with ID who have previously received education on breast health, focusing on breast cancer, mammography and breast palpation. Further we aim to identify who provided them with information on the respective topics. Data collection was part of a larger online survey on breast cancer screening in Austria. We surveyed 113 primary caregivers of women with ID. Given their close connection and importance in facilitating healthcare, they represent a reliable source of information for this purpose. For this study, characteristics of women with ID and their caregivers, as well as information on breast health education was collected. Results suggest that half of the women with ID (49.6%) received education on breast cancer. A majority of the women with ID (63.5%) were provided with information on mammography and approximately 24.8% received education on breast palpation. Education on mammography was significantly associated with characteristics of women with ID. Further, education on breast cancer and mammography was mostly provided by caregivers themselves, medical personnel and social workers. Education on these domains was rarely, to almost never, delivered through educational institutions, media or family members. Comprehensive results will be presented at the conference. The results of this study show a lack of education on breast health in women with ID in Austria. Medical personnel and caregivers seem to be primarily responsible for breast health education. Contrarily, educational institutions seem to represent an underutilised source, which could potentially offer a range of possibilities for providing education. This study offers information on who to target for educational means and lays a foundation on eventually providing a comprehensive breast health education for women with ID.

**Keywords:** *Intellectual disabilities, breast health education, breast cancer, mammography.*

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## PSYCHOANALYSIS AND PSYCHOANALYTICAL PSYCHOTHERAPY

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### A TALE OF TWO FARMS - A CLINICAL APPLICATION OF TEMPLATE THEORY

**Bruce Herzog**

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#### **Abstract**

Therapists commonly listen to recalled memories in the clinical setting, but there are other means by which the analyst can gain access to a patient's history. The non-verbal realm can be very telling in those patients who are not forthcoming, or have difficulty remembering. A therapist's ability to observe the automatic behaviour of such patients can provide a window into their past. I have recommended using the concept of a "relational template" in this endeavour, to aid us in our use of non-verbal phenomena, where we track back from what we observe in the consultation room, to the developmental events that gave rise to those reflexive behaviours. Repeated relational interactions of childhood have become encoded in automatic (procedural) memory, and are now manifest in observable, reflexive, relational behaviours, sometimes outside of the patient's awareness. A relational template is manifest in the consultation room primarily in three different ways. The therapist observes in the patient 1) automatic interactive behaviour, 2) automatic expectancies of others, and 3) relational beliefs, or premises. All three can manifest within the therapeutic relationship, or apply to behaviour being described outside of the consultation room. The therapist has relational templates as well, and combined ways of relating between therapist and patient will create various kinds of therapeutic engagement. Synchronous pairings, where therapist and patient templates align, may seamlessly blend; while discordant (clashing) templates can create conflict and distress. The therapist's affect, positive or negative, can indicate which template configuration is in play. A clinical tale involving the topic of "farming" is recounted to demonstrate how an awareness of discordant templates between therapist and patient can expand the therapist's understanding of a patient's history. Understanding the origins of his own reaction to her farm, the therapist was able to intuit the patient's different developmental history that gave rise her starkly contrasting viewpoint and behaviour. Exploration of the differences in behaviour and worldview in the analytic pair led to increased understanding of their disparate past experiences of shame, which helped to resolve a therapeutic impasse. This demonstrates how observation of automatic non-verbal behaviour can be used to deepen understanding of the patient's developmental history. In this case it jumpstarted an exploratory process that facilitated insight into the evolution of the patient's feelings about her farm and farming, rooted in a history of shaming and intergenerational trauma.

**Keywords:** *Intellect, misanthrope, difficult, attack, disrespect, template, relational.*

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## REPRESSED MEMORIES: FACT OR FAKE?

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### Abstract

The term ‘repression’ is closely associated with Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalysis and was frequently linked to ‘traumatic amnesia.’ Both terms refer to the loss of conscious access to past (and probably problematic) memories. The term repression also found its way into current cognitive theories, clinical psychology and neuroscience. A number of experimental psychologists questions the existence of repression and traumatic amnesia, while many clinicians use and accept this term. Because of this controversy, it was spoken of the “memory war.” Some researchers suggested that “after the 1990s, when the term *repressed memory* was widely criticized, proponents began to favor the term *dissociative amnesia* instead”, while others argued that they are not the same. We will argue for the existence of repressed memories on the basis of cases with dissociative amnesia. By doing so, we will center on the concept of state-dependent memories and on relations between stress and amnesia, mechanisms by which repressed memories are likely to occur. Furthermore, the results of brain imaging studies are used to support the existence of repressed memories.

**Keywords:** *Autobiographical memory, mnestic block syndrome, functional amnesia, false memories.*

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# Posters





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## CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### **WORKING WITH VULNERABLE CHILDREN: STRESS FACTORS AND COPING STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED BY NGO WORKERS**

**Lisa Santoro, Marielle Bruyninckx, & Sathya Lheureux**

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#### **Abstract**

Bolivia faces violence and poverty issues that negatively impact children and their development. In this context, professionals of local NGOs play a crucial role (Gallardo, 2022). However, prolonged exposure to stress can affect their well-being and also the quality of support for vulnerable children (Young et al., 2018). This research focuses on the difficulties of the local NGOs' professionals. This study focuses on sources of stress and coping strategies among professionals working for a child protection NGO in Tarija. To collect our data, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 13 employees of this NGO. They also completed two psychometric questionnaires: the Coping Strategy Inventory (CSI), which measures stress levels on a three-level scale (Tobin et al., 1989), and the Perceived Stress Scale 14 (PSS-14), which assesses the type of coping strategies used (Cohen et al., 1983). Despite the small sample size, the thematic analysis shows that professionals are deeply committed to their jobs. The Bolivian collectivist culture acts as a protective factor, despite few resources. Indeed, all participants emphasized the importance of the support they get from colleagues. They require psychological help and additional personnel.

**Keywords:** *Bolivia, local workers, stress, coping strategies, vulnerable children.*

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### **THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN UNIVERSITY STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND ACADEMIC FUNCTIONING**

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*Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka (Croatia)*

#### **Abstract**

The influence of teachers on student well-being and performance is well documented in elementary and secondary education, but less attention has been given to the role of university teachers. The goal of this research was to examine the role of teacher social support in students' mental health (symptoms of anxiety and depression, and life satisfaction) and their academic functioning. In total, 685 university students (aged 19–28; 79 % female) completed an online survey including the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS); the Stress Source Questionnaire; the Academic Functioning Questionnaire, and ratings of life satisfaction and perceived social support from teachers, family, and friends/partners. Findings revealed elevated levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms, with only 36% of students scoring in the normal range for anxiety and 38 % for depression. Students reported academic functioning and life satisfaction at the moderate level. They perceived the highest social support from family and friends/partners and the lowest from teachers. The results of hierarchical regression analysis showed that lack of teacher support significantly contributed to higher levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms, whereas family and friend support had significant contribution only for depressive symptoms. Teacher support also emerged as the strongest positive contributor to life satisfaction. Furthermore, symptoms of depression, but not anxiety, were a negative predictor of academic functioning. After controlling for psychological symptoms, perceived support from family, and especially from teachers, had the strongest positive effect on academic functioning. These results highlight the critical role of university teachers in supporting both the psychological well-being and academic functioning of their students. Universities should therefore prioritize strengthening teachers' capacities to provide effective support throughout students' academic journeys.

**Keywords:** *Mental health, university teachers, university students, academic functioning, social support.*

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## **PERSONALITY DISORDERS TRAITS AMONG PRISONERS IN THE POLISH SAMPLE**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of the study is to establish the prevalence of personality disorders among a group of prisoners and to show the demographic correlates of the specified personality disorder traits. The study involved 754 adults from the prison population (all participants were men) aged 19 to 46 years. The author measured personality disorder traits using the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-4 Axis II Personality Disorders. The results indicate that the most common specified personality disorders in the prison population were antisocial, narcissistic, and borderline, and the co-occurrence of these pathological traits was noted. The prevalence of personality disorders differs from that of the general population in Poland and in other countries in that obsessive-compulsive personality disorder is the most prevalent. The specified personality disorder traits are not related to age nor to the education of prisoners. However, the severity of crime differentiates the offenders' personality disorders and traits. The more severe the crime committed by a given person, the more it is associated with the antisocial personality disorder traits.

**Keywords:** *Personality disorders, prisoners, offenders, crime.*

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## **SOCIAL SUPPORT AS A BUFFER IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VICTIMIZATION AND SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER**

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### **Abstract**

**Background:** Social anxiety disorder (SAD) is a particularly prevalent mental health condition. It commonly has its onset in late childhood or adolescence. Prior research has demonstrated that exposure to victimization is linked to an increased risk of developing SAD. Social support, on the other hand, has been shown to have protective effects on adolescent's mental health. However, there is sparse data regarding the moderating role of social support in the relationship between victimization experience and SAD. The current analysis aims to explore the association between victimization and SAD in adolescence and young adults from the general population and specifically test the buffering hypothesis of social support, i.e., whether social support moderates the relationship between victimization experiences and social anxiety.

**Methods:** Data come from the baseline assessment of a population-based cohort study of n=1180 adolescents and young adults aged 14 – 21 years from Dresden, Germany. SAD and other mental disorders were assessed face-to-face using a clinical diagnostic interview (DIA-X-5). Victimization was assessed a) through self-developed questionnaire referring to assaults, aggressive behavior, bullying as victim in real life and social media in the past 12 months and b) by Ecological Momentary Assessment across 4 days including one item asking for bullying experiences during the past day. Social support was assessed with an established questionnaire (F-SozU). Weighted logistic regression analyses adjusted for age and sex were used to reveal associations and interactive effects.

**Results:** Individuals who had experienced victimization in the past 12 months more likely met criteria for 12-month SAD compared to those who had not been victimized (Odds ratio, OR = 2.6, 95% Confidence Interval, CI: 1.5 - 4.5, p = .001). The interaction between victimization and social support was also significantly associated with SAD (OR = 0.5, 95% CI 0.3 - 0.9, p = .033) in a way that the higher the level of social support the lower the impact of victimization on SAD.

**Conclusion:** The current analysis confirmed the known association between victimization and SAD in a regional population-based sample of adolescents and young adults. In addition, the study provides evidence for a moderating effect of social support on this association. Given the cross-sectional nature of the findings, further research requires longitudinal observational studies to establish temporal associations and interventional preventive studies to test potential causal effects.

**Keywords:** *Social anxiety disorder, victimization, social support, epidemiology.*

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## **PHD STUDENTS' WELL-BEING: EVIDENCE FROM SELF-CARE AND STRESS-MANAGEMENT WORKSHOPS**

**Olga Zaffini<sup>1</sup>, Ludovica Cionti<sup>1,2</sup>, Rachele Montanelli<sup>1,2</sup>, Valentina Tobia<sup>1,2,3</sup>, & Anna Lucia Ogliari<sup>1,2,3</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

Mental health is defined as an individual's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Within the University context, particularly among PhD students, addressing mental health has become increasingly important to safeguard psychological functioning. As part of the Health Mode On project, within the PRO-BEN initiative, Vita-Salute San Raffaele University developed a set of strategies to promote well-being among University Students and particular PhD Students. A pilot well-being intervention initiative and protocol was implemented, focusing on the promotion of self-care routines, mindfulness and time and stress management. The same set of activities will be administered to the study sample, consisting of PhD students enrolled at Vita-Salute San Raffaele University. To evaluate potential changes in doctoral students' perceived well-being, following participation in the workshops, the SInAPSi academic engagement scale (SAES) will be administered at both pre- and post-intervention time and focus groups will be implemented to describe well-being changes in PhD Students. Preliminary reports from the pilot study implemented in the undergraduate population, encompasses focus groups and qualitative reports indicated a reduction in perceived stress levels after the above-mentioned intervention. These results, together with existing evidence in the literature, provided the rationale for extending the initiative to the PhD student population, reducing stress and fostering psychological well-being.

*Keywords: Well-being, mental health, PhD students, stress-management, self-care.*

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## **THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE OF BREAST CANCER AMONG MUSLIM WOMEN LIVING IN BELGIUM AND FRANCE**

**Lisa Santoro, Dimitri Cauchie, & Syrienne Bounoua**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to explore and understand the experiences of Muslim women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer in Belgium and France. To collect our data, we conducted semi-structured interviews with five Muslim women, aged 27 to 52. Our results show that receiving the diagnosis is a significant challenge, but both religion and family are essential in helping them cope with breast cancer. Living in France or Belgium allows our participants to perceive breast cancer as a disease that may be treated. The physical consequences of treatment, especially hair loss, negatively affected their body image, but they reported a gradual improvement over time.

*Keywords: Breast cancer, Muslim women, quality of life, body image.*

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## PERSONALITY AND GAME DESIGN FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH GAMING ADDICTION: AN OVERVIEW OF CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH

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### Abstract

Gaming represents one of the most popular leisure activities worldwide. Yet, for a subset of individuals, extensive engagement may escalate into addictive behaviour. A growing body of research has identified multiple factors as potential determinants of this phenomenon, including specific personality traits and game design mechanisms that intensify player involvement and may facilitate the development of gaming addiction. Therefore, this paper seeks to synthesize recent empirical findings, through a comprehensive review of the literature, on the ways in which personality traits interact with genre- and structure-related characteristics of video games in the development of gaming addiction, thereby providing critical insights and implications for both research and practice. Key findings reveal that a preference for genres such as role-playing (RPG), first-person shooter (FPS), real-time strategy (RTS), and multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) games is often associated with elevated addiction risk. However, structural components such as reward schedules, gambling-like features, and online social interaction systems appear to play an even more central role in reinforcing compulsive gaming. At the personality level, low conscientiousness and high neuroticism consistently emerge as predictors of problematic gaming, whereas the evidence for openness, agreeableness, and extraversion remains mixed. Personality traits further influence genre selection, with individuals lower in conscientiousness and higher in neuroticism more inclined toward immersive or competitive game types like RPG and FPS. In summary, the development of gaming disorder reflects an interaction of various influences, including individual personality factors and specific design elements of games. Understanding these dynamics is important for the development of preventive strategies, treatment approaches, and ethical guidelines in game design aimed at protecting vulnerable populations. Future longitudinal research is essential to clarify pathways and deepen insight into these interactions.

**Keywords:** *Gaming addiction, personality traits, video game design, structural characteristics, genre preference.*

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## THE IMPACT OF THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION USING THE SEE FAR CBT METHOD ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING MEASURES AMONG PALLIATIVE NURSES EMPLOYED AT 'SABAR-HEALTH'

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** Nurses in home-hospitalization and palliative care settings are exposed to prolonged patient suffering and end-of-life processes, placing them at elevated risk for anxiety, secondary traumatic stress, burnout, and compassion fatigue. These conditions undermine both caregiver well-being and care quality. SEE FAR CBT is an integrative treatment model combining cognitive-behavioral principles with somatic and imagination-based techniques, including associative art cards to facilitate symbolic emotional processing through imaginative, playful engagement. Despite its broad clinical application, empirical evidence among healthcare workers remains limited. This study examined whether the SEE FAR CBT intervention improves psychological well-being among palliative nurses. We hypothesized reductions in distress symptoms and improvements in resilience and professional quality of life.

**Methods:** A pre-post design included 17 palliative nurses aged 30–50 with at least three years of experience. Exclusion criteria included pregnancy, current psychiatric diagnosis or psychotropic medication, and ongoing psychotherapy within the past six months. Participants completed baseline measures of depression (PHQ-9), anxiety (GAD-7), perceived stress (PSS), PTSD symptoms (PCL-5 abbreviated), resilience (CD-RISC), and professional quality of life (ProQOL). Nurses participated in six weekly SEE FAR CBT sessions conducted via Zoom by trained social workers unaffiliated with the

participants. All measures were repeated post-intervention. Paired-sample t-tests assessed pre–post changes.

*Results:* Significant improvements were observed across several psychological well-being measures following the SEE FAR CBT intervention. Depression symptoms (PHQ-9) decreased from 8.53 to 5.71 ( $p = .007$ ), and anxiety symptoms (GAD-7) decreased from 7.41 to 3.76 ( $p = .007$ ). Perceived stress (PSS) showed a substantial reduction from 17.71 to 12.82 ( $p < .001$ ). Resilience (CD-RISC) increased from 29.71 to 31.12 ( $p = .046$ ). PTSD-related symptoms (PCL-5 abbreviated) declined from 3.35 to 2.53, though this change was not statistically significant ( $p = .12$ ). Professional quality of life indicators also demonstrated significant positive change: compassion satisfaction increased from 42.82 to 44.47 ( $p = .022$ ), and secondary traumatic stress decreased from 24.12 to 22.12 ( $p = .015$ ). Burnout scores showed a small, non-significant reduction from 23.42 to 22.76 ( $p = .28$ ).

*Conclusions:* These preliminary findings indicate that SEE FAR CBT may effectively reduce emotional distress and enhance coping resources among palliative nurses. Given the small sample, further research is needed to substantiate these results and evaluate the intervention's broader applicability. Expansion of SEE FAR CBT within healthcare organizations may provide a promising, feasible tool to mitigate compassion fatigue, secondary traumatization, stress, anxiety, and depression, and to support caregiver resilience.

**Keywords:** *SEE FAR CBT, intervention, palliative nursing, psychological well-being.*

## **FAMILY FUNCTIONING FACTORS DIFFERENTIALLY PREDICT DIRECT AND INDIRECT AGGRESSION IN ADOLESCENTS**

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### **Abstract**

Individual and contextual factors contribute to the development of aggressive behavior during adolescence. With regard to contextual factors, it has been widely demonstrated that child neglect, abuse, and maltreatment within the family have severe negative consequences for later adolescent behavior problems, such as delinquency, aggression, and substance use or abuse. Nowadays, there is growing interest in examining characteristics of family functioning during adolescence that contribute to aggression at this stage, since family dysfunction is consistently related to adolescent maladjustment. In this work, we used the McMaster Model of Family Functioning as a comprehensive and systematic framework that has proven useful for identifying relevant family variables that distinguish healthy from unhealthy families, in order to explain different adjustment problems in adolescence. We used this model to examine which specific features of the family could lead to either direct or indirect aggression in adolescents. The sample consisted of 722 Spanish secondary school students aged 12 to 18. They completed the Family Assessment Device (FAD), a self-report measure that assesses different dimensions of family functioning (problem solving, communication, roles, affective responsiveness, affective involvement, and behavioral control), and the subscales for direct and indirect aggression from the Children's Social Behavior Scale – Self-Report (CSBS-S). Regression analyses revealed that both problem solving and roles were predictive of both forms of aggression. In addition, communication was specifically predictive of direct aggression, while affective responsiveness and affective involvement were specific predictors of indirect aggression. In conclusion, the findings clarify the contribution of family functioning to the development of adolescent aggression, and reveal the differential role of communication and affection in preventing direct and indirect aggression, respectively. Knowledge of the risk factors leading to aggressive behavior may be useful for designing specific interventions aimed at preventing the onset of and reducing adolescent adjustment problems over the course of development.

**Keywords:** *Family functioning, direct and indirect aggression, adolescence.*

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS AND PROBLEMATIC PORNOGRAPHY USE AMONG YOUNG MEN: THE ROLE OF IMPULSIVE–COMPULSIVE MECHANISMS**

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### **Abstract**

Excessive and harmful pornography consumption is increasingly conceptualized as a form of maladaptive behavioural regulation characterized by impulsive and compulsive features. From the perspective of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan), such behaviour reflects not merely a deficit in self-control but the chronic frustration of basic psychological needs (BPNF): autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Frustration of autonomy fosters internal pressure and impulsive responding, while frustration of competence undermines self-regulation and increases reliance on immediate relief. Frustrated relatedness may expand, as pornography provides an illusory sense of intimacy without interpersonal risk. Impulsivity represents an acute response to unmet needs, whereas compulsivity reflects persistent behavior maintained despite negative consequences. Although pornography use may temporarily reduce distress, it can intensify need frustration, weakening self-regulation, and promoting a shift from impulsive to compulsive use. The present study examines the relationship between BPNF and problematic pornography use among young men, focusing on the mediating roles of impulsivity and compulsivity. Online data were collected from Slovak men aged 18–35 years ( $N = 794$ ;  $M = 29.8$ ;  $SD = 9.8$ ). BPNF was assessed using the Basic Psychological Need Frustration Scale. Impulsivity (Short UPPS-P) and compulsivity (CPAS) were measured with validated scales and tested as mediators. Problematic pornography use was assessed with the PPCS. Linear regression models and mediation analyses examined direct and indirect associations among the study variables. As it was predicted, the BPNF were significantly associated with: (1) higher level of PPCS ( $B = .278^{***}$ ); (2) higher impulsivity ( $B = .343^{***}$ ) and (3) higher compulsivity ( $B = .319^{***}$ ). Similarly, the impulsivity ( $B = .301^{***}$ ) and compulsivity ( $B = .209^{***}$ ) were positively associated with PPCS. The association between BPNF and problematic pornography use behaviour was partially mediated by impulsivity ( $B = .0656^*$ ) and by compulsivity ( $B = .0447^*$ ). The findings supported all hypothesized relationships, indicating that BPNF is significantly associated with PPCS among young men. This relationship was both directly and indirectly explained through impulsivity and compulsivity, with evidence for a sequential mediating pathway. The results highlight the role of impaired self-regulatory mechanisms in linking unmet psychological needs to maladaptive pornography use.

**Keywords:** *Psychological needs, pornography use, impulsiveness, compulsiveness, young men.*

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## EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### ESCAPE ROOM ON DYSLEXIA: IMPACT ON KNOWLEDGE AND INTRINSIC MOTIVATION OF FUTURE TEACHERS

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#### Abstract

Innovative methodologies increase student motivation and promote deep learning. Among them is gamification, understood as the application of game design elements in non-playful contexts, which includes escape rooms. This research analysed the impact on university students of an escape room whose specific theme was dyslexia. The research had two objectives: Compare knowledge about dyslexia and intrinsic motivation in students who participated in the escape room with those who did not, and examine differences in knowledge about dyslexia and intrinsic motivation in students who participated in the escape room according to their prior training on dyslexia and prior contact with people with dyslexia. The intervention was based on Gamification Theory and Self-Determination Theory. A quasi-experimental design with two independent groups and post-test measures was used. The sample consisted of 60 students (30 in each group) in their second year of primary education degree at a Spanish public university. Their ages ranged from 19 to 23 ( $M = 19.98$ ;  $SD = 1.05$ ), being 60% female. All students received four hours of prior training on dyslexia as part of a course. In addition, the experimental group participated in a one-hour in-person escape room, while the control group attended a regular class in which they created a digital story about autism. The students completed the Scale of Knowledge and Beliefs about Developmental Dyslexia and part of the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory after completing the assigned activities. The results obtained using the Mann-Whitney  $U$  statistic indicated that the students who participated in the escape room showed significantly greater knowledge about dyslexia compared to the group that did not participate. Likewise, significant differences were found in favour of the escape room group in the perceived choice dimension. The effect sizes, assessed using Cohen's  $d$ , were mostly moderate or large. On the other hand, no relevant differences were found in knowledge about dyslexia or intrinsic motivation based on prior training or contact with people with dyslexia. Although more studies with robust methodological designs are needed, gamified activities such as escape rooms can be effective in expanding knowledge and increasing intrinsic motivation among university students.

**Keywords:** *Escape room, gamification, higher education, dyslexia, intrinsic motivation.*

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### HOW DO OUR STUDENTS ENVISION? ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS AND POSITIVITY BIAS IN THEIR FIRST YEAR AT UNIVERSITY

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#### Abstract

This study explores the concept of positivity bias—the human tendency to prioritise positive over negative information—within the academic future thinking of first-year Psychology students. These students are beginning their university trajectory after a period marked by global uncertainty associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, making their academic expectations particularly relevant. The primary objective was to examine how this positivity bias manifests when students envision their academic future, and how it relates to their current emotional and psychological well-being. Building on prior research in autobiographical memory and normative studies, a set of 30 recall cues was developed: 15 positive cues (e.g., *achieve, collaborate, succeed*) and 15 negative cues (e.g., *be afraid of, fail at, feel embarrassed*). Participants generated specific academic expectations in response to each cue and rated the emotional intensity associated with each generated situation. After completing distractor tasks, they were asked to recall freely the previously generated expectations. Participants then completed standardised questionnaires assessing their levels of academic satisfaction, resilience, and academic self-concept. Results indicate a clear and robust positivity bias in academic future thinking. Participants consistently

produced and recalled a significantly higher proportion of positive academic expectations compared to negative ones, with effects of moderate-to-large magnitude. Emotional intensity ratings were generally high for both positive and negative expectations, though the intensity itself did not differ based on valence. Intriguingly, errors in production and recall frequently involved a valence shift toward positivity. For example, a negative cue such as “*Abandon*” often elicited positively reframed expectations (e.g., “*Abandon my fears*”), and negatively framed productions (e.g., “*Argue with classmates*”) were later recalled in more positive terms (e.g., “*Get along with classmates and don't argue*”). This systematic valence shift suggests an active cognitive mechanism favouring positive future outcomes. Furthermore, students exhibiting a more pronounced positivity bias reported higher levels of academic satisfaction, resilience, and self-concept. Although the study’s correlational and cross-sectional design limits causal conclusions, the findings contribute to a more detailed understanding of future thinking in the academic context, linking the cognitive mechanism of positivity bias directly to personal well-being measures. By identifying the common negative expectations that persist in students, the results offer an empirical foundation for developing targeted support and intervention programs. Such initiatives may help first-year students address and overcome perceived academic challenges, thereby supporting their emotional well-being and successful transition into university life.

**Keywords:** *Memory, optimism, self-concept, academic satisfaction, resilience.*

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## **FROM STORYTIME TO SCREEN TIME: HOW DIFFERENT READING ENVIRONMENTS PREDICT READING COMPREHENSION**

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### **Abstract**

This study examined the predictive relationships between different types of home literacy environments and students’ reading comprehension one year later. The Home Literacy Model suggests that outcomes vary according to the types of formal and informal literacy activities undertaken at home. However, it does not explicitly consider how the medium of these activities—whether print or digital—may influence performance. Given the growing role of technology in children’s reading experiences, it is essential to also examine the impact of the digital literacy environment on literacy development. This study considered three literacy contexts: formal literacy environments (e.g., how often parents teach children to read or write letters and short words, or work with them on book-based learning activities), informal literacy environments (e.g., how often parents play language games, visit the library, or read to their children), and digital literacy environments (e.g., how frequently parents use digital devices to teach reading and writing, read together, or listen to audio stories). The study was conducted at two time points. It involved 220 children aged 6 to 8 years and one of their parents. Parents provided insights into formal, informal, and digital literacy activities they engage in with their children. Reading comprehension was measured one year later using a validated assessment tool. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive power of each environment. Findings revealed distinct patterns across literacy environments. The formal literacy environment was not a significant predictor of later reading comprehension, while the informal literacy environment showed a significant positive relationship, indicating that rich, engaging literacy experiences outside formal teaching practices foster stronger comprehension skills over time. Finally, the digital literacy environment emerged as a significant negative predictor, suggesting that higher engagement with digital reading and screen-based content may be associated with lower gains in reading comprehension. The suggested model explained 5.3% of the variance of reading comprehension ( $F=4.04, p<.008$ ). These results highlight the nuanced roles of different literacy environments in shaping reading development. While traditional formal instruction alone may not account for growth in comprehension, informal literacy practices appear to provide meaningful support for literacy skills. Conversely, the negative association with digital literacy exposure underscores the need to better understand the quality and cognitive demands of digital reading experiences. The findings emphasize the importance of promoting rich, authentic literacy experiences at home, as well as developing strategies to guide productive digital reading practices in an increasingly online world.

**Keywords:** *Reading comprehension, digital literacy environment, middle childhood.*

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## MATHEMATICAL WELLBEING PREDICTORS OF MATHEMATICS ACHIEVEMENT IN DIFFERENT EDUCATIONAL TRACKS: CASE OF SLOVENIA

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### Abstract

The role of students' mathematical wellbeing in explaining mathematics achievement has gained increasing attention in national and international research, particularly within large-scale assessment studies (e.g. PISA, TIMSS). Among the dimensions of mathematical wellbeing, mathematics anxiety, mathematics self-efficacy, and proactive mathematics study behaviour have consistently been identified as significant predictors of mathematics achievement. The latest PISA 2022 results for Slovenia show that Slovenian 15-year-olds report substantially higher levels of mathematics anxiety and lower levels of mathematics self-efficacy and proactive study behaviour compared to their OECD peers. Given the long-term negative trend in Slovenian students' mathematics performance, this study addresses a research gap by examining the contribution of different aspects of mathematical wellbeing to explaining mathematics achievement. Since previous national studies have shown that educational programme is an important source of differences in learning behaviour and academic outcomes in Slovenia, the study also explores how the predictive effects vary across educational tracks. The analysis is based on Slovenian PISA 2022 data from a representative sample of 6,721 15-year-old students, of whom 1,486 (22.1%) attended general education and 1,339 (19.9%) vocational education programmes. From the student questionnaire, we used scales measuring mathematics anxiety, mathematics self-efficacy (formal and applied), and prosocial mathematics behaviour, while mathematics achievement was measured using ten plausible values from the cognitive database. All scales showed good internal consistency in the Slovenian sample. Linear regression analysis was applied to examine the effects of predictors within educational tracks, with multicollinearity checked prior to analysis. Data were analysed using IEA IDB Analyzer (Version 5.0.50), which accounts for PISA's two-stage sampling design by applying student and sample weights and estimating standard errors using the Bootstrap method. The results showed that mathematics anxiety and mathematics self-efficacy related to formal and applied mathematics were the most significant predictors of students' mathematics achievement in the Slovenian context, regardless of educational programme. Analyses of the model's explanatory power revealed notable differences between educational programmes, as the predictors explained 16% of the variance in mathematics achievement in general education, but only 5% in vocational education. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening students' socio-emotional wellbeing related to mathematics and fostering supportive student-teacher relationships as key pathways for improving mathematics achievement, thereby emphasizing the need to systematically address mathematics anxiety and enhance mathematics self-efficacy, while also implementing differentiated pedagogical approaches that take into account students' prior knowledge, motivational characteristics, and specific educational needs.

**Keywords:** *Mathematics achievement, mathematics anxiety, mathematics self-efficacy, educational tracks, PISA 2022 study.*

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## **SOCIOEMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING IN YOUNG STUDENTS: GENDER MATTERS**

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### **Abstract**

Socioemotional competencies have become established as essential for student's personal and educational development, in a context that demands emotionally competent and resilient individuals capable of facing the challenges of contemporary life. These competencies are crucial not only for comprehensive development and well-being, but also for academic performance, professional success, individual health, and the construction of healthy democratic societies. Gender stereotypes continue to influence the acquisition and development of these competencies, perpetuating inequalities that affect educational equity. The main objective of this study was to analyse gender differences in various socioemotional competencies and in subjective well-being in young people, as well as to examine the relationships between them. The research was carried out with 205 students (116 males and 89 female) in their first year of Intermediate Vocational Training and Upper Secondary Education, aged between 16 and 22 years ( $M = 16.85$ ;  $SD = 1.35$ ). The socioemotional competencies analysed included self-perceived emotional intelligence (TMMS-24), emotional intelligence as an ability (MSCEIT), self-concept (AF-5), and resilience (CYRM-32). Subjective well-being was measured through positive and negative affect (PANAS) and life satisfaction (SWLS). The results of this research showed significant gender differences, with males scoring higher compared to females in self-perceived emotional intelligence, specifically in the dimensions of clarity and repair (small effects); in all dimensions of self-concept (small to medium effects) except academic; in the total resilience score and its individual skills dimension (small effects) and in subjective well-being, both in positive and negative affect and in life satisfaction (small to medium effects). Furthermore, a positive relationship was found between socioemotional competencies and subjective well-being, suggesting that the former can contribute to the strengthening of the latter and vice versa. Although factors not addressed such as socioeconomic status, cultural background, school climate, or prior training in emotional education could influence results. However, these findings, on the one hand, help increase the scientific evidence related to socioemotional competencies in young students at different educational stages, and encourage reflection on the importance of their development at key moments of great major and educational change. On the other hand, the findings underscore the need to promote emotional education and incorporate a gender perspective into prevention or intervention programmes aimed at young students.

**Keywords:** *Socioemotional competencies, subjective well-being, gender, young people.*

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## **THE EFFECTS OF BACKGROUND MUSIC AND MUSIC LISTENING ON READING RECALL AND EXTRANEIOUS COGNITIVE LOAD**

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### **Abstract**

Music listening is increasing worldwide due to the growing popularity of streaming services. The International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (2023) reported the highest amount of music listening measured to date, with an average listening time of 20.7 hours per week. They also found people often listen to music while completing tasks, including working. This trend suggests an increasing importance of research into background music listening and its effect on working memory. While research has been done on background music (BGM) and working memory, the results were inconclusive and mostly focused on simple memory tasks. Only recently researchers have tested the influence of BGM

on working memory in more complex tasks, such as reading (Vasilev et al., 2024). As the most popular genres have a heavy focus on lyrics, the effect of lyrics in BGM on reading task performance has become an important research objective. This experimental eye-tracking study explored the effect of lyrics in BGM and music listening frequency on reading recall ability and extraneous cognitive load. Thirty-seven participants (12 males, 18 females, 4 non-binary) with an average age of 22.2 years took part in the study. Participants were divided into two groups based on their music listening frequency (low, high) and read two text passages, one with instrumental BGM, one with lyrical BGM. While reading, their pupil diameter was measured as an indicator for extraneous cognitive load. The results indicated no effect of music listening frequency on reading recall and extraneous cognitive load. Lyrics in BGM had no effect on reading recall. However, the findings indicated an increase in extraneous cognitive load when lyrical BGM was played ( $t(37) = 1.7$ ,  $p = .049$ , 95% CI = [-.003, .035]). Reading recall and extraneous cognitive load were not correlated. This study was one of the first to explore lyrics in BGM on both working memory and extraneous cognitive load, while considering a possible effect of music listening frequency. The findings give valuable implications on music usage in an office workspace or learning environment by advancing the literature to date (e.g. Que et al., 2023; Souza & Leal Barbosa, 2023; Vasilev et al., 2024). Specifically, the findings suggest lyrics in BGM may increase extraneous cognitive load but do not influence reading recall. Hence, if reading tasks are completed without time pressure, listening to a song with lyrics compared to its instrumental version does not negatively affect reading recall ability.

**Keywords:** *Cognitive load, reading recall, music.*

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## **ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN TEACHERS' ANXIETY AND DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS AND SELECTED ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

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### **Abstract**

Recent global crises have intensified attention to mental health within school communities, including educators. Teachers' psychological well-being is closely linked to students' academic and emotional outcomes, underscoring the importance of supportive school environments. This study examined associations between teachers' symptoms of anxiety and depression and selected aspects of the school environment, including school connectedness, perceived teaching efficacy, staff collaboration, student behaviour, and parent–teacher communication competence. The sample comprised 638 primary and lower secondary school teachers from Slovakia. Data were collected using standardized instruments (DASS-10, Teacher Subjective Well-being Questionnaire, School Level Environment Questionnaire, and Parent–Teacher Conversation Competence Questionnaire) and analysed using correlational and linear regression analyses. Results revealed significant negative associations between anxiety and depressive symptoms and perceptions of school connectedness ( $r = -.474$ ), teaching efficacy ( $r = -.316$ ), staff collaboration ( $r = -.295$ ), student relationships ( $r = -.289$ ), and communication with parents ( $r = -.315$ ). Higher psychological distress was consistently related to lower perceived support, efficacy, and positive interpersonal relationships within the school context. These findings highlight the importance of fostering supportive and collaborative school climates to promote teachers' mental health.

**Keywords:** *Teachers' mental health, anxiety and depression, school environment, parent–teacher communication.*

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## **EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRO PROGRAMME IN DEVELOPING SOCIOEMOTIONAL SKILLS IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING STUDENTS**

**Marian Soroa<sup>1</sup>, Alaitz Aizpurua<sup>1</sup>, Joanes Lameirinhas<sup>2</sup>, & Amaia de la Fuente<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

Vocational training students are at a critical stage of transition between adolescence and adulthood, where the development of socioemotional skills is essential for personal well-being and academic, professional and social success. The main objective of this research was to analyse the effectiveness of the PRO educational programme in promoting the socioemotional skills of intermediate-level vocational training students. A quasi-experimental design with partially repeated pretest-posttest measures and a control group was used. The research involved 197 students from six public vocational training schools in rural and urban areas (95 in the experimental group and 102 in the control group), with an age range of 15 to 28 years ( $M = 17.16$ ;  $SD = 2.04$ ), 89% of whom were male. The educational programme lasted two academic years and consisted of twenty-one-hour sessions held every two weeks. It was structured around three main components: emotional intelligence, teacher-student interaction, and peer interaction. The programme's methodology was participatory, actively involving the students. The sessions were conducted by the tutors, who were trained by two psychologists who were experts in the field. The results indicated that the students in the experimental group, compared to those in the control group, showed significant improvements in emotional intelligence as ability, in self-perceived emotional intelligence, in depression, in stress, and in group cohesion. Furthermore, perceived support from teachers remained stable over time in the experimental group, while it decreased significantly in the control group. The differences observed were associated with small or moderate effect sizes. However, no significant differences were found between the groups in terms of perceived support from peers and peer relationships. The sample size and the predominantly male composition of the sample may have influenced the results. In any case, these findings suggest that relatively short programmes can be effective in strengthening the socioemotional skills of vocational education students. It is concluded that promoting socioemotional learning throughout the life cycle is essential, including educational stages traditionally neglected by research.

**Keywords:** *Socioemotional learning, programme, vocational training, emerging adulthood.*

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## SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### FROM REJECTION SENSITIVITY TO PEER SUSCEPTIBILITY: BODY IMAGE AS A BRIDGE

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#### **Abstract**

Adolescence is a pivotal developmental stage marked by heightened sensitivity to social acceptance. During this period, adolescents increasingly rely on peer feedback to form their sense of self and identity. Susceptibility to peer influence can be linked both to maladaptive behaviors and to adaptive changes (Laursen & Veenstra, 2021). However, not all adolescents are equally influenced by their peers; certain personality traits may heighten this vulnerability (Belsky & Pluess, 2009). This study aims to investigate how susceptibility to peer influence is longitudinally related to rejection sensitivity and body image. Data were drawn from the longitudinal research project NAVIGATE. The study was conducted in a regional town in Lithuania. The sample consisted of students from six high schools, with a total of 746 students in grades 5 - 8. Participants were aged 10 – 14 years ( $M = 12.33$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ). The sample was diverse in terms of family and socio-economic backgrounds but homogeneous in terms of ethnic background. Written parental consent and student assent were obtained prior to participation. The study was conducted across three waves over one academic year. The following measures were used: Resistance to Peer Influence scale (Steinberg & Monahan, 2007), Children's Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (Downey et al., 1998), Perceived Competence Scale for Children (Harter, 1985). Significant concurrent correlations were observed among all study variables across all three time points. The longitudinal interplay between the study variables was analyzed using three waves of data collected one academic year. Both direct and indirect pathways were considered. At each time interval higher rejection sensitivity predicted lower body image, and lower body image predicted higher susceptibility to peer influence. Bias-corrected bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals confirmed indirect effect: Time1 rejection sensitivity predicted Time 3 susceptibility to peer influence via Time 2 body image ( $\beta = .004$  [.001, .014]). Thus, the hypothesis was confirmed.

**Keywords:** *Rejection sensitivity, body image, susceptibility, adolescence.*

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### SUPPORTING TEACHER WELL-BEING THROUGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

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#### **Abstract**

Teacher well-being is crucial because chronic stress affects teacher retention, instructional quality, and school functioning. While school leadership is considered an important organizational resource, it remains unclear whether it directly improves well-being or buffers everyday work stressors. Drawing on the Job Demands–Resources model and Self-Determination Theory, this study examined how leadership fairness, people-orientation, and power-sharing relate to teachers' job satisfaction, burnout, and self-efficacy. Survey data from 1,179 Slovenian teachers showed that stressors predicted poorer outcomes, while leadership behaviors explained additional variance but did not significantly buffer the effects of job demands.

**Keywords:** *Teacher well-being, school leadership, job satisfaction, burnout, self-efficacy.*

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## **INTEGRATING PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES INTO LOCAL HOUSING POLICY DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION**

**Sofia Matias<sup>1</sup>, Catarina Mano<sup>1</sup>, Sofia Brito<sup>1</sup>, Alexandra Serra<sup>1,2</sup>, & Rui Serôdio<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

This paper presents the development of the Local Housing Strategy of Amarante, Portugal, as a case study of psychology-informed municipal policy design. The work was commissioned to support an application to the national 1st Right housing program and is reframed here as applied research guided by environmental psychology and community psychology. Specifically, the analysis was informed by person-environment fit, place attachment, social support, and ecological interdependence. A mixed-method participatory design combined content analysis of stakeholder questionnaires (N = 52), semi-structured follow-up interviews and clarification contacts with local political and institutional actors, consultation with frontline agencies, review of public demographic and housing statistics, and documentary analysis of regional, national, and European policy frameworks. The findings showed a structural mismatch between housing supply and housing adequacy: while family dwellings increased, populational declined, low incomes, rent inflation, degraded housing, accessibility barriers, and weak informal support networks concentrated housing insecurity among older adults, isolated persons, single-parent households, and people with disabilities. At least 260 households and 5 housing clusters, comprising no fewer than 901 people, were identified as living in or near inadequate housing conditions. The strategy translated these patterns into a targeted investment package of about EUR 13 million, prioritizing rehabilitation, rental support, and territorially dispersed responses. The case illustrates how psychological concepts can strengthen local housing policy by linking material deprivation to belonging, autonomy, accessibility, and community integration.

**Keywords:** *Local housing strategy, evidence-based policy, public investment, social policy planning.*

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## **SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING AND HEALTH AMONG TEACHERS: DIFFERENCES ACROSS EDUCATIONAL LEVELS**

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### **Abstract**

Recent studies have confirmed that teachers' well-being is an important determinant of both personal and professional functioning. In the modern education system, teachers working at various levels of education face different professional requirements, working conditions and psychosocial challenges; nevertheless, comparative evidence across different educational settings is still limited. Therefore, this study aimed to compare the subjective well-being and health indicators among teachers from higher education institutions, vocational education schools, and general education schools. Data from the European Social Survey (ESS) Round 11 were used for the analysis. The sample consisted of 1820 participants. Mean age - 55.04 (SD = 16.82); 73.3 percent were women. The ESS core questionnaire includes the two most common measures of subjective well-being: happiness and life satisfaction, as well as subjective general health, negative affect, and positive affect. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine differences among three groups of educators in subjective assessments of: (1) life satisfaction, (2) happiness, and (3) subjective general health, (4) negative affect and (5) positive affect were assessed. The results revealed that vocational education teachers are more satisfied with life and happier than school teachers, whereas university teachers evaluate their general health more positively than school teachers. Overall, the findings emphasise the need for context-specific approaches to supporting teachers' well-being across educational levels. Potential implications for policy and practice are discussed.

**Keywords:** *European Social Survey, teachers, life satisfaction, happiness, subjective general health.*

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## **SUSTAINABLE WORK, SUSTAINABLE HEALTH: A COMMUNITY-ENGAGED APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING WORKPLACE HEALTH AMONG RURAL WORKERS**

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### **Abstract**

Work plays a central role in physical, psychological, and social well-being, yet not all forms of work provide these benefits equally. Low-wage, precarious, and low-status employment is consistently linked to elevated physical and mental health risks, particularly in construction and service industries. These risks are intensified in rural contexts, where limited infrastructure, weak regulatory oversight, and restricted access to health services compound workplace vulnerability. Rapid population growth and economic expansion in Gallatin Valley, Montana, have increased demand for construction and service labor, disproportionately affecting workers employed in physically demanding and socially devalued “3-D” jobs. This project is motivated by the need to better understand how workplace conditions shape health and well-being among rural workers whose experiences are often excluded from psychological and occupational health research. The primary objective of this study is to establish strong community partnerships that center worker expertise and guide future research on workplace health and well-being among rural construction and service workers. A secondary objective is to lay the groundwork for a workplace needs assessment that examines how job conditions, power dynamics, and social devaluation influence physical and psychological health. Using a community-based participatory research framework informed by intersectionality, this project first focused on the formation of a Community Advisory Board (CAB). The CAB is composed of individuals with lived experience in low-wage, precarious, or socially devalued work, as well as community members with strong ties to local labor sectors. To date, the CAB has been successfully convened and oriented to the project goals, and members are actively contributing to the refinement of research questions, interview domains, and recruitment strategies. This process serves as an initial validation step by ensuring that the research design reflects workers’ lived realities and local context. Future phases of the project will include in-depth, semi-structured interviews with construction and service workers in Gallatin Valley, guided by CAB input. Planned analyses will use inductive thematic analysis with ongoing CAB involvement to support credibility and interpretive accuracy. By centering worker voices from the outset, this study aims to generate community-informed knowledge that can guide ethical, sustainable, and health-conscious workplace practices and advance rural health equity.

**Keywords:** *Rural workers, workplace health, community-based participatory research, construction workers, service workers.*

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## **FROM RELIEF TO RESILIENCE: A SCOPING REVIEW ON MULTI-DIMENSIONAL ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMS**

**Abigail Daley<sup>1</sup>, Brooke C. Winters<sup>1</sup>, Gabriel B. Smith<sup>1</sup>, Michaela Ritchie<sup>1</sup>, Jen Woodland<sup>1</sup>,  
Richelle Witherspoon<sup>2</sup>, & Lisa A. Best<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

The United Nations has identified eliminating poverty as the first goal in the Sustainable Development Goals. The Government of Canada defines poverty as a condition where someone is deprived of the necessary resources, means, choices, and power to have and maintain a basic standard of living and participate in society. As of 2023, 10.2% of Canadians were living in poverty (Statistics Canada, 2025). A contributing factor to the growing rates of poverty in Canada is the number of youths not in employment, education, or training (NEET), which as of 2025, included approximately 1 in 10 Canadian youth. Unemployment amongst Canadian youth has been rising since January 2024 and, as of May 2025, was 14.2% (Statistics Canada, 2025). Given that one-third of these youth reported that it was difficult to support themselves and that they are less satisfied and hopeful about the future (Statistics Canada, 2025),

the Government of Canada began to conduct several programs ranging from financial support to education and training to help prevent poverty amongst NEET youth. The present study sought to conduct a scoping review of similar programs to assess their impact on alleviating poverty. A trained librarian implemented the search strategy for this review and included the following databases: SocINDEX @ EBSCOhost, Social Work Abstracts @ EBSCOhost, and EconLit @ EBSCOhost. Those databases were searched on September 9, 2024 and 12 studies met inclusion criteria for review. Programs included had at least two different elements that were meant to alleviate poverty, with 75% that incorporated financial assistance, 75% incorporated education either such as job training, 66.7% provided mentorship and group support, and 58.3% focused on entrepreneurship to in in self-sufficiency. Overall, 68% (8 programs) identified improvement in participants' financial situation as well as the development of a greater sense of autonomy and financial literacy, which led to improved ability of participants to support themselves and their families. Interestingly, one program did lead to any improvement, as participants reported not receiving ample training in the program, coupled with environmental complications that hindered their income generation. Taken together, these results indicate that the incorporation of a form of support and/or mentorship amongst peers and program leaders, development of financial literacy and money management skills, as well as education/training are all beneficial to helping lift people out of poverty.

**Keywords:** *Anti-poverty programs, youth not in employment, education, or training, scoping review.*

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## **EVALUATING THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROGRAM ON EQUALITY AND NON-VIOLENCE**

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<sup>2</sup>*University Institute of Health Sciences (Portugal)*

### **Abstract**

School-based prevention programs play an important role in promoting equality and reducing violence from early developmental stages. Grounded in social psychological research on stereotypes, empathy, and social attitudes, the program *Hora de Ser* (“Time to Be”), developed by the Portuguese Association for Victim Support (APAV), aims to promote personal and social skills associated with inclusive attitudes and non-violent conflict resolution among elementary school children. The present study evaluates the social impact of this intervention using a quasi-experimental design with pre- and post-test measures and a control group. The sample included 321 children attending the 3rd and 4th grades of elementary school. Measures assessed acceptance of diversity, gender stereotypes and gender role beliefs, empathy and identification of emotions in victims of violence, and attitudes toward strategies for dealing with violent situations. Repeated-measures analyses comparing experimental and control groups revealed significant changes associated with participation in the program, including reductions in gender stereotyping, greater attribution of traits to both genders, increased empathy toward victims of violence, and stronger endorsement of constructive conflict-resolution strategies (e.g., Phase × Group interaction effects,  $p < .05$ ). No comparable changes were observed in the control group. Overall, the results suggest that *Hora de Ser* produces measurable positive social impact by promoting equality-related attitudes and non-violent behavioral orientations in elementary school children, supporting the relevance of early preventive interventions implemented in educational contexts.

**Keywords:** *Social impact measurement, gender stereotypes, equality, violence prevention, school intervention.*

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## INTERSECTIONS OF ETHNIC-RACIAL AND SOCIAL CLASS IDENTITY AMONG LATINX COLLEGE STUDENTS

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### Abstract

In the context of predominantly White institutions (PWIs), Latinx students often experience a cultural incongruity between their social identities and cultural values, and the dominant values or “identity” of the university. Understanding how social identities shape Latinx college students’ distinct realities may provide greater insight into their lived experiences as they navigate higher education. Two social identities pertinent to Latinx students’ academic adjustment are ethnic-racial identity and social class identity. Ethnic-racial identity (ERI) speaks to the social and psychological experiences related to one’s ethnic-racial group identification, or the beliefs and attitudes that one has about their ethnic-racial group membership, whereas social class identity (SCI) refers to how an individual defines and makes meaning of their social class. Both ERI and SCI have been linked to optimal academic and social outcomes, including greater self-esteem, self-concept, and fewer perceived threats at PWIs among Latinx college students. However, how SCI and ERI function synergistically to shape academic outcomes is less clear. In the present study, we investigated how dimensions of ERI (centrality, private regard, and public regard) and SCI (identification, centrality, pride, and shame/guilt) jointly shape students’ Latinx students’ college-going experiences. Survey data were drawn from a longitudinal study of ethnic-racial minority students across five PWIs, with the analytic sample consisting of Latinx undergraduates ( $n = 313$ ; 64.5% female;  $Mage = 18.45$ ). Using latent profile analysis (LPA), patterns of ERI and SCI were identified to capture variability in identity profiles. Hierarchical regressions were then conducted to examine how ERI  $\times$  SCI profiles were associated with campus inferiorization, perceived ethnic fit, and college competence. Five profiles emerged among this sample of Latinx college students. One key finding was that, compared to the *Balanced ERI/Middle-Upper Middle Class/High SCI Guilt group*, the *Low ERI/Lower-Middle- Middle Class/Low SCI Pride group* felt their ERI was less central to their self-concept, and perceived their ethnic-racial group more negatively. This group also identified with a lower social class, was less proud, more ashamed, less guilty about their social class, and felt more threatened when expressing their ethnic-racial identity at their PWI. Regression findings suggest that more negative affect regarding one’s ethnic-racial group and social class is affiliated with less perceived ethnic fit among minoritized students. By relying on a person-centered, strengths-based approach, findings show how ethnic-racial and social class identities jointly shape Latinx college students’ academic adjustment, with implications for inclusive practices at predominantly White institutions.

**Keywords:** *Latinx college students, academic adjustment, ethnic-racial identity, social class identity, predominantly White institutions.*

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## COGNITIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### EXPERTISE RELATED DIFFERENCES IN ABSTRACT ART PERCEPTION: AN EYE-TRACKING STUDY OF PSYCHOLOGISTS AND ARTISTS

Gabriela Puchala<sup>1</sup>, Paulina Puchala<sup>2</sup>, Iga Stasiak<sup>1</sup>, Krzysztof Krejtz<sup>1</sup>, Izabela Krejtz<sup>1</sup>,  
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#### Abstract

Eye movement data provides objective insight into visual attention distribution, cognitive processes, level of expertise and emotional arousal. Significant differences in visual attention distribution exist between experts and novices in specific domains or individuals performing different professions. Research has also shown the influence of presented stimuli on eye movement parameters. Colours are known to influence the emotions experienced by the observer. Warm colours are typically associated with arousal, energy, passion, but also aggression and anxiety, while cool colours are linked to relaxation, calmness, harmony and stability. To determine the impact of stimulus colour and observer's profession on the perception of abstract art, we conducted an eye-tracking study. The study involved a group of 53 participants: 27 non-experts and 26 artists or art students (36 women and 17 men). Participants were presented with 8 abstract graphics depicting an identical combination of rectangles. The main goal of the analyses was to determine the differences in eye-tracking parameters between the professional groups and the colour types of the presented graphics. The results of two-way ANOVAs showed significant influence of the colour tone on the mean number of fixations, mean saccade velocity and mean saccade length during the observation of the presented graphics. These findings provide information on the differences in visual attention distribution influenced rather by colour than profession. Colour tones influence visual attention distribution more strongly than professional knowledge, contributing to the understanding of colour-related differences in art perception.

**Keywords:** *Eye tracking, abstract art perception, psychologists, artists, eye movement.*

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### CHALLENGING THE ROLE OF ANALYTICAL THINKING IN FAKE NEWS DETECTION: EVIDENCE FROM GENDER-RELATED MYSIDE BIAS

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#### Abstract

This study examined the effect of myside bias on fake news identification and its moderating role in the association between analytical thinking and success in fake news identification using an experimental paradigm. A sample of 128 adults rated their belief in news items that differed both in veracity (true vs. fake) and in congruency (congruent- favoring their gender vs. incongruent- opposing their gender). They also responded to the Verbal Cognitive Reflection Test as a measure of analytical thinking. A mixed-design ANCOVA revealed statistically significant main effects of both- myside bias and analytical thinking, while the interaction between the two was not found to be significant. The present findings demonstrate that myside bias significantly affects belief judgments in fake news evaluation, independent of individual differences in analytical thinking. Additionally, vCRT scores significantly predicted mean belief ratings, but not signal detection sensitivity, as indexed by discriminability ( $d'$ ). It implies that analytical thinking may influence decision thresholds or response bias, rather than the quality of evidence integration required for accurate discrimination. Overall, this study highlights the role of myside bias in the identification of fake news while challenging the assumption that analytical reasoning is directly correlated with improved fake news detection.

**Keywords:** *Fake news identification, myside bias, analytical reasoning, motivated reasoning.*

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## EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE LINK BETWEEN APHANTASIA AND INTEROCEPTIVE SKILLS

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** Aphantasia, the absence or marked reduction of mental imagery (Zeman et al., 2024), provides an opportunity to investigate how mental imagery contributes to bodily self-representation and interoception, defined as the perception and regulation of internal bodily signals (Garfinkel et al., 2015). Preliminary findings indicate reduced physiological reactivity, reduced emotional response and reduced attention to bodily cues in aphantasia (Wicken et al., 2021; Monzel et al., 2024). However, empirical investigations are limited. This study aimed to investigate whether aphantasia is associated with specific characteristics in three dimensions of interoception (accuracy, sensibility, awareness; according to the tridimensional interoceptive model of Garfinkel et al., 2015). **Methods:** Thirty-three healthy adults were divided into two groups: 9 aphantasic participants (4 women;  $M_{age}=34.22$ ,  $M_{VVIQ}=32$ ) and 24 controls (20 women;  $M_{age}=35.00$ ,  $M_{VVIQ}=127.71$ ). Group classification was based on the Vividness of Visual Imagery Questionnaire (VVIQ; Marks, 1973), which assesses the clarity, detail, and lifelike quality of mental images. All participants completed the Body Perception Questionnaire (BPQ; Porges, 1993) and the Multidimensional Assessment of Interoceptive Awareness (MAIA; Mehling et al., 2012) to evaluate interoceptive sensibility, the Heartbeat Counting Task (HBC) to measure interoceptive accuracy, and confidence ratings to assess interoceptive awareness. **Results:** Compared to controls, the aphantasic group exhibited significantly lower interoceptive accuracy ( $W=35$ ,  $p=.003$ ,  $rrb=-.676$ ), reduced sensibility in BPQ ( $W=9.0$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $rrb=-.917$ ), and diminished scores on five of eight MAIA subscales (all  $p<.01$ ). Regarding interoceptive awareness, a significant correlation was observed between interoceptive accuracy and confidence levels in the control group ( $r=.643$ ;  $p<.001$ ) but not in the aphantasic group ( $r=-.183$ ;  $p=.638$ ). VVIQ scores correlated positively with sensibility in BPQ ( $r=.791$ ,  $p<.001$ ) and in five MAIA dimensions ( $r=.502-.689$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and with interoceptive accuracy ( $r=.595$ ,  $p<.001$ ). **Conclusion:** These findings indicate that reduced visual imagery vividness in aphantasia is associated with lower interoceptive accuracy and sensibility, suggesting a link between imagery vividness and multiple interoceptive dimensions. Moreover, interoceptive awareness (i.e., reflecting the congruence between confidence and performance) appears also affected by imagery deficits, suggesting an underestimation of accuracy skills by aphantasics.

**Keywords:** *Aphantasia, visual imagery, interoception, heartbeat counting task.*

## THE PERCEPTUAL LIMIT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING SPEED

**Roberta Marrucchelli<sup>1</sup>, Francesca Agostini<sup>1</sup>, Giorgia Botticelli<sup>1</sup>, Denis Pelli<sup>2</sup>, & Marialuisa Martelli<sup>1</sup>**

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### Abstract

The acquisition of fluent reading emerges from the interaction of visual-perceptual mechanisms and higher-order cognitive processes. A well-established constraint is visual crowding—the impaired recognition of a target stimulus caused by nearby distractors. Bouma's law (Bouma, 1970) describes this effect as a fundamental limit on letter recognition in peripheral vision: the minimum space needed to recognize the target increases with eccentricity from the fovea. Previous research has shown that crowding is a major bottleneck for reading in both typical and struggling readers (Pelli et al., 2007; Spinelli et al., 2001; Martelli et al., 2009; Pelli et al., 2016), but its developmental trajectory during primary school remains poorly understood. This cross-sectional study aimed to investigate the developmental trajectory of peripheral crowding from first to fifth grade, to trace how crowding range and reading proficiency co-evolve during childhood, and to explore the role of crowding in atypical reading development. To this end, we assessed 159 children across grades 1–5, examining peripheral crowding and its relationship with reading fluency. Reading proficiency was assessed with standardized passage and word list tests, and participants were classified as skilled or low readers ( $\leq -1.5$  SD). Peripheral crowding and reading speed (RSVP paradigm) were measured using a computerized

application (EasyEyes; Jiang, Burchell, & Pelli, 2021) under controlled conditions. Results revealed a clear developmental trajectory: peripheral crowding decreased systematically with grade, reflecting an expansion of the visual span, while reading speed increased reliably. Higher grade levels predicted both reduced crowding ( $r = -0.66$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and faster reading rates ( $r = 0.64$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Across the sample, reading performance was inversely associated with crowding ( $r = -0.64$ ,  $p < .001$ ), with stronger effects in low-skilled readers ( $r = -0.73$ ,  $p < .001$ ), suggesting that crowding imposes a particular constraint on children with reading difficulties. These findings indicate that peripheral crowding diminishes with age and plays a central role in the acquisition of fluent reading. From an applied perspective, results underscore the importance of incorporating perceptual constraints into developmental models of literacy, and suggest that interventions targeting crowding and visual span may help support children with reading difficulties.

**Keywords:** *Reading development, perceptual integration.*

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## ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### HIERARCHY OVER NATURE? ECOLOGICAL DOMINANCE ORIENTATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ATTITUDES

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#### Abstract

Previous research has highlighted the importance of ideological attitudes - such as general political orientation and more specific orientations like Social Dominance Orientation - in understanding environmental attitudes, including climate change beliefs and denial. Ecological Dominance Orientation (EDO), a more specific ideological orientation in the context of climate change, reflects a preference for hierarchical relationships between humans and nature and has been identified as an important predictor of certain climate change attitudes. The aim of this study was to examine whether EDO is a statistically significant predictor of various climate change attitudes, over and above general political orientation, religiosity, and main sociodemographic variables. Data were collected withing DISINFO climate project through an online survey of 408 Croatian adults from the general population (48% women; 18-68 age, mean age = 46.94 years). Climate change attitudes were measured using single-item indicators assessing the perceived importance of climate change, belief in its reality, human and natural causation, worry, perceived scientific consensus, personal and group efficacy, and willingness to change behavior for environmental sustainability (all measured on a 0–100 scale). Overall, the findings confirm the relevance of EDO in understanding climate change attitudes; however, consistent with previous research, its unique explanatory power varies across different dimensions of these attitudes. These results underscore the need to consider specific ideological orientations, such as EDO, when designing interventions and policies aimed at promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation behavior.

**Keywords:** *Ecological Dominance Orientation, climate change attitudes, ideological orientation, political orientation, religiosity.*

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### NONCONFORMITY AND FOREST NATURE DEFICIT AMONG POLISH RESIDENTS

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<sup>3</sup>*Department of Tourism and Recreation, University of Life Sciences in Lublin, Lublin (Poland)*

#### Abstract

Forest nature deficit can be understood as a limited or complete lack of human contact with forests, which carries negative biological, social, emotional, and functional consequences. Contact with forest environments provides well-documented, multidimensional health benefits—from strengthening immunity and reducing stress through phytoncides and negative air ions, to the relaxing effects of essential oils, as well as supporting circadian rhythm regulation and improving sleep quality. Forests also promote creativity, exploration, and physical activity, serving as a key space for both psychological and physical well-being. Limited access to such experiences may lead to reduced activity, weaker psychological resilience, and lower readiness to take on new challenges. As part of a research project funded under the OPUS competition by the National Science Centre, Poland, the Forest Nature Deficit Questionnaire (QDFN) was developed—the first psychometric instrument in Poland designed to measure forest nature deficit. Nonconformity, understood within the interactionist framework of psychology, is a source of motivational energy that activates an individual's potential toward independence, creative expression, and the ability to resist social pressure. It can be measured, among other tools, using the Nonconformity Scale included in the Creative Behaviour Questionnaire. To date, no studies have examined the relationship between nonconformity and forest nature deficit. The present presentation introduces pioneering findings based on a sample of more than 1,000 Polish residents, opening new perspectives for analyzing personality determinants of human contact with nature.

**Keywords:** *Forest nature deficit, Forest Nature Deficit Questionnaire, nonconformity, personality.*

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## **GUILT AS A MEDIATOR OF ENERGY-SAVING BEHAVIOR?**

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University of Trento (Italy)*

### **Abstract**

This study investigates how social referents and disapproval emojis impact energy saving behaviors in the context of digital energy alerts. 300 adult consumers participated in the study. The research examines emotional responses and behavioral intentions upon receiving a digital alert indicating excessive personal energy consumption, tested across six experimental conditions. Participants were asked socio-demographics questions, and we measured their numeracy level. We also asked them about their environmental values using the New Environmental Paradigm. Participants were also asked to rate their self-reported emotions related to the received digital alert, and two behavioral intention measures: whether they intended to increase, keep at the same level, or decrease their energy consumption (Decision task) and to estimate the expected percentage of changed consumption rate (Estimate task). The 6 experimental conditions resulted from a 3x2 factorial design where it was manipulated the absence or presence of a Social Referent (neighbor or friend) and the absence or presence of a disapproving Emoji. The study not only measured self-reported emotions but also recorded skin conductance to deepen insight into emotional arousal. Results of the mediation analysis indicated that Social Referent and Emojis increased guilt which in turn impacted participants' intentions to reduce energy consumption (indirect effect). While our findings confirm that guilt significantly mediates the effect of these social and emotional cues, skin conductance response revealed a mild autonomic activation. The presence of a disapproval Emoji combined with the knowledge of a neighbor's or friend's lower consumption heightened guilt feelings, which in turn influenced sustainable behavioral intentions. These findings highlight the importance of emotional triggering cues in behavioral change strategies and the potential of such psychosocial factors in environmental conservation efforts.

**Keywords:** *Social referent, guilt, emoji, SGR, energy-saving behavior.*

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## HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

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### MOTIVATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH: EVIDENCE FROM THE B-CHALLENGED PROJECT

Anna Dzielska<sup>1</sup>, Katarzyna Okulicz-Kozaryn<sup>1</sup>, Hanna Nałęcz<sup>2</sup>, Martyna Bójko<sup>1</sup>,  
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#### Abstract

*Background:* Participatory research increasingly emphasizes the involvement of multiple stakeholders in the co-creation of health-promoting environments. While such approaches are widely advocated, less is known about the motivations that encourage children and adults to engage in participatory action research (PAR), particularly in socio-economically disadvantaged urban contexts.

*Aim:* To explore the motivations that drive children and adults to engage in participatory research initiatives. The analysis examines how different stakeholder groups perceive participation in the co-creation and evaluation of environmental interventions supporting active outdoor play and healthy dietary behaviours among children aged 6–12 years.

*Materials and methods:* During the recruitment phase in 2025, qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with 29 children (aged 6–12 years) and 10 adults, including parents, educators, representatives of municipal services, the police, urban planners, and other community stakeholders, residing or working in a socio-economically disadvantaged urban neighbourhood of Praga Północ in Warsaw, Poland. Interviews explored motivations and perceived barriers related to participation in the project. Data was analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. NVivo qualitative data analysis software (QSR International) was used to support data management, coding, and organisation of themes, while all analytic decisions and interpretations were made by the research team in line with established qualitative research standards.

*Results:* Children's motivations to participate were predominantly intrinsic and relational. These included enjoyment of play-based and outdoor activities, curiosity, opportunities for peer interaction, and a sense of agency in shaping their local environment. Many children emphasised their experiential knowledge of neighbourhood needs and expressed motivation linked to the possibility of visible and meaningful environmental change, such as safer and more attractive outdoor spaces. At the same time, children reported reservations about interactions with unfamiliar adults and about sedentary, discussion-focused activities, underscoring the importance of age-appropriate, movement-oriented participatory formats. Adults' motivations were primarily value-driven and purposive. Participants highlighted civic responsibility, professional roles related to children's wellbeing, and the ethical importance of recognising children as legitimate stakeholders in decision-making processes. The project's democratic, cross-sectoral structure and its potential to translate children's perspectives into concrete environmental actions were identified as key motivating factors. Nevertheless, adults also expressed concerns regarding time constraints, institutional capacity, and uncertainties related to long-term implementation.

*Conclusions:* Overall, motivations for participation differed between children and adults but were complementary. Participatory research design should consider the differing motivations of participant groups in order to promote sustained and meaningful engagement.

**Keywords:** *Participatory research, children, motivation, qualitative methods, health promotion.*

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## **BY CREATING A LIFE, I AM PUTTING MINE IN JEOPARDY: EXPERIENCES AND FEELINGS OF WOMEN SUFFERING FROM THE LEIDEN MUTATION, AND THEIR PARTNERS, WITH BECOMING PARENTS**

**Anna Ziklova**

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### **Abstract**

*Background:* The Leiden mutation, one of the most frequently diagnosed thrombophilias, is supposedly connected to increased risk of thrombosis during pregnancy and other pregnancy-related complications, including recurrent pregnancy loss, preeclampsia or excessive postpartum haemorrhage. As of to date, scholarly sources have not yet proven a direct causal relation between the Leiden mutation and pre-, peri- or postnatal complications. The study aimed to explore how women diagnosed with the Leiden mutation, together with their partners, experienced pregnancy-related complications in different phases of gestation, what emotions they felt and which coping strategies they utilised.

*Method:* A pilot qualitative exploratory study was conducted using semi-structured interviews. The data were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

*Findings:* In the research sample (N=4, F=3, M=1, m = 36), which included one heterosexual couple, a variability in experiencing and feelings based on the course of pregnancy, frequency and severity of pregnancy complications was identified, including: lack of information about potential risks, trivialization of the diagnosis, fear of losing the baby, distrust in the prophylactic treatment or fear of harming the baby with the treatment. Social support and relationship satisfaction were recognised as key protective factors for the mental health of female participants, whereas emotional instability and maladaptive coping strategies, particularly depressive tendencies, emerged as significant psychological risks. For the male participant, a rational and pragmatic way of thinking functioned as a protective factor.

*Conclusion/Impact:* The results of this exploratory study provided a unique insight into the underexplored phenomenon of experiencing pregnancy complications while being diagnosed with the Leiden mutation. The findings may be beneficial for future psychological research and clinical practice not only in the Czech Republic.

*Keywords:* *Leiden mutation, pregnancy complications, feelings, experiences, protective and risk factors.*

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## **PRIMARY PREVENTION OF ONCOLOGICAL DISEASES AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC: A PILOT STUDY**

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### **Abstract**

Cancer remains a major public health challenge, with incidence rates continuing to rise despite advances in diagnostics and treatment. As a substantial proportion of cancer cases is considered preventable, primary prevention and cancer-related health literacy are particularly important in young adulthood, a period when long-term health behaviors are formed. The aim of this pilot study was to map the level of health literacy, awareness of cancer and its symptoms, and knowledge of preventive strategies including awareness of human papillomavirus (HPV) among young adults in the Czech Republic. The study employed an exploratory quantitative design based on a one-time questionnaire survey. The first part of the survey collected demographic data and explored previous health education in the family, the presence of health-oriented role models, and respondents' self-assessment of healthy lifestyle adherence. Three validated instruments were used: the Cancer Awareness Measure (CAM), the Health Literacy Survey 2019 (HLS19-Q12), and the HPV Knowledge Measure. The research sample included 164 participants aged 18–30 years (M = 22.48, SD = 2.13), comprising 106 women (64.2%) and 58 men (35.2%). The results showed a generally low level of health literacy, with 44.3% of respondents categorized as having inadequate and 32.9% as problematic health literacy. Gender differences emerged in lifestyle behaviors: women demonstrated greater adherence to healthy eating and sufficient sleep, while men reported higher engagement in physical activity. Respondents showed limited awareness of cancer and its symptoms, as well as very low knowledge of HPV-related risks and prevention. Identified barriers to seeking medical help included embarrassment, lack of time, and fear of diagnosis. This study highlights critical gaps in

cancer-related health literacy and prevention awareness among young Czech adults, emphasizing the need for targeted, gender-sensitive educational campaigns and comprehensive public health interventions aimed at strengthening primary prevention efforts.

**Keywords:** *Health literacy, primary prevention, risk factors, oncological diseases, young adulthood.*

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## PSYCHOANALYSIS AND PSYCHOANALYTICAL PSYCHOTERAPY

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### PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH AND GROUP MODEL BUILDING TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S OUTDOOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Martyna Bójkó<sup>1</sup>, Magdalena Korzycka<sup>1</sup>, Katarzyna Radiukiewicz<sup>1</sup>, Katarzyna Okulicz-Kozaryn<sup>1</sup>, Hanna Nałęcz<sup>2</sup>, & Anna Dzielska<sup>1</sup>

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#### Abstract

*Introduction:* Outdoor play is an effective means of promoting health and wellbeing, particularly in work with young children. The B-Challenged project encourages outdoor play and healthy eating habits among children aged 6–12. This international project is coordinated by Amsterdam UMC, and in Poland it focuses on children living in a Warsaw district characterised by a high level of socio-economic challenges.

*Method:* The project applied participatory action research (PAR), a research approach aimed at actively involving community members or other stakeholders in the research process. Twelve children from a socio-therapeutic after-school centre took part in weekly workshops facilitated by trained facilitators, which included building relationships and mutual trust, storytelling, creating weekly timelines of their activities, and using the photovoice method. Subsequently, Group Model Building (GMB) was used to create a map of factors that positively and negatively influence children's outdoor physical activity. Based on this map, Causal Loop Diagrams (CLDs) were developed, which will serve as a foundation for implementing interventions in cooperation with local decision-makers.

*Results:* The children were particularly eager to participate in project activities that involved active exploration of their surroundings. Causal Loop Diagrams developed on the basis of the factor map co-created with the children indicates multiple variables influencing the level of children's outdoor physical activity, ranging from weather conditions and peer companionship to infrastructure suitability and safety.

*Conclusions:* The PAR procedure involving children as co-researchers, although demanding and time-consuming, is useful in projects aimed at promoting lifestyle changes among children. A greater challenge lies in the more theoretical work with children, particularly in identifying interrelationships between factors that influence their choices regarding physical activity. It is also essential to work in parallel with adult stakeholders to ensure that children's ideas can be implemented in real-life settings.

*Keywords:* Outdoor play, underprivileged urban area, participatory action research, causal loop diagrams.

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# Virtual Presentations





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## CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### TRAUMA: HOW DO WE GET IT AND HOW CAN WE OVERCOME IT

**Shulamith Kreitler**

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**Abstract**

The paper describes the major kinds of responses to traumatic experiences, and presents a three-stage model of progression from the event, to trauma and finally to posttraumatic response. Major treatments of traumatic responses are described, and are characterized in terms of their focus on elaborating the event or in contrast reducing contact with it. Two studies were briefly described, referring to responses to retrospective or prospective trauma. The results provided information about the factors responsible for high levels and low levels of disturbance in response to traumatic experiences, based mainly on dwelling in detail on the event and elaborating its personal connotations versus focusing on factual reports devoid of personal involvement.

*Keywords: Trauma, posttraumatic disorder, treatment, three-stage model, CBT.*

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### UNPACKING THE LONGITUDINAL INTERPLAY BETWEEN EMOTIONAL ABUSE, FAMILY DYSFUNCTION AND DEPRESSION IN ADOLESCENTS

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**Abstract**

Adolescence represents a sensitive developmental period, during which individuals are particularly vulnerable to the long-term effects of adverse interpersonal experiences. Within this context, family dynamics and early emotional experiences play a pivotal role in shaping psychological adjustment and mental health outcomes. Emotional abuse (EA), in particular, has been consistently linked to increased risk for depressive symptoms (DS), yet the mechanisms through which it influences adolescent mental health over time remain insufficiently understood. To address these gaps, the present longitudinal study examined the temporal associations among EA, family function (FF), and DS across three time points spanning one year. Data were collected at baseline, six months later, and twelve months later from a large community sample of 1,887 Italian adolescents (mean age = 15.44 years, SD = 1.09). EA was measured using the EA subscale of the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire–Short Form, FF was assessed via the General Functioning Subscale of the McMaster Family Assessment Device, and DS was measured with the depression subscale of the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales–21. Structural equation modeling was used to investigate bidirectional relationships and potential mediation effects, which showed excellent fit to the data ( $\chi^2(312)=462.401$ ,  $p<.001$ ;  $\chi^2/df=1.482$ ; CFI=.996; RMSEA=.016, 90% CI [.013–.019]; SRMR=.017). The results revealed that EA at T1 and T2 significantly predicted both FF and DS at T2 and T3, respectively. FF at T1 and T2 significantly predicted DS at T2 and T3, respectively. FF did not predict EA, and DS did not predict either EA or FF. Mediation analyses indicated that EA at T1 indirectly influenced DS at T3 through its effects on EA, FF and DS at T2. Similarly, FF at T1 indirectly predicted DS at T3 via FF and DS at T2, but not through EA at T2. Finally, DS at T1 showed no indirect effects on DS at T3. Taken together, these findings underscore the central role of FF as a key mechanism linking EA to the development of DS during adolescence. From a clinical and preventive standpoint, the results highlight the importance of early identification of emotionally abusive experiences and the implementation of interventions aimed at fostering supportive family environments, enhancing communication, and promoting adaptive emotional relationships. Strengthening FF during adolescence may be particularly critical for mitigating the long-term risk of DS and promoting psychological resilience.

*Keywords: Emotional abuse, family functioning, depression, adolescents, longitudinal study.*

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## **UNMASKING AUTISM IN A GENETIC SYNDROME: A FIVE-YEAR DEVELOPMENTAL TRAJECTORY EMPHASIZING REEVALUATION AND COLLABORATION**

**Michelle M. Yetman, Adam T. Blancher, & Michael D. McGill**

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Louisiana State University Health Shreveport (USA)*

### **Abstract**

Accurately identifying autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in children with co-occurring rare genetic conditions presents significant diagnostic challenges, particularly when early developmental features overlap with syndrome-specific phenotypes. This case report expands upon a longitudinal case of a child with SATB2-associated syndrome (SAS) who demonstrated an evolving clinical presentation, including late regression and a marked decline in social communication between ages 2 and 7. The paper highlights how early social strengths, profound speech delays, and motor impairments initially obscured ASD symptomatology, leading to a preliminary diagnosis of global developmental delay. Comprehensive reevaluation in later childhood revealed clear ASD features, emphasizing the necessity of ongoing monitoring for diagnostically complex children. The report underscores the critical role of multidisciplinary teams in differentiating ASD from genetic-syndrome-related behaviors and in providing integrated assessments across developmental domains. Additionally, it discusses how genetic diagnoses such as SAS influence prognosis, guide intervention planning, and support family access to resources. This case study illustrates the importance of combining genetic, developmental, and behavioral perspectives to improve diagnostic accuracy and optimize long-term outcomes for children with rare genetic disorders and co-occurring ASD.

**Keywords:** *SATB2-associated syndrome, autism spectrum disorder, regression, developmental delay, genetic disorders.*

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## **PRAXIS: A DOCTORAL PILOT STUDY OF A PRACTICE-BASED INTERVENTION FOR STRESS AND WELLBEING**

**Sara El Matouk**

*Universitas Mercatorum (Italy)*

### **Abstract**

PRAXIS is an early-stage doctoral protocol. Background: sustained academic pressure, role ambiguity, and limited access to timely support can elevate stress and undermine wellbeing in young adults and early-career researchers. This project aims to develop and pilot PRAXIS: Predictive Risk Assessment with eXplainable & Interpretable Systems, a brief, scalable, practice-based program that translates evidence from applied psychology into daily routines. PRAXIS will integrate psychoeducation about stress, skills for self-regulation and guided reflection to strengthen coping and psychological flexibility. Methods: an iterative mixed-methods approach will be used. In Phase 1, it was designed the protocol, that integrates validated Italian versions of the Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) and the Orbach–Mikulincer Mental Pain Scale (OMMP-8) with two standardized writing tasks (a distress narrative and a best-possible-self narrative) followed by post-task distress sliders. Annotation will apply Columbia Classification Algorithm of Suicide Assessment (C-CASA) categories alongside a composite severity index (severity\_praxis, 0–9 or U). In Phase 2, a feasibility pilot will assess recruitment, retention, adherence, and intervention fidelity, alongside acceptability indicators (satisfaction and perceived usefulness). Expected contribution: although no results are available yet, this submission outlines the theoretical rationale and planned methodology. If feasibility and acceptability are supported, PRAXIS will inform a subsequent randomized controlled trial and provide a transferable toolkit for stress management and wellbeing promotion in academic and community settings.

**Keywords:** *Intervention development, stress management, wellbeing, psychological flexibility, doctoral research.*

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## **UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA AND CHATGPT USE: THE ROLE OF PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS**

**Scott N. Hannah<sup>1</sup>, Deirdre Drake<sup>1</sup>, Christopher D. Huntley<sup>2</sup>, & Joanne M. Dickson<sup>1,3</sup>**

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<sup>3</sup>*Centre for Precision Health, Edith Cowan University (Australia)*

### **Abstract**

General purpose artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots, such as ChatGPT, are increasingly used for conversational support in addressing personal mental health difficulties. For individuals experiencing mental health stigma, non-judgmental and on-demand chatbot interactions may be more appealing than face-to-face support, partly due to their convenience and anonymity. Given the rapid global uptake of AI technologies, understanding mental health stigma in AI-mediated help-seeking contexts is becoming more important for their safe and ethical use. This cross-sectional study aimed to examine whether ChatGPT use for personal mental health difficulties is associated with mental health stigma, and whether the perceived effectiveness of ChatGPT mediates this relationship. Participants (n = 73), who were primarily university students, completed online self-report measures assessing ChatGPT usage for mental health purposes, perceived effectiveness of ChatGPT for mental health issues, and mental health stigma. The results showed that ChatGPT usage was positively associated with perceived effectiveness. While ChatGPT usage and perceived effectiveness were not directly associated with stigma, our tested mediation analyses indicated a significant indirect effect such that greater ChatGPT usage was associated with reduced stigma via increased perceived effectiveness. These findings suggest that ChatGPT use is associated with reduced mental health stigma only when its use is perceived to be effective, highlighting the importance of perceived effectiveness. As AI-based tools are rapidly emerging in mental health contexts, a clearer understanding of why individuals use these technologies, along with their potential benefits and limitations, will be essential for informing appropriate guidelines and best practices for AI-based mental health support.

**Keywords:** *Artificial Intelligence (AI), AI chatbot, ChatGPT, mental health stigma, mental health.*

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## **WHY NOSTALGIA COMFORTS US**

**Yashar Anjamrooz, & Christina Ravelo**

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### **Abstract**

This systematic review of 10 sources identifies multiple converging mechanisms through which nostalgia provides psychological comfort. The most consistently supported pathway is social connectedness: nostalgia augments feelings of belonging and acceptance, which mediates its effects on both meaning in life and self-continuity. Nostalgia also comforts by fostering self-continuity, a sense of connection between one's past and present self—which confers eudaimonic well-being operationalized as subjective vitality. Additionally, nostalgia serves an existential function by bolstering meaning in life, particularly when meaning is threatened, and provides a window to the intrinsic self-concept, increasing authenticity and buffering against threats to self-expression. Evidence also suggests nostalgia maintains physiological comfort, with nostalgic reflection increasing perceived warmth and tolerance to cold. These comforting effects are not universal but depend on important boundary conditions. Nostalgia's benefits are most pronounced for individuals with low attachment-related avoidance, who derive greater social connectedness from nostalgic memories. Critically, identity continuity between past and present is a necessary condition: when individuals perceive their past as disconnected from their present, such as during major life transitions, nostalgia can have negative rather than positive consequences for well-being. A reflective stance focusing on similarities between past and present selves enhances nostalgia's positive effects. These findings are consistent across cultures, suggesting nostalgia serves universal human needs for social connection, temporal coherence, and existential meaning.

**Keywords:** *Nostalgia, coping, pop culture, comfort.*

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## PROSPECTS FOR THE USE OF BIOMETRIC TECHNOLOGIES IN PSYCHOLOGICAL PRACTICE

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### Abstract

The study aims to explore the possibilities and attitudes regarding the use of biometric technologies and in psychological practice. Using a questionnaire centered on future projections, data was gathered from respondents aged 18 to 54 who were pursuing a Bachelor's or Master's degree in Psychology and possessed varying levels of knowledge regarding biometric technologies. The research establishes that those technologies will play an increasingly significant role in socio-psychological services, supporting diagnostics and psychotherapy. However, a key challenge remains preserving the human factor and emotional connection in these professions. Projections up to the year 2030 indicate that biometric technologies will be widely integrated into organizational processes, becoming standard assistive tools in socio-psychological practice. Respondents are optimistic that biometric technologies will be used to assess progress in psychotherapy and as an objective indicator of the effect of interventions for anxiety and trauma. In conclusion, the study highlights the need for a balanced approach to technological changes—one that combines the efficiency of automation with the preservation of emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationships in the workplace

**Keywords:** *Biometric technologies, psychological practice, projections, diagnostics, psychotherapy.*

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## SOCIAL SUPPORT AND SELF-EFFICACY AS PREDICTORS OF BASIC NEEDS CRAFTING AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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Slovak Academy of Sciences (Slovakia)*

### Abstract

Need crafting represents the degree of self-awareness and proactive engagement in fulfilling the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This trait develops during adolescence and may be supported by relationships with significant others. At the same time, adolescents in middle and late adolescence have sufficient life experience to perceive and evaluate their own self-efficacy. The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between need crafting within the three basic psychological needs, social support from family, friends, and significant others, and general self-efficacy. The sample consisted of 293 adolescents ( $M_{age} = 17.69$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ; 62,5% of women). Data were collected using the Need Crafting Scale, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, and the General Self-Efficacy Scale. Data were processed in SPSS 21 using regression models. According to the results, need crafting for competence ( $R^2 = 30.50$ ;  $F = 25.22$ ,  $p < .001$ ), autonomy ( $R^2 = 22.50$ ;  $F = 16.70$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and relatedness ( $R^2 = 31.12$ ;  $F = 26.05$ ,  $p < .001$ ) was associated with social support from significant others and friends. Social support from family did not show a significant relationship with the dependent variables. Self-efficacy was a significant predictor of need crafting in the areas of competence and autonomy, but not relatedness. The results support the examination of the role of significant others in the development of adolescents' personality and mental health. In the category of significant others, it is possible to include friends, romantic partners, as well as important non-parental adults present in the adolescents' natural environment. At the same time, results suggest that self-awareness and proactivity in the domain of relational needs may be associated with different personality traits than those related to autonomy and competence.

**Keywords:** *Social support, self-efficacy, basic needs, need crafting, adolescence.*

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## **COLLABORATIVE VIRTUAL REALITY EXPOSURE FOR ACROPHOBIA: A MULTIPLE-BASELINE SINGLE-CASE STUDY WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL MEASURES**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigated the use of a collaborative immersive virtual reality environment (CIVE) for therapist-guided exposure in the treatment of acrophobia, integrating both psychological and physiological measures. Using a Single Case Experimental Design (SCED) with a multiple-baseline structure, three participants with a fear of heights completed repeated baseline sessions followed by therapist-guided virtual reality exposure therapy (VRET) sessions conducted in a shared virtual space. Our CIVE application enabled real-time interaction between therapist and client, dynamic adjustment of exposure intensity, and continuous heart rate (HR) monitoring via Bluetooth-connected sensors. Participants progressed through a height-simulation protocol inside a virtual elevator while completing validated measures of fear, anxiety, distress, and simulator sickness. Semi-structured interviews complemented the quantitative data to capture subjective experiences of the cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) process. The study aimed to examine how collaborative VR-based exposure, informed by real-time physiological feedback, could support individualized therapeutic work with acrophobia and provide deeper insight into psychological and physiological processes during guided VRET.

**Keywords:** *Collaborative immersive virtual environment, VR, exposure therapy, CBT, acrophobia.*

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## **ADOLESCENT'S PERSPECTIVE ON BULLYING PREVENTION AND HEALTH PROMOTION**

**Alcione Trindade<sup>1</sup>, Geane Vieira<sup>1</sup>, Kátia DeBonis<sup>1</sup>, Saulo Krieger<sup>1</sup>, & Renata Coelho<sup>2</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

This article analyzes adolescents' perceptions of school bullying practices, considering victimization, perpetration, and strategies for prevention and health promotion. A study was conducted with 85 students from the 6th to the 9th grade of elementary school at a private school in São Paulo, through the application of a questionnaire based on the School Bullying Assessment Scale (EAB-E) and the realization of focus groups by grade level. The results indicate a relevant frequency of exclusion, unwanted nicknames, and derogatory comments mainly associated with body-related aspects and skin color, in addition to barriers to seeking help from reference adults. Greater recognition of the suffering related to victimization was observed than of one's own involvement in aggressive behaviors, suggesting the naturalization of such behavior as "joking." Conversation circles expanded the understanding of the findings and fostered reflection and communication. It is concluded that preventive and dialogical interventions, with the active participation of Psychology in schools, are essential for the promotion of mental health in adolescence.

**Keywords:** *Bullying, school violence, adolescent health, prevention, health promotion.*

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## TRACING THE LONG-TERM IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE ON ADOLESCENT DETACHMENT AND ANXIETY

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### Abstract

Patterns of psychological adjustment during adolescence are shaped by the complex interplay between developmental transitions and relational experiences. Emotional abuse, in particular, has been repeatedly associated with a wide range of negative outcomes, including maladaptive personality features, and elevated internalizing symptoms. Despite this growing body of evidence, the mechanisms through which emotional abuse exerts its influence over time remain insufficiently clarified. To address these gaps, the present longitudinal study investigated the dynamic relationships between emotional abuse, detachment, and anxiety across three time points spanning one year. Data were collected at baseline, six months later, and twelve months later from a large community sample of 1,847 Italian adolescents, with a mean age of 15.50 years ( $SD = 1.09$ ). EA was assessed using the Emotional Abuse subscale of the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire–Short Form (CTQ-SF), detachment through the detachment subscale of the Personality Inventory for DSM-5–Brief Form (PID-5-BF), and anxiety via the anxiety subscale of the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales–21 (DASS-21). Structural equation modeling (SEM) with latent variables was conducted. The final model showed acceptable fit:  $\chi^2(312)=525.179$ ;  $p<.001$ ,  $\chi^2/df=1.683$ ,  $CFI=.993$ ,  $RMSEA=.019$  (90%  $CI=.016-.022$ ), and  $SRMR=.014$ . The findings revealed that emotional abuse at T1 and at T2 significantly predicted both detachment and anxiety at T2 and at T3, respectively. Detachment at T1 and at T2 significantly predicted anxiety at T2 and at T3, respectively. Detachment did not predict emotional abuse, and anxiety did not predict either emotional abuse or detachment. Mediation analyses indicated that emotional abuse at T1 indirectly predicted anxiety at T3 through emotional abuse at T2, detachment at T2, and anxiety at T2. In addition, detachment at T1 indirectly predicted anxiety at T3 through detachment at T2 and anxiety at T2, but not through emotional abuse at T2. Finally, anxiety at T1 did not indirectly predict anxiety at T3 through emotional abuse at T2, detachment at T2, or anxiety at T2. Taken together, these results underscore the central role of detachment as a key mechanism linking emotional abuse as a predictor to the development of anxiety as an outcome. From a clinical and preventive perspective, these findings highlight the importance of early identification of emotionally abusive experiences and the implementation of interventions aimed at promoting emotional awareness, adaptive coping strategies, and relational engagement. Strengthening emotional resilience during adolescence may be particularly crucial for disrupting maladaptive developmental pathways and reducing the long-term psychological burden associated with emotional abuse.

**Keywords:** *Emotional abuse, detachment, anxiety, adolescents, longitudinal study.*

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## STRESS RECOVERY AS A MARKER OF RESILIENCE: PHYSIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FROM A DRIVING SIMULATOR PARADIGM

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### Abstract

Exposure to adversity, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, terror attacks, and natural disasters, has become increasingly common. Nevertheless, most individuals demonstrate resilience, adapting functionally to these challenges and recovering fully. Despite advances in understanding physiological stress responses, the mechanisms underlying resilience remain insufficiently understood. Prior research indicates that both exaggerated and blunted physiological reactions to stress are associated with poor coping and negative outcomes. However, the role of recovery from stress as a key marker of resilience has not been adequately explored. This study aimed to investigate stress recovery as a more reliable mechanism of resilience than the immediate physiological response to stress. To this end, we implemented a novel experimental paradigm that distinguished between acute stress and its relief, providing a direct

assessment of individuals' capacity to recover. To enhance ecological validity, assessments were conducted in a driving simulator, with driving tasks serving as a realistic background for studying stress recovery. The protocol included three scenarios: (1) a baseline driving task without induced stress, (2) a driving task following laboratory-induced acute stress, and (3) a driving task following a stress-relief procedure, designed to assess recovery. Physiological responses - specifically heart rate variability (HRV) - were continuously monitored, alongside driving performance and self-reported affect. Individual resilience (IR) was additionally assessed using a validated questionnaire. Thirty-five healthy adults (18 females; ages 20–43,  $M = 27.17$ ) took part in the experiment. Results revealed that higher IR was significantly associated with greater recovery in negative affect, though not in positive affect. Moreover, higher IR was correlated with improved recovery of unsafe driving behavior, measured by distance out of lane. A trend further suggested that greater IR may be linked to more substantial physiological recovery, particularly HRV (standard deviation of R-R intervals, SDNN). These findings provide partial support for the role of IR in both emotional and physiological recovery following acute stress. Understanding the psychological and physiological correlates of IR holds theoretical and clinical relevance, with potential to reduce the prevalence of psychopathology and its personal and societal costs. By focusing on recovery processes rather than solely on stress reactivity, this research highlights new directions for interventions aimed at enhancing resilience and promoting well-being in the face of adversity.

**Keywords:** *Individual resilience, acute stress and relief, driving simulator study.*

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## EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### PERCEIVED SCHOOL PRESTIGE AND TEACHING EFFICACY: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SUBJECTIVE STATUS AND SCHOOL SOCIAL CLIMATE

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#### **Abstract**

*Aim:* This study aimed to explore whether subjective socioeconomic status and school social climate mediate the association between perceived school prestige and teaching efficacy. *Method:* A serial mediation model (PROCESS Model 6) examined whether perceived school prestige is associated with teaching efficacy (a subscale of the Teacher Subjective Well-being Questionnaire / TSWQ) through teachers' perceptions of their subjective socioeconomic status and school social climate (Student relationships and Collaboration and Instructional Innovation, as two subscales of the School-Level Environment Questionnaire / SLEQ). The research sample consisted of 235 teachers (M = 43.41, SD = 10.78; 85.5% women). *Results:* Higher perceived school prestige was associated with higher subjective socioeconomic status, which in turn was linked to more positive student relations and greater collaboration and instructional innovation within the school. These school climate factors were subsequently associated with higher teaching efficacy. Both the direct and total indirect associations were significant, indicating partial mediation. These findings suggest that teachers' perceptions of school prestige are linked to their teaching efficacy both directly and indirectly through perceived social status and relational characteristics of the school environment. *Conclusions:* The results highlight the importance of school prestige and its ripple effects on teacher outcomes. Schools perceived as prestigious may enhance teachers' sense of social standing and foster positive interpersonal relationships among students, which together contribute to stronger teaching efficacy. Interventions aimed at improving teaching efficacy could benefit not only from professional development but also from fostering a positive and collaborative school climate and reinforcing teachers' pride in their school's reputation. Moreover, school leaders might consider how school branding, community engagement, and internal recognition can shape teachers' perceptions of status and relational dynamics, ultimately supporting more confident and effective teaching practices.

**Keywords:** *Perceived school prestige, subjective socioeconomic status, teaching efficacy, school social climate.*

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### TRUST IN SCIENCE AS A PREDICTOR OF PSYCHOLOGICAL MISCONCEPTIONS AMONG PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

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#### **Abstract**

Psychological misconceptions among pre-service teachers represent a persistent problem that can negatively influence pedagogical decision-making, the use of scientific knowledge, and the implementation of evidence-based practices in educational settings. While previous research has focused primarily on knowledge acquisition and critical thinking as factors related to misconception endorsement, the role of trust in science remains underexplored. Trust in science refers to the extent to which individuals perceive scientific knowledge as credible, relevant, and socially beneficial. Lower levels of trust in science may increase susceptibility to simplified or unverified explanations of psychological phenomena among pre-service teachers. This study aimed to examine the relationship between trust in science and psychological misconceptions among pre-service teachers and to verify whether trust in science represents a significant predictor of misconception endorsement after controlling for study-related

variables including year of study, number of completed psychology courses, and teaching practice experience. The sample consisted of 183 pre-service teachers (63.4% women) enrolled in bachelor's and master's teacher education programs in Slovakia, with a mean age of 22.10 years ( $SD = 1.72$ ). Data were collected using paper-based questionnaires that included demographic and study-related variables, a modified version of the Psychological Information Questionnaire assessing psychological misconceptions, and the Credibility of Science Scale measuring trust in science. Statistical analyses included Pearson correlation analysis and hierarchical linear regression. Results revealed a significant positive relationship between trust in science and correct identification of psychological myths ( $r = .215$ ,  $p = .003$ ), indicating that higher trust was associated with fewer misconceptions. Hierarchical regression analysis demonstrated that after controlling for study-related variables in the first model ( $R^2 = .113$ ,  $p < .001$ ), trust in science significantly predicted lower misconception endorsement ( $\beta = .199$ ,  $p = .005$ ), explaining an additional 3.9% of variance ( $\Delta R^2 = .039$ ). Active teaching practice also emerged as a significant predictor ( $\beta = .208$ ,  $p = .021$ ). These findings suggest that trust in science represents an important factor associated with lower psychological misconception endorsement among future teachers, beyond the influence of formal psychological education and practical experience. Teacher education programs should consider fostering trust in scientific methods alongside psychological knowledge to enhance psychological literacy and support evidence-based pedagogical practice.

**Keywords:** *Psychological misconceptions, trust in science, pre-service teachers, psychological literacy, teacher education.*

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## MEASURING WHAT MATTERS: EDUCATORS' SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES

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### Abstract

Teachers' social-emotional competencies (SEL) play a central role in shaping instructional quality, classroom climate, and educators' professional well-being. Despite growing recognition of their importance, valid and profession-specific tools for assessing educators' SEL remain limited. The EduSEL questionnaire was originally developed to address this gap through a domain-specific, practice-anchored assessment of educators' social-emotional competencies. Empirical use of EduSEL across multiple studies demonstrated its sensitivity to developmental differences among preservice, novice, and experienced educators, as well as its relevance for SEL-focused professional learning. At the same time, accumulated evidence highlighted conceptual and psychometric limitations, including partial alignment with the CASEL framework, redundancy across items, and constraints on external validity. These insights motivated the development of a refined instrument: EduSEL-R. EduSEL-R was developed through a systematic, multi-stage validation process comprising expert content review, expansion and refinement of behavioral items, and large-scale exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. Across four studies ( $N = 1,683$ ), results supported a robust four-factor structure – self-management, ethical problem solving, self- and social awareness, and relationship skills – with high internal consistency and improved construct validity. By tracing the conceptual and empirical progression from EduSEL to EduSEL-R, this paper illustrates how iterative measurement development can strengthen the assessment of educators' SEL and enhance its usefulness for research, professional development, and policy.

**Keywords:** *Social-emotional learning, educators, assessment, questionnaire development, validity.*

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## **EXPLORING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KOLB EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROFILE IN JAPANESE**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this study was to develop the Japanese version of the Kolb Experiential Learning Profile (KELP). To achieve this aim, we applied 147 Japanese undergraduates and adopted a test-retest approach at a 5-week interval. Results of the paired t-test indicated no significant difference between them concerning six key learning style variables, suggesting the measurement stability of the Japanese version. As for scale reliabilities, Cronbach's alphas of four scales within the Japanese version stayed at an acceptable range except a reflective observation scale. In terms of construct validity, results of a factor analysis revealed that a component of active experimentation served as a cross-loading to bipolar factors, indicating a room for improvement on the construct validity. To improve the Japanese version, we further created the modified version of Japanese KELP, collecting the additional data from 63 Japanese undergraduates. Results of the internal consistency test illustrated that Cronbach's alphas of all four scales of the modified version were acceptable. Results of a factor analysis indicated strong bipolar structure without an issue of cross-loading. Those results drew us to conclude that the modified version of the Japanese KELP can be a proper measure to examine learning styles of Japanese people.

**Keywords:** *Kolb Experiential Learning Profile, Japanese version, scale development.*

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## SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### FANDOMS AS COMMUNITIES OF BELONGING AND COPING

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**Abstract**

This systematic review of 10 empirical studies examines fandoms as communities of belonging and coping across science fiction, fanfiction, music, television/film, celebrity, and sport fandoms. Strong evidence demonstrates that fan communities create powerful belonging effects: science fiction fans report high psychological sense of community across several dimensions (belonging, needs fulfillment, influence, shared connection, and conscious identification), and fans often rate sense of community higher for fan groups than for their local geographical communities (Chadborn, Edwards, & Reysen, 2018; Obst, Zinkiewicz, & Smith, 2001). Belonging operates through interconnected psychological processes (identification, attachment, and eudaimonic motivations), social processes (peer support, shared practices, and participation in events), and cultural processes (creative transformation of media and community narratives) (Bacon-Smith, 1991; Cavicchi, 1998; Dym, Brubaker, Fiesler, & Semaan, 2019; Tsay-Vogel & Sanders, 2017). Evidence for explicit coping functions is more limited but consistent where measured. Qualitative studies show that online fandoms provide emotional support, stress reduction, and identity-safety, especially in crisis and marginalized contexts such as LGBTQ individuals using fanfiction communities for identity work and Roswell fans mobilizing collective mourning and support after the September 11 attacks (Dym et al., 2019; Stein, 2002). The same mechanisms that create belonging—identification, peer support, and meaning-making—appear to underlie coping benefits. However, these benefits are shaped by fandom type, individual characteristics, and platform features and are constrained by challenges such as toxic behaviors and identity safety concerns. Overall, fandoms function as communities of belonging and coping rather than trivial leisure spaces, though the strength and pathways of these effects vary across contexts.

*Keywords: Fandom, belonging, coping, community, parasocial.*

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### DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF THE EMPLOYEE EXIT EXPERIENCE SCALE

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**Abstract**

Employee turnover research heavily focused on antecedents, decisions and treating leaving as a behavioral endpoint rather than an experience. This study addresses this gap by developing and validating the Employee Exit Experience Scale (EEES), a multidimensional scale capturing the psychological and organizational dynamics of the exit process. In the study, a sequential mixed-methods design was used. In the qualitative phase, 16 semi-structured interviews were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis to generate an initial pool of 90 items. Following expert review and a pilot study (n = 66), data was collected from larger sample (n = 384 valid responses). Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using the CB-SEM algorithm supported a two-domain structure. The antecedent model consisted of Leaving Motivation, Emotional Effects, Manager and Management, Coworker Support, Working Conditions and Balance, and Workplace Policies and Culture. The consequence model identified five dimensions, Knowledge Transfer, Employee Morale, Employee Networks, Turnover Intention Spillover, and Employer Brand. Both model showed acceptable fit and satisfactory reliability in the analyses. The findings showed that employee exit is a transition process with measurable organizational reverberations. The EEES provides a theoretically differentiated and psychometrically robust tool for turnover research and gives evidence-based offboarding practices.

*Keywords: Employee Exit Experience, turnover, scale development, organizational psychology.*

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## UNCERTAIN TIMES, UNCERTAIN JOBS, DEPLETED WORKERS: BURNOUT AS A LINK BETWEEN JOB INSECURITY AND WELL-BEING

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### Abstract

Job insecurity represents a salient job demand in contemporary work contexts and has been consistently linked to reduced employee well-being. However, less is known about the mechanisms through which job insecurity translates into impaired well-being. Drawing on occupational stress and Job Demands–Resources perspectives, the present study examined whether burnout, conceptualized as exhaustion and disengagement, explains the association between job insecurity and employee well-being. Data were collected in autumn 2022 in Montenegro, during a period of heightened uncertainty related to the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 275 employees participated in the study. The questionnaire included the Job Insecurity Scale, the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (exhaustion and disengagement), the WHO-5 Well-Being Index, and a set of questions about demographic variables. Multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationships among variables while controlling for gender, age, overall work experience, and organizational ownership. Results showed that the overall model was significant, explaining 38.9% of the variance in well-being,  $R^2 = .39$ ,  $F(3, 193) = 40.94$ ,  $p < .001$ . Exhaustion ( $\beta = -.38$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and job insecurity ( $\beta = -.25$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were significant negative predictors of well-being, whereas disengagement was not ( $\beta = -.13$ ,  $p = .075$ ). Mediation analysis (PROCESS Model 4) indicated that job insecurity significantly predicted exhaustion ( $B = 0.27$ ,  $SE = 0.04$ ,  $t = 7.25$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which in turn predicted lower well-being ( $B = -0.72$ ,  $SE = 0.10$ ,  $t = -7.31$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The total effect of job insecurity on well-being was significant ( $B = -0.45$ ,  $SE = 0.06$ ,  $p < .001$ ), while the direct effect remained significant but was reduced when exhaustion was included ( $B = -0.26$ ,  $SE = 0.06$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating partial mediation. Bootstrap analysis (5,000 samples) confirmed a significant indirect and partial effect of job insecurity on well-being via exhaustion ( $B = -0.19$ ,  $BootSE = 0.04$ , 95% CI [-0.28, -0.12]). These findings support the health-impairment process proposed by the JD–R model and highlight exhaustion as a key mechanism through which job insecurity undermines employee well-being.

**Keywords:** Job insecurity, burnout, exhaustion, disengagement, employee well-being.

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## THE MEDIATING ROLE OF NEED CRAFTING IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-AWARENESS AND SATISFACTION OF BASIC PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS

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### Abstract

Satisfaction of basic psychological needs is, according to Self-Determination Theory, one of the key predictors for mental health. Its important correlate however, is self-awareness, which—during the period of emerging identity in adolescence—may represent a challenging task often accompanied by negative emotional experiences. A potential mediator between self-awareness and overall satisfaction of the basic needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness may be need crafting, that is, intentional and proactive adjustments in behavior and thinking through which individuals attempt to fulfill their psychological needs. The aim of this study is to examine the mediating role of need crafting focused on the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the relationship between self-awareness and overall satisfaction of basic psychological needs. The sample consisted of 293 adolescents ( $M_{\text{age}} = 17.69$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ; 62,5% of women). Data were collected using the Need Crafting Scale, the Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction Scales (BPNS), and the Self-Determination Scale. The results indicate a direct relationship between self-awareness and the fulfillment of basic psychological needs ( $B = 0.093$ ,  $SE = 0.012$ ;  $R^2 = 31.9$ ), as well as an indirect effect through competence-oriented need crafting ( $B = 0.013$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ;  $R^2 = 0.038$ ). The relationship between self-awareness and need crafting in the domain of relatedness was not confirmed. Likewise, no significant relationship was found between

autonomy-oriented need crafting and overall need satisfaction. The findings highlight, on a practical level, the importance of fostering self-awareness during adolescence. On a theoretical level, it may be considered that need crafting in the domain of relatedness requires different personality characteristics than other psychological needs. Relatedness-oriented need crafting may be more strongly tied to contextual factors than to self-awareness itself. On the other hand, autonomy-oriented need crafting may focus more on one's own identity rather than one need satisfaction.

**Keywords:** *Awareness of self, satisfaction of basic psychological needs, need crafting, adolescents.*

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## **TRANSLATING ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITIES TO BEHAVIOR IN THE ERA OF HYBRID WORK: THE CASE OF SECURITY BY DESIGN**

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### **Abstract**

*Context:* Developers of information systems need to be constantly vigilant about issues and standards regarding code security in their work. As the number of security breaches rises, the relationship between the declared priority given to security in an organization and its actualization in practice is critical. The hybrid work model, blending remote and on-site settings, adds another layer of complexity to this dynamic.

*Objectives:* This research aimed to investigate the dynamics between security goals and behavior through the theoretical lens of organizational security climate, taking into consideration the hybrid work model.

*Methods:* We collaborated with an international IT enterprise, surveying 244 software developers in different development sites worldwide and, using standard measures, examined their perceptions of organizational priorities, security climate, and secure coding behaviors.

*Results:* The results indicate that organizational security climate mediates the relationship between organizational priorities and proactive security behavior and that the extent of remote work weakens this mediation, meaning that organizational policies, procedures, and practices are less enforced and acted upon the more developers perform their duties off-site.

*Conclusion:* Leadership and social processes manifested through security climate have a role in aligning employees with organizational priorities regarding security. Our findings also strengthen the notion that the more employees work remotely, the more difficult it is for the leadership and social processes to take effect. Practical implications are that alternative strategies may be needed to reinforce security norms effectively in hybrid work contexts.

**Keywords:** *Security and privacy protection, security by design, organizational climate, organizational priorities, hybrid work.*

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## **STUDYING SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS IN THE FIELD OF PSYCHOLOGY: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF CURRENT PRACTICES**

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### **Abstract**

Sociodemographic variables are of great importance to social sciences in terms of shaping or predicting psychological outcomes. Socioeconomic status (SES) is one of the most prominent of these variables that are widely used in psychological research. Upon thorough examination of the literature, one can observe numerous methodological strategies regarding the use of SES. This situation may be interpreted as a result of SES being used as a descriptive variable instead of a primary variable; thus, researchers do not allocate enough time to its operationalization. The present research aims to test this assumption by reviewing the long-term research projects (i.e., theses/dissertations) that approach SES as the primary

focus of the project. Accordingly, this systematic review covers the psychology theses submitted to the Turkish National Thesis Center between 2000 and 2023. Sixty-five theses that appeared as a result of the filtered search were screened and selected in terms of the following criteria: to have SES as a precise primary variable in the research, to be written in English or Turkish, to use quantitative methods, and to be open-access at the time of searching. Twenty-three theses were included in the review after the screening and selection phases. The synthesized review findings demonstrated that only 34.8% of the theses provided a definition or a discussion of the SES concept, while the remaining 65.2% did not give any coverage of conceptualization. In addition, the theses with SES definitions varied among themselves regarding the indicators of SES they mentioned, such as education, income, occupation, prestige, power, and wealth. In terms of methodology, the level of SES assessment (i.e., area, family/household, individual) showed a significant variety. All measurements were examined in terms of subjectivity, the type of indicators included, and the final SES variable types. Overall, review findings showed that even in the long-term projects where SES is the primary focus, most researchers still do not attach sufficient importance to the conceptualization and measurement of SES. Examining these methodological inconsistencies highlights the necessity of a clear SES conceptualization in psychology and provide psychometrical insights for future research.

**Keywords:** *Socioeconomic status, social class, psychological measurement.*

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## **ACADEMIC BURNOUT AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN MONTENEGRO: PERFECTIONISM AND EMOTION REGULATION**

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### **Abstract**

Perfectionism and emotion regulation have been increasingly recognized as important psychological constructs related to academic burnout, a phenomenon that poses a growing challenge to students' well-being and academic functioning. The Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT), originally developed for occupational settings, has also been adapted for assessing academic burnout among university students (BAT-S). Within the Study Demands-Resources framework, academic burnout is conceptualized as a state of exhaustion characterized by extreme tiredness, reduced emotional and cognitive functioning, and mental distancing from academic work. The aim of the present study was to examine the contribution of perfectionism and emotion regulation to academic burnout among students in Montenegro. A sample of 181 students from several universities in Montenegro participated in the study. The instruments included the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS; 35 items, 5-point Likert scale), the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ; 18 items, 5-point Likert scale), and the student version of the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT-S; 34 items, 5-point frequency scale ranging from *never* to *always*, with higher scores indicating more frequent experience of burnout symptoms), along with a set of socio-demographic questions. The results indicated a strong positive correlation between perfectionism and academic burnout ( $r = .66, p < .001$ ), as well as an even stronger association between difficulties in emotion regulation and burnout ( $r = .74, p < .001$ ). Regression analyses showed that both perfectionism and emotion regulation significantly predicted burnout levels, with emotion regulation accounting for a larger proportion of explained variance. Furthermore, students reporting greater difficulties in emotion regulation scored significantly higher on the BAT compared to those who regulated their emotions more effectively. Overall, the findings suggest that while perfectionistic tendencies contribute to vulnerability, difficulties in emotion regulation play a more central role in the development and severity of academic burnout. The results highlight the importance of preventive and educational interventions aimed at strengthening adaptive emotion regulation strategies and promoting realistic academic expectations. Such efforts may contribute to reducing burnout risk, improving students' psychological well-being, and fostering healthier academic environments.

**Keywords:** *Perfectionism, emotion regulation, academic burnout, university students, Montenegro.*

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## **SUSTAINABLE ADAPTABILITY AT WORK: A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATORY STUDY OF INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOSOCIAL COMPETENCIES IN THE FRENCH NUCLEAR INDUSTRY**

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### **Abstract**

Sustainable adaptability represents a critical issue in high-reliability organizations characterized by stringent safety requirements, complex socio-technical systems, and continuous regulatory and organizational changes, such as the nuclear industry. In this context, employees must continuously adjust their activity while ensuring both safety and operational performance under conditions of uncertainty and high responsibility. Drawing on work and career psychology, sustainable adaptability can be conceptualized as a dynamic process involving the long-term mobilization and regulation of psychosocial resources (Savickas, 1997, 2013; Hobfoll, 1989; Luthans et al., 2007). However, little is known about how these processes are concretely enacted in safety-critical environments.

This qualitative exploratory study aims to identify the individual psychosocial competencies that support sustainable adaptability among employees in EDF's Nuclear Generation Division. Seventeen semi-structured interviews were conducted across diverse occupational roles and analyzed using inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The results highlight three interrelated families of competencies — cognitive, emotional, and interactional — which enable employees to manage uncertainty, regulate pressure, and coordinate effectively within complex work systems. These competencies support what participants describe as a process of sustainable professional adjustment.

This study contributes to a contextualized understanding of sustainable adaptability in high-reliability environments and identifies specific psychosocial mechanisms underpinning long-term adjustment in the nuclear sector.

**Keywords:** *Sustainable adaptability, psychosocial adaptive competencies, nuclear industry, individual adjustment at work.*

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## **FROM ASSESSMENT TO ENACTMENT: FIVE YEARS OF RESEARCH ON EDUCATORS' SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) COMPETENCIES**

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### **Abstract**

Social-emotional learning (SEL) has been increasingly recognized as a central component of educators' professional functioning, well-being, and instructional effectiveness. However, research on educators' SEL has often remained fragmented, focusing on isolated interventions, single assessment tools, or narrowly defined outcomes. The present paper integrates findings from a multi-year program of research examining educators' SEL across assessment, developmental differences, simulation-based learning, and enactment in professional contexts. Drawing on a sequence of quantitative and qualitative, intervention-based, and simulation-oriented studies, we synthesize evidence from the development and refinement of the EduSEL-R - a questionnaire specifically designed for educators; investigations of individual differences across educators' career stages, and studies examining the effects of clinical simulations on SEL development and enactment of educators. The integrated findings highlight three central insights: (a) educators' SEL can be reliably assessed using profession-specific instruments; (b) SEL competencies vary across career stages and do not develop linearly through experience alone; and (c) different types of simulation-based learning - ranging from active participation to mimetic learning-by-observation (across face-to-face, online, and video-based modalities) - support not only SEL development but also its enactment in complex, value-laden professional situations. Together, these findings contribute to a more integrated understanding of educators' SEL as a dynamic, contextually enacted professional capacity and offer directions for research, teacher education, and professional development.

**Keywords:** *Educators' social-emotional learning, SEL assessment, simulation-based learning, teacher education, SEL enactment.*

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## LEGAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### PSYCHOPATHOLOGICAL DISORDERS AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING IN JUVENILE OFFENDERS IN FRANCE

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#### Abstract

Studies on the mental health of young offenders are scarce, particularly in Europe. Likewise, international data on the specificities of their executive functioning remains rare. This study aimed to assess the prevalence of mental disorders in a representative sample of young delinquents placed under judicial supervision in France (N = 60) and to compare their executive test performance with a comparison group from the general population (N = 60). The diagnostic assessment of mental disorders was conducted using the Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview (DSM-5), and executive functions were evaluated using three neuropsychological tests: Trail Making Test, Stroop and N-back. The results highlighted a higher prevalence of mental disorders among the young offenders (95%) than in the young people from the general population (33.3%). The most common disorders were conduct and antisocial personality disorders (71.7%), disorders linked to substance use other than alcohol (56.7%), prior episodes of major depression (33%) and post-traumatic stress disorder (25%). The level of comorbidity in the offender group was also higher. The young offender group had significantly lower performances on executive tests than the comparison group. These findings highlight the marked vulnerability of young offenders in terms of their mental health and psychosocial adjustment. It is thus necessary to continue investigating this field and to set up national prevention programs.

**Keywords:** *Young offenders, mental health, mental disorders, executive functions, juvenile justice system.*

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### ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES, DENIAL AND CROSSOVER OFFENDING PATTERNS IN INDIVIDUALS WITH SEXUAL CONVICTIONS

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#### Abstract

Studies indicate that individuals who perpetrate violent and sexual offences are more likely to have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), with prevalence rates exceeding those observed in the general population. According to cumulative trauma theory, exposure to multiple types of traumatic events, especially during early childhood, increases the risk of maladaptive outcomes, including criminal behaviour. ACEs tend to be particularly high among those offenders who report convictions for sex crime. This may be related to the specific characteristics of these offenders' criminal careers, as well as a pattern of denial and minimisation by which they often attempt to distance themselves from their criminal behaviour. Therefore, the present study aimed to explore the relationship between ACEs, denial, and crossover offending patterns among individuals convicted of sexual offences. To identify predictors of the four denial domains of the Comprehensive Inventory of Denial – Sex Offender Version (CID-SO), namely: Cluster A (denial of sexually deviant behaviours and arousal), Cluster B (denial of the need for treatment or management), Cluster C (denial of responsibility), and Cluster D (minimisation of harm), hierarchical multiple regression analyses were performed. Results indicated that the ACE total score significantly predicted both Cluster C ( $\beta = 0.186$ ,  $p = .018$ ) and Cluster D ( $\beta = -0.161$ ,  $p = .040$ ). Conversely, significant predictors of Cluster A were found to be the perpetrator's age ( $\beta = 0.261$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and having crossover age victims (i.e., both child and adult victims) ( $\beta = 0.265$ ,  $p = .001$ ).

Finally, the presence of a crossover offending pattern involving both hands-on and hands-off sexual behaviours significantly predicted Cluster B ( $\beta = -0.221, p = .007$ ). Taken together, these findings suggest that early adverse experiences may influence the development of individual meaning-making processes, self-attribution mechanisms, and narrative constructions concerning the offence, potentially shaping how individuals interpret, explain, and emotionally reframe their criminal behaviour. Moreover, the identification of distinct offence- and victim-related predictors highlight the role of offence trajectory characteristics in modulating how individuals cognitively and affectively position themselves with respect to their actions, accountability, and treatment needs. This perspective underscores the importance of adopting specialised and individualised assessment and intervention strategies that consider the different dimensions and manifestations of denial, along with the underlying psychological and developmental determinants.

**Keywords:** *Adverse childhood experiences, denial, sexual offending, crossover, assessment.*

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## **PERCEPTIONS PROFESSIONALS IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM HAVE OF YOUNG OFFENDERS IN PENAL PLACEMENT (FRANCE)**

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### **Abstract**

Young offenders have been the subject of numerous studies, yet very few have focused on the professionals who work with them. This issue is especially important because these professionals' representations may shape interpretation, educational attitudes, and decision-making. The Stereotype Content Model and the BIAS map provide a relevant framework for exploring such representations, as they make it possible to examine stereotypes, the emotions they elicit, and the behavioral intentions associated with them. The aim of this study was therefore to gain a better understanding of professionals' perceptions of this population. A total of 307 participants, including 151 professionals from the French juvenile justice system (aged 23 to 65 years) and 156 adults from the general population (aged 18 to 68 years), were invited to complete an online questionnaire designed to assess their image of young offenders, and inspired by the SCM and BIAS map framework. The results show that professionals and the general population display distinct representational profiles. Inter-group comparisons suggest that, overall, professionals have a more positive image of young offenders in terms of stereotypes, elicited emotions and behavioral intentions. Among professionals, age and seniority appeared to be negatively associated with this positive image, while female professionals tended to report more positive emotions and to adopt more positive behavioral intentions. These findings suggest that stereotypical perceptions of young offenders may be less prevalent among juvenile justice professionals than in the general population. Further research is needed to better understand how these perceptions may influence the processes involved in reducing the risk of recidivism and the well-being of young offenders in penal institutions.

**Keywords:** *Young offenders, social workers, stereotypes, perceptions, penal placement.*

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## **THE MEDIATING ROLE OF POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND DISSOCIATIVE SYMPTOMS IN JUVENILE OFFENDERS**

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### **Abstract**

This study examined whether post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) mediates the relationship between adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and dissociative symptoms among justice-involved youth. The sample included 120 adolescents aged 13–20 (60 under judicial supervision and 60 matched controls). Participants completed standardized measures of ACEs, PTSD symptoms (PCL-5), and dissociation (DES). Mediation analyses revealed that, within the PJJ group, ACEs were indirectly associated with dissociation through PTSD symptoms, while the direct effect was non-significant. These findings suggest that early adversity increases vulnerability to PTSD, which in turn contributes to dissociative manifestations. Addressing PTSD symptoms may therefore be essential in interventions targeting dissociation in juvenile offenders.

**Keywords:** *Adverse childhood experiences, post-traumatic stress disorder, dissociation, juvenile offenders.*

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## **EVIDENCE TYPE AND LEGAL THRESHOLDS: HOW CAUSAL ATTRIBUTION SHAPES PUBLIC JUDGMENTS OF REASONABLE SUSPICION AND PROBABLE CAUSE**

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<sup>1</sup>BA, <sup>2</sup>PhD, Faculty Mentor

### **Abstract**

This study aims to examine how different types of evidence and contextual factors influence public judgments of police searches. Specifically, it explores how people evaluate the justification of police actions under two legal thresholds—reasonable suspicion and probable cause—and whether judgments depend on the perceived strength and causal clarity of evidence. Drawing research in causal attribution and base-rate sensitivity, the experiment will manipulate (1) evidence type (direct vs. circumstantial), (2) crime-rate context (high vs. low), and (3) legal framing (reasonable suspicion vs. probable cause). Participants will read short scenarios about police encounters and rate how justified the search appears. The study expects that direct, causally clear evidence will elicit stronger support for searches than circumstantial cues, and that participants will apply different belief thresholds across legal standards. This study is still in progress for data collection. We expect that participants will judge searches as more justified when supported by direct (causal) evidence than when based on circumstantial cues. When evidence is circumstantial, contextual cues like high-crime settings will significantly increase perceived justification, revealing base-rate sensitivity. Finally, participants are expected to apply a higher internal threshold of belief for “probable cause” than for “reasonable suspicion,” though the distinction may be smaller than the legal standard implies—indicating potential misunderstanding of legal thresholds. Findings will contribute to our understanding of how laypeople interpret probabilistic evidence and may reveal cognitive biases underlying public support for police actions.

**Keywords:** *Police searches, evidence type, base-rate cues, reasonable suspicion, probable cause.*

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## COGNITIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### BEYOND EMPLOYMENT STATUS: CONSISTENCY IN WOMEN'S CLOTHING PURCHASE DECISION-MAKING

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#### **Abstract**

Although women's participation in formal employment has increased, many continue to fulfil primary caregiving and household responsibilities alongside work demands. These dual roles often lead to time pressure and heightened stress. Shopping has been identified as a potential leisure activity and coping mechanism; however, limited research has examined women's clothing purchase decision-making styles (DMS), particularly in relation to employment status. Despite managing more than half of household consumption, women's DMS remain under-explored. This quantitative, non-experimental comparative study investigated DMS in clothing among 228 South African women aged 18–65. Data were collected via an online questionnaire incorporating a 40-item Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI). Exploratory factor analysis identified eight DMS factors. Contrary to expectations, three dominant styles, habitual/brand loyalty, recreational/hedonistic orientation, and price/value consciousness, remained consistent across employment groups. Employed women (EW) reported more planned and enjoyable shopping experiences, suggesting a potential coping function, whereas unemployed women showed greater demonstrated price sensitivity. Overall, employment status influenced contextual constraints but did not fundamentally alter underlying cognitive and affective decision-making orientations. These findings highlight the psychological consistency of women's clothing DMS across employment categories and contribute to applied consumer psychology

**Keywords:** *Clothing purchase behaviour, decision-making styles, employment status, women consumer.*

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### THE IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION CHANNEL ON SKILL ACQUISITION IN A DYNAMIC COLLABORATIVE TASK

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#### **Abstract**

Research on collaborative problem solving typically focuses on speech as the primary driver of team success. Yet, recent studies on joint action have identified additional, non-verbal mechanisms for coordination, such as entrainment, perception-action matching, and action-based communication. Perhaps even more surprising are studies using the complex dynamic Co-op Space Fortress task, which demonstrate that even in the absence of a communication channel, dyads can coordinate effectively through non-verbal mechanisms alone. More impressively, an ACT-R model constructed for this task successfully reproduced dyadic skill acquisition trajectory, suggesting that the same processes underlying individual skill acquisition can also describe how dyads become more skilled at coordinating. This possibility stems, in part, from the nature of Co-op Space Fortress. This task imposes high perceptual-motor demands on subjects while offering limited flexibility for changing the joint plan, aside from selecting teammate roles. Consequently, it has been argued that subjects acquire all necessary task knowledge during initial instruction and subsequently execute the only viable plan, while adopting the role they are more successful at. Automatic skill processes are then responsible for performance improvements. The current study aims to challenge the sufficiency of this account for Co-op Space Fortress by introducing explicit communication channel between participants. Using a between-subject design, we compared dyads without a communication channel to those allowed to communicate either verbally during game play (in-game verbal) or textually between games (in-pause textual). If explicit communication was not needed in this task, we expected that there would be no significant impact on

skill acquisition rates and final scores between conditions. Our results demonstrated the opposite. Dyads with a communication channel significantly outperformed the no-communication group, improving their scores at a significantly faster rate. Furthermore, those with an in-game verbal communication channel showed a non-significant tendency for faster improvement than those with the in-pause textual channel. These findings suggest that initial task knowledge is often incomplete and that communication facilitates faster convergence on joint plans and effective real-time monitoring of partners. This study demonstrates that even in high-demand perceptual-motor tasks, explicit communication provides a critical advantage that exceeds the capabilities of individual learning mechanisms.

**Keywords:** *Collaborative skill acquisition, collaborative problem solving, coordination, communication channel, Co-op Space Fortress.*

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## **DEVELOPING A NEW TOOL FOR ASSESSING RISK INCLINATION: THE CASE OF TRANSPORTATION DURING PANDEMIC**

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### **Abstract**

We developed and tested a novel self-report questionnaire to assess risk inclination. The tool is grounded in the theory of risk homeostasis, which posits that individuals weigh the benefits and costs of risky versus safe behaviors. It addresses cognitive biases often present in previous risk-related questionnaires by employing a unique rolling scenario structure: behavioral dilemmas with positive goals and no socially desirable answer following by a series of questions designed to incrementally increase or decrease the associated risk, thereby probing the respondent's tolerance for different risk levels. The questionnaire was tested in the context of non-adherence to public health recommendations concerning transportation during the COVID-19 pandemic in Israel. Results of a study with 940 participants indicated that in line with the predictions of risk homeostasis theory, individuals were more inclined to take risks for mandatory journeys compared to voluntary ones, supporting the tool's theoretical validity. The study also replicated established findings from the literature concerning age, education, and religiosity, confirming the new tool's concurrent validity. Specifically, the results showed that older individuals and those with higher levels of education were less inclined to take risks compared to younger, less educated individuals. Additionally, more religious individuals were more inclined to take risks than the less religious. No significant effects were found for gender, in keeping with mixed results in the literature regarding the link between gender and transportation behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic. The questionnaire effectively reduces biases inherent in traditional self-report measures, contributing to more accurate assessments of risk inclination. The findings collectively suggest that the new questionnaire is a valid and comprehensive tool for assessing risk inclination in the context of transportation during a global pandemic. Since the design of the questionnaire aims to address biases found in previous risk questionnaires, such as scale format, scale anchoring, and social desirability bias, we suggest that it is more effective, more sensitive and less biased for assessing risk inclination. More broadly, the results indicate that the application of risk homeostasis theory, in conjunction with the unique approach of the current questionnaire, holds promise for exploring risk inclination in other domains.

**Keywords:** *Risk inclination, scale development, theory of risk homeostasis, transportation during pandemic.*

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## THE EFFECT OF ANIMACY IN REPEATED VISUAL SEARCH

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### Abstract

Previous research has indicated that animate entities often attract more attention than inanimate ones. The aim of the present work was to examine whether and how stimulus animacy may affect visual search performance and efficiency in a repeated search paradigm. Fifteen participants (10 female, 5 male;  $M = 23.5$  years,  $SD = 2.1$  years) were asked to search for a target stimulus within displays of three, six, or nine stimuli. The stimuli were pixel images representing animals (e.g., hedgehog, snail, owl; animate condition), objects of common usage (e.g., car, mug, computer; inanimate condition) or upper-case letters (control condition). The stimuli were presented on a computer screen in the form of a circle with a radius of  $8^\circ$  around the center point. At the beginning of each trial, the target was presented at this center point, and the participants' task was to locate this target in the peripheral circle and to click on it as quickly and accurately as possible. The target was always present. Furthermore, the search display stayed either the same within a block of 90 searches (repeated display) or changed after each search (unrepeated display). All three factors (stimulus type, search condition and set size) were varied block wise, resulting in 1620 searches (18 blocks of 90 trials) for each participant in total. The order of the blocks was randomized for each participant. Manual response times revealed that participants needed longer to find an animate target than an inanimate and letter target in a changing search environment, while, in repeated displays, such a disadvantage for animates occurred only in larger displays. In addition, animacy had some impact on search efficiency, regardless of whether the search was repeated or not. Together, these results suggest that stimulus animacy may affect visual search performance negatively, especially in changing search environments.

**Keywords:** Visual search, animacy, attention.

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## MESSY MINDS, MEANINGFUL CHOICES: CREATIVE-CHAOS AND EVERYDAY EMPLOYED FEMALE CONSUMERS' BEHAVIOUR

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### Abstract

Everyday consumer decision-making among employed females (EFs) occurs amid role strain, time scarcity, and cognitive overload. While personality traits are known to influence stress appraisal and coping, less is understood about how trait configurations may shift in response to contextual pressures. This study examined personality, perceived shopping-related challenges, and coping strategies among South African EFs ( $N = 255$ ). Exploratory factor analysis of the MINI-IPIP6 largely reproduced the expected six-factor structure but revealed an additional, theoretically coherent factor comprising high imaginative engagement and behavioural disorganisation. This emergent dimension, labelled *Creative-Chaos (C-C)*, reflects a contextual blending of Openness and low Conscientiousness. Regression analyses indicated that C-C predicted both increased organisational strain and greater creativity-based coping, suggesting a dual risk–resilience convergence. Rather than proposing a new personality trait, findings highlight how trait interactions may manifest uniquely under gendered role demands. The study contributes to applied personality psychology by demonstrating how contextual pressures shape the expression of traits in everyday economic behaviour.

**Keywords:** Consumer psychology, coping, creative-chaos, employed female, personality configuration.

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## **A LITTLE SLEEP AND SYMPATHY: POOR SLEEP IS POSITIVELY CORRELATED WITH INCREASED SYMPATHY**

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### **Abstract**

Sleep is important for emotional regulation and social cognition. Insufficient or disturbed sleep is associated with increased emotional reactivity, negative affect, increased negative situation appraisal, and instability in emotion processing. Prior work examining sleep and empathy (the ability to share another's emotional state) found that decreased sleep is associated with decreased empathy. No research on sleep and sympathy (concern for another's suffering accompanied by a motivation to alleviate it, without mirroring the other's feelings) has been conducted. Sympathy requires social evaluation of another's situation that includes determination of a lack of fault, feelings of love as well as sadness, and a desire to correct the distressing situation. Given previous work on sleep and empathy, it was hypothesized that poor sleep would be associated with decreased sympathetic feelings.

*Methods:* Data from the publicly available Midlife in the United States (MIDUS) study were obtained from the ICPSR repository and analyzed as secondary data (MRIP4 dataset). Participants included 790 adults (clinic visit age range 26–78 years;  $M = 52.74$ ,  $SD = 13.44$ ; 419 women, 371 men). Sleep was assessed via the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI). Sympathy was measured using the total score on the Sympathy Scale (TSS; Expanded). Pearson correlations were conducted between Global PSQI scores, PSQI subscales, and the TSS score;  $t$  tests assessed sex differences, and multiple regressions examined the predictive value of the PSQI measures, sex, and age on Sympathy scores.

*Results:* Higher Global PSQI (indicating poorer sleep quality) was positively correlated with TSS score ( $r = .098$ ,  $p = .006$ ). Women reported poorer sleep across all measures, and more sympathy ( $x=4.78$ ,  $sd=.57$ ) than men ( $x=4.50$ ,  $sd=.61$ , independent  $t$ -test  $p<.0001$ ). Age ( $\beta=.005$ ,  $t=2.99$   $p=.003$ ) and sex ( $\beta=.14$ ,  $t=6.77$   $p<.0001$ ) were significant predictors, and Global PSQI was a marginally significant predictor ( $\beta=.012$ ,  $t=1.93$ ,  $p=.05$ ) of sympathy.

*Discussion:* Contrary to expectations, poor sleep was associated with increased sympathy. Sleep loss related emotional instability and negativity bias may heighten sensitivity to suffering, leading to perception of hardship as more salient or distressing, even with the reduced perspective taking (e.g.: decreased empathy) reported in another research. Sleep disruption, by amplifying negative emotional processing, may result in sympathetic concern. Results support that poor sleep may impact interpersonal interactions, situational evaluations, and possibly prosocial behaviors.

**Keywords:** *Sleep, sympathy, PSQI, emotional assessment.*

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## ENVIRONMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

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### **VIRTUAL LANDSCAPES TO COMBAT STUDENT ANXIETY: WHICH ONE HELPS THE MOST?**

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#### **Abstract**

Psychological health issues, particularly anxiety, have become more prevalent among university students in recent years, impacting both academic performance and overall well-being. While previous research has shown that natural environments tend to reduce anxiety more than urban ones, it remains unclear whether all types of natural landscapes are equally effective. This study examined the impact of five distinct landscape types—green, autumn, rainy, desert, and urban—on state anxiety. A sample of 127 university students (Mage = 21 years, SD = 2.40; 82.7% female) participated during a high-stress period, characterized by upcoming exams and assignment deadlines. Among them, 47.2% had previously tried virtual reality, 97.6% reported no weekly exposure to virtual environments, and only 7.1% had regular daily contact with natural spaces. Using the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, total state anxiety scores were measured before and after exposure to each landscape in a repeated-measures design. Results indicated a significant reduction in state anxiety following exposure to natural landscapes, with the green landscape yielding the greatest decrease, followed by the autumn landscape. In contrast, the rainy, desert, and urban landscapes did not produce significant reductions, with the desert landscape showing the least benefit. These findings suggest that not all natural environments are equally effective in alleviating anxiety, highlighting the importance of specific environmental characteristics when designing virtual interventions to support psychological well-being in high-pressure academic settings.

**Keywords:** *State anxiety, virtual landscapes, nature, virtual reality, university students.*

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### **DESIGNING FOR WONDER: A NEURO-ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK (NAAF) FOR INVESTIGATING EXPERIENCE IN DESIGN HAPPENINGS**

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#### **Abstract**

This paper introduces the neuro-architectural analysis framework (NAAF), a design-research-driven system that integrates mobile EEG (MoBI) with design-ethnography and smart building sensor data to provide a comprehensive assessment of the whole human experience within dynamic social spaces. Situated within an urban design research lab, the NAAF is tested and developed through "Design Happenings" (participatory, sensory events modeled after Allan Kaprow's art "Happenings") that serve as a testbed for investigating wonder as a sustained, curiosity-driven, affective-cognitive state. By introducing a wireless electroencephalography (EEG) headset, specifically the *g.tec Unicorn Hybrid Black*, to capture brain-computer interface (BCI) data including time-resolved neural indicators of attention and arousal in situ, a critical "experiential gap" in current architectural and design research is filled. The NAAF is developed on a pragmatic-phenomenological theoretical foundation and enriched through principles of architectural experience design, humanistic psychology, and neuroaesthetics. The NAAF enables interdisciplinary teams to develop constructed environments that not only support physical safety and function but also create experiential value and holistically serve human, and more-than-human, well-being.

**Keywords:** *Design happenings, design research, EEG, mobile brain/body imaging (MoBI), neuroarchitecture.*

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## HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

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### REDUCING MENTAL HEALTH DISORDER CASES BY IMPROVING ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE CONDITIONS

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#### **Abstract**

The quality of mental health care and patient health improvement are closely linked to organizational culture in health care institutions. A positive and supportive organizational culture enhances staff well-being, professional collaboration, and safe clinical practice, which are reflected in patient outcomes. This study aimed to analyze the impact of organizational culture on patient health improvement in a mental health care institution by identifying key cultural mechanisms related to care quality and patient experience. A quantitative cross-sectional study was conducted using an anonymous self-assessment questionnaire among employees of the National Centre for Mental Health (N = 110). The study applied an integrated methodological approach combining the Denison organizational culture model and Ryff's psychological well-being model to examine the relationship between organizational culture dimensions and employees' psychological well-being. The results revealed a statistically significant association between organizational culture quality and employees' psychological well-being, particularly in the social relations dimension. These findings suggest that strengthening organizational culture may serve as an effective instrument for promoting patient health improvement in mental health care institutions. Aim of the study: to analyze how organizational culture in a mental health care institution influences patient treatment outcomes and health improvement, by identifying key organizational culture mechanisms.

**Keywords:** *Organizational culture, mental health, prevalence of mental disorders, burnout, stress, prevention of mental health disorders.*

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### THE FLOW EXPERIENCE IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND THE BLOSSOMING OF MENTAL HEALTH

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#### **Abstract**

Flow, or optimal experience, is a state of deep immersion in an activity associated with a deep sense of fulfillment. While the existing literature often focuses on Flow in individual, competitive, or athletic contexts, there is a need to explore its induction in non-performance group settings to foster general psychological well-being. This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of a novel, short-term training program, specifically designed to induce Group Flow and to promote Flourishing, improving mental health metrics among university students. A training program, totaling 13 hours over four structured sessions, was developed. The intervention was built upon two main pillars: 1) the practice of Mindfulness fundamentals, spanning all sessions; and 2) the use of introspective-exploratory techniques designed to progressively enhance a sense of personal and interpersonal connectedness, culminating in exercises involving the entire group. The program was tested on a heterogeneous sample of 24 university students (N=24), drawn from the "Rinaldo Franci" Conservatory in Siena and the bachelor degree program in Psychological Sciences and Techniques at the University of Urbino "Carlo Bo". The study utilized a pre-post quantitative design. Participants were assessed using two standardized and validated instruments: the Flourishing Scale (FS) and the Flow Short Scale (FSS). Statistical analyses (paired samples t-tests) were conducted on the mean scores. Additionally, qualitative assessments regarding perceived enjoyment and learning were collected post-training, complemented by a three-month follow-up focus group. Statistical analyses revealed statistically significant differences in the mean scores between the pre- and post-intervention phases for both scales. Participants demonstrated a reliable increase in their self-reported Flow experience ( $p < .05$ ) and in their overall level of Flourishing ( $p < .05$ ) after completing the training. These quantitative findings were strongly corroborated by the qualitative data, which

indicated a noticeable and sustained positive shift in self-perception and relational efficacy among participants. The preliminary results indicate that the structured induction of Group Flow represents a highly promising and useful intervention. This model could be effectively integrated into university curricula to develop crucial transversal skills and serve as a reliable tool for the proactive, continuous promotion of mental health and the discovery of new internal psychological resources among students.

**Keywords:** *Flow, flourishing, mental health, training program, psychological well-being.*

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## **GOAL DISENGAGEMENT AND GOAL RE-ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES IN RELATION TO MENTAL WELL-BEING FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH CHRONIC PAIN**

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### **Abstract**

Chronic pain, typically defined as pain persisting for three months or more, affects around one in five adults worldwide, and poses significant challenges to mental health and everyday functioning. Recent theory and research suggest that adaptive goal processes, effective goal disengagement and effective goal re-engagement are associated with increased well-being, in general populations. To date, however, scant research has examined these two distinct goal processes in relation to mental well-being for people living with pain. Living with chronic pain may well disrupt the pursuit of valued personal goals, thus leading to frustration and diminished mental well-being. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate whether effective goal re-engagement (i.e., the ability to re-engage in a new goal) and effective goal disengagement (i.e., the ability to effectively dis-engage), when faced with an unachievable goal, were associated with mental well-being in adults living with chronic pain. Participants were 190 Australian adults (M age = 49.46, SD = 17.38; 49.5% men), with pain duration ranging from 3 months to >5 years. Participants completed the Goal Adjustment Scale (GAS), the Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale, and a measure of Chronic Pain Grade Scale (CPGS). As predicted, mental well-being was positively associated with effective goal re-engagement but counter to prediction, effective goal disengagement was not related to mental well-being in the full sample. Together, these findings suggest that re-engagement supports mental well-being in chronic pain, whereas the implications of disengagement may be more nuanced. Overall, these findings highlight the value of studying distinct adaptive goal mechanisms that may further inform our understanding of the nature of pain from a motivational perspective.

**Keywords:** *Chronic pain, goal dis-engagement, goal re-engagement, mental well-being.*

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## PSYCHOANALYSIS AND PSYCHOANALYTICAL PSYCHOTHERAPY

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### ETHICS AS A PSYCHIC REGULATOR: ETHICAL COHERENCE, SELF-ESTEEM STABILITY AND COMPENSATORY SELF-REGULATION

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#### **Abstract**

This paper conceptualizes ethics not primarily as external moralism or social compliance, but as a psychic regulator that supports self-coherence, stable self-esteem, and psychological well-being. Building on psychoanalytic accounts of guilt, shame, and superego dynamics, and engaging with contemporary models of autonomy and self-regulation, we propose the construct of ethical coherence: the experienced alignment between one's actions, internal values, and self-representation. We argue that ethical coherence functions as a protective structure in the psychic economy by reducing unconscious guilt and shame-based self-attack, thereby weakening the need for compensatory strategies such as excessive validation-seeking, compulsive productivity, and addictive patterns of consumption or distraction. From a psychoanalytic perspective, ethically dissonant action may intensify persecutory moral configurations and generate residues that require repression, rationalization, or manic repair; in contrast, ethically coherent action consolidates ego continuity and supports more mature object relations. Developmentally, we distinguish authentic ethical functioning from mere compliance: when ethical positions are internally integrated rather than externally imposed, they tend to strengthen autonomy and reduce defensive dependency on external approval. Clinically and socially, this framework reframes ethics as a form of psychic hygiene - a preventive mode of psychological self-regulation that minimizes internal fragmentation and preserves psychological flexibility. We outline practical implications for assessment and intervention (e.g., exploring ethical dissonance as a source of diffuse guilt, rumination, and compulsive self-regulation) and propose testable hypotheses linking ethical coherence to self-esteem stability and reduced compensatory behaviors in contexts marked by acceleration and performativity.

**Keywords:** *Ethics, ethical coherence, self-esteem, guilt, self-regulation.*

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