



ATHENS INSTITUTE

Abstract Book

**20th Annual International Conference on
Psychology
25-30 May 2026, Athens, Greece**

**Edited by
Jim Clark & Olga Gkounta**

2026

Abstracts
20th Annual International
Conference on Psychology
25-30 May 2026, Athens, Greece

Edited by
Jim Clark & Olga Gkounta

First published in Athens, Greece by the Athens Institute.

ISBN: 978-960-598-746-6

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored, retrieved system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the written permission of the publisher, nor be otherwise circulated in any form of binding or cover.

9 Chalkokondili Street

10677 Athens, Greece

www.atiner.gr

©Copyright 2026 by the Athens Institute. The individual essays remain the intellectual properties of the contributors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(In Alphabetical Order by Author's Family Name)

Preface		9
Editors' Note		11
Organizing & Scientific Committee		12
Conference Program		13
1.	Nurses Practice Environment, Job Satisfaction, Workload and Quality of Nursing Care in Aged Care Facilities: A Mixed-Method Study <i>Firas Abu Hussein</i>	17
2.	What are Friends for? <i>Helen Bateman</i>	19
3.	Mindfulness and its Accoutrement <i>Jacob Burmeister & Allison Kiefner Burmeister</i>	20
4.	Case Study of a 30-Year-Patient with a Moderate Recurrent Depression Disorder (ICD-10 F 33.1) and Hashish Abuse (ICD-10 F 12.1) <i>Christos Charis</i>	22
5.	Children's Dictionaries and Age of Acquisition <i>Jim Clark</i>	23
6.	From Story to Impact: Designing a Quality Framework for Digital Storytelling for Behaviour Change <i>Irina Catrinel Craciun</i>	24
7.	Perceived Educational Roles Through Biased Eyes: The Effects of Gender and Age <i>Olga Daneyko</i>	25
8.	Deaf and Hard of Hearing People's Experience of Learning with a Haptic-Visual Music Course: A Qualitative Exploratory Study <i>Antonio Duarte</i>	26
9.	Effects of the Memory-Structuring Intervention on PTSD Symptoms of Nurses in Intensive Care: A Pilot Randomized Controlled Trial <i>Yori Gidron & Maya Golan</i>	27
10.	Legal Responses to Child Sex Trafficking in the U.S., Best Practices for Assisting Survivors <i>Danielle Giroux</i>	29
11.	Cohabitation Attitudes and Intentions: Examining the Impact of Religious Orientation <i>Angela Anarfi Gyasi-Gyamerah, Laura-Lisa Larsey, Millicent Adomako, Eric Delle, Paris Bentil & Charity Sylvia Akotia</i>	31
12.	Resilience and Affective Well-Being in Occupational Contexts <i>Snezhana Ilieva, Radina Stoyanova, Sonya Karabeliova, Yonko Bushnyashki & Alexander Iliev</i>	33
13.	Addressing Shame Episodes Through Self-Improvement Versus Self-Compassionate Writing <i>Edward Johnson & Sophie Hanson</i>	35

14.	An Examination of Artificial Intelligence Use Patterns in Young Adults in the Context of Loneliness Levels <i>Fatma Kayim & Su Demirkol Baysal</i>	37
15.	Body Image and Relationships with Food in Collegiate Athletes vs Non-Athletes <i>Allison Kiefner Burmeister & Jacob Burmeister</i>	39
16.	Autism Spectrum Disorder and ADHD Comorbidity <i>Peter Kyriakoulis</i>	41
17.	From Menarche to Menopause: Estradiol and Brain Aging in Women <i>Eileen Lueders</i>	42
18.	"It worries": Psychosocial Experiences of Persons Living with Infertility in Ghana <i>Salome Korkor Ahene Mate, Charity Sylvia Akotia, Angela Anarfi Gyasi-Gyamerah & Laura-Lisa Larsey</i>	43
19.	Comparative Efficacy of Interventions for Adolescent Anxiety Disorders: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (2004-2024) <i>Caroline Muaka, Priscilla Ndiangui & Laban Ayiro</i>	44
20.	Training Both General and Specific Mathematical Cognitive Precursors for Early Math with Computers <i>Jose I. Navarro, Alvaro Rodriguez-Mora, Manuel Aguilar-Villagran & Gonzalo Ruiz-Cagigas</i>	46
21.	Students' Adaptation to Academic Conditions: Psychometric Validation of the Student Psychological Adaptation Questionnaire (SPAQ) <i>Anna Nogaj, Monika Deja, Malgorzata Wojtowicz-Szeffler & Kamilla Komorowska</i>	48
22.	Pain in Modernity: From Nietzsche's Overman to Transhumanism <i>Kamyar Nowidi</i>	50
23.	An Investigation into Perceptions of Psychological Safety in Post-Pandemic Workstation Settings <i>Jin Gyu "Phillip" Park & Deborah Fuller</i>	51
24.	How to Visually Represent the Self in Psychotherapy and Research <i>Lloyd Robertson</i>	53
25.	The AngoSAP Erasmus+ CBHE Project: Strengthening Psychological and Psychoeducational Support in Angolan Universities <i>Alvaro Rodriguez-Mora, Jose I. Navarro, Manuel Aguilar-Villagran & Gonzalo Ruiz-Cagigas</i>	54
26.	Psychological Characteristics Connecting Mindfulness Practice with Telomere Functioning <i>Nicola Schutte</i>	56
27.	The Effect of Drama Therapy on Depressive Symptoms and Quality of Life among Older Adults in Residential Care Facilities <i>Samer Sharkiya</i>	57

28.	Examining the Impact of Small Group Experiences on Mental Health and School Counseling Candidates in a Master's Program <i>Michael Slavkin</i>	59
29.	Profiling Vulnerability in an Outpatient Mental Health Setting: Implementation of Brief Self-Report Screening Measures at Intake <i>Troy Speirs & Esti Anna Kartika-Speirs</i>	61
30.	Improving the Utility of Psychological Reports: Practical and Ethical Issues <i>Esther Stavrou & Joshua Freidman</i>	63
31.	With a Little Help from my Friends: Teaching Developmental Psychology by Integrating Bioecological Systems and Narrative Identity Theory <i>Caitlin Vasquez-O'Brien</i>	65
32.	Neuroscience-informed Psychoeducation for Addiction Prevention <i>Jasmin Vassileva, Tara Rezapour, Kayla McLean, Swara Chokshi, Elena Psederska, Niki Maleki & Hamed Ekhtiari</i>	67
33.	A Qualitative and Quantitative Study to Analyze, Measure, and Correlate the Family Organizational Behavior and Administrative Functionality at Home of Three Successful Human Resources Generation Sample: Boomers, Millennials and Generation Z <i>Sandra Velez-Candelario</i>	69
34.	An Ecological Approach to Assessing Executive Functions in Children and Adolescents <i>Melissa Weisse</i>	70
35.	The Mind as a Creator: Tagore, Trauma, and The Truth of Healing <i>Matthew Whoolery & Mariam Melikishvili</i>	71
36.	Profiles of Psychological Adaptation to the Conditions of Studying <i>Malgorzata Wojtowicz-Szefler, Kamilla Komorowska, Anna Nogaj & Monika Deja</i>	72
References		74

Preface

This book includes the abstracts of all the papers presented at the 20th Annual International Conference on Psychology (25-30 May 2026), organized by the Athens Institute.

A full conference program can be found before the relevant abstracts. In accordance with the Athens Institute’s Publication Policy, the papers presented during this conference will be considered for inclusion in one of ATINER’s many publications only after a blind peer review process.

The purpose of this abstract book is to provide members of Athens Institute and other academics around the world with a resource through which they can discover colleagues and additional research relevant to their own work. This purpose is in congruence with the overall mission of the association. Athens Institute was established in 1995 as an independent academic organization with the mission to become a forum where academics and researchers from all over the world can meet to exchange ideas on their research and consider the future developments of their fields of study.

To facilitate the communication, a references section includes all the abstract books published as part of this conference (Table 1). I invite the readers to access these abstract books –these are available for free– and compare how the themes of the conference have evolved over the years. According to the Athens Institute’s mission, the presenters in these conferences are coming from many different countries, presenting various topics.

Table 1. *Publication of Books of Abstracts of Proceedings, 2011-2026*

Year	Papers	Countries	References
2026	36	15	Clark and Gkounta (2026)
2025	42	20	Clark and Gkounta (2025)
2024	31	13	Patelis and Gkounta (2024)
2023	40	19	Patelis and Gkounta (2023)
2022	32	20	Patelis and Gkounta (2022)
2021	17	9	Papanikos (2021)
2020	22	8	Papanikos (2020)
2019	30	14	Papanikos (2019)
2018	28	13	Papanikos (2018)
2017	29	16	Papanikos (2017)
2016	32	15	Papanikos (2016)
2015	34	17	Papanikos (2015)
2014	31	16	Papanikos (2014)
2013	62	32	Papanikos (2013)
2012	51	26	Papanikos (2012)
2011	53	21	Papanikos (2011)

It is our hope that through the Athens Institute's conferences and publications, Athens will become a place where academics and researchers from all over the world can regularly meet to discuss the developments of their disciplines and present their work. Since 1995, Athens Institute has organized more than 400 international conferences and has published over 200 books. Academically, the institute is organized into 7 divisions and 37 units. Each unit organizes at least one annual conference and undertakes various small and large research projects.

For each of these events, the involvement of multiple parties is crucial. I would like to thank all the participants, the members of the organizing and academic committees, and most importantly the administration staff of the Athens Institute for putting this conference and its subsequent publications together.

Gregory T. Papanikos
President

Editors' Note

The following abstracts provide a vital means to disseminate scholarly inquiry in the field of Psychology. The breadth and depth of research approaches and topics underscores the diversity of the conference.

Athens Institute's mission is to bring together academics from all corners of the world to engage with each other, brainstorm, exchange ideas, be inspired by one another, and implement what they have acquired once they return to their home institutions and countries. The 20th Annual International Conference on Psychology accomplished these goals by bringing together academics and scholars from 15 different countries (Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, France, Germany, Ghana, Israel, Kenya, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Türkiye, UK, USA), representing diverse perspectives, methodologies, and realities in the field.

Publishing this book can help that spirit of engaged scholarship continue and grow. With our joint efforts, future versions of the conference will be even better. We hope that this abstract book will be both of interest and of value to the reading audience.

Jim Clark & Olga Gkounta
Editors

**20th Annual International Conference on Psychology,
25-30 May 2026, Athens, Greece**

Organizing & Scientific Committee

All Athens Institute's conferences are organized by the Academic Council. This conference has been organized with the assistance of the following academic members of the Athens Institute.

Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos, President, Athens Institute.

Dr. Jim Clark, Head, Psychology Unit, Athens Institute & Professor,
University of Winnipeg, Canada.

Dr. Thanos Patelis, Lead Psychometrician, University of Kansas,
USA.

Dr. Michael Slavkin, Assistant Professor, Marian University, USA.

FINAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM

20th Annual International Conference on Psychology, 25-30 May 2026,
Athens, Greece

PROGRAM

Monday 25 May 2026

08:30-09:15

Registration

09:15-10:00 **Opening Speech and Welcoming Remarks**

Speaker: Gregory T. Papanikos, President, Athens Institute & Professor (Adjunct), University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA.

09:45-11:30 **Session 1**

Moderator: Jim Clark, Head, Psychology Unit, Athens Institute & Professor (Retired), University of Winnipeg, Canada.

1. **Eileen Lueders**, Professor, University of Deusto, Spain.
Title: From Menarche to Menopause: Estradiol and Brain Aging in Women.
2. **Lloyd Robertson**, Adjunct Professor, University of Regina, Canada.
Title: How to Visually Represent the Self in Psychotherapy and Research.
3. **Antonio Duarte**, Associate Professor, University of Lisbon, Portugal.
Title: Deaf and Hard of Hearing People's Experience of Learning with a Haptic-Visual Music Course: A Qualitative Exploratory Study.
4. **Allison Kiefner Burmeister**, Associate Professor, University of Findlay, USA.
Jacob Burmeister, Associate Professor, University of Findlay, USA.
Title: Body Image and Relationships with Food in Collegiate Athletes vs Non-Athletes.
5. **Samer Sharkiya**, Lecturer & Director of Nursing, Complex Nursing Care Division, The Israel Academic College in Ramat Gan, Israel.
Title: The Effect of Drama Therapy on Depressive Symptoms and Quality of Life among Older Adults in Residential Care Facilities.

11:30-13:00 **Session 2**

Moderator: Eileen Lueders, Professor, University of Deusto, Spain.

1. **Jim Clark**, Professor (Retired), University of Winnipeg, Canada.
Title: Children's Dictionaries and Age of Acquisition.
2. **Caitlin Vasquez-O'Brien**, Associate Professor, Eastern Connecticut State University, USA.
Title: With a Little Help from my Friends: Teaching Developmental Psychology by Integrating Bioecological Systems and Narrative Identity Theory.
3. **Melissa Weisse**, PhD Student, Université Rennes 2, France.
Title: An Ecological Approach to Assessing Executive Functions in Children and Adolescents.
4. **Firas Abu Hussein**, Senior Lecturer & Geriatric Nursing Practitioner, Ono Academic College, Israel.
Title: Nurses Practice Environment, Job Satisfaction, Workload and Quality of Nursing Care in Aged Care Facilities: A Mixed-Method Study.

13:00-14:30 **Session 3**

Moderator: Lloyd Robertson, Adjunct Professor, University of Regina, Canada.

1. **Jin Gyu "Phillip" Park**, Associate Professor, University of North Texas, USA.
Deborah Fuller, Lead Faculty, Collin College, USA.
Title: An Investigation into Perceptions of Psychological Safety in Post-Pandemic Workstation Settings.
2. **Michael Slavkin**, Assistant Professor, Marian University Indianapolis, USA.
Title: Examining the Impact of Small Group Experiences on Mental Health and School Counseling Candidates in a Masters Program.

14:30-15:30 Lunch

15:30-17:30 Session 4

Moderator: Caitlin Vasquez-O'Brien, Associate Professor, Eastern Connecticut State University, USA.

1. **Helen Bateman**, Associate Professor, Sewanee: The University of the South, USA.
Title: What are Friends for?
2. **Fatma Kayim**, Assistant Professor, Istanbul Kultur University, Türkiye.
Title: An Examination of Artificial Intelligence Use Patterns in Young Adults in the Context of Loneliness Levels.
3. **Olga Daneyko**, Course Leader in Psychology, Sheffield Hallam University, UK.
Title: Perceived Educational Roles Through Biased Eyes: The Effects of Gender and Age.
4. **Sandra Velez-Candelario**, CEO & Consultant, Family Organizational Psychology, LLC and Researcher, Young Human Capita Research Corp., USA.
Title: A Qualitative and Quantitative Study to Analyze, Measure, and Correlate the Family Organizational Behavior and Administrative Functionality at Home of Three Successful Human Resources Generation Sample: Boomers, Millennials and Generation Z.
5. **Angela Anarfi Gyasi-Gyamerah**, Senior Lecturer, University of Ghana, Ghana.
Title: Cohabitation Attitudes and Intentions: Examining the Impact of Religious Orientation.
6. **Salome Korkor Ahene Mate**, Counselling Psychologist, LEKMA Hospital, Ghana.
Title: "It worries": Psychosocial Experiences of Persons Living with Infertility in Ghana.

18:00-20:00 Session 5 - Visit Aristotle's Lyceum

It requires pre-booking

20:30-22:30 Athenian Early Evening Symposium (Sequence of Events: Ongoing Academic Discussions, Dinner, Wine and Water, Music, Dance)

Tuesday 26 May 2026

09:00-10:30 Session 6

Moderator: Michael Slavkin, Assistant Professor, Marian University Indianapolis, USA.

1. **Edward Johnson**, Professor, University of Manitoba, Canada.
Sophie Hanson, PhD Student, University of Manitoba, Canada.
Title: Addressing Shame Episodes Through Self-Improvement Versus Self-Compassionate Writing.
2. **Yori Gidron**, Professor, University of Haifa, Israel.
Maya Golan, Senior Nurse, Sheba Medical Center, Israel.
Title: Effects of the Memory-Structuring Intervention on PTSD Symptoms of Nurses in Intensive Care: A Pilot Randomized Controlled Trial.
3. **Matthew Whoolery**, Associate Professor, American University in Bulgaria, Bulgaria.
Mariam Melikishvili, Student, American University in Bulgaria, Bulgaria.
Title: The Mind as a Creator: Tagore, Trauma, and The Truth of Healing.
4. **Kamyar Nowidi**, Lecturer, Psychiatrist & Training Analyst, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany / C.G. Jung-Institute Zürich, Switzerland.
Title: Pain in Modernity: From Nietzsche's Overman to Transhumanism.
5. **Peter Kyriakoulis**, Director & Clinical Psychologist, Positive Psychology Centre, Australia.
Title: Autism Spectrum Disorder and ADHD Comorbidity.

10:30-12:00 Session 7

Moderator: Yori Gidron, Professor, University of Haifa, Israel.

1. **Jacob Burmeister**, Associate Professor, University of Findlay, USA.
Allison Kiefner Burmeister, Associate Professor, University of Findlay, USA.
Title: Mindfulness and its Accoutrement.
2. **Nicola Schutte**, Associate Professor, University of New England, Australia.
Title: Psychological Characteristics Connecting Mindfulness Practice with Telomere Functioning.

<p>3. Snezhana Ilieva, Professor, Sofia University, Bulgaria. Radina Stoyanova, Assistant Professor, Sofia University, Bulgaria. Sonya Karabeliova, Professor, Dean of Faculty of Philosophy, Sofia University, Bulgaria. Yonko Bushnyashki, Researcher and PhD Student, Sofia University, Bulgaria. Alexander Iliev, Researcher and PhD Student, Sofia University, Bulgaria. <i>Title: Resilience and Affective Well-Being in Occupational Contexts.</i></p> <p>4. Irina Catrinel Craciun, Postdoctoral Researcher, Hasso Plattner Institute, Germany. <i>Title: From Story to Impact: Designing A Quality Framework for Digital Storytelling for Behaviour Change.</i></p> <p>5. Manuel Aguilar-Villagran, Professor, University of Cadiz, Spain. Gonzalo Ruiz-Cagigas, Researcher, University of Cadiz, Spain. Jose I. Navarro, Professor, University of Cadiz, Spain. <i>Title: Training Both General and Specific Mathematical Cognitive Precursors for Early Math with Computers.</i></p>
<p>12:00-13:30 Session 8 Moderator: Kamyar Nowidi, Lecturer, Psychiatrist & Training Analyst, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany / C.G. Jung-Institute Zürich, Switzerland.</p>
<p>1. Jasmin Vassileva, Professor, Virginia Commonwealth University, USA. <i>Title: Neuroscience-informed Psychoeducation for Addiction Prevention.</i></p> <p>2. Esther Stavrou, Clinical Professor, Yeshiva University, USA. Joshua Freidman, Psychologist, Yeshiva University, USA. <i>Title: Improving the Utility of Psychological Reports: Practical and Ethical Issues.</i></p> <p>3. Christos Charis, Private Practice – Psychodynamic Psychotherapy, Germany. <i>Title: Case Study of a 30-Year-Patient with a Moderate Recurrent Depression Disorder (ICD-10 F 33.1) and Hashish abuse (ICD-10 F 12.1).</i></p> <p>4. Jose I. Navarro, Professor, University of Cadiz, Spain. Alvaro Rodriguez-Mora, Professor, University of Cadiz, Spain. Manuel Aguilar-Villagran, Professor, University of Cadiz, Spain. Gonzalo Ruiz-Cagigas, Researcher, University of Cadiz, Spain. <i>Title: The AngoSAP Erasmus+ CBHE Project: Strengthening Psychological and Psychoeducational Support in Angolan Universities.</i></p>
<p>13:30-15:00 Session 9 Moderator: Sandra Velez-Candelario, CEO & Consultant, Family Organizational Psychology, LLC and Researcher, Young Human Capita Research Corp., USA.</p>
<p>1. Troy Speirs, Clinical Psychologist, Headz Up Health Psychological Assessment and Therapy Centre, Australia. Esti Anna Kartika-Speirs, Psychotherapist, Headz Up Health Psychological Assessment and Therapy Centre, Australia. <i>Title: Profiling Vulnerability in an Outpatient Mental Health Setting: Implementation of Brief Self-Report Screening Measures at Intake.</i></p> <p>2. Malgorzata Wojtowicz-Szefler, Assistant Professor, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland. Kamilla Komorowska, Assistant Professor, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland. Anna Nogaj, Assistant Professor, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland. Monika Deja, Assistant Professor, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland. <i>Title: Profiles of Psychological Adaptation to the Conditions of Studying.</i></p> <p>3. Anna Nogaj, Assistant Professor, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland. Monika Deja, Assistant Professor, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland. Malgorzata Wojtowicz-Szefler, Assistant Professor, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland. Kamilla Komorowska, Assistant Professor, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland.</p>

Title: Students' Adaptation to Academic Conditions: Psychometric Validation of the Student Psychological Adaptation Questionnaire (SPAQ).

4. **Danielle Giroux**, Associate Professor, Hawaii Pacific University, USA.

Title: Legal Responses to Child Sex Trafficking in the U.S., Best Practices for Assisting Survivors.

5. **Caroline Muaka**, Senior Lecturer, Daystar University, Kenya.

Priscilla Ndiangui, Lecturer, Daystar University, Kenya.

Laban Ayiro, Professor, Daystar University, Kenya.

Title: Comparative Efficacy of Interventions for Adolescent Anxiety Disorders: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (2004–2024).

15:00-16:00 Lunch

16:30-19:30 Session 10

Old and New-An Educational Urban Walk

The urban walk ticket is not included as part of your registration fee. It includes transportation costs and the cost to enter the Parthenon and the other monuments on the Acropolis Hill. The urban walk tour includes the broader area of Athens. Among other sites, it includes: Zappion, Syntagma Square, Temple of Olympian Zeus, Ancient Roman Agora and on Acropolis Hill: the Propylaea, the Temple of Athena Nike, the Erechtheion, and the Parthenon. The program of the tour may be adjusted, if there is a need beyond our control. This is a private event organized by the Athens Institute exclusively for the conference participants.

20:30-22:30

Closing Remarks by Gregory T. Papanikos: "Wine, Words, and Wisdom: An Ancient Athenian Dinner Symposium" followed by an Ancient Athenian Dinner

Wednesday 27 May 2026
An Educational Visit to Selected Islands
or Nafplio & Mycenae Visit

Thursday 28 May 2026
Visiting the Oracle of Delphi

Friday 29 May 2026
Visiting the Ancient Corinth and Cape Sounion

Saturday 30 May 2026
11:00-13:00 - The Academic Discussion continues in the downtown open agora (close to the Aristotelian Lyceum)

Firas Abu Hussein

Senior Lecturer & Geriatric Nursing Practitioner, Ono Academic
College, Israel

Nurses Practice Environment, Job Satisfaction, Workload and Quality of Nursing Care in Aged Care Facilities: A Mixed-Method Study

Background: The aging of populations is a global phenomenon, and healthcare systems around the world face the challenge of providing comprehensive, effective, and compassionate care to their elderly citizens. Investigating work environment, job satisfaction, workload, and quality of care are becoming areas of interest for the researcher, policy makers, educators, and clinical professionals.

Purpose: This study was conducted to examine the relationship between practice environment, workload, job satisfaction, and nursing care to enhance the quality of care provided in aged care facilities.

Methods: A Mixed method approach was used. In phase one, a cross-sectional correlational predictive design was used. A sample of 276 participants from many aged care facilities completed the study's questionnaire including Caring Behaviors Inventory-24 (CBI), Practice Environment Scale of the Nursing Work Index (PES-NWI), NASA Task Load Index, and Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) (short version). In phase II, eleven participants were interviewed, and content analysis was used.

Results: The results indicated that in general, the participants had positive caring behaviors while caring for the elderly people in the aged care facilities, a moderate level of positive work environment was reported by the participants in the current study, the participants had a moderate workload, a moderate level of job satisfaction, there was a positive relationship between the practice environment and QONC among nurses employed in aged care facilities, there was a negative relationship between the workload and QONC among nurses employed in aged care facilities, there was a positive relationship between the workload and QONC among nurses employed in aged care facilities, and The results from the parsimonious regression model indicated that the practice environment, workload, and job satisfaction predicted the QONC among nurses employed in aged care facilities with a 62.0% of variance.

The results revealed that three main themes with many categories and sub-categories emerged from the qualitative data. The participants emphasized the emotional dynamics of geriatric nursing, workload

management and job satisfaction, and systemic issues and strategic improvements.

Conclusion: these results increased our understanding regarding the interaction between the main variables under study including quality of Nursing care, work environment, workload, and job satisfaction in aged care facilities. The results of the current study might be utilized by the researchers, policy makers, educators, and clinical practitioners to develop systematic, strategic and supportive modules to improve the work environment, job satisfaction, and workload management to improve the quality of care provided in the aged care facilities.

Helen Bateman

Associate Professor, The University of the South, USA

What are Friends for?

The present study aimed to examine the role that friends play in adolescents' successful adjustment to university life.

More specifically, we examined the role that having friends plays in college students' sense of community at their university and in their participation in the university's social life. Our research took place in a four-year liberal arts college located in the Southeastern United States. We administered an anonymous self-report questionnaire to 189 undergraduate students who had completed at least one semester in their present college setting. We asked participants three questions related to friends on campus. We asked participants whether they already had friends attending the university when they first arrived on campus. We also asked participants whether they had made many new friends while on campus, and, lastly, how many close friends they had on campus.

Our findings suggest that, overall, having friends is positively associated with students' higher levels of sense of community on campus and has positively influenced their overall perception of the university student body as being supportive, friendly, helpful, engaging, and polite. One of our most interesting findings was that all these positive associations, including the number of new friends, students made while in college, were correlated with students' reporting of having friends who were already attending the university when they arrived as freshmen. It seems that having friends who are already attending college is a significant factor in facilitating new friendships, fostering a more positive view of the student body, and increasing a sense of campus community and belonging.

Jacob Burmeister

Associate Professor, University of Findlay, USA

&

Allison Kiefner Burmeister

Associate Professor, University of Findlay, USA

Mindfulness and its Accoutrement

Introduction: This review explores the scientific literature on the relative importance of material objects and physical spaces in facilitating individuals' meditation practices. A primary research question being: Do the objects, attire, or trappings of mindfulness – *the accoutrement* – impact the practice in a meaningful way?

Background: The terms mindfulness and meditation are often used interchangeably to describe a practice or training aimed at developing the skill of nonjudgmentally observing the present contents of conscious awareness including cognitions, emotions, and physical sensations (Trousselard, Steiler, Claverie, & Canini, 2014). A large body of scientific literature supports the use of mindfulness-based interventions (e.g., Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, etc) to treat psychological disorders and improve overall wellness (Shapiro, 2009). These contemporary practices were inspired and informed by traditions used for thousands of years in cultures around the world from Stoicism in ancient Greece to Buddhism across Asia (Murguia and Diaz, 2015). Each of these traditions came with its own set of cultural norms and guidelines aimed at facilitating meditation practice, some of which have been adopted by contemporary practitioners. A goal of the present research is to summarize the existing empirical evidence for the impact of objects (e.g., bells, incense, music) and environments (e.g., buildings, natural spaces) on mindfulness practice. For example, does burning incense while sitting on a special cushion improve meditation practices? An additional goal is to make recommendations for clinical practice and future empirical research.

Methods: A review of published research was conducted via electronic databases including PsycINFO, PubMed, ERIC, and ScienceDirect to locate articles reporting on the use of physical objects as well as factors associated with the built or natural environment in mindfulness and meditation practices. Any studies that reported these or closely related topics were included in the review.

Results: A primary finding is that there is a dearth of empirical literature on the use of objects in mindfulness training and

practice. Several studies examined the importance of the built environment on mindfulness and meditative states from the perspectives of architecture and design (including spaces in virtual reality). In a post hoc effort to evaluate contemporary nonscientific sources, numerous anecdotal and commercial articles were found. These sources primarily focused on either selling mindfulness objects such as cushions, bells, incense, and tapestries or on encouraging the use of objects, sounds, and scents to improve meditative practices.

Discussion: Future research should seek to test for the effects of using various meditation practices with and without mindfulness accoutrement. Practitioner and clinician attitudes and beliefs are also factors worth assessing. For example, their perspectives on the use of mindfulness accoutrement or physical spaces may impact instruction techniques, enthusiasm, and engagement from participants. Implications for clinicians, mindfulness instructors, and practitioners are discussed.

Christos Charis

Private Practice - Psychodynamic Psychotherapy, Germany

Case Study of a 30-Year-Patient with a Moderate Recurrent Depression Disorder (ICD-10 F 33.1) and Hashish Abuse (ICD-10 F 12.1)

Dieter a 30-year-old engineer who is employed full-time by a company that manufactures medical products was clearly depressed when he came to me. At that time he was living with his father in his father's house in a separate flat. After work, he spent almost every evening repairing cars in his car repair shop until late at night. He and his father jointly own the business. The bank loan for the purchase of the shop is in Dieter's name.

Dieter's new girlfriend has been living with him.

He explained to me that in February-March 24, he noticed that he was falling into a "thought spiral!" He hated himself, hit himself in the face, and thought about suicide, but he thought of his parents and didn't do it. He has suffered headaches for years. He had been smoking weed almost every day. Before he started his current relationship the woman he wanted to be his girlfriend told him in February 24 that a relationship with him was not possible for her because he was away so much. That made him even more depressed. We agreed to a course of psychodynamic psychotherapy (once a week), which continues to this day. The therapy explores the psychodynamic background of the patient's depression with a view to treating it. A very young, overwhelmed mother whose pregnancy had been unplanned and was unable to provide adequate care for her son. A father who was equally overwhelmed and unable to compensate for the resulting deficit, compounded by his parents' divorce when the patient was five. As a result, the patient was deprived of important affective responses from his caregivers that would have confirmed his existence and identity. Against this background, he developed a hunger for validation, which becomes apparent in the analysis of his interactions.

Jim Clark

Senior Scholar & Professor of Psychology (Retired), University of
Winnipeg, Canada

Children's Dictionaries and Age of Acquisition

Age of acquisition (AOA) refers to the age at which children learn words and is a construct hypothesized to affect multiple aspects of cognition, even in adults. On the assumption that AOA affects accessibility to mental representations, for example, researchers have proposed that picture naming and other measures of word retrieval will benefit from early AOA. Various measures of AOA have been proposed, including adult ratings of AOA, and studies have confirmed correlations with outcome variables, although the issue of confounding factors complicates interpretation of the relationships, as it does for most item attributes. The present study offers a novel measure of AOA based on the frequency of occurrence in 50 children's English dictionaries, and examines correlations with other measures of AOA and various criteria variables. As well, alternative explanations for the relationships are considered, including the hypothesis that AOA is a proxy variable for several word attributes rather than a unique causal attribute of words.

Irina Catrinel Craciun

Postdoctoral Researcher, Hasso Plattner Institute, Germany

From Story to Impact: Designing a Quality Framework for Digital Storytelling for Behaviour Change

Digital storytelling represents as a powerful medium to motivate health-related behavior change, particularly through social media platforms. As knowledge-transfer interventions, digital stories can address health inequalities by engaging vulnerable groups with limited health literacy. Yet, little is known about how digital tools can support the structured development of such stories for health promotion across diverse contexts.

This study aimed to explore what makes out effective digital stories for behavior change and propose a framework of quality criteria. We conducted five focus groups: three with health promotion professionals (N=8) and two with IT specialists (N=10). Participants were from countries in Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia (aged between 25 and 65, 60% women and 40% men). Inclusion criteria were working in health promotion (e.g., psychologists, behavioral scientists) or in IT development. Participants were recruited by applying the snowball principle. Data included focus group transcripts and digital stories generated during testing. Ethical approval was obtained from the university board. Thematic analysis was applied iteratively to identify critical aspects of designing effective digital stories for health behavior change. Data was coded by the 3 independent coders and consensus was reached through regular discussions.

Analysis revealed five interrelated considerations for designing digital stories in global health promotion: target group specification, applying strategies for engagement, adhering to ethical principles, tailoring dissemination channels to the target group, and incorporation of behavioral change models in the design of the stories. Findings propose a theoretically informed quality criteria framework for the design of digital stories aimed at behavior change. The proposed framework includes key psychological mechanisms through which digital storytelling may influence motivation and action. The findings contribute to psychological research by highlighting how structured storytelling can support effective knowledge transfer across cultural contexts. This framework offers a foundation for the systematic development and evaluation of digital storytelling interventions in health psychology and related fields.

Olga Daneyko

Course Leader in Psychology, Sheffield Hallam University, UK

Perceived Educational Roles Through Biased Eyes: The Effects of Gender and Age

This study investigated how age and gender influence perceptions of individuals' suitability for various educational roles. Participants were divided into three age groups and completed an online study consisting of five components: (1) **Role Suitability Ratings**, using a 7-point Likert scale to assess images of individuals differing in age and gender; (2) **Role Preparation Ratings**, indicating perceived readiness for each educational role on a 7-point scale; (3) the **Gender Role Beliefs Questionnaire**; (4) the **Image of Aging Questionnaire**, measuring explicit age- and gender-related biases; and (5) **Face Age Estimation**, assessing perceived ages of the stimuli. Results indicated that younger women were perceived as more suitable for Early Years and Primary teaching roles, while older adults and men were rated as more appropriate for Secondary and University roles. Older participants, especially women, received lower ratings across all roles. Explicit gender beliefs mirrored implicit biases, particularly in the underestimation of young women for higher education positions. Additionally, female participants demonstrated bias against women, suggesting the presence of internalized stereotypes. These findings underscore the ongoing influence of age- and gender-related stereotypes on perceptions of educational role suitability.

Antonio Duarte

Associate Professor, University of Lisbon, Portugal

Deaf and Hard of Hearing People's Experience of Learning with a Haptic-Visual Music Course: A Qualitative Exploratory Study

Despite their limitations in hearing music, deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) people can experience it via the haptic and visual senses, based on the processing of vibrations produced by sub or low frequency sounds, and of paired visual stimulus. Based on this possibility, a course on music training for DHH people was developed and implemented in Lisbon, Vienna and Berlin, in the context of the project Sub_Bar (2023-2024, EU funded), by two music organizations: Eufonia and Studio MARS. The course (with a total of twelve DHH adult trainees), aimed to develop knowledge and competencies on haptic musical composition, improvisation and performance, and on the integration of visual aspects in music, by introducing related contents, mainly through practical training methods and specific technologies. To gain knowledge on the trainees' learning experience, within a broader qualitative study, semi-structured interviews were conducted for all twelve trainees. The interviews were applied, (with the aid of sign language interpreters), recorded, transcribed and subjected to a thematic analysis. As a clipping of the achieved results, those here reported concern the motivations to learn, the learning strategies and other specificities of the DHH people's learning experience. These results point to the potential and significant impact of learning and performing music through haptic and visual means by DHH people, even though with some problems and difficulties.

Yori Gidron

Professor, University of Haifa, Israel

&

Maya Golan

Senior Nurse, Sheba Medical Center, Israel

Effects of the Memory-Structuring Intervention on PTSD Symptoms of Nurses in Intensive Care: A Pilot Randomized Controlled Trial

Studies show that approximately 30% of nurses working in the intensive care unit (ICU) suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Sadly many nurses do not seek help or obtain in many countries non-evidence-based psychological treatments which often provide forms of debriefing. Debriefing mainly includes telling one's trauma, expressing one's emotions and receiving support and empathy and possibly a summary from the therapist. However, five meta-analyses found this method not to prevent PTSD or to increase its risk. There is an intolerable gap in many countries of 10-20 years between scientific knowledge of treating trauma versus its actual practice. Relatively newer approaches have been developed and scientifically tested including eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). However, these take between 2-20 sessions and require a lot of training. Importantly, most therapies do not try to change how the brain processes trauma, which is at the heart of PTSD. Though EMDR is effective, its hypothesized neural mechanisms have not been supported. In contrast, the memory structuring intervention (MSI) was developed to shift trauma processing from the limbic system to the prefrontal cortex, and from a fragmented and somatic-emotional level to a coherent and more cognitive level of processing. These are done by performing 1-min of vagal breathing before and after the MSI together with helping patients chronologically organize their trauma memory and providing their feelings and somatic sensations labels and causes. Past studies showed the MSI reduced acute stress reactions and prevented PTSD symptoms. However, its effects on existing PTSD were not tested. This preliminary randomized-controlled trial examined the effects of the MSI on nurses with existing PTSD symptoms. Initially, 21 nurses (20 women, 1 man, most working in the ICU, a few in the emergency room) participated. Of these, 16 had higher PTSD symptoms. Half received the MSI with slow paced breathing, half received empathy and support (controls), when describing two traumatic experiences from their work. At

baseline and a month later, PTSD was assessed. Levels of PTSD were significantly lower post-treatment in the MSI condition than in controls. This study preliminarily shows that that the MSI, initially developed to prevent PTSD, may also reduce existing PTSD symptoms. A larger sample with a long-term follow-up is needed. A larger study with a long-term follow-up is needed.

Danielle Giroux

Associate Professor, Hawaii Pacific University, USA

Legal Responses to Child Sex Trafficking in the U.S., Best Practices for Assisting Survivors

Human trafficking, particularly the commercial sexual exploitation of children, remains a critical human rights and public health issue in the United States. While federal legislation has established a national framework for defining and responding to trafficking, significant variation persists in how states interpret, implement, and enforce these laws. This presentation provides an overview of the U.S. legal landscape governing sex trafficking, examines key differences across states, and situates U.S. approaches in relation to international best-practice recommendations. Particular attention is given to the implications of these legal frameworks for identifying, protecting, and supporting youth who experience sexual exploitation.

The presentation will begin with an overview of foundational U.S. federal trafficking statutes, including laws that define sex trafficking, establish penalties for traffickers, and outline protections for victims. While federal law clearly identifies any commercial sexual activity involving a minor as trafficking, responsibility for enforcement and service provision largely falls to states. As a result, state responses vary widely. Some states have adopted comprehensive Safe Harbor laws that prevent the criminalization of trafficked youth and mandate access to services, while others continue to rely on juvenile justice-oriented approaches that may inadvertently punish victims for acts stemming from their exploitation. These inconsistencies create uneven protections for youth depending on geographic location and system involvement. Compared to international best practice standards, U.S. responses often remain fragmented, with limited coordination across child welfare, healthcare, education, and justice systems. Gaps in data collection, training, and accountability further complicate efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of existing laws and policies.

Research also consistently shows that trafficked youth often experience multiple, intersecting vulnerabilities, including prior abuse, family instability, poverty, homelessness, foster care involvement, and exposure to substance use. Exploitation frequently begins in early adolescence and is commonly perpetrated by individuals known to the youth, such as family members, caregivers, or intimate partners, rather than by strangers. These dynamics challenge stereotypical narratives of

trafficking and underscore the importance of trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate, and survivor-centered responses.

Finally, the presentation will highlight emerging best practices for supporting trafficked youth, including Safe Harbor protections, diversion from juvenile justice systems, access to comprehensive mental health care, culturally grounded healing approaches, and survivor-informed program design. By integrating legal analysis with research on youth victimization and recovery, this presentation aims to equip practitioners, policymakers, and service providers with a clearer understanding of how law, policy, and practice intersect and where reform is needed.

Angela Anarfi Gyasi-Gyamerah

Senior Lecturer, University of Ghana, Ghana

Laura-Lisa Larsey

Research Assistant, University of Ghana, Ghana

Millicent Adomako

Student, University of Ghana, Ghana

Eric Delle

Lecturer, University of Ghana, Ghana

Paris Bentil

Student, Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration,
Ghana

&

Charity Sylvia Akotia

Professor, University of Ghana, Ghana

Cohabitation Attitudes and Intentions: Examining the Impact of Religious Orientation

Cohabitation among unmarried couples has become increasingly common worldwide, including in Ghana, where traditional norms and religious teachings persist in discouraging the practice. Despite this, changing social norms and youth autonomy are causing shifts in attitudes toward cohabitation. Research on cohabitation in Ghana has not specifically investigated how religious orientation mediates the influence of cohabitation intentions on cohabitation attitudes among adolescents. This study therefore aimed to examine how cohabitation intentions influenced cohabitation attitudes, with religious orientation acting as a

mediator. Using a cross-sectional survey design and a convenience sampling method, 435 Senior High School students (aged 13 to 19) from five schools in Ghana were sampled. Data were collected through standardized questionnaires measuring attitudes toward cohabitation, cohabitation intentions, and religious orientation. Additional measures assessed attitudes toward marriage and purity culture beliefs. The data was analysed with hierarchical multiple regression to explore the relationships among the variables, using the Process macro version 4.2 to assist the analysis. The results indicated that cohabitation intentions were positively and significantly related to cohabitation attitudes. Religious orientation was also positively and significantly associated with cohabitation attitudes, suggesting that adolescents with strong religiosity tended to approve of cohabitation, contrary to traditional expectations. Furthermore, religious orientation partially mediated the

relationship between cohabitation intentions and attitudes, suggesting that religious orientation does not independently affect attitudes but influences how intentions are internalised and expressed in attitudes. These results emphasize the importance of culturally sensitive sexual and relationship education programs in schools and religious institutions. Policymakers could incorporate religious considerations to support informed decision-making among youth, and further research could examine how evolving social dynamics affect cohabitation in Ghana.

Snezhana Ilieva

Professor, Sofia University, Bulgaria

Radina Stoyanova

Assistant Professor, Sofia University, Bulgaria

Sonya Karabeliova

Professor, Dean of Faculty of Philosophy, Sofia University, Bulgaria

Yonko Bushnyashki

Researcher and PhD Student, Sofia University, Bulgaria

&

Alexander Iliev

Researcher and PhD Student, Sofia University, Bulgaria

Resilience and Affective Well-Being in Occupational Contexts

This study investigates the role of psychological resilience in shaping affective well-being in occupational contexts. Grounded in contemporary perspectives on adaptive functioning and emotional regulation, resilience is conceptualized as an important personal resource that supports individuals in managing stress and maintaining psychological balance. The present research examines whether resilience predicts variations in three core domains of affective well-being at work and study contexts: positive, negative, and calm affect.

The sample consists of 375 participants from diverse occupational sectors (Age range 18-48; $M=21,42$; $SD = 3,93$). Resilience was assessed using a standardized self-report questionnaire capturing individuals' capacity for adaptive coping, persistence, and emotional regulation. Affective well-being was measured using the IWP Multi-Affect Indicator (Warr, 2016), which evaluates the frequency of experienced emotions at work across three dimensions: positive affect (e.g., enthusiastic, inspired, joyful), negative affect (e.g., anxious, tense, depressed), and calm affect (e.g., relaxed, at ease, calm). Participants rated each item on a 7-point scale reflecting the proportion of time they experienced each emotion during the past working week, ranging from "never" to "always."

Stepwise regression analyses were conducted to examine the predictive role of resilience for each affective domain. Results indicated that resilience was a significant positive predictor of positive affect ($\beta = .58$, $p < .001$), with the model explaining a substantial proportion of variance (adjusted $R^2 = .33$). Similarly, resilience positively predicted calm affect ($\beta = .49$, $p < .001$), with a moderate level of explained variance (adjusted $R^2 = .24$). In contrast, resilience was a significant

negative predictor of negative affect ($\beta = -.52, p < .001$), accounting for a meaningful proportion of variance (adjusted $R^2 = .27$). These findings indicate that higher resilience is associated with more frequent positive and calm emotional experiences and lower levels of negative affect in occupational settings.

The results support theoretical frameworks that position resilience as a central protective factor contributing to affective well-being by enhancing positive emotional experiences and mitigating negative emotional states. The strongest predictive effect was observed for positive affect, suggesting that resilience may be particularly important for fostering energizing and engagement-related emotional states at work.

The study has important implications for organizational and health psychology, highlighting the value of resilience-focused interventions in promoting employee well-being. Programs aimed at strengthening coping skills and emotional regulation may foster more adaptive emotional functioning in the workplace. Future research should adopt longitudinal and multi-method approaches to further examine the dynamic relationship between resilience and affective well-being.

Edward Johnson

Professor, University of Manitoba, Canada

&

Sophie Hanson

PhD Student, University of Manitoba, Canada

Addressing Shame Episodes Through Self-Improvement Versus Self-Compassionate Writing

Shame is a painful, self-relevant emotion that can motivate avoidance (Dearing et al., 2005; Lewis, 1971) and is implicated as a transdiagnostic risk factor for the development of psychopathology (Labonté & Kealy, 2024; Nikolić et al., 2022; Williams & Levinson, 2022). However, certain self-attitudes or motivations may make it feasible for individuals to approach shame experiences and thereby potentially mitigate their negative impact by engaging with them to transform the experience and reduce shame. Two self-attitudes conducive to approaching shame include self-compassion (Gilbert, 2014; Neff, 2023) and self-improvement (de Hooge et al. 2010; Gausel & Leach, 2011). Little is known, however, about individuals' preferences for using these approaches to engage with shame and about their comparative benefits for emotion regulation. To explore these questions, we conducted two online experiments in which undergraduate participants recalled an episode of shame before (a) indicating their preference for writing about the episode with either a self-compassion or self-improvement writing prompt, and (b) writing about their shame episode using one of the two prompts. In Study 1, a majority (68%) of the 497 participants chose self-improvement over self-compassion writing. Both writing tasks were associated with improved mood. Moderation analyses showed that greater shame-proneness contributed to self-improvement writing having a more pronounced effect on mood improvement compared to self-compassion writing. Study 2 ($N = 169$) sought to replicate and extend Study 1 by (a) adding a sad episode recall condition to evaluate whether the findings were unique to shame experiences, (b) implementing random assignment to writing conditions, and (c) by evaluating predictors of participants' preferences. The results replicated the preference for self-improvement writing, but only for those in the shame (72%), not sadness (47%) recall condition. Motivation to change the self-mediated the impact of recall condition on preference for self-improvement versus self-compassion writing. ANOVA revealed a main effect of writing condition on emotion regulation, such that self-improvement writing was associated with

reduced negative affect whereas self-improvement writing was not. The general discussion draws on self-improvement accounts of shame regulation to explain why self-improvement was consistently preferred over self-compassion for addressing shame, the robust effectiveness of self-improvement writing on emotion regulation, and the different mechanisms by which self-improvement and self-compassion may address shame episodes.

Fatma Kayim

Assistant Professor, Istanbul Kultur University, Türkiye

&

Su Demirkol Baysal

Independent Researcher, Türkiye

An Examination of Artificial Intelligence Use Patterns in Young Adults in the Context of Loneliness Levels

The aim of this study is to examine the usage patterns of artificial intelligence tools among young adults aged 18-24 in relation to their level of loneliness, and to qualitatively analyze the reasons of participants who use artificial intelligence for psychological support purposes.

The sample of the study consisted of 141 participants aged 18-24, 99 (70.2%) of whom were female and 42 (29.8%) male, who did not have a psychiatric diagnosis, were not using psychiatric medication, and were actively using artificial intelligence tools. It was determined that the participants were predominantly undergraduate students (78.7%), living with their families (77.3%), single (71.6%), and had not previously received psychotherapy (82.3%). Purposes of AI use were assessed using 1-5 Likert-type items rated from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating more frequent use. AI was most frequently used for educational purposes (3.50), followed by personal curiosity (3.23), understanding personal problems (2.44), decision-making (2.42), medical assistance (2.23), increasing motivation (1.88), reducing anxiety (1.85), psychological support (1.77) and reducing feelings of loneliness (1.50). Differences in loneliness scores across AI usage groups were examined using analysis of variance (ANOVA). Significant group differences were observed for several usage purposes. For AI use aimed at reducing anxiety, frequent users exhibited higher loneliness scores than occasional users ($p = .019$) and non-users ($p = .007$). In a similar pattern, individuals who frequently used AI for decision-making reported higher loneliness scores than those who never used it ($p = .004$; $p = .002$). Significant differences were also found for AI use aimed at understanding personal problems ($p = .015$), with very frequent users reporting higher loneliness scores than non-users ($p = .039$). For AI use aimed reducing feelings of loneliness, frequent and very frequent users demonstrated elevated loneliness scores compared to non-users ($p < .001$; $p = .014$). Additional differences were found between occasional and frequent users ($p = .007$) and between low-frequency and frequent users ($p = .028$). In addition, participants who reported that AI was

somewhat helpful for psychological support exhibited higher loneliness scores than those who reported not using AI for this purpose ($p = .010$; $p = .005$).

In addition to quantitative findings, open-ended responses regarding the reasons for choosing AI for psychological support among 29 participants (20.56%) were examined using thematic analysis. The responses were grouped into four main themes. 50% of the responses cited ease of access and speed, 29.16% cited economic reasons, 16.66% cited perceived benefit and convenience, and 12.5% cited distrust toward mental health professionals and psychotherapy.

Furthermore, 49 participants (34.75%) stated that they found AI tools useful for psychological support; of these, 32 (22.69%) expressed their reasons for using them in an open-ended manner. The thematic analysis of these responses identified four main themes. Themes such as emotion regulation and immediate calming effects were mentioned in 40.62% of responses, increased motivation and action in 25%, gaining different perspectives and receiving suggestions in 21.87%, and ease of use and perceived functionality in 15.65%.

Allison Kiefner Burmeister

Associate Professor, University of Findlay, USA

&

Jacob Burmeister

Associate Professor, University of Findlay, USA

Body Image and Relationships with Food in Collegiate Athletes vs Non-Athletes

Emerging adulthood is a period of relative vulnerability in terms of mental health and psychological well-being (Collins et al., 2022). During this period, young adults are faced with competing challenges of work, social lives, and academics which can stress both physical and psychological health. Taking time to engage in sport activities could increase emotional well-being along with physical health (Herbert, 2022). However, a too intense focus on one's body and athletic achievement may put young athletes in danger of developing disordered eating (Beals & Manore, 2002).

The current study investigated the differences between collegiate athletes and non-athlete students on numerous aspects of psychological well-being and eating habits. Participants were 18–23-year-olds, mean age = 19.89 (1.14), enrolled in a private university (Ohio, USA). Of the 90 participants, 44 were National Collegiate Athletic Association athletes and 56 were non athletes. Participants were predominantly women (female $n = 80$, male $n = 10$). The sample had a body mass index (BMI mean = 24.04 (5.36).

Results indicated that being an athlete was related to higher overall well-being. Athletes reported significantly less trait anxiety $t(81) = -2.19$, $p = .031$, athlete (44) $M = 21.84(6.58)$ and non (39) $M = 25.18(7.31)$. Athletes reported feeling better about their healthy eating habits $t(81) = 1.86$, $p = .034$, athlete (44) $M = 13.14 (1.60)$, non (39) $M = 12.33 (2.3)$, but did not report having greater knowledge of these habits or fewer problems with them ($ps > .05$). Athletes reported less negative affect $t(74) = -2.07$, $p = .042$, athlete (39) $M = 7.41 (6.12)$, non (37) $M = 11.35 (10.10)$, but not more positive affect $t(81) = .35$, $p = .730$. Athletes reported less bulimia and food preoccupation $t(87) = -2.04$, $p = .045$, athlete (45) $M = .60 (1.50)$, non (44) $M = 1.68 (3.24)$, but not healthier views toward dieting $t(87) = -1.79$, $p = .077$ or oral control $t(87) = -1.19$, $p = .236$. When it came to body image, athletes felt similar to non-athletes for the internalization of having a muscular or thin body and the pressures from family (all $ps > .05$), but non athletes felt more pressure from peers $t(81) = -2.35$, $p = .021$, athlete (44) $M = 1.63 (.70)$, non (39) M

= 2.10 (1.10) and the media $t(81) = -2.22, p = .029$, athlete (44) $M = 3.10$ (1.18), non (39) $M = 3.69$ (1.21) to have a better body.

This study found that athletes in non-lean focused sports tended toward better body image and relationships with food than non-athletes. It is possible that athletes in lean focused sports (e.g., gymnastics, ballet) would show worse psychological health. Further investigation should be performed to investigate these nuances.

Peter Kyriakoulis

Director & Clinical Psychologist, Positive Psychology Centre, Australia

Autism Spectrum Disorder and ADHD Comorbidity

This presentation explores the co-occurrence of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and Autism Spectrum Disorder across the lifespan, with emphasis on developmental variation in phenotypic expression and associated clinical complexities. ADHD and ASD frequently co-occur, reflecting partially overlapping neurodevelopmental pathways, particularly in domains of executive functioning, emotional regulation, and social cognition. However, distinct features—including attentional dysregulation and impulsivity in ADHD, and social communication differences and restricted/repetitive patterns in ASD—interact in dynamic ways across developmental stages.

In early childhood, comorbidity often manifests as global regulatory difficulties, including attentional instability, sensory sensitivities, and emerging social-communication differences. During middle childhood, increasing environmental demands reveal patterns of academic inconsistency, peer difficulties, and behavioural dysregulation. Adolescence is characterised by heightened social complexity, with increased internalising symptoms, compensatory masking, and identity-related challenges, particularly among females. In adulthood, presentations frequently shift toward persistent executive dysfunction, occupational challenges, relational difficulties, and elevated risk of secondary mental health conditions.

This presentation will compare lifespan presentations, examine diagnostic overlap and misidentification, and discuss implications for assessment and intervention. A formulation-based approach is emphasised to support nuanced, developmentally informed, and individualised care.

Eileen Lueders

Professor, University of Deusto, Spain

**From Menarche to Menopause:
Estradiol and Brain Aging in Women**

The transition to menopause is characterized by declining estradiol levels, which coincides with an increased risk of dementia in women. This temporal overlap suggests estradiol may influence brain aging and age-related neuropathology. We investigated whether reproductive events associated with estradiol exposure—namely, age at menarche and menopause—relate to brain aging. Using a validated machine learning model, we analyzed structural MRI data from 1,006 postmenopausal women. We found that earlier menarche, later menopause, and a longer reproductive span were each associated with less evident brain aging. These findings support the hypothesis that longer cumulative exposure to estradiol may have neuroprotective effects. However, the observed effects were modest, and estradiol levels were not directly measured. Further research is needed to clarify causal mechanisms and to examine the influence of additional factors, including genetic predispositions, lifestyle, and comorbidities. Future work incorporating hormone assays and more diverse samples will be critical for improving our understanding of the relationship between reproductive history, estradiol, and female brain aging.

Salome Korkor Ahene Mate
Counselling Psychologist, LEKMA Hospital, Ghana
Charity Sylvia Akotia
Professor, University of Ghana, Ghana
Angela Anarfi Gyasi-Gyamerah
Senior Lecturer, University of Ghana, Ghana
&
Laura-Lisa Larsey
Research Assistant, University of Ghana, Ghana

“It worries”: Psychosocial Experiences of Persons Living with Infertility in Ghana

Infertility is a medically recognised condition that imposes multifaceted challenges, (psychological, social, economic, and spiritual), on affected individuals. Both males and females living with infertility often endure societal pressure and stigmatisation, which contribute to significant mental health concerns, including depression, anxiety, and insomnia. This study explored the psychosocial experiences of persons living with infertility (PLI), focusing on their social interactions and psychological wellbeing. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, the study recruited 18 PLI (13 females and five males, aged 29-50) through purposive and snowball sampling. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews and analysed through reflexive thematic analysis. The analysis revealed four themes including *Life Course Disruptions*, *Psychological Impact*, *Social Pressures and Support Networks*, and *Financial Barriers* which show that PLI do experience significant mental health challenges, often exacerbated by financial strain and social stigma. These insights highlight the urgent need for integrated psychosocial support, public education, and policy interventions to address the multifaceted impact of infertility. Future studies could employ a dyadic approach where couples living with infertility are interviewed for a deeper perspective into their individual and collective experiences, and their coping strategies.

Caroline Muaka

Senior Lecturer, Daystar University, Kenya

Priscilla Ndiangui

Lecturer, Daystar University, Kenya

&

Laban Ayiro

Professor, Daystar University, Kenya

Comparative Efficacy of Interventions for Adolescent Anxiety Disorders: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (2004–2024)

Anxiety disorders are the most prevalent mental health conditions in adolescence and frequently persist, impairing education, relationships, and later life functioning. While robust syntheses guide adult care, the adolescent evidence base remains fragmented across modalities and diagnoses, constraining clinical decision-making and policy in Africa. This meta-analysis will estimate the overall efficacy and safety of therapeutic interventions for adolescent anxiety disorders; compare psychological, pharmacological, and combined approaches; and identify moderators, age, gender, anxiety subtype, delivery format, treatment intensity and duration, and study quality that account for variability in outcomes. We explicitly test whether combined therapies outperform single-modality treatments. The review is anchored in cognitive-behavioural theory (maladaptive cognitions/avoidance), social learning theory (modelling/contingencies), and ecological systems perspectives (family, school, and community contexts) to interpret mechanisms and implementation fit. Following PRISMA, we will systematically search Cochrane Library, Google Scholar, JSTOR, MEDLINE, PubMed, ScienceDirect, Scopus, and Web of Science for randomized and clinical trials published between January 2004 and January 2024 involving adolescents (10–19 years) with DSM/ICD anxiety diagnoses or validated thresholds. Eligible interventions include cognitive-behavioural and exposure-based therapies (individual, group, family-based, and transdiagnostic), mindfulness/third-wave approaches, SSRIs/SNRIs and other anxiolytics, and predefined combined protocols. Primary outcome is post-treatment anxiety symptom severity on validated scales; secondary outcomes include remission, functional impairment, quality of life, and safety (adverse events and all-cause discontinuation). Two reviewers will independently screen, extract, and assess risk of bias (Cochrane RoB-2 for randomized trials). Random-effects models will be

conducted in Comprehensive Meta-Analysis; effect sizes will use Hedges' g with 95% CIs. Heterogeneity will be quantified with I^2 and τ^2 ; small-study effects examined with Begg's and Egger's tests, complemented by funnel plots and trim-and-fill. Prespecified subgroup analyses and meta-regression will evaluate moderators; sensitivity analyses will probe robustness to risk of bias, outcome measure type, and imputation choices. By delivering head-to-head and class-level comparisons across psychological, pharmacological, and combined treatments, this review will clarify which strategies achieve the largest, safest, and most durable benefits for adolescents and for whom. Findings will inform stepped care algorithms, guide integration of family/school contexts, and identify evidence gaps like under-represented diagnoses, low-resource settings, and long-term outcomes. The synthesis aims to support precise, resource-efficient, and equitable care pathways for adolescent anxiety within real-world services in Africa.

Jose I. Navarro

Professor, University of Cadiz, Spain

Alvaro Rodriguez-Mora

Professor, University of Cadiz, Spain

Manuel Aguilar-Villagran

Professor, University of Cadiz, Spain

&

Gonzalo Ruiz-Cagigas

Researcher, University of Cadiz, Spain

Training Both General and Specific Mathematical Cognitive Precursors for Early Math with Computers

Spain's latest PISA results highlight persistent weaknesses in foundational mathematics. Cumulative evidence from cognitive and educational psychology shows that early identification of math learning difficulties (MLD), followed by evidence-based intervention, improves numeracy and reduces later achievement gaps. This project responded with two goals: (1) to create specialized e-training for kindergarten and primary teachers grounded in the science of early mathematical cognition, and (2) to produce multilingual software for instruction, screening, and targeted support. The ecosystem integrates three digital resources. First, e-assessment tools screen cognitive precursors linked to mathematics (approximate number processing, working memory, inhibitory control, attention, visuospatial skills) alongside early numeracy competencies (subitizing, counting principles, symbolic and non-symbolic comparison, number-line estimation, basic arithmetic, simple word problems). Second, an adaptive, multilingual intervention platform aligns instructional targets with underlying cognitive mechanisms, offers immediate feedback, and sequences practice with built-in scaffolds. Third, blended on- and offline teacher courses develop pedagogical content knowledge for early mathematics, emphasizing explicit instruction, data-informed differentiation, and continuous progress monitoring. Methodologically, we used a design-based research approach with international teacher teams in pre-primary and primary settings. Instruments underwent psychometric validation and differential item functioning to ensure cross-linguistic fairness. Iterative pilots assessed usability and feasibility; subsequent studies employed pre-post designs with comparison groups where feasible. Learning analytics tracked dosage, implementation fidelity, time-on-task, mastery trajectories, and transfer to curriculum-aligned tasks. Findings indicate that technology-mediated professional learning

increases teachers' knowledge and self-efficacy for early mathematics instruction. Children with MLD or at risk showed statistically meaningful gains in magnitude comparison, number-line estimation, and basic arithmetic fluency relative to typical practice, controlling for age, baseline level, and school context. Analytics suggested that the strongest growth occurred when practice was spaced, feedback was immediate, and tasks targeted both domain-general and domain-specific precursors. By coupling cognitive science with educational technology, this preventive strategy can reduce the incidence of MLD emerging in the early grades. Future work will report longitudinal maintenance and cost-effectiveness, examine generalization across languages and socioeconomic contexts, and refine analytics to inform classroom and school-level decision-making.

Anna Nogaj

Assistant Professor, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland

Monika Deja

Assistant Professor, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland

Malgorzata Wojtowicz-Szeffler

Assistant Professor, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland

&

Kamilla Komorowska

Assistant Professor, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland

Students' Adaptation to Academic Conditions: Psychometric Validation of the Student Psychological Adaptation Questionnaire (SPAQ)

Students' adaptation to the conditions of higher education constitutes one of the key challenges of contemporary academia, particularly in the context of increasing emotional difficulties, academic demands, and the specificity of individual university environments. A particularly important yet insufficiently explored area concerns the functioning of students enrolled in artistic programs, for whom the process of studying involves intense emotional engagement, confrontation with the evaluation of creative work, and a high level of self-reflection.

The aim of the present study was to develop and examine the psychometric properties of the Student Psychological Adaptation Questionnaire (SPAQ), designed to assess students' level of adaptation to academic conditions, with particular emphasis on the specificity of art universities.

The study included 660 Polish students representing various fields of study ($M = 22.13$; $SD = 2.93$), including 393 women (58.7%), 250 men (37.3%), and 11 individuals who identified their gender as other.

The final version of the questionnaire consists of 20 items. The reliability of the overall instrument, measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, was 0.83. A four-factor structure of the questionnaire was confirmed (emotional, social, academic, and personal adaptation). The model demonstrated a good fit to the data, with $RMSEA = 0.068$ (90% CI: 0.062-0.074).

External validity was examined using the Adaptive Behavior Assessment System - Third Edition (ABAS-3; 2020). Correlational analyses between the SPAQ scales and the ABAS-3 subscales revealed statistically significant, though low to moderate, associations,

suggesting partial convergence between the assessed construct and adaptive functioning.

Kamyar Nowidi

Lecturer, Psychiatrist & Training Analyst, Ludwig Maximilian
University of Munich, Germany / C.G. Jung-Institute Zürich,
Switzerland

**Pain in Modernity: From Nietzsche's Overman to
Transhumanism**

The early twentieth century is a cultural epoch in which the significance and metaphors of bodily pain were renegotiated on multiple levels and placed into question. In the presentation, it is shown that the new discourse succeeded in bringing together previously disparate aspects—cultural decline, the failures of modern natural science, and pain as a catalyst of fateful forces. The consequence was a far-reaching break with naive faith in progress and the bourgeois world-and-value order, heralding the onset of modernity.

Pain has always seemed integral to the *conditio humana*, alongside birth, death, and mortality. Fantasies of eternal life and of bodies that endure unblemished through time—continually renewed by mythical fountains of youth—have long fascinated the visual arts and literature as culturally sanctioned compensatory mechanisms. Lucas Cranach the Elder staged this topos lavishly in the sixteenth century with his painting *The Fountain of Youth*. The motif persists into twenty-first-century popular culture: the *Pirates of the Caribbean* films and related videogames, for example, send protagonists in search of rejuvenating elixirs. However spectacularly rendered in image or word, most writers, thinkers, and artists of earlier centuries reach the sobering conclusion that, given human inconstancy and divided nature, a rejuvenated person would merely repeat the follies they regret in old age.

This presentation takes the phenomenon of pain as an occasion to trace an intellectual-historical hiatus from antiquity, especially aspects of Aristotelian philosophy to modernity. Pain is not a timeless, uniform fact of life; it is a deeply bodily phenomenon that is culturally differentiated and socially codified. Different codifications incorporate worldviews, grand narratives, and philosophical schemas, each contributing to the understanding of the animal *dolens*—the suffering animal that human beings are. The path of the presentation leads the audience from ancient conceptions of pain through Nietzsche's *Overman* to contemporary formulations of transhumanism as a new anthropological paradigm.

Jin Gyu "Phillip" Park
Associate Professor, University of North Texas, USA
&
Deborah Fuller
Lead Faculty, Collin College, USA

An Investigation into Perceptions of Psychological Safety in Post-Pandemic Workstation Settings

Purpose: This research delves into the psychological aspects of safety perception within the working environment, focusing on workplace design, specifically workstation panel heights and occupant orientation. The study aims to explore how these design elements impact individuals' perception of safety.

Problem Statement: The layout, spacing, and configurations of workstations can evoke anxiety and influence perceived safety, both psychologically and spatially. The unprecedented impact of COVID-19 on the corporate work environment has heightened concerns about returning to the office. This research addresses the post-COVID scenario, emphasizing the need for workspaces that address safety concerns for interior designers, architects, furniture manufacturers, and corporate entities.

Significance: This study contributes crucial insights to shape post-pandemic workspaces. The unique focus on the workplace environment post-COVID requires new standards for physical offices, ensuring a sense of security, providing tools and resources, and fostering perceptions of safety, comfort, and a healthy work environment.

Research Hypotheses:

1. The height of workstation panels (independent variable) is hypothesized to have a positive relationship with occupants' scores regarding the perception of occupant safety (dependent variable).
2. Occupant orientation not facing another person in a workstation layout (independent variable) is expected to result in a higher average score than occupant orientation facing each other in terms of the perception of occupant safety (dependent variable).

Methodology: An online questionnaire was distributed to office workers, supplemented by a review of literature from various disciplines examining workplace design features impacting workers' well-being.

Summary of Results: With 35 responses collected, the data supports both hypotheses. While workstation panel and screen heights influence

occupants, other office elements contribute to perceived safety. The presentation also explores the historical precedence of workstation cubicles, well-being, mental health, social and physical distancing, psychological safety, and occupant choice and control.

The evolving impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to ongoing changes in the workplace. Remote work and limited office occupancy persist, necessitating adjustments in circulation, station density, panel heights, and mobile screens. The trend of open desking may diminish, with increased square footage per person to accommodate social distancing. The new workstation design prioritizes visual and spatial privacy, user control, and comfort, enhancing the occupant's perception of safety in the workplace.

Lloyd Robertson

Adjunct Professor, University of Regina, Canada

How to Visually Represent the Self in Psychotherapy and Research

The concept of the self serves as an internal reference system shaping how individuals perceive, evaluate, and understand their identity. This multifaceted construct is pivotal to motivation, behavior, and emotional well-being. The self is conceptualized in this presentation as an evolving construct consisting of units of culture that supports individual volition, a sense of uniqueness, a sense of continuity and a capacity for self-reflection.

Drawing on qualitative research and its application by two psychologists, this presentation explores the efficacy of a novel method for mapping the self in psychotherapy. It will trace the psycho-historical evolution of the self and examine its manifestation in collectivist cultures. Attendees will observe a demonstration of newly developed software designed to create visual maps of the self, highlighting its utility in clinical practice. The presentation will also discuss potential research applications across psychology and interdisciplinary fields, including political, religious, humanist, cultural, and gender studies, fostering dialogue on innovative approaches to understanding identity.

Alvaro Rodriguez-Mora

Professor, University of Cadiz, Spain

Jose I. Navarro

Professor, University of Cadiz, Spain

Manuel Aguilar-Villagran

Professor, University of Cadiz, Spain

&

Gonzalo Ruiz-Cagigas

Researcher, University of Cadiz, Spain

The AngoSAP Erasmus+ CBHE Project: Strengthening Psychological and Psychoeducational Support in Angolan Universities

AngoSAP (“Development of psychological and psychopedagogical care services in Angolan universities”) is an Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education project funded by the European Union and coordinated by the University of Cádiz (UCA). The consortium includes Óscar Ribas University (UÓR), the University of Namibe (UNINBE), Lueji A’Nkonde University, the Instituto Superior de Ciências da Educação do Bié (ISCED-Bié), and RheinMain University of Applied Sciences. Running from December 2023 through November 2026, AngoSAP’s overarching goal is to transfer and adapt proven models of university psychological and psychoeducational services to the Angolan context. AngoSAP follows a participatory capacity-building design with five pillars: (1) a mixed-methods needs assessment to map demand, access barriers, and existing assets across partner campuses; (2) co-design of a flexible Center for Diagnostic and Psychological and Psychoeducational Guidance (CDOP) model that can be tailored to local resources; (3) staff development via modular training, mentoring, and job-shadowing grounded in UCA’s Psychological and Psychopedagogical Care Center (SAP) and complemented by RheinMain’s good practices; (4) development of context-appropriate protocols for referral, risk management, ethics, and data protection; and (5) infrastructure and ICT enablement for intake, screening, brief interventions, and referral pathways, accompanied by a monitoring and evaluation plan (utilization, satisfaction, symptom change, retention). In 2024–2025 the consortium delivered online training cycles for psychologists and consolidated governance through a general meeting hosted at UCA on 3–5 June 2025. A flagship CDOP has been initiated at Óscar Ribas University in Luanda as a transferable reference site for the network, while UNINBE has advanced

institutional planning and public-presentation activities. Outreach actions include campus events and a short promotional video to raise awareness of available services and the project's mission. For psychology and higher-education audiences, AngoSAP will deliver: (a) an evidence-informed blueprint for scaling student mental-health and learning-support services in resource-variable settings; (b) a practice-oriented training curriculum aligning counseling micro-skills, psychoeducational interventions, and academic advising; (c) a culturally adapted suite of brief screening and outcome tools with an embedded evaluation plan; and (d) a governance and quality-assurance package (standards, supervision, data protection, and continuous improvement) for cross-institutional service networks. By developing local expertise and institutional infrastructure, AngoSAP aims to strengthen the capacity of Angolan universities to deliver timely, ethical, and student-centered psychological and psychoeducational support. The project is designed to improve students' well-being, academic persistence, and equity of access to care, while offering a replicable transfer methodology and open resources for higher-education systems across Sub-Saharan Africa and other regions.

Nicola Schutte

Associate Professor, University of New England, Australia

Psychological Characteristics Connecting Mindfulness Practice with Telomere Functioning

Mindfulness practice is associated with telomere functioning. Telomeres are the caps on the ends of chromosomes; the enzyme telomerase assists in maintaining telomere integrity and length. Both telomere length and telomerase are biomarkers related to health. Short telomeres are associated with a number of indicators of poor health, including cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes and Alzheimer's disease (Rizvi, et al., 2014), as well as early mortality. Telomere functioning can comprise telomere length and activity of the enzyme telomerase. A model of connections between mindfulness practice and telomere functioning proposes a network of connections linking the practice of mindfulness with telomere functioning through ties with a number of psychological characteristics. These characteristics may comprise positive pathways, such as represented by increased dispositional mindfulness, enhanced emotion regulation, improvement in wellbeing, greater optimism, enhanced empathy, and greater self-compassion between mindfulness practice and telomere functioning. The characteristics may also involve blockage of negative pathways, such as through reduced perception of stress, lessened impulsivity, lowered anxiety, and decreased depression. Research findings support most aspects of the model. Research reviewed through the framework of the model shows the benefits of mindfulness practice in supporting telomere functioning as well as increasing characteristics such as dispositional mindfulness, wellbeing emotion regulation and self-compassion and decreasing characteristics such as perception of stress, impulsivity and depression. Links between these positive and negative pathway characteristics with telomere functioning have been found in research. The research reviewed through the lens of the model highlights benefits of the practice of mindfulness and the links between mindfulness, positive and negative psychological pathway characteristics, and telomere functioning.

Samer Sharkiya

Lecturer & Director of Nursing, Complex Nursing Care Division, The
Israel Academic College in Ramat Gan, Israel

The Effect of Drama Therapy on Depressive Symptoms and Quality of Life among Older Adults in Residential Care Facilities

Background: Drama therapy is an active, experiential therapeutic modality shown to promote psychological well-being and quality of life. Few controlled studies have examined its effects on depressive symptoms and quality of life among older adults, and evidence from Israel is limited. This study evaluated the effect of drama therapy on depressive symptoms and quality of life among older adults residing in residential care facilities in Israel.

Methods: A pre-post equivalent-group design was used. One hundred sixty older adults were selected by simple random sampling from residential care facilities and allocated to an experimental group (n = 80) or a control group (n = 80). The experimental group participated in eight structured drama therapy sessions delivered by trained facilitators; the control group received usual care. Outcomes were assessed with self-report instruments: the Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) and the WHOQOL-OLD-BREF. Baseline assessments were conducted prior to the intervention and follow-up assessments immediately after the intervention period.

Results: At baseline, both groups exhibited mild depressive symptoms (control: M = 6.84, SD = 1.55; experimental: M = 7.23, SD = 1.41) and similarly low quality of life scores (control: M = 10.55, SD = 0.93; experimental: M = 10.29, SD = 0.77), with no significant between-group differences. After the intervention both groups showed improvements, with larger gains in the experimental group. Post-intervention means for depressive symptoms were control: M = 6.78 (SD = 1.46) and experimental: M = 5.46 (SD = 1.58). Post-intervention means for quality of life were control: M = 10.63 (SD = 0.94) and experimental: M = 12.64 (SD = 0.89). Between-group comparisons at follow-up indicated statistically significant differences in both depressive symptoms and quality of life ($p < .001$), favoring the drama therapy group.

Conclusions: An eight-session drama therapy program produced greater reductions in depressive symptoms and greater improvements in perceived quality of life compared with usual care among older adults in residential care facilities. These findings support the use of

drama therapy as a feasible adjunct to standard care in such settings. Further research should assess longer-term outcomes and mechanisms of change.

Michael Slavkin

Assistant Professor, Marian University Indianapolis, USA

Examining the Impact of Small Group Experiences on Mental Health and School Counseling Candidates in a Master's Program

Graduate training in mental health and school counseling programs extends beyond theoretical instruction, requiring experiential learning that fosters professional identity, emotional awareness, and applied skills. One instructional method increasingly used in counselor education is structured small group experience. These groups provide students with opportunities to explore interpersonal processes, practice counseling skills, and reflect on personal reactions within a supportive learning environment. However, limited research has examined how these experiences influence counseling candidates' mental health, pedagogical development, and professional performance.

This presentation explores the role of small group experiences in a master's-level mental health and school counseling program and their impact on counselor pedagogy and student outcomes. Drawing from qualitative and quantitative data collected from counseling candidates, the study examines how participation in experiential groups affects self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy development, multicultural sensitivity, and confidence in counseling practice. Particular attention is given to how group dynamics shape students' professional identity and preparedness for real-world counseling settings.

Findings suggest that small group experiences enhance reflective capacity, improve communication skills, and support students' psychological well-being by normalizing stress, vulnerability, and professional challenges encountered during training. Participants report increased comfort with feedback, stronger peer connection, and greater ability to integrate theory with practice. Additionally, the pedagogical implications indicate that experiential group processes positively influence classroom engagement, skill acquisition, and ethical decision-making.

The presentation will highlight practical strategies for integrating small group pedagogy into counselor education curricula while attending to student wellness and performance outcomes. Implications for faculty, supervisors, and program designers will be discussed, emphasizing how intentional group facilitation can strengthen counselor preparation and professional competence. Attendees will gain insight into effective instructional practices that bridge experiential

learning, mental health support, and counselor performance in graduate training program.

Troy Speirs

Clinical Psychologist, Headz Up Health Psychological Assessment and
Therapy Centre, Australia

&

Esti Anna Kartika-Speirs

Psychotherapist, Headz Up Health Psychological Assessment and
Therapy Centre, Australia

**Profiling Vulnerability in an Outpatient Mental Health
Setting: Implementation of Brief Self-Report Screening
Measures at Intake**

Background: Effective triage and early identification of mental health vulnerabilities are crucial for optimising care in outpatient mental health clinics. Traditional intake procedures have largely focused on collecting basic client information and details concerning presenting problems. They often rely on patient self-disclosure and third-party referral information that is not systematic in capturing the breadth of mental health symptomatology or the presence of personality-related vulnerability. This study evaluates the integration of brief self-report screening measures into an intake protocol, specifically derived from the conceptual frameworks of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th Edition, DSM-5) Self-Rated Level 1 Cross-Cutting Symptom Measure – Adult and Alternative Model for Personality Disorders (AMPD). Information collected has been used to inform the development of a standardised intake protocol for a metropolitan outpatient mental health clinic in Sydney, Australia.

Methods: All new adult referrals to the clinic over a 12-month period were administered a brief self-report battery at intake that comprised three measures; the Diagnostic Assessment Research Tool Screener (McCabe et. al., 2017), the Level of Personality Functioning Scale Brief Form 2.0 (Weekers et. al., 2018), and the Personality Inventory for DSM-5 – Brief Form – Adult (APA, 2013). Measures screened for vulnerability for DSM-5 disorders, as well as AMPD criteria evaluating self/interpersonal functioning and personality trait domains. Screening data were analysed to profile the prevalence, co-occurrence and severity of mental health and personality vulnerabilities within the intake population.

Results: The introduction of these brief screening tools provided a robust symptom profile for 84 new clients, providing a mental health vulnerability severity indicator for initial client presentations and

revealing rates of comorbidity and severity of personality-related vulnerabilities. Patterns of symptom clustering and the distribution of personality dysfunction were mapped, allowing for tailored triage and care pathways. Protocol review indicated improved confidence in early case formulation and allocation decisions with intake protocol refinement to continue ongoing.

Conclusions: Incorporating brief, standardised self-report screening measures derived from the DSM-5 with account for mental health and personality vulnerabilities into intake protocols enhances the clinic's capacity to rapidly profile the severity of client vulnerability on initial presentation. This approach supports more nuanced risk assessment, efficient service allocation, and the potential for earlier intervention for complex presentations. Further research will explore the impact of protocol refinement, treatment outcomes and service efficiency.

Esther Stavrou

Clinical Professor, Yeshiva University, USA

&

Joshua Freidman

Psychologist, Yeshiva University, USA

Improving the Utility of Psychological Reports: Practical and Ethical Issues

When evaluating children for psychological and educational functioning, psychological reports are important in translating test and other data into a meaningful description of a child's strengths and weaknesses. These reports should inform diagnoses and recommendations for intervention or treatment. However, a common criticism of psychological reports is that they often use language that is too difficult for most consumers to understand. Since parents are generally recipients of these reports, writing clear and easy to understand reports is important to encourage their informed participation in decision making for their child. Writing clear reports is also an ethical issue as various ethical codes for psychologists require practitioners to guard against misinterpretation of test data and to present test results and interpretations in clear, understandable terms.

Writing clear reports with limited jargon requires more time and care. One way to reduce the time needed to generate more readable reports is through AI platforms such as ChatGPT. These platforms can be used to quickly organize background information, interpret test scores, and generate recommendations (Lockwood et al., 2024). However, this raises additional ethical issues including student privacy, competence, and potential bias.

This presentation will discuss the findings of a study comparing three versions of a report using the same background and test data; 1) a traditional psychoeducational report, 2) a reader-friendly version written at a lower reading level and with reduced jargon, and 3) a report generated using AI (ChatGPT4). Parents (n=105) were randomly assigned one version of these reports to read and asked questions about the report's content, their satisfaction with the report, and perceived credibility of the report-writer. Among those who completed the study, the results reflected similar understanding, satisfaction, and perceived credibility of the writer across report type. However, high dropout rates were noted in the group of parents who were assigned to read the more traditional, technical report, suggesting that the report became too effortful to read to completion. While not a significant difference,

parents who were assigned the AI generated report answered more comprehension questions correctly. In addition to the study findings, suggestions for making psychological reports more understandable and useful to parents will be provided. The benefits and risks of using artificial intelligence platforms to assist in report writing will also be discussed.

Caitlin Vasquez-O'Brien

Associate Professor, Eastern Connecticut State University, USA

**With a Little Help from my Friends:
Teaching Developmental Psychology by Integrating
Bioecological Systems and Narrative Identity Theory**

People craft a narrative identity: an ever-evolving story of who they are that integrates their current experiences with their previous knowledge and their future goals (McAdams, 2011). Narrative identities begin with the stories people tell themselves about their experiences in childhood but typically coalesce in late adolescence or emerging adulthood as the person develops greater agency. Societal factors, including transitioning to college, add to the need to construct a cohesive narrative identity (Merrill & Fivush, 2016). Although helpful to individual development, narrative identities can be a barrier to learning in a developmental psychology course, as students are more likely to accept information congruent with their narrative identity (e.g., personal childhood experiences) than incongruent information (Nickerson, 1998). This propensity may further disadvantage under-prepared students, widening the achievement gap (Tuterts, 2017). In the current study, I hypothesized that a narrative identity intervention would increase student academic and psychosocial well-being.

Participants were students enrolled in two sections of an undergraduate child development course (N = 48). Using a two-group pretest-posttest design, one section was randomly assigned to the experimental condition in which students completed a narrative identity group assignment introduced mid-semester that required them to frame their personal stories within bioecological systems group assignment using a Hero's Journey narrative framework. The control group received a comparable other-focused biological systems group assignment. Both sections were otherwise taught in an identical fashion. Students completed validated measures of academic (academic persistence - Barnett et al., 2017; group work preferences - Cantwell & Andrews, 2002) and psychosocial well-being (resilience - Smith et al., 2008; perspective taking - Davis, 1980; belonging - Arslan & Duru, 2017 & Rovai, 2002, and appreciation of diversity - Fuertes et al., 2000) at two time points. The pretest occurred in week three of the semester; the posttest was administered ten weeks later.

There were no significant pre-test differences. There was a significant condition-by-time interaction for resilience, such that students in the experimental condition demonstrated greater gains over

time compared to controls; $F(1,46) = 6.96, p = .01$. Academic persistence and belonging increased significantly over time in both conditions, suggesting general course-related gains independent of condition. A significant main effect and a marginal interaction ($p = .07$) emerged for appreciation of diversity, indicating that the intervention may have contributed to a marginally greater appreciation of diversity in the experimental condition. No significant effects were found for perspective taking or group work preferences.

The Hero's Journey intervention appears to have enhanced student resilience while also supporting broader, course-level gains in belonging, persistence, and appreciation of differences. This fits with the main premise of the Hero's Journey, wherein the hero faces challenges but overcomes adversity (Rogers et al., 2023). Reframing personal stories within the bioecological systems theory using a narrative-based pedagogy may offer a promising approach to helping students engage more flexibly with course content and support academic functioning and psychosocial well-being. More broadly, these findings suggest that narrative-based pedagogies may provide a useful tool for promoting resilience and engagement in line with equity-minded teaching during a key developmental period.

Jasmin Vassileva

Professor, Virginia Commonwealth University, USA

Tara Rezapour

Institute for Cognitive Science Research, Tehran, Iran

Kayla McLean

Virginia Commonwealth University, USA

Swara Chokshi

Virginia Commonwealth University, USA

Elena Psederska

New Bulgarian University, Bulgaria

Niki Maleki

Metacognium LLC, USA

&

Hamed Ekhtiari

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis MN, USA

Neuroscience-informed Psychoeducation for Addiction Prevention

Introduction: To address the scarcity of neuroscience-based prevention and harm reduction programs for addiction, we recently developed a mobile app using neuroscience-informed psychoeducation and game-based cognitive training as a universal prevention program for college students. It focuses on key neurocognitive functions implicated in addiction by providing interactive psychoeducation using cognitive games, videos, animations, cartoons, and brain training strategies. We will present results from a pilot study testing the feasibility and acceptability of the program in college students, as well as preliminary estimates of its efficacy on substance use and other outcomes.

Methods: The app-based program consists of 4 self-administered 20 minutes long sessions, each of which focuses on a specific neurocognitive function implicated in substance use disorders: (1) Attention, (2) Memory, (3) Cognitive Flexibility; and (4) Decision-Making. Participants were recruited from the Spit for Science Registry at Virginia Commonwealth University. Participants completed a pre-intervention risk-assessment survey, four intervention sessions, and a post-intervention survey including feedback about the intervention.

Results: Of the 85 participants who completed the pre-intervention survey, 68 (80%) completed all four sessions of the intervention and the post-intervention survey and feedback. Student feedback revealed high acceptance and satisfaction with the program. From the different

intervention components, the neurocognitive games were liked the most and the brain training strategies were liked the least. Preliminary results from pre- and post-intervention comparisons reveal significant reductions in self-reported deficits in executive function ($Z=-7.11$; $p<0.001$) and emotional distress including depression ($Z=-2.58$; $p=0.010$) and anxiety ($Z=-2.49$; $p=0.013$), and an increase in metacognitive awareness ($Z=-3.07$; $p=0.002$). Additionally, assessment of decision-making revealed reduced delay discounting of large magnitude rewards ($Z=-2.11$; $p=0.035$) and increased probability discounting of small probabilities ($Z=-3.177$; $p=0.001$), indicating increased sensitivity to uncertainty. Finally, participants reported significantly lower intentions to use and lower actual use of nicotine and cannabis, and lower binge drinking from pre- to post-intervention assessment.

Conclusions: These findings support the feasibility and acceptability of the program among college students. Results also provide preliminary evidence about the potential of the program to increase metacognitive awareness and impulse control and to reduce psychological distress and intentions to use. These preliminary results will be used to refine the intervention and conduct a randomized controlled trial (RCT) to evaluate its efficacy.

Sandra Velez-Candelario

CEO & Consultant, Family Organizational Psychology, LLC and
Researcher, Young Human Capita Research Corp., USA

**A Qualitative and Quantitative Study to Analyze, Measure,
and Correlate the Family Organizational Behavior and
Administrative Functionality at Home of Three Successful
Human Resources Generation Sample: Boomers,
Millennials and Generation Z**

This is a qualitative and quantitative study to analyze, measure, and correlate the results of their Family Organizational Behavior and Administrative performance at home of three successful human resources samples with a college degree and self-economic maintenance of three generations: *Boomers, Millennials and Generation Z*. The sample or voluntary participants are successful human capital with their own economic resources from these three generations; Baby Boomers between 60 to 79 years old, Millennials between 29 to 39 years old and generation Zeta between 20 to 28 years old with a college title that runs between an associate degree to a doctorate. To manage this specific research a triangulation method is applied; an Interview, the FOAF Scale results and the Pearson correlation method. It is a replica of the first analysis that Velez, et al (2016) in this specific topic with some changes. It is also the first analysis to understand and correlate three generations families' groups organizational behavior and administrative performance at home.

Melissa Weisse

PhD Student, University Rennes 2, France

An Ecological Approach to Assessing Executive Functions in Children and Adolescents

For many years, clinicians have recognized the difficulty of assessing executive functions (EFs), particularly in children. The tests used are criticized for being far removed from the subjects' daily activities, often leading to an overestimation of their executive abilities. Traditional neuropsychological tests targeting EFs are now recognized as inadequate due to their lack of ecological validity, and require the use of other, more ecological tools to complement them.

The aim of this presentation is to introduce a new ecological battery of tasks designed to assess EFs, named eEFEE, in children and adolescents. More specifically, it presents one of the six tasks, the Manual task, and the creation of scores for rating purposes as well as the developmental data related to EFs in children and adolescents on this task.

105 normally developing children and adolescents completed the six tasks in the eEFEE battery, all between the ages of 9 and 15, at their school during school hours.

The results show an improvement in success scores, a reduction in task completion time, and a decrease in the number of examiner interventions. In addition, there is evidence of improvement in EFs index, particularly on the high-level EFs scale (planning and reasoning). This study provides new insights regarding the development of EFs during childhood and adolescence within the age group studies, in the various activities offered by the Manual task. It introduces the development of an ecological rating system designed to assess EFs using task from daily life, which is essential for measuring all aspects of EFs, complementing performance-based neuropsychological tests.

In conclusion, the development of tools that are more firmly rooted in the daily lives of subjects should enable a better understanding of EFs and therefore better support at the earliest possible stage, given the role of EFs in all everyday activities and particularly in learning during childhood and adolescence.

Matthew Whoolery

Associate Professor, American University in Bulgaria, Bulgaria

&

Mariam Melikishvili

Student, American University in Bulgaria, Bulgaria

The Mind as a Creator: Tagore, Trauma, and The Truth of Healing

Contemporary psychology defines trauma as a lasting emotional or cognitive response to distressing events, yet it rarely considers how trauma alters the subjective perception of the world. Drawing on Rabindranath Tagore's essay *The World of Personality*, this paper uses the relational model of perception to reimagine trauma as an ontological and aesthetic experience rather than solely a psychological wound. With Tagore's philosophy and the broader Indian, spiritual understanding of human psychology, reality is no longer fixed or external but cocreated by the self and the personality of the perceiver. From this point, the world becomes a continual exchange between the inner awareness and outer existence. When trauma occurs, this creative dialogue may stagnate, dimming perception and narrowing one's engagement with life. Consequently, healing can be understood as a fundamentally relational and holistic process, where the self's relationship and communion is restored to find ultimate truth and beauty in existence. This theoretical reframing challenges the Western model of trauma treatment and invites a cross-cultural dialogue, bridging philosophy, art, and clinical practice.

Malgorzata Wojtowicz-Szeffler

Assistant Professor, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland

Kamilla Komorowska

Assistant Professor, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland

Anna Nogaj

Assistant Professor, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland

&

Monika Deja

Assistant Professor, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland

Profiles of Psychological Adaptation to the Conditions of Studying

Adaptation to the conditions of studying constitutes one of the key challenges of contemporary higher education, particularly in the context of increasing emotional difficulties, rising academic demands, and diverse academic environments. This process involves not only academic functioning but also emotional regulation, social relationships, and the psychological burden incurred while meeting academic requirements. A particularly important yet insufficiently explored area concerns students of art universities, for whom studying is associated with intense emotional involvement, coping with stress, and increased exposure to the evaluation of creative work.

The aim of the present study was to identify qualitatively distinct profiles of students' psychological adaptation and to determine personality-related and regulatory factors differentiating these profiles. The adopted profile-based perspective enables the analysis of adaptation to studying as a qualitatively differentiated phenomenon, reflecting diverse patterns of functioning in response to academic demands.

The selection of students from art universities was motivated by their specific developmental and educational context. Artistic education is characterized by a high level of self-reflection, frequent exposure to subjective evaluation, ambiguous criteria of success, and a strong integration of personal identity with creative activity. These factors may contribute to elevated stress levels and the consolidation of adaptive patterns associated with high psychological costs, which are not always clearly recognized as requiring support within the academic environment.

The study was conducted among 600 students of art universities as part of the Academic Psychological Support for Artists project, which aims to assess students' psychological functioning and identify their

support needs within the academic environment. An author-developed Student Psychological Adaptation Questionnaire (SPAQ) was used alongside standardized instruments: NEO-PI-R, CISS, and GHQ-28. Correlational and exploratory analyses enabled the identification of four profiles of psychological adaptation: resource-based adaptation, high-cost adaptation, unstable adaptation, and a maladaptive profile. The profiles were derived through multidimensional analysis of response patterns integrating indicators of adaptation, personality traits, coping strategies, and psychological symptoms. They differed in their configuration of psychological resources and costs, allowing them to be interpreted as distinct pathways of functioning in the context of studying.

This project assumes a shift away from uniform, reactive forms of psychological assistance toward a support model based on early risk identification and the profiling of students' needs. Within this framework, the identified adaptation profiles enable differentiation of supportive interventions - from psychoeducational and preventive actions, through interventions aimed at stabilizing adaptive functioning, to intensive forms of specialized support.

The empirical findings indicate that students' psychological adaptation is processual and multidimensional rather than dichotomous. The identified profiles differ in psychological burden and stability of adaptive functioning, with neuroticism, coping strategies, and symptom severity playing a key role in their differentiation. These results support the necessity of a profile-based approach to academic psychological support, encompassing both early intervention for students exhibiting unstable adaptation and intensive support for those presenting a maladaptive profile.

References

- Clark J, Gkounta O (2026) *Psychology. Abstract Proceedings of the 20th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Clark J, Gkounta O (2025) *Psychology. Abstract Proceedings of the 19th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Patelis T, Gkounta O (2024) *Psychology. Abstract Proceedings of the 18th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Patelis T, Gkounta O (2023) *Psychology. Abstract Proceedings of the 17th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Patelis T, Gkounta O (2022) *Psychology. Abstract Proceedings of the 16th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2021) *Psychology Abstract Proceedings of the 15th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2020) *Psychology. Abstract Proceedings of the 14th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2019) *Psychology. Abstract Proceedings of the 13th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2018) *Psychology. Abstract Proceedings of the 12th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2017) *Psychology. Abstract Proceedings of the 11th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2016) *Psychology. Abstract Proceedings of the 10th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2015) *Psychology. Abstract Proceedings of the 9th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2014) *Psychology. Abstract Proceedings of the 8th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2013) *Psychology. Abstract Proceedings of the 7th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER).
- Papanikos GT (2012) *Psychology. Abstract Proceedings of the 6th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.
- Papanikos GT (2011) *Psychology. Abstract Proceedings of the 5th Annual International Conference*. Athens: Athens Institute.