Sally Al-Dandachi

Decoding Episodic Memory in Healthy Aging Population: The Role of Family History of Dementia and Arousal Mood State on Pattern Separation and Completion

This study investigated the individual and interactive effects of family history of dementia and mood states on pattern separation and completion, two memory processes associated with episodic memory and hippocampal subregions. Mainly, the hypotheses were that (a) the presence of a family history of dementia would reduce memory performance, (b) higher arousal would enhance memory performance, and (c) both higher arousal and absence of a family history of dementia would yield the highest memory performance. Thirty-five participants aged 50 years and older were recruited from Prolific, an online research platform. Data about demographics and present mood states (i.e., arousal-calm subscale of Brief Mood Introspection Scale) were collected through Qualtrics. Pattern separation (i.e., lure discrimination index) and pattern completion (i.e., corrected recognition) were evaluated using the Mnemonic Similarity Task for Objects. Results revealed a significant negative correlation between arousal and corrected recognition scores, but not the lure discrimination index - though it was a negative correlation. Moreover, a family history of dementia did not predict performance on pattern separation or completion. Similarly, the interaction between arousal and family history of dementia was deemed to have no significant effects on memory performance. Future studies might recruit a larger, more diverse sample for a longitudinal study to investigate the interaction and influence between mood and dementia genetic risk factors on episodic memory processes.

Asma Badi

The Influence of Perceived Closeness on Willingness to Trust In Friends: How Attachment Style Moderates This Relationship

This study examined the relationship between perceived closeness and the willingness to trust in friendships, focusing on the moderating role of attachment style. Three hypotheses were tested: (1) greater perceived closeness would predict higher trust, (2) this relationship would be stronger in close friendships than with classmates, and (3) secure attachment would strengthen the closeness-trust association. Ninety-nine undergraduate students aged 18-42 completed an online questionnaire administered through the Department of Psychology's Participant Pool. Participants responded to measures assessing trust, attachment style, and perceived closeness, including the Other-Focused and Propensity to Trust Scale, the Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised Questionnaire, the Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale, and the Trust Scale. Contrary to expectations, perceived closeness did not significantly predict trust across all friendships, suggesting that closeness alone may not fully explain trust development. However, closeness was significantly associated with trust in close friends (but not classmates). Secure attachment did not moderate the relationship between closeness and trust, although securely attached participants reported higher trust levels than those with insecure attachment styles. The study's findings provide insight into the relationship of trust, closeness and attachment in friendships.

Emilee Beaumont

The Role of Gratitude and Insecure Avoidant Attachment in Connectedness, Interpersonal Support, and Recovery Capital Among Women in an Online Recovery Community

The present study aimed to examine how gratitude and avoidant attachment mediate the relationship between connectedness, interpersonal support, and recovery capital for women who participated in a digital recovery space. Recovery capital refers to an individual's internal and external resources that support their recovery processes. While research has explored the role of resources in recovery, there is a gap in the literature regarding the compounding effects of these components on an individual's recovery capital. Additionally, limited literature supports the effects of online recovery communities in enhancing these recovery resources. The current study utilized archival data collected from The She Recovers Foundation (SRF). The sample primarily consisted of women and non-binary individuals who sought trauma-informed care in an online recovery community. The original study used online self-report questionnaires to collect data on participants' demographics, family history of substance use, mental health disorders, and known correlates of recovery. The current study analysed participants' responses on the gratitude, attachment, connectedness, interpersonal support, and recovery capital measures. The objective was to explore whether these components formed an interconnected network of processes throughout an individual's recovery journey. Results provided evidence that suggests higher levels of interpersonal support and connectedness are associated with greater levels of recovery capital. However, the proposed mediation of both greater gratitude and lower avoidant attachment on interpersonal support, connectedness, and recovery capital were insignificant. The findings did support the mediation of greater gratitude on connectedness and recovery capital, and the mediation of decreased levels of avoidant attachment in lower interpersonal relationships and recovery capital. Future research should replicate these models in longitudinal study designs to explore the hypothesized outcomes and further investigate the relationship between gratitude and avoidant attachment in online women's recovery spaces.

Tanisha Desai

Parent-Child Relationship Quality and Radius Trust: Trust and Cynicism as Mediators

This study explores the effect of the parent-child relationship on the radius of trust in adulthood, with general trust and social cynicism as possible mediating variables. Anchored in attachment theory, we posit that favorable parent-child interactions would lead to greater general trust and lesser cynicism, thus expanding or constricting the radius of trust. One hundred psychology students were surveyed regarding their parent-child relationships and their general trust, social cynicism, and radius of trust. Results supported H1, indicating that high-quality parent-child relationships correlate with greater general trust (r = .325, p < .001). Contrary to hypothesized expectations, participants with previously established general trust did not demonstrate a wider radius of trust and did not mediate the effect of trust and parent-child relationship on the radius of trust. Social cynicism also proved unrelatable to parent-child relationships or radius of trust, and no mediation effect was found. Overall, these results indicate that although the quality of relationships in early life fosters trust, the radius of trust is likely determined by other factors beyond social attitudes, like culture or context. The complexity of trust dynamics calls for more research integrating developmental, social, and cultural angles.

Aaron Dugan

Better Together? Emotion Reactivity and Difficulties in Emotion Regulation as Transdiagnostic Predictors of Psychopathology

Emotion dysregulation, which encompasses the two major components of emotion reactivity and difficulties emotion regulation, plays a significant role in the development and maintenance of psychopathology. Despite its relevance to the field, a unified, comprehensive definition of emotion dysregulation remains elusive as researchers often assess the two major components separately. This study aimed to determine how the two components relate in predicting different forms of psychopathology alone versus combining them as a measure of the emotion dysregulation construct. Adult participants 18 years and older were recruited from two sources: the University of Windsor Psychology Participant Pool and the surrounding community (N=97). These participants completed a battery of self-report measures, including the Emotion Reactivity Scale (ERS; assessing emotion reactivity) and Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS; assessing difficulties in emotion regulation), and five measures of psychopathology assessing symptoms of depression, generalized and social anxiety, borderline personality disorder, and disordered eating. Regression analyses showed the combination of the two measures serving as a measure of emotion dysregulation significantly predicted each psychopathology tested at or above the level either separate measure could alone. Moreover, while neither measure alone fully encompasses the tripartite model of emotion dysregulation, the ERS and DERS function as complementary assessments when used together. These preliminary findings provide support for the combination of the ERS and DERS as a more comprehensive measure of emotion dysregulation and suggest that together they may form a collectively representative model when utilized together rather than alone.

Brooke Dupuis

Feasibility and Acceptability of an Internet-Delivered Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Skills Training Intervention: A Mixed Methods Study

The current study examines the feasibility and acceptability of a proposed internet-based dialectical behaviour therapy (iDBT) intervention through a mixed-methods approach involving university students and community adults. Using established self-report measures and an interview procedure, the study collected feedback on the proposed intervention called Wise Minds from Ontario residents who were 18 years or older and had prior experience with psychotherapy and/or online mental health tools. Participants (N=23) provided feedback on the layout, content, and usability of the proposed iDBT intervention. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and qualitative questionnaires distributed post-interview. Participants also completed questionnaires measuring the credibility, acceptability and expectancy of the intervention at the end of the session. The Wise Minds intervention was perceived as moderately credible (M = 7.6/9, SD=1.0), with participants estimating an average of 60 percent improvement in their mental health and coping (SD = 18.3) if they were to engage with the training. This intervention was also recognized as moderately acceptable (M = 55.04 out of 70, SD = 10011.80). Thematic analysis revealed convergent patterns around feasibility, credibility, and acceptability. The relevant themes indicated that there was significant educational potential of the intervention to both the participants themselves and others in their lives, that it overcomes relevant technological and accessibility barriers, and provided ways to encourage engagement. Opportunities to enhance the content within the modules were also suggested, such as improvement of accessibility features. These findings will inform future revisions of the iDBT program in preparation for a pilot feasibility trial which is proposed but has not yet been conducted. Results suggest that the proposed iDBT shows promise as a flexible, self-guided intervention for supporting mental health among university students and community adults.

Meaghan Garrett

Buffering Burnout: The Protective Role of Perceived Organizational Support and Engagement During Organizational Restructuring

Organizational change is a pervasive feature of modern workplaces, often introducing uncertainty and psychological strain for employees. This study examined the extent to which perceived organizational support (POS) and employee engagement act as protective factors against burnout during a period of organizational restructuring at a mid-sized North American pharmaceutical company. Drawing on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model and Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, the research assessed whether support and engagement predicted lower burnout levels across 67 employees who participated in a company-wide engagement survey. Results showed significant negative correlations between burnout and POS (r = -.301), as well as burnout and overall engagement (r = -.683). Each engagement subdimension, culture and environment, fairness and inclusion, and well-being and support, was also significantly associated with reduced burnout. However, burnout levels did not significantly differ by department, tenure, age, salary group, or managerial status. Regression findings suggested that shared variance between predictors may obscure their individual statistical significance, though the overall model was meaningful. These findings highlight the universal importance of psychological resources like POS and engagement in mitigating burnout during change, independent of role-based or demographic differences. Practical implications emphasize the value of organizational investments in culture, fairness, and well-being to sustain resilience during transitions. The study contributes to the understanding of burnout as a multifactorial outcome shaped more by psychosocial conditions than by structural factors.

Sarah Hussain

Exploring the Impact of Problematic Cannabis Use and Cannabis Use Motives on Executive Functioning Impairments in Emerging Adults

Executive functioning (EF) skills, such as impulse control, working memory, and cognitive flexibility, guide behavior toward goals. These skills are particularly important for emerging adults (ages 18 to 25 years), as their environments often place high demands on these skills before they are fully developed. Cannabis, a commonly used substance in this age group, may hinder EF performance, leading to cannabis-related problems in some individuals. The role of individual motivations to use cannabis in these processes is unclear. This study investigated the intersection of problematic cannabis use and executive dysfunction in emerging adults. A total of 84 participants were recruited from the University of Windsor Psychology Pool for this in-person study. A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used to assess how problematic cannabis use related to performance on two clinical EF tasks and a selfrating measure of EF. Level of problematic use (high, low, no cannabis use) did not predict significant differences in executive functioning test scores. A post-hoc exploratory analysis suggested cannabis users had lower EF self-ratings compared to non-users, but cannabis users did not differ from cannabis nonusers on more objective EF tasks. The ability of cannabis-use motives to predict EF performance was also evaluated. Results suggested that the type of motivation to use cannabis did not predict EF either by self-report or task performance. These results suggest that emerging adults who use cannabis exhibit poorer EF, regardless of whether their use is problematic or driven by a specific motive. Future work should aim to identify predictors of executive functioning impairment in emerging adults who use cannabis to ensure they can be identified and provided personalized treatment when needed.

Cristian A. Iannicello

The Prospect of Support Scrolling: A Content Analysis on Type 1 Diabetes Advocacy, Technology, and Support on Social Media

Type 1 diabetes (T1D) is marked by a deficiency in insulin secretion caused by an autoimmune destruction of the insulin-producing beta cells in the pancreas. As a result, individuals typically follow a complex regimen of carbohydrate counting, checking blood glucose levels regularly, and calculating insulin doses daily. As such, it is imperative for these individuals to feel connected and cared for by those around them. Therefore, the use of social media as a vehicle to connect individuals with T1D to interact with and support one another is groundbreaking. The purpose of the current study was to investigate the positive aspects of social media for individuals with T1D, focusing on how these platforms can equalize access to current diabetes healthcare knowledge, including technology advances, so that people with T1D who experience support online are better able to advocate for their healthcare needs. Using archival data previously collected as part of a parent study (Type 1 Diabetes on Social Media: A thematic analysis of publicly posted content across social media platforms), the current study conducted further qualitative examination of advocacy, technology, and social support through a secondary content analysis, including both deductive and inductive approaches. Ultimately six themes were identified: Amplifying the Message, Harvesting Unity, Pioneering T1D Progress, Unity in Experience, Personal Empowerment, and Community Empowerment. Overall, this study highlights the multi-layered nature of the T1D healthcare advocacy ecosystem and the benefit of engaging in "support scrolling" on social media to enhance self-management skills for those with chronic conditions, like T1D.

Helana Jraige

Relations Among Cyber Intimate Partner Aggression (C-IPA), Animal Maltreatment, and Thoughts and Behaviours Related to Leaving a Relationship Due to Concerns About the Pets' Safety and Well-Being

Intimate partner aggression (IPA), alongside technology, has given rise to a new form of violence: cyber intimate partner aggression (C-IPA). Despite the increasing prevalence, no known research has explored the intersection between C-IPA and animal maltreatment (AM). Many IPA victims delay leaving abusive relationships due to concerns over their pets' safety and well-being. This study examined the relationships among C-IPA, AM, and victims' thoughts and behaviours related to leaving abusive relationships, specifically focusing on the role pets play in these decisions. Online data collected via Qualtrics Research Panel from 1,406 Canadian adults (66.6% female, 53.0% White, *M* age = 44.53 years) with pets were analyzed. Participants completed the Cyber Aggression in Relationships Scale (CARS) victimization subscale, the Partners Treatment of Animals Scale (PTAS), and two items that captured participants' thoughts and behaviours related to leaving their abusive relationships. Bivariate results revealed significant positive correlations between (a) C-IPA and AM subtypes, (b) C-IPA and thoughts about leaving and days delayed leaving, and (c) AM and thoughts about leaving and days delayed leaving. Negative binomial regressions indicated that C-IPA and AM significantly predicted the number of thoughts about leaving but not the number of days participants delayed leaving. These findings emphasize the need for pet-friendly policies in domestic shelters to support victims of IPA and their pets.

Emma Larocque

The Impact of Emotional Valence on Involuntary Autobiographical Memory Retrieval

This study examines the impact of emotional valence on the elicitation of involuntary autobiographical memories (IAMs). IAMs are unintended recollections of personal experiences that come to mind with no prior conscious attempt at retrieval. Emotional memories tend to be more vividly remembered and, therefore, enhance the likelihood of involuntary recall. Although they are common, many questions about IAMs' properties remain unanswered. In particular, a discrepancy exists regarding their valence. Overall, a review of the literature on the relationship between emotional valence and the retrieval of IAMs shows varying results. Using a sample of 50 undergraduate students from the University of Windsor Psychology Department Participant Pool, the current study sought to address this gap by using emotionally evocative video clips to investigate whether positive, negative, or neutral valence is more effective at eliciting IAMs. Participants completed an incidental encoding task where they watched short video clips, noting whenever they experienced an IAM. After a brief delay, participants were asked to freely recall their memories of the videos prompted by their titles. Finally, participants elaborated on any IAMs experienced throughout the experiment through a written recall task. Although it was hypothesized that positively valenced videos would elicit more IAMs than negative or neutral videos, there was no significant difference found in IAM frequency across emotional valence conditions. The small sample size and further limitations are important to consider. Implications of emotion-memory research are discussed along with future directions to expand these findings.

Kayla Lauritsen

Exploring Connections Between Relational Demography, Stereotype Threat, Trust in Coworkers, and Stress Levels in Students' Workplaces

In workplace studies, age similarity, stereotype threat, and trust in coworkers have each been found to be correlated with stress (Adamovic, 2022; Coulon et al., 2024; Guinot et al., 2014). Research mainly focuses on each of these variables separately from another. Moreover, age-related similarities and age-related stereotype threat are often overlooked. To address these gaps in the literature, the current study explored the relationship between each of age similarity, age-based stereotype threat, and trust in coworkers with perceived stress levels. Correlational analyses were conducted with stress as the dependent variable, resulting in the finding that perceived age similarities were negatively correlated to perceived stress levels. The other two variables were not found to have a significant correlation with stress levels, meaning that a mediation analysis could not be conducted (Kenny, 1986). Future research should utilize a more diverse sample than what the Participant Pool can provide, so the results can be generalizable to the public. Also, additional potential moderators should be explored, with a potential experimental design which allows causation to be inferred.

Deborah A. Laze

Defining the Baseline: Normative Data for the V-8, a Brief Psychiatric Screener, in Collegiate Athletes

This study aimed to establish normative data for the V-8, a brief 8-item psychiatric screener using visual analog scales, in a sample of high-contact collegiate-level student-athletes. The primary goal was to generate baseline symptom severity scores and examine how these vary by sex, concussion history and family history of neurodevelopmental conditions. The secondary goal was to assess the V-8's psychometric properties by assessing convergent validity with the Post-Concussion Symptom Scale (PCSS). Participants included 489 athletes (mean age of 20.0 years; 70.8% male) from the University of Windsor, who completed the V-8 at the beginning and end of routine pre-season baseline assessment. Stratified analyses were conducted using non-parametric tests, and Spearman's correlations were calculated to evaluate convergent validity with the PCSS. Results revealed significant group differences in V-8 symptom scores by sex and history of both concussions and neurodevelopmental concerns. Female athletes and those reporting troubles in school similarly reported higher anxiety and stress, while those with multiple concussions reported more severe depressive symptoms. The V-8 also demonstrated significant correlations with conceptually similar PCSS items, supporting its convergent validity. Findings suggest that the V-8 is a valid and efficient tool for assessing psychological symptoms and may offer added clinical value when used alongside existing concussion assessments. The normative data presented here may assist clinicians in distinguishing between pre-existing and post-injury symptom profiles, enabling more effective, personalized concussion management strategies.

Emily Mastromatteo

"My Body Deserves to be Taken Care of,": Self-Care Strategies in Women with Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome

Self-care, the active engagement in health promoting behaviours, is quintessential in promoting wellness and resilience in women with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). In this qualitative study, we explored how 55 cis-gendered, Canadian women implemented various self- care strategies and behaviours to improve their quality of life and promote wellness in their journey living with PCOS. Archival data from a parent study done by Soucie et al. (2022-2024), which capitalized on strength and resilience within the PCOS community, was analyzed for this thesis project. Participants completed a 3-hour long narrative interview, which began with participants constructing their PCOS story, over their life course, and then reflecting on this journey in relation to domains such as health care, relationships, self-care, and future scripts. This thesis was guided by the following research question: what self-care strategies do women with PCOS engage in to promote improved quality of life, and better health outcomes? Utilizing Braun and Clarke's (2021, 2022) reflexive thematic analysis, within a social constructivist perspective, three major themes were cultivated: "Understanding what my journey looks like," "reconnecting with my body and what it needs," and "creating that sense of community, of sisterhood." The collection of themes represents women's ability to retain a high quality of life, despite shifting symptoms, through their active engagement in their health, their community, and in the building of positive perceptions of PCOS. The underlying findings show a need for further exploration on how to promote health-care providers involvement in self-care regiments to increase the ability for person-centred care.

Irma Merdanovic

Mind-Wandering as a Consolidation-Like Process: The Role of Wakeful Rest in Guiding Memory Retrieval

The following study investigated the relationship between mind-wandering and memory. Recent research suggests that mind-wandering, similar to sleep and other offline states, may help consolidate memories through cued reactivation (Nicosia & Balota, 2024). Using a sample of undergraduate university students, this pilot study aimed to replicate findings from previous research and examined whether cued reactivation during mind-wandering may improve memory performance for picture-word associations in younger adults. Participants completed an encoding, mind-wandering, and a recall task. Participants viewed scenes during the mind-wandering task to promote the process in a more realistic way compared to previous studies. The study hypothesized that memories cued during mind-wandering would be recalled with better speed and accuracy than uncued memories. Additionally, it was hypothesized that individuals who mind-wander about the task in which they formed picture-word associations would show better memory accuracy at retrieval. Though statistically significant results were not found for these hypotheses, a few trends did emerge that both agree and disagree with previous findings and should be further investigated in future studies that address the limitations of the present study. The conclusions of the present study were able to contribute to this new and emerging research topic and offered insights that can help better solidify the link between mind-wandering and memory consolidation. Additionally, the findings of this pilot will inform a future project that will incorporate eye tracking to explore age-related differences in mind-wandering and if it may partially explain the age-related memory decline that older adults are often presented with.

Hannah Sauve

The Association of Neuroenhancement with Academic Achievement and Engagement in Undergraduate Students

The nonmedical use of prescription stimulants such as Adderall and Ritalin has become increasingly common among university students (Neilsen, 2024). The illicit use of such stimulants for their perceived benefits is known as neuroenhancement. The purpose of the current study is to investigate the misuse of one's own and other's prescription stimulants and the association with academic engagement and performance, psychological variables, and attitudes and perceptions of this misuse. The sample consisted of 100 undergraduate students. Participants were asked to complete four questionnaires concerning demographic information, prescription stimulant misuse, depression, anxiety, stress, impulsivity, and attitudes/perception of misuse. The study findings revealed a low prevalence of lifetime stimulant misuse (7%). The attitude of stimulant use demonstrated participants, on average, moderately disagreed with its misuse. Future research should prioritize recruiting larger and more diverse samples to ensure adequate statistical power and improve generalizability across disciplines and universities.

Sydney Stevenson

How Does Body Image Investment Impact the Relationship Between Obsessive-Compulsive Symptoms and Body Change Strategies?

Body image investment is a highly under researched construct in the field of body image. Researchers hypothesize that obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) contains subtypes, since two individuals with the disorder can have completely differing and nonoverlapping symptoms. However, there is a lack of research and understanding about the nuances of these specific subtypes. Previous research demonstrates that body image, specifically body satisfaction, is related to obsessive-compulsive disorder, but no research to date has investigated the relationship between body image investment and OCD. The goal of this study was to investigate how body image investment moderates the relationship between OCD symptoms and body change strategies. It was hypothesized that individuals high in OCD symptoms will engage in even more body change strategies when they are also high in body image investment. Participants (n = 98) completed four self-report questionnaires online that measure perceived investment in body image, OCD symptoms, strategies engaged in to change the body, and disordered eating symptoms. Data analyses were conducted using multiple linear regressions and moderated regressions. It was found that when symmetry symptoms of OCD were low, levels of motivational salience impacted the likelihood of engagement in strategies to decrease body size. In contrast, when symmetry symptoms were high, strategies to decrease body size were also high, regardless of levels of motivational salience. The results of this study suggest that preoccupations with the environment being "just right" likely encompasses a person's appearance, hence the association between strategies to decrease body size and symmetry. This study is important because its significant results may lead to further research regarding the connection between body image investment, OCD subtypes, and strategies to change the body.

Sully Thrasher

Relationships between Personality, Learning Styles, Well-being, and Attitudes toward Al

Measuring individuals' relationships with Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a constantly changing process accompanied by AI's own technological advancements. In particular, these dynamic relationships with AI may affect students' attitudes towards them, influencing whether they are generally more positive or negative. This study aims to determine if undergraduate students' attitudes toward AI and other related technologies are influenced by personality variables, psychological well-being (i.e., depression, anxiety, and stress), learning styles, and AI-related consumption (specific use and experience). Likewise, if demographic factors such as age, gender, university major, internet access, and occupation contexts influence participants' AI attitudes. These potential cognitive, behavioural, and affective influences on AI attitudes have been examined in a majority female (95%) undergraduate participant sample (*N* = 100, ages 18-25) recruited through the University of Windsor's Psychology Department Participant Pool. Findings from this online questionnaire study could help to establish how a young Canadian population sample both generally and individually approaches the different kinds of human-made (i.e., artificial) technology resembling aspects of humanity (i.e., intelligence, consciousness).

Caterina Wiggins

Remembering Unresolved Events: The Effects of Narrative Perspective on Psychological Closure and Self-Compassion

The current study examines how adopting different narrative perspectives (first-person vs. third person) influences ratings of psychological closure and self-compassion for unresolved event memories. Prior studies have shown that these retrieval strategies can shape the way in which individuals interpret and respond to unpleasant events. Specifically, a distanced (vs. immersed) view can reduce negative emotionality and induce positive reappraisal. Participants included 81 undergraduates recruited from the University of Windsor Psychology Department Participant Pool. In a between-subjects experiment, participants visualized an unresolved event memory from either a first-person or third-person perspective and then wrote about it using the corresponding pronouns. Those assigned to the control condition thought about their memory and did not receive a specific narrative prompt. All participants then completed a series of self-report questionnaires measuring state psychological closure (CRS) and state self-compassion (SSCS-L). The moderating role of cognitive emotion regulation strategies (adaptive vs. maladaptive) was also explored. No statistically significant differences were observed between narrative conditions on ratings of psychological closure or self-compassion. Narrative perspective may not independently influence emotional outcomes following memory recall, highlighting the need to consider additional psychological or contextual variables in future research on narrative-based interventions