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University College Cork, Ireland
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School of Applied Psychology

Book of Abstracts for:
Master's Dissertation (2019-2020):

Master's in Applied Psychology

Master's in Applied Psychology: Mental Health

Master's in Applied Psychology: Positive Coaching

Master's in Applied Psychology: Work and Organisational Behaviour

Master's in Applied Psychology: Work and Organisational Psychology

Disclaimer

This book contains the abstracts for master's students who submitted their dissertation in the 2019-2020 academic year. These abstracts are the unedited work of the students listed and represents a portion of their final degree mark. The opinions and interpretations of the data represent the students and not the School of Applied Psychology or University College Cork.

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Master's in Applied Psychology

Transformative Potential of Print-Making as Embodied Experience with Migrants and Asylum Seeker Women

Student: Sara Arias Otalvaro
Supervisor(s): Dr. Angela Veale

This paper sets out an ethnographic research project that aimed to document a Cork Migrant Centre Women's group engagement in a 12-week print-making psychosocial intervention. In recent years arts-based programmes where migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women participate have grown popular for its valuable therapeutic and healing capacities. However, the embodied realities of these groups of women remains an under-researched topic. The ethnography conducted encompassed the researcher's participation and observation during the 12 weeks of print-making. The data set was pluralistically analysed; thematic analysis (TA) was conducted on both sets of data: field notes and interviews; and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was further employed to analyse the interview transcripts. The managing meanings of embodied experience theory (Field-Springer & Margavio Striley, 2018) offered a framework that guided the TA and IPA analysis and discussion of women's sense of *being*, *doing*, and *directed becoming*. We outline that creative arts practices and spaces allowed participants to express themselves in new ways where they acted as agents challenging the sociocultural constraints placed on their bodies, achieving a sense of liberation and transformation possibility. We conclude that participants' accounts illustrate the social community atmosphere that was created in the print-making sessions, indicating a gained sense of psychosocial wellbeing.

Partners Living With Depression; A Visual Psychometric Tool Assessing Partner Feelings

Student: Emily Boylan
Supervisor(s): Dr. Raegan Murphy

Background: This study is the fourth in a series of research on the experience of living with a depressed partner. The Living with Depression scale (LWDS) originated from themes derived during qualitative interviews with individuals who lived with a depressed partner. Two subsequent quantitative pilot studies consisting of 62 items translated from the interviews were conducted. The items were refined to the 23 items assessed in this current study. This study will also follow on from the previous pilot studies by testing the utility of a novel facial Likert response format. *Aims:* This study aims to test the underlying structure of the LWDS in the written Likert and facial Likert versions of the scale. Based on prior studies it is hypothesised, that the facial Likert response format will elicit a wider response range across the facial Likert scale. *Methods:* The data from the two pilot studies were merged with the current data creating a sample size of n= 1133. A summary means test was conducted to compare differences in the responses between the written and facial Likert version of the LWDS. A principal component analysis using direct oblimin rotation was performed on both formats. A reliability analysis was performed on all subscales. *Results:* There was a statistically significant difference between the written and facial Likert's responses on 15 out of 23 items, with the facial Likert showing a wider range of responses. The PCA produced a three-factor structure for the written Likert explaining 43.1% of the variance and consisted of the subscales Depression in the Relationship, Self-care and Awareness of Depression in the

Relationship. The PCA for the facial Likert revealed a four-factor structure explaining 49.9% of the variance and consisted of the subscales Self-care, Impact of Depression in the Relationship, Awareness of Depression in the Relationship and Resilience. *Conclusion:* This novel piece of research demonstrates the utility of the novel facial Likert scale; however, further refinement is needed. The underlying structure of the three factor written Likert and four factor facial Likert was identified, however a Confirmatory Factor Analysis is needed to confirm this underlying structure.

Living With Depression: A Psychometric Tool
Student: Lauren Byrne
Student: Dr. Raegan Murphy

Background: Depression can have a significant impact on families. Most research in the area has involved family members in general, with less focus on the unique experience of partners of people with depression. No validated tool currently exists to assess the experience of partners. The development of the Living with Depression tool seeks to address this gap in research. **Aims:** This study aimed to pilot a new form of the Living with Depression tool. The primary aim was to assess the psychometric properties of the tool by extracting and interpreting the underlying component structures. Furthermore, it aimed to compare the use of two response formats, a written Likert scale and a faces Likert scale. **Methods:** Participants completed an online survey consisting of a demographic questionnaire and the Living with Depression questionnaire. Participants were randomly assigned to a response format condition. Summary t-tests were conducted to compare mean responses of each item in the two conditions. Principal components analysis was conducted to extract and interpret the component structures of the tool in both conditions. **Results:** Significant differences were observed between mean responses for 15 items. Two principal components analyses identified models of three and four components each. The written Likert model consisted of the components Relationship Quality, Care for Self, and Emotional Concern. The faces model consisted of the components Care for Self, Disconnection, Intimacy and Coping, and State of Relationship. **Conclusions:** The similarity between the models indicated that the two scales result in similar response patterns, suggesting that faces Likert scales may be a viable response format. The component models reflected many issues identified in previous research, indicating that the tool may be an effective method of assessing the variety of experiences of partners of people with depression. Further research is required to validate the tool.

Crossing Borders For Care – The Experience of Parents of Children with Congenital Heart Disease from Northern Ireland Who Travel To The National Centre in Ireland for Life-Saving Surgery.
Student: Cailean Coffey
Supervisor(s): Dr. Chris McCusker

Objectives: Congenital heart disease (CHD) refers to structural abnormalities in the heart that are present at birth. It has been reliably demonstrated that parents of children born with CHD are at an increased risk of psychological distress and indeed that the extent of this is an important predictor of later outcomes for the child. Since 2016, all CHD surgery on the island of Ireland has been conducted in Dublin. This study seeks to develop a deeper understanding of the experience of parents who travel from Northern Ireland for their children's CHD surgery and how it might impact on parent stress at this sensitive time.

Method: An online survey with open-ended questions and incorporating the Maternal Worry Scale (MWS) was conducted with parents of children via the website page of the 'Children's Heartbeat Trust', a Belfast-based organisation for parents of children with CHD. Participants were eligible to participate if they had been to Dublin for a child's surgery within the past two years.

Results: Thematic analysis of responses to the narrative survey component of the study highlighted three major themes: the spectrum of stresses, experience of accommodation in Dublin, and shared cared – where parents' perceptions of advantages outweighed disadvantages. The MWS profile was consistent with that obtained in previous research with a Belfast sample when surgery was conducted in Belfast.

Conclusion: Although there were specific stresses associated with travelling to, and residing close to the child within, a new city, our participating parents showed a familiar pattern of worries and stresses as has been reported in previous research. Worry levels after the experience were no higher than in previous research and parents appreciated advantages conferred. Nonetheless, suggestions for improving the experience were evident and future research might explore impact of additional preparation.

Determinants of quality of life outcomes for young adults with chronic illness: examining the role of family, trauma, and resilience

Student: Carla Engel
Supervisor(s): Dr. Chris McCusker,

Background: Rates of mental health difficulties as well as social, educational, and occupational disadvantages are elevated in young adults with chronic illness. Psychosocial factors have often been implicated as being of greater importance in predicting outcomes than disease variables.

Aims: This study aimed to specifically investigate the role of family functioning, resilience, and trauma in quality of life (QoL) outcomes in young adults with chronic illness.

Methods: A multivariate design was employed in which 103 participants (18-30 years) who were diagnosed with a chronic illness before 16 years were recruited via various online platforms to participate in the study. Participants completed an online survey with measures related to demographics, disease factors, resilience, trauma, and family functioning, as predictor variables, and QoL as the outcome variable. Exploratory analysis and hierarchical regression analysis were conducted to examine associations between variables.

Results: Analyses revealed that whilst disease severity and employment status were associated with some outcomes on exploratory analyses, the psychosocial factors of trauma, resilience, and family functioning were more reliably associated. When regression analyses were employed to look at the relative strength of these predictor factors, trauma and resilience emerged as the strongest predictors of QoL outcomes.

Implications: The results of this study suggest that early intervention which includes trauma-informed, resilience-based approaches may improve health outcomes and promote better QoL for young people living with chronic illness.

"Don't Scroll to the Comments, Your Day Will Be Ruined": Examining Online Discourses of the Heartbeat Bill in the USA

Student: Gabriella Lyn Fattibene
Supervisor(s): Dr. Sarah Foley

Background: Media discourse has long been known to influence major political and legislative movements. With the rise of social media, certain political discourses have been gaining more and more momentum online which has led to new legislation. An example of this is the heartbeat bills in America. Using critical discourse analysis (CDA), we can begin to understand the social consequence of this online political discourse.

Aims: The aims of this study are to apply CDA to online commentary. This is done to understand the social consequence that abortion discourse may have of the psycho-social wellbeing of those affected by the discourse, namely American women.

Methods: This study examined 150+ comments left under articles and videos generated by the search term "heartbeat bill". Potter & Wetherell's (1987) method of CDA was applied to analyze comments in terms of power, extreme case formulation, and "disguised" extremist language.

Results: Analysis showed that commenters use their own socially held positions and experiences to construct abortion as an issue. By examining back-and-forth comment threads, it became clear that commenters construct the "problems" and "solutions" related to abortion in a variety of different ways, especially in terms of their language regarding priorities and personal responsibility. Analysis also showed that commenters used "subtle" language to disguise extremist discourses.

Conclusion: CDA can be applied to online political discourse in order to understand the evolution of political and social movements online. Online commentary is important to consider when it comes to viral and divisive movements, as it gives important insight into how these issues are constructed.

Working our way through a Pandemic: Student's in employment during Covid-19

Student: Ellen Holloway
Supervisor(s): Dr. Maria Dempsey

Background: This article aims to explore the impact of Covid-19 on students in employment. College students are included in the thousands of workers that have been financially impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic. Since a large number of students work in the service industry they often cannot work remotely from home and therefore, must continue to work during this pandemic. Being an employee in an essential service and a student at this time could cause an increased level of stress and a need to adapt personal ways this study aims to explore how Covid-19 has affected students in employment and how they are coping with the changes in their employment and academic study.

Methods: This is a mixed methods (MM) study in which data were collected through the use of an online survey of N=122 and 3 interviews. Participants were recruited to take part in an online survey through Qualtrics. Participants were recruited by means of an email disseminated by the student survey email at UCC. Students were also recruited through the use of a messaging feature on Canvas. Following on from preliminary analysis on the questionnaire, three follow up interviews were conducted with students that volunteered to be part of the interview following their participation in the online survey. After the data collection phase of the study was complete, the quantitative data was analysed using the software SPSS (statistical package for the Social Sciences). The qualitative data collected through the use of the questionnaire was analysed using content analysis. Interview data were analysed using thematic analysis.

Results: Quantitative analysis of the data found that there was no significant change in participant wages or working hours and there was no statistically significant correlation between working hours and academic study. Content analysis found that the majority of student's employment and academic study had been negatively affected however, students reported making positive changes to their routine to cope with such changes. Thematic analysis of the interviews constructed three

main themes; fear and anxiety, change in academia and employment, and development of coping mechanisms.

Understanding the Psychological Impact of Working in Family Law Practice on Legal Practitioners Based in Ireland

Student: Caroline Kinneen
Supervisor(s): Dr. Sharon Lambert

Background: Family Law has been commonly misinterpreted to only deal with marriage breakdowns and child custody negotiations. In reality, Family Law focuses on the breakdown of complex family relationships, and the emotions that entails. The impact this can have on Family Law Practitioners (FLPs), is relatively under researched in Ireland.

Aim: This study investigated the impact the role of a FLP has on professionals, what supports are currently in place, and what can help support FLPs moving forward.

Methods: Eight FLPs participated in a semi-structured interview providing an in-depth account of their experience and the impact it has on both their professional and personal lives.

Results: Thematic Analysis identified five prominent themes from the dataset: A Day in the Life, Common Characteristics and Attributes, Knock on Impacts, Confronting the Challenge, and Breach in Professionalism.

Conclusions: The findings of this study indicate that the FLPs have little to no support with the emotional impact their role has on them. There is no accredited training on how to manage client's emotions, with participants reporting that they have had to develop their own coping mechanisms over time. Research moving forward should look at a mixed method approach to measuring occupational stress and its impact on FLPs.

The Effect of Pubertal Timing on Substance Use in Adolescence and Early Adulthood

Student: Paddy Lynch
Supervisor(s): Dr. Samantha Dockray

Background

The timing of puberty has been shown to mediate the impact of pubertal development, with early timing being associated with negative outcomes (Ge, Jin, & Natsuaki, 2009). Substance use (SU) behaviour in adolescence has been shown to be influenced by pubertal timing (Cance et al., 2013; Marceau et al., 2019; Lanza & Collins, 2002). This study aims to investigate the effect of pubertal timing on the onset of SU and rate of current use, while controlling for personality traits and socioeconomic background.

Method

313 participants took part in the study (206 females, 100 males, 7 did not report their gender), with an age range 18 – 25 years (*Mean* = 20.41 years, *SD* = 1.78 years). A survey assessed self-report pubertal timing, socioeconomic status, and personality traits, measured using the Substance Use Risk Profile Scale (SURPS) (Woicik et al., 2009), which measures personality traits associated with adolescent SU.

Results

Results of a series of ANCOVAs showed no significant effect of pubertal timing when controlling for SURPS subscale scores for age of onset of use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, cocaine, or ecstasy. Chi-Square tests showed no relationship between current use and pubertal timing, or

between current use and socioeconomic status (All $p > 0.05$). No significance was found for any of the preconceived confounding variables.

Conclusion

The lack of significance of pubertal timing, as well as the variables of socioeconomic status and personality traits signal the potential emergence of other confounding variables in the last decade which may be impacting on adolescent SU. Explanations for the results of the current study are detailed and future recommendations are also given.

"Perceptions and Experiences of Family-Centred Practice Training amongst a Sample of Early Intervention Team Professionals in the Irish Health Service Executive"

Student: Jennifer Mullane

Supervisor(s): Dr. Joanne McVeigh

Background: Often cited as best practice, family-centred practice (FCP) aims to empower and support families in the care of a child with disability, in partnership with professionals. However, there is a lag in the implementation of FCP in early intervention services, which has been attributed to training difficulties and broader organisational factors. The study is part of a broader HSE-led research project, which included recent training in FCP amongst a sample of EIT professionals in Ireland. This aim of this study was to assess perceptions and experiences of this training in FCP, and FCP more broadly, amongst a sample of EIT professionals in the HSE.

Methods: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with EIT professionals working in the HSE (n = 4) (all female). Qualitative data was analysed using the interpretive and descriptive qualitative methods.

Findings: Participants communicated their perceptions and experiences of the FCP training and FCP practice in relation to five themes: A safe training environment, tailored intervention to each family, continuing professional development, lack of resources, and importance of the team for FCP.

Conclusions: This research contributes to the current body of knowledge on facilitators and barriers of effective FCP practice and training for early intervention services. Findings indicated the need for continuous professional development, in addition to adequate policy and guidelines by professional bodies and service-providers.

The Experiences of Autistic Women with Online Communication

Student: Stephanie Murphy

Supervisor(s): Dr. Sarah Foley

Background and Aims

Past research has indicated that the existence of online communities can help stigmatized adults on the autism spectrum to connect with and support each other, and that the communication styles of these individuals could be quite compatible with unique characteristics of the text-based communication typically used online (Burke et al. 2010; Gillespie-Lynch et al., 2014). Therefore, this research has suggested that online communication could be beneficial for autistic adults. However, due to the lack of female participants in studies of this topic, there is a danger that the voices of autistic women have not been represented in this research area. Due to this flaw in the literature, the current study aimed to investigate the experiences of women on the autism spectrum with online communication.

Methods and Procedures

The current study used a qualitative research design, and convenience sampling was used to recruit autistic women both online and locally. Ten semi-structured interviews were conducted to investigate the research question, and these interviews were conducted either in-person, through a phone call, through text, or through a video-chat. An inductive thematic analysis was conducted to analyse the data from these interviews.

Results

Four main themes were constructed from this thematic analysis: Comfort and Discomfort with Text-Based Communication, Online Communication as a Facilitator of Personal Development, Online Communication as an Outlet for Self-Expression, and The Marginalisation of Autistic Adults Online.

Conclusions and Implications

As both positive and negative aspects of online communication were reported by participants within this study, it was concluded that the experiences of autistic women with online communication are quite complex and multi-faceted. However, the research has yielded interesting implications as they could inform future action in a number of different areas.

"Getting help means making the connection": An exploration of group therapy for men with sex addiction

Student: Aoife O' Carroll

Supervisor(s): Dr. Philip Moore

This study is a qualitative exploration into group therapy as a treatment for men with sexual addiction. Semi structured interviews were carried out with 8 self-identified sex addicts attending a therapy group with the purpose of identifying the main aspects of group therapy that participants found effective, not so effective, what they have learned and how their behaviour has changed since starting group therapy. A thematic analysis of the interviews was conducted which found that Superficiality vs Depth, Building Relationships, Network, Scaffolding and Group Process were the main themes generated from the data. Superficiality vs depth referred to the growing problem of superficial discussion in the group and how this could be combatted. Building relationships focused on sex addiction as a disorder of intimacy, exploring the tension between the group as a safe space and one for practicing conflict and having needs met healthily. Network refers to a sense of belonging and stigma breaking afforded by group membership, while scaffolding encapsulates the coping skills and emotional validation it equips the men with. Finally, the group process is how learning and growth are achieved and deals with the psychoeducational element as well as the evolving nature of the group. Implications for the use of group therapy for sex addiction in a clinical setting are discussed.

Exploring Orthorexia Nervosa and its relationship with other psychological disorders; Anorexia Nervosa, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Alexithymia and Magical Food Beliefs

Student: Hannah Rice

Supervisor(s): Dr. Christian Ryan

Background: Orthorexia Nervosa (ON) is an obsession with 'healthy eating' characterised by adherence to a rigid diet of perceived 'healthy' food. This study used two proposed measures of ON, the Eating Habits Questionnaire (EHQ) and the ORTO-15 to investigate the relationship between ON, disordered eating, obsessive compulsive symptoms, alexithymia, and magical thinking. The aim of this study was to provide further evidence of ON as distinct from other disorders such as anorexia/bulimia nervosa (AN/BN) and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and to assess its relationship with alexithymia and magical thinking which has previously never been done. Distinction between ON and AN/BN was assessed by analysing the differences in food choices based on importance of weight, health and natural content properties of food. **Method**: 182 participants completed an online questionnaire including demographics (height and weight), the EHQ, the ORTO-15, the Eating Disorder Examinations Questionnaire (EDE-Q), Obsessive Compulsive Inventory- Revised (OCI-R), Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20), the Magical Beliefs about Food and Health (MFH) and the Food Choice Questionnaire. Correlational analysis was performed to analyse the relationship between the variables. MANCOVA was performed to analyse the relationship between BMI, Gender and ON symptoms controlling for disordered eating symptomatology and obsessive compulsive symptomatology. **Results:** Correlational analysis showed a strong correlation between both measures of ON, AN/BN, OCD and alexithymia. Controlling for AN/BN and OCD there was no change in the relationship between both ON measures and there was no significant correlation between ON and alexithymia. ON symptomatology was more closely related to AN/BN then OCD symptomatology. From food choice analysis ON symptomatology was correlated with importance of health and natural content food properties and AN/BN symptomatology were positively correlated with importance of weight. There was no significant effect for gender and ON measures. There was a significant effect on BMI for the EHQ problems subscale such that lower BMI was associated with ON symptomatology. **Conclusion:** The EHQ and ORTO-15 measure a distinct construct ON that is associated with healthy food choices and is closely related to other disordered eating.

How do Young Asylum Seekers Negotiate the Transition from Direct Provision to the Community?

Student: Seán Ryan
Supervisor(s): Dr. Angela Veale

Background: The transition from Direct Provision (DP) to the community in Ireland can be a very daunting task for young asylum seekers. After years spent living in this institutional setting, they can experience certain challenges or obstacles in negotiating the transition to the community. For this group, two transitions loom particularly large: 1) the transition from asylum seeker to an individual who has been granted international protection and 2) the transition from childhood/adolescence to adulthood. **Aim:** The aim of this study was to investigate the transitional processes associated with leaving DP as an adolescent or young adult and gain insight into how these are negotiated by young asylum seekers. These transitions were analysed using the rupture-transition model (Zittoun, 2008). **Methods:** Semi-structured interviews were carried out with former asylum seekers, three females and two males, between the ages of 18 and 25 all of African and Asian origin. Participants that were recruited for this study had spent a period of their childhood or adolescence in DP but are now living in the community as young adults. Interview transcripts were analysed using deductive thematic analysis (TA) following the six steps of TA outlined by Braun and Clarke (2013). **Results:** Four overarching themes were identified in the analysis: growing up in DP; rupture and transition – shifting spheres of experience (DP to the community); emergence of the self in creating "the bigger picture" in a state of "limbo" and "I consider it to be a silver lining" - transition and personal life philosophies.

Conclusion: The findings from this study highlighted that young asylum seekers negotiate the transition from DP to the community through unique strategies and meaning making processes. The practical implications of these findings seek to support and facilitate the integration of future young asylum seekers making the transition from DP into Irish society.

Roll for Insight: understanding how the experience of playing Dungeons and Dragons impacts the mental health of an average player

Student: Orla Walsh

Supervisor(s): Dr. Conor Linehan

Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) is a fantasy tabletop Role-Playing Game (T)(RPG) that was designed in the United States in 1974. The game has become increasingly popular over recent years. However, little research exists in regard to the experience had by its players, particularly in relation to their mental health. This paper aims to understand how the experience of playing D&D impacts the mental health of an average player, and what factors scaffold this experience. Through the use of semi-sutured interviews and thematic analysis it was hoped that ways in which D&D may be beneficial as a therapeutic process would be determined, as well as the factors that may prove challenging or problematic in the therapeutic context. Participants were recruited through Twitter, the D&D section of the website Reddit or word of mouth. 7 males, 2 females and 1 non-binary person participated in the study and their ages ranged from early twenties to fifties. All participants were over the age of 18 and had a minimum of one year's experience regularly playing D&D. Through the analysis, it was discovered that aspects of D&D provide a positive mental health experience for its players. These features were identified as five key themes: (1) escapism; (2) exploration of self; (3) creative expression; (4) social support; (5) routine. These results indicate the potential for D&D to be utilised in a therapeutic setting, particularly for those who would benefit from giving voice to a character in a fantasy world.

Evaluating the experiences of partners who live with depressed individuals, using a novel psychometric tool

Student: Samantha West

Supervisor(s): Dr. Raegan Murphy

Background: Worldwide more than 350 million people have depression, it is a global health care concern. Individuals that are also affected by depression, but who are often forgotten, are the non-depressed partners of those that are depressed. Non-depressed partners that are living with a depressed partner, are at greater risk of becoming psychological distressed, experiencing anxiety and in some cases, developing depression themselves. However, the non-depressed cohort, are understudied and not enough is known about their unique caregiver experience.

Aims: Thus, the current study aimed to progress the psychometric robustness of a new tool called the Living with Depression (LwD) survey, created to capture the non-depressed partners experience. Additionally, the 23-item LwD survey, was formulated with two different response options, via Likert Scale format. The two different response options, included the traditional written Likert scale response option and a novel facial Likert scale response option. The rationale for including a novel facial response option, was to explore if it would yield any response differences between participants.

Methods: Participants were recruited and responded, via online methods. Participants either answered the 23-item LwD survey, in written Likert response form or facial Likert response form. The study, which used previous study data to improve validity, used 1133 participants responses, to the 23-item LwD survey and a basic item analysis, an independent t-test and a Principal component analysis, was conducted.

Results: The results supported the hypotheses and identified that participants did in fact respond differently, between the facial and written Likert response stimuli and that the two scales were successfully reduced to underlying thematic values.

Conclusion: The results showed that the factor labelled, self: care, love & worth, appeared valuable, in furthering future research into the experience of non-depressed partners and may represent the resilient self within the relationship. Future research, also should consider separating the two aims of the current study and investigating them separately, with additional psychometric trials and tests of the LwD survey essential. Limitations and strengths stated.

Master's in Applied Psychology: Mental Health

Effects of Self-Regulated Meal Planning on the Well-being of Young Adults: An Exploratory Study

Student: Nichapar Boonparlit
Supervisor(s): Dr. Jason Chan

Aim and Method: This project examined whether cooking interventions can be used to increase the mental well-being of young adults. Young adults between the ages of 18-28 (n = 37) were recruited to complete a 2-week self-regulated meal plan. Their well-being scores were analysed for differences at Pre-, Post- and Follow-up. The current study also utilized a qualitative survey to accommodate changes in well-being, eating and cooking habits amid the Covid-19 pandemic that ensued during data collection, and consider its effects on participant behaviour (n = 13).

Results: Analysis of variance in the data did not find significant changes in well-being factors and eating and cooking practices following the intervention. However, significant correlations were found between changes in anxiety and depression, depression scores and the number of reminders sent to prepare a meal, and the number of reminders and self-assessed comfortability with cooking. These interactions were thematically supported in a qualitative analysis of the data indicating the effects of limited freedoms in food preparation, eating and cooking practices and dysregulation in well-being factors prompted by Covid-19. It was thereby unsurprising that a significant correlation also highlighted an effect between grocery shopping and a young adult's eating practices. We theorize that the lack of statistically significant results may stem from sampling limitations and effects of lockdown.

In conclusion, this study serves as a basis for future interest into the effect of cooking on well-being factors, and further research is encouraged with a larger sample and integration of a stronger social factor.

An exploratory analysis into the therapeutic and transformative benefits of filmmaking for individuals with brain injury

Student: Nora Conway
Supervisor(s): Dr Maria Dempsey

Purpose: A main goal of brain injury rehabilitation is to support individuals in their holistic journey to recovery post-injury. The holistic model is considered to be the leading approach in the continuity of care for persons with a brain injury as it emphasizes an understanding of the patient's lived experience from a bio-psychosocial perspective. This study considers using documentary-making as a holistic and novel paradigm to support the rehabilitation of people with a brain injury. As research into the therapeutic benefits of film making on patients with a brain injury is pretty much undocumented, the aim of this study is to evaluate the potential of film-making as a transformative and therapeutic tool, as both the process and the product can be used as a medium, to engage in a process of self-discovery, awareness and expression.
Materials and methods: A qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews was employed with ten project participants; including 7 service users with a diagnosis of non-progressive acquired brain injury, the artistic film director and two staff members; all of whom were invited to share their views and experiences of the project. The data was analysed using an inductive bottom up

approach to thematic analysis, common threads and patterns were identified and weaved to form a shared narrative of their experiences of the film-making process.

Results: Several themes emerged from analysis of the data that reflect the participants subjective experience of therapeutic filmmaking. Themes are organised based on their cohesiveness into two broad categories, and include the following superordinate themes: mastery, therapeutic alliance, social affiliation, film as catharsis and film as motivation.

Conclusions The results yielded promising findings in relation to the therapeutic benefits of filmmaking as a medium for transformation and growth following an acquired brain injury. Filmmaking should be considered a valid medium in rehabilitation as it optimises psychological components of well-being (mastery, autonomy, self-esteem and social connection).

The effect of the Instagram overuse intervention on the sleep quality, level of anxiety and orthorexic symptomology in female college students
Student: Wiktoria Barbara Gorczynska
Supervisor(s): Drs. Maria Dempsey & Robert King

The current study was aimed to assess the effect of the reduction in Instagram use on orthorexia nervosa (ON), anxiety symptomology and sleep quality (SQ) of university students, with attention given to the impact of the present COVID-19 outbreak in Ireland. Moreover, the study aimed to preliminarily validate the social media reduction intervention by Hou et al. (2019) in an Irish sample of university students. The sample was made solely of female college students from which 11 (52.4%) individuals were in the experimental group and 10 (47.6%) in the control group. Results suggest there was a negative partial correlation between anxiety and score on ON scale, a positive partial correlation between ON and SQ and a non-significant relationship between SQ and anxiety while controlling for Instagram use at baseline. The study found that the intervention significantly reduced Instagram use between baseline and endpoint in the experimental group only. Findings suggest there are no statistically significant group differences in levels of anxiety, ON, and SQ between baseline and the endpoint. Lastly, the thematic analysis resulted in the construction of four themes: Attachment, Wellbeing, Self-image and Managing Detachment. The study develops the field by emphasizing the value of the intervention by Hou et al. (2019) in an Irish student population and its effect on the wellbeing as revealed in the qualitative analysis.

The Role of Key Workers in the Health Outcomes of Individuals Experiencing Homelessness
Student: Aaron Gorman
Supervisor(s): Dr. Sharon Lambert

Objective: Research has identified the presence of a key worker as being a facilitator for people experiencing homelessness in achieving good health outcomes. However, little research has been done to develop an understanding of the mechanisms key workers working with services users utilise in order to access health care for a group that has complex health issues and difficulties in accessing mainstream services. Thus, the present study aimed to investigate the role of Key Workers in the health outcomes of Individuals experiencing homelessness. **Method:** Three participants took part in semi-structured interviews relating to their experiences as a key worker, their role in influencing health outcomes of those experiencing homelessness, barriers and facilitators to achieving good health outcomes and barriers and facilitators to exiting homelessness.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to analyse transcripts in order to gain a detailed understanding of the phenomena discussed while taking the sociocultural context into account. **Results:** Two master themes developed from analysis are discussed in this study: Facilitating good service user health outcomes and Working through barriers. Several super-ordinate themes were presented under each master theme. Four super-ordinate themes were developed within the master theme "Facilitating good service user health outcomes: Client-led approach, collaboration between services, bringing services to service users, and finding a bed for service users. Three super-ordinate themes were developed within the master theme "working through barriers": Lack of communication between agencies, working within a segmented healthcare system and working with under-resourced services. **Conclusions:** This research identifies the mechanisms by which key workers facilitate good health outcomes, as well as barriers to good health outcomes for people experiencing homelessness. It is hoped issues and facilitators highlighted in these findings may contribute to the improvement of some areas of health and homelessness services which previously have not received attention.

Exploring Experiences of IVF Egg Donation Pregnancies
Student: Clare Harris
Supervisor(s): Dr. Maria Dempsey

Objective: In recent years, Ireland has experienced rapid social change. The use of Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) with donor eggs has increased since its introduction to Ireland in 2002. As the use of donor eggs has been occurring for less that 20 years in Ireland, detailed investigation of the lived experience of IVF egg donation pregnancies is needed.

Method: Interviews were conducted with nine Irish women, aged between 35 and 45 years, who had conceived using a donor egg. These women were either pregnant (n=1) or had given birth (n=8). The age of the child is up to five years. The data set, comprising individual interviews and e-journal entries, were analysed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis.

Results: Analysis identified the following superordinate themes: 'Pregnancy as a Jigsaw', 'The Process of Normalising', and 'The Birth of a Mother'. The findings advance understanding of the lived experiences of IVF egg donation pregnancies.

Conclusions: This study has identified psychological issues pertinent through the experience of pregnancy resulting from donor eggs. Women seek out ways of normalising their experience through interpersonal and intrapersonal communication. Understanding their role as the mother derives from specific mothering experiences and negotiating the donor. It is hoped that the findings may contribute to future infertility care provision.

"It's Changed my Life": Incarcerated Individuals Explanations of How Volunteering with the Red Cross Facilitated their Personal Development
Student: Sophie Marron
Supervisor(s): Dr. Maria Dempsey

The Community-Based Health and First Aid (CBHFA) programme is a nine-month course within the Irish Prison System (IPS) which trains incarcerated persons as Red Cross (RC) volunteers and

supports them in carrying out health-related projects in their community. Previous research on the programme suggests that participation facilitates personal development (PD) for volunteers which could be a step towards rehabilitation for these individuals. This study aims to understand how the CBHFA programme facilitates PD for volunteers. Ten participants were randomly selected from a pool of volunteers across two open prisons in Ireland. All participants identified as Irish males currently volunteering with the RC. Data was collected through semi-structured phone interviews which lasted between 30 to 70 minutes. Questions in the interviews centred around skills, behaviour, self-esteem, selfefficacy and mental health. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and then analysed using thematic analysis (TA). Three key themes were developed from the data set to explain how the CBHFA programme facilitates PD for volunteers; an opportunity to succeed, acquiring skills and knowledge and engaging in meaningful work. These aspects of the programme were reported to improve volunteers self-esteem, self-efficacy and mental health thereby, facilitating PD. This study suggests that the CBHFA programme could be considered a social approach to rehabilitation for volunteers thereby adding to the evidence-base for the programme. As well as this, by identifying the aspects of the programme which facilitate PD, the conditions needed by incarcerated individuals to live a life free from crime are highlighted. This is relevant to the design of future prison programmes and early intervention with high-risk populations.

THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING HARM REDUCTION INTERVENTIONS FOR ILLICIT SUBSTANCE MISUSE AMONGST A THIRD LEVEL STUDENT POPULATION

Student: Laoise Meany
Supervisor(s): Dr. Conor Linehan

Background: Illicit substance use is becoming normalized worldwide. Third-level student populations are at an increased risk for the initiation of illicit substance use. Illicit substance usage rates are increasing for the third-level student populations worldwide, yet it remains an under-researched area. There are few harm reduction interventions for illicit substance misuse amongst third-level students. Those that do exist focus predominantly on marijuana. Furthermore, they are seen as less effective when compared to alcohol and smoking interventions. **Aims:** Due to the lack of literature surrounding illicit substance misuse amongst a third-level student population, this study aims to seek the views and opinions of college students regarding illicit substance misuse and harm reduction interventions. Furthermore, this study aims to identify potential challenges that could arise when implementing harm reduction interventions for illicit substance misuse amongst a third-level student population. **Methods:** This project employs a qualitative research design. One-to-one interviews which employed a card-sorting task relevant to the COMB-B model were held remotely online. There were ten participants in this project. They were University College Cork (UCC) students with a history of illicit substance misuse. They were recruited via the UCC email account. The data was analysed using thematic analysis as an analytic tool. **Results:** The main findings of this study showed the following; students know the risks associated with their inability to accurately predict the immediate effects of drugs, students are aware of the negative implications of illicit substance misuse, yet they continue to use illicit substances, and students' drug-taking behaviours are heavily influenced by their peers. **Conclusion:** There are various challenges that exist which could impact the implementation of harm reduction interventions for illicit substance misuse amongst a third-level student population.

"He's just my brother"; the retrospective influences on current appraisals of having an adult sibling with autism.
Student: Alison O' Byrne
Supervisor(s): Dr. Christian Ryan

There has been a limited amount of investigation into the nuances of adult sibling relationships between neurotypical (NT-sib) and autistic siblings (ASD-sib).

Previous research on autism in adulthood has suggested recommendations for the advancement of treatment guides of professional interventions and support for parents, but there has been a lack of research into utilising the sibling relationships where one sibling has autism, and the impact the quality of this relationship has on both siblings across the lifespan. The purpose of this study was to explore the retrospective experiences of neurotypical adults who have at least one autistic adult sibling, how different life experiences has impacted their current appraisal of their sibling relationship and autism in general and how it may impact their relationship in the future.

Data was collected using semi-structured interviews and were analysed using Thematic Analysis (Clarke &Braun, 2006). Eight themes were uncovered; 1) Making sense of autism, 2) An alternative perspective, 3) NT-sib Guilt, 4) Mental health issues, 5) NT-sib relationship with parents, 6) Changes in the sibling relationship, 7) Frustrations and 8) Possible interventions for NT-sibs.

Findings indicate having an autistic sibling influences both positive and negative appraisals for the NT-sib in familial relationships, identity formation and the implications of future long term care giving. Attitudes and perceptions of Autism were shaped initially by parental modelling and societal influences but were later more focused on changes in the ASD-sib/NT-sib relationship itself, future role changes and managing increased responsibility. Other themes highlight the need for NT-sib support during adolescence and young adulthood that are separate from their ASD-sibs and autism in general, the need for education on how autism develops for their siblings beyond childhood and what that means for the sibling relationship.

Recommendations of this study include developing psychoeducational resources for NT-sibs to aid understanding of how autistic symptomology impacts development and functioning at each stage across the lifespan, and for clinicians and service providers to adopt a systemic family view in providing supports and interventions, rather than a sole focus on the autistic individual.

The Effect of Motus, a Social and Emotional Learning Workshop, on Emotion Regulation and Well-Being in Irish Children.
Student: Jade O'Rourke
Supervisor(s): Dr. Samantha Dockray

Background & Aims: Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) delivered through workshops in school settings has been proven to be a successful approach for fostering effective, cognitive, academic and behavioural skills among children. Many of these studies and workshops have focused on general SEL competencies, however few have directly focused on psychological outcomes such as Emotion Regulation and Well-being. Developing effective emotion regulation skills is linked to academic success, better social functioning, physical and psychological well-being, and reduced expression of psychopathology in both childhood and adulthood. This study investigated if a specific SEL intervention, Motus, had any effect on emotion regulation skills and well-being in children. The impact of age, gender and baseline capabilities will also be examined.

Methods and Procedures: Participants, (N=150) aged between 10-13 years were recruited from eight Irish primary schools. Participants completed the Emotional Regulation Questionnaire for Children and Adolescents and The Stirling's Child Well-being Scale before and after completing the SEL workshop, in a pre-post design.

Outcomes and Results: Paired sample t-tests indicate that the Motus intervention had small but significant effects on participant levels of emotion regulation and well-being (Cohen's d range = -.17 to .43). Age and gender had no bearing on the effectiveness of the intervention. Children who had lower scores on the pre-intervention emotion regulation and well-being measures demonstrated larger magnitudes of improvement.

Conclusions: Brief SEL programmes may have immediate benefits to the emotional regulation skills and well-being levels of children. Longitudinal studies will be useful to determine the enduring benefit, the opportunities for 'top-up' workshops and activities, and the effects, if any, on mental health difficulties in childhood and adolescence.

Living with a Partner with Depression: How do we measure it, and what impact does it have?

Student: Elizabeth O'Brien
Supervisor(s): Dr Raegan Murphy

Study 1: Study 1 is one of a Living with Depression (LwD) study series that aims to develop a tool to assess the experience of living with a partner with depression. The aim of this study was to propose a preliminary dimensional model for the Partners Living with Depression Scale (LwDS) and evaluate its psychometric properties. Principal component analysis (PCA) with oblique rotation was performed on the online item responses of 274 adult participants living with a partner with depression. This resulted in a three-factor solution as determined by eigen values greater than 1, scree plot and Parallel Analysis. The three components of the Partners Living with Depression Scale (LwDS) were labelled shadow of depression, autoreliance and confident rapport. Sufficient psychometric properties for auto-reliance warranted its further use in Study 2. In view of the apparent impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the data, a further study for PCA is recommended before scale validation is performed.

Study 2: This study aimed to investigate the differential role of dispositional empathy dimensions in resilience outcomes, including psychological flexibility and the auto-reliance component derived through Study 1, for people living with a partner with depression. A cross-sectional design was employed in which 148 participants living with a partner with depression and 45 participants for a comparison sample were recruited using online platforms. Participants completed online surveys with measures relating to demographics, empathy and psychological inflexibility (PI). Scores were compared between the study and comparison samples. The study sample scored significantly lower for cognitive empathy (CE) and affective empathy (AE), and significantly higher for PI than the comparison sample. Exploratory analyses and regression analyses were run to examine associations between variables within the study sample. Analyses within the study sample revealed that CE predicted resilience outcomes whilst AE did not. These results suggest that interventions for partners of people with depression that bolster the CE dimension alone may improve mental health outcomes for both members of the couple relationship.

A Narrative Analysis of the Experience of Open Dialogue Trainees in the Irish Mental Healthcare Setting

Student: Rebecca Russell
Supervisor(s): Dr Maria Dempsey

Background: Open Dialogue (OD) focuses on the inclusion of the service user's network in mental health treatment. OD is an approach to mental health care that differs significantly from the traditional approach offered in Ireland.
Aims: This study aimed to explore the attitudes and experiences of Irish mental health professionals throughout their training in OD.
Method: Data were collected through focus groups at four time-periods spanning three years. This data was analysed using narrative analysis.
Results: Participants experienced significant personal and professional development throughout their training. OD forced them to re-evaluate their approach to mental health and re-construct their professional identities. OD aligned with their values. Participants noted improvements in their relationships with colleagues and service users and an increase in self-awareness and reflexivity. The learnings from OD caused participants to reconsider their approach to practice; the language used, inclusion of the family, and the focus of meetings.
Conclusions: This narrative demonstrates the significant impact felt by staff who train in OD. OD is a fundamental shift in perspective and practice. Participants noticed the challenges of incorporating this new method into a traditional service and highlighted the difficulties faced in adopting a new method into an organisation with a conflicting framework.

A Qualitative Exploration into Personal Agency in Instagram Use

Student: Emily Ryan
Supervisor(s): Dr. Conor Linehan

Background
Instagram use has increased exponentially in recent years, yet the literature is fraught with conflicting evidence regarding the impact the app has on its userbase. In much of the research, there has been a failure to recognise the importance of the individual's manner of engagement in their experience of the app. Personal psychological agency, the ability to influence one's functioning and circumstances by one's own actions, may be influential in user-engagement and subsequently the creation of each individual's Instagram experience.
Aims
The aim of this study is to address this gap in the literature and understand the ways in which Instagram users actively participate in the creation of their Instagram experience through a framework of personal agency.
Method
There were 17 participants in this study, 10 females and 7 males, aged between 18 and 39 years old. Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were conducted. The interview schedule was designed to access the participants' experiences of personal agency in their Instagram use, without assuming prior knowledge of the concept of agency on the part of the participants. A combination of inductive and deductive thematic analysis was conducted on the interview transcripts.
Analysis
The analysis indicates that each participant had a unique set of aims, motivations, and strategies which they used to create a personal Instagram experience. While some participants were active

agents, others were less capable of commanding their experience. Additionally, agentic practices were not stable; some participants were active in some areas of use and passive in others, their engagement changed with context and mood, and their manner of Instagram use developed considerably over time.

Conclusion

The findings of this analysis indicate that Instagram use is idiosyncratic, complex, and changeable. In this malleable nature, there may be opportunities to learn better social media practices if given the opportunity. This is particularly important for younger users, who are more at risk from the dangers of social media use.

Adolescent stress and behaviour: The associations between cortisol reactivity and internalising and externalising behaviours

Student: Laura Trihy

Supervisor(s): Dr Samantha Dockray

Background

Chronic stress and elevated cortisol levels have been shown to increase risk of developing physical and mental health issues among children and adolescents. Understanding the associations between cortisol reactivity and internalising and externalising behaviours may provide opportunities for early detection of psychopathology and intervention.

Methods

This study examines the emergence of internalizing and externalizing behaviours in adolescents, and the contribution of resilience, cortisol reactivity to stress, and social factors. Cross sequential data was collected from a stratified sample of 124 children and adolescents (8 - 13 years) using measures including the Child Behaviour Checklist, Child Health Illness Profile, Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children. Stress Reactivity was measured in response to the Trier Social Stress test for Children. A Univariate ANOVA was conducted to provide regression analysis and analysis of variance for cortisol reactivity by sex for internalising and externalising behaviour and resilience, and multiple comparisons to investigate which variables have significantly different means on cortisol.

Results

Four primary issues were highlighted by the findings. First, boys were more likely to engage in externalising behaviours than girls. Second, both boys and girls engaged in internalising behaviours. Third, cortisol reactivity increased with age for girls but decreased for boys between the ages of 9 and 11, but then increased again at age 13. And finally, positive associations were found between girls' cortisol reactivity and parent criteria counts for oppositional defiant disorder and conduct disorder.

Conclusion

Strong evidence for the association between cortisol responses and internalising and externalising behaviours among youth which was, in part supported by the current study. Future studies should compare clinical and non-clinical populations and include measures of both social and interpersonal stress.

Master's in Applied Psychology: Positive and Coaching Psychology

The Self -Discovery Journey through Support and Recovery for Survivors of Domestic Abuse

Student: Gillian Baker
Supervisor(s): Dr. Anna Trace O' Reilly

Background: Domestic abuse is a global issue and a growing concerning across many societies. In Ireland 1 in 3 women will experience some form of domestic abuse over their lifetime and domestic abuse has serious negative outcomes for those affected. To provide effective support for survivors of domestic abuse it is crucial to understand how they engage with support and recover from their experiences. **Aims:** This study seeks to understand how survivors of domestic abuse experience support and how this has shaped their journey of recovery. It aims to provide a greater understanding of the lived experiences of support and recovery processes of survivors of domestic abuse. **Methods:** Six female participants took part in this qualitative study. Semi-structured interviews, lasting 60 to 90 minutes, were conducted to gather the data on their experiences. Data was analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis. **Results:** Five superordinate themes emerged from the data: The Fearful and Pressurised Self, Sourcing Intrinsic Energy: Vital Survival Strengths, Confronting and Revealing Vulnerability is Transformative, Connection and Empowerment and The Authentic Self. The process of support and recovery is revealed as a complex journey of self-discovery that requires enormous strength in challenging, confronting and overcoming the experience of trauma. **Conclusion** The results of this study revealed the importance of vulnerability, safety, flexibility, professionalism and social support, empathy, self-care and self-compassion in the facilitation of recovery. The study revealed the multifaceted nature of trauma and gives insights into the complex emotional and psychological processes of survivors as the journey through support and recovery. This study has implications for practitioners in terms of gaining greater knowledge in understanding recovery from domestic abuse. Additionally, this study can contribute to interventions that build on women's resources and understanding of the self. For service providers, this study can contribute to enhancing engagement and supports for survivors of domestic abuse.

Transpersonal Coaches and their experience of Spirituality: A qualitative IPA analysis.

Student: Cathy Coyle
Supervisor(s): Dr. David O'Sullivan

Currently, the relationship between spirituality and wellbeing is gaining much theoretical and research attention. As a discipline coaching psychology is well placed for exploring the role of spirituality within personal and institutional flourishing (Law & Lancaster, 2010). Spirituality is listed as a character strength within the VIA strengths inventory (Peterson & Seligman, 2006) and is a recognised form of intelligence (SQ) (DeCicco, 2009; Paloutzian et al., 2010). To date Mindfulness based programs offer a strong example of the beneficial role spiritually informed practices can offer (Unsworth, 2016), whilst indicating the far-reaching positive outcomes that can be harnessed from connecting to the wisdom of spiritual traditions (Mijares, 2014; Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1990).

For Coaching psychologists understanding how to cultivate transformation and wholeness with clients is central to the coaching journey. Transpersonal coaching offers one such approach by integrating a spiritual dimension into coaching practice and has been listed as an emerging field within coaching psychology. This article explores Transpersonal Coaches experience of spirituality. A qualitative research design using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was employed. The interview data are reported under three overarching themes; lived spiritual experience; transpersonal development; and transpersonal coaching. The data provides insights into the various way's spirituality has impacted on the coaches life journey and how it has contributed to their work within transpersonal coaching. The findings offer possible avenues for future research that can support a framework for best practice and training of coaches looking to incorporate a spiritual dimension to their work.

Gratitude: a catalyst for pro-environmental behaviour? Survey investigation into the moderating roles of values and nature connectedness.

Student: Nicole Lee
Supervisor(s): Drs. Marica Cassarino and Annalisa Setti.

Background: The promotion of pro-environmental behaviours (PEBs) at the individual level is seen as important to reversing the anthropogenically induced shift in the Earth's climate. Implementation of effective environmental policies requires an understanding of the personal factors predisposing people to engage in such behaviours. As a psychological resource strongly associated with prosocial behaviour, boasting many ancillary benefits and with the potential to be enhanced, dispositional gratitude holds promise as a psychological antecedent of PEB. Gratitude has received limited interest in previous research, and is thus deserving of further investigation in this area.

Aims: The current report aimed to investigate the relationship between PEB and dispositional gratitude in a general population sample. A further aim was to explore the potential moderating roles of nature relatedness and environmental value orientation, two concepts related to PEB.

Methods: Data were collected via an online survey. Participants (*N* = 220) completed measures of PEB, dispositional gratitude, environmental value orientation (*biospheric*, *egoistic*, *hedonic* and *altruistic* values) and nature relatedness. Correlational analyses were conducted to test the study hypotheses.

Results: Gratitude exhibited a significant, although weak, positive correlation with PEB, suggesting that dispositionally grateful individuals appear to engage in more PEB. However, in multivariate regression analyses the effect of gratitude disappeared, while biospheric values (i.e. concern for nature in and of itself) and nature relatedness remained the strongest predictors of PEB.

Conclusion: In this study, attitudes and values relevant to nature were of more significance to the prediction of PEB than broad dispositional positive characteristics. The results provide preliminary insight into the relationship between dispositional gratitude and PEB, and act to further substantiate the valuable roles of nature relatedness and biospheric values in predicting PEB. Implications and directions for future research are discussed.

Embodied Coaching: Its Effects on Self-Efficacy and Decision-Making Through the Clean Space Lite Technique

Student: Clare Elizabeth Healy
Student: Dr. Annalisa Setti

Background: Embodied and walking coaching is becoming more common when looking at psychology coaching. There is general thought that the physical movement can help benefit mental processes in coaching sessions. The researcher experienced the benefits personally and wished to study embodied coaching to see if there were more benefits in the embodied approach versus the more traditional seated condition.

Aims: The aim of this study was to determine whether an embodied coaching psychology method would result in higher levels of self-efficacy and decision-making skills on a person than if they experienced a traditional seated coaching psychology session.

Method: This study involved a between-group, embodied approach versus seated approach, and within-group (pre-post) mixed methods quantitative and qualitative study looking at whether embodied coaching has a more positive effect on self-efficacy and decision-making skills than seated coaching. Participants consisted of 10 males and 20 females, with 20 participants being between 18 – 33 years old, 5 being between 34 – 49, and 5 being in the 50+ range. A validated questionnaire for General Self-Efficacy (GSE) (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995) was used, and a Decision-Making Questionnaire (DMQ) (French, West, Elander, & Wilding, 1993), along with pointed questions formed specifically for this study, pre and post to a coaching session – plus a few added post-session, with some short answer questions – to see if there was any change in self-efficacy and decision-making skills pertaining to the specific goal. The Clean Space *Lite* model (CSL) (Lawley & Tompkins, 2012) was used in its usual embodied form, or a form converted to the traditional seated approach, during the coaching sessions.

Results: It was found that, though there were small differences in pre- and post- coaching sessions in embodied and seated conditions, there was only a significant positive result in one of the targeted decision-making questions and both targeted self-efficacy questions in the seated condition. It was determined after the study was conducted that the seated method also incorporated some embodiment in the session, which was a confounding variable in the between-participant results. The qualitative questions post-session revealed that the Clean Space *Lite* coaching method was beneficial for both embodied and seated conditions, based on the participants' comments and reflections.

Conclusion: This study is beneficial for the field of psychology coaching because it furthers the research on embodied coaching, traditional seated coaching, and different methods to help promote self-efficacy and decision-making abilities for coaching clients. Further research with a larger quantity of targeted questions, and a more pointed between-group method differentiating between embodied and seated conditions would be helpful to see which condition could show more positive results for one condition over the other in future research.

Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace A qualitative research of the experience of international employees in Ireland and reflections on the role of coaching

Student: Sin Yee Kerk
Supervisor(s): Drs. Marica Cassarino

Backgrounds: Promoting diversity and inclusion in workplaces is an increasingly important topic and has been widely discussed. Despite money and resources that have been invested in establishing diversity initiatives, little progress has been made.

As Ireland is becoming more culturally diverse, there is a growing interest and need for diversity and inclusion in the country. However, little academic research has been conducted in the national context.

Aims: This project aimed to investigate the workplace experiences of non-Irish employees in Ireland, focusing on the dimensions of gender and race/ethnicity. Drawing from these experiences, this study aimed to reflect on the potential of using coaching to enhance diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Methods: Qualitative method using one-to-one semi-structured interviews was adopted. Fourteen non-Irish employees of diverse nationalities and occupations were interviewed. Thematic Analysis was employed to analyze and generate common themes across the interviews. Based on the constructed themes, reflection was made on the potential of coaching as an intervention to build an inclusive workplace.

Results: Five themes were constructed including the enablers of, and barriers to social interaction, identity and challenges of being non-native English speakers, glass ceiling in career advancement, and the organizations' perspectives on differences which lead to inclusion or exclusion of employees. These findings revealed that building an inclusive workplace would require changes in the organizational culture and collective effort of the entire organization. Coaching can support senior leadership team, people manager, and all employees through ongoing open dialogues, questions, feedback, and reflection to achieve this goal.

Conclusion: Language and nationality diversity emerged as core dimensions of the challenges faced by non-national diverse employees. Further research should be conducted on these dimensions, as well as their intersection with other diversity dimensions. This paper has reflected on the potential of coaching in supporting diversity and inclusion in workplaces. Further research is needed to explore how coaching can be best implemented across the organization.

An investigation into the influence of walk-and-talk versus sit-and-talk meetings on levels of well-being and engagement
Student: Fiona McAuliffe
Supervisor(s): Dr. Zelda Di Blasi

Background: There is growing concern that inactive lifestyles and lack of engagement with the natural environment is having a detrimental effect on health and well-being. Increasingly, attention is being focussed on how the sedentary lifestyles can be altered to afford greater opportunities for experiencing the physical and mental benefits associated with being active in close proximity with nature.

Aims: This study aims to compare the effects of walk-and-talk meetings versus the traditional sit-and-talk meetings on levels of well-being and engagement.

Methods: This was a randomised controlled experimental study. Eligible participants were supervisors and supervisees (N=16) from University College Cork who were working on research projects. Participants were randomly assigned either to an experimental group (one to one walking meetings outside in the natural environment) or a control group (one to one seated indoor meetings). Participants completed an online baseline survey, conducted four to six supervision meetings over a two month period and completed a follow-up survey. Measures included Vitality, Self-Esteem and Work engagement. The follow-up survey included two post intervention questions relating to the work with their supervisor/supervisee and two open ended questions.

Results: Post intervention, compared to participants in seated meetings, walking meeting participants had statistically significantly higher levels of vitality and engagement, but not self-esteem. There were large effect sizes for vitality and engagement but not for self-esteem. Content analysis of the qualitative data identified the following categories; energy levels, stress levels, work

engagement, relationships, difficulties encountered, ease of accesses to resources, being in the natural environment and future participation in walking meetings.

Conclusion: The holding of one to one walking meetings can have a positive impact on well-being and engagement. The study suggests that one to one walking meetings can harness the restorative effects of nature and the energising effects of walking outdoors, and, where appropriate, can be seen as a possible alternative to seated indoor meetings.

Diabetes Distress and Quality of Life in Parents of Children with Type 1 Diabetes, the Role of Insulin Delivery, Perceived Benefit and Covid 19
Student: Doreen Mary McCarthy
Supervisor(s): Dr. Audrey Dunn Galvin

Type 1 diabetes is a complicated and unpredictable chronic illness that requires constant effort and attention to maintain optimum blood glucose levels; this entails daily measuring of food intake and monitoring of blood glucose. Diabetes distress (DD) is the negative emotional response to the burden of managing this illness (Skinner et al., 2019). As Type 1(T1) is often diagnosed in childhood, parents must assume the role of maintaining their child's diabetes; this can result in care giver diabetes distress and burnout overtime. This study explores the significant connection between a parent's diabetes distress and their quality of life. Research has shown that higher diabetes distress is associated with lower quality of life and parental DD can influence how a child adapts to their illness and self care. High DD in parents may impact glycaemic control and potential health outcomes for their children leading to future complications for the child's health. The purpose of this current study was twofold, first to examine the relationship between diabetes distress (DD) and quality of life (QoL) and secondly to explore the impact of insulin delivery satisfaction, perceived positive benefit and Covid 19 on this relationship.

The three main hypothesis evaluated were :1)Higher diabetes distress is associated with lower quality of life of parents in all domains; 2) Insulin delivery system and perceived benefits are positive moderating influences in this association; 3) Covid 19 negatively moderated this association. Parents (n=110) of children with T1 (who were under 18 and diagnosed at least a year) completed an online self report survey. Measures were the parent version of the Diabetes Distress Scale (DDS), Quality of life WHOQOL Bref, Insulin Delivery Satisfaction Survey (IDSS), the Silver Lining Questionnaire (SLQ) and the Pandemic Stress Index (PSI) was used to measure response to Covid 19. QoL was scored separately in four domains, physical, psychological, social relationships and environment and these were used as the dependent variable in each test. DD, IDSS SLQ and PSI (referred to as Covid 19) were the independent variables. Statistical analysis included the Pearson correlation test to measure the relationship between variables, and hierarchical regressions which were used to assess the ability of four control measures (DD, IDSS, SLQ, and PSI) to predict levels of quality of life in all four domains, while controlling for current age and years diagnosed. One way ANOVAs were used to compare mean scores between method of insulin delivery and DD and secondly between method of insulin delivery and IDSS.

Participants reported high levels of diabetes distress (M = 61.47 SD 16.32). DD significantly predicted QoL across all domains physical (β = -.426, P <.01), psychological (β = -.386, P <.01), social relationship (β = -.316, P <.05) and environment (β = -.307, P <.05). 'Years diagnosed' moderated the relationship between DD and physical QoL, and the scores on the Silver Lining questionnaires moderated the relationship between DD and psychological QoL. Parents of children who used an insulin pump had lower diabetes distress than those who use multiple daily injections, f (2,106) = 4.12, P = .01. Parents of children who used pumps had higher scores in insulin delivery satisfaction (IDSS) whereas parents whose child used injections experience lower satisfaction with insulin delivery, f (2,106) = 27.03, P<.001.

This current study had a relatively small sample but all participants reported high level of diabetes distress which impacted their quality of life in physical, psychological, social relationships and environment domains. As DD increased QoL decreased this was most significant in physical QoL followed by psychological, social relationship and environment. This study highlights the impact of parenting a child with Type 1 diabetes on distress and quality of life from the perspective of the parent and examines if there is a positive outcome or benefit in parenting a child with Type 1 diabetes.

Self-care for what purpose? Exploring how self-care is understood in coaching training and practice

Student: Kate O' Loughnan
Supervisor(s): Ms. Nicola Barry

Background: While It has been well documented that burnout occurs frequently amongst helping professions (Alarcon et al, 2009; Corey et al, 2014) there is a surprisingly significant lack of research that addresses burnout amongst coaching professionals (Bachkirova, 2016). With the rise of positive psychology and other areas of preventative healthcare, self-care has been a topic that is gaining increasing attention both at the training and practice level of psychology (Zahniser et al, 2017) with studies showing how it can support a proactive approach to reducing stress, thereby avoid progression to burnout while enhancing well-being (Rupert & Dorociak, 2019). However, research on the role that self-care plays in coaching training and practice still remains ambiguous (Bachkirova, 2016) with a paucity of literature exploring the role of self-care specifically in relation to coaching competence. Aims: The current study sought to explore how self-care is understood in coaching training and practice. The research addressed how both coach trainers and coaches regard the role of self-care in relation to coaching competence. The research question and interview guide drew on the 5-factors which comprise the empirically validated measure of the Self Care Assessment Tool for Practising Psychologists (SCAP) (Dorociak et al, 2017). Method: 8 participants were recruited through purposive sampling from two groups (i) individuals currently involved in the training of coaches and (ii) practising coaches. A qualitative approach was used to explore the research question, with semi-structured interviews employed as the method of data collection. The researcher used deductive Thematic Analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) to construct themes in relation to the research topic. Results: 3 superordinate themes of 'Imbalanced position of selfcare in coaching training', 'The quality of a coach's 'being' influences the quality of 'doing' and 'Broader context influences how selfcare is learned' captured how these participants conceptualised selfcare in relation to competence. Competence was connected to the personhood of the coach and self-care was closely aligned with self-awareness. Self-awareness was construed as promoting competence through supporting coaches to take proactive action to maintain their wellbeing, work/life balance, coaching presence and an awareness of their limitations. Relational support and self-reflection emerged as keyways to support ongoing self-awareness. Coaching training structure and coach trainers were positioned as playing a pivotal role in communicating the value of self-care within coaching training. Conclusion: These findings contribute to the paucity of literature addressing the relationship between self-care and coaching competence (Bachkirova, 2016). These participants engage in self-care proactively to support flourishing and competence rather than in response to distress suggesting a positive psychological approach to preventing burnout (Wise et al, 2012). As seen in previous studies, cognitive awareness and work/life balance were particularly important (Rupert & Dorociak, 2019) however professional relational support also

featured as a pivotal support to competence. In the context of the status of coaching as currently unregulated, all participants connected benefits of a greater emphasis on self-care as a means of enhancing the development of the profession through increasing a coach's self-awareness and reflexivity.

The influence of walking in nature on vitality and wellbeing: A pilot-randomised controlled study with third level education students

Student: Topaz Lily Shrestha
Supervisor(s): Drs. Marica Cassarino and Zelda Di Blasi

Background: Research indicates that connecting with nature can induce positive changes across multiple domains of functioning. Despite this, relatively few programs or interventions seem to utilise nature as a positive mental health strategy. Furthermore, the vitalizing effects of connecting with nature are substantially understudied. This is particularly relevant to university students, who can face high levels of stress, anxiety and burnout, and could significantly benefit from a natural environment intervention aimed at enhancing positive states such as vitality.

Study aims: To investigate the influence of walking in nature, as opposed to an urban environment, on subjective vitality, wellbeing and mood in a sample of university students and consider zest as a dispositional trait that may moderate these associations. Furthermore, the study explored participants' psychological experiences *during* the walk and perceived restorative potential.

Methods: A sample of 13 adults took part in a pilot randomised controlled study to evaluate the effect of walking in a natural vs. urban environment on vitality, mood and wellbeing. The perceived restorative potential of the walk was compared between the two groups. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse qualitative descriptions of the individual psychological impact of the environment during the walk.

Results: There were no differences in vitality, mood or wellbeing before and after the walk between the two groups. Significant increases in vitality, but no changes in mood or wellbeing, were observed independent of type of walk. Zest was significantly associated with vitality and wellbeing at baseline for the whole sample. In the nature group, zest was strongly associated with baseline vitality and negative affect. Participants who walked in in nature perceived it as much more restorative than those who walked in the urban setting. Lastly, the qualitative analysis revealed that, compared to the urban walk, walking in nature was more conducive to being present in the moment and self-aware, to enhance mood and to restore energy levels.

Conclusion: In the context of the small sample size, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this study found no significant difference between walking in nature compared to walking in an urban setting. However, going for a short walk significantly improved vitality in both the intervention and control groups. This study emphasises how nature is frequently perceived to be more restorative than urban settings. Furthermore, qualitative data suggests that the nature walk was a more energizing and vitalizing experience, thus adding the value of exploring the process of nature interaction. Implications for further research and interventions are discussed.

Does childhood adversity impact on resilience and occupational choices of social care workers in Ireland?

Student: Padraig Danaher
Supervisor(s): Dr Sharon Lambert

Background: Alarming rates of compassion fatigue and burnout exists in the social care sector, which results in a high turnover of workers and by many leaving the profession early. Consequently, there is a need for the sector to focus on the factors that influence both resilience and occupational choices of social care workers.

Aims: The purpose of this qualitative study was to address the gaps in the literature regarding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and its influence on both social care workers, occupational choices and resilience in adulthood. The research questions guiding the study use Bronfenbrenner Ecological Systems Theory as a theoretical framework. Bronfenbrenner Ecological Systems Theory is used to conceptualise significant factors from an individual level to ecological levels, relating to microsystems, mesosystems, exosystem, macrosystem & chronosystem.

Methods: Five semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the factors that influence occupational choices and impact resilience on social care workers. All five participants had worked in the sector for over five years and had self-identified as having high levels of resilience. A deductive thematic approach was utilised to analyse the data in this study.

Examining Experiences of Leisure Time, Technology Use, and Time Journaling

Student: Anna Navin Young
Supervisor(s): Dr. Sarah Foley

Time, a finite resource that individuals use every day regardless of whether they are aware of how they spend it. A resource commonly allocated to categories of life, such as leisure time. This qualitative study aimed to examine the category of leisure time, with a particular focus on the role technology plays in individuals' engagement in leisure activity. Eight participants first explored their experiences categorizing, spending, and reflecting on their leisure time and the role technology plays in this time. Next, participants engaged with a week-long time journaling exercise to track their leisure time and any thoughts and feelings that arose through the process. Finally, a follow up interview reflected on their experiences keeping the time journal and any insights or desires for change that were prompted by the experience. Inductive thematic analysis was used to construct four themes 1) time tracking increasing time awareness, 2) multi-faceted experiences of leisure time, 3) technology and quality of leisure, and 4) meaningful leisure time. The analysis is discussed with further focus given to insights and implications of the time journal study design. Implications for future research and application within the field of coaching psychology are explored.

Master's in Applied Psychology: Work and Organisational Behaviour

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IN THE WORKPLACE
Student: Aditeya Kumar Das
Supervisor(s): Sarah Foley

Objective: Unconscious bias is a bias held unknowingly and being enacted unconsciously. The study takes up the topic of unconscious bias with relevance to the workplace and seeks to gauge the people's understanding of it and their experience with it. The study also attempts to understand how the respondents feel about unconscious bias as a topic and how it originates and goes on to harm the workplace, and seeks to note the solutions to unconscious bias that the respondents believe to be helpful in minimizing its effects or completely eliminating it. **Method:** The ten participants recruited were interviewed online and their responses were recorded and later transcribed. These transcriptions were then analysed using thematic analysis and subsequent codes were generated. The codes were then grouped into larger themes that helped explain the overall responses of the individuals in relation to unconscious bias and helped display their thoughts and opinions towards it. **Results:** All ten participants confirmed their understanding of unconscious bias and had a unanimous agreement on its existence. They also stated their beliefs on its origins, split between organizational factors, personal factors, and a mix between both sets of factors. The participants expressed their personal solutions towards the bias and these solutions fell in line with strategies theorised by previous studies. **Conclusion:** The existence of unconscious bias is unanimously agreed upon and its effects are displayed to be harmful for the people working in an organization and the organization as a whole as well. There are some solutions that can be effective in dealing with it, if implemented appropriately and evenly throughout the organization. The proposed solutions are backed by previous literature and future iterations of similar research will help strengthen the claims. This study counters the notions of unconscious bias being an artificial creation or being unsolvable, and future studies may help disprove that hypothesis effectively.

Effects of Perceived Supervisor Listening on Psychological Safety, Turnover Intentions, Positive Affect, and Negative Affect amongst a Sample of German and Irish Employees
Student: Sophie Diehl
Supervisor(s): Dr. Joanne McVeigh

Background: Key to communication between supervisors and employees is how employees perceive the active empathic listening of their supervisors. Supervisors' listening therefore requires more consideration in theory and practice. The primary aim of this study was to investigate the effects of perceived supervisor listening on psychological safety, turnover intentions, positive affect, and negative affect, amongst a sample of German and Irish employees.
Methodology: A survey was used for the study, which had a total of 107 respondents (62 females; 34 males; 1 other). Perceived supervisor listening was measured using the Active-Empathic-

Listening-Other-Report Scale (AELS-OR), while psychological safety was assessed using the Self Psychological Safety Scale. Turnover intentions was investigated using the Turnover Intentions Scale, and well-being was measured using the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule Scale (PANAS). Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to explore the structure of underlying latent variables. Four simple linear regressions were also conducted to test if perceived supervisor listening predicted psychological safety, turnover intentions, positive affect and negative affect.

Results: Findings of the EFA indicated that a one-factor solution best represented the data for the AELS-OR Scale, for the Self Psychological Safety Scale, and for the Turnover Intentions Scale. For the PANAS Scale, two factors were extracted. Results of the simple linear regressions indicated that higher perceived supervisor listening significantly predicted higher employee psychological safety, lower turnover intentions, and lower negative affect. However, perceived supervisor listening was not found to significantly predict positive affect.

Conclusions: When addressing psychological safety, turnover intentions, and negative affect of employees, findings of this study indicate that perceived supervisor listening may be an important factor. When supervisors listen actively and with empathy to employees, it may be possible to reduce turnover; saving time, money, and knowledge in an organisation. Based on the findings, several recommendations are made, including the use of transformational leadership in organisations, as active empathic listening is an essential component of this form of leadership.

Human Rights, Social Inclusion, and Equity
in Irish National Disability, Employment, Health, and Transport Policies

Student: Sandra F. Duggan
Supervisor(s): Dr. Joanne McVeigh

Background: Irelands ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2018, signalled a commitment to equity, and the promotion and protection of human rights for persons with disabilities. The principles of equity and inclusion are equally applicable to other vulnerable groups in society who are also at increased risk of inequity and social exclusion. For these principles to be inculcated in service delivery, they must first be promoted by policies. Therefore, the inclusion of vulnerable groups and commitment to core concepts of human rights in policy documents is imperative.

Objective: The aim of this study was to assess core concepts of human rights and inclusion of vulnerable groups in Irish national disability, employment, health, and transport policies.

Methods: Content analysis of Irish national policy documents was conducted using EquiFrame. EquiFrame is a systematic policy framework, which assesses a policy's commitment to 21 core concepts of human rights and inclusion of 12 vulnerable groups. In accordance with EquiFrame, policies were assessed in relation to: Vulnerable Group Coverage, Core Concept Coverage, and Core Concept Quality. Based on these indices, each policy was assigned an Overall Summary Ranking of High, Moderate, or Low quality.

Results: Vulnerable Group Coverage ranged from 17% to 50%. The only vulnerable group included across all policies analysed was Disabled. Core Concept Coverage ranged from 33% to 90%, and Core Concept Quality varied from 24% to 86%. The Overall Summary Ranking was, Low quality for two policies, Moderate quality for three policies, and High quality for one policy.

Conclusion: The development of an equitable and inclusive society requires recognition of vulnerable groups and commitment to core concepts of human rights within policy documents.

Although, inclusion in policy documents does not guarantee equitable and inclusive outcomes, it does increase the likelihood that equity and inclusion will translate into practice.

Delivering Through Covid19 - An Exploration of the Experiences of Gig Workers in Ireland & Their Perspectives on Covid19

Student: Éadaoin Fitzgerald
Supervisor(s): Prof. Carol Linehan

The world around us is changing, and with it, the world of work is changing too. Evidence of this changing world of work is seen in the rapidly growing gig economy. The gig economy is not precisely defined, and so definitions vary from study to study. This study focuses on platform-based gig work specifically. This involves the exchange of labour for money between individuals or companies by matching the supply and demand of work, exclusively via digital platforms, such as smartphone-based apps. The work, or gigs, are on a payment-by-task basis. The gig economy is unique in that its workers are not technically considered 'employees' of the companies they work for but 'self-employed independent contractors'. The aim of this study was to gain insights into work within the gig economy, from the worker's perspective, by exploring the experiences of gig workers. It also investigated a secondary research question exploring the perspectives of gig workers on working during the coronavirus (Covid19) pandemic. The Covid19 pandemic is of major concern in today's society. It is impacting economies worldwide. Due to the 'self-employed' status of gig workers, they do not receive any benefits or protections from the companies they work for. For this reason, it was of interest to investigate gig workers' perspectives and feelings on working in an economy of this nature during these unprecedented times. Eight participants, all gig workers who worked with Deliveroo, food-delivery service, were recruited through snowball sampling. They were all adults (over the age of 18). They were all Irish. Seven participants worked with Deliveroo in Ireland, one worked with Deliveroo in Holland. All were male. A semi-structured interview was conducted with each participant. A thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of the transcripts of these interviews elicited four overarching themes from the data: "Performance Management", "Solitariness", "Context Matters" and "Risk". These findings and their potential implications are discussed in detail later in this study, and some key areas of interest are signposted for future research.

Perceptions and Experiences of the Effects of Communication Technologies on Work-life Balance and Perceived Occupational Stress Amongst a Sample of Irish Employees

Student: Ciara Maxwell
Supervisor(s): Dr. Joanne McVeigh

Background: Organisations are increasingly using communications technologies, such as smart phones, laptops, and IPads, for the purposes of work-related communications after formal working hours. These communication technologies enable employees to instantly collaborate with managers and colleagues, complete work-related tasks from any location and access data through physical and temporal boundaries. However, previous research indicates that use of communication technologies after the formal work hours can lead to a conflict between work and personal life spaces and can negatively affect employee well-being. The aim of this study was to explore

perceptions and experiences of the effects of communication technologies on work-life balance and perceived occupational stress amongst a sample of Irish employees.

Methods: A series of online semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight participants (3 female and 5 male), employed in various companies in Ireland. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis.

Results: Findings indicated that use of work-related communication technology outside of regular work hours contributed to work-life conflict and increased perceptions of occupational stress. The results also indicated a lack of policies and procedures to mitigate against the adverse impacts of the increased use of communication technologies.

Conclusion: Continuous connectivity between employees and their organisation may erode work-life balance, as employees are unable to disengage from their work. It is crucial that occupational stress due to communication technology devices, is taken seriously by organisations as a valid stressor. Organisational policies and procedures should protect employees against the adverse impacts of communication technologies.

Research Dissertation on 'Attitudes and opinions on freedom of speech, hate speech and diversity on campus amongst of a sample of Irish university students'

Student: Jack O' Driscoll
Supervisor(s): Dr. Joanne McVeigh

Background:

Freedom of speech is an important, yet contentious, topic. Governments and other institutions must attempt to find a balance between supporting citizens' right to free expression and protecting the dignity of minority groups, who may be targeted by objectionable, and even hateful, expression.

Freedom of speech on college campuses is a microcosm of the wider, societal debate on this topic. Universities must provide a welcoming and civil environment for all; whilst also ensuring students are exposed to many diverse ideas, even ones that may be controversial. This study will fill an important gap in the existing literature by exploring college students' attitudes and opinions outside of the United States.

The aim of this study was to learn more about the attitudes and opinions of freedom of speech, hate speech, media and diversity on campus amongst a sample of Irish university students.

Methodology:

This study used a version of the questionnaire developed by Knight and Gallup (2018) modified for the sample of Irish students. This questionnaire comprised of 72 items, including 7 demographic questions. Respondents were students enrolled at University College Cork, Ireland. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine the structure of the underlying latent variables. A Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted to assess if liberals were more likely to believe that freedom of speech was under threat in Ireland and to examine the relationship between self-described political ideology and gender. A further Kruskal-Wallis test was used to assess if females and liberals were more likely than males and conservatives, respectively, to support social media sites restricting hate speech on their own platforms.

Findings:

Respondents to this study believed that their right to free expression was protected in Ireland today, with 61% of respondents describing this right as 'secure'. However, when asked about free speech in action at their university, 70% believed that the atmosphere on campus forced students to censor their own speech. Respondents had a good deal of trust in traditional media but were more sceptical of the role of social media in modern society. Exploratory Factor Analysis resulted in the retention of seven factors, each of which is related to a certain theme explored by the questionnaire. Kruskal-Wallis tests revealed that conservatives were more likely than liberals to believe that freedom of speech was under threat in Ireland today. Further Kruskal-Wallis tests demonstrated that females and liberals were more likely than males and conservatives, respectively, to report that social media platforms should be responsible for limiting hate speech on their platforms.

Conclusion

As the findings of this study exemplify, freedom of speech issues divide opinion, among university students and the wider public. The implications of this study's findings, for Irish universities and other organisations, are outlined. The limitations of this study and directions for future research are discussed.

Assessing how dual-working parents are managing work and childcare from home during the COVID-19 period.

Student: Emily Walsh

Supervisor(s): Prof. Carol Linehan

Background: Remote working is becoming an increasingly popular trend within the work environment. This is due to globalisation and innovation. The recent impact of the novel coronavirus saw many companies availing of telecommuting practices in order to stay open.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of how dual-working parents are managing work and childcare from home during the COVID-19 period.

Design/ Methodology: For the purpose of this study, a qualitative research approach in the form of semi-structured interviews was chosen. In terms of the inclusion criteria all participants had to be over 18-years old, could be male or female, must be in a dual-earning couple and currently working from home. Finally, their children had to be under the age of 12-years old. The participants for this study were recruited from various locations around Ireland through personal contacts. Additionally, those who were initially recruited were encouraged to invite others who met the criteria to participate. There were 8 participants recruited in total, 3 males and 5 females. There was one couple from the same household recruited. Interviews were recorded using software known as Panopto. Afterward, they were transcribed.

Results: After thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was applied to the transcripts there were four predominant themes constructed from the data. These were "Challenges present with home working," "Balancing workloads between partners," "Importance of Routine," and "Resources". Additionally, there were 5 sub-themes constructed from the data. These themes help to with regards to explicitly answering the research question.

Conclusion: The conclusions drawn from this study displayed that social isolation was a predominant issue for the participants. However, technology seemed to be used as an aspect to

combat this issue. Finally, participants seemed hopeful that this arrangement would continue as there was positivity around its impact on work-life balance. Some limitations of this study were the impact of COVID-19 itself, and the sample size.

Master's in Applied Psychology: Work and Organisational Psychology

The Navigation of Work and Non-Work Identities by HR Personnel
Student: Aoife Marie Condon
Supervisor(s): Ms. Nicola Barry

Background: HR personnel have an intriguing role duality as being both employees of the organisation and also implementers of the organisation's practices. The contemporary perspective on the organisation of identity is such that identities are multiple, and this has not yet been researched in relation to the role duality experience by HR personnel.
Aims: This study is exploring the navigation of work and non-work identity by HR personnel. This study is taking a multiple identities lens perspective on how identity is organised and will explore how this is experienced by those in a HR role due to the role duality they experience.
Method: This is an exploratory, qualitative study of HR personnel and their experience of navigating work and non-work identities. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, and the data was analysed using Thematic Analysis.
Results: There were three main themes created from the analysis. The first was management of boundaries, which includes how the boundaries of multiple identities are balanced and how certain aspects of identity are parked. The second was authenticity, which includes how identity develops due to age and experience, the navigation of moral conflicts, and the debate between having multiple identities or a core-self. Finally was embodying the HR role, which included the navigation of the role duality and the challenge experienced in keeping the human connection within the HR role.
Conclusions: This study gave significant insight into how multiple identities are navigated by HR personnel due to their role duality. More research should be conducted in relation to the impact of remote or e-HR on the identity of HR personnel and on how to provide support to HR personnel in navigating the complexities of the HR role.

The Remote Candidate: Exploring the Impact of Personality on Perceived Attitudes towards Remote Work Environments
Student: Jack Dennehy
Supervisor(s): Dr. Raegan Murphy

Background: Advancements in technology have transformed the modern workplace into distributed work arrangements ranging from employees working part- or fulltime from their homes, in coffee shops, hot-desking in satellite offices or elsewhere rather than in a centralized location. The interest in these remote work practices has been witnessed by job seekers, with increasing frequency of people searching for and organizations hiring based on remote work contracts. Most recently, the Covid-19 pandemic has considerably increased the number of remote workers around the world. The psychological impact of remote work arrangements is debated, with job satisfaction being one of the most commonly studied outcomes but results for this has been mixed. Previous research has shown the existence of a curvilinear relationship between job satisfaction and remote work where such working can possibly lead to less employee job satisfaction over time. The literature on remote work has been concerned with predicting what type of individuals will choose to apply for a remote work position by examining identifying demographic, situational,

technological, family and lifestyle influences. A recent field of research has focused on the impact personality dimensions can have on employee's perceived attitudes and satisfactions from remote work arrangements.

Aims: The aim of this study was to further explore the impact personality can have on employees' attitudes towards remote work environments. Specifically, this study sought to determine how personality can, in part, account for remote working employees' self-reported need satisfaction levels of competence, autonomy and relatedness on the job as well as their preferences surrounding remote work practises. It was hypnotised hypothesised that among remote workers, basic need satisfaction and remote work preferences would be positively linked to the personality traits of openness to experience, conscientiousness, and agreeableness and negatively associated with neuroticism and extraversion.

Method: The present study incorporated a cross-sectional correlational design using convenience sampling. N = 107 professional working adults were surveyed. These participants were gathered employed by a multinational e-commerce organization. Regarding work arrangements 32 participants had previously experienced working from home prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and 75 recently transitioned into remote work roles due to the current circumstances. Qualtrics software was used to administrate an electronic survey within organizational group chats. The survey consisted of three questionnaires; the NEO Five-Factor Inventory, the Work-Related Basic Need Satisfaction scale and Blended Work Preferences. Multiple linear regression and one-away ANOVA measures were used to analyse the data using IBM SPSS Statistics software.

Result: The findings suggest that certain personality scores on the Big Five dimensions could significantly predict perceived attitudes towards remote work environments. Extraversion and agreeableness were significant predictors for relatedness scores, conscientiousness and neuroticism were linked to competence, while only the trait of neuroticism was negatively associated with autonomy scores. The remaining personality dimensions did not correlate with basic satisfaction needs while remote working. In terms of remote work preferences, conscientiousness was linked to time-independent working preferences, openness to experience and neuroticism were correlated with location-independent working preferences and neuroticism was the only significant predictor for work-home segmentation preferences. The remaining personality dimensions did not correlate with remote work preferences. Elsewhere, the only observed difference between prior remote work experience groups compared to participants who had recently transitioned into remote work contracts was location dependent working preferences.

Conclusions: This study contributes to the literature of personality differences correlating with perceived satisfaction and preferences towards remote work environments. The results can have real world implications in understanding how individuals' differences can contribute to the suitability for remote working and likelihood of deriving satisfaction from this type of work arrangement. This can help organizations to create a work environment that recognises the need to recruit, retain and regulate successful remote employees amidst this constantly evolving virtual working landscape.

Work – life balance and Absenteeism Attitudes among Shift-Workers in a Public Healthcare Setting in Ireland
Student: Redmond Egan
Supervisor(s): Prof. Carol Linehan

Work-life balance and absenteeism are two large issues for contemporary organisations. Much of the research in this area examines these two topics and the interaction between them using quantitative means. This research aims to explore the experience and opinions of shift-work employees in relation to their work-life balance and their exposure to voluntary absenteeism. This research used qualitative methodology in order to address the aims of this study. 8 semi-structured interviews were conducted with full-time public healthcare shift-workers. Thematic analysis was then used to analyse the data collected. Results showed that shift work can both positively and negatively affect one's sense of work-life balance. It was found that shift-work negatively affected a number of participants social life which had a negative impact on their sense of work life balance. Additionally, it was found that many of the shift-work employees found the flexibility of shift work to be very convenient which they stated had a positive impact on their sense of work-life balance. It was also found that a sense of personal responsibility as well as organisational policies were both important factors in the decision making of shift-work employees in relation to voluntary absenteeism.

Walking Meetings: A Step Towards Occupational Wellbeing
Student: Katie A. Horgan
Supervisor(s): Dr Zelda Di Blasi

Background: Modern-day employees spend the majority of their day sitting. This increase in sedentary behaviour has negative impacts for both physical and mental health. Light to moderate physical activity has shown to decrease the negative impacts of sedentary behaviour and improve employee wellbeing. Nature exposure at work has also shown to have significant benefits for employee health, including decreased stress, and increased work engagement.

Aim: The present study aims to compare the effect of walking meetings with sitting meetings on wellbeing outcomes in a university setting.

Method: A pragmatic mixed-methods Randomised Controlled Trial was employed. Nineteen research supervisors and supervisees from an Irish university were randomised to either walking or sitting meetings. An online questionnaire measuring wellbeing (particularly work engagement and perceived stress) was administered pre- and post-a three-month intervention period were administered pre- and post- a two-month intervention period. Mixed-ANOVAs were used to analyse the quantitative data. Qualitative data was analysed using pluralistic analysis, synthesising thematic and discourse analyses.

Results: Quantitative analyses indicated that walking meetings had no significant effect on work engagement or perceived stress. Synthesising the findings from quantitative and qualitative analyses walking meetings showed potential to decrease stress, lower mental fatigue, and improve the relationship between supervisor and supervisee. Pluralistic analysis indicated that walking meetings are better suited to creative, not focused, thinking.

Conclusions: Walking meetings have potential benefit across multiple contexts, including work, education and coaching. Further research is required to understand the contexts in which walking meetings are most effective and the wellbeing outcomes of regular use of walking meetings.

Coping, controlling and collaboration - A study on the experience of demands, control and social support of psychiatric nurses working twelve hour shifts in a psychiatric intensive care unit (PICU) setting in Ireland.

Student: Eithne Hurley
Supervisor(s): Professor Carol Linehan

Background: Psychiatric nurses often experience occupational stress because of multiple job demands. Also the perceived lack of control and social support can negatively impact coping abilities. Engaging in a twelve hour shift pattern has implications for the worker, their family and the organisation. From an extensive review of the literature, the majority of shift work studies were quantitative in nature. The lack of research and indeed qualitative research on nurses working twelve hour shifts in a PICU (Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit) setting in Ireland provided the impetus for this research.

Aims: The current study explores the experience of job demands, control and social supports of psychiatric nurses in a PICU setting engaging in a twelve hour shift pattern. Participants were questioned about their coping skills. Understanding the impact of social support from colleagues and management was explored. The Job Demands Control Support model (JDCS) was utilised both as a lens and framework to guide the research.

Methods: A qualitative methodology was utilised. Eleven psychiatric nurses participated in semi-structured interviews. Purposive sampling was used to permit strategic selection of participants (Flick, 2014). Interviews were audio recorded via the researcher's dictaphone over the phone and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Data was analysed using thematic analysis.

Results: Common stressors include violence, suicidal patients, interpersonal difficulties, lack resources, administration, poor communication and an unpredictable environment. Perceived level of control varied among participants. The importance of social support was seen as instrumental in coping with demands of their role. Six identified themes included-Shift Work Preparation, The Realities of Shift Work, The Employees Voice, Risks, Roles and Responsibilities, Collaboration in Action and Developing Resilience.

Conclusion: This study delivered a wide-ranging account of individuals who work in a PICU setting. The findings of the current study are discussed in the context of previous literature. Implications for practice and future research are discussed with particular emphasis on education and policy in addition to conceptual enhancement of the JDCS model.

The Influence of Social Media Use on People's Understandings of Workplace Sexual Harassment

Student: Orlaith Morrissey
Supervisor(s): Prof. Carol Linehan

Background: Legal, socio-psychological and public definitions of sexual harassment (SH) all differ in terms of parameters. However, lay definitions of SH often present the most challenges for researchers as there appears to be little consistency in how individuals define and report incidents of SH. The influential power of social media has been reported many times. Exposure to certain content on social media platforms is believed to have the ability to influence individual's behaviours, knowledge and attitudes. The topic of SH has received a lot of attention on social media in recent years, e.g. the #MeToo movement. Social media representations of SH may be influencing individual's understanding of SH. In a similar way, lay definitions of SH often influence management policies within organisations, which in turn can impact employee's likelihood of reporting incidents of SH.

Aims: This study has two research objectives. The first is to investigate how experiences and interactions with content on media platforms, with a particular emphasis on social media platforms, may impact the participant's understanding of workplace sexual harassment. The second is to investigate participants' experiences with and opinions of formal SH workshops, training, and workplace policies and procedures.

Method: A qualitative approach to analysis was believed to be the most appropriate for the current study. 13 semi-structured interviews were carried out via Microsoft Teams. Participants, 11 women and 2 men, aged between 18 and 24, from the researchers were recruited via email. Analysis was carried out using TA.

Findings: 6 themes were constructed from the data, 4 of which relate to the first research objective, 'Understanding of SH,' 'Gender,' 'Divisive Topic on Social Media' and 'Awareness of Fake News on Social Media;' 2 of which relate to the second objective 'Organisations' Lack of/Indifference to SH Training' and 'Perspectives on SH Training Being Implemented into the Workplace.'

Conclusion: Evidence to suggest participant's understandings of SH are influenced by social media are mixed. Participant's feel SH training is beneficial, but any initiatives which appear genuine can make the employee feel more secure in the workplace. Therefore, organisations should be striving to implement anti-SH strategies which help the employee feel secure and supported.

The effect of multiple types of nature exposure on office workers' perceived stress, attention and job satisfaction.

Student: Paul Murtagh
Supervisor: Dr Marica Cassarino

Background: The physical work environment can be both a source of stress and a way to reduce it. It has been suggested that different forms of nature in the workplace may positively impact employees' health, performance and wellbeing. While many studies have examined the relationship of nature with employee stress, attention and job satisfaction separately, this is the first known study to evaluate all three simultaneously.

Aims: The current study investigated the extent to which exposure to, and use of, nature in the workplace may impact on stress, attention and job satisfaction levels among office workers, while controlling for biophilia, social interactions at work, physical activity, urbanity of workplace and residence, and time spent sitting at desk.

Methods: This was a observational cross-sectional study with 317 participants, consisting of 91 males and 189 females, while two participants preferred not to say. Stress was assessed using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), attention was measured using the Cognitive Failures Questionnaire (CFQ), and job satisfaction was measured using the Brief Index of Affective Job Satisfaction (BIAJS). Four types of nature exposure were investigated including whether participants had a nature image as their computer background, a window view of nature, presence of live indoor plants, and access to a green outdoor space at their workplace. Time spent in the green space was also examined, as well as a nature exposure composite score which consisted of the aggregated responses to each of the four nature exposure types.

Results: Correlations revealed no significant associations between number of indoor plants, nature exposure composite, time spent in green space, and PSS, CFQ or BIAJS. A window view of nature, a nature image as computer background and number of indoor plants visible, had no relationship with the three outcomes. Participants with access to a green outdoor space had lower levels of cognitive failures. Multiple regressions revealed access to a green space also negatively predicted CFQ. None of the outcomes were predicted by any other form of nature exposure, cumulative nature exposure, or time spent in green.

Conclusions: The results do not provide evidence for the relationship between nature and employee stress, attention or JS levels in a real office setting, however, access to a green space may be beneficial for office workers' attention levels.

Core Concepts of Human Rights and Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups in a Sample of National, International, and Organisational Sports Policies

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Background: Social exclusion in sport is experienced by several marginalised groups. Addressing social exclusion is therefore a salient issue in sport, with 'Sport for all' becoming a central theme across Europe. While rights-based and inclusive policies are crucial to ensuring inclusion in sport, there is a lack of research evaluating sport policies. The primary aim of this study was to assess core concepts of human rights and inclusion of vulnerable groups in a sample of national, international, and organisational sports policies.

Method: EquiFrame, a policy content analysis framework, was used to evaluate the commitment to human rights and inclusion of vulnerable groups in six sports policies. The sports policies were evaluated in relation to their coverage of 16 predefined core concepts of human rights (Core Concept Coverage), their explicit quality of commitment to these core concepts (Core Concept Quality), and their inclusion of 11 vulnerable groups (Vulnerable Groups Coverage). Based on these summary indices, each sports policy was then assigned an Overall Summary Ranking regarding its *High*, *Moderate*, or *Low* quality.

Findings: Commitment to core concepts of human rights and inclusion of vulnerable groups differed across policies. All the national policies received an Overall Summary Ranking of *High* quality, while the international policy received a ranking of *Moderate* quality. Particular deficiencies were identified in the organisational policies, which were rated as *Low* quality. Furthermore, vulnerable groups such as 'LGBTQ+', 'People with a Chronic Illness', 'Children with Special Needs', and 'People Living Away from Services' were absent across all policies.

Conclusion: Ensuring that the content of sports policies is inclusive provides an important step for equitable participation in sport. When sports policies are based on human rights and social inclusion, it is more likely that these values will be inculcated in sport.