

EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF MIND WANDERING ON  
TASK SWITCHING USING DIFFERING LEVELS OF  
TASK DIFFICULTY

**CLAIRE BARNES**

Supervised by Dr. K. KNAPP

Executive functions (EF) enable us to achieve goal directed behavior by organizing our thoughts to create a plan, initiate its execution, and concentrate on the task until completion. Mind wandering occurs when attention shifts from a task at hand to personal internal thoughts. One particular theory of mind wandering, the Executive Control Hypothesis, argues that the act of mind wandering involves executive control and predicts that mind wandering should interfere with other types of executive control (Smallwood & Schooler, 2006). My Honours project aims to test this theory by exploring the impact of mind wandering on the performance of an executive functioning task. To extend past research in this area, the impact of mind wandering on task switching under differing levels of task difficulty will be explored. The data for this study has already been collected at Massey University in New Zealand as part of a PhD research project. Participants included 63 people ranging in age from 18 to 30 years old. The switching task involved the presentation of visual stimuli which differed on two dimensions; color and shape. The difficulty of this task was manipulated by having participants complete the switching task in silence or with auditory background noise. To measure mind wandering, participants were asked what they were thinking about randomly throughout the switching task and given 8 options to choose from that described their current thoughts. This research will improve our understanding of mind wandering by testing the Executive Control Hypothesis in the context of task switching.

Claire is grateful for the opportunity to complete an independent research project in one of her primary areas of interest – cognitive psychology. After graduating, she plans on pursuing graduate studies in the area of Cognitive Neuroscience or Neuropsychology. Beyond school, Claire volunteers with the Alzheimer's Society of NB, where she gets to directly help individuals living with dementia.

# EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READING ABILITY AND SCHIZOTYPAL TRAITS

## **Narissa Byers**

Supervised by Dr. Veronica Whitford

Past research has suggested a link between schizophrenia (a psychiatric condition that involves delusions, hallucinations, and impaired language processing) and developmental dyslexia (a specific reading disorder), despite being clinically different conditions (Whitford, O'Driscoll, & Titone, 2018). For example, some studies have found a higher prevalence of schizotypal traits in healthy people with dyslexia (Byers, Whitford, O'Driscoll, & Titone, 2020; Richardson, 1994; Richardson & Stein, 1993). Schizotypal traits are personality characteristics, perceptions, beliefs, and experiences that are similar, but less severe to those involved in schizophrenia (Raine, 1991). My honours project aims to extend this research by examining whether there is a negative association between reading abilities and schizotypal traits in healthy individuals without reading disorders. Participants will complete a battery of standardized reading tests to assess their reading abilities and the Schizotypal Personality Questionnaire (SPQ; Raine, 1991) to assess their schizotypal traits. The findings will help clarify the relationship between schizotypal traits and reading abilities, which, in turn, will help clarify the relationship between schizophrenia and developmental dyslexia.

Narissa is grateful for pursuing the Honours degree as it allows her to expand her knowledge in an area of research that she is passionate about, clinical populations. Furthermore, this provides her with the ability to refine and gain new research skills and experience. Narissa plans to apply to graduate school to further pursue her interest of studying clinical populations, specifically regarding clinical neuropsychology or behavioural neuroscience in clinical populations.

EXERCISE ADHERENCE DURING COVID-19: EXAMINING  
MOTIVATION AND PERCEPTION OF BARRIERS DURING A  
PANDEMIC

**Beatrice Devlin**

Supervised by Dr. R. Hamilton

Although the importance of regular exercise has been well documented, a majority of Canadian adults do not meet the recommended 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity per week. In an attempt to improve this, research has examined the psychological traits of people who exercise regularly, such as grit and intrinsic motivation, as well as common barriers to physical activity, such as lack of time, energy, and willpower, and access to facilities. My study will build upon research on barriers of exercise by taking into account the current COVID-19 Pandemic and how people believe it has impacted their barriers to physical activity. I will examine personality factors such as motivation in order to gain insight into the types of people who experience greater exercise barriers during the pandemic, both internally and externally. To accomplish this, participants will be taking part in a month-long journaling activity to log the amount of exercise they get, as well as an initial survey to gather personality data and the participant's anticipated barriers. Because physical activity is essential in the primary prevention of illness, examining ways to improve people's access to physical activity during a global pandemic will contribute to alleviating pressure on the healthcare system.

Beatrice is completing an honours degree in psychology in order to prepare her to pursue a PhD in experimental psychology. She hopes to be a lifelong learner and to develop a deeper understanding of how humans interact and perform and be able to use her knowledge to help others. In her spare time, Beatrice enjoys long walks with her dog, Finch, and taking care of her ever-growing plant collection.

**EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN PREFERENCE FOR TYPES OF  
PRAISE AND PERSONALITY  
CHARACTERISTICS**

**Anna Gaeva**

Supervised by Dr. Michael Palmer

Praise is used as a reinforcer in applied behaviour analysis (ABA) interventions as it has been shown to be an effective reinforcer. Within ABA there are recommendations emphasizing individual differences in preference for different types of reinforcers and it is suggested to conduct a preference assessment (PA) before each intervention to find an effective reward. However, PAs can take a significant amount of time to complete and, to our knowledge, PAs have not been used to determine preference for different praise statements. Praise can be classified in different ways. In developmental psychology praise can be classified as person or process praise. Although different studies point out the role of individual differences in the effect of praise, the relationship between personality characteristics and different types of praise remains unclear. This honour's study investigates whether there is a relationship between preference for certain types of praise, as measured using PA procedures used in ABA, and personality characteristics. The Big Five Inventory, as well as modesty/humility items, from the International Personality Items Pool will be used to measure personality characteristics. A PA questionnaire based on the paired stimuli PA will be developed. Four types of praise will be used in this study: person, process, person/inflated, and process/inflated praise. We hypothesize that there will be a relationship between personality traits, such as extraversion and humility, and preference for specific types of praise. If personality traits do have a relationship with preference for praise statements, this could help practitioners make faster decisions about which types of praise statements to use.

Anna pursued an Honours degree in Psychology with specialization in Neuroscience in addition to the C-ABA program because it provided her an opportunity to develop and refine research skills that can subsequently be applied to many areas within the field. Following completion of her undergraduate degree, Anna plans to pursue a Master's degree in Behavioural Neuroscience. Additionally, Anna plans to attain the Board Certified Behaviour Analyst certification in order to work as a behaviour analyst. With this degree and the C-ABA program, she hopes to incorporate what she has learned in neuroscience and ABA to help those with behavioural issues such as those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The opportunity to participate in the Honours program allowed Anna to gain research experience in the ABA field, and simultaneous completion of C-ABA program allowed for immediate application of the research issues to clinical experience

INCIVILITY AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A NEW  
VIRTUAL WORKPLACE

**Brandon Glazebrook**

Supervised by Dr. Elaine Perunovic and Dr. Shelley  
Parker

Workplace incivility is a deviant, low intensity workplace behaviour with an ambiguous intent to harm (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Examples include making demeaning remarks, being passive aggressive, and otherwise violating workplace norms (Porath & Pearson, 2009). This is a form of disrespectful workplace behaviour that, according to Porath and Pearson (2013), has negative personal and organizational outcomes including lowered motivation, higher turnover, and frustration. Most incivility research has been on interactions in a physical workspace, but the COVID-19 pandemic has abruptly moved much of work to a virtual environment and no past research has investigated incivility over telephone or video calls. The current study aims to evaluate rates of incivil experiences through four types of interactions: in-person, video calls, telephone calls, and electronic messaging such as email. North American electrical utility employees will complete a version of the Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS) that has been modified to account for all four types of interactions, as well as measures on psychological wellness, mindfulness, work engagement, life satisfaction, and work satisfaction. This research will investigate previously unexplored questions on incivility and provide a pertinent addition to the incivility literature.

Brandon pursued an honours in psychology because he has been attracted to research for many years, and recently has taken an interest in applied social psychology. He hopes to use the skills that he has acquired in his undergrad to pursue a PhD in industrial/organizational psychology and conduct applied research and consulting. Outside of school, Brandon enjoys the outdoors, a nice restaurant, and waiting for 2020 to be over.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND  
RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION: A  
META-ANALYSIS

**Brittany Jardine**

Supervised by Dr. D. Voyer

Emotional intelligence (EI) involves the accurate perception of emotions in the self and others, understanding the cause behind emotions, managing one's own emotions, and harnessing emotions to accomplish goals (Malouff et al., 2014). EI has been linked to better communication between partners (Pollock et al., 2017) which is likely why it plays a role in relationship satisfaction. Understanding what constitutes a satisfying relationship is important, as the formation of a long-term, successful relationship has been hypothesized to promote well-being and good health (Wollny et al., 2020). Various studies have been done on the relation between EI and relationship satisfaction. Conducting a meta-analysis on this topic will further our understanding of the relation between these two variables, and allow us to identify variables that moderate the relation between EI and perceived relationship satisfaction. Several potential moderating variables have been identified in research, such as age at onset of marriage, gender, and degree of ADHD symptomatology. A thorough literature search will be done to identify relevant studies and potential moderators. Then, the data will be coded and analyzed. Though a previous meta-analysis has been conducted on this topic, it was limited by a narrow search and a low number of studies included. By doing a wider search and including more studies, our results are likely to be more generalizable.

Brittany feels that completing an Honours thesis will allow her to obtain research experience during her undergraduate degree. In undertaking this challenge, she will learn many valuable skills that will be useful when doing research in graduate school. Furthermore, an Honours thesis is time consuming, which teaches self-discipline and time management. These skills will be useful in any area of life. Upon completion of her undergraduate degree, Brittany intends to pursue a PhD in clinical psychology.

# FIBROMYALGIA AND ITS EFFECTS ON MEN'S SEXUAL HEALTH

**Domina Laurent**

Supervised by Dr. S. Byers and J. Henry

Fibromyalgia (FM) is a musculoskeletal pain disorder affecting bone and soft tissue, with effects extending to memory, and sleep. It is commonly found in women, but also affects men and children. Although FM is known to negatively impact physical sexual functioning, not much is known about its effects on other domains of sexual health and well-being, particularly among men. Yet, sexual health and well-being encompasses the physical, psychological, and social well-being of an individual with regards to their sexuality. Having a disease that negatively impacts sexual health can affect quality of life. Therefore, the goal of our study is to explore the impact of FM on men's sexual well-being. Specifically, for my Honours project I will focus on men's perceptions of the impact of FM on their desire for, frequency, and enjoyment of sexual activity as well as their sexual self-esteem. This study will analyze previously collected telephone interviews with 18 sexually active men in committed relationships. The data will then be analyzed using thematic analysis. Based on research with women with FM, we expect to find that recurring themes will reflect a complex, non-uniform relationship between men with FM and their sexual health. This research will help us better understand the lived experiences of men with FM with respect to their sexuality. This information will help inform strategies designed to promote positive sexual health outcomes and overall well-being among men with FM.

As a very passionate and ambitious individual, Domina changed her biology and psychology double Major to a double Honours in order to pursue her lifelong dream of becoming a psychotherapist. Upon graduating, she plans to pursue a Master's degree in Psychotherapy in graduate school. Beyond school, Domina likes to get involved in her community and stay connected to people. She is currently a full time employee for CBI Health Group as a Community Support Worker involved with mentally and behaviourally challenged youth, and dedicates her summers to volunteering at the Chimo Helpline. She also holds a committee position in UPS as the treasurer, and is a Psi Chi member.

NEW BRUNSWICK TEACHERS' COMFORT AND  
WILLINGNESS TO TEACH COMPREHENSIVE SEXUAL  
HEALTH EDUCATION

**Emily Mackenzie**

Supervised by Dr. E. S. Byers & Dr. L. F. O'Sullivan

Sexual health contributes to a person's overall health and well-being, but proper practices to ensure one's sexual health is dependent upon a broad foundation of sex-related knowledge. School is one of the primary sources of sexual health education (SHE) for youth in Canada. Comprehensive SHE is a curriculum-based education that encompasses all aspects of sexuality and equips youth to make healthy and informed decisions about their sexual lives. It is necessary to know about teachers since the quality of comprehensive SHE depends, in part, on teachers' effectiveness. However, there is variability in teachers' comfort and willingness to teach SHE. This may be particularly true of topics that have not traditionally been part of the mostly biologically-based SHE curriculum but are in line with current public social concerns. Such topics include gender and sexual identity, sexual consent, online sexual activity, and sexual pleasure and arousal. Thus, it is important to assess teachers' willingness and comfort teaching these topics. The purpose of the current study is to assess New Brunswick teachers' comfort and willingness to teach these topics in comparison to biological topics as well as to determine the characteristics of teachers who are more comfortable and willing to teach them. The participants will complete a survey evaluating aspects of their training, teaching experience, and attitudes as well as their comfort and willingness to teach a range of sexual health topics.

Emily is thrilled to be completing her Honours as it is allowing her to dive deeper into researching an area of interest which is sexual health education. This experience has left Emily feeling hopeful and excited about continuing in research. After graduating, Emily aspires to pursue either medical school or clinical psychology. Beyond school, Emily likes to catch up on sleep and cook fancy pastas.



AN INVESTIGATION OF STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH  
TREATMENT PREFERENCES

**Taylor MacKinley**

Supervised by Dr. J. V. Olthuis

The poor mental health of university students is increasingly being recognized as a problem. Studies have shown that approximately 20%-50% of university students meet criteria to qualify for a mental health diagnosis (Blanco, et al., 2008; World Health Organization, 2016). While much of the problem with mental health services on campus lies in lack of availability, in some cases services are available but uptake is low. My honours project focuses on determining what attributes of campus mental health services are important to university students in order to match student needs and preferences with services offered. We are particularly interested in understanding what services students prefer and if evidence-based services known to treat common mental health problems (i.e., group therapy, peer mentor counselling, and online therapy) can be modified in some way to increase their attractiveness as treatment options for university students. We will also investigate whether personality factors, perceptions of campus mental health culture, personal attitudes toward help-seeking, and/or personal attitudes about mental health influence participants' treatment preferences. Data collection will be done using a 30-minute online self-report survey hosted on Qualtrics. Students can access the survey on SONA, or a link that will direct them to the survey.

Taylor thinks that completing her honours will give her experience in how to conduct a research study, and how to interpret data. By completing her honours, it will help her reach the requirements necessary for her next degree. After graduating, Taylor plans to pursue a PsyD in Clinical Psychology, or a Master in Social Work with the hopes of one day having a private practice in her hometown with the ability to help others.

## CONTROLLING WOMEN'S BODIES

# Lena Mohamad

Supervised by Dr. C. Poulin,  
Dr. L. Gouliquer, & Alissa Moore

Firefighting is governed by a hyper-masculine and heteronormative tradition, often resulting in 'othering' of women, which is a process of stigmatisation based on differences of the minority by the dominant group (Gouliquer, Poulin, & McWilliams, 2020). Not surprisingly, women only represent 4.7% of the Canadian fire services (Statistics Canada, 2017). Research in the Psycho-Social Ethnography of the Commonplace (P-SEC) lab examines the experience of marginalised groups. At the core of the P-SEC approach, which is feminist and qualitative, is the concept of an Organisational Moment. This concept represents institutional practices, which complicate the lives of marginalised groups but benefit institutions. Using a software package as an aid in carrying out a qualitative analysis (NVivo), my Honours project focusses on the analysis of the theme 'Other Women'. In particular, the Organisational Moment 'Controlling Women's Bodies' is examined. In a misogynist context, this refers to the ways women firefighters assert control over the behaviours and bodies of other women (e.g., surveillance of presentation, behaviour, sexuality). In a P-SEC analysis, we identify the complications, benefits, schemata, and coping strategies associated with the Organisational Moment, and provide policy recommendations in the hope of alleviating complications.

Completing an honours with the P-SEC group will provide Lena valuable knowledge on the struggles and oppression that society and institutions impose on marginalised groups. This will be an asset to her pursuit of a career in social work, where she hopes to provide services such as counselling of vulnerable individuals and families, including LGBTQ+ youth and adults, refugees, and victims of family violence.

FACTORS THAT PREDICT ADOLESCENTS SEEKING HELP FROM  
FEMALE FRIENDS AND MALE FRIENDS

**Mallory Pittman**

Supervised by Dr. H. Sears

Previous research on help-seeking behaviour has shown that individuals prefer to seek help from informal sources, such as a friend or a parent, rather than from formal sources, such as a physician or counsellor. In addition, girls and women are generally more positive about seeking help than boys and men; they also seek help more often and have higher intentions to do so in the future. My honours project aims to extend previous research on help seeking by adolescents by examining how often adolescents seek help from a female friend and a male friend, and whether there is a gender difference in help seeking from each of these sources. I will also evaluate whether the quality of their relationship with each friend, their past experience seeking help from that friend, and the extent to which they conform to the masculine gender norm emotional control and to the feminine gender norm being nice in relationships are related to how often adolescents turn to each of these friends for help. Finally, I will assess whether there is a gender differences in the contribution of each of these four factors to how often adolescents seek help. This study will use survey data collected from 285 adolescents in two New Brunswick high schools (grades 10-12). This research will allow me to identify important individual and contextual predictors associated with adolescents seeking help from a female friend and a male friend.

Mallory is pursuing an Honours degree in Psychology because doing so is a great opportunity for help to develop multiple skills necessary for conducting research. She plans to pursue a Master's degree in Speech Language Pathology. With this degree, she hopes to apply what she has learned in her Psychology degree and Neuroscience specialization to help those with language impairments. The opportunity to participate in the Honours program has allowed Mallory to challenge herself and to expand her skills as a researcher.

THE EXPERIENCES OF NEW BRUNSWICK  
FRANCOPHONE INFORMAL CAREGIVERS: THE  
MONETARY DILEMMA  
**Sandrine Poulin**

Supervised by Dr. Carmen Poulin and Dr. Lynne  
Gouliquer

One of the greatest social challenges faced by Canadian governments is to provide alternatives to hospital and institutional care for the nation's expanding older population (Keefe, 2011). The healthcare system cannot meet older adults' care needs without informal caregivers (Keefe, 2011). In fact, one in four Canadians provide care to a family member or a friend with a long-term health condition, a physical or mental disability, or an aging-related need (Hango, 2020). Despite a crucial contribution to society and individuals, caregiver's role, voice, and well-being are often overlooked (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2019). The experiences of Canadian informal caregivers will be examined through a New Brunswick qualitative study focusing on the intersections of gender, language/culture, and geographic location. Data from six Francophone interviews of informal caregivers of older adults (ages 65+) 'aging in place' in New Brunswick (Lafrance, Poulin, & Gouliquer, 2018-2020) will be analysed using the Psycho-Social Ethnography of the Commonplace (P-SEC) methodology (Gouliquer & Poulin, 2005). This interdisciplinary, qualitative, and semi-structured methodology was developed to study the reality of marginalised groups. This study aims to contribute to the literature on the experiences of caregivers.

Sandrine considers that completing an Honours degree in Psychology will allow her to further develop her research competencies and improve her presentation skills, both orally and in writing. Most interestingly, she will collaborate with knowledgeable supervisors and research lab members in a unique intellectual environment, which she hopes will open doors for a future in industrial/organisational Psychology. Following the completion of her Honours degree, Sandrine plans to pursue a Ph.D. in Experimental psychology and examine caregiver-employees' unique set of challenges.

# SELF-REPORT SEX DIFFERENCES ON SPATIAL NAVIGATION ABILITIES: A META-ANALYSIS

**Clarisse Ramirez**

Supervised by Dr. D. Voyer

Acts of navigation and wayfinding occur in everyday life for most, if not all species. For humans, navigation tasks can be more easily executed such as commuting to work via the same daily route, or more difficult such as reading a map in regards to a novel environment. Sex differences on such tasks has been an ongoing research topic, and it is not unusual for men to be perceived as the dominant performers compared to women (Gregoire, 2015; Nazareth et al., 2019). To date, previous research reviews do not specifically address if human sex differences among the self-reporting of spatial navigation abilities exist or tried to quantify such differences, as well as examine potential moderators. Therefore, the main aim of the current meta-analysis is to provide a summary of self-report sex differences found in navigation research. Accordingly, an intensive search for relevant published and unpublished data collected from different sample populations will be conducted. Studies that contain a measure of self-report relevant to navigation as well as human male and female participants will be included. The current meta-analysis will extend previous research on human sex differences in navigation by highlighting the aspect of self-report.

Clarisse decided to pursue an Honours degree in Psychology for the purpose of gaining research experience that can be applied in many professional fields. Upon graduating from her undergrad, Clarisse plans to pursue a Masters in either counselling therapy or speech pathology. She is also considering an advanced nursing program. She hopes to apply her knowledge of research and the study of Psychology in a hospital or other clinical setting to provide care and assistance to clients and/or patients.

AGE OF ACQUISITION EFFECTS DURING BILINGUAL  
READING:  
AN EYE-TRACKING INVESTIGATION

**Samantha Shaw**

Supervised by Dr. Veronica Whitford

Bilingualism (knowledge of two languages) is more prevalent than monolingualism (knowledge of one language only) across the world. However, relatively few experimental studies have investigated reading in bilinguals and even fewer have used naturalistic measures, such as eye-tracking. Much has been learned about lexical (word-level) processing from this work; however, one recent study suggests that age of acquisition (AoA) might be one of the best predictors of word reading fluency (Whitford & Joanisse, 2018). This study found that acquisition of two languages at one time (in bilingual individuals) does impact reading performance and leads to changes in eye movement data (Whitford & Joanisse, 2018). One limitation, however, is that this study had a small sample size of college aged participants, which likely lacks generalizability to other populations. To circumvent this issue, my research project will investigate how AoA influences eye movement measures of first-language (L1) and second-language (L2) word reading fluency in community samples of English-French bilingual younger (aged 18-30) and older (aged 60+) adults. Previously collected eye-tracking reading data will be used (Whitford & Titone, 2017). Although there is a large bank of AoA norms for English words (Kuperman, et. al., 2012), none exists for French words. Thus, additional AoA norms in both English and French will be collected. Participants will complete a demographic/language background questionnaire, as well as the Word Reading and Pseudo-Word decoding subtests of the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT; Wechsler, 2005), to assess whether they are native English or French speakers. Afterward, they will be presented with eight short stories in an Excel spreadsheet and asked to indicate at what age they learned each word. The data will be averaged across participants (60 native English and 60 native French speakers) to calculate the average AoA for each word. These norms will be used to re-analyze previously collected eye-tracking reading data (Whitford & Titone, 2017) involving bilingual younger and older adults.

Samantha hopes to attend graduate school after completing her honours degree at UNB. She hopes to attend a cognitive science or neuroscience program and feels that working in the area of language acquisition will help prepare her for future research endeavors. Outside of academia Samantha is the president of the Undergraduate Psychology Society and works as a disability support worker. In her free time, Samantha enjoys painting and cooking.

MOVING BEYOND RISK AND NEED: AN  
EVALUATION OF SERVICE  
UTILIZATION AND RESPONSIVITY  
FACTORS AMONG SERVICE PROVIDERS

**Kennedy Sherwood**

Supervised by Dr. S. Ronis & Laura Kabbash

Some research has dedicated attention to service barriers and facilitators for individuals who are homeless in Atlantic Canada. However, there is a gap in the literature concerning individuals' responsivity to available resources as well as comparisons between service providers' and service users' perspectives. My honours thesis will focus on the first phase of a multi-phase study in partnership with the Fredericton chapter of the John Howard Society to evaluate the perceived impact of various factors on individuals' experiences using community resources. The study will use data from semi-structured interviews conducted by me and Laura Kabbash, a graduate student in the clinical psychology PhD program. The first phase of the study entails interviewing service providers via Teams, and the second phase will include in-person interviews with service users. Participants from the first phase are employees or volunteers of local homeless shelters who will be asked a variety of open-ended questions surrounding their experiences in the field. I will transcribe the audio-recorded interviews, and I will use NVivo to code for prominent themes surrounding perceived barriers of service uptake and utilization from service providers. Findings will be shared with the John Howard Society to ensure that barriers to service utilization for service users are addressed.

Kennedy pursued an Honours degree in Psychology because it allows her the chance to strengthen her research and writing skills that can be applied to many professional fields. Following completion of her undergraduate degree, Kennedy plans to pursue a Master's degree in Speech and Language Pathology. With this degree, she hopes to include what she has learned in psychology to help individuals with disabilities, illnesses, and people who have been in accidents. The opportunity to be in the Honours program has given Kennedy hands on experience involving the community and advocacy for underrepresented populations. Beyond school, Kennedy enjoys spending time with family and friends and works part time as a care provider for children with autism.

PORNOGRAPHY AND WOMEN'S  
AGGRESSION ACCEPTANCE

**Mileena Stewart**

Supervised by Dr. L. O'Sullivan

Internet pornography is widely accessible to women and men of all ages. By late adolescence, the majority of girls and boys have been exposed to pornography and for some, pornography is their only sexual education. This can raise concerns, considering that porn consumption has been linked to addiction, sexual dysfunction, rape myth attitudes, dating violence, and aggression. In a typically pornography scene we often see the male in the scene asserting his "dominance" over the female actress, using force to get what he desires. Research has been conducted on this very notion and has suggested that pornography is associated with higher levels of aggression in men. In these pornographic scenes, women are the submissive that must bend to the males' desires, and little research has looked at how aggressive pornography may influence women to be more submissive. The current research will be bridging this gap of knowledge by exploring women's pornography consumption and its association with women's acceptance of aggression. This study will be surveying women, over the age of 18, about their rape myth acceptance, attitudes toward dating violence, previous coercion experiences, personality, risk perception and revictimizing and pornography consumption to determine if there is an association between pornography and more submissive attitudes.

Mileena pursued an Honours degree in Psychology because she was interested in conducting her own research about a very specific question, and saw this as an opportunity for her to develop and enhance her research skills. After completion of this degree, Mileena intends on pursuing a Masters in Counselling Psychology. With the goal to work with clients who have experienced trauma.



**BLACK WOMEN IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY,  
ENGINEERING, AND MATHEMATICS (STEM)  
OCCUPATIONS: THE EFFECTS OF RACE, GENDER  
AND EDUCATION ON PERCEPTIONS OF  
COMPETENCE, HIREABILITY, AND LIKEABILITY  
DURING THE JOB APPLICATION PROCESS**

**Varick Young**

Supervised by Dr. E. Perunovic

Although there have been significant increases in women entering the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) field, Black Women are still struggling to reach the same level of representation (Alfred, Ray, & Johnson, 2018). White Women represented 20% of the STEM workforce, while Black Women represented a mere 1.6% (National Science Foundation, 2017). During the hiring process in STEM occupations are Black women perceived and judged differently than other job candidates? Do race, gender and education level influence these hiring decisions? The current study aims to answer these questions by examining how an applicant's race, gender, and education level influence how other perceive them during the hiring process. Data will be collected from 200 MTurk® participants from North America, who are 19 years of age or older and are fluent in written and spoken English. They will be randomly assigned to read one of eight, hypothetical resumes, and will be asked to imagine that they are assuming the role of a hiring manager for a Mechanical Engineering firm looking to hire a Senior Project Manager. The resumes will vary in the applicant's race (a Black versus. a White name), gender (man's name versus. woman's name) and education (Master of Science versus. Bachelor of Science degree). Participants will then be asked to indicate their perception of the candidate on the dimensions of competence, likeability, and hireability. Additionally, they will be asked about whether they would choose to contact the candidate's references, as well as whether they would hire them for the position. Following this, they will be asked to provide demographic information about themselves. This research will allow us to examine how people's evaluation and perception of job applicants in the STEM field are influenced by the applicant's race, gender, and education level.

Varick is pursuing an Honours degree in Psychology as it will allow him to gain research experience that can help further his academic career and give him the skillset to pursue a career in research. After completing his undergraduate degree, Varick plans to pursue a Master's in Experimental Psychology. In addition to having a greater knowledge of how research is conducted, the Honours program has allowed Varick to develop skills that he can use to conduct future research.