

CPA Traumatic Stress Section Newsletter



Dear members of the Traumatic Stress Section,

The members of the traumatic stress section executive committee are excited to introduce a new initiative of our section: The CPA Traumatic Stress Section Quarterly Newsletter!

In an effort to increase awareness of and connections between members of the traumatic stress research and practice community in Canada, we are thrilled to introduce our newsletter, a quarterly update on current traumatic stress research and initiatives being carried out by Canadian scientists and practitioners. This newsletter will also keep you up to date on our committee and help you connect more with members.

The inaugural edition includes an introduction to our executive committee and summaries of selected research articles that have recently been published by Canadian researchers. Please feel free to send recommendations of research or projects to highlight in our newsletter to the executive committee: aprotopo@stjosham.on.ca



Meet the Executive Committee



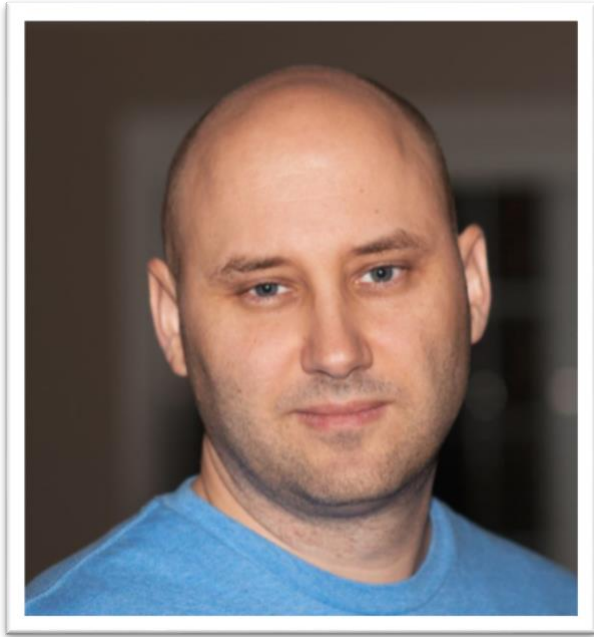
Chair, Anne Wagner, PhD, CPsych

Dr. Anne Wagner is a clinical psychologist and researcher who is committed to helping understand and improve trauma recovery. She is the founder of Remedy, a mental health innovation community, an Adjunct Professor and associate member of the Yeates School of Graduate Studies at Ryerson University. She completed a Canadian Institutes of Health Research Postdoctoral Fellowship at Ryerson University. She is the Chair of the Traumatic Stress Section of the Canadian Psychological Association, and sits on the Quality Committee of Casey House (Toronto's HIV/AIDS Hospital). Anne has a particular focus on innovating mental health interventions, for example by working with a community-led approach (e.g., with HIV/AIDS service organizations and community health centres), using different treatment formats (e.g., with couples), and facilitators of treatment (e.g., MDMA).

Chair Elect, Eva Monson, PhD

Dr. Eva Monson is an assistant professor at the Université de Sherbrooke and a researcher at the Centre de recherche - Charles-Le Moyne – Saguenay – Lac-Saint-Jean sur les innovations en santé in Québec, Canada. She received her PhD from McGill University in 2016 where she explored trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder as they relate to quality of life and perceived neighbourhood contexts. Her current research is devoted to investigating how social and environmental deprivation, from the level of the individual to the neighbourhoods where they reside, factor into the dialogue concerning mental illness.





Treasurer & Secretary, Jean Phillippe Daoust, PhD, CPsych

Dr. Jean Philippe Daoust is currently working full-time at the Operational Stress Injury (OSI) Clinic of The Royal in Ottawa, Ontario. Over the years, he has learned how to break through the mysteries of our veterans, combat veterans, active CAF members and RCMP officers. He also has a private practice in Ottawa and Gatineau where he mostly works with the same clientele.

Student Representative, Alina Protopopescu, BA, BSc, PhD Candidate

Alina Protopopescu is a third-year Ph.D. Candidate in the Research and Clinical Training Stream in the Department of Psychology, Neuroscience & Behaviour at McMaster University. Her doctoral work focuses on posttraumatic stress disorder and its relations with emotion regulation, moral injury, and other symptoms (e.g., depression, anxiety, dissociation, and cognition) and how they interact to impact treatment outcomes in military personnel, veterans, and public safety personnel.



Ex Officio Members

Vivien Lee, PhD, CPsych



Dr. Vivien Lee is a psychologist who specializes in trauma, operational stress injuries, anxiety, and depression. She is the Chief Clinician at WGM Psychological Service – Southern Ontario, as well as a clinician for group therapy programs with Wounded Warriors Canada. She has extensive experience working with and training first responders (e.g. police, paramedics, corrections, dispatchers) and military. Dr. Lee previously worked as a staff psychologist in the psychological trauma program at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. She is a clinician trainer for the Road to Mental Readiness and The Working Mind programs with the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

Dr. Lee also serves on the Board of Directors for the Public Services Health & Safety Association, and is a clinical advisor to Boots on the Ground, a peer support volunteer organization for first responders in Ontario, as well as Toronto Beyond the Blue, which provides support to families of Toronto Police Service officers.

Lara Hiseler, PhD, CPsych

Dr. Lara Hiseler is a clinical and forensic psychologist and co-Founder of Hiseler, Kelly & Associates, a private practice in Peterborough Ontario. She holds a Special Faculty Appointment in the Department of Psychology at Trent University. Dr. Hiseler has expertise in assessment and treatment of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder with a wide variety of adult clients, including specialization with first responders, military, and correctional personnel.



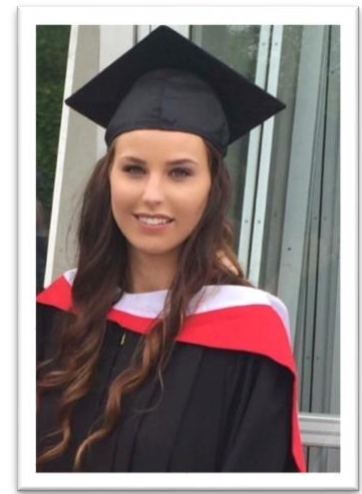


Jenna Boyd, MSc, PhD Candidate

Jenna Boyd is a PhD Candidate in the Research and Clinical Training Stream in the Department of Psychology, Neuroscience & Behaviour at McMaster University and a Psychology Resident at St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton. Her doctoral work focuses on researching cognitive functioning and the efficacy of cognitive remediation approaches in PTSD and major depressive disorder. She is passionate about improving our knowledge of and ability to treat functional impairment associated with PTSD.

Lindsey Snaychuck, BA

Lindsey Snaychuck recently graduated with her honours degree and is currently the coordinator of the Fear and Anxiety Research Lab at Vancouver Island University. She is also nearing the completion of a certificate in Sexual Health from the University of Alberta and plans to pursue graduate studies in clinical psychology.



Robyn Shields, BA

Robyn Shields left her career as a paramedic in 2014 to pursue clinical psychology. She has since completed her BA-Psychology (Hns.) with a focus on the relationships between posttraumatic stress disorder, burnout, and empathy in Canadian paramedics. She is looking forward to continuing this work and hopes to one day complete a PhD in clinical psychology.

Canadian Trauma Research Highlights

Neurobiology of PTSD

Persistent hyperconnectivity of emotional processing regions in PTSD

Benjamin Dunkley and colleagues at the Hospital for Sick Children, University of Toronto, and the Canadian Forces Health Services investigated that stability of brain hyperconnectivity in response to emotional stimuli among soldiers with and without PTSD. This work is particularly novel as hyperconnectivity has previously been established in PTSD, but its stability over time has not been. Here, subjects were implicitly (rapidly) presented with happy and angry faces while neural activity was recorded via magnetoencephalography (MEG). The authors found stable hyperconnectivity between regions associated with threat responding and social cognitive evaluation over a two-year period. The authors suggest that this hyperconnectivity may constitute a reliable biomarker of PTSD.

Dunkley, B. T., Wong, S. M., Jetly, R., Wong, J. K., & Taylor, M. J. (2018). Post-traumatic stress disorder and chronic hyperconnectivity in emotional processing. *Neuroimage: Clinical, 20*, 197-204. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.nicl.2018.07.007>

Public Health

Assessing trauma and mental health needs of immigrants and refugees to Canada

Lloy Wylie and colleagues from Western University conducted a qualitative study to investigate current mental health services and practices as well as experiences of health care providers to immigrants and refugees. The results of this study highlight several key findings, including inconsistency of current practices for transcultural assessment, due in part by a lack of mandated cross-cultural assessment tools for mental health services. Further, providers highlighted the critical need to have a deep understanding of cultural differences as well as the need for family based approaches for many immigrants and refugees. With respect to trauma, the report highlighted that the experience of trauma is a significant challenge for many refugee and immigrant families. The article recommends a consistent approach to immigrant and refugee assessment balanced with the need to be flexible and adaptive with these patients, and improved access to transcultural training and tools.

Wylie, L., Van Meyel, R., Harder, H., Sukhera, J., Luc, C., Ganjavi, H., Elfakhani, M., & Wardrop, N. (2018). Assessing trauma in a transcultural context: Challenges in mental health care with immigrants and refugees. *Public Health Reviews, 39*, 22. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/s40985-018-0102-y>

Posttraumatic stress symptoms in women living with HIV in Canada

A national team of researchers investigated rates of posttraumatic stress symptoms (PTSS) among women with HIV in Canada. The authors highlight this group as particularly vulnerable given high rates of previous trauma exposure and greater incidence of ongoing exposure to traumatic stressors in comparison to the general population. This study analyzed data from the Canadian HIV Women's Sexual & Reproductive Health Cohort Study (CHIWOS), examining putative contributors to PTSS symptoms in this population. Study results revealed that women with HIV living in Canada experience high levels of PTSS with different correlates and predictors of PTSS depending on geographical location. This study highlights the necessity of trauma informed-practices and trauma-focused interventions for women living with HIV and PTSS in Canada.

Wagner, A. C., Jaworsky, D., Logie, C. H., Conway, T., Pick, N.,...,Loutfy, M. (2018). High rates of posttraumatic stress symptoms in women living with HIV in Canada. *PLOS One*, 13(7), e0200526. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0200526>

Treatment

Propranolol and reconsolidation of traumatic memory in the treatment of PTSD

Alain Brunet, along with Canadian and American colleagues, investigated the efficacy of treatment with propranolol, a beta-receptor blocker, during trauma memory reactivation as a method of memory reconsolidation and thus treatment of PTSD symptoms. Participants with chronic PTSD were treated with either propranolol or placebo 90 minutes before a weekly memory reactivation session over six weeks. Treatment with propranolol was associated with significantly greater improvement among those treated with propranolol, with a large pre- to post-treatment effect size difference in PTSD symptoms for those treated with propranolol. This study provides evidence for a promising alternative treatment for PTSD symptomatology among individuals with chronic PTSD.

Brunet, A., Saumier, D., Liu, A., Streiner, D., Tremblay, J., & Pitman, R. K. (2018). Reduction of PTSD symptoms with pre-reactivation propranolol therapy: A randomized controlled trial. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 175(5), 427-433. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2017.17050481>

First Responders

Mental disorder symptoms among Canadian public safety personnel

Canadian researchers investigated rates of clinically significant symptoms of mental health disorders among Canadian Public Safety Personnel (PSP). 44.5% of a sample of 5183 Canadian PSP screened positive for at least one mental health disorder, with 23.2% of sample screening positive for PTSD and 26.4% for major depressive disorder (MDD). Lower rates of positive screens

for mental health disorders were noted among municipal/provincial police and firefighters compared with RCMP, correctional workers, paramedics, and call center operators or dispatchers. These findings reflect higher rates of possible mental health disorders than those reported in the general population. The results of this study indicate that Canadian PSP experience significant mental health symptoms, highlighting the importance of assessment and therapeutic intervention in this population.

Carleton, R. N., Afifi, T. O., Turner, S., Taillieu, T., Duranceau, S.,...,Asmundson, G. J. G. (2018). Mental disorder symptoms among public safety personnel in Canada. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 63(1), 54-64. <http://dx.doi.org.10.1177/0706743717723825>



Have research or a practice program you'd like featured? Send it to us!

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