

# Newsletter of the CPA Section for Students



Issue #12, Spring 2020

**STUDENTS IN PSYCHOLOGY**  
SECTION OF THE CPA

CANADIAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION



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# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

*Greetings to all student members! Bonjour à tous les membres étudiants!*

I am extremely grateful to have served as Chair of the CPA's Section for Students in Psychology for the 2019 - 2020 year. Along with the wonderful members of the Student Section's Executive Team, it was my pleasure to connect with students across the country and to help organize our section's many initiatives.

At around this time of year, I would usually have the pleasure of meeting with all of you face to face at the CPA's annual convention, but our in-person convention was unfortunately cancelled this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year has hardly been a typical year for students to say the least, as our courses, research projects, and clinical practica have all been impacted in some way by the current pandemic. Despite this, I am proud of our team who has continued to work hard to come up with new ways of informing and supporting our membership virtually. For example, the Student Section will be launching an additional Student Research Grant Competition during the Summer of 2020 with the goal of facilitating student research initiatives during this difficult time. On page 16 of this newsletter, we have included several resources for students, some of which are specifically related to COVID-19.

Even though we will not be meeting in person this year, the CPA has announced it will be hosting a virtual convention over the months of July and August. We are excited to share that Dr. Erin Barker from Concordia University will be presenting her research on stress, coping, and well-being among university students, which I believe is particularly relevant given the current global climate. Remember to check out the posters submitted to our section as well!

I hope to have the chance to virtually connect with you all on the convention platform over the coming months, as well as at our Section Business Meeting which will be happening online – check your email for more details about that, coming soon!

It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to several members of the Student Section Executive who will be ending their terms shortly. I would like to thank our Past-Chair, Chelsea Moran, for her outstanding leadership and many contributions to both the Student Section and the broader CPA organization over the past three years. I would also like to thank Jérémie Richard (Graduate Student Affairs Officer), Kate Wilson (Administration and Finance Officer), and Alisia Palermo (Communications Officer who has served for two terms or four years!). Each of these individuals has made many meaningful contributions to our section over the past few years and will greatly be missed! Next year, Joanna Collaton will take on the role of Chair. We will also be welcoming Alejandra Botia (Chair-Elect), Alanna Chu (Communications Officer), Melissa Mueller (Graduate Student Affairs Officer), Nicole Boles (Undergraduate Student Affairs Officer), and Jolie Ho (Administration and Finance Officer) to the team.

The Student Section Executive and myself are here for you and will do our best to respond to any questions or concerns you might have during this difficult and rapidly changing time. I am hopeful that we will have the opportunity to connect in person at convention next year! Until then, stay safe and stay well.

**Alexandra Richard, McGill University**

Email : [alexandra.richard@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:alexandra.richard@mail.mcgill.ca)

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# Catch the Student Section at the Virtual CPA Convention 2020!

Join the Student Section at the 81<sup>st</sup> CPA National Convention and the 1<sup>st</sup> ever Virtual CPA Convention. Although we are saddened by the cancellation of the annual in-person event, we are excited that the convention will be offered **virtually**.

Dates are coming soon for live chats and interactive components. Recordings and other digitized formats will be available **July 6<sup>th</sup> through August 28<sup>th</sup>**. The weekly schedule is available [here](#). Check your emails for regular updates on the Virtual Convention.

This newsletter will feature the various presentations the Student Section hosting at the virtual convention. We hope that you are able to participate in some of the programming!



**Facebook: CPA Section for Students**

<https://www.facebook.com/CPASectionForStudents/>



**Twitter: @CPA\_Students**

Follow us for more information about our Section and convention!



**CPA Section News Page**

Be sure to check <https://cpa.ca/students/news/> and your emails for news from our Section.

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# MEET OUR KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Dr. Erin Barker is a developmental scientist whose program of research examines how emotional experiences and regulation processes engaged in the context of developmental transitions function as risks for compromised well-being and mental health problems. She employs repeated measures methodologies to uncover longer-term and shorter-term processes that differentiate normative and adaptive emotional experiences and regulation processes that promote well-being from those that compromise mental health. Dr. Barker completed her graduate training in lifespan developmental psychology at the Universities of Victoria (M.A.) and Alberta (Ph.D.). She then completed two postdoctoral fellowships in the U.S., first in the Child and Family Research Section of the NICHD, and then at the Waisman Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology and Centre for Research in Human Development (CRDH) at Concordia University, where she directs the “*Lifespan Well-Being Laboratory*.”

## Dr. Erin Barker



### The Transition Puzzle of Well-Being and Distress in the Transition to Adulthood

Canadian youth have been enrolling in university programs at increasing rates, and as a result, the university experience has become a central part of the transition to adulthood for many. University students, as a group, report high levels of distress, which can interfere with the attainment of key developmental tasks, including those associated with the pursuit of post-secondary education. At the same time, large proportions of students also endorse moderate-to-high levels of life satisfaction and happiness. These trends correspond to more general trends with respect to emotional well-being across the transition to adulthood. First, prevalence rates of mental health problems that involve the regulation of emotions, like depression, peak during this period. Second, depressive experiences appear to be on the rise, with recent cohorts of youth reporting more depressive experiences than cohorts from previous generations. At the same time, emotional well-being tends to improve, on average, across the transition. The co-occurrence of these trends demonstrates that the transition to adulthood is a pivotal point in the life course for experiencing emotional problems and signals a need to better understand the nature of emotional experience across this transition. In this talk, Dr. Erin Barker will discuss her recent research aimed at identifying *who*, *when*, and *why* the co-occurring trends are experienced among university students in particular. She will also articulate an integrative *COMPASS Transition Assets* model of strengths in emotion regulation capacity that protect against depressive experiences and foster emotional well-being during this period of the life course.

**Look out for more information about the date and time!**

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# STUDENT SECTION PROGRAMS

## Student Section Posters

Check out the following Student Section posters presented this year in English & French!



1. **Post Secondary Student's use of Social Media and Relationship to Cognitive and Affective Empathy**  
Presenting Author: Dominica Pec
2. **Daily Conflicts and Teen Dating Violence: The Moderating Role of Gender**  
Presenting Author: Andréanne Fortin
3. **Emotional Processes and Executive Functioning: A Multi-Method Approach**  
Presenting Author: Jarvis Neglia
4. **Differentiating Between Authentic and Hubristic Pride: The Contribution of Display Speed**  
Presenting Author: Camille S. Zolopa
5. **La Relation Parent-Enfant Affectée Chez Les Enfants Nés Prématurés d'Âge Préscolaire**  
Presenting Author: Mélissa Vona
6. **Distress Tolerance and Parenting**  
Presenting Author: Carole-Anne Lachance
7. **Association Entre le Sommeil et le Comportement à la Suite d'un TCC Léger Durant la Petite Enfance**  
Presenting Author: Lara-Kim Huynh
8. **Examining child self-reported helpless attributions in relation to anxiety and depression symptoms**  
Presenting Author: Minyeong Cho

Available ONLINE from July 6<sup>th</sup> through August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020

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# ANNUAL STUDENT SECTION BUSINESS MEETING



Chaired by Alexandra Richard.

Please join us to reflect on the past year, as it allows us to provide new resources to the Section. All students are welcome to attend and we look forward to hearing your feedback, particularly surrounding new initiatives!

**Look out for more information about the date and time!**

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# REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Have we convinced you to come to convention yet?

**Anyone who registered for the in-person convention, including pre-convention workshops, will be provided with a full refund.**

In order to attend any of the live or pre-recorded sessions and to access any material presented during the virtual convention, you **must** register online at <https://convention.cpa.ca/registration/>.

VIRTUAL EVENT Registration Fees (June 15, 2020 – August 31, 2020 23:59 EST)			
Category	Rate	HST 13%	Total
CPA Members and Affiliates*	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CPA Honorary Life, Honorary Fellow and Retired Member	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CPA Student Affiliates	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CPA Early Career 1 & 2; Parental Leave	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Non-Members	\$75.00	\$9.75	\$84.75
Student Non-Affiliates	\$15.00	\$1.95	\$16.95

\*Includes members / special affiliates / international affiliates / fellows/ CPA-APA joint members/CPA-APA joint fellows



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# Here's what you've missed!

## ELECTION RESULTS

This year we had several outstanding candidates put their name forward to join our executive. Thank you to all those who expressed interest in the positions and to all those who voted during the election period. We are pleased to welcome the following individuals to our team in June 2020:

**Chair-Elect:** Alejandra Botia (University of British Columbia)

**Administration & Finance Officer:** Jolie Ho (University of Waterloo)

**Graduate Student Affairs Officer:** Melissa Mueller (University of Calgary)

**Undergraduate Student Affairs Officer:** Nicole Boles (University of Calgary)

**Communications Officer:** Alanna Chu (University of Ottawa)

*We look forward to working with you over the upcoming year!*

## GRANT RECIPIENTS

This year, the Student Section awarded two Student Research Grants (\$500 each) and two Campus Initiative Grants (\$500 each). Congratulations to this year's recipients!

### Student Research Grant

**Alejandra Botia** (University of British Columbia)

Title: How Young Adult Women Engage in Decision-Making Processes with their Romantic Partners: Career Development in the Making



**Michael Dubois** (University of Toronto)

Title: The Development of Procedural Memory in the Human Mind and Brain



### Campus Initiative Grant

**Lauren Trafford** (University of Alberta)

Initiative: 13<sup>th</sup> Annual G. M. Dunlop Graduate Student Conference, hosted by the Educational Psychology Graduate Students' Association

**Leah Chadwick** (University of Alberta)

Initiative: Mental Health Workshop Series, hosted by the Graduate Pan-Psychology Partnership

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# NEW OPPORTUNITY: SPRING STUDENT RESEARCH GRANTS

Students, do you need help with funding?

This year, the CPA Section for Students is offering **FOUR** Student Research Grants for Spring 2020. We hope that these grant opportunities will be able to help out students!



This award is intended to support students in undergraduate or graduate programs in any domain or discipline within psychology who are actively engaged in research. Given the costs that are associated with conducting research, and the limited funding that is available to students, the Section for Students wishes to recognize and support student research efforts by awarding **FOUR research grants**, valued at **\$500** each, to help alleviate a small portion of the financial burden.

**Deadline: July 31, 2020**

## Eligibility

To be eligible for this grant, students must meet the following criteria:

1. The applicant must be a current member of the Section for Students of the Canadian Psychological Association
2. The applicant must be the primary investigator and/or first author of the research project
3. The research project for which support is being sought must be relevant to at least one domain or discipline within psychology
4. The research project for which support is being sought must not yet be completed (i.e., does not apply retroactively to completed research projects), and the research and/or data collection must begin within 12 months of the adjudication of this award.

**Instructions for submission and application materials are available at the following link:**

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/yh8h4n6qa14w9/AAA7a85mpf5bils\\_hBZ2Qu7Aa?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/yh8h4n6qa14w9/AAA7a85mpf5bils_hBZ2Qu7Aa?dl=0)

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# GET INVOLVED

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## 1. Join our Executive Team!

Each year, we hold elections for a variety of positions. For our next election period, we will be looking for people to fill the positions of:

- Chair-Elect
- Francophone Affairs Officer

Stay tuned for updates on the election process and check our website for a [Summary of Executive Member Duties](#).

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## 2. Join the Student Mentorship Program!

Are you an undergraduate student looking for support in applying to graduate school? Are you a graduate student looking to get experience in a leadership role? If so, read below for more information about the CPA's Student Mentorship Program.

The CPA Student Mentorship Program offers Student Affiliates the opportunity to engage in peer-mentorship relationships with fellow students. The primary purpose of this program is to facilitate the exchange of information and the sharing of personal and professional experiences amongst CPA Student Affiliate Members with varying levels of education across Canada. Student mentors (i.e., graduate students) have the opportunity to develop and hone their mentoring skills, which can be extended to various professional domains, whereas mentees (i.e., undergraduate students) have a unique experience to extend their knowledge of the various subject areas in psychology, develop their communication skills, and receive guidance around their decisions. Students are matched based on academic or career interests, (e.g., clinical versus experimental psychology), geographical location, as well as specific interests and skills, with the goal being to connect undergraduate student mentees seeking guidance, information, or support with graduate student mentors whom share similar interests, research, and career goals within their domain of psychology. By taking this approach, we hope to provide all students participating in the CPA Student Mentorship Program with the most positive experience that assists them in making lasting connections and achieving their desired educational and career goals.

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To participate in the program, students must be registered as a CPA student affiliate (for more information about becoming a CPA Student Affiliate, click [here](#)). Undergraduate students (mentees) and graduate students (mentors) are asked to complete an application form and submit their CV. Additionally, mentors are asked to provide a personal statement that outlines their previous mentoring experience and describes how they feel they could assist students in a mentorship role. Applications are then matched by the Program Coordinator to create dyads that are compatible based on career goals, interests in specific areas of psychology, geographic location, as well as language and communication preferences. Once paired, mentors and mentees are provided with a training manual to make the mentoring process as smooth as possible. While these tools have been made available to students to facilitate the mentoring process, we have also made efforts to ensure students can tailor this experience to suit the specific needs of each mentorship pair. Ultimately, it is up to each dyad to decide what works best for them, such as how often and through what medium (phone, email, or in person) of communication is mutually convenient for both individuals.

The mentorship was originally developed in 2015 by Zarina Giannone and was coordinated in past years by Jean-Philippe Gagné (2016 – 2017), Chelsea Moran (2017 – 2018), and Alexandra Richard (2018-2019). The most recent iteration, 2019-2020, marked the fifth yearly edition of the CPA Student Mentorship Program, which was coordinated by Joanna Collaton. Joanna, building on the work of the previous program coordinators, worked to expand advertisement of the program across Canada. She successfully recruited and paired 57 mentor-mentee dyads to participate in this year's edition of the program, which was a significant increase from the 39 dyads whom participated last year. A feedback survey was administered mid-way and at the end of the program to assess both mentee and mentor experience. By the end of the program, 77% of participants indicated that most or all of their expectations were met.

If you are interested in participating in the CPA Student Mentorship Program next year, mark your calendars! The call for applications for the 2020 – 2021 academic year will be released in July 2020. We will announce this on our webpage and will also be circulating emails to all our CPA Student Affiliates, so keep an eye out! In the meantime, please feel free to check out our [website](#) for more details about the program, or feel free to email Joanna, the program coordinator, at [joanna.collaton@uoguelph.ca](mailto:joanna.collaton@uoguelph.ca) if you have any questions or concerns about the program. Joanna welcomes the incoming Chair-Elect and program coordinator for 2020-2021, Alejandra Botia, who will begin her term on July 1, 2020. We always welcome feedback from past and current participants to continue to adapt the program to the needs of CPA student affiliates.



### 3. Become a Campus or Student Representative!

The CPA Campus and Student Representative Program promotes many programs, services and benefits that the CPA has to offer for students in psychology, and there are a multitude of leadership opportunities for undergraduate and graduate level students.

**CPA Campus Representatives** have a coordinating role as CPA ambassador and primary point of contact at the college/university. They are responsible for recruiting a designated CPA Graduate and Undergraduate Representative, and collaborating with these individuals to provide psychology students at their university with relevant information. They are also responsible for organizing one event within the academic year relevant to psychology students and the CPA.

**CPA Student Representatives** are ambassadors within their graduate or undergraduate student programs at their college/university. They are responsible for collaborating with the campus representative in providing psychology students with information. Further, they are responsible for helping plan, organize and implement an event within the academic year relevant to psychology students and the CPA. In return for their effort and support, each designated CPA Campus Representative and CPA Student Representative will receive a complimentary one-year membership/affiliation in the CPA.

**In Spring 2020, there were 56 active Student Representatives from over 30 universities all over Canada!**

Check our website to find more information on [How to Become a Student or Campus Representative](#) and for [a list of Canadian universities with vacancies!](#)

To apply, please contact the [Graduate and Undergraduate Student Affairs Officers](#).

### 4. Share your writing talents with us!

The CPA Section for Students has two great ways for you to share your writing with others.

#### Section Newsletter

This newsletter aims to improve the communication within our section and allows you to get to know your executive team, as well as stay up to date on current events. The newsletter is a great place for you to share events and new initiatives related to psychology being held at universities across Canada.

Please contact our Communications Officer ([com.cpastudentsection@gmail.com](mailto:com.cpastudentsection@gmail.com)) for more information on submissions!

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## MindPad

Are you looking to boost your CV? Do you have an article, a paper from a class, or ongoing research that you'd like to share? Well, you could submit it for publication to Mind Pad, Canada's student written, edited, and published newsletter publication.

Mind Pad publishes a range of submissions, including but not limited to:

- Original research summaries (clinical or fundamental);
- Review summaries;
- Psychology career-related articles;
- Opinion articles on a psychology-related topic;
- Reflections on new trends in psychology or psychology research;
- Reflections on psychology in the media;
- Reports on conferences or workshops attended.

Students who are not enrolled in psychology programs may also submit a manuscript to the journal, if its subject-matter falls within one of the subfields of psychology. Please contact us if you wish to check if your subject would be of interest for Mind Pad!

- Your submission should be 800 to 2000 words in length.
- The content of the submission should be of interest to all who are practicing and studying psychology and/or any of its subfields (e.g. neuropsychology, psycholinguistics, social psychology) but the primary audience of Mind Pad are students of psychology.

Check our website for more information on [Mind Pad Editorial Policy and Submissions](#).

Articles and questions should be submitted to Chelsea Moran at [pastchair.cpastudentsection@gmail.com](mailto:pastchair.cpastudentsection@gmail.com) or [chelsea.moran1@ucalgary.ca](mailto:chelsea.moran1@ucalgary.ca). Submissions are accepted on an ongoing basis.

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## New Mind Pad Editorial Policy: Open Science Badges

Articles accepted to Mind Pad are now eligible to earn badges that recognize open scientific practices: publicly available data, material, or preregistered research plans. Open science badges ([Open Science Framework](#)) are incentives to recognize efforts of authors to engage in open science practices, namely providing open access to data, materials and preregistration of methods. The badges also serve to notify readers when supplementary materials are available and enhance their trust of the article presented.

See the [editorial policy](#) for more information.



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### 5. Be in the know!

Be sure to follow us on social media (as mentioned previously in this newsletter), and read those emails we sent you! We offer many resources for students including a variety of student awards throughout the year and we do not want you to miss out on a single one!

Like us on [Facebook](#).

Follow us on [Twitter](#).

Read our emails.

Tell your friends to [become a student affiliate](#).

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# STUDENT RESOURCES

Check out some of these great resources for students in psychology!

## COVID-19 Student Resources

The CPA published two “Psychology Works” Fact Sheets specifically related to psychology students. Check out these two resources for more information:

1. [“Psychology Works” Fact Sheet: Guidance for Psychology Students as Relates to COVID-19](#)
2. [“Psychology Works” Fact Sheet: Student Wellness and COVID-19](#)

We hope you are all staying healthy and safe during this time!

[www.goodhead.ca](http://www.goodhead.ca)

Check out this research-based mental health resource for sexual minority men, [www.goodhead.ca](http://www.goodhead.ca).

This website was designed as a tool to **help gay, bisexual, queer and other guys into guys learn more about the social factors affecting their mental health**. It offers great navigation tips on how to access and to evaluate mental health care supports in Ontario and functions as well as an advocacy tool to expand mental health services for sexual minorities. The website also serves as resource for health service providers working with LGBTQIA2+ communities.



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# How to: Join the Student Section for FREE

There are many benefits associated with your CPA Student Affiliate membership, and many of these are provided through being a member of the CPA Section for Students. When you purchase or renew a CPA Student Affiliate membership, you are not automatically enrolled as a member of the Section for Students – you must choose to join on your online profile. Becoming a member of the Section for Students is completely free, and this ensures that you are eligible for the awards and activities that our Section provides to students. If you want to make sure that you are making the most of your membership, follow the steps below to join!

## Steps to join the CPA Section for Students

1. Log into [Members Only Site](#) and click on “Manage my Profile”.



2. Log in using your credentials on the next page.
3. Scroll down your profile page to "If you wish to join a [Section](#) after you have completed the online renewal, please [Click Here](#)" (Near bottom of page)
4. Scroll down to "Students in Psychology" among the list of CPA Sections and check the box. Then click “Next”

- Sport and Exercise Psychology - \$6.00
- Students in Psychology - \$0.00
- Teaching of Psychology - \$5.00
- Traumatic Stress - \$10.00
- Women and Psychology - \$5.00

Next

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- The payment page will indicate amount owed of \$0.00 (no payment required). Agree with the terms and conditions and click submit – you are now officially a member of the Section for Students!

The screenshot shows a payment interface. At the top, there is a blue header labeled "Payment". Below it, a light blue box contains the text "No payment is required for your Order." Underneath this box is a checkbox that is checked, with the text "I agree to the Terms and Conditions". At the bottom of the form, there are two buttons: a blue "Submit" button on the left and a red "Cancel" button on the right.

- Congratulations! You are now a Student Section Affiliate! *Don't forget to add this to your CV!*



# STUDENT SUBMISSIONS

Thank you to all of the students who submitted a piece for this edition of the Newsletter – we had so many interesting, personal, and useful ones this time!

To submit for the next Newsletter or for more information, please contact our Communications Officer ([com.cpastudentsection@gmail.com](mailto:com.cpastudentsection@gmail.com)).

## List of Submissions (in alphabetical order of author's surname):

1. Chadwick, L., 8 Tips for Applying to Clinical Psychology Graduate School Programs.
2. McCabe, C., Managing COVID-19 and Dealing with Uncertainty.
3. Sackman, S., Staying Well in a Psychology Program with a Mental Illness.
4. Seo, W., How Clinical Depression Changed My Life.
5. Trafford, L. Resources for Staying Connected and Academically Engaged During Quarantine.



## 8 Tips for Applying to Clinical Psychology Graduate School Programs

Leah Chadwick, M.Sc. Student

University of Calgary

Applying for admission to graduate school programs can be an overwhelming and stressful time in a student's academic career. Many students may be unsure of where or how to start the application process, which can create even more anxiety and uncertainty.

I am currently in my second year of the M.Sc. in Clinical Psychology program at the University of Calgary. I have mentored a number of undergraduate students both formally and informally. The most common questions that I receive from mentees involve the process of applying for graduate school programs, so based on my personal application and mentorship experiences, I have compiled a list of tips for applying to Canadian clinical psychology graduate school programs.

1. Understand why you're applying to graduate school and to a clinical psychology program in particular. This may seem obvious, but it's important to truly understand your motivation for applying to graduate school. This may involve asking yourself what your long-term personal and professional goals are or what led you to develop an interest in clinical psychology. Personal exploration will help you to identify programs that fit with your values and can inform what will be written in your Personal Statement. Often it's an applicant's unique background and personal experiences that set them apart from other applicants in the eyes of the admissions committee and potential supervisors.
2. Give yourself lots of time and start your application as early as possible. Graduate school applications can take a lot of time and effort to prepare. You may need to write a standardized exam, such as the GRE, collect transcripts from previous institutions you've attended, and write a Personal Statement or a research project proposal. Many programs also suggest that you contact potential supervisors to check their availability for accepting and supervising graduate students. By starting your application early, you will show your potential supervisor that you're organized, eager, and planning ahead. Giving yourself plenty of time to complete your applications will also help to decrease the stress, anxiety, and time pressure you feel, as well as ensure that you don't miss any important deadlines.

When I applied to graduate school, most applications were due on December 1<sup>st</sup>. With this in mind, I began researching program requirements in May, I wrote the Psychology-specific GRE in August, I reached out to potential supervisors and began preparing my application materials in September, and I wrote the General GRE in October. It isn't necessary to follow this timeline exactly, but it should give you a sense of how it can be beneficial to start the application process as early as possible.

3. Do your research. On that note, do your research so that you know the requirements and deadlines for each program you're interested in applying to. Requirements and deadlines will vary by program, so be sure to know what you need for each one. This information can usually be found online but if you have questions, contact the department. Being thorough in your research will help you avoid any last-minute problems or confusion.



Thoroughly researching a program will also come across in your application. It's important to show that you've spent time familiarizing yourself with the university, department, and program that you're applying to. Learn about the current research that is taking place and understand the university's mission statement and determine whether it aligns with your values (see tip #1). Then use this information to show the admissions committee why you would be a good fit for the environment they provide and how your goals and experiences will benefit their program.

4. **Get advice from first-hand sources.** Part of your research should involve soliciting information from first-hand sources. Although most clinical psychology programs will have information listed online, I found that the most useful and unique information and advice that I received during my application process was from other people who had already gone through the same process. These first-hand sources could be other students, supervisors, or program advisors. If you're part of a lab, speak to your supervisor and more senior lab mates about their graduate school applications. Alternatively, there are a number of mentorship programs that facilitate connections between undergraduate and more senior students, such as the Student Mentorship Program facilitated by the CPA Section for Students in Psychology. Most universities also have dedicated Graduate Program Advisors who have a wealth of knowledge about specific programs. Soliciting advice from first-hand sources could also involve asking for your current supervisor's advice about what your strengths and weaknesses are and how best to address these in your application or asking your classmates to proof-read your applications materials.

5. **Keep your options open, both in terms of programs and research areas.** Practically speaking, clinical psychology graduate school programs are competitive. You can boost your chances of acceptance by applying to more than one program. The number of programs an applicant applies to will depend on a lot of individual factors (interests, values, ability to relocate, etc.) but I recommend applying to approximately five or more programs, if possible. Additionally, undergraduate applicants will often have experience in one or two areas of research but there are so many different areas within clinical psychology that you may not even know you're interested in a topic until you become immersed in it. Your interests and career goals will likely change as you progress through your training, so try not to limit your options by focusing too narrowly on a few specific cities, programs, supervisors, or research areas. Getting involved in something and realizing that you aren't passionate about it can still be an important lesson about learning what you don't like and where you would rather spend your energy.

6. **Prioritize your application tasks and create a schedule.** Once you've done some research, talked to other students and supervisors, and narrowed down which programs you intend to apply to, create a priority list of what needs to be done and when you'll do it. Then work on your applications in that order. Do you need to schedule and study for the GRE? Which supervisors should you reach out to? When is the deadline for requesting official transcripts? Creating a to-do list and a schedule will help you stay organized and can make the overall application process feel less overwhelming. Personally, I created an Excel spreadsheet that contained all of the requirements and deadlines for each program I intended to apply to. This was helpful for staying organized and it allowed me to see which tasks were the highest priority and needed to be completed first, without worrying that I was going to miss any important deadlines.



7. **Be interesting.** Market your uniqueness, even (in fact, especially) if it falls outside the realm of the 'typical' graduate school application. Yes, it's important to have good grades and research experience, but every competitive applicant will have these. You will be interacting with other students, supervisors, and clients for the remainder of your training and career, so it's also important to be an interesting human. Supervisors look for the best fit in a graduate school applicant, not necessarily the best student, so figure out what makes you interesting and sets you apart from others, and then market yourself.

In my applications, I made a point to discuss the impact that living abroad for several years had on me and how my experiences shaped me into the person I am today. I also highlighted my work experiences that were not related to psychology at all and the different skill sets that they helped to develop. Several supervisors that I have interviewed with have mentioned how interesting and unique my past experiences are and how they had contributed to my success and appeal as an applicant, not only for graduate school but also for practicum and scholarship applications. Every person has something unique about them and it can pay off to spend time identifying and cultivating these areas of your life.

8. **Manage your expectations and learn from rejection.** Finally, it is important to set realistic expectations about applying to graduate school. Clinical psychology, and academia in general, is competitive and rejection is common. If your application(s) is unsuccessful, try to use it as a learning opportunity. Are there areas of your application that you could spend time strengthening? Or perhaps the programs or supervisors you've chosen to apply to are not a good fit for your specific skill set and goals. Do you need to cast your net wider and apply to a greater range and variety of programs?

If an application is unsuccessful, there is nothing wrong with waiting a few weeks and then contacting the admissions committee to request feedback on your application. But also keep in mind that rejection isn't necessarily a direct reflection of you as a person. A lot of factors play into acceptance or rejection to a graduate school program, such as the availability of a supervisor to accept students and the competitiveness of other applicants. It's common for students to take time off between finishing their undergraduate degree and applying to graduate school in order to work on strengthening their application, or for it to take several rounds of applications to get accepted into a program. Extend some self-compassion to yourself and then use rejections (not only in terms of graduate school, but in life) as a learning experience and motivation for the next attempt.



Courtney McCabe, University of Guelph-Humber

# Managing COVID-19 and Dealing With Uncertainty

Make self-care a priority by exercising, sleeping, and eating well.

Avoid ruminating about what you cannot control, such as how other people behave, feel, think, and make decisions.

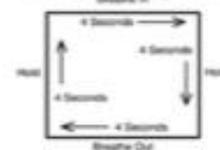
Focus on things in your control such as how much news you read and watch, cleaning the house, being kind to others, learning a new skill, handling your feelings, choosing to self-soothe, and the decisions you make...

Go easy on yourself and others. Remember that we all react differently to stressful situations.



1. Journaling about your feelings and emotions

2. Practicing breathing exercises such as box breathing, which helps to calm the nervous system



3. Connecting with family or friends to ask for help

4. Limiting how much information you consume to what is essential

5. Finding a relaxing hobby

## Instead of...

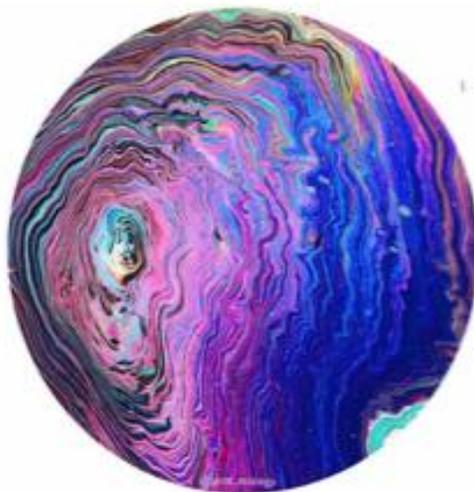
1. Hiding and bottling up your feelings

2. Pushing your limits

3. Trying to do it all

4. Watching the news 24/7

5. Over sleeping



## Staying Well in a Psychology Program with a Mental Illness

Shae Sackman, University of Regina

Being an undergraduate student in psychology working to get into honours so they can go into graduate school is a difficult task to undertake under the best conditions. Doing this with a mental illness adds an extra consideration that can be incredibly difficult to manage.

There are many tips and suggestions that talk about how to maintain mental health and they often suggest getting adequate sleep, ensuring that you take time to care for your body and checking in with others. While these are hugely important to maintain mental health for everyone (not just those experiencing mental illnesses!), these things enable you to do the work you need to accomplish, and are not strategies for getting the work done while managing symptoms. Everyone's needs are different, but here are some ideas for working through your next semester.

### **Harnessing the benefits of structure:**

Psychology programs are generally rigorous and very limiting. Many symptoms of mental illness are best managed through adequate planning. Taking the time when you are having a good day to work out a plan for your worst days is one of the kindest, most proactive things you can do for yourself. Using the schedules you get as you move through your program as your outline not only keeps you invested in what you are working on, but provides a starting point for developing a way to approach your work. From here, assess your semester's requirements. Use syllabuses, lab schedules and other duties to create a picture of what kind of effort and time investment will be needed to accomplish your goals. As you develop a schedule, plot out assignment due dates and list out the steps that will be needed to cross them off the list. There is a tendency to go through classes just reacting to due dates and assignments. This more intentional method of looking at your term holistically not only provides you with an idea of the actual hours needed to accomplish what is coming up, but allows you to foresee potential problem areas that you can prepare for. The best possible solution to experiencing problems with symptoms down the road is to have planned very carefully in the first place.

### **Communicating your intentions and needs:**

Talking about your needs as someone who experiences symptoms of mental illness can be incredibly fraught and difficult. Many mental illness issues are incredibly difficult to gain accommodations for due to the medical model of disability many Universities employ in managing support for students. One tactic to mitigating some of the pressures mental illness symptoms can present is to actively show your dedication to your program and in your classes. It is much easier for professors to assist you if they know you are invested and hard working. You can accomplish this relationship without disclosing any uncomfortable information, and the connections you make by asking questions, engaging with the material, and inquiring about what you can do to improve are incredibly beneficial when looking for labs to to volunteer in, or looking for other opportunities in your program. Becoming a steward of your own work is a great way to set a kind of pro-communication mindset for your goals.



**Educate yourself:**

Investigating some of the mechanisms of your mental illness and its symptoms can help inform you as to how to best approach completing work and engaging with a psychology program. It also allows you unique insight and a different way to study concepts you will be engaging with at some point in your education! Becoming acquainted with the reasons why your experiences are the way they are lets you work in psychology in a different way than just a strictly academic one. This more personal education can help you figure out what your communication needs may be, or may indicate how best you learn material. The experience of educating yourself on something personally relevant to your life and your work in a University program can be a powerful and important experience.

More than ever psychology needs diverse individuals dedicated to the discipline. Managing a mental illness while navigating higher education is not often spoken about frankly. In order to grow a varied and well-rounded pool of talent in psychology, we need to have these conversations and share our experiences and resources so as to help and encourage others.

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## How Clinical Depression Changed My Life

Wonjin Seo, Ph.D. Student

University of Western Ontario

### Diagnosed with Clinical Depression

Depression is the most prevalent mental health issue in the general population. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), over 300 million people in the world were suffering from depression in 2015. WHO anticipates that depression will be the second-most significant disease in terms of socio-economic burden in 2020. As such, I too have battled with depression.

I was diagnosed with major depressive disorder (MDD) approximately ten years ago. I was depressed, nervous, hypervigilant, and pessimistic all at the same time. My blood pressure was over 160/100 due to ongoing anxiety. My heartbeat was irregular, I was always overwhelmed by my feelings, and I had extreme insomnia. Sometimes suicidal thoughts would whisper to me like a devil on my shoulder, "Hey, there is no reason for you to live". I feared meeting people because of my struggles, which prevented me from seeking social support. My life was hell. It felt like I was alone, with no hope and no future. Like the devil said, there was no reason for me to be alive.

I began taking medication (SSRIs) as prescribed by my psychiatrist. A couple of weeks later, the medicine began to take effect. My depressive, anxious, and paranoid feelings were alleviated. I could almost return to my normal life. One day, I asked my psychiatrist, "Why did I become depressed?" and "How can I avoid this condition?" She did not answer the question directly but instead advised me to keep taking the medication. I felt I was suffocating; I did not want to rely on the medicine for the rest of my life.

### The book that changed everything

I began looking for information about what depression is, what the cause of it is, and how to overcome it. I happened to read a book titled 'Abnormal Psychology,' written by a couple of professors of psychology. The mood disorder section of it made me feel hopeful. It was amazing to me that the authors knew almost all the symptoms of depression. How did they examine and collect data on the causes and effects of depression? I was awed by all the contents on depression in the mood disorder chapter, which led me to a new life path.

I contemplated my future again and again, and finally decided to prepare for the exam to enter graduate school in the Department of Psychology at Duksung University in my country, South Korea. I hoped to specialize in Clinical Psychology. My aims were to better understand the harmful disease of depression, how to handle and overcome it, and ways to help others who suffer from the same disease all over the world. I wished that my personal vivid experience battling depression would give me a unique perspective for helping others. With this earnest wish, I was admitted into graduate school, majoring in Clinical Health Psychology.



## Relapse and Recovery

Occasionally my depression would recur even though I kept taking medicine. The levels of my depressive symptoms went up and down. At that time, I was taking a class dealing with 'mindfulness meditation' as well as 'cognitive distortion'. One day, during class, I recognized that my cognition, my way of thinking, was distorted. I realized that I thought of myself as having a lower capacity to do anything compared to others. I believed that the world was out to get me and that things were often not right or fair. Moreover, if something bad happened, I would assume ownership for the blame.

The techniques I was learning in my classes were very helpful. They allowed me to break out of my distorted thoughts and I could see myself detached. Finally, I felt like I was finally understanding the cause of my problem.

This new insight helped me for a while. To be honest, however, it was not much help for me in terms of dealing with depression in the long term. I realized that knowing what the cause is does not guarantee successfully managing and overcoming the disease. By that time, another psychiatrist suggested that I take an additional medicine, called 'Lithium', which is used to deal with 'bipolar disorder'. As I had already studied bipolar disorder and its medicine, I desperately said to myself that "This is not supposed to happen to me!". I knew that my depression was a type of 'neurosis,' but that I could handle it on my own and with some help from a milder medication. Bipolar disorder, however, is more likely to be categorized as a 'psychosis,' which is definitely much more serious. With this news, I felt the pressure of an impending "manic" episode.

To escape from further deterioration of my condition, I participated in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) with a psychiatry resident. I learned how to cope with my unhealthy ways of thinking, to relieve the symptoms of my depression for about a month, but the effect was something I could not maintain over time. I realized that the effect of the CBT was not necessarily compatible with treatment. Rather, it interfered with treatment. This was such a conundrum for me.

## Conquering Depression with a Sense of Achievement

As I mentioned, I was a master's student majoring in clinical health psychology at the time. I had fought depression ceaselessly. Despite trying many different treatments, I could not overcome my dark feelings. It seemed that I was at a dead end.

I clearly remember that it was in late April 2014 when I abruptly wanted to do something meaningful as a master's student for the sake of eschewing my bad feelings. I embarked on my first research study with the support of my academic advisor. With immense effort, I managed to finish my first project, successfully conducting my first oral presentation at a conference. Due to this great experience, I felt more confident than before. For the first time in a long time, I felt like I could achieve whatever I wanted.

As this successful experience acted as a type of reinforcement for my research, I could keep doing my research into other issues during the rest of my degree. Finally, I completed seven poster presentations, two oral presentations in a variety of psychology conferences, and two papers published in addition to my thesis. Moreover, I was honored with two academic awards, including best poster from division 12 of the American Psychological Association and best paper from my graduate school. This series of great experiences motivated my desire to achieve more and increased my sense of efficacy; all of which gave me optimism for beating my depression.



## Second Life

During the 3rd term of my master's degree, I recognized that despite the enormous advances in the treatment of depression, there was no panacea. This is due, in part, to individual differences that result in significant variation. In my case, there were a few different therapies that worked for a while, but they did not have any lasting effects. This may be due to the fact that my treatment plan was not tailored to my specific needs. Since people are inherently different, the treatment must reflect those differences. I believe that my experiences have helped me recognize the importance of person-specific therapy. For me, the ability to achieve something meaningful imbued me with a sense of self-efficacy. Major depressive disorder can be a very broad concept, but my struggles have helped me to understand the specific nature of my own depression.

It has been a long road, but it has brought me to this point and I am confident in my direction. I have been given the good fortune of being able to pursue my Ph.D. at a prestigious research university in Canada. It is here that I will continue to develop my understanding of resilience, self-efficacy, and the dynamics of depression. During my personal struggles, my inherent resilience may have acted as a driving force in my recuperation from depression. I intend to further explore this hypothesis and conduct more research stemming from my experiences. I hope that my work will help people foster their resilience and thereby discover their latent potential to overcome many kinds of mental illnesses. This story, however, would not be possible without depression. Crisis can be an opportunity for a better life when it compels you to combat your personal devils. I believe that mental illness should not have to be a stigmatized disease. If it is properly understood, we may be that much closer to realizing who we truly are.

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## Resources for Staying Connected and Academically Engaged During Quarantine

Lauren Trafford, M.Ed. Student

University of Alberta

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Canadians everywhere is undeniable. As a graduate student who was positioned to be finishing her Master of Education degree this spring, the pandemic came at a time that was supposed to be filled with hard work, joy, pride, and celebration with my fellow graduates. For many others, the changes that accompanied a nation-wide quarantine called for work to stop—employees were laid off, schools were closed, and life as we knew it came to a grinding halt.

Self-compassion in such stressful times can look like so many different things, including reducing the pressure to perform and be productive so that more energy can be devoted to surviving each uncertain day. Allowing oneself the grace to slow down when needed is an important skill, but it was not the coping strategy that worked best for me. It became quickly apparent that I am soothed by my work. I am privileged to be studying in a field that I am passionate about, and staying involved in my academic journey has, so far, proven to be the most self-compassionate act I can do for myself in quarantine. This article is for anyone who feels the same, and is also striving to stay connected and academically engaged.

Graduate school has already curated a reputation for being an isolating experience. This is especially clear as more and more memes are shared claiming to show “before and after” images of lonely graduate students before the COVID-19 pandemic and now, where the punch line is that each image is identical (and equally lonely). However, as I have had more time to reflect on the experience of shifting to academic work *à la quarantine*, I have started to appreciate how many opportunities for connection and engagement I actually had. Curating new opportunities for connection and engagement in these strange times requires creativity and flexibility. In my quest to stay involved in my work, I have come across several useful resources:

**Focusmate.** This website is relatively new, and is marketed with the impressive tagline “distraction-free productivity.” Essentially, Focusmate pairs virtual “co-workers” for 50-minute stretches of time via the website’s video platform. Like Zoom, users can mute and unmute their audio and video and are able to use the chat function to stay connected. Unlike Zoom, there are community guidelines to follow—users are expected to spend no more than 1 minute at the start of each call sharing which goal they are trying to accomplish in that session, working to break projects down into tasks that can be reasonably completed in 50 minutes or less. At the end of each session, co-workers share their successes and congratulate one another. Essentially, this website fosters accountability to a partner working somewhere in the world at the same time as you by inviting them into your workspace via webcam. Although this website is not targeted specifically to academics, I have had the good fortune of being paired with other post-secondary students and find it energizing to be working alongside other students. Hearing about the research being done around the world enhances my connection to my own work. ([focusmate.com](https://focusmate.com))



***I Should Be Writing Facebook Group.*** This Facebook group is targeted to women in academia and is moderated by Dr. Cathy Mazak, a tenured professor and academic writing coach. Along with the helpful content and resources Cathy posts, discussions on the *I Should Be Writing* page are filled with encouragement, tips, tricks, questions, and answers from academic professionals around the world looking to write and publish more. The group offers a valuable source of support and social connection. ([facebook.com/groups/ishouldbewriting/](https://facebook.com/groups/ishouldbewriting/))

**Instagram Graduate Student Accounts.** Being intentional about your social media feeds can be challenging. I use my primary Instagram account for following friends and family, and have set up a separate username for following inspiring, mindful content. Seeing posts from other graduate students trying to find their way through a health crisis has been reassuring, inspiring, and motivating. There are likely many, many more accounts worth following, but some of my favourites include:

- @ **academeology** (Sarah, Canadian PhD student)
- @ **ourpersonalstatement** (Chantal & Hanna, Canadian PhD students)
- @ **phdessentials** (Jacqueline, Canadian PhD student)\*
- @ **scholarculture** (Christine, Canadian PhD student)
- @ **grad\_selfcare** (Katherine, PhD student)
- @ **gradwritesslack** (academic writing group for graduate students)
- @ **growingthroughgradschool** (Becky & Chris, PhD students)
- @ **phd\_balance** (mental health support group for graduate students)

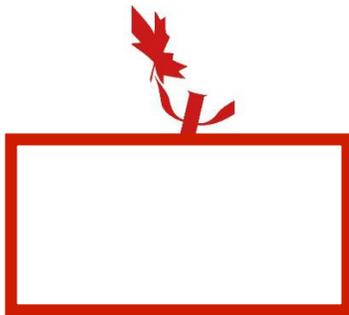
\*Jacqueline also has a YouTube channel with pre-recorded “Study or Write With Me” videos, which can provide a sense of companionship when working alone. ([youtube.com/jacquelinebeaulieu](https://youtube.com/jacquelinebeaulieu))

**Coursera.** There is already more than enough to do with everything that is going on, so this resource may not resonate with many. However, I have enrolled in some interesting free courses offered through Coursera and find that it provides some of the familiar comforts of a more structured “school day.” Coursera has structured assignment “deadlines”—although there is no real penalty for missing them—and I am able to tune into lectures when it is convenient for me. Starting my day in the morning with a lecture video helps me to warm up for the rest of the day while remaining relatively low-stakes, as oppose to trying to undertake thesis writing when my brain is still just revving up. I have found many other relevant, free courses through the social media accounts listed above (including a webinar on teaching and learning, writing workshops, and a priceless R programming course delivered by a university professor who was feeling housebound and generous). While those opportunities are fleeting, Coursera’s platform is an archived hub for free online learning. ([coursera.org](https://coursera.org))

It is worth repeating that self-compassion can look different for everyone—there is no right way to “be” during this pandemic. There is no guilt or shame in taking a step back from work or academia now or any time that it is needed, just as I have learned to accept my need to lean in to work in order to self-regulate. One method of self-compassion does not devalue the other. I am grateful for these resources and the support of my cohort, and I encourage all students of psychology to set aside time for reflection, and to find ways to connect that are most meaningful for them.



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