



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY

School of Behavioral Health

Doctoral Candidates
Town and Gown Ceremony
June 11, 2021

Program

Processional.....*Triumphal March* from *Aida* by Giuseppe Verdi

Welcome.....Dr. Beverly J. Buckles

Opening Prayer.....Dr. Adam Aréchiga

Graduate Awards.....Dr. Beverly J. Buckles

Research Excellence Awards.....Dr. Susanne Montgomery

Reading of Dissertation Abstracts.....Dr. Kendal Boyd

Hooding of Graduates.....Families, Friends, and Faculty

Closing Prayer.....Dr. Beverly J. Buckles

Recessional.....*Rondeau* by Jean Joseph Mouret



Psychology

Doctor of Psychology in Clinical Psychology

Nicole Bennett, PsyD

Body Dissatisfaction, Verbal Commentary, Social Influences, and Cigarette Smoking

Body dissatisfaction and smoking are linked with development of eating disorders and premature death, respectively. The study examined body dissatisfaction as a mediator of the relationship between sociocultural influences, including positive verbal commentary, and cigarette smoking, while controlling for BMI in a sample of young adult women. There were no significant mediators or predictors of smoking. Sociocultural influences, verbal commentary, and BMI predicted body dissatisfaction, which fit with previous research. Possible explanations are discussed.

Chairperson: Dr. Holly Morrell

Acknowledgements: *This journey was possible because of the encouragement and support from my parents and friends, especially my husband, as well as God's provision and blessing.*

Hooding by: Jon Bennett (Husband)

Dylan Faire, PsyD

A Review of Malingering Measures in Psychology

Malingering describes the act of feigning physical or psychological symptoms for external gain, which may include exaggerating symptoms on psychological testing. Thus, standardized measures are needed to detect malingering and invalid responses for accurate interpretation of test results. This review examines existing literature on the most well-known cognitive and psychiatric malingering measures. Optimal contexts, in terms of population and setting, for each measure are examined, and directions for future research and recommendations discussed.

Chairperson: Dr. Grace Lee

Acknowledgements: *I acknowledge Dr. Grace Lee for all her help and support along this journey! I couldn't be more thankful!*

Hooding by: Jacob Manuel (friend/fellow intern)

Christopher Law, PsyD

The Association Between Stigma and Violence among Individuals with Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a psychotic disorder characterized by positive, negative, and cognitive symptoms. Individuals with schizophrenia (IWS) are often stigmatized and portrayed as dangerous though many are not. While medication adherence can significantly reduce the risk for aggressive/violent behaviors, medication noncompliance is a significant issue and is further complicated by IWS's perceptions of stigma. More research is needed and there should be a greater emphasis on addressing stigma in treatment for IWS.

Chairperson: Dr. Colleen Brenner

Acknowledgements: *My deepest gratitude to Drs. Brenner and Flynn for inspiring me to finish this project. To my wife, son, friends, and family, for their love and support through this long journey.*

Kaylin Miller, PsyD

Stage Two Outpatient Adolescent Recovery Program

Self-harm is a broad term used to describe the intentional injury to oneself. A qualitative study was conducted to examine how an adolescent self-harm recovery program was received. Using grounding-theory techniques to code feedback gathered from program participants, we analyzed themes to inform revisions to the current treatment manual. This manual is critical for the recovery of adolescents who self-harm, with a focus on treating the underlying trauma symptoms of the self-harm behaviors.

Chairpersons: *Dr. Bryan Cafferky and Dr. Cameron Neece*

Acknowledgements: *With God's help, may pain and suffering leave this world.*

David Ross, PsyD

The Effects and Mechanisms of Phytochemicals on Alzheimer's Disease Neuropathology

Alzheimer's disease affects millions of people, yet pharmacological treatments are limited. In the absence of effective treatments, identifying factors that can decrease the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease is critical. Growing evidence suggests that dietary fruits and vegetables have neuroprotective effects against harmful oxidative stress, neuroinflammation, and aging, mediated by phytochemicals with antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory, properties. Thus, regular consumption of bioactive phytochemicals from fruits and vegetables could attenuate age- and insult-related Alzheimer's disease neuropathology.

Chairperson: *Dr. Richard Hartman*

Acknowledgements: *My deepest gratitude to Dr. Hartman who let me to take part in the incredible work that he does. His contribution to the field and the students mean more than he likely knows.*

Michelle Simpson, PsyD

Treatment and Recovery in Schizophrenia

While many now recognize recovery from schizophrenia is possible, treatment has been primarily focused on symptom remission and improved functioning. This review examines the connection between each evidence-based treatment and the recovery model to which they best align. In order to provide the best treatment possible to consumers, adaptations to current treatments as well as developing more effective treatments built on personal recovery-oriented principles such as helping an individual find meaning and purpose are necessary.

Chairperson: *Dr. Colleen Brenner*

Acknowledgements: *I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my mother, friends, and family whose love and support through this long endeavor has been instrumental to this accomplishment.*

Hooding by: *Fay Simpson (mother) and Lance Taylor (brother)*



Psychology

Doctor of Philosophy in Clinical Psychology

Grant Griffin Boostrom, PhD

The Role of Therapeutic Processes in an Abbreviated MBSR Intervention for Parents of Children with Developmental Delays

This study investigated therapeutic processes variables in a randomized-control trial testing stress-reduction intervention for parents of children with developmental delays. Findings indicated the group negative relationship factor was a significant predictor and the positive working factor was a marginally significant predictor of changes in parenting stress from baseline to post-treatment in both intervention groups. Post-hoc results indicated that therapeutic processes work differently for different relationships within the group.

Chairperson: Dr. Cameron Neece

Acknowledgements: My God, my family, my friends, my peers, my children, my wife, and my soul.

Hooding by: Chantelle Boostrom (wife) and Emilia Isabelle Boostrom (daughter)

Andrea Briseno, PhD

Exploring the Effects of Age in a Drosophila melanogaster Model of Traumatic Brain Injury

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is one of the leading causes of death worldwide and can lead to immediate and long-term behavioral deficits. We assessed behavior and physiological parameters in a *Drosophila melanogaster* (fruit fly) model of TBI. Young, middle, and old *Drosophila* received a TBI or sham procedure followed by a variety of assays. Old flies took significantly longer to recover from the TBI and did not climb as high as young and middle-aged flies.

Chairperson: Dr. Richard Hartman

Acknowledgements: Thank you to my parents, Dale and Jesus, my fiancé Mark, my brothers, family, and friends. Your love and support helped me to pursue my dreams.

Hooding by: Dale and Jesus Briseno (parents)

Neilson Chan, PhD

Anxiety in Preschool-Aged Children with Autism: Rates, Symptoms, and Predictors

Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are at a high risk for anxiety; however, few studies have examined this in early childhood. The current study included a preschool-aged sample of children with and without ASD to examine rates, symptoms, and predictors of anxiety. Findings suggest that children with ASD are at a higher risk for clinically-significant anxiety compared to typically-developing peers. Restricted/repetitive behaviors and interests was a significant predictor of anxiety in those with ASD.

Chairperson: Dr. Cameron Neece

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Hooding by: Elena Luo Chan (wife)

Yasmine Kolahi, PhD

Symptoms, Executive Function, Mentalization, and Functional Capacity in Schizophrenia

The deleterious effect that schizophrenia has on real world functioning has become a treatment target and burgeoning focus of research. We examined the effect that negative symptoms, executive functioning, and metacognition have on overall functional outcomes. The metacognitive domain of self-reflectivity was shown to explain the relationship between higher order cognition and functioning. This study provides support for the integration of metacognitive interventions into traditional Cognitive Remediation Programs, especially those that target higher-order functions.

Chairperson: Dr. Colleen Brenner

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Hooding by: Flora Kolahi (mother)

Hyo Jin “Jenny” Lee, PhD

Correlates of Problematic Gambling as Correlates of Problematic Video Game Use

Problematic video game use is associated with negative physical and mental health problems. This study applied correlates of gambling disorder in the context of video games, and tested them as predictors of PVGU using structural equation modeling. As hypothesized, gaming fallacies, locus of control, and increased video game use all had significant, positive relationships with problematic video game use. Considering these correlates in combination may aid in assessment and treatment of problematic video game use.

Chairperson: Dr. Holly Morrell

Hooding by: Dr. Holly Morrell

Ann Nguyen, PhD

Factors Related to Cognitive Reserve in Healthy Older Adults

Cognitive reserve describes one's ability to cope more successfully with age-related brain changes. Multiple factors—including education, intelligence, and occupational complexity—contribute to cognitive reserve. However, it remains unclear whether the protective effect of these factors is modified by genetic risk and physical functioning. Education and intelligence were strongly associated with cognitive function. Higher physical functioning enhanced the protective effect of intelligence on language, but ApoE genotype did not modify the effects of education or intelligence on cognition.

Chairperson: Dr. Grace Lee

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Hooding by: Tin and Thang Nguyen (parents)

Shaina Ponce, PhD

Subjective Emotional Experience and Social Cognition in Schizophrenia and Healthy Controls

Individuals with schizophrenia have impaired social cognition. It is not clear to what extent subjective valence and arousal impact social cognition. We found that healthy controls were better at recognizing emotions at the extremes of valence. Theory of Mind predicted emotion recognition, but Empathy did not. The schizophrenia group performed worse overall and rated images as more pleasant. Results indicate that subjective experience impacts domains of social cognition differently for schizophrenia and healthy controls.

Chairperson: Dr. Colleen Brenner

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Hooding by: Aniel Ponce (husband)

Darrell Rice, PhD

The WISDOM Program as a Treatment for Geriatric Psychopathology

We examined the effectiveness of the LLU WISDOM program, an 8-week intensive outpatient program for older adults, in improving depression, anxiety, and cognitive function. Pre- and post-treatment scores of WISDOM patients were compared with those of patients receiving usual care. Although participants' scores improved over time, the change was not statistically significant, and there were no significant differences between the WISDOM and usual-care groups. Future research with a larger sample is needed to further evaluate the program's effectiveness.

Chairperson: Dr. Grace Lee

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Hooding by: Dale and Sandra Rice (parents)

Lelah Villalpando, PhD

Neurofeedback: An Examination of Attentional Processes in Adults with Self-Reported PTSD Symptoms

Trauma survivors are often treated with talk-based therapeutic interventions, which can trigger the limbic system, thus keeping a person in a constant state of fight or flight. For this reason, many trauma survivors are motivated to consider alternative treatments, such as neurofeedback training, which shifts the focus of the intervention away from the emotional part of the brain. The results of this study indicate neurofeedback training is an effective intervention to treat PTSD symptoms.

Chairperson: Dr. Grace Lee

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Hooding by: Reverend Dakota Baker (father) and Adam Villalpando (husband)

Katherine Wu, PhD

Therapist Boundary Crossings in the Digital Age: Psychologists' Practice Frequencies and Perceptions of Ethicality

Clinical psychologists are challenged as ethical decisionmakers by ever-expanding digital technologies. Two hundred and fifty-six (256) doctoral-level U.S. psychologists rated their practice frequencies and ethicality ratings regarding four therapist digital boundary crossing behaviors with clients. The study also examined six potential predictors of frequencies and ratings. Results revealed that psychologists' practice frequencies and ethicality ratings for the four crossings varied widely. Significant predictors (therapist gender and hours of professional experience) were identified only for one crossing: patient-targeted Googling.

Chairperson: Dr. Janet Sonne

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Hooding by: Dr. Su-Syin Wu (mother) and Nicholas Wu (father)



Counseling and Family Sciences

**Doctor of Philosophy in Systems, Families, and Couples
Doctor of Philosophy in Family Studies**

Sandra Banjoko, PhD
Systems, Families, and Couples

What's Faith Got to Do with It? Christian Sexual Scripts and the Transition into Marriage

Christian sexuality research has minimally explored the relationship between religious culture, personal faith, sexual expression, and eroticism. This limited focus demonstrates the urgent need to reconcile how Christian culture and theology shapes sexual identity. The results from this study revealed that the three main influences are familial culture, church culture, and the culture outside. The conclusion of this research was used to form The Phases of Transition and the inter-phase negotiation model.

Chairpersons: Dr. Jackie Williams-Reade and Dr. Zephon Lister

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Natalie Wei-Mun Hsieh, PhD
Systems, Families, and Couples

Constructing Bicultural Identity and Shame Resilience in Chinese Americans

Shame frequently prevents Asian Americans from seeking or staying in therapy, but dominant shame resilience theories are unattuned to social location and bicultural identity complexities. This qualitative study explores shame and identity construction for 1.5 and second generation Chinese Americans. Findings illuminate how social groups and Face and Race identity constructs frame how participants experience shame, with movement from Shame-Influenced to Whole-Self Identity Resilience facilitated by Change Processes that promote the reclaiming of whole self.

Chairpersons: Dr. Bryan Cafferky and Dr. Jackie Williams-Reade

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Hooding by: Nick Hsieh (husband), Derek and Leah Wong (parents)

Yency Garcia, PhD

Family Studies

Needs Assessment for Familias Latinas Unidas

Familias Latinas Unidas (FLU) is a 12-week psychotherapy program designed for Hispanic high school students and their parents. It especially targets students between the ages of 15 and 18 who would be the first in their family to attend college. FLU addresses cultural stressors that are known to interfere with the pursuit of higher education in this population. FLU has been endorsed by community leaders in education and will be implemented across Southern California.

Chairperson: Dr. Winetta Oloo

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Hooding by: Juan Padilla (father) and Roger Garcia (husband)



Social Work and Social Ecology

Doctor of Philosophy in Social Policy and Social Research

Nenette Caceres, PhD

Exploring the Social and Cultural Determinants of Latino Older Adults' Quality of Life

Although there is consensus that cultural values are mediators of quality of life (QoL), few studies explore this and almost none focus on Latino older adults. This dissertation explored the influence of traditional Latino cultural assets (familismo, respeto, personalismo, and religion) on QoL among Latino older adults, guided by social capital theory. Religiosity, familismo, and personalismo were not significantly associated with QoL; acculturation and enculturation were important factors and greater levels of respeto were associated with decreased QoL.

Chairperson: Dr. Larry Ortiz

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Nipher Malika, PhD

Understanding the Psychosocial Factors Affecting Prostate Cancer Screening in African Immigrant Men

Black men are disproportionately affected by prostate cancer (PCa); however, little research has explored subgroup differences and the role of psychosocial factors and their impact on screening. The aim of this dissertation was to address that gap. Our results suggest that Black men are not a monolithic group and that differences exist in PCa psychosocial factors that affect screening behaviors. These differences should be considered when seeking to address persistent PCa health disparities in Black men.

Chairperson: Dr. Susanne Montgomery

Hooding by: Julie Young (family friend), Hezekiah and Catherine Malika (parents)

