

# HEADLINES

September 2020 / VOLUME 15/ ISSUE 5

## COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESEARCH

DR. SANDRA MEIER USES  
SMARTPHONE RESEARCH TO  
STUDY IMPACTS OF COVID-19



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# HEAD LINES

# MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM HEAD

With the evening temperatures cooling off, there can be no doubt we are moving into fall and the resumption of academic activities put on pause for the summer. Of course, this year the COVID-19 pandemic will shape how these activities take place as it continues to change how we live and work. Both topics are key themes of this issue of *Headlines*.

Our feature article this month focuses on the research of **Dr. Sandra Meier**, scientist and Canada Research Chair in Psychopathology and Youth Mental Health at the IWK. Her innovative collaboration with colleagues in computer science uses data from a novel mobile app to track the impact of social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic on youth mental health. Dr. Meier's project is a great example of how our department's researchers rapidly moved into studying the effects of the pandemic, winning a number of highly competitive grants this past spring.

In a learner profile, **Dr. Katie Radchuck**, a child and adolescent psychiatry fellow, describes how the rapid clinical transition to virtual care during the COVID-era both inspired her and facilitated an innovative rural elective in Truro all the while remaining physically in Halifax. I am excited about the possibility of technology allowing us to improve services to rural communities and this experience is a great example of how this might work.

As we start the new academic year, we welcome six new MSc students to our highly successful graduate program. These six women come to us from



*Dr. Jason Morrison*

both local and international venues – check out their profiles on page 12.

Another new start this fall will be **Dr. Angela Cooper**, a psychologist, department member, and now the new Assistant Dean of Faculty Wellness in the Faculty of Medicine. Congratulations to Dr. Cooper on being the successful applicant for this very competitive new position. I am very proud of the leadership roles our department contributes to the Faculty of Medicine.

**Dr. Gail Eskes** is our profiled researcher this month. Please read about her interdisciplinary research in attention and cognition, including the development of a clinical tool to assess attention across conditions in the clinical neurosciences.

This issue also presents a number of accolades to department members

including new books by **Dr. Rami Rudnick** and **Dr. Brad Kellin**, a lifetime contribution award to **Dr. David Pilon**, the 2020 Teacher of the Year Award for **Dr. Selene Etches**, and a CPA Award for Innovation in Education Leadership for **Dr. Cheryl Murphy**. Congratulations to everyone – your achievements bring prestige and recognition to the department.

As we enter an uncertain fall, with the possibility of a second wave of COVID-19 looming, I feel assured that we will successfully navigate whatever challenges present themselves over the next few months. I was deeply impressed and appreciative of the positive and pragmatic approach our staff and faculty took during the rollercoaster of changes through the spring. I share Dr. Radchuck's sense that when talented and caring people work together to solve our common problems, anything is possible.

# ON THE COVER



**Dr. Sandra Meier**, the Canada Research Chair in Psychopathology and Youth Mental Health, is working with fellow Dalhousie researcher, Dr. Rita Orji in the Faculty of Computer Science, to use smartphones to monitor the impacts of social distancing and isolation on youth during the COVID-19 pandemic. With over 262 applicants, the study is one of 40 that were funded by the \$1.5 million investment made by the Nova Scotia COVID-19 Research Coalition.

Using a mobile sensing app called PROSIT (Predicting Risk and Outcomes of Social Interactions), the study aims to assist people in coping with the pandemic, focusing especially on the public health measures in place. Launched in June 2020 the specific goal of the research study is to help people better engage in physical distancing and to promote strategies compensating for a lack of social interactions in person. The app is a natural extension of the previous work done by Drs. Meier and Orji and enables them to passively record the mobility, physical activity, sleep and social interactions of people, which are likely to be affected by the ongoing pandemic. By measuring how often people leave their house, what places they visit, and how many other people can be detected around them via Bluetooth signals, the app provides a good estimate of people's compliance with current public health measures. Call and messaging logs can also be used to gain insights in how people are staying in contact with each other while physical distancing.



*Dr. Rita Orji from the Faculty of Computer Science.*

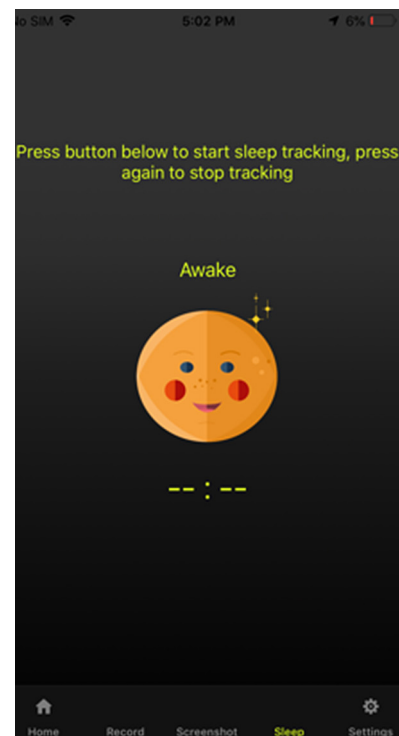
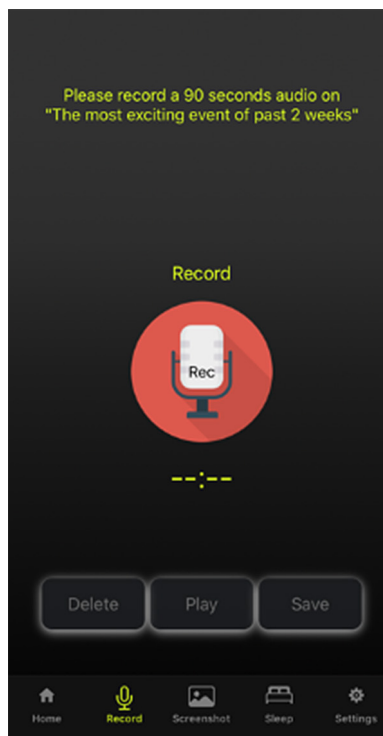
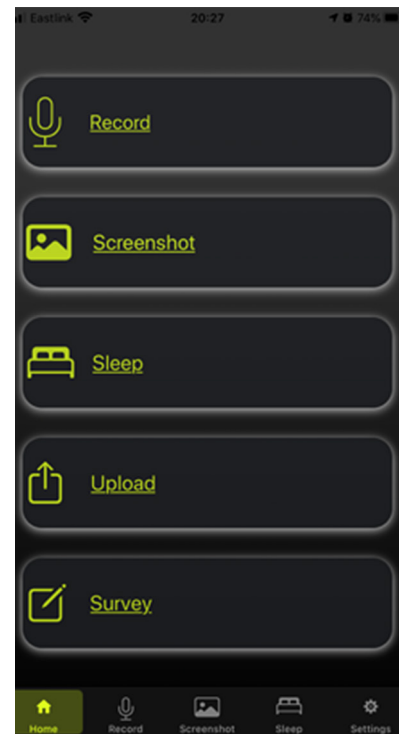
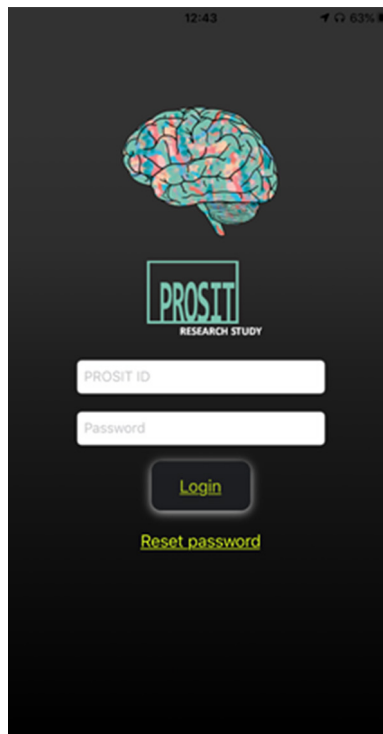


*Graphics used to advertise for the study.*



The app can be downloaded on smartphones and activated via individualized login information. Upon installation, the app asks users for permissions to record around 20 features indicative of health-related behaviours. Most of these features (e.g. accelerometer, gyroscope, magnetometer, calls, music, light, noise) can be passively recorded in the background without requiring any input from users. The app also includes two active features directly engaging the users. Specifically, the app prompts users to answer four short questions about their physical distancing practice and social interactions for three days a week; and every second week the app prompts participants to record a short speech sample.

Drs. Meier and Orji have been recruiting participants via Facebook, Instagram, and Kijiji ads. “We have also been so lucky that the IWK and local media outlets are assisting in advertising for our study,” says Dr. Meier. “So far, we are working with patients and healthy youth in the age range of 15 to 25.” They are aiming to include 500 participants in the study by January 2021 and hope to complete analyses by the following April. In the meantime, they will continuously be working on integrating individualized feedback loops into the app to achieve the best possible fit of the health tips going to be sent and a specific participant’s need. To accomplish this goal, they have begun working with Drs. Evangelos Milios, Sageev Oore, and Fernando Paulovich in the Faculty of Computer Science on creating individualized prediction models. “As we can communicate over the app with our users, we will be able to react



Screen captured images of the PROSIT app.

to potential maladaptive changes in behaviour sending our participants individualized health tips,” says Dr. Meier.

With so much uncertainty related to COVID-19, Drs. Meier and Orji are hoping the app will help people to cope with the limitations put on them as a result of physical distancing. “We

are excited to explore if our app can help to better match the needs of people with available resources during the pandemic,” says Dr. Meier. “It’s also wonderful to see how much our participants are engaging in this study and how experts across disciplines came together to make our research work.”

Registration is open for the study and can be accessed by visiting <https://research-survey.nshealth.ca/surveys/?s=FTWWX33TXX>.

## RESEARCH REPORT



This year’s event is scheduled for Friday, Oct. 30, 2020. The current plan is to hold Research Day at the Atlantica Hotel, but if pandemic-related restrictions are in effect at that time, we will revise our plans to create an online Research Day event.

We are pleased to announce that this year’s keynote speaker is Dr. Kathleen Brady, President of the International Society of Addiction Medicine Executive Committee and Vice President for Research at the Medical University of South Carolina, who will be presenting on addictions research.

For those interested in attending Research Day, registration forms will be circulated in September. Please forward completed registration forms to [hillary.yuill@nshealth.ca](mailto:hillary.yuill@nshealth.ca) on or before October 23, 2020.

## MEET A RESEARCHER: DR. GAIL ESKES

This issue profiles Dalhousie researcher **Dr. Gail Eskes**, professor in the Departments of Psychiatry and Psychology and Neuroscience, as well as in the Division of Neurology. *Meet a Researcher* is a recurring article in the research section of *Headlines*. If you are interested in being profiled in an upcoming publication, please contact **Hillary Yuill** at [Hillary.Yuill@nshealth.ca](mailto:Hillary.Yuill@nshealth.ca).

**My current research interests:** Over the last 15 years, I have been focused on developing assessment and intervention tools for individuals with cognitive problems due to normal and abnormal aging, or psychiatric/neurological diseases. These projects got a kick-start when I received funding from the Atlantic Canada

Opportunities Agency (ACOA, Atlantic Innovation Fund) to develop software technology for a battery of attention/executive function tests and a suite of theory-driven and game-like cognitive training tools that can be done in clinic or online. This funding (along with support from the Department of Psychiatry and other agencies)

introduced me to the world of developing health technology, and I was fortunate to work with a talented and diverse group of colleagues in science, medicine, computer science and health, as well as to benefit from the skills, energy and drive of many trainees and research staff. I also had fun collaborating with RedSpace,

a local software development company (<https://www.redspace.com/>) who was responsible for the initial development and coding of the training programs that we designed.

**Research projects I'm currently participating in:**

Current projects include validating the attention assessment and training tools we developed in different populations. For example, we have been collecting normative data on the Dalhousie Computerized Attention Battery (DaCAB) in all age groups in order to validate the attention measures and to make it clinically useful for work with patients. We currently can produce an "attention report card" which provides standardized scores of different aspects of attention (e.g., vigilance, selective, executive control) based on age and gender. Fortuitously in this pandemic era, we also have an online version. Problems with attention are common and debilitating in psychiatric and neurological populations, and the DaCAB is a sensitive tool for detecting and monitoring changes in cognitive function. Through past and current collaborations with researchers at NSHA, Dalhousie and elsewhere, we are examining how attention changes in individuals with schizophrenia, ADHD, multiple sclerosis, lupus, after stroke and in older patients post-surgery.

In other projects, we have been involved in developing and examining the effectiveness of a variety of interventions for cognitive problems. Developing effective interventions is critical as cognitive problems can be long-lasting in many psychiatric/neurological diseases and are associated with worse

health outcomes and quality of life. Interventions that we are working on include process-based training (e.g., attention skill training) or are based on teaching behavioural strategies (e.g., memory groups). For example, one study recently

of our research activities has been focused on knowledge translation, or bringing research to the public, with the hope that we can enhance quality of life for those concerned about their memory. To this aim, we have been designing public outreach programs



Dr. Gail Eskes

finished with **Dr. Karen Chipman** in Seniors Mental Health showed that a multi-component memory group for patients newly diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment can increase use of memory strategies and improve subjective ratings of memory. Another study of working memory skill training showed improvements in fluid intelligence that were enhanced when combined with aerobic exercise in patients with cognitive problems after stroke.

Another important (and fun) aspect

(called 'Memory Bootcamps') for educating the public about the latest evidence on memory, how it works, how aging and other factors (e.g., emotional health, stress, sleep) affect it, and teaching evidence-based strategies for enhancing memory as applied to their daily lives.

**A typical "Day in my work life":** Get up. Have coffee. Attend a meeting. Have another coffee. More meetings. More coffee. The best meetings that make it all worthwhile involve discussions with colleagues and

students about new ideas, new data and new manuscripts. Futile struggles to get through all the emails between meetings.

***What I wish I knew (but didn't) when I first contemplated becoming a***

***researcher:*** Becoming a researcher is like owning and running a business – You need to wear many hats! These hats include: Innovator - coming up with novel and good ideas for your research; Salesperson - selling your ideas to raise money to do the research; HR manager - using the grant money to hire, pay and manage staff and students who do the research; Trainer - educating your staff and students in conducting the research; Accountant - managing your budgets so you have enough to pay staff and students and get the research done; Communications - writing up and presenting your research; Marketing - selling your research 'products' so that you can get more money. And on and on.

***The most satisfying and frustrating aspects of doing research:***

The most satisfying part is working with trainees and watching them grow into capable and talented independent researchers. It is just a lot of fun to see them get excited about a question and work so hard to learn how to get the answers, which then usually raise more exciting questions. I love to celebrate their successes! The most frustrating aspects can be the never-ending admin that is required to let the research happen – paperwork, paperwork, paperwork!

***The experience that best prepared***

***me for my position:*** Honestly, nothing really prepared me for this – it was really on the job training. It's a good thing that I enjoy it so much!

***My research mentor(s):*** I've had so many mentors along the way, but I can think of two people who really had long-lasting impacts on where I am today. One person is Dr. Don Stuss, a neuropsychologist and former postdoctoral supervisor at the Rotman Research Institute who passed on his considerable knowledge of how the brain works and the skills of a neuropsychologist, but also taught me the importance of personal integrity in the job. He just passed away, but I continue to hear his advice in my head all the time.

The second person who got me here today is **Dr. Stan Kutcher**, who provided me with the initial support to give me the time and flexibility to get started on my research career, despite having a busy clinical load. It was his support that let me apply and receive a Faculty of Medicine Clinical Research Scholar Award that started me in this position and allowed me to develop my research career. Thank you, Stan!

***My second career choice:*** That's a hard one, there are so many different jobs I'd like to try. Photographer? A great way to explore people and places. Dog trainer? An interesting new teaching challenge! Or how about barista? Unlimited supply of java, what could be better? On a more serious note, I can't think of a better career than the one that I have right now. I get to pursue interesting ideas and puzzles, I work with talented and passionate teams, and our work is meaningful and aimed at improving health care and people's lives.



# EDUCATION REPORT



## UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION NEWS

As we wrap up the 2019-2020 undergraduate academic year, we would like to thank our faculty for their ongoing contribution to teaching and supervising our medical students. Your dedication is truly appreciated.

### **During 2019-2020:**

Clerkship was suspended on March 18 and resumed on June 8 with shortened rotations; students remained on one service for the duration of their four weeks with psychiatry.

### **As we start the 2020-2021 academic year:**

Elective scheduling resumed in late August after being suspended due to COVID-19. Medical students nationwide will only be permitted to attend local electives and we appreciate your patience and support while we attempt to place these students.

Clinical electives are typically in highest demand, but scholarly or medical education electives can also effectively demonstrate CanMeds core competencies.

Clerkship for the Class of 2022 will begin on Sept. 28, 2020.

UGME has announced that for Unit 1 only (September 28 – December 4), students will spend five weeks with departments instead of the usual six weeks. Starting on December 7, the usual schedule will resume.

### **Tutor recruitment**

UGME tutor recruitment continues.

There are several short teaching opportunities remaining. If you are interested in tutoring, please contact

**Kelly Hancock** at

[kelly.hancock@nshealth.ca](mailto:kelly.hancock@nshealth.ca).

All clerkship teaching will occur online, using Microsoft Teams, as will the majority of Pre-Clerkship teaching. MedIT continues to support this and will be in touch in advance of all teaching to test with preceptors.

### **Thank you!**

Our Undergraduate Education Committee would like to thank resident representative, **Dr. Holly Greer** and the various medical student representatives for their contribution to the committee over the past year.

## POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION NEWS

### Going with the times: Rural child and adolescent psychiatry electives in 2020

In the COVID-19 era, major changes in healthcare provision were rapidly implemented. This opened the never-considered possibility of a rural elective via telecare. **Dr. Katie Radchuck** did just this for her child and adolescent psychiatry placement in June with **Dr. Cornelius de Boer** and the Truro team. Without setting a foot in Truro, Dr. Radchuck was able to join and connect with the members of the team by attending meetings. Psychiatric consultations were conducted with the therapist present. By the end of the relatively short rotation and it was time for Dr. Radchuck to move on, the team felt as if they lost a member, which indicates that some sense of cohesion and connectedness can be achieved in different ways. The current situation also opened the possibility of Dr. Radchuck joining Dr. de Boer for his consultation sessions at the Wood Street Centre, allowing a glimpse of the inner workings of these unique residential youth treatment programs run by the Department of Community Services.

Dr. Radchuck says joining Dr. de Boer and the Truro outpatient team was a great learning experience that exposed her to the benefits of providing care via telehealth. "I felt warmly welcomed into the team and supported by the clinicians and staff who were available to manage anything from building my awareness of the local services to helping me navigate administrative questions," she says. "I particularly enjoyed the



Screen capture of a team consultation meeting in the COVID-19 era. Clockwise (L-R): Dr. Katie Radchuck (PGY5), Dr. Cornelius de Boer (child and adolescent psychiatrist), Kelly Byrne (social worker), Pam Reyes (mental health nurse).

unique opportunity at Wood Street Centre where the physician role expands to include being a consultant on a systems level." She enjoyed the collaborative environment that staff from different disciplines and organizations developed in the best interest of the youth they serve. Although she was not physically in Truro, she ended her elective feeling as if she had been there and says she is excited to see how psychiatry services will continue to adapt and find creative ways to continue to deliver care.

*Submitted by Drs. Cornelius de Boer and Katie Radchuck*

## FELLOWSHIP AND SUBSPECIALTY TRAINING NEWS

### **Meet Dr. Katie Radchuck: child and adolescent psychiatry subspecialty trainee**

**Why I chose to pursue the child and adolescent psychiatry subspecialty program:** Before medicine, I loved working with youth and their families through my involvement in coaching youth soccer and Special Olympics athletics. My passion for working with a younger population was similarly fostered through my work as a research assistant with the Sun Life Financial Chair in Adolescent Mental Health. I feel lucky I met this dynamic team of child and adolescent psychiatrists and researchers, who encouraged my interest in medicine and highly influenced my focus away from internal medicine towards psychiatry. They did a good job because my interest in C&A psychiatry has remained steadfast! Throughout my psychiatry training, my most rewarding and memorable experiences involved working with youth and the clinical teams at the IWK and outpatient clinics. Working with young people is energizing and stands out to me as a uniquely hopeful field in medicine where early interventions can lead to massive changes in a youth's development and future. I particularly appreciate the way healthcare is provided to youth through a systems perspective. Working with family members, teachers, and multiple health-related professionals is not the exception but the norm and something I love to do.

**The highlight of my subspecialty training so far:** Witnessing the rapid

response to the pandemic by the mental health services providers. The transition to telehealth was swift and the commitment to the provision of high-quality psychiatric services, despite unprecedented circumstances, has been simply amazing. This experience has left me with the impression that when caring and intelligent people are dedicated to important causes, anything is possible.

An associated highlight was being part of the changes that were put into motion as a response to the pandemic. I began virtual care appointments from my home in Halifax, and by the end of the first week had met multiple pets, explored a few backyards, and been amazed at how easy it was to connect with youth through Zoom. The willingness to embrace telehealth and the resiliency of youth and their families through the unique challenges that faced Nova Scotians this year has been inspiring.

**Who has most impacted my subspecialty training:** There have been so many impactful people throughout my training that I find it difficult to name just one person. My development has been supported by many incredible clinicians who have been happy to take time out of their day to enhance my clinical knowledge and support my career goals. I look up to the psychiatrists in the department for both their individual characteristics and the collegial environment they have created. Most importantly, I have been impressed by the positive impact that their work has had on so many youth. I love going

to work everyday and am grateful to learn from psychiatrists who practice in a way that I hope to emulate in my own career.

**What the future holds:** I have a year left in my subspecialty training that I look forward to completing. Life beyond my training will include pursuing opportunities that put my subspecialty training to use! Ideally, I would love a position that combines a clinical focus with opportunities to teach medical students and residents. My positive experience with the child and adolescent division leadership has increased my desire to expand my administrative awareness and involvement moving forward. If I've learned anything from life during a pandemic, it's that anything is possible!

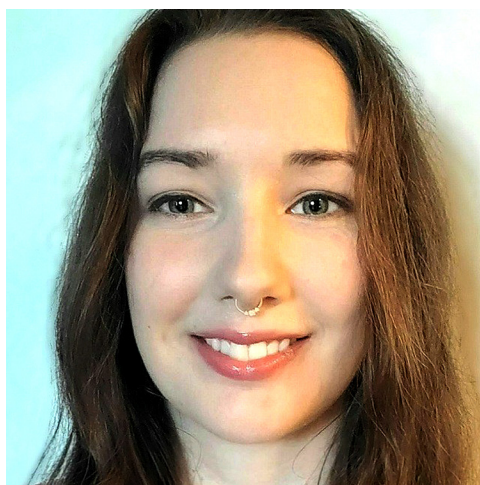
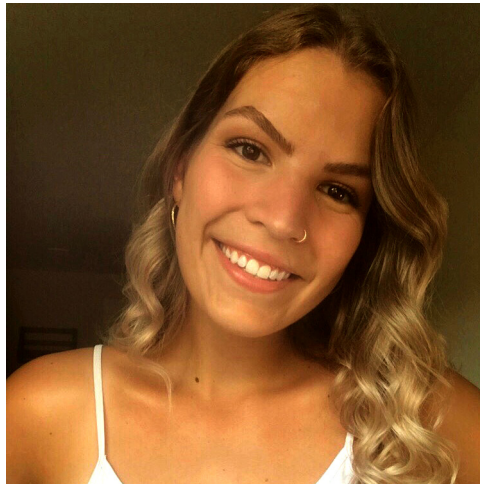
## GRADUATE STUDIES IN PSYCHIATRY RESEARCH NEWS

### Master's in Psychiatry Research: Welcome class of 2022

On Sept. 1, 2020 our fourth Master's in Psychiatry Research class began their training in the Department of Psychiatry. Of the six students, one is a Dalhousie graduate, one is from Mount Saint Vincent University, one is from Acadia University, one is from Saint Mary's University, one is from Leiden University in the Netherlands, and one is from Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts. The two year graduate program they are embarking on is designed to equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed as professionals in clinical and neuroscience research concerning mental health and illness. The coursework covers relevant current topics including clinical trials, genetics, neuroimaging, participatory research, psychotherapy research, early interventions, and personalized psychiatry. Students will improve their skills in critical appraisal, study design, statistics, data analysis, and scientific writing. Each student will complete an independent Masters' thesis research project under the supervision of one of our faculty. You are introduced to the class of 2022 below.

#### Jenna Bissonette

Jenna graduated from Mount Saint Vincent University last spring with a Bachelor of Science in honours psychology and minors in neuroscience and biology. Originally from Tantallon, she now lives in Halifax, closer to the Dalhousie



*Clockwise from top left: Jenna Bissonette, Sarah DeGrace, Silvia Marin, Anna Nazarova, Katie Scott, and Ruth Shelton.*

campus. She is motivated and eager to be starting her Master's in Psychiatry Research under the supervision of **Dr. Derek Fisher** and **Dr. Phil Tibbo**. Jenna will be studying cortical glutamate levels in individuals with psychosis using magnetic resonance spectroscopy (MRS). Specifically, Jenna will be focusing on whether cannabis use differentially affects metabolite levels in those with early-phase psychosis compared to healthy controls. Following her master's degree, Jenna aspires to complete her Ph.D. in clinical psychology at Dalhousie and find a balance between her research and practice. In her spare time, Jenna likes to paint, knit, and relax at the beach with her dog, Max, and family.

### **Sarah DeGrace**

Sarah graduated from Acadia University in 2020 with a Bachelor of Arts in honours psychology. She hails from Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia, and is happy to be closer to home as she begins her Master's of Psychiatry Research at Dalhousie. Supervised by **Dr. Sherry Stewart**, Sarah's research will investigate the automatic cognitive processes which link post-traumatic stress disorder and cannabis-use disorder. More specifically, her work will combine Dr. Stewart's cue-reactivity paradigm with a computerized reaction time task to examine memory associations between trauma cues, cannabis, and approach behavior. Sarah hopes to continue her academic career by completing a PhD, and ultimately apply such mechanistic frameworks in mental health contexts.

### **Silvia Marin**

Silvia is from Slobozia, Romania, and is a graduate of Mount Holyoke College, USA and University of Rochester, USA. She has a double major in honours psychology and computer science, along with extensive research in clinical psychology. Silvia looks forward to conducting her Master's of Psychiatry Research project under the guidance of **Dr. Sandra Meier**.

Silvia is passionate about using technology to enhance mental health research and is excited to join a lab that matches her interests so well. Her research will explore how youth's smartphone usage may lead to poor sleep and thereby worsen mental well-being. Through her work, she hopes to contribute to the understanding of how to enhance the well-being of young patients and hone her skills in preparation for a future career as a researcher and clinical psychologist.

### **Anna Nazarova**

Born in Russia, raised in Canada and educated in the Netherlands, Anna is a 2018 honours graduate in psychology from Leiden University. For as long as Anna can remember, she admits she has been amazed by the curiously complex nature of children. Her interests in adolescent psychopathology, as well as the underlying neurobiological mechanisms brought her into the team of FORBOW, under the expert guidance of **Dr. Rudolf Uher**. During her Master's in Psychiatry Research she will investigate which neural markers found in the brain can be predictive of mental illness onset in high family risk offspring. Although

still open to many future career possibilities, Anna wants to work closely with youth in the field of mental health promotion and early intervention of mental disorders.

In her spare time, she enjoys working on a variety of make-up art projects and on other creative endeavors, as well as exploring beautiful Nova Scotia.

### **Katie Scott**

Katie graduated in the Spring of 2020 from Dalhousie University with a degree in honours neuroscience. She grew up in the small area of Malagash, Nova Scotia. She's especially excited to be conducting her Master's of Psychiatry Research project under the expertise of **Dr. Martin Alda**. The project investigates patterns of inheritance of clinically-relevant traits in individuals with bipolar disorder and their affected relatives. Her ultimate goals are to help refine the clinical treatment of individuals with bipolar disorder and expand the current understanding regarding the heterogeneity of the illness. Aside from her studies, Katie likes to spend time with her partner and cats, or visiting friends and family. Being from rural Nova Scotia, she also enjoys hiking and swimming whenever possible. In the future, Katie hopes to continue with research focusing on mood disorders, potentially with a doctorate's degree.

### **Ruth Shelton**

Ruth is a 2020 graduate of Saint Mary's University in honours psychology. Originally from St. John's, Newfoundland, she enjoys being close to family in Halifax. Ruth will be carrying out her Master's of

Psychiatry Research project under the supervision of **Dr. Barbara Pavlova**. Her research will be investigating how childhood trauma impacts the comorbidity of anxiety and mood disorders and how this effects disorder progression, treatment efficacy, and prognosis. When not doing schoolwork, Ruth enjoys volunteering in the mental health field, and she is currently a board

member with Eating Disorders Nova Scotia and a committee member with the National Youth Advisory Committee for Mood Disorders Canada. Ruth hopes that her research will contribute to a better understanding of how childhood trauma effects and impacts mental health in adulthood.

## CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEWS

### Upcoming events

Please join us on September 9 for a child and adolescent psychiatry presentation by **Dr. David Lovas** on the topic of *Adolescent Treatment Resistant Depression: Is there a Case to be Made for Ketamine?*

Find the 2020 – 2021 schedule on the rounds information page (<https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/department-sites/psychiatry/education/continuing-professional-development/psychiatry-rounds-information.html>).

Please note rounds attendance will be online only via Zoom until further notice.

### WOMAD Conference 2021

Save the date for the 2021 W.O. McCormick Academic Day Conference on Friday, May 07, 2021 at the Westin Nova Scotian, Halifax. The theme is coaching and behaviour change. Registration will open mid- March. Look for further details in future editions of Headlines.

## MED-ED MINUTE

The “Med Ed Minute” introduces scholarly snippets to consider in your teaching practice.

### Role modelling in medical education

This Med Ed Minute highlights the concept of role modelling in medical education, its importance and strategies for deliberate role modelling. Much of this content was originally included in **Mandy Eslinger’s** graduate thesis.

#### What is role modelling?

Role modelling occurs when “faculty members demonstrate clinical skills, model and articulate expert thought processes and manifest positive professional characteristics” (Irby, 1986, p. 40). As a fundamental component of medical education (Wright, 1996), role modelling is essential for developing medical learners into physicians (Sutkin et al., 2008).

#### Why is role modelling important?

Role models are catalysts in influencing learner’s career choices (Ravindra & Fitzgerald, 2011) and are necessary in the formation of learners’ attitudes, values, behaviours and morals (Mufson, 1997). Role modelling has a knock-on effect during medical training: faculty role models impact residents (Côté & Leclère, 2000) and resident role models impact medical students (Morrison et al., 2005). The impact can be positive or negative. Fortunately, good role models can negate the negative effects of poor role modelling (Passi et al., 2013).

#### What strategies can you incorporate into your teaching practice for deliberate role modelling?

Derived from Bandura’s (1986) social learning theory, he suggests the following strategies for deliberate role modelling:

1. Be aware of yourself as a role model.
2. Demonstrate positive, personal and professional behaviours.
3. Focus the learner on what you are role modelling.
4. Help the learner to reflect on what you are role modelling.
5. Reinforce the importance of what you are role modelling.
6. Encourage the learner to practise what you have role modelled.
7. Observe the learner practise what you have demonstrated and provide feedback.

#### Suggestions for future Med Ed Minute topics

If you have suggestions for what you would like to see in a future Med Ed Minute, please send them to Ms. Mandy Eslinger.

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## FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

### Faculty Development Opportunities

#### Dalhousie Continuing Professional Development

#### Online Learning

##### Online Courses:

*Teaching and Assessing Critical Thinking Phase 1*

September 28 – December 14, 2020

Registration fee: \$100

For more information or to register please visit <https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/core-units/cpd/faculty-development/programs/TACT.html>

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#### Resources for Virtual Supervision of Learners

*Virtual Supervision of Medical Students in Clinical Settings* ([https://dal.adobeconnect.com/\\_a840580711/pg7cddqgc22e/?proto=true](https://dal.adobeconnect.com/_a840580711/pg7cddqgc22e/?proto=true))

*Teaching in Turbulent Times (A nice reminder of why we should still be enthusiastic about teaching)* (<https://med-fom-fmprpostgrad.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2020/04/Teaching-in-Turbulent-Times-v20Apr202.pdf>)

*Pearls for Writing Daily Feedback to Learners* ([https://portal.cfpc.ca/ResourcesDocs/uploadedFiles/Education/For\\_Teacher/Emerging-Writing-ENG-v4.pdf](https://portal.cfpc.ca/ResourcesDocs/uploadedFiles/Education/For_Teacher/Emerging-Writing-ENG-v4.pdf) [https://portal.cfpc.ca/ResourcesDocs/uploadedFiles/Education/For\\_Teacher/Emerging-Writing-ENG-v4.pdf](https://portal.cfpc.ca/ResourcesDocs/uploadedFiles/Education/For_Teacher/Emerging-Writing-ENG-v4.pdf))

*Supervising Learners While Providing Virtual Care* (<https://www.nosm.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CEPD-SUPERVISING-LEARNERS-WHILE-PROVIDING-VIRTUAL-CARE-Tips-Best-Practice-April-22-2020.pdf>)

*Medical Education – Wiley Online Library* (<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/13652923>)

*Additional resources for Faculty:*

*Working with Clinical Learners in a Virtual Practice* (video) (<https://sites.google.com/view/pivotmeded/faculty-resources/virtual-care-supervision?authuser=0>)

PIVOT MedEd has others resources on their site, which can be found at <https://sites.google.com/view/pivotmeded/home>.

Continuing Professional Development has resources that can be found at <https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/core-units/cpd/about/COVID19PhysicianInformation.html>

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#### New Episodes: The Fac Dev Lounge Podcast

Hosted by Dr. Sarah Gander, the Fac Dev Lounge podcast launched in the winter of 2019 and addresses popular and needs-based faculty development topics.

The next two episodes are available now on Soundcloud, Apple Podcasts, and YouTube:

*Episode 4: Why We Must Listen to the Students' Perspective*  
An Interview with Naythrah Thevathasan (DMNB Class of 2022) [28:27]

*Episode 5: Why I Miss the Students' Voices Even in a Global Pandemic*  
Sarah Shares Messages from Learners [8:09]

For past episodes and more information, please visit <https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/core-units/cpd/faculty-development/Podcasts.html>

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#### 2018-2020 recorded webinars

Last year Faculty Development put on a variety of different webinars, for the full list and to request recordings please contact [FacDev@dal.ca](mailto:FacDev@dal.ca).

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For more information on Faculty Development and their programs, email them at [facdev@dal.ca](mailto:facdev@dal.ca).

Note: Many Faculty Development activities are accredited. If you would like to receive a CME listing of your credits for the past year, or other date span, please feel free to contact Deirdre Harvey at 902-494-2234 or [deirdre.harvey@dal.ca](mailto:deirdre.harvey@dal.ca).



# CHILD & ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY REPORT



## Welcome

The Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry would like to extend a warm welcome to **Dr. Sarah Fancy**. Dr. Fancy joined our division on July 20, 2020 and is based at the Garron Centre inpatient unit. She obtained her undergraduate degree (BSc) from Acadia University and medical degree from Dalhousie University. Dr. Fancy completed both her core residency training and Child and Adolescent Psychiatry subspecialty training at Dalhousie University. We are very pleased to welcome Dr. Fancy to our team!

## Awards

On behalf of the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, we would like to commend **Dr. Selene Etches** on her receipt of the 2020 Teacher of the Year Award from the Dalhousie Psychiatry Residents Association. Congratulations on your very well-deserved award, Dr. Etches!

## Media Feature

**Dr. Sandra Meier** was recently featured in CBC news (*Dal researchers create app that monitors mental health by measuring user's emotions*) and The Chronicle Herald (*Halifax researchers explore social distancing, mental health*). In these articles, Dr. Meier speaks about her work on the PROSIT app and on the impacts of social distancing on mental health. To read these articles please visit:

[https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/dalhousie-university-researcher-prosit-study-smartphone-app-mental-health-](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/dalhousie-university-researcher-prosit-study-smartphone-app-mental-health-treatment-1.5653705)

[treatment-1.5653705](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/dalhousie-university-researcher-prosit-study-smartphone-app-mental-health-treatment-1.5653705)

<https://www.thechronicleherald.ca/news/provincial/halifax-researchers-explore-social-distancing-mental-health-465047/>

**Dr. Alexa Bagnell** was recently featured in a blog post by Doctors Nova Scotia: *Supporting kids through uncertainty*. This post looks at way of helping children cope during the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic. To read more visit:

<https://www.yourdoctors.ca/blog/general/supporting-kids-through-uncertainty>



## NEWS FROM THE DEPARTMENT

### **Dr. Angela Cooper named Assistant Dean, Faculty Wellness**

As of September 21, **Dr. Angela Cooper**, a clinical psychologist who is a member of both the Department of Psychiatry and the Department of Family Medicine, will hold the position of Assistant Dean, Faculty Wellness, for a five-year term. The brand-new position will be focused on creating a culture of wellness alongside wellness programming for faculty at various Dalhousie teaching sites across Atlantic Canada.

Hailing from Lancashire, England, Dr. Cooper completed her PhD in clinical psychology at Nottingham University in the UK. She spent three years specializing in Intensive Short-Term Dynamic Psychotherapy (ISTDP) and then in 2015, with an interest in medically unexplained symptoms (MUS) and wellness, packed her bags and relocated to Halifax to work for the Centre for Emotions and Health. Director of the centre, **Dr. Allan Abbass**, had secured three years of funding from the Department of Health and Wellness to provide an emotion-focused psychotherapy service across two family medicine clinics for patients who were struggling with physical symptoms that medical investigations could not fully explain.

After her initial three-year term Dr. Cooper continued her work in the



*Dr. Angela Cooper*

Centre for Emotions and Health focusing on more complex co-morbid cases involving deeper psychological, emotional and medical issues and says she has found this work to be

incredibly rewarding. "Small changes in symptoms and patterns of relating can bring huge benefits for these patients and major cost savings for the healthcare system at large, it is

important work,” says Dr. Cooper.

Her ongoing teaching appointment in the Department of Family Medicine has allowed her to focus on helping physicians understand MUS at a deeper level, as well as helping them to understand their own emotions and health. It is through this position that she became interested in faculty wellness. “I don't believe you can have a healthy workplace, unless people have an awareness of their own wellness” she says. “Becoming aware of one's own wellness can then help us to help our patients, often in a more humanising way. We have all suffered loss and setbacks, we don't always know how to create the space to process those emotions or create the psychological safety to enable this to happen.” This way of thinking is how she approaches work with her patients, with other physicians and within herself. “Nobody is immune from life's difficulties and maintaining wellness can be a challenge for anyone.”

Dr. Cooper applied for the Assistant Dean position in February and found out in June that she was the

successful applicant. “I was pretty shocked to get the job,” she recalls. “It is a big step up in terms of leadership, but I feel ready for the next step in my development. I want to contribute to meaningful systemic change that impacts people in a deeper way, it is really what has driven me into my career in the first place and now I have the chance to see what changes I can bring forth.”

In her new role Dr. Cooper will work to determine what wellness issues the faculty currently face. As previously indicated, she feels it is impossible to create a culture of wellness if faculty are burnt out and stressed, especially if they are not aware of how that stress is impacting them. The Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie has recognized the need to support faculty wellness. Their plan is to begin implementing change primarily at a systemic level, as well as continuing to support evidence-based strategies at the individual level, in order to maintain and potentially enhance wellbeing. “The systemic piece is crucial,” says Dr. Cooper. “Faculty members cannot improve their

wellness if the system and culture does not foster it.” The Assistant Dean will predominantly focus on the system-level drivers that contribute to faculty distress, as well as cultivating a culture of wellbeing at all levels throughout the Faculty of Medicine, including residents and their learning environment.

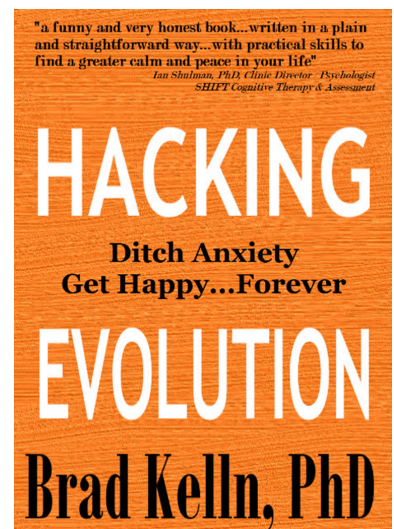
Dr. Cooper looks forward to the wide variety of individuals and groups she will encounter in her new role. “I am excited to get the chance to inspire others to tackle wellness in their own departments for the health and benefit of the whole system,” she says. “I think wellness can be an exciting pursuit for anyone, if tackled in the right way.” During her tenure as Assistant Dean she will continue her teaching commitments in both the Department of Psychiatry and the Department of Family Medicine. She has however, had to leave her position with the Centre for Emotions and Health in order to properly dedicate herself to the position as Assistant Dean of Faculty Wellness.

## Dr. Brad Kelln publishes book

**Dr. Brad Kelln**, clinical and forensic psychologist, and assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry, has released a new non-fiction ebook on mental health. *Hacking Evolution: Ditch Anxiety...Get Happy Forever* explains the origins of thinking and emotion in the context of what advantage they provided during our lengthy evolution as a species. It is no surprise that without our capacity for thinking, problem-solving, and

creativity, we, as a species, would not have survived. However, evolution also required us to worry and be anxious in order to be proactive. This and many other aspects of evolution's impact are explained and this radical approach firmly places anxiety, worry, and other mental health concerns in a new light, offering new ways to create change.

Find Dr. Kelln's new book wherever ebooks are sold (e.g., Apple, Kobo, Amazon, Chapters).



## Dr. Rudnick publishes 10th book

**Dr. Abraham (Rami) Rudnick** has published his 10th book. Released in August 2020, it is titled *Handbook of Person-Centered Mental Health Care*, and authored with four other person-centered mental health scholars and practitioners (occupational therapy, nursing and psychiatry). It addresses person-centered mental health care, as well as related research, education and leadership. It can be found on the publisher's website (<https://us.hogrefe.com/shop/handbook-of-person-centered-mental-health-care-91992.html>) and other websites, such as Amazon.

Dr. Rudnick would also like to commemorate William (Bill) Anthony, PhD, professor of Psychiatric/Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR) at Boston University, who passed away on July 15, 2020. Bill was a founding pioneer and giant of PSR who for decades led the way internationally in person-centered recovery-oriented mental health care. He was one of the most important influences for Dr. Rudnick personally and graciously wrote the foreword to his first book on person-centered mental health care in 2011. He will be very much missed professionally and personally for Dr. Rudnick.

Nosheen Akhtar / Cheryl Forchuck / Katherine McKay  
Sandra Fisman / Abraham Rudnick

## Handbook of Person-Centered Mental Health Care



## AWARDS & HONOURS

### Dr. David Pilon receives lifetime contribution award

**Dr. David Pilon** is the inaugural recipient of the Dr. Charles J.A. Hayes Lifetime Contribution Award recognizing a psychologist who has spent a significant part of their professional lifetime supporting the profession of psychology at the provincial, national and international level. The award was presented by the Association of Psychologists of Nova Scotia (APNS) in June. Dr. Pilon is recognized for his high level of continuous commitment to APNS and as an advocate for the profession of psychology as an educator, a mentor, an administrator and a clinician.

Dr. Pilon has been a member of the Department of Psychiatry since 1992 where he has taught residents and medical students and he continues to provide resident

psychotherapy supervision. During his many years with the Nova Scotia Health Authority, Dr. Pilon was affiliated with the Eating Disorder Clinic where he was instrumental in establishing the clinic's group-based treatment program. For several years he was program leader with oversight for all of the province's specialty mental health services. Having served in governance roles in numerous national and international associations throughout his career, Dr. Pilon is particularly interested in enhanced access to evidence-based mental health services, capacity building with respect to service delivery, mental health literacy and the evaluation of outcomes of mental health treatment. At present, he is Director of Counselling and Psychological Services at Dalhousie Student Health and Wellness.



Dr. David Pilon

## **Dr. Cheryl Murphy awarded by CPA**

**Dr. Cheryl Murphy** is the recipient of the Canadian Psychiatric Association's 2020 Paul Patterson Innovation in Education Leadership Award. This award is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Paul Patterson and is presented annually to a psychiatric educator, who, in responding to change or leading in new directions, makes a significant innovative contribution to undergraduate, postgraduate, continuing professional or public education. Dr. Murphy is recognized for the key role that she has played in developing innovative education initiatives in geriatric psychiatry training, which continue to positively impact the quality of training for medical students and residents at Dalhousie University.

Dr. Murphy's commitment to education has been evident throughout her career. She provides leadership across the educational spectrum and is a dedicated clinical teacher who consistently receives excellent student feedback. She transformed the clerkship curriculum from lectures to interactive, case-based sessions and led faculty and residents in the development of e-learning modules. She identified that residents in our program were not adequately prepared as teachers and collaborated to develop a highly successful longitudinal resident as teacher curriculum including practical teaching experiences. She offered the first postgraduate elective in medical education in our department and has supervised countless resident scholarly projects focused on education. She is also a peer mentor and using linked video and role play,



*Dr. Cheryl Murphy*

she has collaboratively implemented faculty development on effective prioritized feedback in a CBME training model.

Dr. Murphy demonstrates a passion for innovative educational leadership that is inspiring. Congratulations on this most deserving award.

# HUMANITIES CORNER



Professor (Emeritus) Francis Lu from the University of California presented in August 2020 by synchronous video a seminar for our department's psychiatry residents. The seminar used scenes from the movie *Ikiru* (To Live), directed by Akira Kurosawa in 1952, to address the human condition, particularly in relation to coping with death. For more information on using movies to educate health care (including psychiatry) learners:

<https://bmcmededuc.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1472-6920-11-60>;

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5938242/>;

<http://www.amhsjournal.org/article.asp?issn=2321-4848;year=2019;volume=7;issue=1;spage=96;epage=103;auiast=Shankar>;

<https://www.mededpublish.org/manuscripts/1895>; and <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3221185/>.

# RESIDENTS' CORNER



## PGY1 orientation



*Annual orientation day "field trip" with the PGY-1's looking a bit different this year.*

## PHOTO FEATURE



*Peggy's Cove, 35mm film (Photo by Dr. Kyle Godden, PGY-2).*

### HEADLINES SUBMISSIONS

**Headlines** aims to provide a forum for the exchange of information, ideas, and items of general interest to the faculty, fellows, students and staff of the Department of Psychiatry. Your contribution(s) are needed and greatly appreciated.

The next issue of **Headlines** will be distributed on Nov. 2, 2020, with the deadline for submissions to be Oct. 16 2020.

Please send all submissions to Kate Rogers: [Kate.Rogers@nshealth.ca](mailto:Kate.Rogers@nshealth.ca)