

# 6th Annual Canadian Forensic Psychology Virtual Conference

February 6, 2026

## Keynote Speaker

Educating the Public  
About Policing: A Path  
to Improved Police  
Legitimacy



**Dr. Craig Bennell**  
Professor, Carleton University

## Keynote Speaker

From Individual Risk to  
Systemic Vulnerability:  
Reimagining Forensic  
Mental Health Research  
for a Changing World



**Dr. Anne Crocker**  
Professor, Université de Montréal

## Keynote Speaker

Reducing Sexual  
Violence on Campus  
through Evidence-  
based Prevention



**Dr. Charlene Senn**  
Professor, University of Windsor

## Event Details

**Date:** February 6, 2026

**Time:** 11:30 AM - 5:30 p.m. AST

**Fee:** Free | [Register for Zoom link](#)

The conference will be of interest to researchers, practitioners, and students working in forensic psychology areas, justice-related fields, or with justice-involved populations.

The Dept of Psychology at Saint Mary's University offers an undergraduate [Certificate of Forensic Psychology](#) and an MSc in Applied Psychology ([forensic psychology stream](#)), along with its undergraduate and other graduate programs. For more information visit [www.smu.ca/psychology/](http://www.smu.ca/psychology/)

# 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Canadian Forensic Psychology Virtual Conference



## Welcome!

As learners, researchers, and educators in forensic psychology at SMU in Forensic Psychology at **Saint Mary's University** in Halifax, Nova Scotia, we welcome you to our **6<sup>th</sup> Annual Canadian Forensic Psychology Virtual Conference!**

We would like to begin by acknowledging that Saint Mary's University is located in **Mi'kma'ki**, the **unceded land of the Mi'kmaq Nation**. We encourage you to spend time recognizing and appreciating the land that you are currently situated on. Access the link: <https://native-land.ca/> for an interactive map that works with Indigenous communities beyond colonial boundaries to map territories, languages, and treaties worldwide.

We acknowledge that the acts of colonialization have made inequities for Indigenous peoples, yet despite this, **Indigenous peoples continue to amplify strength and bravery in celebrating cultures and communities**. We hope to provide a safe space for all to be welcomed and treated with the respect and care they deserve.

We are thrilled to have such a talented group of presenters gathered here to **share insights, exchange ideas, and foster collaborations**. Featuring a lineup of esteemed keynote speakers, panel members, and researchers, we hope to provide a space that allows us to **learn from one another, grow as individuals, and build connections** that extend beyond the confines of the conference. We want to express our deepest gratitude to our peer reviewers, conference moderators, and all those who have contributed to making this event possible, including **Dr. Adam Sarty, Dean of Graduate Studies and Research**.

**Thank you for participating in our conference and enjoy the day!**

**Sincerely,**

**Stephanie Chen**  
Conference Coordinator  
MSc Student

**Maryann Pitre**  
Conference Coordinator  
MSc Student

**Dr. Veronica Stinson**  
Conference Co-host  
Professor

**Dr. Marguerite Ternes**  
Conference Co-host  
Associate Professor



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## February 6, 2026 Schedule

\*Note: Times are in Atlantic Standard Time. [Click here for time zone converter](#). The keynote speakers will be in Room #1. All presentations will be about 10 minutes with questions at the end of each session.

**11:30 AM**

### Welcome

**11:40 AM**

### Educating the Public About Policing: A Path to Improved Police Legitimacy

Dr. Craig Bennell

**12:40 PM**

### Break

**12:50 PM**

### From Individual Risk to Systemic Vulnerability: Reimagining Forensic Mental Health Research for a Changing World

Dr. Anne Crocker

**1:50 PM**

### Break

**2:00 PM**

	Room 1	Room 2	Room 3	Room 4	Room 5
Sexual offending, CSEM, and risk	Sexual offending and prevention	IPV and coercive control	Investigations, interrogations, courts	Stigma and justice outcomes	
Arellano	Garant	Giesbrecht	Ferguson L.	Coady	
Cormier	Gauthier	Loinaz	Hynes	Denault	
MacDonald	Gordan	Melnyk	Lucier-Lewis	Summersby	
Pagacz	Nasim	Ncube	Villeneuve	Swanek	
Samithamby	Ng	Young			

**3:10 PM**

### Break

**3:20 PM**

### Reducing Sexual Violence on Campus through Evidence-based Prevention

Dr. Charlene Senn

**4:20 PM**

	Room 1	Room 2	Room 3	Room 4	Room 5
Perception, risk, and interpersonal violence	Sexual violence, consent, and tech-facilitated harm	Policing, credibility, and evidence	Psychological risk factors in decision-making	Life-course, perceptions, desistance	
Keeping	Davidson	Blackall	Dumont	Johnson	
Kirk	Handford	Carruthers	Ferguson B.	Dion Larivière	
Presta	Karasavva	Heffren	MacIntosh	MacFadyen	
Rowe	Nelson	Louati	McMillan	Turnbull	
				Zeyrek Rios	

**5:30 PM**

### Closing Remarks

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## Dr. Craig Bennell

Craig Bennell is a Professor in the Department of Psychology at Carleton University and Director of Carleton's Police Research Lab. He sits on the Research Advisory Committee and Use of Force Committee for the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. He also sits on the Advisory Board for the Canadian Police College and Co-Chairs the Program Advisory Committee for the Police Foundations Program at Algonquin College. Most recently, he has assumed the role of Co-Chair for the Research Advisory Council of 30Forward, a new initiative designed to address the challenges and opportunities for women in law enforcement. Together with a great group of students and collaborators, he partners with Canadian police services to conduct research related to evidence-based policing, police use of de-escalation strategies and use-of-force, mental health crisis response, and public understanding of policing.

## Presentation

### *Educating the Public About Policing: A Path to Improved Police Legitimacy*

Have you ever asked yourself why police officers are parked alongside road crews at night seemingly doing nothing while they sit in their cars? Or why police officers are allowed to be on their phones while driving, or typing on their computers, when you and I would get a ticket for doing the same thing? Or why police officers shoot to kill rather than to wound, or sometimes shoot people who are holding replica handguns that don't pose any real danger to officers? These types of questions are at the centre of new research my lab is conducting to address what we feel are important questions: To what extent does the public understand policing? If they don't, what can be done about it? And why does any of this matter?

Throughout this presentation I'd like to provide some preliminary answers to these questions by drawing on findings from our recent research. In doing so, I'll be making the case that the public doesn't have a good understanding of policing and that public education needs to be higher priority for police services, oversight boards, and academic researchers. I'll also be suggesting that there are easy-to-implement, cost-effective ways to reduce public misconceptions about policing and that, by doing so, public perceptions of policing become more favorable (e.g., with respect to perceived police legitimacy). The session will end with a Q and A, where we can collectively explore how we can expand upon this type of research and apply the results in field settings.

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## Dr. Anne Crocker

Anne Crocker PhD, Canada Research Chair in Mental Health, Justice and Safety is Full professor at the department of psychiatry & addictions and at the School of criminology of the Université de Montréal, Director of Research and Academics at the Philippe-Pinel Institute, Guest professor at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden and past-president of the International Association of Forensic Mental Health Services. She holds a Ph.D. in psychology from the Université de Montréal and a post-doctoral degree in mental health services from Dartmouth Medical School, New Hampshire, U.S.A. She sits on many forensic mental health policy advisory committees. Professor Crocker's research program focuses on circumscribing issues and specific needs related to mentally ill individuals' interactions with the justice system; characterizing their use of services; analyzing the effects of legislative mechanisms related to the access to, organization and delivery of services; and documenting the barriers and facilitators of post-criminalisation community integration. Over the past 15 years, Professor Crocker has been leading the Canadian National Trajectory Project of individuals found not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder.

## Presentation

### *Individual Risk to Systemic Vulnerability: Reimagining Forensic Mental Health Research for a Changing World*

Over the past half-century, advancements in research, policy, and practice have helped to build a deeper understanding of the intersection between mental health and the justice system. This presentation looks back and critically examines the legacy of past research – one that has provided both a foundation to build upon and, at times, shifting ground that complicates progress, particularly for historically marginalized groups – while also considering the evolving challenges we face. As society continues to change through shifts in cultural, social, and legal landscapes, it is crucial that we examine emerging issues. This includes the impact of new technologies, changing societal attitudes toward mental health, escalating misinformation and the increasing complexity of forensic populations. Finally, the construct of risk in forensic mental health has primarily focussed on individual issues and characteristics, however systems may also set up people for failure and increase risk. To support future research, we introduce the Risk in Systems Framework – RiSyst, a conceptual model to understand how risk emerges not just within people but also through institutional practices and structural inequalities.

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## Dr. Charlene Senn

Charlene Y. Senn, Ph.D., is a Distinguished University Professor and former Tier I Canada Research Chair (2017-2024) in Sexual Violence at the University of Windsor. She is a social psychologist committed to the belief that high quality theory and research evidence can be used not only to understand our world but also applied to make it better. Her research centres on men's violence against women and girls and, for 20 years, has focused on sexual violence prevention. She developed the Enhanced Assess, Acknowledge, Act (EAAA) sexual assault resistance education program (Flip the Script with EAAA®) for women in the first year of university. To date, it has been implemented on campuses in seven countries. She has active research collaborations in the U.S. and Canada adapting and evaluating EAAA for other groups. She worked for more than a decade on another important piece of the campus sexual assault prevention puzzle, to institutionalize effective bystander education for students of all genders on campus and to study its impact in the short and longer term. She also contributes to sexual violence prevention and policy change through her consulting with universities and government committees and taskforces in Canada, the U.K., and U.S.

## Presentation

### *Reducing Sexual Violence on Campus through Evidence-based Prevention*

Researchers have known that sexual violence is a serious problem on university and college campuses for almost 40 years and those high rates have not changed. This sexual violence is most often perpetrated against women by men they know and presents unique emotional and psychological obstacles for women. Most victims never report their experiences. Campus sexual violence prevention aimed at stopping men's perpetration has, despite decades of work toward that goal, not been effective. Bystander programs, which are powerful and effective in changing bystander attitudes and behaviour, are important but have no or limited impact on sexual violence perpetration or victimization. Empowerment of women in the face of these realities is important.

Dr. Senn developed The EAAA Sexual Assault Resistance program (a.k.a. Flip the Script with EAAA®) to address this prevention gap. It is a theoretically grounded and evidence-based education program designed to empower women-identified students of all sexual identities and cultural backgrounds with the best tools available for early detection of danger and effective resistance against sexual assault attempts by male acquaintances. A randomized controlled trial provided evidence of its efficacy in reducing the sexual violence women experience for at least two years while reducing woman- and self-blame. These benefits were confirmed when the program was implemented by Canadian universities. In this talk, Dr. Senn will provide a brief overview of current strategies for prevention of sexual violence and then will focus on EAAA as one piece of a comprehensive campus prevention plan.

## ROOM 1

### SEXUAL OFFENDING, CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION MATERIAL (CSEM), AND RISK

#### Factors That Distinguish Individuals with Sexual Interest in Children Who Offend from Those Who Do Not

Faye Arellano; *Carleton University*

Annika J. MacDonald; *Carleton University*

Abiraam Samithamby; *Carleton University*

Kelly M. Babchishin, *Carleton University*

Pedophilia is known to be a strong risk factor for contact child sexual abuse (CSA). However, some individuals with pedophilia never commit contact offences. To better understand characteristics associated with these differences, this study examined risk factors linked to contact offending within a sample of individuals with pedophilia. A total of 1,661 self-reported pedophilic males, including those who committed contact offences ( $n = 73$ ) and those who did not ( $n = 1,588$ ), were recruited through an anonymous online survey on a darknet forum dedicated to child sexual exploitation material. Overall, 4.4% of the sample reported contact offences. These individuals tended to score higher than non-contact offending individuals across several risk factors. On average, those who reported contact CSA scored higher on antisociality compared to non-offending individuals (30% higher;  $d = 0.61$  [.37 .84]), with similar patterns observed for substance abuse (23% higher;  $d = 0.33$  [.10 .57]), and for having access to children outside the family (18% higher;  $d = 0.30$  [.06 .53]). Targeting antisocial traits and contextual factors such as substance use and access to children outside the family may be key to strengthening prevention efforts for contact CSA among individuals with pedophilic interests.

**Keywords:** Pedophilia, Child sexual abuse, Risk factors

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## Incidence and Correlates of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism in Colombia

Isaac Cormier; *Saint Mary's University*

Skye Stephens; *Saint Mary's University*

The commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism (SECTT) are significant concerns in Colombia. Despite these concerns, there remains very limited data on CSEC and SECTT victimization in Colombia with most research conducted in Global North countries. The aim of the present study was to establish the prevalence of CSEC and SECTT among Colombian adolescents. Using an ecological framework, we examined demographic, individual, relational, community, and structural factors associated with these forms of sexual exploitation. The study relied on the 2018 Colombia Violence Against Children Survey (VACS) to estimate these objectives. The VACS is a nationally representative survey of Colombian youth in a national and priority stratum (priority stratum was a sample disproportionately impacted by the internal armed conflict). In the VACS data, less than 1% of Colombian adolescents aged 13-17 experienced CSEC. There were no youth aged 13-17 who experienced SECTT within the context of commercial exploitation. Thus, we were only able to explore potential correlates in relation to CSEC victimization. Several robust correlates emerged across both the national and priority stratum: demographic (older age, being in a relationship), individual (maltreatment), and relational (low parental monitoring) factors. There was less consistent support for community and structural risk factors. These findings provide critical prevalence data and assess whether correlates identified predominantly in Global North research apply in the Colombian context, offering guidance for targeted prevention and intervention efforts.

**Keywords:** Commercial Sexual Exploitation; Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism; Adolescents; Victimization; Ecological Model; Colombia

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## Predicting recidivism in men with Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM) offences using the STABLE-2007 and the ACUTE-2007 after a 15-year follow-up

Annika MacDonald; *Carleton University*

Faye Arellano; *Carleton University*

Abiraam Samithamby; *Carleton University*

Kelly M. Babchishin; *Carleton University*

Child sexual exploitation material (CSEM) offences are increasing, but few risk assessment tools have been validated over a long-term follow-up period for this population. This study assessed the predictive validity of the STABLE-2007 and the ACUTE-2007 for men with CSEM offences. The sample overlaps with Babchishin et al. (2022) using data from men with sexual offence convictions in British Columbia, but extends the average follow-up from 4 to 15 years. Three groups were compared: men with contact sexual offences against children ( $n = 1,042$ ), CSEM-exclusive offences ( $n = 229$ ), and mixed CSEM and contact sexual offences ( $n = 80$ ). Men with contact sexual offences against children, CSEM-exclusive, and mixed CSEM had an average follow-up of 13.41 ( $SD = 1.48$ ), 14.81 ( $SD = 2.37$ ), and 14.80 ( $SD = 2.64$ ) years, respectively. 15.5% of men with contact sexual offences, 8.74% of CSEM-exclusive, and 22.2% of mixed CSEM committed another sexual offence during this period. The ACUTE-2007 showed similar predictive validity for men with CSEM-exclusive offences ( $C = 0.62$ ,  $p = .034$ ), mixed CSEM offences ( $C = 0.62$ ,  $p = .108$ ), and contact sexual offences ( $C = 0.57$ ,  $p = .049$ ). The STABLE-2007 had similar predictive validity for men with CSEM-exclusive offences ( $C = 0.67$ ,  $p = .007$ ), mixed CSEM offences ( $C = 0.67$ ,  $p = .048$ ), and contact sexual offences ( $C = 0.63$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These findings support the validity of the ACUTE-2007 and STABLE-2007 as risk assessment tools for individuals with CSEM offences, therefore informing risk assessment and management practices for this population.

**Keywords:** CSEM, CSAM, child sexual abuse, risk assessment

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## Minority Identity in People Who Self-Report a Sexual Attraction to Children

Joelle Pagacz; *Carleton University*

Kailey Roche; *University of Ottawa; The Royal Ottawa Health Care Group*

Martin L. Lalumière; *University of Ottawa*

Michael C. Seto; *The Royal Ottawa Health Care Group*

Individuals attracted to children face substantial public stigma, potentially resulting in mental health difficulties. According to the minority stress model, identifying with a stigmatized attribute may worsen these difficulties. This study investigated whether a stronger preferential attraction to children, a greater same gender/sex attraction to children, and an earlier age of first awareness of attraction to children were associated with stronger minority identity in individuals attracted to children. Understanding these associations may help identify individuals at risk of mental health difficulties. Participants ( $n = 434$ ,  $M_{age} = 35$ ; 91% male; 82% White; 57% North American) were recruited from online forums for people attracted to children to complete an anonymous online survey on their experiences of stigma and mental health difficulties. Three variables assessed minority identity: number of social roles identified with (fewer roles signifying stronger minority identity), importance of sexual attraction to children to identity, and strength of affiliation to the broader community of people attracted to children. Regression analyses partially supported the preferentiality hypothesis: Stronger preferentiality was associated with higher ratings of importance of sexual attraction to children to identity and strength of group affiliation. Earlier age of awareness and greater same/gender sex attraction did not, however, relate to minority identity. Because a strong minority identity may be related to mental health difficulties in stigmatized groups, researchers should examine potential mental health differences between individuals with a preferential versus non-preferential attraction to children.

**Keywords:** Child attraction; minority identity; preferentiality; gender/sex attraction; age of awareness

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## Are fictional and 'real' Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM) users distinct in their risk profiles?

Abiraam Samithamby; *Carleton University*

Annika J. MacDonald; *Carleton University*

Faye Arellano; *Carleton University*

Kelly M. Babchishin; *Carleton University*

Child sexual exploitation material (CSEM) is a growing global problem, and rapid technological advances have increased the availability of fictional CSEM, including animated, cartoon, and AI-generated content. While research and legislation have historically focused on depictions of actual children, fictional CSEM remains in a legally and ethically ambiguous space, with regulations varying across countries. This changing landscape raises important questions about whether individuals who rely solely on fictional material differ significantly from those who view 'real' CSEM. Using data from an anonymous darknet child-lover forum ( $N = 3,015$ ), we compared individuals who reported viewing only fictional CSEM ( $n = 1,196$ ) to those who viewed both fictional and real CSEM (mixed users;  $n = 1,807$ ); only 0.4% ( $n = 12$ ) exclusively viewed 'real' CSEM. Across behavioural outcomes, mixed users reported consistently higher rates of sexually harmful behaviours involving real children, including offline sexual contact (7.8% vs. 0.5%;  $d = .34$  [.27, .42]) and online sexual communication with a child (12.0% vs. 0.8%;  $d = .44$  [.36, .51]). Mixed users also endorsed greater proclivity for a range of harmful behaviours, such as likelihood of having sexual contact with a child ( $d = .88$  [.80, .95]), paying a child for sexual material ( $d = .64$  [.57, .72]), and engaging in online contact with a child ( $d = .80$  [.72, .87]). Finally, multivariate models indicated elevated risk for contact sexual offending across several domains for mixed users, including pedophilic interests ( $aOR = 1.65$  [1.49, 1.82]), offence-supportive attitudes ( $aOR = 2.89$  [2.43, 3.44]), sexual preoccupation ( $aOR = 1.33$  [1.13, 1.57]), and negative social influences ( $aOR = 2.05$  [1.83, 2.28]), suggesting a distinct and higher risk profile. Together, these findings highlight the importance of differentiating subgroups of CSEM users to better inform prevention, risk assessment, and policy development.

**Keywords:** Child sexual exploitation material (CSEM); sexual offending; darknet users; pedophilic interests

## ROOM 2

### SEXUAL OFFENDING AND PREVENTION

#### Associations Between Therapeutic Alliance and Post-Treatment Desistance in Men Who Sexually Offended Against Children

Etienne Garant; *Université de Montréal*

Alexandre Gautier; *Université de Montréal*

Research on treatment outcomes for men who have committed sexual offenses (MCSOs) has consistently highlighted the importance of individual motivation for change, the quality of the group therapy climate, and the strength of the therapeutic alliance. However, previous studies have often examined these factors in isolation or focused primarily on short-term indicators such as treatment engagement or progression, leaving the mechanisms by which these variables jointly influence long-term outcomes, including recidivism, largely unexplored. The present study aimed to address this gap by investigating how motivation for change, group therapy climate, and therapeutic alliance interact to impact treatment effectiveness and subsequent sexual recidivism. The study included a sample of 140 men who had committed sexual offenses against children and were followed for a period of 5 to 8 years post-treatment. Using repeated measures ANOVA, we examined changes in cognitive distortions supporting sexual offending from pre- to post-treatment. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was then applied to assess the interrelations between motivation, group climate, therapeutic alliance, and the likelihood of post-treatment recidivism. ANOVA findings indicated a significant reduction in cognitive distortions, which was associated with a stronger therapeutic alliance. SEM results further demonstrated that the therapeutic alliance functioned as a mediator, linking both motivation for change and positive group climate to the absence of recidivism after treatment. These results suggest that while individual motivation and the social context of group therapy are important, their effects on long-term outcomes are substantially influenced by the quality of the therapeutic relationship. Overall, this study contributes to the field by demonstrating the central and mediating role of the therapist in promoting treatment effectiveness among MCSOs. These findings underscore the need for treatment programs to not only foster motivation and positive group dynamics but also prioritize strategies to strengthen the therapeutic alliance to reduce future offending risk.

**Keywords:** Therapeutic alliance; cognitive distortions; recidivism; offenders against children; structural equation modelling (SEM)

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## Understanding Sexual Recidivism Against Women Through a Three-Dimensional Developmental Framework

Alexandre Gauthier; *Université de Montréal*

Etienne Garant; *Université de Montréal*

Over the past few decades, research on men who have committed sexual aggression against women (MCSAAW) has identified both static and dynamic risk factors that either directly influence the commission of sexual aggression and its recidivism, or contribute to the sequence of events leading to such behaviors. These factors may be grouped into three dimensions: (1) externalized, (2) internalized, and (3) sexualized. However, little is known about how these dimensions influence different recidivism outcomes (i.e., sexual, violent nonsexual, and nonviolent/nonsexual). Building on previous research, this study examines these interactions in a sample of 206 MCSAAW. Using path analysis, the results indicate a positive association between externalized dimension and violent and nonviolent/nonsexual recidivism, and a positive association between the sexualized dimension and sexual recidivism. Additionally, the internalized dimension influences sexual recidivism indirectly through the sexualized dimension. Together, these findings show that recidivism among MCSAAW stems from distinct dimensions, each requiring tailored intervention. Externalized manifestations call for strategies targeting behavioral regulation and antisocial tendencies, while sexualized functioning—directly associated with sexual recidivism—requires interventions focused on atypical sexual interests and compulsive sexual behaviors. The indirect role of internalized difficulties suggests that emotional distress should be assessed for its potential to fuel maladaptive sexual coping. Overall, these results highlight the need for dimension-specific treatment aligned with risk-need-responsivity principles.

**Keywords:** Sexual aggression against women; Recidivism; Risk factors; Externalised, internalised, and sexualised dimensions; Path analysis; Violent and nonviolent offending

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## Appraisals of Prevention Messaging for the Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism in those with a Behavioral Proclivity to Offend

Katie Gordon; *Saint Mary's University*

Dr. Skye Stephens; *Saint Mary's University*

The sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism (SECTT) is defined by sexual contact with individuals under 18 years old whilst traveling internationally or domestically (Hawke & Raphael, 2016). Although SECTT carries potentially severe harms for victims and legal penalties for perpetrators, prevention efforts have been somewhat limited. Prevention responses to SECTT have largely originated from non-profit organizations and are primarily discussed in the grey literature. A review of the grey literature demonstrates prevention initiatives that appear to focus mainly on reporting of suspected cases, representing a secondary or tertiary prevention approach, rather than targeting behaviour before it occurs (Altamura, 2016; Beaulieu, 2016; Farrington, 2016; Hawke & Raphael, 2016; Hecht, 2016; Wallin, 2016; Zambrano & Abreu, 2016). As a result, empirically informed primary prevention strategies for SECTT remain underdeveloped. The present study addresses this gap by examining how individuals with differing levels of SECTT proclivity respond to three prevention messages - general awareness (focusing on occurrence and illegality), fear-based (emphasizing legal consequences), and emotional messaging (highlighting harms befalling victims) . Using a mixed-methods design, adult male participants (N = 300) from North America were recruited via Prolific and randomly assigned to one of the three poster conditions. Note that all poster conditions included general awareness information; however, the fear-based and emotional conditions incorporated additional content related to their message framing. Participants completed an online survey containing quantitative and qualitative measures relating to attitude, individual traits, proclivity, and appraisals of prevention posters. To assess change resulting from the prevention material, attitudes toward SECTT were measured pre- and post-. Participants also evaluated the perceived efficacy of the prevention materials. Data has been collected and analyses are currently underway. The results will be discussed within the context of prevention responses for SECTT.

**Keywords:** the Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism (SECTT), Prevention, Messaging Tactics, Proclivity

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## Examining Child Abuse & Attachment Style as Predictors of Sexual Recidivism

Mariya Nasim; *Ontario Tech University*

Leigh Harkins; *Ontario Tech University*

Jeffrey Abracen; *Ontario Tech University*

Jan Looman; *Forensic Behaviour Service*

Sexual recidivism remains a major concern in forensic psychology, yet there is limited consensus regarding the developmental factors that predict reoffending. This study examined whether childhood abuse and adult attachment style were associated with sexual recidivism among men convicted of sexual offences. Participants consisted of 772 incarcerated men enrolled in a high-risk sexual offender treatment program. Sexual recidivism was examined over a five-year follow-up period using official police records, and logistic regression analyses assessed whether childhood abuse, abuse characteristics, and insecure attachment style predicted reoffending. Descriptive analyses indicated high rates of childhood abuse and insecure attachment within the sample, with nearly 70% reporting abuse and over two-thirds classified as insecurely attached. However, neither childhood abuse nor specific abuse characteristics significantly predicted sexual recidivism. Similarly, insecure attachment style did not significantly predict reoffending. These findings suggest that developmental vulnerabilities related to childhood abuse and attachment may play a greater role in the onset of sexual offending than in its persistence. The results align with contemporary risk assessment frameworks emphasizing both dynamic and static risk factors and highlight the importance of trauma-informed clinical practice alongside targeted intervention on criminogenic needs most strongly associated with reoffending.

**Keywords:** Sexual Recidivism, Childhood Adversity, Child Abuse, Attachment Style

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## A Scoping Review of Psychological Characteristics of Children and Youth Engaging in Sexual Contact with Non-Human Animals

Noah Ng; *University of Ontario Institute of Technology*

Alexandra Zidenberg; *University of Montreal*

Saad Iqbal; *Pacific University*

Logan Neable; *King's University College*

Michelle Schwier; *Waypoint Centre*

Alice Lee; *University of California-Davis*

This presentation synthesizes the limited research on children and youth who engage in sexual contact with non-human animals to provide guidance for practitioners. Following Arksey and O'Malley's framework, we systematically searched the literature, reviewing 17 studies published primarily before 2010, with most originating from the United States. The studies included case reports, large-scale studies, and small forensic samples examining various forms of animal sexual contact, most commonly involving dogs and farm animals. Results revealed that youth engaging in these behaviors typically exhibited complex backgrounds characterized by histories of emotional, physical, and/or sexual abuse, family instability, and poor communication patterns. Mental health concerns included learning disabilities, autism, anxiety, isolation, and histories of other paraphilic behaviors. However, some cases showed no significant psychopathology, highlighting heterogeneity in this population. The findings align with Boisvert et al.'s five-factor model of concerning sexual behaviors, demonstrating behavior problems, parental stressors, coercive parenting, disruptions in psychosexual development, and compromised parent-child attachment. Clinical implications emphasize the need for comprehensive psychological assessment to distinguish isolated curiosity from patterns requiring intervention, interdisciplinary collaboration, and early intervention addressing both the sexual behaviors and underlying family dynamics. Clinical implications for psychologists, psychiatrists, and other professionals will be discussed.

**Keywords:** Zoophilia; Bestiality; Paraphilic, Children and Youth; Animal Sexual Abuse

## ROOM 3

### IPV AND COERCIVE CONTROL

#### A 50-Year Systematic Review of Typologies of Men Who Perpetrate Intimate Partner Violence

Crystal J. Giesbrecht; *University of Regina*

Leslie Anne Keown; *University of Regina*

Kaila C. Bruer; *University of Regina*

Perpetrators of intimate partner violence (IPV) are not a homogeneous group. For decades, researchers have sought to classify perpetrators of IPV into typologies. This presentation will share findings from a systematic review of 190 typologies of men who perpetrate IPV, published between 1974 and 2024. Typologies included in the systematic review are grouped according to nine types: 1) family-only and generally violent; 2) family-only, generally violent, and borderline/dysphoric; 3) family-only, generally violent, low-level antisocial, and borderline/dysphoric; 4) severity and frequency of violence; 5) reactive and instrumental, 6) situational couple violence and coercive control; 7) personality types; 8) other typologies (e.g., treatment responsiveness, physiological reactivity); and 9) perpetrators of intimate partner femicide. The presentation will provide an overview of the characteristics of perpetrator types and the proportions of each type in the extant literature; methods and measures used to derive typologies and compare types; and samples used in typology research. Similarities and potential overlap between types identified in the systematic review (e.g., generally violent and reactive perpetrators; family-only and coercive control; family-only and situational couple violence) will be discussed. Twenty-four ( $k = 24$ ) studies presented treatment outcomes for different types of perpetrators, and  $k = 25$  presented recidivism outcomes. Half of the studies that reported treatment and recidivism outcomes for different types classified perpetrators using variations of the family-only/generally violent typology. Overall, generally violent men were less likely to complete treatment, more likely to drop out, and attended fewer sessions. Individuals deemed higher risk were less likely to complete treatment. General violence, antisocial attitudes, anger, instability, and low readiness to change were associated with recidivism. Individuals deemed higher risk were more likely to reoffend. Although no typology has emerged as the definitive model, it is clear that different types of perpetrators have distinct treatment and supervision needs.

**Keywords:** intimate partner violence, perpetrators, treatment, recidivism

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## Improving Police Risk Assessment and Management of Intimate Partner Violence through Actuarial Developments

Ismael Loinaz; *University of the Basque Country & Biogipuzkoa*  
Maialen Irureta; *Donostia Hospital, Psychiatry Service - Osakidetza*

Police risk assessment plays a central role in the prevention of intimate partner violence (IPV), particularly in cases of targeted violence where legal and protective decisions can be directly informed. This study presents empirical findings from a ten-year review (2013–2023) of the actuarial risk assessment and management system used by the Ertzaintza (Basque police) in the Basque Country, Spain, with a focus on recent developments aimed at improving both assessment and intervention. The sample comprised more than 568,000 IPV risk assessments conducted with the EPV-R, a 20-item actuarial tool, corresponding to 31,077 distinct police case files involving 27,594 victims and 27,727 perpetrators. The EPV-R classifies cases into four risk levels (low, medium, high, extreme), each formally linked to graduated police management strategies oriented toward victim protection. These include structured self-protection planning, proactive police monitoring, judicial accompaniment, spatial and routine-based surveillance, counter-surveillance strategies, and permanent police escort in extreme-risk cases. Analyses examined risk level distributions, recidivism and revictimization patterns, and the intensity and duration of police management (mean case duration = 1,530 days). Results show that actuarial risk assessment, when embedded within structured management protocols, functions as an active intervention that alters exposure to violence. This finding raises a key methodological issue for psychology and law: intensive risk management may reduce reoffending while simultaneously attenuating observed predictive accuracy. Current developments will be discussed, including improved detection of multiple-victim and multiple-perpetrator profiles, or expanding the procedure to other domestic violence like child/adolescent-to-parent violence. Implications for evidence-based policing, risk assessment research, and legal decision-making are considered.

**Keywords:** violence risk assessment; violence risk management; police; actuarial

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## The RESPECT study: Research framework for Engaging intimate partner violence Survivors as Partners in Empowering Collaborative Transformation

Carissa Melnyk; *Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan and University of Regina*

Background: Involving people with lived experience as research partners is becoming more common in other fields (e.g., healthcare), but is less common in forensic psychology research. This involvement helps inform the research agenda, improve research outcomes, and facilitate knowledge mobilization. Methods: Using an iterative participatory approach, the RESPECT study developed a framework for engaging survivors/victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) as full research partners. A team of academic, lived experience, community-based, and student researchers conducted a rapid scoping review, evaluated several existing models, organized a roundtable event, and held focus groups. Sixteen IPV survivors/victims and/or service providers attended the roundtable event, providing input into recommendations, and nine participated in the focus groups during which they gave feedback on the draft framework. Results: The framework has five overarching foundations accompanied by supporting recommendations: (1) Centering Safety, Well-Being, and Emotional Support; (2) Sharing Power Between Organization-Affiliated and Lived Experience Researchers; (3) Respect, Trust, and Relationship Building; (4) Ensuring Equity and Accessibility; and (5) Respecting and Celebrating Diverse Identities. Conclusion: Through the roundtable and focus groups, IPV survivors/victims and service providers helped develop the framework from its initial conception to amendments. This co-created framework offers a practical approach to conducting ethical, equitable, and intersectional participatory research with IPV survivors/victims. The framework will be shared in an open-access platform to facilitate knowledge translation and use by all researchers.

**Keywords:** intimate partner violence; participatory research; research framework

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## INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE: FEMALE VICTIMS IN TERTIARY EDUCATION: MUTARE, ZIMBABWE

Jessica Nokwanda Ncube, *Manicaland State University of Applied Sciences*  
Sifikile Songo, *Manicaland State University of Applied Sciences*

Intimate partner violence has been recognized as a serious public health issue which is prevalent against women worldwide. Exposure to this form of violence results in mental health problems. This study is premised on the social and cultural context of intimate partner violence in Zimbabwe which is profoundly affected by traditional norms where men hold power and women are socialized to be passive and reliant on men. The study aims to assess the consequences of intimate partner violence among students in tertiary education. An Exploratory study was conducted using thirteen female students aged between 19 and 25 years who were purposively selected. This is a vulnerable group of emerging adults seeking long-term relationships. Semi-structured interviews were administered and the data was thematically analyzed. The cognitive-behavioral theory was used to interpret for the findings of the research. The findings revealed that intimate partner violence was a cause of concern among female students, however, its prevalence was viewed as low due to underreporting. The results showed that intimate partner violence had the following consequences; i) physical consequences, which are evidenced by unexplained bruises and wounds, ii) behavioral consequences which are exhibited by poor academic performance or restlessness, iii) social consequences, victims avoid social spaces or withdraw from their social networks, iv) cognitive consequences which show by absentmindedness and fear of getting into intimate relationships and v) emotional consequences which are evidenced by emotional distress and mood swings. The findings of this study suggest that provision of strong psychotherapy services and establishing clear reporting structures are ideal interventions to tackle intimate partner violence. Peer support groups for victims and survivors can be established at institutional and community levels. Education on this phenomenon through campaigns, workshops and seminars was recommended. Implications of this study are that there is a need to strengthen support systems by developing policies which advocate for improving security to foster safer academic environments. This study will contribute to literature by providing context specific narratives. It will reveal that empowered females still face violence due to patriarchal societal norms.

**Keywords:** Consequences, Female students, Interventions, Intimate Partner violence, Tertiary Education.

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## Exploring Predictors of Romantic Interest in Men who have Committed Intimate Partner Violence

Katelyn Young; *Saint Mary's University*

Melissa Corbett; *Dalhousie University*

Marc Patry; *Saint Mary's University*

Marguerite Ternes; *Saint Mary's University*

The impact of romantic relationships on human behaviour is well outlined. Within the context of former justice-involved individuals, these relationships significantly promote crime desistance. Despite this understanding, little research has examined individual willingness to engage romantically with this population, which is becoming increasingly relevant when examining stigmatized crimes like intimate partner violence (IPV). This study examined willingness to romantically engage with a man previously convicted of IPV and its relationship with attachment, self-esteem, empathy, trust, and helping attitudes. Ninety participants read a short vignette that described a date with a man who had no criminal history, a one-time offence of IPV, or repeated offences of IPV. Participants answered questions regarding the vignette they read and measures of identified variables. A regression analysis showed participants were less willing to romantically engage with someone who had committed IPV (single or repeated) than someone who had not committed IPV, and participants with higher self-esteem were less willing to romantically engage. No additional variables predicted willingness to romantically engage. Future research should investigate the impacts of personal experience of IPV and offender remorse on willingness to romantically engage with former IPV justice-involved individuals.

**Keywords:** Romantic relationships, justice-involved individuals, intimate partner violence, crime desistance

## ROOM 4

### INVESTIGATIONS, INTERROGATIONS, COURTS

#### **The Cases They Carry: “Sticky” Missing Persons Cases and Their Impacts on Police and Search and Rescue Volunteers**

Lorna Ferguson; *University of Regina*

Police officers and search and rescue (SAR) volunteers respond to hundreds of missing persons cases over the course of their service, yet not all cases fade from memory. This presentation draws on original empirical data from 249 semi-structured qualitative interviews and 200 open-ended online surveys with police officers and SAR volunteers across multiple jurisdictions. Participants were asked to reflect on missing persons cases requiring SAR that had “stuck with them” over time and to explain why these cases remained salient. Data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006), enabling an inductive examination of how participants interpret and make sense of enduring case memories. The presentation introduces the concept of “sticky cases” to describe missing persons incidents that persist psychologically long after operational involvement has ended. Borrowed from marketing scholarship, “stickiness” refers to the enduring cognitive and emotional salience of particular experiences and their capacity to remain accessible over time. Findings indicate that sticky missing persons cases are shaped by a range of interrelated factors, including successful and unsuccessful outcomes, unresolved cases, perceived decision errors, intense emotional or sensory exposure, personal identification with the missing person, and high-stakes or traumatic circumstances. Participants described these cases as frequently resurfacing during later responses, informal conversations, and personal reflection, influencing how they approach their work and interpret its emotional demands. While some sticky cases supported learning, meaning-making, and professional identity formation, others were associated with rumination, moral distress, and cumulative psychological strain. The presentation concludes by considering the implications of sticky cases for occupational stress, psychological well-being, and organizational support practices within policing and SAR contexts.

**Keywords:** Missing persons; Policing; Search and rescue volunteers; Occupational stress; Sticky cases

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## Dispositional and Situational Risk Factors in Jurors' Evaluations of Disputed Confessions

Madison Hynes; *Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador*

Brent Snook; *Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador*

False confessions remain a major contributor to wrongful convictions, yet little is known about how jurors integrate established risk factors when evaluating the credibility of disputed confessions. Across two experiments, we examined how Canadian potential jurors weigh dispositional suspect vulnerabilities and situational interrogation features when judging the believability of retracted confessions. Our goals were to assess the influence of empirically supported risk factors, compare the relative weight of dispositional versus situational cues, and evaluate whether jurors appropriately incorporate these factors when forming believability judgments. In both experiments, 100 jury-eligible participants evaluated 32 vignettes describing a male suspect who recanted a confession. Experiment 1 varied dispositional traits (compliance, youth, intellectual ability, trauma history, mental illness). Experiment 2 manipulated situational factors (prolonged questioning, false evidence, minimization tactics, phenomenology of innocence, sleep deprivation). Participants rated the believability that the confession was false on a 10-point scale. A policy-capturing approach using within-subject regressions identified which factors each participant relied on and the strength of those influences. Across both studies, dispositional and situational cues were equally predictive, each accounting for roughly 54% of the variance in believability ratings. Situational cues were ignored slightly more often (46.2%) than dispositional cues (41.4%). Compliance was the strongest dispositional predictor, while intellectual ability and youth showed moderate effects and trauma and mental illness minimal effects. Sleep deprivation and false evidence presentation were the most influential situational cues, followed by prolonged interrogation; minimization and innocence phenomenology were weak predictors. Participants frequently failed to adjust believability judgments even in high-risk scenarios and showed limited metacognitive insight, underestimating the influence of their strongest cues. Jurors consider both suspect characteristics and interrogation practices, but their judgments are selective, incomplete, and sometimes misaligned with psychological evidence – highlighting the need for continued research on how lay decision-makers evaluate false confession risk.

**Keywords:** Jury research; Judicial decision-making; Police interactions/Confessions

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## The Influence of Guilt Status and Minimization on Sentencing Expectations

Sierra Lucier-Lewis; *Ontario Tech University*

Dr. Quintan Crough; *University of Texas at El Paso*

Suspects are often reluctant to cooperate during interviews due to a fear of legal consequences. To overcome such reluctance, investigators frequently employ minimization (i.e., downplaying the moral consequences associated with an act). Numerous past studies have indicated that minimization implies lenient sentencing, and warning participants that investigators do not possess the ability to influence sentencing does not affect such perceptions. Researchers have therefore speculated that minimization increases the risk of false confessions. All such research, however, has been limited in its generalizability primary due to being conducted exclusively online. To address this concern, the current study examined implications of minimization within in-person mock-suspect interviews. Undergraduate participants ( $N = 56$ ) either completed a mock transgression or they did not. All participants then underwent an interview where a leniency warning was provided or it was not, and minimization was either applied, or it was not. All participants then completed various measures relating to sentencing expectations. A logistic regression assessed how Guilt, Minimization, and Warning influenced beliefs about whether confessing leads to a more lenient sentence (1 = yes, 0 = no). Guilt status was a significant predictor ( $\text{Wald} = 5.404$ ,  $p = .020$ ), with Innocent participants over five times more likely to expect leniency if they confessed ( $\text{OR} = 5.12$ , 95% CI [1.29, 19.88]). Minimization ( $\text{Wald} = 1.142$ ,  $p = .285$ ) and Warning ( $\text{Wald} = 0.790$ ,  $p = .374$ ) showed no significant effects. However, an ANOVA indicated that Guilt, Minimization, and Warning did not significantly impact continuous Sentencing Expectations (1 = Minimum, 7 = Maximum). Although, innocent participants again expected lesser sentences than guilty participants ( $d = .34$ ). Current results indicate that being innocent of a crime is seemingly a greater risk factor in terms of inferred leniency than is the application of minimization.

**Keywords:** Minimization, Pragmatic Implication, Investigative Interviewing

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## Revisiting Apologies: Examining the Composition of Apologies in Investigative Interviews

Katrina Villeneuve; *Ontario Tech University*

Amy Leach; *Ontario Tech University*

Logan Ewanation; *Ontario Tech University*

Brian Cutler; *Fielding Graduate University*

In our previous study, we explored the prevalence of apologies in investigative interviews. In the 117 interviews examined, 43 included at least one apology ( $M = 0.37$ ,  $SD = 0.48$ ). Beyond this, little is known about the underlying nature and composition of these 'legal apologies'. It is unclear whether suspects merely express regret (e.g., say "I'm sorry") or offer more comprehensive statements. In this study, we assessed the quality of apologies. That is, we examined the underlying components of apologies present in investigative interviews. We coded Lewicki et al.'s (2016) six apology components (i.e., Expression of Regret, Explanation, Acknowledgment of Responsibility, Declaration of Repentance, Offer of Repair, Request for Forgiveness) as they occurred in the same set of 117 interviews from the previous study. In addition to this typology, additional factors, such as a statement's direction (i.e., primary, secondary, investigation, and undefined), were coded. To our knowledge, these apology components have not been assessed in a sample of investigative interviews. Therefore, this will be an exploratory analysis. Controlling for interview length, components will be assessed in a few ways. Individual component occurrences will be calculated for each interview. We will then analyze the average number of components contained within interviews and the most commonly occurring components using descriptive statistics (i.e., a calculation of each component's frequency irrespective of direction). Typical combinations of apology components will also be identified and assessed using association analyses (e.g., Chi-Squared tests) to determine whether certain components occur together at statistically significant rates. Relatively little is known about the underlying nature of apologies across a broad sample of suspect interviews. Our research will provide a better understanding of the quantity and quality of apologies and their related components in real interviews.

**Keywords:** apologies; investigative interviews; forensic psychology

## ROOM 5

### STIGMA AND JUSTICE OUTCOMES

#### Describing the Experiences of Justice-Impacted People with Disabilities in Canada

Ellen Coady; *Carleton University*

Shelley Brown; *Carleton University*

People with disabilities are over-represented in the American criminal legal system (CLS; 66% of individuals in prison vs. 25% of community individuals; Bixby et al., 2021; CDC, 2024), yet Canadian prevalence rates are unknown. This study utilized retrospective manual coding of probation officer case notes and risk assessment information to establish the prevalence of disability, use of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), and disability-based differences in risk/need profiles in 510 medium-to-high risk probation clients in Ontario (Mage= 35.3 years, 45.7% women, 53.7% men, 36.5% Indigenous/mixed-race Indigenous, 32.4% White, 15.7% Black). Half (52.6%; n = 268) of clients self-reported a disability/condition resulting in functional impairment, indicating that people with disabilities are over-represented in probation settings (Community prevalence: 27.0%; Statistics Canada, 2023). Additionally, 158 clients (31.0%) were accessing ODSP, a rate that is 12.5 times higher than community settings (2.5% of Ontarians; MCCSS, 2021). Compared to those without, individuals with disabilities had significantly higher risk scores (Cohen's  $d$  = -0.32) on the Level of Service Inventory – Ontario Revision (Andrews et al., 1995) and significantly more priority treatment needs identified (Glass'  $\Delta$  = -0.39). Additionally, leisure/recreation, family/marital and antisocial pattern, companions, and attitudes, were identified significantly more frequently as priorities in those with disabilities ( $\Phi$  = 0.11-0.20). These findings suggest that disability may increase the risk of CLS involvement and be an important responsivity factor. To reduce recidivism, future studies should identify the mechanisms through which the social construction of disability and ableism influence crime. Further, they should explore whether disability may be an axis of identity through which systemic biases may become embedded in risk assessments, inflating risk scores.

This research reflects the views of the authors and not the Ontario Ministry of the Solicitor General and is funded by a SSHRC Partnership Development Grant (#890-2023-0064) between Carleton and the Ministry.

**Keywords:** Disability, Ontario Disability Support Program, probation, identity-based differences, risk/need assessment

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## The Autism and Criminal Justice Research Field : Findings from a Bibliometric Analysis

Vincent Denault; *University of Montreal*

Danielle Bozin; *Australian Centre for Health Law Research, Queensland University of Technology*

Larbi Benallal; *Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, McGill University*

Research over the past two decades has shown how autistic people are perceived by criminal justice practitioners. However, although the literature on autism and criminal justice is growing steadily, the structure and dynamics of the autism and criminal justice research field are largely unknown. How has this research field grown over time? Who are the contributors, institutions and journals? What are the emerging trends? Which topics are being neglected? To better understand these characteristics, a bibliometric analysis was conducted. The results highlight that the research field is centred around a growing understanding of autism and criminal justice, and examining the significant challenges facing Autistic people, with a focus on the systematic issues, rather than techniques to better support Autistic people, including during their courtroom appearances. The results also shows that Western countries predominantly feature in our corpus, and other parts of the world do not, and that different groups of researchers are active in the autism and criminal justice research field, sometimes with very few links between them. Finally, keywords and titles (e.g., disorder, syndrome, co-morbidity, disability) suggest that autism is pathologized and ascribed impairment or deficiency status. Future research could pay more attention to what actually helps autistic individuals during their courtroom appearances (e.g., whether or not a disability is disclosed) and helps judges avoid assessing credibility using neurotypical expectations.

**Keywords:** Autism, Criminal Justice, Bibliometrics

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## The Role of Stigma: The Relationship Between Public Stigma and Drug Policy Among Canadians

Emma Summersby; *Saint Mary's University*  
Marguerite Ternes; *Saint Mary's University*

The opioid epidemic has caused overdose and consumption rates to skyrocket to unprecedented heights in Canada, affecting all provinces and territories, especially British Columbia (BC). In January 2023, BC implemented an alternative drug policy that exempted Section 56(1) of Canada's Controlled Drugs and Substances Act for a three-year trial period. This alternative drug policy, namely, decriminalization, replaces criminalization of illicit substances with non-criminal interventions for personal possession of MDMA, cocaine, methamphetamine, and opioids, including fentanyl and heroin, for adults 18 years or older. Through decriminalization, people who use drugs (PWUD) are turned toward services such as treatment, harm reduction sites, and educational programs rather than entering the criminal justice system. The execution of this alternative drug policy is meant to encourage PWUD to engage in care-seeking behaviours and reduce stigma. The objective of the study is to examine the influence of stigma against PWUD on Canadians' attitudes toward decriminalization. The sample consisted of 1,000 ( $M_{age} = 35.76$ ) adults over the age of 18 residing in Canada. Participants were asked to complete a survey that measures perceptions of decriminalization, substance-use-related stigma, conservatism, and demographic characteristics. Results from the linear hierarchical regression demonstrate that higher levels of stigma are associated with opposition to decriminalization among Canadians. The hierarchical regression states that the relationship between stigma and support or opposition for this alternative drug policy is impacted by personal characteristics such as age, race, gender, political conservatism, and marital status. Moreover, differences of opinion regarding decriminalization were also found among provinces. Findings will be discussed regarding the role stigma plays in Canadians' views toward drug policies in this country, and what should be done in the future to ensure that public opinion does not cloud the needs of PWUD regarding drug policy.

**Keywords:** Substance use, Stigma, Decriminalization

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## Testing, Testing!: Pilot Testing Education and Indirect Contact for Modifying Negative Beliefs About Psychopathy (Study 1)

Jessie Swanek; *Carleton University*  
Adelle Forth; *Carleton University*

The idea of a psychopath has long infatuated the public; media often portrays them as untreatable, unemotional, serial killers. A spillover effect of this is that the psychopathy label has become synonymous with increased stigma and harsher sentences in court cases. Depictions of psychopathy are prevalent in the media, with an increasing number of newspaper and online articles including mentions of it from 1980 to 2021. Unfortunately, their portrayals are often inaccurate, or sensationalized, with media focusing on homicides. This study is the first of two aiming to reduce the myths that people hold towards psychopathy. This first study validated four conditions (control: information about psychology, education: refuting psychopathy myths, indirect contact with a man diagnosed with psychopathy, indirect contact with a woman diagnosed with psychopathy) by comparing any post-test score changes with three measures that examined convergent and discriminant validity. Undergraduate participants ( $N = 346$ ) completed a measure examining their psychopathy myth acceptance, the HEXACO-PI-R Agreeableness subscale, and the Perceived Threat to Freedom Scale. Lastly, they saw one of four conditions and answered questions on it. Overall, endorsement of most myth acceptance items decreased post-test. Participants tended to view all four conditions positively. While the four conditions all showed good convergent and discriminant validity, unexpectedly, there was not a statistically significant difference in post-test psychopathy myth scores between the four conditions. While no significant differences were found between the four conditions on the psychopathy myth scores, t-tests indicated that scores did decrease in the intended direction from pre-test to post-test. Given that this study did not have enough participants to determine small changes between groups, there is need for a larger sample and use of a pre-post design to further test the effectiveness of the different conditions, which my Study 2 is currently testing.

**Keywords:** Psychopathy; education; indirect contact; myths

## ROOM 1

### IPV, FAMILIES, AND OTHER HARMS

#### Exploring the Role of Attractiveness in Crime Type Perceptions

Abigail Keeping; *Saint Mary's University*

Steven Smith; *Saint Mary's University*

Katelynn Carter-Rogers; *St. Francis Xavier University/Saint Mary's University*

Physical attractiveness has been well established as an important factor in how individuals are judged and perceived. This study investigates how perceived physical attractiveness influences crime type likelihood judgements, building upon existing theories including the halo effect and the beauty penalty effect. The study uses a 3x6x2 repeated measures ANOVA design with a sample consisting of 164 undergraduate students. Crime likelihood ratings were assessed for six different crimes, including: Driving while impaired, assault, swindle/fraud, murder, break-in, and drug possession at three levels of attractiveness (below average, average and above average). Images for this study were sourced from the Chicago Face Database (CFD). Findings revealed a significant interaction between crime type and attractiveness. These findings reveal that the halo effect does not uniformly apply to all crime types and that there is evidence for a beauty penalty effect in crimes where deception is involved, showcased by the swindle/fraud likelihood ratings. Limitations of this study include limited generalizability to real-word contexts, a reliance on self-reported data and a limited sample pool consisting of undergraduate students.

**Keywords:** perceived attractiveness, halo effect, beauty penalty, social judgement

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## Co-Offending, Substance Use and Intimate Partner Violence: The Rates of Substance Use and Intimate Partner Violence in Co-offending Cases Involving Women Offenders

Grace Kirk; *Saint Mary's University*

Emma Summersby; *Saint Mary's University*

Dr. Meg Ternes; *Saint Mary's University*

Research suggests that substance use, trauma, and intimate partner violence (IPV) play a unique and inter-connected role when it comes to female offenders committing crime generally, but also when it comes to co-offending. Co-offending relationships are commonly abusive and obtaining substances is often the motivation for commission of the offence. The majority of the literature has examined these three variables separately, and currently there are no studies looking at them simultaneously. This study seeks to find the rates of Canadian co-offending cases where IPV and/or substance use were present. This goal is being carried out by coding Canadian court records on the online archive CANLII for relevant variables. Ten cases from Ontario that involve a woman co-offending have been coded so far. In this sample, 40% of the women experienced at least one Adverse Childhood Experience, which is fitting with what we know about female offenders and trauma. The most common relationship dynamics between the co-offenders were friends (40%) or current or ex-romantic partners (30%). Contrary to what past research would suggest about co-offending cases involving female offenders, only 10% of cases coded contained IPV or coercive control. Rates of substance use (20%) and mental illness (30%) were also lower than expected. Although this study is high in ecological validity due to its archival nature, using court records is also a limitation of this study as some information is not included, and this may explain why the current results don't reflect past research. Future studies should use other ways of collecting data such as interviews to get a fuller understanding of female offenders, IPV and substance use.

**Keywords:** Substance use, Coercive control, Intimate Partner Violence, Female Offenders, Co-offending

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## Understanding and operationalizing coercive control: Preliminary results of a scoping review

Ben Presta; *Carleton University*  
Millena Grajewski; *Georgian College*

**Background:** Coercive control (coercive, controlling behaviour) in intimate relationships is used to assert dominance over a partner and can involve verbal threats, manipulation, economic dominance, and many other tactics. Knowledge of coercive control has steadily increased over the past ~20 years, but despite its increasing prevalence in academic and legal circles, a clear definition/operationalization of coercive control remains elusive.

**Method:** A scoping review was conducted of the operationalization of coercive control in empirical research. Screening identified 131 articles. Data extraction involved identifying behaviours included in the study's operationalization (e.g., economic control, isolation), as well as any details about how coercive control is operationalized (e.g., time span, number of behaviours).

**Results:** Preliminary findings show that in sum, researchers include the majority of the theoretically identified coercive controlling behaviours in their studies of coercive control. However, less emphasis is placed on the details of the operationalization.

**Conclusion:** This presentation will present the preliminary results of the scoping review project and offer initial thoughts regarding a consensus definition of coercive control and how it is operationalized in empirical research.

**Action/Impact:** A consensus definition and operationalization would help improve the research, measurement, and assessment of coercive control. Further research may focus on the details of coercive control beyond behaviours, such as time span, number of behaviours, survivor impact, and more.

**Keywords:** Coercive control, intimate partner violence, intimate terrorism, coercive controlling behaviour, violence

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## Assessing risk for negative child outcomes related to psychopathy, mental health, and intimate partner violence in a family court sample

Robert Rowe; *Queen's University*

There is substantial research examining the impact that mental health, personality disorders, and IPV has on negative child outcomes. Research specifically on psychopathy and borderline personality disorder, and their relationship with parenting and negative child outcomes is emerging. A common rationale for family court ordered assessments is to ascertain the mental health status of parents and the likelihood that any mental health issues may detrimentally impact on their ability to look after the best interests of their children. The proposed presentation will present a study examining multiple parenting factors that may, or may not be, related to risk for future negative child outcomes. The study examines over two-hundred parents assessed through family court orders. Measures of mental health and psychological functioning were gathered through interviews and questionnaires. These included symptoms and measures of various mental health disorders, as well as personality disorders and factors associated with domestic violence, coercive control, and poor co-parenting. A structured professional judgement measure of parental risk was implemented for each parent. Results examine the relationship between various facets of mental health, personality disorders, IPV, and parental risk. Preliminary findings suggest the relative importance of psychopathy and other personality disorders and their likely connection to negative child outcomes, while traditional mental health problems are less likely to be related to risk for negative child outcomes. Implications for the future assessment of parents' mental health in family court systems will be discussed as well as the utility of structured guides for assessing risk.

**Keywords:** psychopathy parenting IPV Risk Assessment

## ROOM 2

### SEXUAL VIOLENCE, CONSENT, AND TECH-FACILITATED HARM

#### Understanding Consent Violations in BDSM: The Role of Practitioner Identity and Community Involvement

Myles Davidson; *Carleton University*

Kelly M. Babchinshin; *Carleton University*

Consent violations have been documented as occurring at higher rates among individuals who practice BDSM (bondage, discipline, domination, submission, and sadomasochism) within organized community settings compared to those who practice BDSM privately or do not engage in BDSM at all. However, the mechanisms behind these differing rates remain poorly understood. The present study sought to explore whether BDSM identity (i.e., dominant, submissive, and switch) contributes to variations in consent violation victimization and perpetration within different contexts. An online community sample of 246 individuals ( $M_{age} = 28.50$ , 75.6% BDSM practitioners) completed measures assessing consent violation experiences. Across groups, BDSM practitioners reported significantly more victimization than non-practitioners, including submissives ( $d = 0.31$ ), dominants ( $d = 0.88$ ), and switches ( $d = 0.93$ ). Dominants ( $d = 0.60$ ) and switches ( $d = 0.67$ ) also reported more victimization than submissives. A similar pattern emerged for perpetration: all BDSM practitioners reported more incidents than non-practitioners (submissives:  $d = 0.54$ ; dominants:  $d = 1.36$ ; switches:  $d = 1.14$ ), and dominants ( $d = 0.63$ ) and switches ( $d = 0.55$ ) reported more perpetration than submissives. A  $3 \times 4$  factorial ANOVA revealed a significant interaction between BDSM involvement and identity for both consent violation outcomes; however, within BDSM community practitioners specifically, no role-based differences emerged. These findings suggest BDSM roles relate to consent violations outside a community context, with non-practitioners and submissives reporting fewer instances of victimization and perpetration. Within communities, role differences vanish, indicating that community norms and a more fulsome understanding of consent and the consent negotiation process may moderate consent practices. Future research should explore how community structures and expectations shape these dynamics.

**Keywords:** BDSM; sexual sadism; sexual masochism; consent; consent violations

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## An Analysis of Canadian Criminal Trials Involving Non-Consensual Intimate Image Distribution

Melissa Handford; *Ontario Tech University*

Leigh Harkins; *Ontario Tech University*

Non-consensual intimate image distribution (NCIID) is a growing form of sexual violence which involves the creation, distribution, and threatening to create or distribute nude or sexual images of another person without their consent. Often times, these instances are perpetrated by men towards women, in the context of a recently ended romantic relationship. Additionally, images are often created and sent to the perpetrator with consent, only to then be distributed non-consensually afterwards. The aim of this research was to understand if and how these trends appear within a Canadian legal context. Six case studies of criminal trials were assessed to search for the demographics of the accused and victim, the relationship between the accused and victim, and how the image was created and distributed, to better understand if and how these factors that influenced the outcome of the cases examined. Three of these trials resulted in a conviction of the accused. In all cases, each of the accused were men, and each of the victims were women. Of the cases that resulted in a conviction, all three were done in the context of an ended committed romantic relationship. This was also the case in one of the cases which resulted in an acquittal, while the other occurred between acquaintances. There was less consistency in image creation and distribution method in both case outcome conditions; however, sharing images through a direct message to specific individuals or on social media were common ways of distributing. These findings provide foundational insight into how NCIID is treated in Canadian criminal trials, and can be built upon to better understand how these factors may or may not contribute to a higher likelihood of a case resulting in a conviction.

**Keywords:** Sexual violence, non-consensual intimate image distribution, technology-facilitated sexual violence, criminal case outcome

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## What we know about Non-consensual intimate image dissemination: A scoping review

Vasileia Karasavva; *University of British Columbia*

Young adults increasingly initiate, maintain, and end sexual relationships online, an evolution that has also transformed how sexual violence may be perpetrated. Nonconsensual intimate image dissemination (NCIID) has gained attention in research, policy, and media. Yet, to date, there has been no synthesis of the literature on NCIID victimization. The goals of this work were to: (a) describe the frequency and nature of NCIID victimization, (b) examine the impacts of experiencing NCIID, and (c) identify survivor coping strategies. Following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines, PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and ProQuest were systematically searched for peer-reviewed qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods studies published in English by February 1, 2025. A total of 49 studies met the inclusion criteria. The reported frequency of NCIID ranged from 3% to 65%, with higher rates among those who experienced some other form of technology-facilitated sexual violence. Perpetrators were often current or former partners, and content was shared through both private messaging and public platforms. Victim-survivors frequently reported psychological (e.g., depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder), social (e.g., ostracism, victim-blaming), and academic/occupational harms. Help-seeking strategies included disclosing to trusted others, legal action, and content reporting, while coping through avoidance strategies included relocation, withdrawal, or trying to act as if nothing happened. Barriers to help-seeking included stigma, lack of awareness, and prior negative experiences with authorities. Findings highlight the urgent need for survivor-centered support systems, awareness campaigns, and broader conversations about consent in digitally mediated sexual encounters.

**Keywords:** technology-facilitated sexual violence, non-consensual intimate image dissemination, scoping review

# 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Canadian Forensic Psychology Virtual Conference



## Blame on You! How Sexual Assault Blame Attributions Vary Across Cisgender and Transgender Victims

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Transgender individuals experience disproportionately high rates of sexual assault (SA) in Canada and the US. Police-reported cases rarely lead to charges and convictions, and many SA survivors report experiencing victim-blaming (VB) from friends, family, and the criminal justice system (CJS). Mock jury studies also reveal gendered biases in how people perceive victims and offenders of SA in court, where women are subject to high levels of VB. While research has focused on cisgender women victims and cisgender men perpetrators, limited attention has been paid to transgender victims, despite heightened rates of SA in this population. Extant research has yielded inconsistent results; this may be due to use of stranger-rape scenarios in such studies despite the infrequency of these occurrences relative to those perpetrated by familiar individuals. The current study addresses these limitations using a between-subjects mock jury design. Participants (N = 500+) provided demographic information, and were randomly assigned to read a fictional case summary of acquaintance SA that varied by victim gender identity (man/woman) and sex assigned at birth (male/female), thus creating cisgender/transgender conditions. Victim portrayal also was modified to appear feminine or masculine. Following the case scenario, participants completed a case outcome questionnaire that assessed perceptions of the incident, victim, perpetrator, and legal responses. Our analyses are underway and examine perceived victim credibility, responsibility, promiscuity, and other variables empirically related to VB. We anticipate that some victim blaming will occur overall (consistent with past research); however, this will be exacerbated in conditions where the victim is depicted as a transgender woman/transgender man (with low credibility ratings and high perceived responsibility). This study has implications for the CJS, and promotes awareness of how victim blaming and diverse gender identities can be doubly disadvantaged throughout the legal process.

**Keywords:** blame attributions, cisgender & transgender victims, sexual assault

## ROOM 3

### POLICING, CREDIBILITY, AND EVIDENCE

#### Perceptions and Misconceptions of Eyewitness and Fingerprint Evidence

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There are decades of systematic research on eyewitness identification, resulting in a well-developed understanding of eyewitness performance across a range of contexts. In contrast, latent fingerprint evidence (LPE) has comparatively little foundational research, limiting what is known about examiner performance and sources of error. Unlike eyewitness evidence, the issues with LPE have generally not been communicated to the public, leaving lay people less aware of its constraints. As a result, misconceptions about LPE may be more prevalent than misconceptions about eyewitness evidence. Because jurors—lay people tasked with making important legal decisions—tend to place substantial weight on both eyewitnesses and LPE in trials, it is important to know what they believe about these forms of evidence. Attorneys, who tend to share a similar level of understanding about science as lay individuals, are nonetheless responsible for challenging questionable evidence in trials and advising clients about the strength of the evidence. Misconceptions held by attorneys might have particularly serious implications for decision-making and outcomes in real cases. The present research examines the prevalence and nature of misconceptions about eyewitness and fingerprint evidence among these groups. First, we asked 500 jury-eligible US citizens about their agreement with statements about eyewitness and fingerprint evidence, as well as their exposure to this type of evidence in the real world and the media. Results suggest that lay individuals have significantly more misconceptions about LPE than eyewitness evidence. We are currently surveying practicing attorneys about their agreement with those same statements and will be comparing the extent to which the two samples hold misconceptions about these common forms of evidence. These findings will help to clarify how forensic evidence is understood by attorneys relative to lay individuals, which can guide future research to help combat the effect of these misconceptions in the criminal legal system.

**Keywords:** Jury decision-making; Attorney decision-making; Misconceptions; Eyewitness identification; Latent fingerprint evidence

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## Validating the Attitudes Towards Police Legitimacy Scale – Short Form in Canada

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Police legitimacy refers to the belief that the police act fairly, justly, and in the best interests of the public. Police legitimacy is strengthened when officers enforce laws impartially, respect individual rights, and communicate openly with the public. High police legitimacy has been shown to predict compliance with the law and, importantly, justification of police actions, including use of force (UoF). In contrast, perceptions of bias, corruption, or injustice weaken legitimacy and strain police-public relations. Several theoretical models describe how legitimacy develops (e.g., Bottoms-Tankebe Model, 2012; Tyler, 2006; Tyler & Jackson, 2014). The most widely used measures of police legitimacy, however, are the Attitudes Towards Police Legitimacy Scale (APLS) and its short form (APLS-SF). Both APLS scales consider seven constructs of police legitimacy (e.g., quality of interpersonal treatment, trustworthiness, and motivation) and predict several police-related behaviours, such that higher scores indicate greater likelihood of perceiving a police shooting as justified, self-reporting crime, and donating money to a police charity. Although the APLS has been validated in Canada. The APLS-SF has not. As part of a larger study, the present study sought to validate the APLS-SF in Canada and examine whether it predicts responses concerning perceptions of UoF. Using data from 55 participants, the APLS-SF demonstrated strong internal consistency ( $\alpha = .94$ ). Additionally, there was a weak, positive correlation between perceptions of force and APLS-SF scores,  $r (49) = .39$ ,  $p = .002$ , with legitimacy accounting for 15.4% of the variation in perception of force. A significant linear relationship was found between the APLS-SF and perceptions of UoF,  $F (1, 49) = 8.93$ ,  $p = .004$ , indicating that for each unit increase in APLS-SF score, perceptions of UoF increased by .18. Overall, these results indicate that the APLS-SF can be used as a valid measure in Canada.

**Keywords:** Police legitimacy, Perceptions of police, Use of force

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## Cognition Under Fire: How Commanders Balance Intuition and Analysis

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Dr. Lorna Ferguson; *University of Regina*

Critical incident command (CIC) requires police leaders to make high-stakes decisions under acute time pressure, ambiguity, and physiological stress. This study examines how dual-process cognition, System 1 (rapid, intuitive decision-making) and System 2 (deliberative, analytical reasoning; Kahneman, 2011), operates in real-world operational policing contexts. Drawing on qualitative interviews with experienced incident commanders ( $n = 41$ ) across Canadian police services, we analyzed how officers perceive, integrate, and manage these two cognitive modes during crises. Our findings demonstrate that System 1 processes dominate during time-compressed, life-threatening situations, enabling commanders to rapidly triage information, adapt to volatile conditions, and make decisions based on training and experience. Participants emphasized the necessity of "acting on incomplete information," maintaining calm affective control, and avoiding paralysis by analysis. At the same time, commanders described the corresponding stress, cognitive load, and physiological arousal that can degrade decision accuracy, highlighting the limits of intuition under duress. Conversely, System 2 thinking emerged as essential for structured decision-making, risk assessment, and post-incident justification. Commanders routinely relied on formal frameworks (e.g., SMEAC, NRA) to slow down cognition, evaluate probabilities and consequences, integrate multidisciplinary expertise, and document rationales for later legal scrutiny. This deliberate mode was considered especially critical when time permitted consultation, when information was incomplete but non-urgent, and when decisions carried significant organizational, reputational, or ethical implications. Overall, the data show that effective incident command hinges not on choosing one system over the other, but on the ability to transition between them fluidly. These findings have implications for forensic psychology, police training, and leadership development, particularly the need for stress inoculation training, scenario-based repetition, and development of cognitive flexibility to strengthen both intuitive and analytical competencies in high-risk environments.

**Keywords:** Dual Process Cognition, Critical Incident Command, Policing

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## Interpreter Effects on Deception Detection Accuracy

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People are less accurate at detecting deception in non-native (vs. native) speakers. One solution to this disparity is offered by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: the right to an interpreter. However, there is no published work to suggest interpreters improve observers' detection of non-native speakers' deception. We examined the effects of language proficiency and interpreter assistance on deception detection. Undergraduate students ( $N = 117$ ) were randomly assigned to watch 8 audiovisual clips (4 lie-tellers and 4 truth-tellers providing mock testimony about a suspicious event) in one of 8 conditions (beginner vs. intermediate vs. advanced vs. native English speakers – communicating either with or without interpreters). Participants provided lie and truth judgements following each clip. We hypothesized that – in the absence of an interpreter – observers would have lower accuracy when viewing lie- and truth-tellers speaking in their non-native (vs. native) language. A preliminary Veracity  $\times$  Proficiency  $\times$  Interpreter Use mixed-factors ANOVA on participants' veracity judgements revealed a significant interaction between the variables. Post hoc tests indicated that participants were more accurate when judging beginner non-native speakers who used interpreters than native speakers who did not. Data collection is ongoing to achieve 95% power, ensuring the robustness of the results. Our preliminary analyses suggest that interpreters improve deception detection when observers judge beginner non-native speakers, but not other non-native speakers. This study is the first empirical evidence to indicate that interpreter use can be advantageous for only certain types of non-native speakers in legal settings.

**Keywords:** Deception detection, Accuracy, Interpreters, Non-native speakers

## ROOM 4

### MISSING PERSONS, HOMICIDE, APPLIED FORENSICS

#### **In search of ambiguity: a codesign and validation process of immersive videos to address socio-cognitive biases of forensic patients with schizophrenia**

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Rosemarie Hamel; *Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières*

Socio-cognitive biases are a factor associated with violence in schizophrenia. Virtual reality represents a promising therapeutic modality to address these biases while they are raised in therapy. Nevertheless, developing socially realistic situations that are intentionally ambiguous and likely to lead to violent behaviour is a challenge. This project focuses on the co-design process and ongoing validation of a series of immersive scenarios for social cognition training. Method: Four codesign workshops were held over a period of one year with a group of clinicians (n=4) and a group of forensic psychiatric patients who had received social cognition training (n=4). A mixed method design is currently underway to validate the immersive videos created. We are seeking to recruit patients with schizophrenia (n=7) as well as people without mental disorders (n=7). After experiencing each scenario, quantitative data is collected on the emotions experienced, the sense of presence, and social realism. Qualitative data is then collected on the participant's interpretation of the scenarios and the evidence they considered. Descriptive analyses are conducted for quantitative data and thematic analysis is conducted for qualitative data. Results: The co-design workshops ended with three immersive videos completed that both groups deemed satisfactory in terms of realism, ambiguity, and emotion. The scenarios address intentionality and self-reference biases. Initial results from the validation phase suggest that all scenarios are considered highly realistic. The sense of presence in these scenarios ranges from moderate to high. The emotions experienced are generally low in intensity, but vary depending on interpretation. Two of the three scenarios generated varied interpretations among participants, suggesting their ambiguity. Discussion: Developing ambiguous immersive scenarios for forensic psychiatric patients can be a long and demanding processes. The scenarios developed show promise for conducting clinical studies using this modality in the assessment and intervention of patients' socio-cognitive biases.

**Keywords:** Virtual reality; Schizophrenia; Social cognition; Violence; Psychosocial interventions

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## The Role of Rapport-Building in Interpreter-Mediated Suspect Interviews

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Amy Leach; *Ontario Tech University*

Katrina Villeneuve; *Ontario Tech University*

Claudia McArthur; *Ontario Tech University*

**Introduction:** Building rapport with an interviewee is crucial to a successful interview (Dhami et al., 2017). It is a key step in securing cooperation from the interviewee and gathering information from them. There is currently a lack of research on how the presence of a professional interpreter affects officers' attempts at rapport-building (Skinner, 2025). Police officers in other countries believe that interpreters help establish rapport, specifically by clarifying cultural differences (Walsh et al., 2020). We examined the perceptions that Canadian police officers had regarding rapport-building in interpreter-mediated suspect interviews. **Method:** We recruited 21 Canadian police officers to participate in an online Qualtrics survey. Embedded within the 78-item survey were 10 questions related to rapport. Specifically, participants answered questions relating to rapport between the interviewing officer and the suspect, the interviewing officer and the interpreter, and the interpreter and the suspect. All questions were measured on a five or seven-point Likert scale. **Results:** Univariate analyses revealed that it was more common for police officers (vs. interpreters) to engage in rapport-building with suspects. Officers believed that it was important for them to build rapport with suspects in interpreter-mediated interviews and that interpreters helped police officers in doing so. In fact, police officers did not believe that the presence of an interpreter interfered with rapport-building. The quality of rapport established was perceived as being slightly better between police officers and interpreters than between police officers and suspects, however. **Conclusion:** We examined one potential issue with interpreter-mediated interviews: rapport. Generally, our work suggests that having an interpreter present in an interview does not negatively harm the ability of police officers to build rapport with suspects. However, there may be opportunities to optimize rapport.

**Keywords:** Interviews, Rapport, Suspects, Interpreters

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## Uncovering the truth: Utilizing Criteria-Based Content Analysis and Linguistic Inquiry Word Count in missing person cases

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Dr. Christopher J. Lively; *Saint Francis Xavier University*

Dr. Margo C. Watt; *Saint Francis Xavier University*

Criteria-Based Content Analysis (CBCA; Undeutsch 1967) is a set of 19 criteria used to assess statements for truthfulness and deception. Richards and Keatley (2022) were the first to utilize CBCA on a sample of missing persons cases to assess the language used by potential suspects (e.g., family, friends) in making public appeals for the return of their missing loved one. The current study replicates and extends upon this work by assessing witness and suspect statements in 18 missing persons cases (2 nondeceptive, 16 deceptive) derived from open information sources. Statements were analyzed using both CBCA and Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC; Pennebaker et al., 2022); the LIWC is a software program designed to assess the frequency of text-based words and phrases associated with psychological concepts (e.g., positive emotions). As predicted, results found that contextual embedding (e.g., time, place) was the most frequently occurring CBCA criteria across both groups (nondeceptive and deceptive). Contrary to predictions, descriptions of interaction (e.g., paraphrasing conversations) was second most frequent, followed by unusual and superfluous/peripheral details (e.g., unnecessary details). While the majority of CBCA scores in nondeceptive statements showed no significant difference compared to deceptive scores, the two exceptions were accounts of subjective mental health (e.g., self-reports of feelings), and self-deprecation (e.g., self-disapproval of behaviour), which were significantly higher in nondeceptive statements compared to deceptive statements. Contrary to predictions, nondeceptive statements used significantly more anxiety (e.g., "worried") and sadness words (e.g., "cry") than deceptive. As expected, deceptive statements used less first-person pronouns (e.g., "I") compared to nondeceptive statements. Implications of these findings are discussed in terms of potential benefits to law enforcement officers during the initial stages of their investigations.

**Keywords:** Criteria-based content analysis, linguistic inquiry word count, deception detection, forensic linguistics, missing person cases

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## Relational Dynamics of Child Homicide in Canada

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Faye Arellano; *Carleton University*

Sasha Reid; *University of Calgary*

Background: Child homicide research remains fragmented, with relational, developmental, spatial, and motivational factors examined separately. Objective: Fragmentation is addressed by examining Canadian child homicide across relational, developmental, spatial, and motivational domains. Method: From more than 600 child homicides in the Missing/Murdered Database, 386 solved cases were selected. Inclusion required an identified offender, documented victim-offender geolocations, a verified motive, and confirmation that the death was intentional. Cases lacking offender, spatial, or motivational data were excluded. Chi-square analyses were performed. Results: Victim age shaped offender type, how and why victims were killed, & where they were found. Young children were mostly killed by family in the home using close-contact methods. Adolescents faced more sexual violence, firearms use, & stranger-perpetrated homicides. Stranger homicides involved more outdoor body recovery sites, longer disposal distances, & higher rates of body concealment. Sexual motives were overwhelmingly concentrated among stranger offenders & serial killers. Anger & domestic discord concentrated among pre-adolescent victims. Conclusions: Distinct developmental & relational patterns shaping motives, methods, & spatial behaviours can inform investigative practice & policy across child-protection & justice systems.

**Keywords:** Child homicide, juvenile victimology, spatial ecology

## ROOM 5

### LIFE-COURSE, PERCEPTIONS, DESISTANCE

#### Older Adults' Perspectives on Barriers to Information Gathering in Investigative Interviews: A Qualitative Interview Study

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Cassandre Dion Larivière; *Ontario Tech University*

Joseph Eastwood; *Ontario Tech University*

Older adults' concerns about investigative interviews represent an important yet underexplored area of research. Older adults (ages 65+) are a fast-growing population who are susceptible to maltreatment and abuse. Older adults are more likely to face physical, cognitive, and social challenges that can hinder the gathering of information in the interviewing process. The current study aimed to gain direct insight from older adults regarding their perspectives on age-specific barriers to disclosure when interviewed as victims or witnesses of a crime. Older adults (N = 11) aged 69 to 80 years (Mage = 79.7) in Ontario, Canada, were interviewed via Google Meet about factors pertaining to the investigative interviewing process that they perceive as potentially hindering their willingness and ability to provide information about a crime when interviewed as a victim or witness. Following the structured qualitative interviews, the transcripts were analyzed, and a thematic content analysis was performed by two researchers (inter-rater reliability will be included in the presentation) to identify the most mentioned barriers. Preliminary findings highlight several barriers to disclosure raised by participants. Many participants feared that police would minimize their experiences, noting past feelings of being ignored or dismissed due to their age. They also described sensory and cognitive challenges, such as difficulties with hearing, vision, and memory, as well as fears of retaliation from perpetrators. To date, we are not aware of any other research that has directly consulted older adults regarding their perception of being interviewed by the police. These insights underscore the need for law enforcement to account for older adults' specific concerns when interacting with and interviewing them, ensuring both the comfort of the interviewee and the optimization of information gathering. Note that all interviews have been conducted and transcribed. Preliminary analyses have been conducted and will be updated in the conference presentation.

**Keywords:** Older adults, investigative interviews, barriers to disclosure, qualitative interview.

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## Age-Inclusive Interviewing: Older Adults' Perspectives on Factors That Facilitate Positive Experiences and Effective Information Gathering

Cassandre Dion Larivière; *Ontario Tech University*

Alphonsa Johnson; *Ontario Tech University*

Joseph Eastwood; *Ontario Tech University*

As the population of older adults (65+) grows, police are increasingly likely to interview older victims and witnesses. To date, we are not aware of any research that has directly consulted older adults regarding their perception of being interviewed by police, despite the fact that they may have unique physical, cognitive, and social needs during such interviews. In this qualitative study, we gathered older adults' preferences regarding the interview environment and memory supports to enhance their ability and willingness to participate in investigative interviews. Older adults (N = 11; ages 69–80; Mage = 79.7) were interviewed via Google Meet, where they shared their perspectives on factors that would facilitate their experience as victims or witnesses, including preferences regarding interview location, room setup, time of day, potential memory aids, and more. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed using a thematic content analysis approach. Inter-rater reliability will be included in the presentation along with updated results. Preliminary analyses suggest participants preferred soft interview rooms and found "interrogation" rooms too intimidating. They favoured female, non-condescending interviewers who avoided referencing their age, and valued clear instructions about the interview process. Comfort considerations were important, including access to food or water, note-taking materials, softer lighting, a warm room, and comfortable seating (e.g., firm couches). Accessibility and privacy were also concerns; older adults preferred neutral locations to avoid mobility issues and the visibility of a police car at their homes. Participants described variable memory confidence, noting that, in their experience, fatigue, time of day, and stress could hinder their recall. Participants endorsed memory supports such as written prompts, extra time, breaks, and opportunities to review documents at their own pace. Overall, findings highlight the need for the development of age-inclusive interviewing practices to enhance interview quality and promote equitable access to justice for older adults.

**Keywords:** investigative interviewing, older adults, age-inclusive practices, vulnerable interviewees

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## Race, Criminal Records, and Employment: Examining the Impact of Certificates on Hiring Bias in Canada

Brooke MacFadyen; *Saint Mary's University*

Dr. Stephen M. Smith; *Saint Mary's University*

Katelyn Carter-Rogers; *St. Frances Xavier University*

Chances of employment are drastically reduced for individuals with a criminal record, and these barriers are even more pronounced for racialized individuals. Since employment is known to reduce recidivism, identifying effective strategies that reduce hiring bias is essential for improving employment outcomes and supporting successful reintegration for this population. While past research has examined methods to address hiring bias, these efforts have yet to address the challenges faced by all, particularly racialized individuals. To address this gap, the present research uses a two-study design, with Study 1 evaluating five types of certificates and Study 2 assessing how the highest-rated certificates influence hiring outcomes across applicant races. For Study 1 ( $n = 578$  employers), a repeated-measures ANOVA indicated that a Government Certificate of Employment (COE) and a University Skills Certificate were perceived most favorably. Based on these results, Study 2 data were collected from a representative Canadian sample ( $n = 1,000$ ) using a 3 (Race: White, Black, Indigenous)  $\times$  4 (Certificate: None, COE, University, John Howard Society) between-subjects mock hiring design to test how race and certificate type influence willingness to hire. Study 2 data are being analyzed using factorial ANOVA, logistic regression, and mediation analyses. Findings will identify which certificate-based strategies effectively reduce hiring bias and improve employment outcomes for people with criminal records, particularly racialized applicants. Ultimately, this research will inform policies and practices that increase fair-chance hiring, meaningfully support reintegration, and reduce recidivism.

**Keywords:** Criminal Records, Hiring Bias, Race, Employment, Reintegration

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## Sorry Doesn't Fix Everything: The Role of Remorse in Recidivism and Rehabilitation

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Dr. Meg Ternes; *Saint Mary's University*

Remorse is considered a mitigating factor in sentencing and parole decisions, yet there is limited research exploring the impact of remorse on recidivism and rehabilitation, particularly in adult samples. The present study qualitatively examined the experiences of formerly incarcerated individuals to explore how remorse influences engagement in correctional programming and other supports, as well as re-offending in the community. Participants have been recruited from community organizations, including parole offices and halfway houses in Nova Scotia. Two participants have been interviewed so far, and several more are expected to be interviewed by February 2026. Interviews follow a semi-structured guide and incorporate the State Shame and Guilt Scale to assess participants' emotional state at the time of the interview. Thematic analysis of the data indicates that participants' thoughts and feelings surrounding their offences changed throughout their sentence, often shifting from feelings of anger and revenge to feelings of guilt and acceptance of responsibility. Religion and family emerged as the main influences in the development of remorse and motivation for positive change. Participants expressed mixed views regarding the effectiveness of mandatory correctional programming; however, both reported a lack of additional programs and supports within federal institutions. In relation to recidivism, neither participant identified remorse as a primary factor in desistance. Instead, they both emphasized a desire to avoid returning to prison as a key motivator underlying their avoidance of criminal activity. These results expand our knowledge on the ways that remorse relates (or does not relate) to desistance from crime and can be used to inform sentencing and rehabilitation practices.

**Keywords:** Remorse, recidivism, rehabilitation, community corrections

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## Relationship between emotion regulation and aggression mediated by criminal thinking in women convicted of violent offenses

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The pathways to violence in women - especially in non-Western contexts - remain underexplored. This study examines the relationship between emotion regulation difficulties, criminal thinking, and aggression among 114 incarcerated Turkish women convicted of violent offenses (i.e., assault, murder/manslaughter, bodily harm, etc.). The mean age of the sample is 35.67 (SD = 9.66). Half of the sample (50 %, N = 58) has a maximum educational level of primary school qualification, and 30 % are unemployed. Drawing on the General Aggression Model and criminal thinking framework, the participants were administered the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS), the Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ), and the Criminal Thinking Scale (CTS). Results revealed significant positive associations between emotion regulation difficulties and all subtypes of aggression, yielding correlation coefficients ranging from 0.25 to 0.62. Furthermore, while offenders scored lower than university students on emotion dysregulation and aggression, they scored higher compared to age-matched community samples, highlighting the importance of contextual comparison. Mediation analysis demonstrated that criminal thinking partially mediated the relationship between emotion regulation difficulties and aggression, suggesting that cognitive distortions amplify the effect of affective dysregulation on violent behaviour. These findings underscore the interplay between affective dysregulation and cognitive distortions in female violence and suggest that gender-responsive, trauma-informed interventions must integrate cognitive restructuring alongside emotional regulation skills to effectively reduce female violent offending. The current study advances our understanding of female violence by integrating emotional, cognitive, and sociocultural perspectives within a non-Western context.

**Keywords:** Adult violent offenders, Turkish female offenders, Emotion regulation difficulties, Criminal thinking, Aggression