SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY NEWSLETTER: CONVERSATIONS IN PSYCHOLOGY

Comments from the Editor

Welcome back to the school of Psychology newsletter - now on its 5th issue. As a fresh-face to the editing process of this newsletter I have been thoroughly impressed and amazed at the creativity and professionalism of staff and students alike within the university. I look forward to reading many more contributions!

This April issue begins with some welcomes and congratulations (featuring a mug-shot of yours truly!), before venturing into a fascinating article by our very own lecturer Holly Stokes upon inclusivity in research in relation to autism. This is followed by a very interesting piece by Kensington David; an MSc Psychology student whose article is premised upon perceptions of autism. The issue then moves into the domain of Sports Psychology, with an article by BSc Psychology student Marie Sherman on the growing importance of Sports Psychology. Rather fittingly, this is followed by a Career Spotlight looking at Sports/ Exercise Psychology. MSc Psychology student Azra Klempic's contribution then comprises an article upon the importance of self-regulation within primary education, and methods of supporting its development in children.

In 'Getting to Know the Psychology Team' we feature Dr Tom Lockhart, a lecturer and deputy programme team leader here at Arden, and all-round lovely human being! Kristyn Hall, MSc Psychology, provides an insight in her article about being a good citizen within digital environments. This is followed by Dr Matthew Hall's thought-provoking piece on new technologies and cyberabuse!

Finally, Holly Stokes highlights a postgraduate publishing opportunity with PSYPag, before we end on some thank you's and messages of support and solidarity.

If you would like to contribute to the next issue of the newsletter, please contact myself at krooney@arden.ac.uk for more information.

I welcome any feedback and content suggestions also

Kieron Rooney, Editor.

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY NEWS

WELCOMES

A big welcome to our new staff members who have joined Arden in the past couple of months. We have three new dissertations supervisors, Ian Hulme, Andrew Holliman and John Allbutt, and a new blended-learning associate lecturer, Penelope Hyams. Welcome aboard all!

Kieron Rooney: New Editor of the Newsletter

Hello everyone! My name's Kieron and I will be taking over from Holly Stokes as editor of the Psychology newsletter. I am also the new Psychology Experimental Officer at Arden University. It sounds fancy, but it effectively means that I will be supporting students with things such as experiments and statistics during their time at Arden University. I was a mature student when I completed my undergraduate (Psychology BSc) and masters (Health Psychology MSc) degrees, leaving me with an appreciation for how hard it can be to juggle work, social, and academic commitments all at the same time. Being able to work in an environment where I can support other people to do the same thing makes me feel incredibly fortunate. I look forward to working on the newsletter, as well as meeting many of you as you submit work for publication in future issues!

CONGRATULATIONS

A massive congratulations to our PTL, Dr Matthew Hall, on getting married in February! Pictured right is a lovely shot of the happy couple of their big day.

Also a big congratulations to the newly titled 'Dr Sophie Ward, our postgraduate Deputy PTL, for passing her PhD viva!

Sophie's research explores the sources of and reactions to work frustration in the United Kingdom. Her triangulation research method lead to the development and validation of a new scale and a new model of workplace frustration. Some interesting results were found in that frustration did not always lead to negative reactions but could also trigger positive reactions. This research will lead to the development of interventions for organisation to reduce frustration in the workplace.

Brilliant work Sophie! We are all incredibly proud of you.

World Autism Awareness Month
Inclusivity In Research: The Autistic Voice

Holly Stokes, Lecturer in Psychology

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a prevalent health issue in the UK, affecting an estimated 650,000 individuals. Much research has focussed the underlying causes and consequences of ASD, with stresses on family life and parental experiences of having a child with ASD being well-documented. However, there has recently been a push from researchers and UK government to provide autistic individuals with greater power and a greater voice, especially regarding autism research.
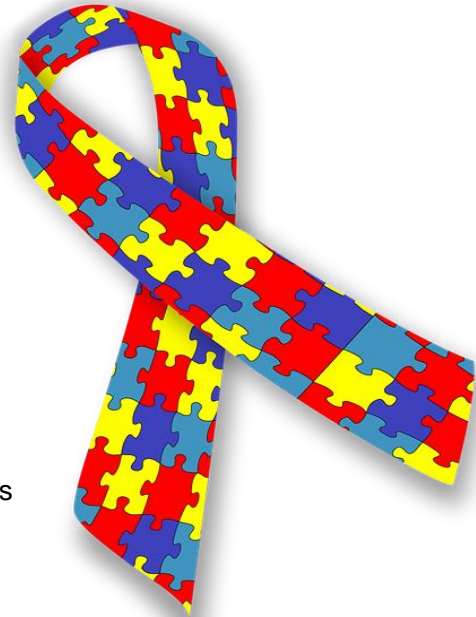
Autism Research: What Has Been Focussed on to Date?

The majority of funding has been given to projects which focus on the 'basic science' of ASD: investigating the underlying causes, correlates and consequences of the condition. Pellicano et al.'s (2013) analysed 106 funding awards made between 2007 and 2011, finding the number of awards and money spent in the areas of biology, brain and cognition far outweighed all other areas of research at 56%, equating to £11.6 million, compared to interventions at 18%, services at 5% and societal issues at 1%.

Funding given to studies focussing on the immediate improvement of the circumstances of autistic individual lives has been low, with very few studies being funded that would aid the understanding and promotion of family functioning and the services available to autistic individuals. The large focus on the 'basic science' of autism is criticised by autistic individuals and researchers, stating that this type of research exclusively frames the condition as a collection of deficits (Milton & Bracher, 2013). There is evidence of autistic individuals outperforming their non-autistic counterparts in a range of tasks which involve perception, reasoning or comprehension (Dawson et al., 2007; Gernsbacher et al., 2006) but this research is often underreported or framed as further evidence of autism being a deficient condition.

What Does the Autistic Community Think?

Pellicano, Dinsmore and Charman (2014) used a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods to capture the views of autistic adults, family members, practitioners and researchers regarding the future priorities of Autism research. All groups, but particularly the autistic adults, parents and practitioners, expressed their wish for future research to prioritise issues of immediate practical concern. This included knowledge about autism and the development of services and support (i.e. evidence-based interventions, post-diagnostic support and employment services). Pellicano et al.'s (2014) study also found a unanimous agreement amongst all groups, especially the autistic individuals and researchers, that research focusses upon autistic children significantly more than autistic adolescents and adults.

Though researchers agreed with the priorities for future autism research, they were the only group to discuss the practicalities of the research. The general consensus was that there was a lack of funding in the UK and greater investment needs to be made for British researchers to be competitive. However, though all groups rated their satisfaction with current funding as 'dissatisfied', researcher's ratings were significantly higher than autistic adults and families, reflecting greater satisfaction.

Inclusive Research Practice

AutismCRC (2016) has a clear vision of what constitutes inclusive research practice with autistic individuals and their families:

- ❖ Ensuring the individuals and their families are informed, willing, respected participants and are supported through all stages of the process
- ❖ Allowing autistic people and their families to inform the research
- ❖ Producing meaningful research which can be quickly translated into practice, tools and resources
- ❖ Ensuring individuals and their families have a central role as both participants and co-researchers with their voices heard and validated
    - o Providing opportunities for co-presentation where individuals are co-researchers
- ❖ Making adjustment to research tools, processes and reports so they are appropriate and reflect the diversity of the spectrum
- ❖ Conducting research which has a 'real-life impact' with 'real-world benefits'
- ❖ Using the most appropriate research design for the research question to respectfully and accurately capture the voices of individuals and their families
- ❖ Ensuring research acknowledges the strengths of autistic individuals as well as areas requiring support

Overcoming Barriers to Inclusivity in Research

Due to the nature of the condition, adjustments may need to be made to accommodate for autistic individuals taking part in research. AutisticCRC (2016) created specific guidelines to include and engage autistic individuals in research to combat some of the barriers which could arise. This includes the creation of an autism-friendly environment which has minimal distractions, accommodates hypersensitivity to light, noise, smell and temperature, gives regular breaks between short periods of tasks and utilises visual aids.

As well as practical adaptions, cultural and structural adaptions are also needed to promote participatory research – incorporating the views of autistic individuals into research priorities, processes and implementation (Raymaker & Nicolaidis, 2013). Cultural changes are needed as non-autistic researchers have traditionally viewed autistic individuals to be the passive 'subject' of research rather than valuing their role as active and powerful; this may be due to fear of compromising scientific integrity. Structural barriers include the low employment of autistic individuals, particularly in the competitive job market of academia, meaning these individuals seldom have opportunities to have a meaningful input into research decisions.

Fletcher-Watson et al. (2019) made several recommendations for the future of participatory research. Supportive environments are needed which will include changing the discourse around describing autism, modifying and identifying appropriate physical spaces for engagement and adapting the current academic environment to facilitate the involvement of autistic adults.

Further methodological challenges must also be considered; how can we capture the voices of autistic individuals who are not easily integrated into current research structures, such as those with intellectual disabilities or speech difficulties?; how do we respond to disagreement within the autistic community or between the autistic and non-autistic community?; how do we handle conflicting views of autistic adults and parents of those with autism?; and how do we manage the diversity of views within the community, when each individual case of autism is unique?

For a full list of references, please contact the editor at krooney@arden.ac.uk.

Autism: Harmful to Self and Society or Misunderstood?

Kensington David, MSc Psychology Student

In October of 2018, the UK media reported the story of a teenage girl with autism who was receiving inhumane support services by a community healthcare provider. Reports described her as aggressive, engaging in self-harm, and that she was in fact detained under the Mental Health Act. In a similar fashion in 2017, the US media reported the cruel handling of a so-called autistic 9-year-old boy by officers of the Franklin Police Department in Indiana. He was accused of battery and criminal mischief, and there were in fact trending online videos at the time of him handcuffed by police officers. These are only two of several reports in recent times in which offending behaviours or being at risk of harm to self and others is being associated with ASD. This is however one issue of serious concern, as incorrect interpretation of the condition (especially by an influential force such as the media) coupled with its continuously rising prevalence (WHO, 2017) may cause stereotyping, stigmatization and possible discrimination of persons with ASD.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition characterized primarily by deficits in communication, social interaction as well as restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviour (APA, 2013).

This issue therefore raises some questions for clinicians, and indeed all stakeholders: are persons with ASD really a risk to themselves and others? Or is there an emerging interpretation for autism that may well be at odds with what is defined in the accepted references for mental disorders and what is described in research?

There is lack of research evidence suggesting that persons with ASD are generally violent or at risk to themselves and others (King & Murphy, 2014). It is logical that overwhelming sensory overload, inability to effectively communicate thoughts and feelings as well as other related issues may occasionally lead to agitation and aggressiveness such as inappropriate touching or pushing. However, such behaviours may not be intentional or deliberate as is the case with violent behaviour. Autism has being associated with violent behaviours by some studies (Allely, Minnis, Thompson, Wilson, & Gillberg, 2014). But it has also been shown in other studies that the samples used in such reports are not randomized samples but based on isolated case reports or selected samples such as those from incarcerated populations or of those in special hospitals as used in Hare, Gould, and Mills, (1999). In fact, in one review carried out by Maras, Mulcahy, and Crane (2015), they observed that studies based on more generalized samples have shown that cases of offending behaviours and violent crimes are in fact quite insignificant among persons with ASD and that on the whole, there is too little research to draw substantial conclusions from. As such, even though there are cases of aggressiveness associated with ASD, popular opinion about violence and risk of arm to self and others in persons with ASDs are yet to be scientifically validated.

Additionally, misinterpretations about autism may be due to the identification of individuals with other comorbid conditions solely by their autism. ASD is not characterized in the DSM-5 or ICD-10 by violent behaviour or self-harm. However, conditions characterized by such behaviours may co-occur with autism. For instance, the DSM-5 notes that 70% of individuals with ASD may have at least one comorbid psychiatric disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Thus, if there are other mental or neurodevelopmental conditions co-occurring with an individual's autism, manifesting behaviours for each condition ought to be appropriately specified for their respective conditions. When this is not done, and autism is continuously identified wrongly as being the underlying condition for behaviours actually specific for other co-morbid conditions, society may be at risk of misunderstanding ASD. More importantly, such misconception may grow into stereotyping, stigmatization and possibly discrimination of persons with autism.

Furthermore, an approach that is focused on intervention will reduce incidences of offending behaviours. Interventions such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) with objectives such as tackling overwhelming issues, like feelings of anxiety, confusion and stress can prevent frustration and aggressiveness in persons with ASDs. Autistic individuals mostly have the capacity to learn as do typically developing people. Also, there is evidence that early intervention for ASD is effective in improving social communication and reducing severity of the condition (Pickles, et al., 2016). Thus, rather than generalizing the offending behaviours of a minimal group to all persons with ASD, the responsibility lies with society to take a result-oriented approach. For instance, relevant state departments may expedite the release of funding for early ASD intervention services and programmes in order to help diagnosed children improve their social and communication skills. Additionally, more has to be done to educate the media about autism and generally on the need for informed and inclusive approach when reporting about persons with physical and mental disabilities

For a full list of references, please contact the editor at krooney@arden.ac.uk.

Final Year Undergraduates! Let us hear your voice. The National Student Survey 2020

The National Student Survey (NSS) is an annual, externally run survey for all final year students in all UK universities. It's a great opportunity for you to give us your feedback (anonymously) on all the different aspects of your course and a chance to reflect on your whole experience with us over the period of your study. We are really encouraging students to complete the study because the greater participation we have, the more reliable the results will be- and then we will have a really good idea of what to keep doing, stop doing or improve. **Scan the QR code above** or **click here** to be taken to the survey site for more information. The survey will be open from now until early April.

Helen Scott, Pro-Vice Chancellor

The Growing Importance of Sports Psychology

Marie Sherman, BSc Psychology student

Every four years the summers come alive with both football and athletics. Pressures from these tournaments along with everyday stresses that come from being a modern-day athlete—such as intense scrutiny and praise from journalists and on social media—highlight the importance of having individuals who can support these athletes and players. A type of athlete support that is growing is the use of sports psychologists to help athletes reach their full potential and cope with any difficulties. Sports psychology is a recent development in psychology, and despite individual psychologists exploring this subject in the past, it only picked up traction in the Western world in the mid-1960s (Kremer & Moran, 2008). Despite the growing support for sports psychology, there are still individuals who view it as unnecessary. Athletes and team managers sometimes claim that everything is okay as it is, or as coaches already explore mental fitness with athletes, a psychologist is not needed.

However, psychologists delve much deeper into mental fitness than coaches, and having somebody to focus solely on the mind can be crucial to an athlete's success.

Dr Pippa Grange, a sports psychologist formerly with the English Football Association (the FA), highlights the importance of having models and frameworks to help coaches/managers understand the psychologists' processes, especially since many of the techniques used are not quantifiable (Olusoga & Grange, 2019).

Green, Morgan and Manley (2012) conducted a qualitative study on elite rugby players to find out their opinions on sports psychology. Overall the players were positive towards sports psychology. However, many were concerned about what other team members and the public would think, and only one player out of eleven had access to a psychologist. This research took place in 2012, and thankfully attitudes have now changed. The England Rugby coach, Eddie Jones, hired a team of sports psychologists to help his team rid themselves of their 2015 Rugby World Cup demons ready for the 2019 World Cup. There was praise for their team spirit during the 2019 competition, helping them reach the finals and produce an epic victory in the semi-finals against favourites New Zealand. The year before, in 2018, the FA hired Pippa Grange to assist Gareth Southgate's England team in the World Cup. The team's success uplifted the country as England reached the semi-finals for the first time in the competition since 1990. Grange was credited alongside Southgate for the team's cohesiveness and relaxed attitude between games.
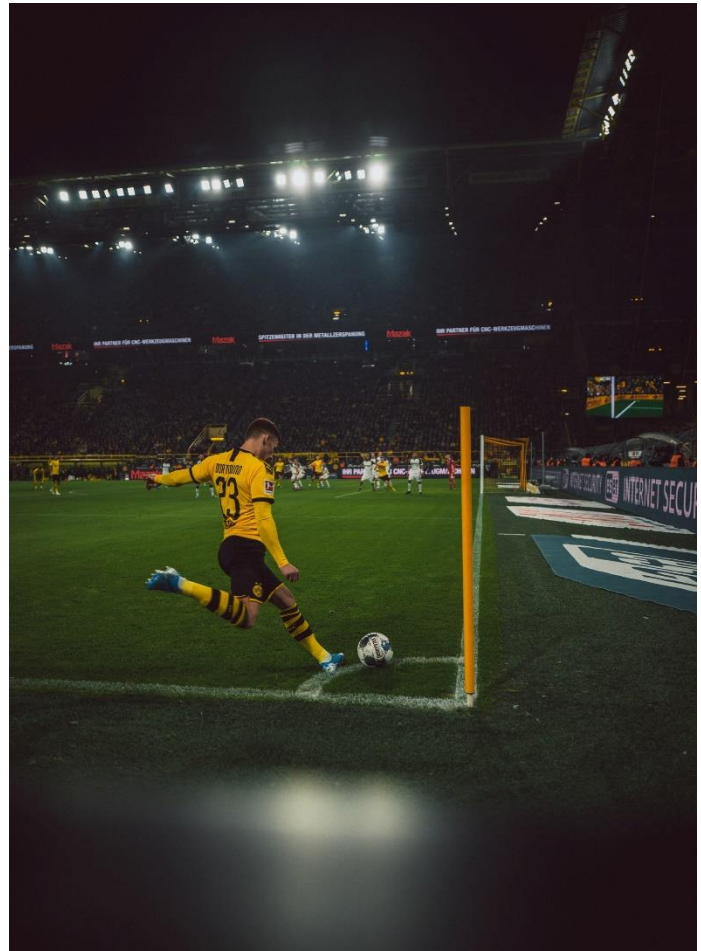
Birrer, Wetzel, Schmid and Morgan (2012) studied how sports psychology helped the Swiss National Team during the 2006 Turin, 2008 Beijing and 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games. The most common use of the psychologists were daily interventions concerning a wide range of subjects including competition debriefing, social or personal issues, nutritional issues and injury/illness. Half of the psychologists' interventions were very brief counselling sessions due to the Olympics' strict scheduling, and a large number of issues were related to friction within the team. Coaches made up 30 per cent of the psychologists' clients, which is common in sports psychology. Sports psychologists are also needed if critical incidents happen, such as a life-threatening injury or worse. A critical incident does not necessarily have to occur within the team. For example, the horrific, fatal incident of the Georgian luge athlete, Nodar Kumaritashvili, in Vancouver 2010 affected the performances of the majority of the other luge athletes who had to race again once the track had reopened. Birrer et al. (2012) reported that psychologists were called upon instantly to help the Swiss luge team regain their confidence after track safety caused many racers to make mistakes. These rare but occurring incidents highlight that the need for sports psychologists goes deeper than solely mental fitness and performance issues. It also shows the importance of psychologists having time before tournaments to build up a rapport with team members and athletes so that they can have an immediate impact on the athletes in the shortest amount of time possible.

External pressures from social media, journalists and the "religion-like" adoration of sports stars and teams are not going to go away and are more than likely going to increase. Therefore, athletes must continue to have access to psychological help. Sport is a lucrative business, and therefore affordability is not an issue. For sports psychology to truly flourish, athletes and teams will need to overcome any preconceptions and stigmas while psychologists continue to pitch the importance of their work. Luckily, the need for sports psychologists is being recognised, publicised and widely discussed. It will be interesting to see how far the field will grow and whether in the future psychologists will become as widely used and integrated within teams as say, coaches are.

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CAREER SPOTLIGHT : SPORT/ EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGIST

What is the role of a Sport/ Exercise Psychologist?

Firstly, 'Sport Psychologist' and 'Exercise Psychologist' are distinct roles, despite many people using the terms interchangeably. Sport Psychologists spend their time working with athletes and other sports staff (coaches etc.) to apply psychological knowledge to the improvement of performance in competition, amongst many other things. This can involve stress-management surrounding dealing with setbacks or injuries in competition; it can involve things such as mental imagery to aid in performance, or even squad communication and cohesion. A notable example of this is Prof Steve Peters, a prominent Sport Psychologist that has worked with snooker professional Ronnie O'Sullivan on the mental-aspects of the game and has also worked with Liverpool Football Club. Competitive sport is not just a physical endeavour, but is a largely mental one, too. This paves the way for individuals with a passion for applying psychological knowledge within a sporting environment!

Conversely, Exercise Psychologists work with the general public in increasing participation and engagement with physical activity. This is not based upon performance, as in Sports Psychology, but is predicated around overall health and wellbeing through exercise. This may involve working for local authorities to help design campaigns to increase physical activity or working within services that promote physical activity in individuals who are ill, either through poor physical or mental health. The move toward holistic care and promotion of physical activity is a growing area, allowing Exercise Psychology to flourish!
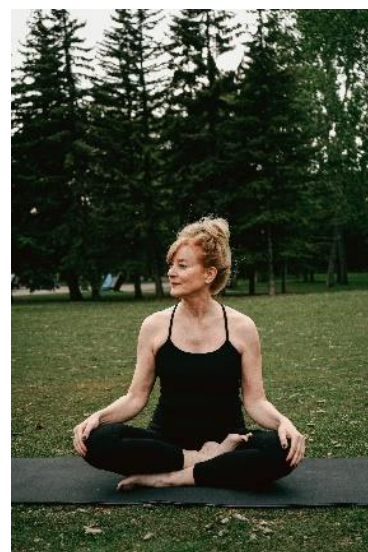
What is the relevance of my Psychology degree?

A degree in psychology comes with a raft of key skills and competencies that are drawn upon during the progression towards becoming a Sport and Exercise Psychologist. This includes having a degree in psychology that is accredited by the BPS, conferring GBC eligibility. Your ability to work with data of different varieties, as well as confidence and skill at communicating through different mediums is something that is further explored and developed during the journey to becoming a Sports and Exercise Psychologist, and so a thorough grounding in psychological theory and approaches to human behaviour is highly valuable.

The British Psychological Society
Accredited

How do I become a Sport/ Exercise Psychologist?

In order to qualify as a Sport and Exercise Psychologist, you will firstly need to complete an undergraduate degree in psychology that has BPS accreditation. Secondly, you will need to complete a BPS-accredited MSc in Sport and Exercise Psychology. Finally, completing Stage 2 of the BPS Qualification in Sport and Exercise Psychology (QSEP) will enable you to register with the HCPC. This means you will be able to use the protected term of 'Sport and Exercise Psychologist"!

Supporting Self-Regulation Development in Primary Education

Azra Klempic, MSc Psychology Student

The Importance of Self-Regulation Development

The ability to self-regulate, that is, the ability to control one's own urges and desires is of utmost importance in the life of an adult as well as a child. People who have more developed self-regulation skills have higher levels of self-esteem, life satisfaction and lower levels of stress, anxiety and depression (Ghorbani et al., 2014). Reduced levels of self-regulation ability generate the development of emotional and behavioural disorders (Wilson, 1999). On the road to becoming independent, children develop self-regulation skills, which includes the ability to control feelings and behaviours. Self- regulation skills help children to manage and build stronger relationships with adults and their peers. These skills are still developing in children's preschool years, however, this can vary, as children do not always find it easy.

By the time the children start school their self- regulation of their feelings and behaviour becomes better, which helps them overcome everyday stress and access learning. The role of parents is critical in the development of children's self- regulation. However, in the school environment the role of the teacher is of utmost importance for children's self- regulation skills development and support. In order to provide an encouraging and motivating learning environment, and to help children develop skills needed to regulate their feelings and behaviour, teachers need a better understanding of self-regulation (Paris &Winograd, 2001). Developing self- regulation skills helps children to control their impulse behaviour (Baumeister, 2018), which results in preventing different behaviour outbursts. Schools should have clear support systems for children experiencing social, emotional and mental health difficulties, bearing in mind that any disruptive behaviour should not affect other children.

The effects of low self-regulation skills

With the start of school children get new responsibilities that they need to fulfil independently. Some children will learn it themselves, while others will need the help of their parents. This will highly depend on their ability to self-regulate. Within the school environment children who have low self- regulation skills may have different behaviour difficulties, such as: fighting with peers, not following an adult's instructions, tantrums including hitting, spitting, and throwing self on the ground, worry, anxiety, sadness, becoming easily upset, withdrawing from social situations and turning away from the adult (Schunk and Green, 2017). In order to support children with such difficulties, Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice (2015) states that "Schools should have clear processes to support children and young people, including how they will manage the effect of any disruptive behaviour, so it does not adversely affect other pupils". However, very often the lack of knowledge may result with inadequate or no strategies when supporting pupils who are experiencing self- regulation difficulties.

Teaching children who are experiencing self- regulation difficulties

There has been an increase in research on self-regulation as part of teaching and learning in recent years. In order to determine the importance of self-regulation in the teaching and learning process, good and poor self-regulation skills have been compared. The impact of self-regulation skills on motivation and learning has also been explored (Pintrich, 2000). The research suggests that self- regulation is rather important in school environment, not only for developing greater motivation and becoming stronger learners, but also for developing relationships (Pintrich, 2003). The students who are still developing self- regulation skills might need particular classroom environment adaptations, including various resources. For such children, teachers play a major role in the school environment by adapting the classrooms and providing different tools, materials and strategies. Teaching students to set goals, use effective task strategies, monitor progress, take notes, organize their studying and establish a productive work environment can positively effects students' school achievement (Schunk & Ertmer, 2000). Furthermore, interventions in which teachers implemented interactive and collaborative strategies into their teaching supported the development of deep-level cognitive processing in their students, improving their self-regulation (Perels et al., 2005).

When teaching children who are experiencing self- regulation difficulties it is very important to particularly pay attention to teaching adaptation and behaviour management. In order to adapt teaching to suit the needs of all the students, teachers should "know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively" (Department for Education [DfE], 2013). Teachers should have a clear understanding of students' needs and "be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them" (DfE, 2013). They should also be aware of various difficulties that may negatively impact students' learning, and how to best overcome them. Also, having the knowledge of children's physical, social and intellectual development, teachers should adapt their teaching according to children's stage of development (DfE, 2013).

Unfortunately, Teachers' standards and High-Quality Teaching strategies are very general and broad. Hence, teaching strategies and interventions largely depend on the teachers' knowledge and understanding of children's needs, and their relationship with students. Some of the possible self-regulation strategies and activities applicable in the classroom environment are: structured lessons supported with timetables, particular classroom arrangements, such as seating, an individualized behaviour support plan, a reward system to reinforce established behaviour expectations, small social groups or social stories targeting particular social skills development, different stress and anger management programs, such as art clubs and mindfulness. Unfortunately, teachers are often left to explore and try different strategies on their own. Not only does this approach take a considerable amount of time, but it can also be counterproductive and can have a negative overall effect. It is important for school leadership to support the teachers providing adequate and sufficient training for teachers to gain the knowledge that will contribute to the support of the students with difficulties in self-regulation. Teachers' preparation time has to be of great importance as it enables them to differentiate work and implement appropriate strategies for children of different needs.

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GETTING TO KNOW THE PSYCHOLOGY TEAM: DR TOM LOCKHART

Can you summarise who you are and your role at AU?

Hello! I'm Tom and I've been lecturing at Arden for about a year. I've also recently taken on the role of deputy program team leader. Besides making me sound slightly like a character out of a wild-west film, the role means that I'm responsible for standardising the experience and quality of our undergraduate modules. In other words, I'm working hard to make sure that every module lives up to your expectations! I might also pop in to do some actual lecturing on your modules from time to time. On top of that, I supervise some very talented and dedicated dissertations students who are running fascinating projects on gender stereotypes, mental agility, single-sex schooling and time perception. Please feel free to get in touch with me anytime to say hello or to voice any comments about your undergraduate modules.

Can you tell the readers about your main research interests?

My main interest is anxiety. Anxiety is a useful thing. It's the reason that we do things carefully and work hard! However, anxiety can easily get out of hand, especially in today's always-on world (as a case in point, I'm writing this on a Sunday afternoon when I should be unwinding!). So, we need to understand how to manage anxiety properly. My own research addresses this by looking at how behaviour, personality and brain activity relate to anxiety. Meanwhile, my side projects explore anxiety across species (do dogs and cats get anxious? What about goats? Or earthworms?) and at how anxiety affects decision making in dangerous situations, such as firefighting.

## If you had to choose just one, what is your favourite academic experience?

I once gave a lecture on brainwaves and decided to include a live brainwave recording. I asked the class to huddle round the front of the lecture theatre to take a close look at the tiny spikes and dips in brainwave activity. We were looking for something called occipital-alpha, which is a pattern of brainwave activity generated when someone's visual cortex goes into power-saving mode, usually when they close their eyes. I remember the excitement as a few students lurched forward and pointed at the screen to say "There, there it is" and there was a collective "oooh" from the class.

What is your favourite thing about being part of AU?

I don't mean to score points here, but I think that our students and our staff are the best part about working at Arden. Arden seems to attract dedicated, passionate and interesting students and I love our conversations that start with psychology and then veer into philosophy, history, physics and biology. I also have to keep reminding myself how lucky I am to work with such a friendly bunch of colleagues. So, thanks to all of you, staff and students, for making our community at AU the best part of the job for me!

Good Citizen vs. Good Digital Citizen

Kristyn Hall, MSc Psychology student
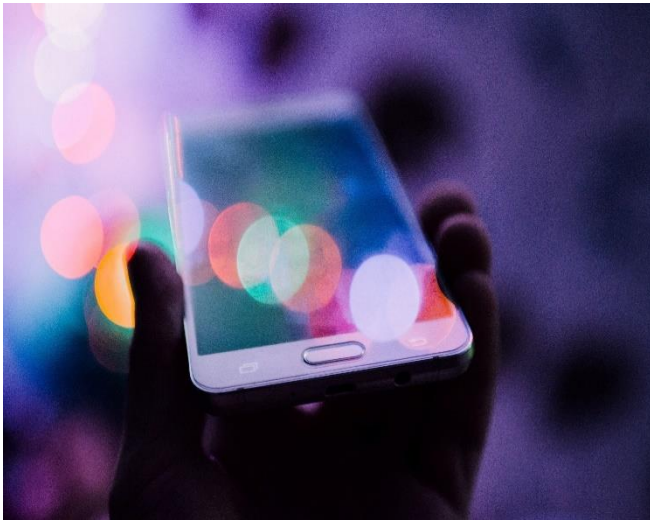
Most of us would like to think we are fairly decent people and good citizens of society. We go about our daily business without the intent to cause harm or conflict to our fellow citizens. So why does this all change when we go online?

The perception of anonymity on Social Media has given rise to a way for bullies to target individuals in a way that would not be deemed socially acceptable in most societies today. For example, when you read some of the comments written online, you cannot imagine someone walking up to someone in the street and publicly abusing them in such a way. And yet this is what is happening online on an almost daily basis. The impact of Social Media on our daily lives is impossible to ignore. The Pew Research Centre began tracking social media adoption in America in 2005, when around 5% of the American population were using Social Media sites. As of 2018, that figure had increased to 72% (Pew Research Centre, 2018).

Last year the UK was home to 45 million active social media users (Statista Research Department, 2020). Whilst Social Media has its benefits - openness, participation, and sharing (Khan, Swar and Lee, 2014) - there is a darker side to Social Media, and one that has been garnering much attention in the media recently, given high profile cases of celebrities targeted. Social Media platforms have become popular sites for cyberbullying (Whittaker and Kowalski, 2015). Instagram has been identified as one of the worst platforms for cyberbullying, although it happens across all platforms (Ditch The Label Charity, 2017; Dredge, Gleeson, & de la Piedad Garcia, 2014).

Cyberbullying has been defined as an aggressive and intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact (Smith, Mahdav, Carvalho and Tippett, 2006). The online disinhibition effect is a term defined in psychological literature, as a loss of the inhibitions which would usually regulate behaviour, whilst online, because they feel they are protected by anonymity and/or a sense of distance (Suler, 2004; Widyanto and Griffiths, 2011). A lot of research into cyberbullying has been focused on adolescence, due to the mental health concerns of cyberbullying on impressionable young adults, who are forming their opinions of self. However, this has meant that research hasn't been widely carried out on other populations. However, cyberbullying is not exclusive to the younger generations.

Social media is known to be a powerful platform for branding and marketing (Tsimonis and Dimitriadis, 2014) and so is a common platform used by celebrities and other people with a public image such as journalists, businesspeople, sports personalities. However due to the large number of followers they gather on these platforms, it can make them targets for cyberbullying. The law has struggled to keep up with the sharp rise reports relating to online crime and abuse (Bishop, 2013). For younger users of these platforms, there has been a real focus on the introduction of digital citizenship education. Often as an extension of digital literacy and internet safety education, digital citizenship efforts were a response to the growing concern about the potential risks for a generation growing up online (Jones and Mitchell, 2015). Digital citizenship has also been described as a way of educating users to make safe, responsible, respectful choices online (Common Sense Media, 2011).

Whilst it may be implicitly implied that digital citizens act according to accepted norms, rules, and laws (Ribble, 2007), it has become apparent that this is not the case on Social Media, and we are missing the education of a large demographic of social media users in our targeting of digital citizenship programmes to only minors. The largest demographic group of Twitter users are between the ages of 18 and 29 at 37%, with 25% of users are between 30 and 49 years old. Looking at Instagram which launched in 2010, 59% of internet users between the ages of 18 and 29 and 33% of internet users between the ages of 30 and 49 are using this site (London School of Economics, 2017).

So a question remains about how we bridge this gap in the education of good digital citizenship to protect our digital society and our mental health when using Social Media? Any approach will have to be multidisciplinary and requires a shift in thinking and action by society as a whole to no longer accept antisocial behaviour from its digital citizens. As users of these platforms there are steps we can take to show we no longer accept this behaviour, and this goes not just for the victim, but also bystanders witnessing this behaviour online. Most Social Media platforms have, in accordance with guidance set out in section 103 of the Digital Economy Act 2017, developed reporting tools which allow users to report any issues to the platform for investigation. It is then reviewed by the platform content moderators and they may decide to remove the offensive content and/or disable or suspend accounts, but there is no guarantee a user will not simply create a new account. There are also tools to block or mute the person so that they can no longer see posts or comment on them. The issue with this approach is that the perpetrator can simply move on to their next victim.

Cyberbullying is not covered by any specific law in the UK, and therefore cyberbullying as an act is not a crime. However, offenders may find themselves falling foul of other laws which can be used to prosecute, such as harassment or stalking, which is contrary to sections 2, 2A, 4 or 4A of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 (Crown Prosecution Service, n.d). There has been much call for change in the current legislation due to the fact that these laws predate the use of Social Media, and do not legislate against cyberbullying in its own right (Strickland and Dent, 2017). Currently the Law Commission are actively working on a project to recommend reform of the criminal law relating to abusive and offensive online communications, with its first consultation paper due later this year (Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, UK Gov, 2019). The Social Media platforms themselves have used the need for freedom of speech, and a resistance to censorship as reasons why they cannot be proactive in the removal of much of the cyberbullying content that is shared. Yet these same platforms are constantly and consistently harvesting the content being shared using big data algorithms for the purposes of targeted marketing. Some responsibly therefore must fall to them to use these same algorithms to identify harassment online and take steps to quickly shut it down before it becomes a bigger issue, perhaps using digital citizenship education to ensure respectful behaviour online.

Available Support

If you need urgent help, you can call Samaritans on 116 123. They're available to offer support 24/7 every single day of the year. If you need immediate support, you can text SHOUT to 85258 anytime day or night and chat by text to share what is worrying you.

For a full list of references, please contact the editor at krooney@arden.ac.uk.

New Technologies, Image Distribution and Cyberabuse

Dr Matthew Hall, in collaboration with Jeff Hearn

There are many forms of cyberabuse, such as cyberbullying, cyberstalking, online aggression, 'flaming', 'happy slapping' and trolling, to name just a few. Cyberabuse can entail intentional damage of someone's reputation by spreading malicious gossip, rumours or photos (these can also be digitally manipulated, as, for example, with 'deepfakes' also known as 'sexualised photoshopping' (McGlynn et al., 2017); and outing and trickery – the sharing of, or tricking someone into revealing aspects of their private life, with the intent to embarrass them (Lacey, 2007). Some may begin as fun such as the posting of a friend intoxicated and partially naked on a social media platform but later become misused by others (Walker et al., 2019). Posting explicit sexual images or films can be done without consent, along with offensive text with the intention to violate, harm, abuse or humiliate the targeted person by circulating or sending repeated messages and photos, often via hyperlinks to purpose-built websites. These images or films may also be accompanied by abusive emails, 'tag-team-style pile-ons' in internet forums and personal attacks in blog and newspaper article comment sections (Svoboda, 2014). In short, the crux of cyberabuse is the imbalance of power and lack of consent, sometimes facilitated by the perpetrator's ability to remain anonymous.

The development of technology has also facilitated 'upskirting' (Powell, 2010) and an explosion in 'sexting' – the sending of explicit sexually images by text message (Hasinoff, 2015). A survey of 5,000 adults (Match.com, 2012) found that 57% of men and 45% of women had received an explicit photo on their phone, and 38% of men and 35% of women had sent one. Once this happens, those seemingly 'private' pictures are potentially available for the world to see if uploaded and shared on the Web (Penney, 2014). Whilst some forms of electronic pornography such as sexting may be considered consensual, Ringrose et al.'s (2012) interview and focus group study of sexting shows it is often coercive and is often linked to peer-pressure, harassment, bullying, and even violence. This raises some complex issues, for example, how such violations can be simultaneously embodied and virtual. They are not reducible to just one form or possibility, may be multi-medial, and may only be understandable in the context of a range of social practices beyond the context of a range of social practices beyond the visible and readable text. For example, a particular posting may reference, implicitly or explicitly, another earlier topic or social occasion offline and off-screen, positive or negative, for one, both or more parties, which would not be decipherable by an uninvolved party or viewer. Specific instances may be part of a chain of events, occurrences, times and places. Moreover, violations by sexual images can be seen in terms of the processual nature of the interactive web, in which 'produsers', 'prosumers' and other hybrids (Bird, 2011) create the web interactively, sometimes for the assumed but unknown audiences (Whisnant, 2010), as evidenced in do-it-yourself pornography, selfies, celebrity selfies, naked selfies, reality media, online lives, neknominate (drinking) challenges, and the rest.
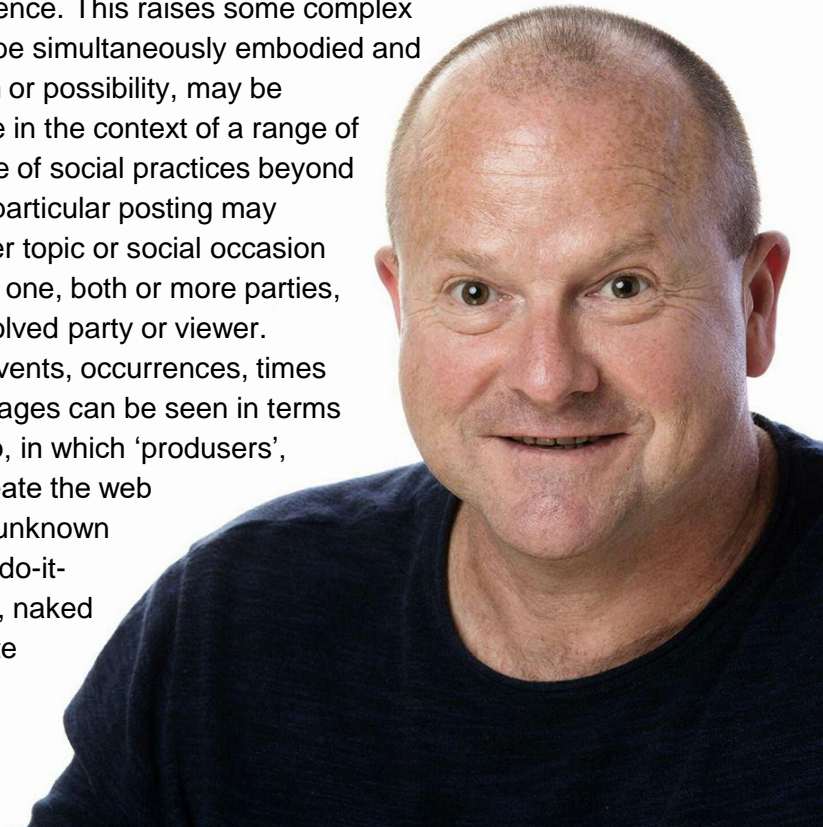
Dr Matthew Hall

Effects

Harassment and abuse occurs both offline and online, and in public and private spaces. There is a more general increase in the pornographisation of public space, both online and offline, with the unprecedented historical expansion of (online) pornography, and more general 'mainstreamification' or 'normalisation' of pornography in society. These tendencies have multiple effects. The 2014 study, Young People, Sex and Relationships: The New Norms (Parker, 2014, p. 23), surveyed a representative sample of 500 18-year-old young people: "Almost eight out of 10 young women (77 per cent) say 'pornography has led to pressure on girls or young women to look a certain way', while almost as many (75 per cent) say 'pornography has led to pressure on girls and young women to act a certain way'." Online pornography is part and parcel of many children's, young people's, and indeed adults', lives.

Non-consensual distribution of sexual images can be understood as another form of gendered/sexual violence and abuse that ranges across femicide, rape, stalking and non-contact harassment (Blumenstein & Jasinski, 2015). Victim-survivors of cyberabuse and sexual harassment report a host of negative effects: feelings of humiliation, shame and embarrassment; reputation damage; problems with intimate partners, family, friends, work colleagues and, in public; sexual shame; sexual problems; body image issues; becoming paranoid and hyper-vigilant; concern for personal safety; and, some have even taken their own life. A 24-year-old victim, Anisha, talking on BBC Newsbeat (2014) about being a victim of "revenge pornography" says people recognise her in public and turn up at her door as well as contact her by phone, text messages, emails and through Facebook. Although her ex-boyfriend posted explicit images of her on a couple of websites, they are now on over 200 websites across the globe. She now struggles to find a job because an employer can see the images of her from a simple Google search.

Combating violation by image distribution

There is a need for stronger evidence-based interventions to combat cyberabuse, not least as we do not yet know exactly how many people are affected by these abuses. Combating cyberabuses involves matters of politics, policy, law, education and changes in public attitudes so that victims are not blamed for consenting to the taking of explicit images and instead the perpetrators for sharing them. Effective interventions for tackling harassment and other abuses of women and girls in public spaces, both offline and online, require strategic planning at all levels, and multidisciplinary and multi-organisational responses.

Universal laws for convicting perpetrators of violation by image distribution and revenge porn do not exist. In many countries, the criminal legal frameworks are either non-existent or securing convictions is very difficult (Franks, 2016). Although countries need to develop their own individual national and regional action plans, there needs to be greater international cooperation and the development of cross-border laws, pursuing the perpetrators and those who facilitate these crimes.

Ex-boyfriend of the YouTube musician Chrissy Chambers' recorded secret non-consensual sexual videos of her. The videos were recorded in the USA where she lives but posted online in the United Kingdom. Even though the offence took place in the USA, she had to pursue the case in the UK, under UK law, because that was where the videos were posted. It took a four-year legal battle to secure a conviction because the USA does not (yet) have specific 'revenge porn' laws (Kleeman 2018).

Much also needs to be done to stop organisations which are hosting such sexual images and search engines that link to revenge porn sites, for example. Stronger civil laws should also be in place so that victims can sue perpetrators for damages.

Other forms of sexual harassment in public places such as 'upskirting', although now a criminal offence in England and Wales, should be made an offence elsewhere.

There were 465 UK prosecutions for violation by way of non-consensual distribution of sexual images, so-called "revenge pornography", in 2016/2017, a rise from 206 in the previous year (CPS, 2016). Current legislation and responses are typically slow, costly, and, sometimes ineffective at removing the images from the web. While prosecutions are pending, the images remain online and continue to affect victim-survivors. There is a need for national-level coordination and funding of policies, and also local-level cooperation of the services needed to serve victims. At the local and national levels, services need coordination in order to exchange best practice and ensure a focus on the needs of the victim.

Specialised services focused on the needs of victim-survivors should be developed. More needs to be done to help victims deal with the fallout. It would help therefore, if protocols of cooperation between relevant authorities and existing support services were strengthened to provide a range of emotional- and practical-based support services, and webpages and webforums could be developed for the dissemination of learning and support materials for victims, educators, agencies and the media.

There is also a need to raise public and popular awareness, for example, the potential risks of revenge porn that can follow from sexting. One method of doing so is to include this on educational and training curricula on sex and relationships, and on equality and diversity, in both educational institutions and other locations, such as workplace, religious and sports organisations. Charities and educational groups are reported to be concerned that many teenagers are not being taught about issues like sexting, online pornography, consent and healthy relationships, including the illegality of child sexting and revenge pornography.

The primary focus of sex and relationship curricula tends to be on sexuality and health, and what constitutes a healthy relationship; this should include how to communicate online, and also deal with the ending of relationships, problem solving, and training on relationship skills and emotion regulation (Lundgren & Amin, 2015). As most online sexual harassment is done by men and boys, gendered analysis and understanding of sexual harassment is also necessary, especially in education and training.

There also needs to be greater regulation and responsibility of internet providers and other relevant technology companies who facilitate online sexual harassment and abuses. Current copyright and privacy laws should be more comprehensive to allow victims-survivors the right to have images swiftly removed and deindexed. Courts should also have greater powers to force technology companies to comply with this. Strategic planning requires a regular and consistent research, data and statistics in order to provide the evidence to evaluate policy developments and the effectiveness of interventions.

More specifically, what often underlies violation by image distribution is that image copyright means the author of the image – the person who took the photo – has, in effect, the right to do what they wish with a photograph even if the person in the photo or video does not consent to this. One US survey indicated that 80% of victims-survivors took the pictures in question themselves, thus giving them the legal rights to the photographs in question (Johnson, 2013). Many websites offering take-down services often also ask for copyright registration numbers. We wonder what the probability is of a couple seeking joint copyright after taking sexually explicit images and photographs?

Concluding Remarks

In tackling violation by sexual image distribution, and cyberabuse more generally, we recommend 4 key responses:

- Stronger civil laws in place so that victims can sue perpetrators for damages;
- more international co-operation particularly in relation to law, criminal proceedings, and technology companies;
- more support for victims; and,
- educational programmes in schools and elsewhere to highlight the risks and potential consequences of taking and sending images.

Through more action-orientated, multidisciplinary responses, we can help to remove the stigma and trauma this crime causes (Hall & Hearn, 2017a, 2017b, 2018a, 2018b; Hearn & Hall, 2018).

Key references

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For a full list of references, please contact the editor at krooney@arden.ac.uk.

PUBLISHING AND EMPLOYABILITY
Postgraduate Publishing Opportunity: Th Quarterly by PSYPag

By Holly Stokes, Lecturer in Psychology

In the December issue of the newsletter, lecturer James Bartlett wrote about publishing in peer-reviewed journals for this feature. On a related note, I will focus on a publishing opportunity available for those studying on our postgraduate programmes, to write an article for a peer-reviewed journal specifically for postgraduates: The Quarterly.

What is PSYPag? And What is The Quarterly?

PSYPag, which stands for the Psychology Postgraduate Affairs Group, is a national organisation ran for postgraduates on a voluntary basis, by postgraduates. They do many things, such as running an annual workshop and conference and liaise with the student members group of the BPS. They also produce a quarterly journal which is free of charge to all postgraduate psychology departments in the UK, named 'The Quarterly'.

The Quarterly is a peer-reviewed journal open to all postgraduates studying at UK institutions. Funnily enough, it's published Quarterly. There are a number of different article-types you can submit including; featured articles and discussion papers; brief research reports; interviews with those connected to Psychology; conference reviews; departmental reviews; book and software review; and hints and tips.

My Experience of Publishing in The Quarterly

Whilst studying for my MSc in Applied Psychology, I came across PSYPag after James shared an article he had co-published in the journal with me (Eaves & Bartlett, 2019). One of my main research interests, and passions, is the importance of play for child development so I decided to write a discussion article surrounding the issue of declining play opportunities.

I wrote an article of around 1000 words to begin with, which I sent to the editors for review. Within a few weeks, the editors came back to me with both overall comments and specific in-text comments – an extremely useful experience for developing my writing skills. Constructive criticism can be difficult to process and not take personally, but the editors at PSYPag were developmental in their comments which was encouraging. I took their comments on board, completely restructuring the article (which, I must admit, did make it 10x better), before sending back my final draft. The editors were happy with my changes, and informed me of the issue I could expect to see the finished article appearing in. If you're interested, you can read my article titled 'The Worrying Decline in Children's Playtime: The Need for Intervention on a Nation-Wide Level' by clicking here.

Useful Links if you are interested…

- Submission guidelines (detailing the types of articles they accept, word limits and formatting): http://www.psypag.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/PsyPAG-Quarterly-submissions-guidelines.pdf
- Author guidelines (more detail about article preparation and formatting): http://www.psypag.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/PsyPAG-Quarterly-instructions-to-authors.pdf
- Writing tips from the editors: http://www.psypag.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Writing-tips-from-the-Quarterly-editors.pdff

A THANK YOU FROM OUR HEAD OF SCHOOL

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Psychology Lecturers for the transition of Blended Learning teaching to Online Teaching during this period of uncertainty. You have worked tirelessly to ensure as smooth a transition as possible even with a few glitches. I would also like to express my thanks to all our students who have worked with us whilst we have made this transition and thank you for your patience. Studying online, as a Blended Learning student is a different experience. It is important that you engage in the online activities and Adobe Connect sessions. This will provide you with the support to continue in your studies. We will work together to support you.

Dr Gail Steptoe-Warren, Head of the School of Psychology.

A THANK YOU TO OUR HEAD OF SCHOOL

Gail, we would like to say thank you so much for being such a fantastic leader and mentor, especially during such challenging times! Your full support and encouragement has been invaluable and enabled the team to continue working successfully together. You are amazing!

From all of us.

Stay safe. Stay calm. Stay positive.

Dr Sophie Ward has produced the following articles that contain helpful tips that are sure to be of use during these unique times.

Important information relating to mental health:

https://arden.ac.uk/knowledge-base/student-life/food-health-lifestyle/importance-university-mental-health-day

Some top tips for staying positive!:

https://arden.ac.uk/knowledge-base/student-life/food-health-lifestyle/top-tips-staying-positive

A variety of other resources can be found within the "Knowledge Base" such as "*4 steps for successful student self-care*" and "*Top 5 study tips for online learners*".

It is crucial that we come together during this period, so be sure to reach out to those in your life, whether it be your fellow students and colleagues, family, friends, or even cute bunnies! → We are *always* happy to hear what you are up to, so be sure to tweet @ArdenUniPsych.

Contributing to the next edition of the newsletter

I would like to thank all contributors to this edition of the School of Psychology newsletter. If you would like to contribute a topical article or news item related to Psychology for the next edition, please contact myself at krooney@arden.ac.uk for more information. I look forward to hearing from you!

Next Issue: June 2020.

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