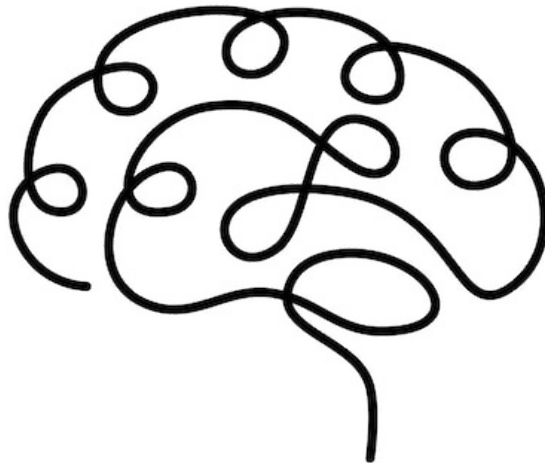


32nd ANNUAL

**California State University
San Marcos**

PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT RESEARCH CONFERENCE



2026 Event Program

2026 PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT RESEARCH CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME AND THANK YOU	4
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS	5
KEYNOTE ADDRESS	6
GRADUATE SCHOOL IN PSYCHOLOGY PANEL	7
CAREERS IN PSYCHOLOGY PANEL.....	8
STUDENT POSTER SESSION A.....	9
STUDENT POSTER SESSION B.....	20
STUDENT BLITZ TALKS.....	33
PREVIOUS KEYNOTE SPEAKERS	36

WELCOME AND THANK YOU

Welcome to the 32nd Annual Psychology Student Research Conference sponsored by the CSUSM chapter of Psi Chi and the CSUSM Psychology and CHAD Organization. This conference offers undergraduate and graduate students from colleges and universities throughout Southern California the opportunity to share their work in psychological research and connect with fellow students and faculty. For our conference this year, we received over three dozen submissions. Our program this year will include 52 posters and 5 blitz talks! We hope that you enjoy learning about our students' research.

We would like to take a moment to thank all of those who have worked on and contributed to our conference, because without these efforts and support, this event would not be possible. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the dedicated time and effort of the Research Conference Planning Committee and student volunteers, who have been working diligently in preparation of this event. We would also like to express our appreciation to the CSUSM Psychology Department faculty and staff for their continual support for student research and this conference.

Finally, we would like to offer a special thank you to Betsy and the late Dr. Richard Fitzpatrick, whose very generous endowment and subsequent contributions help to ensure that psychology students for years to come will have the opportunity to participate in this wonderful learning experience and celebration of student research.

We hope that you enjoy today's event!

Sincerely,

The 2026 Psychology Student Research Conference Planning Committee

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

9:30AM

Sign-in begins

10:00AM-11:00AM

Opening Remarks

Student Poster Session (A)

11:00AM-12:00PM

Graduate School and Careers in Psychology Panel

12:00PM-1:00PM

Keynote Address

1:00PM-2:00PM

Student Poster Session (B)

Luncheon

2:00PM-3:00PM

Careers in Psychology Panel

3:00PM-4:00PM

Student Blitz Talks and Awards Session

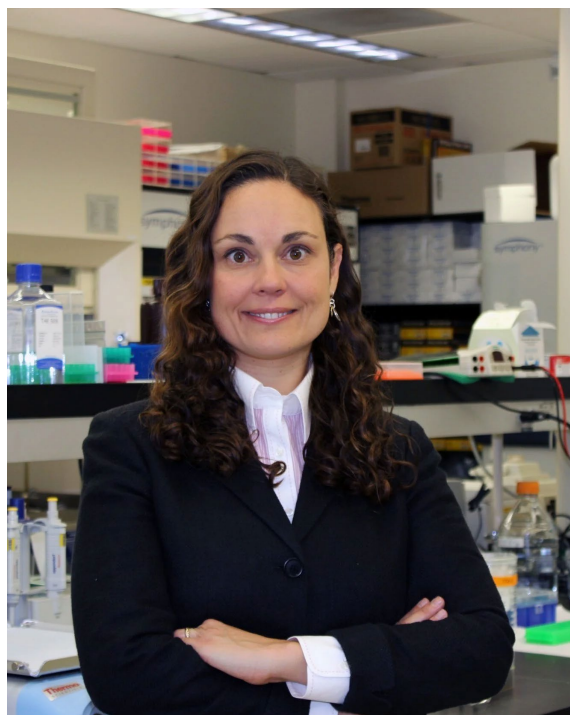
Closing Remarks

All events will be held in the USU Ballroom

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

12:00PM-1:00PM

AI Guided Therapeutic Development for the Treatment of Opioid Use Disorder



Christie Fowler, PhD
Professor and Chancellor's Fellow, Neurobiology and Behavior
Charlie Dunlop School of Biological Sciences
University of California, Irvine

The opioid epidemic has led to a devastating loss of life nationwide. Of those dependent on opioids, many individuals desire to quit or reduce use, but their efforts are often unsuccessful given the powerful reinforcing properties associated with opioid drugs, including fentanyl. In this talk, Dr. Fowler will discuss their recent drug development efforts focused on opioid use disorder. Their group began with an artificial intelligence (AI)-based platform, which was rationally designed to identify markers of dysregulation from human drug user postmortem brain tissue. Based on these AI predictions, they tested two compounds for their effectiveness in reducing fentanyl self-administration in a preclinical rodent model and then further validated one compound as having no off-target side effects. Together, these studies validate a polypharmacy-focused approach to target serotonin receptors, without inducing hallucinogenic-like effects, to promote cessation of opioid use.

GRADUATE SCHOOL IN PSYCHOLOGY PANEL

11:00AM-12:00PM

Alexair Gonzalez, B.A.

Social Psychology Ph.D. Student
University of California Los Angeles

Petrona Gregorio, M.A.

Public Health Ph.D. Student
UCSD/SDSU Joint Doctoral Program in Public Health

Jennifer Lozano, B.A.

Psychological Science M.A. Graduate Student
California State University San Marcos

Gabriel Holguin, Ph.D.

Postdoctoral Associate
Scripps Research Institute

Mona Saii, B.A.

Psychological Science M.A. Graduate Student
California State University San Marcos

CAREERS IN PSYCHOLOGY PANEL

2:00PM-3:00PM

Egamaría Alacam, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Quantitative Psychology
California State University Long Beach

Jessica Cooper, M.A.

Research Director
Action Research

Cristal Lopez, Ph.D.

Licensed Psychologist
Children's Hospital of Orange County

Joey Schmitt, M.A.

Director
Action Research

STUDENT POSTER SESSION (A)

10:00AM-11:00AM

Poster 01. Engagement in Cultural Socialization Practices and Postpartum Mental Health Among Second-Generation Immigrant Mothers

Kathia Lopez, Tylin Bakhoun, Paloma Vega Martinez, Irene Tung, Sabrina Liu
California State University San Marcos (CSUSM)

Strong cultural identity is linked to greater life satisfaction and belonging, yet little is known about whether engaging in cultural socialization practices benefits second-generation immigrant (SGI) parents' mental health. This study examined whether SGI mothers' frequency of, or plans to engage in, cultural socialization with their children was associated with life satisfaction, depression, and anxiety. Participants were 27 SGI postpartum mothers (M age = 29.15) recruited from a longitudinal perinatal health study who completed surveys at 6–12 months postpartum; 15 also participated in qualitative interviews. Cultural socialization was assessed using the Cultural Socialization Behaviors Measure. Contrary to hypotheses, cultural socialization was not associated with depression or life satisfaction and was marginally positively correlated with anxiety ($r = .39$, $p = .06$). These findings suggest that cultural socialization may not function as a protective factor during the postpartum period and may reflect stress related to transmitting cultural heritage.

Poster 02. The Role of Creative Art Therapies in Fostering Resilience Among Trauma-Exposed Youth: A Neurobiological Literature Review

Cassandra Stillman
California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

Childhood and adolescent trauma can disrupt emotional regulation, identity formation, and trust. Traditional trauma interventions often rely on verbal processing, which may be difficult for youth whose experiences are overwhelming or hard to articulate. This study examined its whether creative art therapies (CAT), already known to support trauma expression, can also foster resilience in traumatized youth. A systematic literature review of peer-reviewed research from the past ten years across psychology, neuroscience, and expressive arts therapy analyzed studies focused on children and adolescents, trauma, resilience, and creative arts. Three consistent findings emerged: (1) CAT improved emotional regulation and self-efficacy through nonverbal emotional processing, (2) creative engagement in group settings strengthens social connection by activating neural systems linked to empathy, perspective taking, and bonding; and (3) arts engagements stimulates resilience-related brain systems, including dopamine reward pathways, prefrontal-amygdala regulation, and mirror neurons. Overall, CAT support emotional, social, and neurological processes that promote adaptive coping and resilience in traumatized youth.

Poster 03. When Exposure Becomes Overexposure: Social Media Exposure to Traumatic Content as a Moderator of Daily Social Media Use and Empathy in Emerging Adults.

Carmen Tyler
California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

Introduction: While social media is a central platform for engagement among emerging adults, the prevalence of graphic global events shared on social platforms has introduced a significant risk of vicarious traumatization. Given the saturation of digital platforms, these adults are highly likely to encounter traumatic content, which could play a role in the observed decline of dispositional empathy (Konrath et al., 2011). In the present study, we examined the potential influence of exposure to traumatic content via social media and empathy, particularly as a moderator of daily social media use. Methods: We analyzed self-report data from 1659 individuals recruited via social media (Mage = 26.54, 47.6% female). Daily social media use was measured using 1 item related to a scaled frequency of daily use. Exposure to traumatic content in the past month was assessed using 1 survey item (yes/no). We assessed empathy using a version of the Adolescent Measure of Empathy and Sympathy (AMES) adapted for emerging adults (Bloom & Lambie, 2020). Results: Significant associations were observed between the amount of time spent on social media daily and empathy [$B(SE) = .37(.04)$, $p < .001$, $\Delta R^2 = .05$, $t(1474) = 9.0$], as well as the frequency of exposure to traumatic content and empathy [$B(SE) = .09(.02)$, $p < .001$, $\Delta R^2 = .02$, $t(1474) = 4.6$, $p < .001$]. The interaction between repeated engagement and exposure to traumatic content on empathy was nonsignificant [$\Delta R^2 = .06$, $t(1407) = -0.13$, $p = .90$]. Conclusion: Our findings suggest that the influence of simply being exposed to traumatic content on empathy may not change based on the frequency of emerging adult daily social media use. Future directions to expand on these findings would benefit from a more nuanced observation of how engagement with traumatic digital content could influence empathy in this population.

Poster 04. Exercise and NACHO's impact on Nicotine Reward, Cognition, Anxiety and Depression

Karina Aurora Marquez

California State University San Marcos (CSUSM)

Exercise has been shown to be a beneficial method for reducing anxiety and depressive-like behaviors while also increasing cognitive abilities both in rodent models and humans. When mice engage in moderate exercise, they have been shown to exhibit an increase in alpha-7 nicotinic receptors, along with an enhancement in cognitive abilities and a decrease in nicotine withdrawal behaviors. Nicotinic receptors have been shown to be dependent on the chaperone protein NACHO for their assembly, expression, and function. For this research study, we investigated the differences in exercise behaviors between NACHO Knockout mice and wild-type mice. After mice were exposed to three weeks of wheel running, behaviors such as anxiety-like behaviors, depressive-like behaviors, recognition memory, and nicotine seeking behaviors were assessed. Specifically, the locomotion experiment was used to assess anxiety-like behaviors, the forced swim test assessed depressive-like behaviors, the novel object recognition test assessed recognition memory, and the conditioned place preference experiment was used to assess nicotine seeking behaviors. The results from these experiments revealed that the NACHO KO mice ran more than the wild-type mice. The results from the behavioral experiments revealed no significant differences between the two groups. These findings are important to consider as they may highlight exercise's ability to decrease anxiety and depression among wildtype mice to match the level of anxiety and depressive-like behaviors in NACHO KO mice. Further studies that utilize non-exercising groups are essential to gain a better understanding of how exercise is impacting behaviors between wildtype mice and NACHO KO mice.

Poster 05.

Alissa Saridin

California State University San Marcos (CSUSM)

Positive affirmations are promoted as a strategy for improving mood and emotional state, yet support for the effectiveness of affirmations remains mixed. The present study examined whether positive self-referential statements influence mood compared to neutral statements. Participants (N = 63) were randomly assigned to read either positive affirmations or neutral statements and completed mood surveys before and after the manipulation. Results from a repeated-measures analysis suggest a slight increase in mood over time, as well as higher overall mood scores in the positive affirmation condition compared to the neutral condition. These findings suggest that positive self-directed language may influence emotional state and support the idea that positive self-talk can contribute to short-term mood improvement. Understanding how internal language shapes emotional experiences may impact everyday emotion regulation and psychological well-being.

Poster 06. Anxiety, cognition, and daily functioning in Aging Asian American Adults

Claudine Lim Oliva, Jenna Vargas, Sage Yosick

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

Background: The influence of anxiety severity on reported daily functioning and neuropsychological performance in aging Asian American (AA) adults requires further investigation, given projected trends in general growth and prevalence of anxiety and Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) in this population. Methods: We examined associations of anxiety severity (no anxiety, mild anxiety, moderate to severe anxiety) with subjective informant reports of participants' daily functioning (assessed via the Functional Activities Questionnaire [FAQ]) and with objective participant performance on neuropsychological testing among AA adults (ages 48-95) in the NACC cohort (n=342). Results: Participants who reported no anxiety scored significantly lower on the FAQ (reported better daily functioning) compared to those who reported mild or moderate to severe anxiety. Regarding neuropsychological testing, in the domains of verbal and visual memory, participants who reported no anxiety performed significantly better than those who reported mild anxiety (ps < .05). However, participants who reported moderate to severe anxiety performed comparably to those who reported no anxiety or mild anxiety (ps > .05). Anxiety severity was not shown to influence performance in domains of language, attention, executive functioning, or processing speed (ps > .05). Discussion: AA adults with no anxiety demonstrated better daily functioning and performance on tests of verbal and visual memory compared to participants with mild or moderate to severe anxiety. No other group differences on daily functioning or neuropsychological performance were observed. A critical next step in this research is to examine whether anxiety severity moderates associations between reported daily functioning and objective neuropsychological performance in the aging AA population.

Poster 07. Declining Home-Field Advantage? An Analysis Across Major North American Professional Sports Leagues

Arianna Hahn and Dr. Nadav Goldschmied

University of San Diego (USD)

Home-field advantage (HFA)—the phenomenon that highlights the benefit a team gains from playing on its home field—is widely recognized in professional sports, though its magnitude varies over time and across leagues. The present study examined whether HFA has changed since the start of the 21st century in five major North American professional leagues: Major League Baseball (MLB), National Football League (NFL), National Hockey League (NHL), National Basketball Association (NBA), and Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA). Archival season-level data were used to calculate HFA as the ratio of home wins to total home games for each season. Kendall's tau-b correlations indicated a decline in HFA for the NFL, NBA, and WNBA. In the NFL, a medium effect size (-.3 to -.5) corresponded with a decrease in HFA from 55.6% in 2000 to 53.3% in 2024. The

WNBA also showed a medium effect, with HFA dropping from 59.8% to 52.5%. The NBA demonstrated a large effect (above -.5), with HFA decreasing from 59.8% to 54.4%. It is postulated that, in basketball, the increasing reliance on the three-point shot may reduce referees' influence and bias, which have historically been cited as key factors in home-field advantage.

Poster 08. Amusement park happiness

Joseph Crisaldo

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

The purpose of this study was to answer two questions: Do males who frequently visit amusement parks show higher levels of happiness than females and do those who frequently visit amusement parks show higher levels of happiness than those who do not. The study was conducted by using a Google Forms survey measuring levels of happiness, and how frequently people visit amusement parks

Poster 09. Has Inclusive Early Childhood Education Changed Over Time? A Systematic Review of Outcomes, Experiences, and Perceptions for Children without Disabilities

Merielle Dautz, Elizabeth Keck, Taylor Munro, Allison Jobin

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

Inclusive early childhood education (ECE) involves the inclusion of children with and without disabilities in early childhood education programs (Siller et al., 2021). Although research demonstrates that children with disabilities benefit from inclusive ECE and that practices have evolved over time, there are no recent syntheses of the literature on the impact on children without disabilities. Further, prior reviews have not focused on how outcomes, experiences, and perceptions may have changed over time. A systematic review was conducted using PubMed, ERIC, and PsycINFO. Searches were limited to peer-reviewed articles reporting original empirical data published between 1975-2024 reporting on the outcomes or child/caregiver beliefs, attitudes, or perceptions of inclusive ECE for children without disabilities. Two independent coders screened all abstracts, with discrepancies resolved through consensus. Findings were compared across time to examine changes in outcomes, experiences, and perceptions over the last several decades. The literature search yielded 1,324 articles. After removing 225 duplicates, title and abstract screening yielded 116 articles that advanced to full-text review. The final extraction results will include analyses of inclusive program type, as well as child outcomes and child/caregiver beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of inclusive ECE, with particular attention to how these factors shifted between 1975 and 2024. Findings are expected to highlight improvements across decades, while also underscoring remaining gaps and directions for future research.

Poster 10. Cool Kid Dilemma: How Children Weigh Social Traits in Friendship Selection

Alex Depinto Avilez, Merielle Dautz, Cory Jordan, Kimberly Vanderbilt

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

Friendship selection is a central component of children's social development, as it reflects their growing understanding of social expectations. Young children rely on trait-based inferences to evaluate their peers and guide their choices. As they grow up, children start to prioritize being associated with a "cool" peer, even if they behave in anti-social ways, to gain the social benefits. This can reflect the influence of how they value other social qualities, such as kindness. The present study examines how children ages 6-10 weighed "coolness" versus "niceness" when making decisions on their friendships. Participants are first introduced to a 6-point Likert scale

to report their attitudes towards varying character traits and situations. After, they are presented a short story featuring two contrasting characters: one who is considered “cool” but acts in anti-social behavior and the other who is considered “uncool” but acts in prosocial behavior. Participants are then asked a series of questions related to the story they heard & the characters within it (e.g., “Do you think Olivia is nice or not nice? A little nice/not nice or very nice/not nice?”). After answering each question, they would briefly explain their reasoning for their friendship preferences. By investigating how perceived coolness and kindness intermingles, we aim to determine which traits children prioritize when selecting friends.

Poster 11. Cannabis Vape Use and Neurological Quality of Life in U.S. Young Adults: Examining the Influence of Depressive Symptoms.

Aryanna Alarcon, Kim Pulvers

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

Cannabis use is prevalent among U.S. young adults, with 36.5% of individuals aged 18-25 reporting past-year use in 2023. Cannabis is consumed through multiple routes of administration (ROA) and vaping has gained popularity. Cannabis use is associated with deficits in cognitive functioning, which may impair neurological quality of life (NQoL). Depressive symptoms are common among young adults, associated with increased cannabis use, and reduced cognitive performance. Limited research has examined how cannabis vaping relates to NQoL and whether this relationship varies by depressive symptoms. A survey administered to young adults (age 18-25) assessed cannabis use in the past 30 days for various ROAs. Depressive symptoms were evaluated using the 2-item Patient Health Questionnaire and perceived cognitive function was evaluated using the 4-item Neurology Quality-of-Life Cognitive short form. The findings of our study indicated that greater cannabis vape use days were associated with more NQoL impairment ($b = .07$, $SE(b) = .03$, $t(208) = 2.56$, $p = .01$, 95% CI = [.02 to .13]). There was a main effect of depressive symptom level on NQoL impairment ($b = 3.86$, $SE(b) = .52$, $t(208) = 7.40$, $p = .0000$, 95% CI = [2.83 to 4.89]). The interaction between vape use days and depressive symptoms was not statistically significant ($b = .008$, $SE(b) = .06$, $t(208) = .15$, $p = .88$, 95% CI = [-.10 to .12]). Findings suggest that both cannabis vaping frequency and depressive symptoms independently contribute to lower NQoL, emphasizing the importance of addressing substance use and mental health in young adults.

Poster 12. Short Video Analogy Research Project

Erika Gomez, Yu Zhang, Alyah Ochoa

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

Short-form video platforms have transformed how children access and process information, raising important questions about how learning principles operate in these environments. Grounded in theories of analogical reasoning and relational learning, this study examines how short educational videos (e.g., TikTok, YouTube Shorts) use analogies to support children’s understanding of abstract concepts. Analogies can facilitate learning by mapping familiar knowledge onto novel domains, enabling relational transfer beyond surface features. We conducted a qualitative content analysis of 160 short-form videos across domains, including math, science, AI, biology, and physics. Videos were coded for the presence and type of analogy (perceptual vs. conceptual), modality (visual, verbal, mixed), and instructional approach. Preliminary findings indicate that analogies are widely used across topics, with math videos showing greater reliance on perceptual analogies. These patterns suggest that while analogies are prevalent, they may emphasize surface similarities over deeper relational structures, highlighting opportunities to design short-form content that better supports conceptual understanding.

Poster 13. Perception of Career Readiness in Psychology Undergraduate Students

Sydney Sanchez, Yu Zhang

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

Preparing undergraduate psychology majors for career pathways is essential yet understudied. This study examined changes in students' career beliefs, motivation, and work readiness in a psychology career development course (N = 98) using pre- and post-surveys. Students generated adjectives for "career," "self after graduation," and "psychology as a profession," coded for valence. Paired-samples t-tests showed that "career" was viewed more negatively than both "self after graduation" ($t(74) = -2.42, p = .02$) and "psychology as a profession" ($t(73) = -2.87, p < .01$), with no difference between the latter two ($p = .55$). Students' responses from pre- and post-beliefs and motivations showed significant increases in career beliefs ($t(70) = -4.71, p < .001$) and work readiness ($t(69) = -6.21, p < .001$), with a marginal increase in motivation ($t(69) = -1.83, p = .072$). Findings suggest a gap between positive self/field perceptions and career uncertainty at the beginning of the course, highlighting the value of career-focused courses in improving psychology career readiness and confidence.

Poster 14. First-Generation Status, Social Class, and Beliefs About Opportunity

Isaac Villasenor & Alex C. Huynh

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

Prior research suggests that first-generation college students may differ from continuing-generation students in how they perceive opportunity, trust institutions, and explain success. Given that CSUSM is dedicated to supporting first-generation students, this project explores how CSUSM first-generation and continuing-generation students experiences may relate to, or contrast with what the psychological literature suggest. An ongoing research study conducted through the psychology department's HPP subject pool will explore whether first-generation (vs. continuing-generation) students report lower institutional trust, perceive more structural barriers, and rely more on structural reasoning. Participants will respond to various open-ended and closed-ended questions assessing these variables, including scenario-based questions assessing whether outcomes are due to personal effort or systemic factors. We expect to report on approximately 100–200 undergraduate student data. T-tests and regression analyses will examine differences between first-generation and continuing-generation students on their experiences at CSUSM. Findings will help clarify how social class background shapes perceptions of opportunity and inequality.

Poster 15. Bridging the Gap: The Role of Mentorship, Stigma, and Socioeconomic Status in Shaping Community College Students' Transfer Aspirations

Dana Wei, Daisy M. Sanchez, Netta Schroer

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

A correlational study explored mentorship, stigma, and socioeconomic status (SES) in community college students, and how it related to intent to transfer to a 4-year university. Previous research suggested mentorship can combat stigma, provide support, and build confidence in students (Haeger & Fresquez, 2016; Hamilton et al., 2019). A total of 105 anonymous surveys were collected from a sample of community college students. Results suggest that there was no correlation between mentorship and intent to transfer. It was also found that there was no correlation between stigma and intent to transfer. Additionally, there was no correlation between SES and intent to transfer. The results suggest that because most students focus on the goal to transfer, it may override mentorship and stigma.

Poster 16. Communicating through Learning: Examining Parent-Child Elaboration Across STEM and Socio-Emotional Contexts in Early Childhood

Celeste Ateek, Adali Rios, Yu Zhang

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

Early childhood development is shaped by the quality of parent-child learning interactions, yet minimal research has examined how parental elaboration is influenced across STEM and socio-emotional domains simultaneously. This pilot study investigates whether elaborative parent-child conversations vary across shared activities. Specifically, parent-child dyads will engage in magnetic tile building, picture book reading with STEM and socio-emotional themes. Interactions of 40 parent-child dyads were recorded and coded for the frequency of open-ended and closed statements and questions to measure parental elaboration. Parental elaboration plays a crucial role in children's cognitive development, as the process of open-ended statements and questions may facilitate stronger engagement in learning. We hypothesize that the frequency of open-ended and closed statements and questions will vary by activity type, demonstrating how elaborative talk is context-specific. Additionally, parental elaboration may vary based on families' socio-cultural backgrounds.

Poster 17. Understanding high school students' anticipated feelings of belonging and college decision-making

Jayne Quezada-Mares, Tal Waltzer, Giselle Laiduc, Gail D. Heyman

University of California San Diego (UCSD)

Understanding belonging is important as university demographics become increasingly diverse. Current research focuses on first-year college students, but high school students are also important to better understand their anticipated feelings of belonging and how they guide college choice. We conducted a survey with college students (N = 75) about how colleges shape feelings of belonging to identify factors that could impact high school students' anticipated feelings of college belonging. The survey consisted of close-ended questions about college students' current feelings of belonging and about a racial, ethnic, and cultural identity match with students and faculty at their university. A key finding was that high belonging students had higher perceptions of an identity match with other students (M = 63.91) than low belonging students (M = 49.09). Unexpectedly, we found no difference between high and low belonging students' perceptions of an identity match with faculty at their university. Based on these findings we developed a study to learn more about how presenting a college with a student identity match can influence high school students' anticipated feelings of belonging and college-decision making. Drawing insights from the open-ended responses, this study prompts high school participants to discuss their belonging expectations and college preferences. This study is ongoing with local high schools and will be completed before the conference. Findings from this research will inform institutions seeking to foster belonging among prospective students and aid high school counselors in ensuring students from diverse backgrounds feel a sense of belonging early in their college transition.

Poster 18. Adolescents' Belonging in Motion: Varying Identifications Across Space

Yutong Wu, David Lindstrom

University of California San Diego (UCSD)

Sense of belonging is a central indicator of adolescents' ethnic identity development. Few studies have examined how adolescents' sense of cultural belonging and their coping strategies vary and inform each other

as they move through different geographical contexts. This study addresses this gap by examining the cases of two second-generation Chinese American adolescents from California whose sense of cultural belongingness is developed in widely dispersed contexts—in their journey to China and in daily life in the United States. We explore how the two adolescents rethink their understanding of belonging to their cultural communities within distinct spatial contexts. Participants reported changing perceptions of belonging as they move into geographically different settings. They adopted different patterned thoughts and identifications to feel emotionally anchored in different spatial contexts, and such thoughts/identifications were continually reconstructed as the respondents revisited their past experiences over time. This study also suggests a more open-ended interpretation of belongingness. Rather than putting adolescents into the dichotomy of either fitting into a certain ethnicity category or not, this study puts forward the possibility for adolescents to feel belonging to a dynamic mosaic of cultures as they continue to adjust their self-concepts through diverse contexts. Focusing on adolescents' lived experiences, this research can further our understanding of belonging development in adolescents and provide insights into ways to support well-being, especially for adolescents with diverse cultural backgrounds.

Poster 19. Emerging social norms in adolescents' conversations about using AI in high school

Sarah I. Segall, Deanna Vuong, Tal Waltzer, Gail D. Heyman

University of California San Diego (UCSD)

As generative AI tools become increasingly prevalent in education, students must navigate their appropriate use without clear guidelines. This absence makes high school a particularly important setting for emerging norms, as students are developing foundational academic skills while also being highly susceptible to social influence from both peers and teachers. Understanding these conversations is important as student susceptibility may lead to influential expectations that normalize certain AI practices while discouraging others. To examine the ways that peer and teacher discourse may shape students' usage of AI tools, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 31 students and 29 teachers across multiple high schools in the Western US. Students ($M = 17.16$ years, $SD = 0.82$) reported that 84% had peer conversations about generative AI, with 62% describing a mixed tone and 46% including peer demonstrations of AI tools. Key themes in peer discourse included appropriate use, future readiness, cheating and its consequences, and social comparison. Teachers ($M = 13.27$ years teaching, $SD = 8.56$) reported that 93% had spoken with students about generative AI, with 74% adopting a mixed tone and 26% incorporating student demonstrations. Teacher conversations centered on appropriate use, intellectual ownership, critical evaluation, future readiness, and cheating in one-on-one conversations. Norms around AI use in high school are being built organically and informally from the ground up, resulting in inconsistent and largely underground expectations. Because students form different ideas about what constitutes acceptable AI use based on peer and teacher conversations, these norms remain fragmented rather than institutionalized.

Poster 20. Keeping secrets and how it varies across social contexts

Cara L. Chan, Tal Waltzer, Gail D. Heyman

University of California San Diego (UCSD)

Keeping secrets—information that is intentionally and premeditatively concealed to prevent others from finding out about it—is an integral aspect of social life that impacts relationships and wellbeing. This study investigated people's secret-keeping in everyday contexts to understand the social nuances and impacts of secrecy. In an online survey, 187 participants ($M_{age} = 20.26$, range: 18-25, 77% female, 45% Asian, 25% Latinx) described their relationships with four different people and reported on their past experiences keeping secrets from each person. All participants reported keeping secrets from at least one of the four people they described. People

most frequently reported keeping secrets about romantic relationships (38%) and mental health (34%), and kept more secrets from professional contacts (e.g., colleagues, bosses) and family members than friends and romantic partners ($p < .001$). Common reasons for keeping and disclosing secrets had to do with concerns regarding relationships (39%), emotions (38%), and reputation (31%). Generally, people felt more pressure to keep secrets in relationships they rated as lower in quality (Pearson's $r = -.49$, $p < .001$). These results reflect the social nuances and context-dependent nature of secrecy, highlighting how relationship concerns and emotions shape secret-keeping decisions, and how secrecy varies across different relationship types and qualities.

Poster 21. Effects of Prenatal CBD Exposure on the Stress and Emotional Regulation

Julia Steinberg, Savana Hampton, Ilse Fleischer, Sam Angell, Jennifer D. Thomas
San Diego State University (SDUS)

Cannabis is a commonly used illicit drug that contains hundreds of cannabinoids, including cannabidiol (CBD). CBD has increased in popularity due to its potential therapeutic properties in reducing pain, inflammation, anxiety, and nausea. Of concern, individuals may utilize CBD to address such symptoms during pregnancy. However, little is known about the effects of CBD on fetal brain and behavioral development, including effects on emotional and stress regulation. The present study used an animal model to investigate if prenatal CBD exposure altered anxiety-related behavior and stress hormone response. Pregnant Sprague-Dawley rats were randomly assigned to prenatal CBD (50 mg/kg/day) or control (0 mg/kg/day) conditions. CBD was delivered via a cookie dough edible, which was consumed by the dam on gestational days 5-20. To measure anxiety-like behaviors, the offspring were tested on an elevated-plus maze task on postnatal day (PD) 40. Five days later (PD 45), the offspring were exposed to an acute stressor. Corticosterone was measured using an enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) with blood samples that obtained 15 minutes before and immediately after exposure to the stressor. Results indicate that prenatal CBD exposure in males reduces anxiety like behavior and suppresses the stress response, an effect that was less robust in females. Taken together, the current study suggest that prenatal CBD exposure may impact emotional and stress regulation systems that are essential for fetal health and survival. Elucidation of the potential risks of CBD use during pregnancy on the developing fetus is critical for promoting healthy pregnancies.

Poster 22. Noradrenaline modulates alcohol drinking in female Wistar rats

Nicole Cornwall, Max Arrazola, Francisco J. Flores-Ramirez
California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)
The Scripps Research Institute (TRSI)

Alcohol use disorder (AUD) is a chronic relapsing disorder that is the leading preventable cause of death worldwide. The central nucleus of the amygdala (CeA) is recognized as a hub for stress-related responsivity and underlies the pervasiveness of AUD. Norepinephrine (NE), also known as noradrenaline, regulates the brain's response to stress and alcohol. Previous research has shown that $\alpha 1$ -adrenergic receptors drive moderate alcohol intake, while β receptors contribute to excessive drinking associated with dependence in male rats. In this study, we aimed to determine that alcohol dependence and withdrawal alter the CeA noradrenergic system in female rats using site-specific behavioral pharmacology. We found that prazosin, an $\alpha 1$ receptor antagonist, reduced moderate alcohol intake in nondependent female rats and excessive drinking in dependent females, while propranolol, a β receptor antagonist, reduced excessive drinking only in dependent females. Overall, the results indicate that Amygdalar $\alpha 1$ - and β -adrenergic receptors are key neural substrates of AUD. Our results support ongoing development of receptor-specific medication for AUD and highlight promising efficacy in females.

Poster 23. Functional interaction between orexin/CRF transmission in the infralimbic cortex modulates the stress-induced reinstatement of alcohol-seeking behavior in male and female Wistar rats

Katherine E. Brunson, Sophia dV. Kuper, Francisco J. Flores-Ramirez

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

The Scripps Research Institute (TRSI)

Stress contributes to the chronic relapsing nature of alcohol use disorder (AUD), given its ability to elicit craving and precipitate relapse, even after long periods of self-imposed abstinence. Although not thoroughly understood, anatomical, pharmacological, and behavioral data suggest orexin (OX) and corticotropin-releasing factor (CRF) interact, particularly in the infralimbic cortex (IL). A functional interaction between these systems in the IL may be critical for the etiology and pervasiveness of compulsive alcohol seeking in dependent subjects, rendering them vulnerable to relapse. Male and female Wistar rats were trained to self-administer 10% alcohol for 3 weeks and then made dependent via chronic intermittent alcohol vapor exposure for 6 weeks. Following extinction training (12 sessions), rats received an intra-IL microinfusion of the OX_{1/2} receptor antagonist suvorexant (15 µg/0.5 µl/side), the CRF1 receptor antagonist CP154,526 (0.6 µg/0.5 µl/side), or a combination of suvorexant + CP154,526. Rats were then tested for footshock stress-induced reinstatement of alcohol-seeking behavior. In nondependent rats, only CP154,526 prevented the reinstatement of alcohol-seeking behavior, an effect that was reversed by suvorexant co-administration. In dependent rats, suvorexant, CP154,526, and norBNI attenuated alcohol-seeking behavior. Interestingly, the co-administration of suvorexant + CP154,526 or suvorexant + norBNI attenuated suvorexant's effect. These results demonstrate a functional interaction between OX/CRF receptor signaling in the IL in subjects with a history of alcohol dependence.

Poster 24. Functional interaction between orexin/dynorphin transmission in the infralimbic cortex modulates the stress-induced reinstatement of alcohol-seeking behavior in male and female Wistar rats

Kristin Cole, Christina Camacho, Francisco J. Flores-Ramirez

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

The Scripps Research Institute (TRSI)

Stress contributes to the chronic relapsing nature of alcohol use disorder (AUD), given its ability to elicit craving and precipitate relapse, even after long periods of self-imposed abstinence. Although not thoroughly understood, anatomical, pharmacological, and behavioral data suggest orexin (OX) and dynorphin (DYN) interact, particularly in the infralimbic cortex (IL). A functional interaction between these systems in the IL may be critical for the etiology and pervasiveness of compulsive alcohol seeking in dependent subjects, rendering them vulnerable to relapse. Male and female Wistar rats were trained to self-administer 10% alcohol for 3 weeks and then made dependent via chronic intermittent alcohol vapor exposure for 6 weeks. Following extinction training (12 sessions), rats received an intra-IL microinfusion of the OX_{1/2} receptor antagonist suvorexant (15 µg/0.5 µl/side), the κ-opioid receptor antagonist nor-binaltorphimine (norBNI; 4 µg/0.5 µl/side), or a combination suvorexant+norBNI. Rats were then tested for footshock stress-induced reinstatement of alcohol-seeking behavior. In dependent rats, suvorexant and norBNI attenuated alcohol-seeking behavior. Interestingly, the co-administration of suvorexant+norBNI attenuated suvorexant's effect. These results demonstrate a functional interaction between OX/DYN receptor signaling in the IL in subjects with a history of alcohol dependence.

Poster 25. How young people reason about everyday environmental experiences

Ananya N. Raman, Katrina E. Cloyes, Tal Waltzer, Gail D. Heyman

University of California San Diego (UCSD)

Many young people express concern about climate change, but this concern does not always lead to action. Some face barriers such as limited opportunities or uncertainty about what makes a difference, while others lack motivation to follow through. Adolescence and emerging adulthood are critical for shaping values and habits, and youth describe “doing their part” through personal actions like recycling or walking instead of driving, though broader engagement through advocacy and systemic efforts is essential. Understanding how youth reason about these choices is key to fostering climate action. In Study 1 (N = 48; M = 21.40 years), participants described environmental decisions and reasons. Responses were coded as personal or social and as positive or negative. Nearly all recalled a personal action, while four in five recalled a social action, suggesting collective efforts are less common. Recycling and sustainable transportation were the most common personal actions, while overconsumption was the most common negative one. Socially, encouraging peers to recycle and joining advocacy were common positives, while inaction and misinformation were seen as harmful. Informed by Study 1, Study 2 (N = 59; M = 20.42 years) used vignettes from common actions to examine how youth evaluated peers’ environmental decisions. Participants judged each action’s morality, impact, and affiliation willingness. Higher perceived impact and moral approval were strongly linked to greater willingness to affiliate ($R^2 = .87$ and $.89$). Together, findings suggest moral reasoning and social considerations shape how youth evaluate environmental actions and may explain why personal habits feel more salient than collective engagement.

Poster 26. Assessing the Role of NACHO in Cognitive Flexibility

Harrison McCamy

California State University San Marcos (CSUSM)

Cognitive flexibility requires successful adaptation to changing environmental conditions and is operationalized through reversal learning, which enables the characterization of operant learning through the discrimination between initial acquisition of response-outcome associations and effective updating. While cholinergic signaling mediates diverse aspects of cognitive function through nicotinic acetylcholine receptors (nAChRs), including learning and memory, the behavioral consequences of disrupting upstream regulators of nAChRs remain poorly defined. NACHO, a neuronal chaperone protein encoded by the TMEM35 gene, facilitates the functional expression of multiple major nAChR subtypes and is required for the formation of $\alpha 7$ nAChRs. Given that NACHO knockout (KO) mice have previously demonstrated impaired spatial learning and memory and $\alpha 7$ KO mice have exhibited deficits in operant food learning tasks as well as delayed procedural learning, the present study examined whether NACHO removal disrupts operant learning performance and cognitive flexibility in a reversal learning paradigm. Wildtype C57BL/6J and NACHO KO mice were trained to discriminate between two levers to receive a food reward over an acquisition period, and upon achieving stable responding criteria, the lever assignment was reversed. The NACHO KO mice exhibited delayed acquisition of the initial rule, earning fewer pellets and demonstrating lower rates of active lever pressing across the baseline and reversal sessions. Notably, despite no genotypic differences during the baseline session, NACHO KO mice had significantly fewer inactive lever presses during the reversal session. Taken together, our results suggest that NACHO-dependent nAChR expression supports rule acquisition, operant task performance, and perseverative responding.

STUDENT POSTER SESSION (B)

1:00PM-2:00PM

Poster 01. Online But Connected?: Social Media Use and Friendship Strength Across Young Adulthood Ages

Vanessa Sandoval

California State University San Marcos

This study was conducted to examine (1) whether social media usage predicts friendship quality. (2) Does Age influence the relationship between social media use and friendship quality? To answer the research question, Google Forms was used to conduct a survey containing 23 questions about social media habits and friendship quality, with a total of 70 participants. These findings suggest that the general frequency of social media use does not meaningfully predict friendship satisfaction across age groups. Although it was suspected that higher social media usage, specifically among younger participants, would be associated with higher friendship quality, there was only a difference in friendship quality among younger participants who used social media more, as they were the majority of the sample. Future research should investigate specific types of online behaviors and the quality of digital interactions to understand better how social media contributes to relationship outcomes.

Poster 02. Development and Optimization of Protocols for RNA Extraction and Purification using Rat Brain Tissue

Ren Barkey, Ana Alvarez, Kristina Nguyen, Isabella Lugo, Nathan Malki, Sarah Daly Ferreira, Dana Hijazi, Oscar Torres

San Diego Mesa College

In this study, protocols were developed for total RNA extraction from rat brain tissue and RNA purification. RNA extraction from brain tissue is a unique technique in neuroscience, enabling scientists to research gene expression patterns underlying basic neurological functioning. The University of California San Diego (UCSD) donated neuronal tissue to Mesa College, and the nucleus accumbens (NAc), striatum (STRM), as well as prefrontal cortex (pCTX) were dissected. The protocol outlined herein details cleaning all equipment with 70% ethanol, preparing reagents such as RLT/B-ME buffer, DNase master mix, molecular-grade ethanol solutions, and the use of a column-based purification kit from Qiagen. Brain tissue was stored at -80°C, and then lysed by adding the RLT buffer with B-ME followed by sonication on ice. Fully homogenized samples were then centrifuged at 14,000 rpm to form pellet debris, and the supernatant was combined with 70% ethanol and loaded onto a pink silica column for RNA binding. Total RNA was purified through a series of wash steps by using RW1 and RPE buffers, an on-column DNase digestion mixture to remove contaminating DNA, and a final elution with two rounds of RNA-free water. Pure RNA was suspended in approximately 100 µL of molecular-grade water purchased from Sigma-Aldrich. After completion, samples were stored immediately at -80°C for quantification and integrity analyses. A second protocol was developed in order to measure and analyze total RNA content. Using single-channel NanoDrop spectrophotometry, samples were loaded at 1.5 µL to visualize purity levels and quantity assessments. Lastly, a third methodological approach was employed to develop designer cDNA probes. Designer cDNA probes were developed using the UCSD genome browser and specialized oligo software from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). RNA extraction from brain tissue presents unique technical challenges that demand careful handling and optimized protocol adherence for the preservation of RNA integrity. To our knowledge, this is the first time total RNA has been extracted and purified at San Diego Mesa College, Department of Behavioral Sciences.

Poster 03. Physiological changes in a preclinical animal model of alcohol use disorder (AUD)

Ren Barkey, Antonina Trusova, Celsey M. St. Onge, Marisa Roberto

The Scripps Research Institute (TRSI)

Alcohol use disorder (AUD) affects approximately 10% of the United States population and significantly contributes to global mortality. Previous research indicates that AUD has notable sex differences, with females showing a “telescoping effect” of rapid progression attributed to stronger and longer lasting effects from intoxication than in males. AUD is also highly comorbid with stress and its related disorders, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Alcohol can activate a physiological stress response by stimulating corticotropin-releasing factor (CRF) neurons in the central amygdala (CeA), a brain region associated with reward and motivated behavior. This feedback loop affects a wide range of physiological responses, including immune system modulation. To further investigate relationships between alcohol, sex, and stress, this study used male and female Wistar Crh-Cre rats, modified to study stress and alcohol consumption, in a preclinical model of the binge-like alcohol consumption seen in AUD. Here, rats underwent twelve two-hour sessions of intermittent two-bottle choice (2BC) over four weeks. During these sessions, half of the rats had free access to two drinking bottles filled with 20% ethanol (alcohol) and water, respectively, while the other half had access to water only as a control. Once drinking was stable, tail blood was collected to measure blood alcohol levels (BALs). Thirty minutes into the final drinking session, all rats were sacrificed, brains were extracted, and blood was collected. Brains and blood will be assayed to examine markers of stress and inflammation using Luminex and qPCR techniques. While preliminary results indicate no significant differences in alcohol consumption or preference, further results are hypothesized to highlight sex-dependent differences in immune system modulation and stress response. These findings are consistent with our previous studies and may provide additional insight into the physiological changes caused by AUD.

Poster 04. Exploring Voluntary Alcohol Consumption in Rats and Stress-Related Mechanisms

Antonina Trusova, Ren Barkey, Celsey M. St. Onge, Marisa Roberto

The Scripps Research Institute (TRSI)

Alcohol use disorder (AUD) is one of the most prevalent mental health disorders affecting millions of people worldwide. Further, AUD frequently co-occurs with other stress and anxiety-related disorders. Additionally, there are biological sex differences in the development and presentation of AUD. To further examine the sex differences and changes in stress-related mechanisms caused by AUD, we used an intermittent two-bottle choice (2BC) voluntary alcohol drinking model. Male and female Wistar rats were divided into two groups wherein one group had voluntary access to alcohol and water, and the other was a control group with no access to alcohol. The alcohol group had twelve 2-hour sessions with free choice between two bottles, one with 20% alcohol and the other with water, spread across four weeks. Alcohol and water intake as well as alcohol preference were monitored across sessions to evaluate the consumption behavior over time as well as sex-related differences. Preliminary results showed no significant differences in alcohol intake or preference between males and females; however it is hypothesized that sex differences may be observed in due course. To further investigate the underlying neural mechanisms in effect, rats were dissected at the end of the study and the tissue from a brain region involved in stress and alcohol dependence, the central nucleus of the amygdala (CeA), will be obtained by microdissection and analyzed via the quantitative PCR (qPCR) technique. The CeA and

blood will be examined for stress-related markers. These results align with those of our previous studies and may provide additional information about the changes in neural mechanisms caused by AUD.

Poster 05. Functional interaction between orexin/dynorphin transmission in the posterior paraventricular nucleus of the thalamus following alcohol dependence: mediation of alcohol-seeking behavior

Marielle Alexander, Sophia Bellitire, Francisco J. Flores-Ramirez

California State University San Marcos (CSUSM)

The Scripps Research Institute (TRSI)

Stress is a major contributor to the chronic nature of alcohol use disorder (AUD). Orexin (OX) neurons project to the paraventricular nucleus of the thalamus (PVT)-particularly the posterior part (pPVT)-a structure that plays a key role in stress regulation. The blockade of OX receptors in the pPVT was shown to prevent the stress-induced reinstatement of alcohol seeking in alcohol-dependent rats. Accumulating evidence indicates interactions among OX and dynorphin (DYN) in the pPVT, but unclear is the role of OX and DYN transmission in the pPVT in the stress-induced alcohol seeking during alcohol abstinence. Male Wistar rats were trained to self-administer 10% alcohol for 3 weeks. They then underwent 6 weeks of chronic intermittent alcohol vapor exposure to induce dependence. After 12 extinction sessions (~3 weeks of abstinence), the rats received intra-pPVT infusions of the dual OX receptor antagonist TCS1102 (15 µg/0.5 µL), the κ-opioid receptor (KOP) antagonist nor-binaltorphimine (norBNI; 4 µg/0.5 µL), or their combination, and they were assessed for their reactivity to the stress (footshock)-induced reinstatement of alcohol-seeking behavior. In dependent rats, TCS1102 and norBNI reduced reinstatement but, when co-administered, their individual effects were modulated. These findings reveal a functional interaction among OX receptor and KOP signaling in the pPVT that underlies relapse that is precipitated by stress post-dependence, underscoring the value of multi-target interventions to restore pPVT function and prevent relapse.

Poster 06. Characteristics Associated with Self-Reported Quality of Life in Autistic Children

Taylor Munro, Cody Certain, Allison Jobin

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

Background: Autism is a diverse neurodevelopmental condition. Person-centered approaches to care emphasize the incorporation of individuals' subjective experiences. A proposed measurement for intervention outcomes and monitoring is quality of life (QOL); however, QOL is typically reported for children by caregiver proxy. Self-reporting may improve assessment when feasible due to the subjective nature of life satisfaction. Methods: This study examined whether chronological age, cognitive ability, and adaptive communication were associated with the ability of autistic children to complete a self-report QOL measure and explored concordance between child self-report and parent proxy-report. Nine autistic children aged 5 to 10 years participated in this study. Descriptive and nonparametric analyses were completed due to the small sample size, with an emphasis on effect size. Results: Non-significant differences were observed, with moderate to large effect sizes. Children who were able to complete the self-report QOL measure displayed higher adaptive communication and cognitive ability compared to those unable to complete the measure. Discussion: The results of this study emphasize the importance of inclusive, person-centered assessment practices while drawing attention to the need for further research with larger samples and developing a child's perspective measurement of QOL.

Poster 07. Barriers and Facilitators to Inclusive Early Childhood Education: Insights from ECE Leaders

Katelin Wagner, Rachel Soliven, Brittney Abundis, Elizabeth Keck, Allison Jobin
California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

Introduction: Early childhood education (ECE) is essential for supporting the development of children with various backgrounds and abilities, yet many families of children with disabilities face barriers to accessing sustainable and inclusive childcare (Odom et al., 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2020). While early childhood educators and leaders play a critical role in shaping inclusive practices, research examining their perspectives on the factors that facilitate implementation, as well as systemic and practical challenges, remains limited. **Methods:** Eleven early childhood education leaders participated in semi-structured interviews exploring factors affecting inclusion in center-based programs. An initial coding framework was developed based on the research questions and preliminary transcript review, which was iteratively refined as patterns emerged. Transcripts are being coded by two researchers using NVivo, with discrepancies discussed and resolved through consensus during collaborative review. **Results:** Preliminary analyses identified themes related to funding, staff training, and family involvement as central influences on inclusive practices. This ongoing work is expected to yield an improved understanding of both barriers and supports, highlighting factors that inform program-level decision-making. **Conclusion/Discussion:** Insights from this study aim to guide future research and practical strategies for promoting inclusion in early childhood education. This research has the potential to expand access to supportive early learning environments for children with disabilities and their families.

Poster 08. Driven to the poles: Investigating the impact of political defensiveness on overclaiming and the relationship between social isolation, social media use, and political polarization

Justin C. Seber.
California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

Overclaiming is a phenomenon whereby individuals claim knowledge or familiarity with terms that do not exist. Overclaiming is conceptually related to intellectual humility, an individual's acknowledgement of the potential fallibility of their knowledge. Prior literature suggests that psychological defensiveness plays a role in reducing intellectually humble behavior via motivated reasoning. To our knowledge, there is no research directly linking defensiveness to overclaiming. The present study aims to clarify whether defensiveness may increase overclaiming tendencies. We also had a secondary objective of exploring the relationships between social isolation, social media use, and political radicalization. Prior qualitative research suggests that variables such as social isolation act as influencers in the political radicalization pathway, though there seems to be a gap in the literature when it comes to quantitative relationships between these variables. Participants were prompted to read either a contentious political news article which was designed to trigger defensiveness, or a neutral control article. Their defensiveness was then measured along with levels of intellectual humility and overclaiming. They then completed several measures involving social isolation, social media use, and political radicalization. Data collection is ongoing, though we hypothesize that increased defensiveness is related to lower levels of intellectual humility and higher levels of overclaiming. We also hypothesize that social isolation and social media use will be related to higher levels of political radicalization.

Poster 09. The Effects of Domestic Dog Cranial Morphology on Vestibular-Dependent Tasks

Monica Frazee
California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

My research proposal investigates how cranial morphology influences vestibular function across domestic dog breeds with the goal of informing veterinary understanding of breed-related vestibular disorders

Poster 10. Ethnic Identity and Ambivalent Sexism among College Students: Preliminary Findings

Yolotzin Aquino, Fernando Vasquez-Rendon, Sofia Pregardier, Carlos E. Rosas

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

Ethnic identity may contribute to sexism among young Hispanics/Latinos by reinforcing gender stereotypes. Ambivalent sexism, which comprises both hostile and benevolent sexism, may bolster traditional gender roles through fear and affection. Few studies, if any, however, have examined the relationship between ethnic identity and ambivalent sexism among college students of diverse backgrounds. The present study examined the association between ethnic identity and ambivalent sexism and whether this relationship varied by race/ethnicity among college students. Participants were 114 undergraduate students recruited through the CSUSM Human Participant Pool who completed an online survey assessing cultural values, sexual attitudes, and behaviors. These analyses used the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI), and demographic information. A multiple linear regression revealed that higher ethnic identity was significantly associated with lower levels of ambivalent sexism ($\beta = -0.23$, 95% CI: $-0.42, -0.04$, $p = .016$), after adjusting for gender, year in college, and race/ethnicity. Stratified analyses showed a significant effect in the same direction among Latinx students ($n = 61$; $\beta = -0.27$, 95% CI: $-0.54, -0.003$, $p = .048$) but not among non-Latinx students ($n = 53$; $\beta = -0.21$, 95% CI: $-0.52, 0.09$, $p = .171$). The formal interaction test was not significant ($p = .714$). These preliminary results suggest that a strong sense of ethnic identity may be associated with lower sexist attitudes among college students. This effect may be more pronounced among Latinx students. Further research with larger, more diverse samples is needed.

Poster 11. The Weight of Tradition: Religiosity and Sexual Guilt among College Students

Sophia Pregardier, Carlos E. Rosas

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

Emerging adulthood is a key stage when individuals begin to explore their sexuality more freely. During this stage, cultural, religious, family values and/or gender roles may influence young adults' sexual attitudes and behaviors. Prior research has found that religiosity is positively associated with sexual guilt—a feeling of shame and/or anxiety when sexual behavior conflicts with personal beliefs and values—among middle-aged and older adults. This study examined the association between religiosity and sexual guilt among college students. It also assessed whether race/ethnicity moderated this association. Participants were 130 CSUSM undergraduate students recruited through the university's Human Participant Pool. Participants completed an online survey. Specifically, participants completed the Revised Mosher Guilt Inventory, the Gender Role Beliefs Scale, and the Belief into Action Scale, and provided demographic information. After controlling for gender, race/ethnicity, household income, and year in college, a multiple linear regression analysis revealed a significant positive association between religiosity and sexual guilt, such that higher religiosity predicted more sexual guilt ($\beta = 0.36$, 95% CI $[0.19, 0.53]$, $p < .001$). This association was not moderated by race/ethnicity as predicted ($p > .05$). These findings suggest that higher religiosity is a robust predictor of increased sexual guilt among college students, independent of demographic factors. The lack of significant interaction may indicate this relationship remains consistent across diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Poster 12. Do (not) judge a book by it's cover? Children's selective learning from others

Amanda M. Flores, Skylabelle M. Jimenez, Brittney L. Abundis, Allison Jobin, Kimberly
California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

This study explored how autistic and typically developing children assess the reliability of social partners when deciding whom to trust. Specifically, we examined whether children valued face-traits or past-behavior more when judging the reliability of a source. Autistic children ages 3-10 ($n=17$) and typically developing children ages 3-6 ($n=35$) engaged in a sticker-search game with two puppet-like informants that hid stickers in colored boxes and provided advice to the participants about which box held the sticker. The participants then selected the box they believed had the sticker inside based on the puppet's advice through a series of four trials. Puppet 1 displayed untrustworthy face traits but had positive past behaviors (e.g., gave correct advice in the search task). Puppet 2 displayed trustworthy face traits but had negative past behaviors (e.g., gave wrong advice in the search task). Findings showed there were no significant differences between autistic ($M=2.59$) and typically developing children ($M=2.88$) in how often children trusted the trustworthy-acting source, $p=.47$. However, typically developing children systematically trusted the trustworthy-acting source at above chance levels, $p=.03$; whereas, autistic children's trust in the trustworthy-acting source did not differ from chance, $p=.10$. These findings suggest typically developing children systematically rely on past behavior over face-traits when making trust judgements; however, autistic children displayed less systematic use of past behavior, and more overall reliance of face traits when assessing trust. These findings indicate that autistic children may rely on different cues to assess trust and thus may benefit from different instruction when learning whom to trust. Future studies should assess autistic children with additional trust-based inferences to evaluate which inferences may be more salient to diverse populations.

Poster 13. Perceptions of Infidelity, Gender and Relationship Satisfaction

Karen Sanchez
California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

The study examined how relationship satisfaction and gender influence individuals' perception of emotional and physical infidelity. Participants completed a self-reported survey measuring attitude towards infidelity. A 2x2 ANOVA investigated the effect of level of satisfaction (low vs. high) and gender (female vs. male) on total infidelity perception scores. Results demonstrated a small but not significant main effect of relationship satisfaction, with individuals with self-reported higher satisfaction considering infidelity negatively than those with lower satisfaction. Gender had no impact on the connection between levels of satisfaction and perceptions of infidelity, neither the main effect of gender or the interaction between gender and satisfaction was significant. Overall, the results highlight relationship satisfaction as an important indicator of infidelity perceptions and provide an understanding of how individuals interpret behaviors that destroy romantic loyalty.

Poster 14. CULTIVANDO: A Culturally Congruent Intervention Addressing Intersectional Stigma and Mental Health Among Latina Transgender Women

Adriana Gonzalez Azucar, Joanna Balderas
California State University, Long Beach (CSULB)

Latina transgender women (LTGW) experience compounded mental health disparities driven by intersectional stigma across gender identity, racialization, immigration status, and socioeconomic marginalization. Despite elevated depression and mistrust in healthcare, culturally congruent interventions tailored to LTGW's remain

scarce. This pilot study assessed the feasibility, acceptability, and preliminary effects of CULTIVANDO, a six-session cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) group-based intervention developed through community-based participatory research (CBPR), grounded in minority stress theory, intersectionality, and gender minority resilience frameworks. Fourteen LTGWs in Los Angeles County participated in the non-randomized, pre–post study. Over three weeks, sessions included psychoeducation, group discussion, skill-building, and tailored CBT tools reflecting participants’ lived experiences. Quantitative data was collected via baseline and post-intervention surveys and analyzed using Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Tests. Exit interviews were thematically analyzed to explore participant experiences and perceived impacts. Results showed strong participation and completion, indicating feasibility and acceptability. Though Wilcoxon tests revealed no statistically significant changes, directional trends suggested improvements in medical mistrust, PTSD symptoms, and social support. Qualitative findings highlighted empowerment, increased community connectedness, and appreciation for the affirming group format. Participants emphasized CULTIVANDO’s distinctiveness from social spaces and valued opportunities to reflect, learn, and heal. This study supports the promise of community-grounded, trauma-informed group interventions tailored to LTGW, with findings highlighting strengthened coping, perceived support, and directions for future research.

Poster 15. Beyond Serotonin: A Neurobiological and Clinical Analysis of SSRI Action

Audrey Tu

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

While selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) are the most commonly prescribed psychiatric medication class, their effects extend far beyond increased serotonin availability. SSRIs act as indirect agonists by inhibiting the serotonin transporter (SERT), increasing 5-HT in the synaptic cleft. This acute accumulation activates presynaptic autoreceptors, paradoxically suppressing serotonergic signaling and delaying therapeutic effects. Only after these autoreceptors desensitize, sustaining elevated 5-HT release and downstream BDNF upregulation and hippocampal neuroplasticity, can therapeutic effects be fully realized. Chronic SSRI use produces significant behavioral and cognitive effects, including emotional blunting driven by elevated serotonin suppressing dopamine tone in the mesolimbic pathway and reducing reinforcement sensitivity. Animal models further demonstrate enhancements in hippocampal long-term potentiation and spatial memory, alongside gains in cognitive flexibility mediated by serotonergic activity in the orbitofrontal cortex. SSRIs demonstrate broad clinical efficacy across MDD, anxiety, OCD, and PTSD, though their use is associated with sexual dysfunction, gastrointestinal side effects, and elevated suicidality risk in patients under 25, particularly during early treatment. Understanding these mechanisms directly informs clinical practices- communicating the delayed therapeutic timeline to patients is crucial to prevent premature discontinuation, and SSRI-driven neuroplasticity synergizes with cognitive behavioral therapy in ways neither intervention achieves by itself. The neuroadaptations underlying SSRI action not only shape behavioral and cognitive outcomes but directly inform clinical decisions around treatment timelines and combination therapy, underscoring that a mechanistic understanding of SSRIs is essential to guide their effective and responsible use.

Poster 16. Sex Differences among NACHO Knockout Mice and Wildtype Mice in Exercise and Novel Object Recognition

Karina Marquez, Janna Sawah, Jasmyn Sorapuru, Zeshaun Hassan, Yasmine Sherafat

California State University San Marcos (CSUSM)

Exercise has been shown to be a beneficial method in enhancing cognitive functioning. Specifically, exercise was shown to significantly increase $\alpha 7$ nAChR of the hippocampus. Activating the $\alpha 7$ nAChR is shown to improve

cognition. The $\alpha 7$ nAChR has been shown to be dependent on the chaperone protein NACHO. Sex differences are found in both spatial memory and recognition memory in rodent models. Specifically, male mice were found to have a higher preference for exploring and remembering an object's location for long periods of time; whereas female mice developed a novelty preference and could not remember object locations. Female mice have also been shown to exhibit more forward running compared to males. For this study, we wanted to assess the sex differences in running behavior and object recognition among wildtype and NACHO KO mice. For this study, both groups engaged in three weeks of wheel running. After these three weeks, mice were assessed for recognition of memory using the Novel Object Recognition test. The results in this study revealed no sex differences among wildtype and NACHO KO mice for exercise and object recognition. Future studies should utilize non-exercising groups to have a better understanding of how exercising may impact the cognition of these groups and both sexes differently. Gaining a better understanding of how NACHO expression impacts running behavior and novel object recognition between males and females can lead to the development of treatment aimed at manipulating NACHO differently between sexes.

Poster 17. Configuration of Operant Conditioning Chambers

Zeshaun Hassan

California State University San Marcos (CSUSM)

Operant conditioning is a psychological learning process that explains how behavior is influenced through various forms of positive and negative reinforcement and punishment, emphasizing the response to consequences. Operant conditioning chambers, commonly known as Skinner boxes, are comprised of an outer insulated box and an internal mechanical cage, which is configured to house interchangeable stimuli apparatuses, such as levers, feeders, lights, and speakers. These boxes are used for behavioral testing by controlling external environmental conditions and allowing the various types of stimuli to be manipulated or applied in order to observe behavioral changes during the completion of attention, memory, and learning tasks. These chambers primarily use rodent subjects for experimentation and are programmable to combine multiple interactive modular components to conduct reward- and punishment-based behavioral analyses. The currently discussed chamber model is from the H-Series of The Habitest System, developed by Coulbourn Instruments, and features Graphic State 4 computer software, which is used to program the mechanical functions of the operant conditioning chambers. Although this model of chamber has discontinued manufacturing new units, changes to the boxes are more for aesthetic and ease of programming or software compatibility purposes. Since the types of operant conditioning tests remain the same, the technical support and the continued use of these chambers is still applicable in modern research.

Poster 18. Fundamentalism, Gender Roles, and Ambivalent Sexism among College Students: Preliminary Findings

Kelly Robertson, Sophia Pregardier, Carlos E. Rosas

California State University San Marcos (CSUSM)

Religious fundamentalism, characterized by strict adherence to traditional religious beliefs, has been linked to conservative gender role beliefs. Ambivalent sexism, which comprises both hostile and benevolent sexism, has also been related to more traditional gender norms. However, little, if any, research has examined whether sexist attitudes affect how strongly religious fundamentalism shapes how college students endorse gender roles. We examined the association between religious fundamentalism and gender role beliefs and whether this relationship was moderated by hostile and benevolent sexism. Participants were 130 undergraduate students recruited via the CSUSM Human Participant Pool. Participants completed an online survey assessing cultural

values and sexual attitudes and behaviors. We used the Religious Fundamentalism Scale, the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI), the Gender Role Beliefs Scale, and demographic information for these analyses. Four separate regression analyses showed that fundamentalism negatively predicted household/workplace gender role beliefs, and this relationship was strengthened by both hostile ($\beta = -.26$, 95% CI[-0.42, -0.11], $p = .001$) and benevolent ($\beta = -.19$, 95% CI[-0.32, -0.05], $p = .007$). For chivalry/protectionism beliefs, fundamentalism ($\beta = -.35$, 95% CI[-0.53, -0.17], $p < .001$) and benevolent sexism ($\beta = -.39$, 95% CI[-0.57, -0.20], $p < .001$) were both significant independent predictors, but no interaction was found. Our findings suggest that when young adults hold both fundamentalist beliefs and sexist attitudes, they are more likely to hold traditional views about women's roles at home and in the workplace. For beliefs about chivalry/protectionism, fundamentalism and benevolent sexism each independently predicted more traditional attitudes.

Poster 19. Sex differences of nicotine-induced reward and depressive-like symptoms in mice exposed to moderate exercise.

Jasmyn Sorapuru, Karina Marquez

California State University San Marcos (CSUSM)

Nicotine is a psychoactive drug that is highly addictive. In both human and rodent models, females exhibit higher withdrawal symptoms. Previous studies have also shown that female rodents display significantly more depressive-like symptoms. NACHRs may be implicated in antidepressant-like effects. The psychopharmacological mechanisms between these antidepressant-like behaviors and nAChR in female mice are not fully understood. Exercise has been shown to reduce nicotine seeking behaviors and depressive-like symptoms in rodent models. Utilizing NACHO KO model, nAChR subunit $\alpha 7$ is completely absent, as well as the expression of subunit $\alpha 4\beta 2$. Our work aims to define the possible sex differences of nicotine-induced reward and depressive-like symptoms in NACHO KO and Wildtype mice. NACHO WT or KO mice aged 28-32 days were placed under moderate exercise before moving onto their behavioral assessments on reward and depressive-like symptoms. The Forced Swim Test (FST), as a behavioral model used to assess depressive-like symptoms, yielded no significant differences between male or female WT mice, as well as WT or KO female mice. Following this procedure, nicotine-induced reward was assessed using a Conditioned Place Preference (CPP) apparatus, finding no significant differences in preference ratio between KO or WT females, male and female KO. There was a significant difference between male and female WT mice, with females expressing a higher preference ratio towards nicotine. These findings highlight the importance for NACHO expression for emphasizing sex differences in nicotine seeking behavior. Future studies should investigate how exercise impacts these sex differences by utilizing a non-exercising group.

Poster 20. Evaluating Selective Trust: Do 3 and 4-Year-Olds Verify Information from Unreliable Sources?

Mary Fuerte, Courtney Huggins, Kimberly Vanderbilt

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

The current study evaluates whether children between the ages of 3 and 4-years old will independently seek to verify an informant's testimony when provided with information about the informant's past untrustworthy behaviors. To test this, participants engaged in a sticker finding game with a puppet informant, who indicates which of the two cups contains a sticker. With this information participants pick which cup they believe the sticker is in across four trials. In the experimental condition, participants are informed that the puppet informant is "tricky" and "always says the wrong answer". Before the trials, experimenters inform the participants that the cups have no lids, and indicate to participants that they are able to look inside, showcasing peeking is an option.

Throughout the four trials, we record which cup the child picks, as well as whether they peeked into the cups before answering or not. To ensure participants were not picking at random a trusted measure was used to assess executive function. Preliminary analysis demonstrates that the participants ($n = 15$) chose the correct cup more often than chance $t(14) = 2.303$, $p = .037$, ($M = 2.867$, $SD = 1.457$). This study contributes to our understanding of how children evaluate trustworthiness, and provides further insight into the development of critical thinking and selective trust. Some real world implications of the study include whether children will trust an informant based on past actions, and if they will verify information when skeptical of an informant.

Poster 21. Machismo, Caballerismo, and Sexual Risk Tendencies across Acculturation among Latinx Students: Preliminary Findings

Kayla Sabo, Sophia Pregardier, Carlos E. Rosas

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

Sexual risk behaviors, such as unprotected sex, pose a significant public health concern. Latinx college students exhibit high rates of sexual risk behaviors compared to non-Hispanic students. Past research suggest that Latinx gender norms may influence sexual risk tendencies. Traditional machismo, represented by hypermasculinity, for example, may be associated with greater risk behaviors. Caballerismo, characterized as chivalry, may also be related to protective sexual behaviors. Acculturation may weaken traditional gender norms; however, current research is scarce. This study examined the association of machismo and caballerismo with sexual risk behaviors and assessed whether acculturation moderates these associations. Participants were 61 Latinx undergraduate students enrolled at California State University San Marcos, (5 males, 56 females). Students completed measures of sexual risk, acculturation, and gender norms. Separate linear regressions indicated that, after adjusting for year in college, higher levels of caballerismo were significantly associated with lower sexual risk behaviors ($\beta = -0.40$, 95% CI: $-0.64, -0.17$; $p = .001$), whereas machismo did not predict sexual risk behaviors ($\beta = -0.03$, 95% CI: $-0.30, 0.24$; $p = .841$). Analyses revealed a marginally significant interaction between caballerismo and acculturation ($p = .057$) on sexual risk behaviors. The negative association between caballerismo and risk behaviors was more pronounced among students with higher levels of acculturation compared to those with lower levels. Our findings suggest that both caballerismo and acculturation may serve as protective factors against sexual risk behaviors, highlighting the importance of Latinx gender attitudes in promoting safer sexual outcomes.

Poster 22. The Influence of Religious Socialization in Romantic Relationships

Jarryd Willis, Kelly Marquez, Nayeli Jimenez, Spencer Paine, AnnaBelle Adams, Kayali Mathias, Ziyang Huang, Lizzie Hernandez

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

Religious homogamy remains a central pattern in romantic relationships, with most couples sharing the same faith (Lehrer & Chiswick, 1993; Schwartz, 2013). However, Millennials and GenZ have been more likely to grow up in interfaith households due to globalization & rising cultural pluralism (Pew Research Center, 2021; Tipton, 2024). In this study, we investigated how individuals raised in interfaith and monofaith families differ in their romantic preferences and religious practices in relationships. Participants were 5322 undergraduates from UCSD ($n=4302$) and CSUSM ($n=1020$). Interreligious dating was more common among people from interfaith families (49.9%) than among those from monofaith families (34.5%). Consistent with previous research (Pew, 2020), people from interfaith families were more likely to share their mother's beliefs (57.1%) than their dad's (42.9%). Interestingly, those who shared mom's beliefs had lovers whose beliefs matched their mom's

(52.9%), those who shared dad's beliefs had lovers whose beliefs matched their dad's (56.6%), and those whose beliefs differed from both parents had lovers who did not share either parents' beliefs (73.1%). Moreover, those raised in monofaith households were more likely to say grace before meals with their lover, and marginally ($p = .077$) more likely to attend worship services with their lover. Lastly, those from interfaith households were more likely to have changed beliefs at least once (31.2%), usually around age 15. These results suggest that early exposure to religious diversity increases openness to interfaith dating, though there are still assortative preferences via parental alignment.

Poster 23. Reactions to Changing Population Distribution Trends

Katherine Rollins, Alex Huynh

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

Previous research has demonstrated that White U.S. Americans experience status threat when confronted with projections that they will become a minority group by 2050, with further research linking status threat perception to conservatism for this group. Related research has found evidence of a conservative shift among non-Hispanic/Latino minority group members when informed of Latino population growth. Since California's demographic shift has been more gradual than most of the U.S., the present study investigated whether Californians express less status threat related to demographic change than other Americans. Over 200 CSUSM students were randomly assigned to read one of two mock newspaper articles with accompanying pie charts: a demographic shift experimental condition showing that Latinos are the largest ethnic group in California, or a geographic mobility control condition showing the suburbs are the most popular destination for moving Californians. We predicted that Hispanic/Latino participants in the experimental condition would report lower average perceptions of group status threat than Hispanic/Latino participants in the control condition, while White participants in the experimental condition would report higher average perceptions of group status threat than White participants in the control condition. We also predicted that conservatism would be positively associated with group status threat for White and other non-Hispanic/Latino participants, especially in the experimental condition. Primary hypotheses will be tested with a 2 (participant ethnic identity: Hispanic/Latino or White) $\times$ 2 (condition: demographic shift or geographic mobility) between subjects ANOVA, but non-White and non-Hispanic/Latino participants were also recruited for exploratory analyses.

Poster 24. Breadwinners, Breakups, & Blended Socialization

AnnaBelle Adams, Spencer Paine, Nayeli Jimenez, Kelly Marquez, Jarryd Willis

California State University, San Marcos (CSUSM)

Introduction: Prior research suggests that deviations from traditional gendered earning patterns (i.e., wives earning more than their husbands) are associated with increased relationship strain and dissolution (Folke & Rickne, 2020; Jordan, 2022; Jurczyk et al., 2019; Munsch, 2015; Rogers & DeBoer, 2001; Sayer & Bianchi, 2000). Importantly, perceptions of parental relationships and divorce may shape individuals' own expectations and attitudes toward romantic relationships (Karney, 2007). In the present study, we investigated the influence of income dynamics and childhood family structure on adulthood relationship outcomes. Methods: Participants were 1020 undergraduate students from CSUSM. Data were collected via an online survey administered through Qualtrics. Results: We found a significant association between parents' income and parents' marital status, $\chi^2(4, N = 206) = 24.12, p < .001$. Specifically, individuals' parents were more likely to be married if their fathers had higher income (71.1%) or if their parents had equal incomes (66.7%), whereas those whose mother had the higher income were more likely to be from divorced households (54.5%). Discussion: The present findings

suggest that parental income dynamics continue to be associated with marital stability, consistent with prior research on gendered economic roles in relationships. Further research could examine whether the endorsement of egalitarian relationships promotes stability in households with nontraditional gender roles, particularly as women's advancement towards equality continues. Moreover, research should consider how and why divorce occurs more frequently among certain groups, and how exposure to parental dissolution influences children's future relationships.

Poster 25. Courtship Extension: Implications of Divorce & Parental Perception

AnnaBelle Adams, Jarryd Willis

California State University, San Marcos (CSU)

The study examines the demographic materials of a courtship and relationship process. Within this research this data shows adversities such as divorce and closeness can predict the nature of parental to participant relationship, as well as perceptions in romantic relationships. Parallels to patterns of income among participants' parents and their relationships was evaluated and analyzed. A prominent leading factor when considering divorce and its effects has been identified to be income disparity, as it sits at number one for Ludwig F. Lowenstein in heterosexual marriages where the females make more than their husbands in a year. Benjamin R. Karney implies that divorce and parent perceptions could influence individuals' personal relationship perceptions. A survey was made available through Qualtrics. Participants were at least 18 years old, could read and write in English, and were CSUSM students. A Chi-square test of independence showed the relationship between parental marital status, and which parent was the primary earner, $X^2(28, N = 200) = 58.67, p < .001$. Additionally, closeness to stepfathers ($M=5.19$) was significantly higher than to stepmothers ($M=3.27, p=.019$). Further research could reveal stronger connections to divorce and the gender disparities and expectations that take place in intimate relationships. Tailored investigations can be achieved for divorce and romantic perceptions on the matter of how and why they occur frequently among certain groups as well as how demographics affect their family's perception of relationships.

Poster 26. Creatures of habit - Decision making under pressure in the NBA

Claire Sheerin

University of San Diego (USD)

This study examines decision-making under pressure in NBA games during the final five seconds when the shooting team is either tied or trailing by one point. Over the past decades, the frequency of three-point attempts in the NBA has increased substantially, which can influence players to opt for a three-point shot even in situations where a less risky closer range two-point shot would still win the game. Using a Generalized Estimating Equations (GEE) analysis, we examined shot attempts across 26 NBA seasons (2000/1–2024/5), covering 4,078 plays. The results show that over time there has been an increase in attempting three-point shots in situations where a two-point shot would be sufficient to win the game. This finding suggests that even highly trained NBA players may rely on habitual patterns rather than purely rational decision-making in high-pressure situations. Interestingly, when a timeout is taken before the possession, the likelihood of attempting a three-point shot decreases significantly, suggesting that a brief pause for deliberation may help players override habitual decision-making. Furthermore, we find that the three-point strategy is counterproductive with a win rate of 47.7% vs. 54.7% for the two-point option.

STUDENT BLITZ TALKS

3:00PM-4:00PM

Talk 01. Perceived Stress, Physical Well-Being, and Medication Adherence Among Breast Cancer Survivors: A Multiple Regression Analysis with Multiple Imputation

Emily Hernandez Rincon, Kristen J. Wells

San Diego State University (SDSU)

Background: Medication adherence is critical to optimal breast cancer treatment outcomes. Psychological factors, including perceived stress, physical well-being, and adherence behavior. Thus, controlling for education level, using multiple imputation techniques to address missing data, the study explored whether baseline measures of perceived stress and physical well-being served as predictors of medication adherence by breast cancer survivors. Methods: The participants of the current study on medication adherence are breast cancer survivors (N = 36). The dependent variable was the percentage of days adhering to medication over eight months (percentMEMS8). They included baseline perceived stress (Stress_T1), baseline physical well-being (A_PWB_COMPLETE), and education level (EDU_RECODE) as a covariate. Multiple imputation method (mice package in R) was used for missing data with cancer stage (A_MR2) and treatment group (Group) as auxiliary variables. Cook's distance, leverage, and standardized residuals were used to check influential data points. Results: Baseline perceived stress was a significant predictor of medication adherence ($b = -0.03$, $p = .03$), such that the higher the stress, the lower the medication adherence. Physical well-being and education level were not significantly associated with adherence. The whole model accounted for adherence at approximately 19% ($R^2 = 0.19$; $p = .17$). Discussion: Findings suggest that perceived stress at baseline may be an important clinical target among breast cancer survivors to mitigate poor medication adherence. Future research should examine stress intervention strategies within the population to support long-term treatment adherence.

Talk 02. Mental Imagery: Updating and Attention Control

Mona Saii, Carrick Williams

California State University, San Marcos (CSUM)

Individual differences in the dynamic quality of mental imagery have attracted limited attention regarding cognitive mechanisms. Thus far, studies have suggested that attention control, the capacity to maintain goal-relevant representations while inhibiting goal-irrelevant ones, largely predicts individual differences in mental imagery. However, the mental rotation task, an established measure of the dynamic quality of mental imagery, may reflect a cognitive mechanism separable from attention control. A key finding from mental rotation is that reaction time to determine if pairs of figures represent the same shape increased linearly with every increase in the angular disparity between them, indicating that individuals likely manipulated their representation of the figure along iterative steps. This pattern of results closely resembles updating, the capacity to actively monitor and replace working memory content in a continuous manner. A Stroop task, 2-back task, and mental rotation task will be administered to 60 undergraduate participants to measure their attention control, updating, and mental imagery. To test the hypotheses that 1.) attention control will predict mental imagery and 2.) updating will predict mental imagery above and beyond attention control alone, a hierarchical linear regression with attention control placed into block 1 of the model and updating added into block 2 will be performed. A significant R^2 change from block 1 to block 2 would imply that updating contributes unique variance to mental

imagery. This study would suggest theoretically that updating and attention control support mental imagery but through separable yet complementary mechanisms.

Talk 03. The Effects of Prenatal CBD on Cognition and Emotion-Related Behavior

Maya Rusnak, Ilse Fleischer, Jennifer D. Thomas

University of California, San Diego (UCSD)

Consumption of cannabidiol (CBD), a non-psychoactive component of cannabis, has increased in popularity. Alarming, up to 20% of pregnant women report CBD use (Bhatia et al., 2024), with the perception that CBD is safe to use during pregnancy. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the effects of prenatal exposure to CBD on behavioral development. Pregnant rats were given 5, 10, or 25 mg/kg CBD daily during gestational days 5-20. CBD was delivered within a cookie dough 'edible'. On postnatal days (PD) 55-60, offspring were tested on a working memory version of the Morris Water Maze. Subjects were required to find a hidden escape platform in a tank of water for 2 daily sessions. Each session included a dyad of trials: (1) a training trial during which the platform was moved to a new location, and (2) a test trial to measure location memory. There were no effects of CBD exposure on test trials, suggesting that working memory was not impacted. However, during training trials, females exposed to 25 mg/kg/day CBD took longer latencies to find the platform, whereas females exposed to the 5 mg/kg/day CBD took shorter latencies. Thus, prenatal CBD impacted task performance in a dose-dependent manner, possibly by impacting anxiety. Indeed, females exposed to 25 mg/kg/day CBD spent more time in thigmotaxis, suggesting a heightened stress response. These results suggest that CBD use during pregnancy may pose risks to the developing fetus. Supported by CMCR P64-07-001.

Talk 04. Do Students Know What They Know? Growth Mindset and the Calibration of Research Methods Knowledge Among Undergraduate Child Development Students

Emily Love Buenviaje Dikitanan, Janice Phung

California State University San Marcos (CSUSM)

Accurate self-assessment is critical for effective learning, particularly in quantitatively demanding domains such as statistics. However, research on the Dunning–Kruger effect indicates that individuals with lower levels of competence often overestimate their abilities due to limitations in metacognitive insight. Growth mindset theory offers a potential explanation for variability in self-evaluation accuracy, as students who view ability as malleable may be more likely to engage in reflective learning and adjust confidence in response to feedback. The present study examines whether a Dunning–Kruger–type pattern emerges in students' research methods and statistics learning, and whether growth mindset moderates the association between objective knowledge and perceived self-competency. Participants were undergraduate psychology students from California State University San Marcos enrolled in an upper-division Child and Adolescent Development observation lab course ($n = 179$). Participants completed measures of perceived self-competency, domain-specific growth mindset, attitudes toward statistics and science, and an objective assessment of research methods knowledge. It is hypothesized that lower-performing students will report disproportionately higher perceived competence relative to performance. It is further hypothesized that growth mindset will moderate the relation between perceived competence and knowledge. Data will be analyzed using analysis of variance and moderation analysis conducted via sequential multiple regression. Findings may inform instructional practices by identifying factors that promote accurate self-evaluation, which is essential for developing students' ability to critically interpret research through applying methodological and statistical knowledge in real-world contexts.

Talk 05. Assessing the Role of NACHO in Cognitive Flexibility

Harrison McCamy

California State University San Marcos (CSUSM)

Cognitive flexibility requires successful adaptation to changing environmental conditions and is operationalized through reversal learning, which enables the characterization of operant learning through the discrimination between initial acquisition of response-outcome associations and effective updating. While cholinergic signaling mediates diverse aspects of cognitive function through nicotinic acetylcholine receptors (nAChRs), including learning and memory, the behavioral consequences of disrupting upstream regulators of nAChRs remain poorly defined. NACHO, a neuronal chaperone protein encoded by the TMEM35 gene, facilitates the functional expression of multiple major nAChR subtypes and is required for the formation of $\alpha 7$ nAChRs. Given that NACHO knockout (KO) mice have previously demonstrated impaired spatial learning and memory and $\alpha 7$ KO mice have exhibited deficits in operant food learning tasks as well as delayed procedural learning, the present study examined whether NACHO removal disrupts operant learning performance and cognitive flexibility in a reversal learning paradigm. Wildtype C57BL/6J and NACHO KO mice were trained to discriminate between two levers to receive a food reward over an acquisition period, and upon achieving stable responding criteria, the lever assignment was reversed. The NACHO KO mice exhibited delayed acquisition of the initial rule, earning fewer pellets and demonstrating lower rates of active lever pressing across the baseline and reversal sessions. Notably, despite no genotypic differences during the baseline session, NACHO KO mice had significantly fewer inactive lever presses during the reversal session. Taken together, our results suggest that NACHO-dependent nAChR expression supports rule acquisition, operant task performance, and perseverative responding.

PREVIOUS KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

- 1994 Mark Snyder, University of Minnesota
The Psychology of Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination
- 1995 Nancy Adler, University of California, San Francisco
Adolescent Decision Making and Contraception Use
- 1996 Philip Zimbardo, Stanford University
On the Psychology of Evil: How to Seduce Good Folks to do Bad Things
- 1997 Paul Ekman, University of California, San Francisco
Why Don't We Catch Liars?
- 1998 Larry Squire, University of California, San Diego
Memory and the Brain
- 1999 Elizabeth Loftus, University of Washington
Creating False Memories
- 2000 Marc Schuckit, University of California, San Diego
A 20-Year Prospective Study of Children of Alcoholics
- 2001 Robert Cialdini, Arizona State University
The Power of Persuasion
- 2002 Robert Rosenthal, University of California, Riverside
Interpersonal Expectations and Nonverbal Behavior
- 2003 Claude Steele, Stanford University
The Contingencies of Social Identity
- 2004 Ebbe Ebbeson, University of California, San Diego
Psychology and the Law
- 2005 Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Claremont Graduate University
The Creative Person and the Creative Context
- 2006 Diane Halpern, Claremont McKenna
Sex Differences in Cognitive Abilities
- 2007 Ross Parke, University of California, Riverside
Fatherhood: Remembering the Past and Imagining the Future
- 2008 Christina Maslach, University of California, Berkeley
Research Adventures in Job Burnout

- 2009 [Jean Twenge, San Diego State University](#)
Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled, and More Miserable than Ever Before
- 2010 [Michael Hogg, Claremont Graduate University](#)
The Trouble with Identity: How Uncertainty Breeds Extremism
- 2011 [Steven Hayes, University of Nevada, Reno](#)
The Importance of Psychological Flexibility
- 2012 [Paul Abramson, University of California, Los Angeles](#)
Smells Like Teen Spirit: The Conundrum of Kids, Sex, and the Law
- 2013 [Howard Friedman, University of California, Riverside](#)
Healthy Models and Pathways to Longevity
- 2014 [Sylvia Hurtado, University of California, Los Angeles](#)
Success in STEM: Recent Research at Different Stages of the Pipeline
- 2015 [Jonathan Schooler, University of California, Santa Barbara](#)
The Three "R"s of Mindwandering: Ramifications, Rewards, and Regulation
- 2017 [John P. Elder, San Diego State University](#)
Child Obesity and the Hispanic Health Paradox
- 2018 [John Wixted, University of California, San Diego](#)
Eyewitness Memory: A New Perspective
- 2019 [Bella DePaulo, University of California, Santa Barbara](#)
Happily Ever After: The Surprising Science of Single Life
- 2021 [Roxane Cohen Silver, University of California, Irvine](#)
Coping with Collective Traumas: Mass Violence, Infectious Disease, and COVID-19
- 2022 [Paul Piff, University of California, Irvine](#)
Privilege, Compassion, and Social Cohesion
- 2023 [Franki Kung, Purdue University](#)
"Robotic Asians": A Mechanistic Dehumanization Perspective of Bias against Asians in the U.S.
- 2024 [Larissa \(Lacie\) Barber, San Diego State University](#)
Under Pressure in the "Always On" Workplace – Managing E-Work Communications for Better Well-Being
- 2025 [Rémi Martin-Fardon, The Scripps Research Institute](#)
Repurposing Suvorexant, an Insomnia Medication, for the Treatment of Opioid Use Disorder