

Master of Clinical Psychology

Clinical Research Projects

Researchers from the School of Psychological Sciences and the Turner Institute for Brain and Mental Health are offering a range of clinical research projects in 2026 that may be suitable for PhD (Clinical Psychology) students applying for enrolment in 2026. A sample of particular projects or areas of research are listed below.

Researcher	Project Area
Alexandra Ure	<p>Project: Optimising outcomes via early treatment for young people with eating disorders</p> <p>First Episode Rapid Early Intervention for Eating Disorders (FREED) is an evidence-based model designed to prioritise early treatment for young people with an eating disorder of less than three years' duration. FREED has demonstrated improved clinical outcomes and cost-effectiveness across multiple sites in the UK's National Health Service. In Australia, however, implementation has been limited to a single service in Queensland, and its effectiveness within the Victorian context remains unexplored. Embedded within the Wellness and Recovery Centre at Monash Health, this project is an opportunity to work alongside clinicians to explore the implementation of a new model of care within a busy public health service.</p>
Alexandra Ure	<p>Project: Optimising transitions into school for children with acquired brain injuries</p> <p>The successful transition of children with acquired brain injuries into the school environment is critical for their academic success, emotional well-being, and overall life satisfaction. The Victorian Paediatric Rehabilitation Service (VPRS) supports children and adolescents with complex neurodevelopmental conditions and acquired brain injuries through specialist interdisciplinary care. VPRS at Monash Children's Hospital are working with families, educators and interdisciplinary clinical teams to co-design, develop, implement and evaluate a school readiness program to support children transition back into school. There is flexibility for a student to choose a project within this larger program of work which involves scoping the existing evidence, benchmarking existing practices within Australia, and implementing and evaluating a co-designed school readiness program for children and families.</p>
Alexandra Ure	<p>Project: Embracing Neurodivergence in Child and Adolescent Mental Health</p>

	<p>This project, based within the Early in Life Mental Health Service (ELMHS) at Monash Health, offers students the opportunity to investigate the prevalence of neurodivergence (e.g. autism, ADHD) across service streams within ELMHS. The impact of co-occurring neurodivergence on consumer journeys, care pathways and outcomes will be investigated. The project will explore co-occurring mental health presentations and how these intersect with neurodevelopmental needs, using a mixed-methods approach that includes service data analysis and lived experience consultation with children, young people, families, and clinicians.</p>
<p>Alex Wolkow</p>	<p>Project: Impact of sleep disturbances and other occupational demands on mental health in emergency service personnel and other high-risk occupations</p> <p>Emergency services and other high-risk industries are exposed to a unique set of occupational demands, including poor sleep, trauma and shift work. These demands can adversely impact the mental health and wellbeing of personnel. Our team aims to better understand and counteract the impact of occupational demands on mental health in emergency personnel and other high-risk occupations. Within this area of research, we are interested in examining how sleep and other factors emerge in new personnel and could be related to the development of mental health outcomes (e.g., PTSD, depression, anxiety, burnout). We are also interested in understanding the effectiveness of interventions and programs designed to enhance health and wellbeing in high-risk occupations. There are opportunities for PhD (both Clinical psychology PhD and Research-only PhD) and Masters candidates to join this area of research. Note this project area can be modified to align with the specific interests of the candidate.</p> <p>See our lab website for more information: https://www.monash.edu/medicine/psych/alex-wolkow-lab</p>
<p>Bei Bei</p>	<p>Project: Perinatal insomnia and mental health</p> <p>The Sleep Health in Perinatal Care (SHINE) study is a large National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) funded clinical trial, looking at real-world effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Insomnia during pregnancy and the postpartum periods, as well as the implementation potential of the intervention in the routine perinatal care (Royal Women’s Hospital and Monash Health). Within this trial, there will be ample scope for the candidate to develop research topics in the area of perinatal maternal/infant sleep, mental health, and cognitive/daytime functioning; health and wellbeing of new fathers; as well as clinical expertise in treating insomnia during this challenging time for new parents.</p>

	<p>Topics for doctoral/PhD/Masters projects are worked out collaboratively with the candidate to incorporate their research interests and career goals. Projects broadly relate to sleep and mental health, and improving sleep and wellbeing through cognitive-behavioural interventions. Please see our website to find out more about the team https://www.monash.edu/turner-institute/bei-bei-lab</p>
<p>Beth Johnson</p>	<p>Project: Best practice trauma-informed assessment for transforming outcomes for young people with complex mental health presentations</p> <p>Join our team in investigating how comprehensive, trauma-informed assessment can transform outcomes for young people with complex mental health presentations. This research project examines real-world clinical data from the Endeavour Neurodevelopmental Psychiatry Team, a multidisciplinary service including psychiatrists, neuropsychologists, clinical psychologists, speech therapists, and occupational therapists. Our team conduct comprehensive assessments across 4 – 5 sessions for clients who experience significant mental health conditions and cooccurring neurodivergence, complex medical or neurological issues, family of origin complexities, and in addition many have experienced significant adverse childhood events.</p> <p>This is an opportunity to contribute to meaningful research that directly impacts clinical practice while gaining hands-on experience with data analysis, clinical research methods, and evidence-based service improvement. We are seeking collaborative students interested in mental health, neurodevelopment, or health services research who want to help shape how we support some of our most vulnerable young people. If you're passionate about translating research into better patient care, we would love to discuss how this project aligns with your interests and career goals.</p>
<p>Beth Johnson</p>	<p>Project: Creating a transdiagnostic model of neurodevelopment and mental health</p> <p>Neurodevelopmental conditions, like autism and ADHD, frequently co-occur with mental health conditions in children and young people. Families, young people, educators, clinicians, and allied health professionals have consistently reported that existing diagnostic systems do not capture the full range of children’s strengths and support needs.</p> <p>This project will focus on co-designing new ways to assess co-occurring neurodevelopment and mental health that moves beyond current diagnostic categories. This project will work closely with consumers and professionals to create a holistic model of neurodevelopment and mental health by combining standardised quantitative (parent- and</p>

	<p>teacher-reported measures, clinical information) and qualitative insights from young people, families and professionals whose complex or nuanced presentations mean that traditional assessments are not appropriate. The goal is to develop a transdiagnostic framework that separates symptom presentation (e.g., attention differences, social communication, emotional regulation) from a young person's support needs across family, education, medical, allied health, and disability contexts to create flexible, holistic support young people's needs.</p>
<p>David Mosely</p>	<p>Project: Expanding the Developmental Kit: Co-Designing and Evaluating Parent-Child Psychological Interventions</p> <p>This collaborative project running in the Turner Clinics Child Youth and Family Clinic, offers Clinical PhD and Master's students the opportunity to contribute to the expansion of the Developmental Kit, a dyadic, transdiagnostic intervention designed to support children's development, mental health, and wellbeing. The Kit currently includes the My Emotions intervention, which supports children and parents to build emotional awareness and regulation, and will be expanded to include new resources targeting additional developmental and mental health domains. Opportunities include active co-design with children, parents, and clinicians to develop new intervention materials, and will contribute to the evaluation of these resources through feasibility, acceptability, and pilot effectiveness studies. Projects will focus on developing new therapeutic intervention materials and better understanding attachment and parent-child relationship processes in therapeutic work. The project will be collaboratively shaped with the candidate to align with their goals and interests, and will provide opportunities to build skills in intervention design, co-production, and applied clinical research, advancing innovative family-centred approaches to child mental health care.</p>
<p>David Moseley</p>	<p>Project: Mindful Parenting for Neurodivergence</p> <p>The Mindful Parenting for Neurodivergence program is a tailored, strengths-based intervention designed to support parents of children with autism, ADHD, and intellectual disabilities. Delivered in four online modules, the program aims to enhance parental wellbeing by fostering mindfulness, emotional regulation, and parent self-compassion. With project supervision from clinical and clinical neuropsychologists, Master's and PhD projects will focus on evaluating feasibility, acceptability, and effectiveness in supporting parents, improving family functioning, and promoting neurodiversity-affirming care, while also offering students valuable experience in intervention development, clinical evaluation, and multidisciplinary collaboration. At the Master's level, the project could involve piloting the four-module program with parents using a pre-post evaluation design, including psychometric measures of parental stress, mindfulness, and perceived competence, alongside qualitative feedback to refine the program. At the PhD level,</p>

	<p>the project could extend on this foundation by incorporating a systematic review of mindful parenting interventions, co-design of enhanced resources with parents and clinicians, and a randomised controlled trial to evaluate outcomes for parents and children. A co-designed peer mentoring model where experienced parents support others could also be explored. These projects will be developed collaboratively with the candidate to align with their research interests and career goals, and offer the opportunity to make a substantial contribution to family-centred, neurodiversity-affirming approaches to child and family mental health. This is a collaborative project between the Turner Clinics Child Youth and Family Clinic and the Monash University Centre for Consciousness and Contemplative Science (M3CS).</p>
<p>David Moseley</p>	<p>Project: Understanding and Improving Inpatient Care for Children with Complex Co-Occurring Mental Health and Neurodevelopmental Presentations</p> <p>This PhD or Masters project, offered in collaboration with the statewide Oasis Neuropsychiatry Unit at Monash Health, offers Clinical Psychology and Clinical Neuropsychology candidates the opportunity to advance knowledge and practice for children with highly complex presentations. The project could include a systematic review of international evidence on inpatient mental health care for children with neurodevelopmental disorders, followed by the development of a revised evaluation protocol grounded in empirical literature and co-designed with clinicians, children, and families. Opportunities include to implement this protocol within the Oasis Unit and conduct a pilot evaluation, examining key domains including transdiagnostic presentations, the role of trauma and adversity in children’s lives, and assessment and treatment models and outcomes. This project will be developed collaboratively with the candidate to align with their research interests and career goals, offering opportunities to build expertise in systematic review, co-design, applied clinical research, and service evaluation. The project will contribute to new knowledge about complex inpatient care, generate evidence to inform practice and policy, and play a role in shaping more effective and responsive services for children with neurodevelopmental disorders and mental health difficulties. This is a collaborative project between the Turner Clinics Child Youth and Family Clinic and the Monash Health Early in Life Mental Health Service (ELMHS) - Dr Belinda Gargaro and collaborators.</p>
<p>Emma Morton</p>	<p>Project 1: Online risky behaviours and risk mitigation strategies in bipolar disorder</p> <p>Excessive involvement in risky activities with a high likelihood of negative consequences is a defining feature of manic episodes in bipolar disorder, and the internet facilitates 24/7 access to platforms and services that can trigger or enable risky behaviours. For example,</p>

	<p>disinhibition and hypersexuality can be expressed over social media, online dating, or online pornography use, while overspending and financial risk-taking can be facilitated by online shopping, gambling, usury loans, and scams. Research is required to understand the prevalence and impacts of risky behaviours online, as well as the strategies employed by people with bipolar disorder to safely and effectively use digital technologies. Students will have the opportunity to design studies to address this understudied topic, such as surveys and qualitative interviews with consumers, carers, and healthcare providers, development and evaluation of web-based resources, and explorations of predictors of risky behaviours.</p>
<p>Emma Morton</p>	<p>Project 2: The experience and impacts of self-compassion in bipolar disorder</p> <p>Emerging evidence suggests that self-compassion is negatively impacted for people who live with bipolar disorder, a condition that is often associated with low self-esteem, harsh self-criticism, perfectionism, self-worth that is contingent on achieving lofty goals, internalised stigma and disrupted identity formation. Compassion-focused interventions may help address these challenges, but there is currently insufficient evidence to support the potential benefits, mechanisms, and challenges of self-compassion in this population. To inform future intervention-based research, this project offers a student scope to design a project to advance understanding of self-compassion in bipolar disorder, including systematic reviews, qualitative interviews, self-report surveys, psychometric studies, and experimental research.</p>
<p>Emma Morton</p>	<p>Project 3: Understanding and challenging stigma in serious mental health conditions</p> <p>People with a serious mental health condition (e.g., treatment resistant depression, bipolar disorder, psychosis-spectrum conditions) encounter multiple types of stigma, including public stigma, structural stigma, and self-stigma. Stigma is associated with negative impacts to treatment access and wellbeing, yet limited research has been conducted to explore predictors and impacts of different types of stigma across diverse populations, how stigmatising beliefs are developed and internalized, and interventions to address stigmatising beliefs and behaviours at different levels (i.e., individual/group interventions, public health campaigns, healthcare professional education). Students are invited to design a project to address understudied aspects of stigma in serious mental health, including via surveys, qualitative interviews, and experimental research.</p>
<p>Emma Morton</p>	<p>Project 4: Closing the knowledge to practice gap in mental health care - Implementation focused research</p>

	<p>Despite advances in our knowledge of clinical psychology phenomena and practice, it still takes an average of 17 years for new research findings to be translated into clinical practice. The tightly controlled environment of the randomised controlled trial can differ enormously from the complex reality of clinical services, and real world insights regarding barriers and facilitators to change are needed to streamline the implementation of research findings in practice. Various opportunities are available to partner with clinical services to help leverage research findings to inform the development of novel interventions, to evaluate current practice from the perspectives of consumers and clinicians, and to study the implementation of new initiatives. Other opportunities exist for students to design projects to explore how therapist variables, client characteristics, organizational variables, and training interventions influence therapist behaviour and intentions to implement evidence-based practices. This project would be ideally suited to a trainee that seeks to embody the scientist-practitioner model in their future work, and who is keen to develop collaborative relationships with healthcare providers in diverse settings. Co-supervision arrangements will depend on the student's project.</p>
<p>Emma Morton</p>	<p>Project 5: Sexual health and wellbeing in serious mental health conditions</p> <p>The symptoms of serious mental health conditions (i.e., treatment-resistant depression, bipolar disorder, and psychosis spectrum conditions), and the medications used to treat them, can have significant consequences for a person's sexual health and wellbeing. For example, depression can lower interest in sexual activities, while mania can lead to increased, and potentially risky, sexual behavior. However, healthcare professionals rarely inquire about sexual health due to feelings of discomfort, or the perception that issues of sexual health are not relevant to mental health care. Students will have the opportunity to design studies to address this understudied topic, such as surveys and qualitative interviews with consumers and healthcare providers, the development and evaluation of evidence-based resources or screening tools to guide clinical practice, and exploration of determinants of behavioural change.</p>
<p>Jai Carmichael</p>	<p>Project: Addressing suicidality and self-harm after acquired brain injury: Co-developing support resources</p> <p>People with acquired brain injury (ABI), such as from traumatic brain injury or stroke, are at 2 to 4 times higher risk of attempting and dying by suicide compared to the general population. While non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) often co-occurs with suicidality in non-ABI populations, no research to date has explored NSSI in individuals with ABI, leaving a major gap in understanding and clinical practice.</p>

	<p>This innovative and fully funded project aims to co-develop practical resources (e.g., training, psychoeducational content) to support clinicians, families, and individuals with ABI in assessing and responding to suicidality and NSSI. It will use a multi-method approach—scoping surveys, qualitative interviews, and co-design sessions—involving ABI clinical scientists, suicide prevention experts, and people with lived experience.</p> <p>Funded by a School of Psychological Sciences Strategic Grant and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, this project offers the chance to contribute to world-first research with strong academic, clinical, and lived experience partnerships.</p>
<p>Joshua Wiley</p>	<p>Project: SleepSteps</p> <p>Summary: Stepped care trial of cognitive behavioral sleep interventions for people with cancer.</p> <p>Opportunities: direct patient work, intervention design & delivery, qualitative interviews, work with lived experience experts, collaborate with clinical health partners (hospitals & community).</p> <p>Measures: variety of measures incl sleep symptoms and behaviors, quality of life, mental health, cognitive function, qualitative feedback. \$8,000/yr topup scholarship available.</p>
<p>Joshua Wiley</p>	<p>Project: Neurocognitive prehabilitation</p> <p>Summary: Brain "fog" and memory problems are common after cancer and are exacerbated by surgery. In this project, we work with the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre Psychology and Surgery departments to explore neurocognitive prehabilitation options before surgery.</p> <p>Opportunities: direct patient work, direct work with clinicians (psychology and medical), possible intervention design & delivery, qualitative interviews, work with lived experience experts, possible observational surveys.</p> <p>Measures: subjective cognitive function, brief objective function measures, sleep, feasibility & acceptability & satisfaction.</p>
<p>Joshua Wiley</p>	<p>Project: Cancer's Financial Toxicity</p> <p>The psychosocial impacts of financial toxicity after cancer are not clearly documented. This project is focused on understanding financial toxicity's impacts on psychological and social factors and potential solutions and supports (e.g., what options healthcare professionals see, what options would people with cancer like to see health services provide).</p> <p>Opportunities: direct contact with patients, direct contact with health professionals, work with the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre.</p> <p>Measures: distress & mental health, social & relationship factors, neurocognitive functioning, qualitative measures, sleep</p>

<p>Joshua Wiley</p>	<p>Project: Cancer Daily Experiences</p> <p>This project would use daily diary / ecological momentary assessment to understand the real time experiences of people after cancer. There is broad scope to plan the exact measures included and questions asked. Opportunities: patient recruitment, real time understanding, training in statistical analysis, remote delivery offers research flexibility. Measures: sleep, physical activity, fatigue, pain, emotions, emotion regulation, mental health, brief daily cognitive function measures.</p>
<p>Joshua Wiley</p>	<p>Project: Trauma-Informed Cancer Care</p> <p>People with cancer commonly have experienced trauma from their life and the experience of cancer itself can be traumatic. However, trauma informed care is not route in health services. This project would seek to scope the current state of trauma-informed cancer care, idenetify barriers and facilitators to its use, and design training and education materials to increase the adoption of trauma-informed care in routine practice. Opportunities: direct patient engagement, direct clinician engagement, systematic and scoping reviews, qualitative interviews, design and evaluate materials to increase use of trauma-informed care; deep engagement with Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre's psychology department. Measures: various related to assessing use of, attitudes towards, facilitators and barriers of trauma informed care.</p>
<p>Kate Gould</p>	<p>Project: Enhancing self-advocacy and managing risks in complex interpersonal relationships after acquired brain injury</p> <p>People with acquired brain injury (ABI) often experience cognitive and psychosocial challenges that make navigating intimate and professional relationships difficult. Despite intimate relationships being a core contributor to quality of life, people with ABI often struggle with positive and safe dating. They can also find it difficult to navigate professional boundaries with support staff. As a result, vulnerability to exploitation, unsafe practices, and relational breakdowns may be prevalent. This project aims to strengthen relational wellbeing and safety by co-designing practical resources with people with lived experience of ABI and their support workers.</p> <p>The project will involve qualitative interviews with individuals with ABI and support staff to explore needs, risks, and strategies relating to dating and professional support relationships. Insights will then inform a co-design process involving focus groups to develop accessible, evidence-based resources, and co-design evaluation methodology. Students will collaborate with co-design contributors with ABI and partnering disability organisations. The project is suitable for a PhD student in either Clinical Neuropsychology or Clinical Psychology.</p>

<p>Laura Jobson</p>	<p>Project: Service Evaluation of Approaches to Mental Health at Many Coloured Sky</p> <p>This project will be a service evaluation in partnership with Many Coloured Sky. It will involve evaluating mental health approaches and programs provided by Many Coloured Sky, an organisation that supports LGBTIQ+ organisations with capacity building, planning and project development, and empowers those at the margins and intersections of LGBTIQ+ communities to participate fully and equally.</p>
<p>Louisa Selvadurai</p>	<p>Project: Neuropsychiatry of degenerative cerebellar ataxias</p> <p>Degenerative cerebellar ataxias are complex and heterogeneous diseases defined by a range of debilitating motor and non-motor symptoms. These include neuropsychiatric symptoms, such as emotional dysregulation and social difficulties, increasingly recognised as common and functionally impactful disease features. There is also an open question as to whether the current knowledge of neuropsychiatric symptoms in ataxias is being effectively translated into the clinic.</p> <p>The wider project includes the following aims: 1) investigate the phenomenology of neuropsychiatric dysfunction through qualitative interviews of people with ataxia and their close others, 2) investigate how neuropsychiatric symptoms are evaluated and addressed in current clinical practice for ataxias, 3) understand the types of neuropsychiatric symptoms experienced and how they manifest in daily life, 4) investigate the impact of neuropsychiatric symptoms on family and carer relationships, 5) track neuropsychiatric symptoms over time, 6) co-design, implement, and evaluate an intervention for neuropsychiatric symptoms in ataxias.</p> <p>This research project will be co-supervised by Dr Louisa Selvadurai (psychologist, clinical neuropsychology registrar) and Associate Professor Ian Harding (neuroscientist). Students will have the opportunity to work with local and international clinical and research collaborators, and be embedded in the Ataxia Center of Excellence at the Royal Victorian Eye & Ear Hospital.</p>
<p>Marie Yap</p>	<p>Project 1: Co-design and evaluation of a coach-supported digital parenting intervention to support parents to respond to school avoidance in primary-school-aged children</p> <p>School avoidance (also known as school can't or school refusal) has become a global concern especially since the COVID-19 pandemic. A child with school avoidance experiences high levels of distress about attending and staying at school, and ends up missing school despite their parents' efforts to send them to school. Despite parents' central role in supporting children with these challenges, there is currently no</p>

	<p>evidence-based guidance for parents of primary-school-aged children. This project will co-design such a program with parents and education-sector professionals, and evaluate its short-term effects on parental self-efficacy and child school attendance.</p>
Marie Yap	<p>Project 2: Optimising the engagement and effects of digital parenting interventions for child and youth mental health</p> <p>Our team conducts research to optimise the engagement and effects of digital parenting interventions for child and youth mental health. We have developed a range of such interventions and established their benefits for parents and young people. However, such interventions still fail to reach under-served subgroups of the population locally (e.g. lower socioeconomic backgrounds, migrant/refugee status, families living with family adversities, fathers, families of children with specific needs such as neurodiversity, learning disabilities etc) and globally (e.g. lower and middle income countries). Candidates who are keen to undertake research within this topic are welcome to contact me to discuss their specific interests and scope a potential research project.</p>
Marie Yap	<p>Project 3: Evaluating the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of a coach-supported digital parenting intervention for parents of adolescents with emotionally-based school avoidance</p> <p>Our team has received funding to conduct a randomised controlled trial of the Partners in Parenting Plus - Education (PiP-Ed+) intervention for parents of adolescents with emotionally-based school avoidance (also known as 'school refusal' or 'school can't'). This trial will evaluate the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of PiP-Ed+ compared to a waitlist-control group. As part of this broader project, there are opportunities for PhD and Master's student research projects to explore the mechanisms underlying the intervention effectiveness, the active ingredients underlying an effective clinician-coached digital intervention, cost-effectiveness evaluation of such an intervention, etc. Students who are interested in this area or type of research are encouraged to contact me to discuss specific aspects of interest.</p>
Martin Sellbom	<p>Project 1: Hierarchical Taxonomy of Psychopathology (HiTOP): Assessment, Mechanisms and Clinical Utility</p> <p>The Hierarchical Taxonomy of Psychopathology (HiTOP) is a new framework that considers mental disorders from a dimensional and hierarchical perspective. It is designed to address many of the limitations of the traditional categorical mental disorder system and allow for more accurate and useful formulations of individual's presenting symptoms and problems. The HiTOP framework is quite new and many important questions remain unanswered. My lab is interested in addressing important questions about the optimal assessment of the HiTOP framework, improving our understanding of underlying neuropsychological and environmental mechanisms that</p>

	<p>underlie HiTOP spectra, and understanding the feasibility and predictive utility of this framework in clinical implementation. Research projects within this context can be discussed and shaped based on prospective students' specific interests.</p>
Martin Sellbom	<p>Project 2: Clinical Utility of Dimensional Models of Personality Disorder</p> <p>Current diagnostic manuals (DSM-5, ICD-11) have begun to move away from traditional personality disorders (e.g. Borderline, Antisocial, Narcissistic) and instead understand them from the perspective of functional impairment in relation to self and others coupled with description using dimensional personality trait profiles. Although research has established that dimensional operationalizations have good psychometric properties, we need to know more about clinical utility. Specifically, we need to better understand how using dimensional models improve the care of patients, how they can be better implemented into mainstream practice, reduce stigma regarding the term "personality disorder", and be generally more acceptable by affected communities. Research projects within this context can be discussed and shaped based on prospective students' specific interests.</p>
Martin Sellbom	<p>Project 3: Integration of Personality and Psychopathology</p> <p>There is considerable evidence that the structure of common mental disorders is hierarchical in nature. Research in behaviour genetics, for instance, has indicated that a lot of the shared commonalities among groups of mental disorders (e.g. internalising, externalising) can be largely attributed to genetic vulnerabilities that translate into brain (dys)functions. Interestingly, similar brain functions can also be linked to individual differences in personality traits (e.g. neuroticism, disinhibition). My lab seeks to further understand what mechanisms are shared between personality traits and mental disorders. Do they represent manifestations of the same thing (e.g. is mental disorder a reflection of dysfunctional personality under stressful circumstances?) Are personality traits risk factors for developing mental health problems? Research projects within this context can be discussed and shaped based on prospective students' specific interests.</p>
Melinda Jackson	<p>Project 1: Care2Sleep: Co-designing a digital sleep intervention for community-dwelling people with cognitive impairment and their care partner</p> <p>Sleep disturbances are common in individuals with cognitive decline and their care partners. Despite this, effective and accessible treatments of sleep disturbances remain an unsolved challenge. The Care2Sleep project intends to design and implement a digital sleep program to improve access to a preventive sleep health intervention that will delay and reduce the severity of dementia. The aim is to transform an existing sleep health intervention, the Better Sleep for</p>

	<p>Wellbeing program, into a digital offering, thus providing a scalable, accessible, evidence-based sleep intervention that provides cost-effective ongoing support to not only people with cognitive impairment, but their carers. To achieve this, the Care2Sleep project will involve: 1) qualitative co-design workshops drawing on the lived-experiences of key community groups and stakeholders to design the program and sleep coaching model, and 2) a hybrid effectiveness-implementation RCT to demonstrate community implementation and effectiveness of the Care2Sleep program. The project will involve both qualitative and quantitative research methods and working with clinical populations.</p>
<p>Melinda Jackson</p>	<p>Project 2: MindMInC: Investigating the efficacy and feasibility of an online mindfulness-based intervention for insomnia in older adults</p> <p>Sleep difficulties are highly prevalent in older adults but often go untreated as they are considered a sign of normal ageing. Sleep difficulties are also linked to increased feelings of stress, anxiety, depression and issues with memory and concentration. For many individuals, improving sleep can enhance their wellbeing. However, not many seek these alternative treatments due to barriers like time constraints, geographical access, long waitlists and limited availability. The MindMInC study aims to investigate the feasibility of an online mindfulness-based intervention for insomnia for older adults with sleep difficulties compared to a sleep hygiene program. This will help to understand whether such interventions are a helpful way to enhance wellbeing and overcome barriers to accessing sleep treatments for older adults.</p>
<p>Nicole Rinehart</p>	<p>Project: AllPlay Footy</p> <p>Children with neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) often experience clinical and social barriers to inclusion in their daily lives. The Child and Family Program revolves around a suite of clinical and community programs that aim to improve developmental outcomes. The program is a partnership model funded by industry, government and philanthropy. For example: AllPlay Learn, Footy, Dance, Joy of Moving, Sleeping Sound, and the Developmental Kit. Research Methodology: Implementation research, randomised control trials, and clinical neuroscience and developmental neuropsychology. https://www.monash.edu/medicine/psych/research/neurodevelopment/allplay-child-and-family-program</p>
<p>Nicole Rinehart</p>	<p>Project: AllPlay Learn</p> <p>Children with neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) often experience clinical and social barriers to inclusion in their daily lives. The Child and Family Program revolves around a suite of clinical and community programs</p>

	<p>that aim to improve developmental outcomes. The program is a partnership model funded by industry, government and philanthropy. For example: AllPlay Learn, Footy, Dance, Joy of Moving, Sleeping Sound, and the Developmental Kit. Research Methodology: Implementation research, randomised control trials, and clinical neuroscience and developmental neuropsychology. https://www.monash.edu/medicine/psych/research/neurodevelopment/allplay-child-and-family-program</p>
<p>Nicole Rinehart</p>	<p>Project: Joy of Moving</p> <p>Children with neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) often experience clinical and social barriers to inclusion in their daily lives. The Child and Family Program revolves around a suite of clinical and community programs that aim to improve developmental outcomes. The program is a partnership model funded by industry, government and philanthropy. For example: AllPlay Learn, Footy, Dance, Joy of Moving, Sleeping Sound, and the Developmental Kit. Research Methodology: Implementation research, randomised control trials, and clinical neuroscience and developmental neuropsychology. https://www.monash.edu/medicine/psych/research/neurodevelopment/allplay-child-and-family-program</p>
<p>Paul Kremer</p>	<p>Project 1: Validating the Expanded MSE (eMSE): A Clinical Study Incorporating Social & Environmental Determinants</p> <p>The Expanded Mental State Examination (eMSE; Kremer, 2025) is a novel clinical tool that extends the traditional Mental State Examination by incorporating environmental and social determinants of mental health, such as housing stability, social supports, and exposure to stressors. While conceptually robust, the eMSE has not yet been validated in real-world clinical settings. This project aims to evaluate the feasibility, reliability, and validity of the eMSE across diverse psychiatric services.</p> <p>Using a mixed-methods design, clinicians will administer both the standard MSE and the eMSE to adult patients across diagnostic groups, with assessments randomised in order of administration. Quantitative analysis will examine test–retest reliability, convergent validity with established measures of social and environmental stressors, and the incremental value of eMSE domains in clinical decision-making. Qualitative feedback from clinicians and patients will be gathered to assess usability, acceptability, and perceived relevance.</p> <p>The findings will establish whether integrating social and environmental context into routine assessment enhances clinical understanding, improves treatment planning, and strengthens person-centred care. If successful, this study will provide the empirical foundation for broader</p>

	<p>adoption of the eMSE, positioning it as a next-generation standard for comprehensive psychiatric assessment.</p>
<p>Paul Kramer</p>	<p>Project 2: Clinician Acceptability and Training in the Expanded Mental State Examination (eMSE): A Feasibility Study</p> <p>The Expanded Mental State Examination (eMSE; Kremer, 2025) is an innovative extension of the traditional Mental State Examination, designed to incorporate environmental and social determinants of mental health into routine clinical practice. Before widespread adoption can occur, it is essential to understand how clinicians perceive the eMSE, how easily they can learn to use it, and what barriers or facilitators influence its uptake.</p> <p>This project will examine clinician acceptability and training needs related to the eMSE. A brief training module will be delivered to mental health clinicians across selected services. Participants will complete pre- and post-training surveys to assess confidence, perceived relevance, and ease of use. In addition, short semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a subset of participants to gather deeper insights into barriers, facilitators, and perceived clinical utility.</p> <p>The student will take a lead role in developing and delivering training, administering surveys, and conducting qualitative interviews. Data analysis will involve both quantitative methods (descriptive and inferential statistics) and qualitative thematic analysis.</p> <p>Findings from this study will inform strategies for clinician training and support, contributing to the broader validation and implementation of the eMSE as a next-generation clinical assessment tool.</p>
<p>Sally Richmond</p>	<p>Project: Developing interventions for families on a waitlist for psychological assessment: merging mental health and neurodevelopment.</p> <p>The Paediatric Assessment Clinic provides comprehensive and family-focused neurodevelopmental, cognitive, and mental health assessments to school-aged children experiencing complex challenges. While the bulk of our referrals typically relate to queries around autism, ADHD, intellectual developmental disorder, and/or a specific learning disorder, the clinic sees many children and families with varied presentations, including those with neurological and medical conditions.</p> <p>Perhaps most importantly is that while many services in Australia and internationally remain siloed, our clinic prides itself on being a 'dual focused' neurodevelopment and mental health assessment service.</p>

	<p>This means that our expertise does not lie in either neurodevelopment or mental health, but uniquely, in both.</p> <p>Families spend a significant amount of time waiting for a formal assessment and tend to only receive support after the assessment has been completed. In the meantime however, families still need help.</p> <p>This project aims to provide help to these families by co-designing interventions, supports and/or resources that can be offered to them in the waitlist period between their initial intake and their child's formal assessment. Excitingly, given the clinic's dual focus and novel service model, waitlist supports will be neurodevelopmentally and psychologically centred, and will be informed by families' needs.</p> <p>This project sits at the intersection of clinical psychology and neuropsychology, and will provide an opportunity to work directly with families. It is well-suited for a clinical psychology and neuropsychology trainee who has an interest in paediatrics, neurodevelopment/neurodiversity and mental health.</p>
<p>Sally Richmond</p>	<p>Project: Responsible Generative AI for Mental Health</p> <p>The mental health of young Australians has been declining for over two decades and is now in crisis. Of the 2 in 5 young people currently experiencing mental ill-health most are not accessing professional support. Substantial reform of under-resourced mental health systems is urgently required. Artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to provide 24/7 accessible mental health support; however recent unintended consequences have underscored the risks and the need for safe use and responsible development.</p> <p>This project is broad and can be developed with the trainee to explore research questions related to safety, clinical governance, culture and current mental health knowledge of large language models. Establishing consumer-driven research priorities they are shaped by young people and families will be a critical component of the project.</p> <p>This project will be co-supervised by Dr Lizhen Qu from the Faculty of IT.</p>
<p>Sarah Liddle</p>	<p>Project: Professional psychology education, mental health and suicide prevention</p> <p>Various projects are available related to professional psychology education, including the development and assessment of competencies and skills, as well as broader initiatives on suicide prevention and mental health. Specific projects will be developed in collaboration with the trainee.</p>
<p>Sue Cotton</p>	<p>Project: Understanding risk behaviours in bipolar disorder</p>

	<p>During a manic episode there can be increased goal-directed activities (either socially, vocationally, and sexually) and involvement in pleasurable activities (excessive spending, sexual indiscretions, substance use) that can lead to poor outcomes for both the individual with bipolar disorder but also close others. There can also be heightened risk of self-harm and suicide, particularly during mixed episodes. However, we do not have a good understanding of those with lived experience, their caregivers and supporters, and clinicians' perspectives on risks associated with bipolar disorder. Also, examination of risk is often specific to self-harm and suicide rather than more broadly about other kinds of risk. We also do not have an adequate measure of the diverse risks associated with the disorder. This research program is part of the NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence in Bipolar Disorder (CORE-BD) led by Prof Sue Cotton. Other supervisors will include Dr Mel Hasty (Senior Research Fellow, Clinical Psychologist and Executive Officer of CORE-BD), A/Prof Kate Filia (Principal Research Fellow, Orygen, expertise in social inclusion), and Dr Emma Morton (Senior Lecturer, Psychologist, expertise in bipolar disorder). There are a range of potential projects that students could undertake in this area.</p>
<p>Sue Cotton</p>	<p>Project: Social determinants associated with bipolar disorder (BD)</p> <p>There are a range of social determinants that have been associated with poor health and mental health outcomes such as economic stability, education, social and community context, health and healthcare, neighbourhood and built environment. These have often been examined in the context of mental health more broadly, and there has been little done on specific disorders such as bipolar disorder. We do not have a good understanding of the causes of bipolar disorder and often there is a 10-year delay between of symptom onset, diagnosis, and receipt of adequate treatment. In this research program, the student will examine the social determinants of bipolar disorder and look at their relationships with diagnostic delays and poor outcomes. This research program is part of the NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence in Bipolar Disorder (CORE-BD) led by Prof Sue Cotton. Other supervisors will include Dr Mel Hasty (Senior Research Fellow, Clinical Psychologist and Executive Officer of CORE-BD), A/Prof Kate Filia (Principal Research Fellow, Orygen, expertise in social inclusion), and Dr Emma Morton (Senior Lecturer, Clinical Psychologist, expertise in bipolar disorder).</p>
<p>Sue Cotton</p>	<p>Project: Mapping contacts with police after a first episode of psychosis</p> <p>This project offers the opportunity for students to examine contacts with police in a large cohort of individuals who were treated for a first episode psychosis (FEP) treated at the Early Psychosis Prevention and Intervention Centre (EPPIC) at Orygen, Parkville between 1998-2000. As</p>

	<p>part of the long-term follow-up study (FEPOS15 – the First Episode Psychosis Outcome Study – 15 year+ follow up), we have recently linked cohort data to the Victorian Police's Law Enforcement Assistance Program (LEAP). We have data on offending behaviours, victimisation, family violence and police call outs for medical episodes. One DPsych student has been looking at several aspects of violent offending behaviours but there are a range of opportunities available for several students to explore other aspects of the data. Students will be supervised by Prof Sue Cotton, Dr Amity Watson (Orygen).</p>
<p>Sue Cotton</p>	<p>Project: The CARE research program</p> <p>The CARE program encompasses a suite of projects designed to better understand the experiences, wellbeing, and support needs of people who care for a loved one with severe or serious mental illness. The flagship CARE project focuses on carers of individuals with psychosis and/or bipolar disorder, using an online survey to capture information on carer wellbeing, functioning, and lived experience, with recruitment already underway. CARE-Mood extends this focus to carers of young people with mood and/or anxiety disorders, with plans to include carers of adults in future stages. CARE-Sib builds on earlier work to explore the unique perspectives and support needs of siblings who support a family member with mental illness. Finally, CARE-Parent is a new stream that will examine the experiences of young people caring for a parent with severe mental illness. Together, these projects aim to generate comprehensive insights to inform policy, service development, and targeted supports for carers across different contexts. There are opportunities to look at social determinants, impacts of suicide attempts, family violence on carers' experiences. The supervisory team include Prof Sue Cotton, Dr Mel Hasty, A/Prof Kate Filla (Orygen), Dr Dan Gan (Orygen) and Dr Amity Watson (Orygen).</p>
<p>Sue Cotton</p>	<p>Project: Advancing the assessment of mental health through psychometric investigations</p> <p>Many mental health assessment tools that are commonly employed by clinicians and researchers were developed decades ago and are outdated. These include measures of depression, anxiety, psychological distress and quality of life. Measures have most often been developed without input from key stakeholders such as those with a lived experience. In this research program there will be an opportunity to not examine the properties of commonly used measures but to develop new measures. One study is focused on undertaking a review of the Health of Nation Outcome Scales that is widely used in mental health services. Other studies including critiquing screening and assessment tools used for bipolar disorder. Another study is focused on developing a tool focused on risk (e.g., hypersexuality, impulsive spending). Another study would be focused on identifying what quality of life means to young people today.</p>

<p>Sue Cotton</p>	<p>Project: Understanding the impacts of being a woman living with bipolar disorder</p> <p>Bipolar disorder can have serious impacts for the individual and especially women. In this research program a range of studies can be examined. This includes the relationship between mood and hormones, relationships, risky behaviours, etc. Understanding the unmet needs of women with bipolar disorder will inform development of novel treatments.</p>
<p>Tracey Sletten</p>	<p>Project: SleepSync: digital sleep health management</p> <p>Digital sleep health interventions for mental health in shift workers. Development and evaluation of app-based technology to provide personalised recommendations for sleep-related behaviour to manage sleep and health in shift work where immediate access to clinical support is limited. The program incorporates adjustment of digital health to the needs of users, and evaluation of effectiveness. This project can include the optimisation of interventions via qualitative user-centred design.</p> <p>Projects will be shaped in collaboration with the student, to best align with their interests.</p> <p>The vision of our research program is to optimise circadian rhythmicity, sleep, alertness and mental health in society, with a particular focus on individuals experiencing circadian misalignment, a mismatch in the timing of the circadian pacemaker and the timing of sleep. Our research is focussed on understanding the mechanisms and impacts of sleep and circadian disruption, especially in the workplace, and developing targeted interventions to improve sleep, health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Research will be conducted in community and industry settings. Candidates will gain unique experience in well-designed research and intervention in real-world settings, and adaptation to the specific requirements of the population in question to support scaling of health support. Projects will include collaboration with additional experts at Monash, across national and international collaborating academic institutions, and external industry and policy stakeholders.</p>
<p>Tracey Sletten</p>	<p>Project: SWITCH: personalised sleep health interventions</p> <p>Personalised behavioural recommendations for optimising sleep, alertness and health in shift workers, a vulnerable population who form up ~16% of the working population. This research is deploying novel individualised sleep and lighting recommendations tailored to each individuals' circadian timing and shift schedule to help shift workers to manage their non-standard work hours and improve their sleep-wake behaviour and wellbeing. The project will include examination of the</p>

	<p>factors influencing compliance with behavioural change interventions to support successful implementation across multiple cohorts.</p> <p>Projects will be shaped in collaboration with the student, to best align with their interests.</p> <p>The vision of our research program is to optimise circadian rhythmicity, sleep, alertness and mental health in society, with a particular focus on individuals experiencing circadian misalignment, a mismatch in the timing of the circadian pacemaker and the timing of sleep. Our research is focussed on understanding the mechanisms and impact of sleep and circadian disruption, especially in the workplace, and developing targeted interventions to improve sleep, health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Research can be conducted in community and industry settings. Candidates will gain unique experience in research and intervention in real-world settings, adaptation to the specific requirements of the population in question. Projects will include collaboration with additional experts at Monash, and across national and international collaborating academic institutions.</p>
<p>Tracey Sletten</p>	<p>Project: Sleep and alertness in commercial flight operations</p> <p>Sleep, alertness and cognitive performance during extended flight duty. This project will examine the sleep, alertness and wellbeing of international pilots and cabin crew during long range flight patterns to understand the impact of shift work, variable occupational workload and regular time zone transitions. Data collection includes working with Qantas Airways during specifically designed flight patterns and incorporates assessments of health, cognition and wellbeing. The program will support the development of recommendations for improving the safety case for extended duration flight patterns proposed for the future on international aviation.</p> <p>Projects will be shaped in collaboration with the student, to best align with their interests.</p> <p>The vision of our research program is to optimise circadian rhythmicity, sleep, alertness and mental health in society, with a particular focus on individuals experiencing circadian misalignment, a mismatch in the timing of the circadian pacemaker and the timing of sleep. Our research is focussed on understanding the mechanisms causing sleep and circadian disruption, especially in the organisational setting, and developing targeted interventions to improve sleep, health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Research will be conducted with external industry and policy stakeholders. Candidates will gain unique experience in research and intervention in real-world settings. Projects will include collaboration</p>

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