November

Wednesday, 28th
Hot Chocolate Drive
$1 per cup, $1.25 per cup of mint chocolate, $0 per minute gained by avoiding the lineup at Tim’s. Meet us in the Quad, between 10-3. Even better, volunteer for us! Details in the back.

Thursday, 29th
Honors Forum: are you game? $1 for non-members, $0 for members. 5-7, location TBA.

Friday, 30th
Volunteer Appreciation Night: we couldn’t have done it without you! Let’s meet up at the eatery formerly known as the Power Plant at 5.

January

Monday 21st – Friday 25th
Psych Week. A whole crock of psych-related fun. Watch out for updates. Ideas for any fun psych-related activities are welcome so please contact us!
Editor’s Note

Does anyone else walk out of the graduate studies forum every year feeling deflated? The incredible standard for graduate admission in psychology is enough to daunt anybody. Maybe not everybody, because I’m sure some of us have a 4.0, stacks of experience, a publication or two, a research grant, three academic references, ....in which case I might have to murder you for your CV.

Sometimes we find we don’t measure up to the requirements for the programs we want, and it’s easy to get discouraged and mopey. But it’s not that you don’t have all the requirements: just that you don’t have all the requirements yet. Who in their second or third year would have three academic references? Or even most fourth-years? If you don’t have it all right now, you can always do another year of school to gain research experience or boost our GPA.

Most of us keener types want the best, want it all, want it now; but there’s something to be said for delayed gratification. The successful application was never meant to be built in a day. Do all you can for now and call it a day? And spend the rest of the time building your life; the better and happier a person you are, the better prepared you will be for a fulfilling career, in psych or otherwise.

Speaking of fulfilling careers, this month's featured career in psychology is Nursing. Hope you find it useful. ☺

Leigh Yang
VP Comm

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I'm afraid if people see my insides they'll see how sour I am.
I feel that something is eating away inside me.
FRUIT GROUP THERAPY
I'd like to pull back my skin and show my true self.
I'm afraid I'm going to be pulled apart.

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I know what we did last month:
October-November update

The annual Graduate Studies Forum: what better way to start our chain of academic events than with a tough-love dose of reality? Always one of our most well-attended functions, the forum drew a crowd of approximately 70 people. Faculty speakers representing clinical, research and educational psych gave outstanding, well-prepared presentations regarding admission for their respective discipline and were receptive to questions from the audience. Graduate students from counseling, social psych and psychiatry formed a panel for the q-and-a session to follow. Judging from your comments on the feedback sheet, we can tell you found it as useful as we did. Thanks to all the speakers and of course, Kristin and her academic army!

Pimp my Office. The on-campus execs have re-vamped our office in BioSci, now home to some swanky new chairs to lounge in. Also, the mound of surplus furniture cluttering the hallways have been tucked away, leaving room for more than one person to walk down the corridor at any given time.

Upcoming Events

The Hot Chocolate Drive is coming up on Wednesday the 28th from 10-3. Not only is it delicious, it also keeps your hands warm for while if you take small sips. Profits go to the Gay Bisanz Memorial Turkey Drive. We are currently looking for volunteers to fill hour-long slots anywhere from 9-4. Please email Erin at karman@ualberta.ca

Are you an ambitious First or Second year? The Honors Forum is slated for Thursday the 29th, location TBA. Hear tips on finding supervisors and details on requirements. You want to be there. The usual zero dollars for members, $1 for non-members.
Freud and his theories surrounding hysteria have, more often than not, received less than favourable reviews. I do not wish to debate the merit of his Hysteria theory here but rather briefly mention what the theory in general has done for women clientele in the realm of Psychology.

The English word “hysteria” is actually derived from the ancient Greek word *Hystera* meaning “uterus” and the cause of hysteria was supposedly a wandering womb. It was believed that a woman’s womb, if without child, would travel aimlessly throughout her body causing an array of negative symptoms: temporary paralysis of the limbs and/or the senses, outbursts of emotion, uncontrollable physical reactions etc. (Heller, 2005, p. 146).

Let us fast forward to the 19th century and Hysteria practices in the Victorian era. Women, presenting with the same symptoms as their ancient cohorts, were accused of malingering or condemned as witches; resulting in either years of institutionalization or death (Heller, 2005, p. 147).

When Sigmund Freud and his colleague Josef Breuer published their work entitled, *Studies on Hysteria*, it “brought hysteria out of the dark ages” (Heller, 2005, p. 147). According to Freud and Breuer, Hysteria was an actual Psychological illness, brought on by “reminiscences”, which could be diagnosed and treated…potentially even cured (Heller, 2005, p. 147).

So, though you might not agree with Freud’s theories surrounding Hysteria, it’s difficult to ignore that Freud played an important role in women’s mental health - changing a death sentence to a recognized and treatable mental illness.

All facts and ideas derived from...

Hey everyone,

This is Maria, the undergraduate rep for Canadian Psychological Association here on campus. Hope everyone's semester is going well. I just wanted to send out a quick email reminding students about the annual CPA convention in Halifax June 12-14th. Registration fees are next to nothing for student members of CPA and you can also submit a poster presentation if you're interested. I went to the convention last year in Ottawa and it was a great opportunity for networking and finding out about all the current research being done in various areas of Psychology. Check out the website at [www.cpa.ca/convention](http://www.cpa.ca/convention) for more details.

If you have any questions about CPA in general or becoming a student member, feel free to email me at mt5@ualberta.ca

Thanks!

Maria Tsoukalas

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**Freud’s First Slip**
With a psych degree, I can.....

Look further and wider: psychology spans a staggering variety of professions. Although many of us start psychology hoping to enter the clinical psychology stream, there are literally dozens of different ways with which one can make a positive impact on society, on both individual and structural levels. Every month, the Ink Blot will feature different career options available within the field of psychology. Hope that some of these worthy fields catch your eye and inspire you! Feel free to email the UPA with suggestions for new professions to feature.

Psi In the Hotseat: Heike Meyers, Registered Nurse

So, what exactly is your job title?

I am a registered nurse (RN) with a specialization in outpatient psychiatry. This is different from psychiatric nurses. Then there’s outpatient psychiatry and inpatient psychiatry, which are different. Inpatient psychiatry is working with people who are really sick, and outpatient psychiatrists deal with people who are still functioning, still in the community, who can take care of themselves, live on their own, and often have a job. Within outpatient psychiatry, I specialize in group psychotherapy: so the specializations get narrower and narrower within the field.

What is the difference between an RN specializing in psychiatry and a registered psychiatric nurse (RPN)?

I used to know the differences for the training process, but now I’m not sure. Back in the 70s, you could be an RN with a two-year program and now it’s 4. I trained out of Alberta Hospital. The program for RPNs probably increased as well. We mostly differ in our ability to administer medication.

How is your job different from those of psychologists, psychiatrists, or RPNs?

I work in a team with psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, who receive intensive psychiatric training if they opt for it, RNs, and occasionally RPNs. The hands-on part is no different when you’re working as a part of a team providing therapy, especially in a hospital setting where everyone is doing the same work with patients. We all see patients, do assessments, and do treatment. I know that as a part of the job, the psychologists’ job is to do a lot of testing, so they do an awful lot of testing. Our union is different, and our pay scale is different.

Can you elaborate on the type of jobs in psychology where one can work as a registered nurse?

As an RN, you can work in hospitals, clinics, paperwork, trauma work, community work, it’s a huge field. If you’re interested in ER, ICU, you can take all these 6-month courses offered by hospitals. It’s one of the most flexible careers. There’s home care, where you can do crisis work. Addiction is another area for nurses: that area is a bottomless pit. CASA, which deals with youth. I’m not sure how the system works in those establishments, though: maybe psychologists are given more of a leadership
role, maybe nurses? For the more politically oriented, there are also associations like Canadian Mental Health, which deals with advocacy and support service at a very grassroots level. Awareness and advocacy is very important to mental health care. They would be an interesting agency to look into in terms of nursing or research. When I think of careers in psychology or otherwise, research is important and exciting. For example, pharmaceutical companies are just waiting for research to develop so new drugs can be developed.

**Do you enjoy your work?**

I do like it. I have been a nurse for about 30 years, with time taken in between. I like the people, and I like working with clients.

I also enjoy the time and flexibility. When I was looking into nursing, I considered nursing and occupational therapy, but I chose nursing because I can travel. The job market pendulum keeps swinging; there are 400 beds closed in the city because of a shortage in nursing staff. We are now hiring from the Phillipines, UK, and Austrailia to fill the positions here. There’s a shortage of nurses all over the world right now. Dozens of places in the US is always hiring our nurses because our standards are higher, as does New Zealand; you can travel internationally or locally. It’s also easy to stop and come back into it. You can always work casual, such as trauma working on weekends, for example, which leaves the family uncompromised but enables you to do fulfilling work. Pregnancy leaves are also easy. And it pays well. When I came back from travelling in Africa this summer, the union had finished negotiating so there was a 7% raise and another 2% raise if you’ve worked for more than 2 years.

**Can you describe your typical workday?**

Paper work: charting, filing, dictating... It’s really hard to describe a typical day but I do assessments and interviews, which takes about an hour and half, and all the papers associated with that. Then there is the group therapy, which usually has 8-10 patients in a group, and the paper process that goes with that. So you’re dealing in terms of diagnoses, depression and anxiety, and personality disorders. Once you do the group, you have to write up what you did in groups, and then we see people individually in between. I don’t see private consultations but many people do. Sitting, listening, meetings. How could I forget meetings: discussing the program, doing in-services, presenting articles of interest or new areas of learning, introducing new patients.

**Do you have a least favorite part of your job?**

Politics involved in mental health care. The mental health care business is run by money and sometimes insurance companies. For example, one of the programs offered is a program that’s short-staffed, and one of the staff members were asked to go back to in-patient, there’s no money to fund the program. It becomes a way of negotiating people: who can we steal to staff an underfunded program? It also becomes territorial. For example, one hospital in the city says we’re not going to provide a certain type of care for 6 months for whatever reason, which then affects all other hospitals because of the influx of patients, and then it can’t be taken in because of the lack of beds because beds have been allocated for certain things, or lack of staff. Also there has been an increase in middle management in
the last few decades, which makes communication harder. It’s now slower to induce changes, more distant, and there’s more money being lost in management. Localized level workers identify problems, but by the time it hits actual management it’s irrelevant. Politics are closely connected with this. If politicians had children with ADHD or such, they would pay more attention to mental health; so mental health awareness is important.

**Do you have a favorite part of your job?**

Interviewing clients.

**Ever feel threatened?**

No. That’s something you would face more in Inpatient Psychiatry. By the time they’re in my chair, they’re well enough to know why they’re there. There are people who are drunk or stoned, usually male, but it happens so rarely in outpatients. By time someone gets to where I am and my years of experience, the stories are the same, truly the same. What’s different is the person telling the story. Everyone’s got their own way of being. With some people who are abused, I can finish their story because I’ve heard different versions of the same story before. But how they’re telling the story, how they related to themselves, how they related to me is what’s different. What strengths do they have? What weaknesses do they have? The other thing that amazes me is that you hear of a lot of violence. Personally what I find overwhelming is the amount of violence that kids are subjected to. That’s the part I probably find the hardest. When I see how kids are treated, it’s true that violence has no class, race, nothing. Stories you hear about people in authority: lawyers, religious figures, police, judges. Also, a lot of what we’re looking at is not necessarily psychiatric, it’s socio-economic. It’s also a product of poverty and neglect.

**So, it sounds like you would have to be a very people-oriented person for this particular job.**

Yes, you must be able to empathize and listen. Probably the thing is have your own strengths. One of the risks is losing your own life so there’s a risk of getting overinvolved with your clients, your work, and you really need to have your own life to protect you from the things you witness at work.

**So must be able to empathize but leave work at work?**

A lot of people end up in this profession because of their needs but must remember what we are. You can’t choose this job out of a Savior complex. We empathize and we want to do stuff but mostly what we do is witness the suffering.

**What other characteristics?**

You need a huge capacity to tolerate otherness. Open-minded to the range of people we see, stories we hear.

**What kind of skills do we need? Experience in helping people face to face?**
If you have experience in places like the Support Network, that would be a good asset. You need to listen but set limits. I really learned that working in a team helps you develop those skills. At the start you’re vulnerable and curious. It’s a real asset working with others; I would find it really hard to work alone in an office. I need people around me to ground me so I don’t get overwhelmed by the human sorrow because a lot of what you’re doing is tragic. Doing any any face-to-face frontline volunteer work, you get to hear what it’s really like to be in psychological distress. You learn as you go, too. I think you need curiosity, and openness.

Are research skills crucial?

I avoided stats like the plague in school, but you need to understand how that language is used. But in terms of a starting point, it’s not that necessary: it’s more important in personality.

I know lots of people who would be glad to hear that.

Some people come in very political; they want to advocate, and not to be cliché, but change the world. If you want to do stuff like that, stats becomes an asset: it becomes something with which you can approach agencies, politicians for funding. At some point, stats becomes the vehicles with which you can say “we need more space, we need more funding, more attention.”

How about being a good speaker?

I think so. The capacity to give voice to whatever is going on.

Any tips? Something you wish you knew back when you started?

Not really. One thing I think is an asset is, a lot of what you’re doing is the human condition. Literature has a lot to do with human condition, like drama, English, Comparative Lit, and then a lot of your work walks side by side with literature. So if you have an interest in those, nurture it because if gives you an outlet. And there certainly is a difference between working inpatient and outpatient. One of the differences is the amount of paperwork: there is less time for patients in Inpatient Psychiatry. Medication and charting take up huge part of time. If interested in working with people and relationships, outpatient or community is more satisfying. Inpatient in hospitals, you’re working with meds, paperwork, quantities of patients; it’s got its own demands. I would not get the same fulfillment I get from my job. I was watching Grey’s Anatomy with my girls the other day, and I thought “wow, it’s nothing like that.”

Thank you, Heike. I think we covered most bases now.

Heike Meyers is a Registered Psychiatric Nurse working part-time for three days a week in Edmonton. A mother of two, she enjoys her job and has travelled to several different places, most recently Namibia, South Africa and Botswana this summer. She enjoys bananas and Second Cup coffee with a side of literature and music. She is also so much cooler than I make her sound in the interview.
Join the UPA!

Why?
- To have fun with other psych students!
- To get information on careers in psychology!
- To have something to put on your resume

How?
Come to BS P 206D during any of our office hours listed below, pay your $5 membership fee and receive your card!

Office hours listed on the last page

The Perks:
Free admission into all forums and events! ($1+ for non-members)
Chance to volunteer within the UPA and take on leadership roles!
Meet new friends!
Seek advice from other UPA members on psych-related matters

Volunteer Opportunities

The UPA is looking for responsible, dedicated individuals for:

Ψ The Advertising Committee
The advertising committee is in charge of communicating UPA events to members and the U of A campus.

Time Commitment: 1-2 hours per week
- Creating/designing posters or flyers
- Posting signage
- Class presentations or writing on whiteboards in classrooms
- Sidewalk chalk advertisements
- Thinking or creative ways to spread UPA news.

Contact April at aprilg@ualberta.ca

Ψ Merchandise Coordinator
Our merchandise coordinator assist the VP Finance with the UPA Merchandise

- Researching and contacting different merchandise providers for clothing, pens, mugs, etc.
- Attending meetings with the VP Finance and merchandise providers
- Creating, collecting and processing merchandise order forms
- Distributing merchandise

Interested? Contact our VP Finance Erin at karman@ualberta.ca
The Social Committee

The social committee will be assisting the VP social with planning and facilitating UPA social events. Volunteers need to be enthusiastic about representing the UPA through fun and exciting social activities such as parties, pub crawls, and movies nights. We’re specifically looking for the following:

Event Coordinator

Time Commitment: 3-5 hours a week (varies depending on event but can work around volunteers schedule)

- Assisting VP Social with social event planning
- Coordinating volunteers for events
- Advertise and facilitate social events
- Attending social committee meetings
- Possible office hours
- Committed to the U of A campus social life
- Experience organizing events (preferable but not necessary)
- Outgoing and friendly personality

Contact VP Social at moore_jenna@hotmail.com

Event Facilitators

Time Commitment: Varies depending on events

- Attending social committee meetings
- Aiding in organizing activities (making posters, selling tickets etc.)
- Committed to the U of A campus social life
- Outgoing and friendly personality

Contact VP Social at moore_jenna@hotmail.com

Ink Blot Contributors

We’re always looking for enthusiastic psychology lovers to contribute interesting and entertaining articles for our newsletter. We accept all types of submissions such as opinion pieces, research updates, biographies, cartoons, etc.

Please send your submissions to VP Communications at myang@ualberta.ca

UPA Office hours: Fall term

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