

CURRENT CLINIC RESEARCH

Health Psychology Research Team (HPRT)

The team is studying a lot of areas within Health Psychology. The first area is examining personality, forgiveness, and physical and mental health variables. One student is doing her dissertation on this topic, and has already presented preliminary findings at a local conference. Our team is also conducting "Wellness 180" which is a manualized group intervention focused on health behavior coaching and motivational interviewing for health behavior change. We use a wellness perspective with measurement of outcomes to demonstrate efficacy. Wellness 180 is now being conducted in the community in a geriatric setting, and students are gaining supervised clinical experience and hours working with group participants. Wellness 180 has boundless possibilities in both university and community settings, and we will be launching more groups in the future. In partnership with a current intern at a local VAMC, we are also learning about the applications of Nutritional Psychology as a sub-domain of Health Psychology.

All of the completed studies have been presented at professional conferences such as the American Psychological Society, American Psychological Association, Christian Association of Psychological Studies, and Virginia Psychological Association. Several of the studies are also being submitted to professional journals.

Contact Information: Interested parties can email the principal investigator and supervisor Dr. Judy Johnson at judijo2@regent.edu.

The Hope Marriage Project | www.hopecouples.com

The HOPE marriage project is a clinical trial study examining the effects of the Hope approach to marital therapy on different aspects of couples relationship. This means that couples are receiving a specific approach to marriage therapy called Hope focused therapy. The approach is tailored to the specific goals and needs of each couple, while following this approach. Couples receive 8 free sessions of marriage counseling and are paid \$75.00 for completing assessments of their marriage. Assessments include questions about their agreement on important issues, their beliefs about their marriage, their commitment and other questions. We also measure heart rate and blood pressure during a communication exercise and have couples review their own videotape and rate it. This project uses cutting edge techniques and methods to significantly add to the literature on marital therapy.

Previous research has found the Hope approach to be effective. Current research is still collecting data on couples with a goal of completing 50 couples' treatment by July of 2007. After that date the Hope approach will continue to be available through the clinic, although this study will be complete.

Contact Information: Interested parties can email the principal investigator and supervisor Dr. Jennifer Ripley at marriage@regent.edu

Sexual Attitudes and Behavior Study

The Sexual Attitudes and Behavior Study is a national, longitudinal study of sexual attitudes and behavior that has been ongoing for 5 years. Dr. Mark Yarhouse has been conducting this study with the assistance of Psy.D. and Ph.D. students in the School of Psychology & Counseling. The Psy.D. and Ph.D. students have an opportunity to receive training in conducting an extensive, structured interview on sexual attitudes and behavior. The results of the study are expected to be published in 2008.

Contact Information: Interested parties can contact Mark A. Yarhouse, Psy.D., Professor of Psychology and director of the Institute for the Study of Sexual Identity (www.sexualidentityinstitute.org). Dr. Yarhouse can be reached by phone at (757) 352.4829 or by email at markyar@regent.edu.

Personality and Forgiveness: Theoretical and Applied Aspects

This team has been involved in theoretical studies establishing that the personality factor of Negative Emotionality (NE) is strongly predictive of a tendency to be unforgiving towards oneself. Further, the aspect of NE that is most predictive of lack of self-forgiveness is depression. Agreeableness, another personality factor, is strongly related to tendencies to not forgive others and to seek revenge for perceived wrong-doing. A dissertation study is ongoing to establish which aspect of Agreeableness best predicts other-forgiveness. The research team has also had dissertations examining motivations to forgive and the effect of father-absence on forgiveness in their children. For example, a major motivation to forgive is to preserve relationships, including those with God. Finally, the relationship between forgiveness, God-Image, and gratitude is currently being examined through a doctoral dissertation.

The research team also focuses on applied aspects of forgiveness through examination of efficacy of forgiveness interventions with prison samples. One study has established that a group forgiveness intervention resulted in less revenge and greater other-forgiveness among prison inmates. A dissertation follow-up study is underway to extend this finding within a different prison sample. We have also examined forgiveness within a school-based program designed to decrease aggressive behavior. It was found that the program did result in increases of other-forgiveness.

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The MMate Center

The mission of the MMATE Center is to support and empower churches in building a successful marriage ministry. This support creates the opportunity for churches to support mature and Godly marriages. The MMATE Center provides internet resources for marriage ministry leaders and consultations with church leaders. Dr. Jennifer Ripley, associate professor of psychology, heads a team of doctoral students who provide the support for a thriving Center both in community outreach and research.

RECENT PAST RESEARCH

The PSC has been a resource for dissertation and faculty research in a variety of areas, including ADHD, marital, and sexual identity studies. Plans are to continue considering opportunities for research within the PSC as a means of advancing clinical knowledge in the field.