

LaMarsh Centre for Child & Youth Research Newsletter

Fall 2023 Issue | December 2023



The LaMarsh Centre for Child & Youth Research is a collaborative group of faculty and students that supports community-engaged interdisciplinary research in health, education, relationships, and development of infants, children, adolescents, emerging adults, and families everywhere. The Centre conducts leading edge research and mobilizes knowledge in ways that improve wellbeing and resilience for children and youth.

Our newsletter aims to share some of this incredible work and provide updates to the LaMarsh Community.

[Visit our website](#) to learn more about the research that is done at LaMarsh.

Director's Message

Dr. Rebecca Bassett-Gunter, LaMarsh Centre Director



Wow! We have almost made it to the end of 2023! The end of the year brings an opportunity to reflect on our achievements. I am very proud of the efforts and impact of our LaMarsh members over the past year. It is so easy to get bogged down in the day-to-day demands and forget to reflect on the achievements of our group. I truly believe that as a community we can be more than just the sum of our parts. Together we can do meaningful work to impact children and youth at a time when there is such need. As you start to think about 2024 and your research goals, please think about how LaMarsh can play a role in elevating your work through collaboration or other supports. I am happy to meet at any time to discuss opportunities.

We will look forward to seeing you at LaMarsh events in the coming months and continuing to grow our community. Please be sure to take time over the holidays to rest and recharge. Thank you for your continued support for LaMarsh!

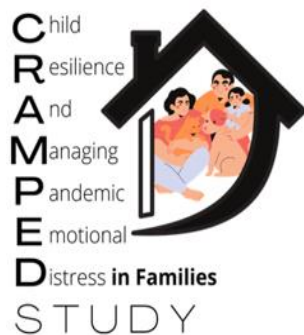
Best wishes!
Rebecca

Article of the Season

Each season, the LaMarsh Centre for Child & Youth Research highlights an article that has been produced by one of our members. Check out this issue's research spotlight, which comes from Dr. Heather Prime's lab!

Family stress during the pandemic: It's impact on caregivers, families, and children

Dr. Heather Prime, Alexandra Markwell



Since the beginning of the COVID-19 global pandemic, there have been unprecedented population-level disruptions to the daily lives of children and families worldwide. Dr. Heather Prime and a team of collaborators have published a series of studies examining how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected family wellbeing and child adjustment.

In May 2020, the team developed the [COVID-19 Family Disruption Model](#), a conceptual model describing how the pandemic may influence children's adjustment. In this model, social disruptions increase caregiver psychological and parenting stress, impacting the coparental relationship, parent-child relationships, and sibling relationships, which, in turn, may impact several domains of child wellbeing and mental health. Since that time, Prime and her collaborators aim to examine the model empirically using data from the [CRAMPED study](#). This multi-national longitudinal study measured COVID-19 life changes, caregiver and child mental health, family functioning, and parenting from May 2020 to present in a sample of 549 families with children ages 5 – 18 years old.

In the [first study](#) the research team found that family stressors related to COVID-19 clustered within three domains: income (e.g., financial problems), family (e.g., increased family altercations or emotional withdrawal), and pandemic-specific stress (e.g., distress related to news/media exposure). They also found that female caregivers consistently scored higher than males on all domains of stress.

The [second study](#) assessed the impact of the pandemic on the mental health of female and male caregivers while investigating pre-pandemic adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) as a potential vulnerability factor. In the second wave, the researchers evaluated caregivers' mental health in terms of anxiety, depression, substance use, and post-traumatic stress. For female caregivers, they found both COVID stress/disruption and higher levels of ACEs were independently related to worse mental health outcomes. In comparison, the mental health of male caregivers was best predicted by considering COVID stress/disruption and ACEs simultaneously; COVID stress/disruption was most impactful for those with a history of ACEs, indicating that male caregivers with a history of adversity are vulnerable to the negative

impacts of COVID-related stress. Overall, female caregivers had higher levels of stress and mental health difficulties, which highlights the disproportionate burden on female caregivers due to COVID-19 disruption.

The [third study](#) examined the association between COVID-19 stress/disruption and caregiver and child mental health, psychological distress, parenting quality and family functioning over two months. The researchers found that COVID-19 corresponded to greater sibling differences in mental health, and the siblings with poorer mental health had deteriorating parent-child relationships over time.

In sum, the CRAMPED study has started to identify several routes through which the pandemic disrupts family functioning. Future research will examine processes of resilience to explore protective and promotive factors that support children and families to recover from pandemic-related disruptions.

Recent Events

The following events were hosted through the Centre over the Fall term:

- The **19th Annual Breakfast for Champions** was held on **October 24th, 2023**. The theme for this year was “Bouncing Forward” to share the importance and relevance of resiliency in our everyday lives. This was an opportunity for LaMarsh faculty and students to learn how to ‘bounce forward’ toward positive mental health outcomes. Some of our Jackman Award winners were able to meet Dr. Jackman himself!



- **The LaMarsh Fall Open House Drop-In** was held on **November 15, 2023**. The LaMarsh Fall Open House was a great opportunity to share ideas, network, and interact with LaMarsh members and students.



- **Dr. Heather Prime's Lab** held a talk on **December 6th, 2023**, titled: *Covid-19 and Child and Family Well-Being: What We Know and Why We Care*. This in-person event was an opportunity for LaMarsh members to learn and discuss the implications of Covid-19 on individuals and relationships within the family.



Upcoming Events

We are excited to host the following events in 2024:

- LaMarsh Research Talks
- LaMarsh Annual Graduate Student Symposium
- Jackman Scholars' Learning Forum

Stay tuned for more details!

Member Profiles

2023-2024 Graduate Student Leader: **Nathania Ofori**

Supervisor: Dr. Jessica Fraser-Thomas **Department:** Kinesiology **Email:** jft@yorku.ca



I am an upper year PhD candidate in the School of Kinesiology and Health Science. My primary research interest relates to the healthy psychosocial development of children, youth, and emerging adults through sport, with a secondary interest in physical activity promotion. I conduct research and support projects at various stages from grant writing, research project conceptualization, and participant recruitment to qualitative data-collection, data-analysis, knowledge mobilization and communication. My Master's thesis explored coaches' life skill development, as emerging adults within a Sport for Development facility. The aim of my doctoral research is to advance understanding of youth's experiences within one community-based high performance sport education program in central Canada, with a focus on exploring processes and outcomes of PYD. Community engagement has been an integral part of my education. As a LaMarsh Graduate Student Leader, I hope to effectively apply my learning into practice, identify diversity gaps and biases, enhance my leadership skills, participate and coordinate LaMarsh research initiatives, and advocate positive change among children and youth.

Welcome to our newest member: Madison Aitken

Title: Assistant Professor

York U Profile: <https://health.yorku.ca/health-profiles/index.php?dept=&mid=2170713>

Email: aitken@yorku.ca



Dr. Aitken's research focuses on improving youth psychotherapy outcomes by understanding how evidence-based therapies bring about change, and by testing new interventions targeting factors that predict poor treatment response. She is also interested in innovative approaches to increasing the real-world relevance of psychotherapy outcome measures. Her research is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and the Cundill Centre for Child and Youth Depression.

Select Publications:

Aitken, M., Plamondon, A., Krzeczkowski, J. E., Kil, H., & Andrade, B. F. (2023). Systematic integration of multi-informant externalizing ratings in clinical settings, *Research on Child and Adolescent Psychopathology* (Advance online publication). doi:10.1007/s10802-023-01119-z

Dobrin-De Grace, R., Carvalho, D., Courtney, D., & Aitken, M. (2023). Suicidal behaviour and ideation among adolescents during the COVID-19 pandemic, *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 52, 101650 doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2023.101650

Aitken, M., Sagar, A., Courtney, D., & Szatmari, P. (2023). Development and preliminary effectiveness of a group intervention to improve parent-adolescent relationships in the context of adolescent depression, *JCPP Advances* (Advance online publication). doi.org/10.1002/jcv2.12168

Aitken, M., Perquier, F., Haltigan, J. D., Wang, L., Andrade, B. F., Battaglia, M., Szatmari, P., & Georgiades, K. (2023). Individual- and family-level associations between child psychopathology and parenting, *Development and Psychopathology*, Advance Online Publication doi.org/10.1017/S0954579423000202

Articles, Hot Off The Press!

- Sellitto, T., Fraser-Thomas, J., Bassett-Gunter, R. L., Lee, V., Lunsky, Y., Balogh, R., & Weiss, J. A. (2023). The role of thriving in mental health among people with intellectual and developmental disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 1 - 11. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jar.13177>

Presentations

- Levi, N., Hayhurst, L., & Fraser-Thomas, J. (2023). Exploring young peoples' experiences within a sport and livelihood program. *Journal of Exercise, Movement, and Sport (SCAPPS refereed abstracts repository)*, 54(1).

Awards & Achievements

Congratulations to Sepher Rassi, Uswa Shafaque, Kayla Robinsom, and Shyamaly Vasuthevan for receiving the Dr. Eric Jackman Award! The award recognizes research that supports community-engaged interdisciplinary research into child and youth development, including children at risk. **Sepher** and **Uswa** are working with **Dr. Rebecca Bassett-Gunter** and **Dr. Jonathan Weiss**, along with community partner **Autism Ontario**, to explore the development of a physical activity program for autistic children. **Kayla** and **Shyamaly** are working with **Dr. Jennifer Steele** and the **Toronto District School Board** to examine the direct and indirect effects of anti-Black racism education on adolescent students in Toronto.

Congratulations to LaMarsh faculty member Debra Peplar for being elected to the Royal Society of Canada! This is one of the country's highest honours in recognition of exceptional career achievements in the arts, social sciences, and science.

[Read more here.](#)

Congratulations to Dr. Jeni Pathman who received the following SSHRC Insight Grant to continue to study children's memory for time and other event details useful in forensic settings:

- How accurate is memory for time across childhood and adolescence? Theoretical and practical implications for forensic settings. Role: Principal Investigator with Lindsay Malloy (Ontario Tech University). **\$240, 030.**

Congratulations to Rebecca Bassett-Gunter and Kelly Arbour (University of Toronto) who are part of a team that received the following SSHRC Insight Grant:

- Applying a Family-Centred Research Approach to Developing and Testing Physical Activity Interventions in Children and Youth with Disabilities. **\$198, 032.**

Congratulations to Natan Levi who successfully defended his Master’s thesis titled “Sport and Livelihoods: From Outcomes to Experiences.”

Congratulations to Gillian Shoychet and Carly Goodman for receiving the MA Award in Clinical Developmental Psychology. This award recognizes graduate student leadership and scholarly excellence at the MA level in the area of clinical-developmental psychology.

Announcements

Join the LaMarsh LinkedIn Group

We have recently established a LinkedIn group for the LaMarsh Community. The goal of this group is to provide a platform for LaMarsh members to support one another.

You’re invited to actively engage with this virtual community in ways that are most meaningful to you. For example, you can use the LinkedIn group to contribute to discussions, ask questions, share announcements, seek out mentors, schedule meetups, and network with fellow LaMarsh members.

We hope this platform will serve as a helpful tool to foster communication among our Community. This group will evolve based on your contributions and needs, and we welcome your suggestions to improve the service.

[Join the LaMarsh LinkedIn group.](#)

Follow Us On Social Media

Be sure to follow LaMarsh on social media to stay up-to-date with the latest news and events from the Centre. We also encourage you to tag **@LaMarshCentre** in your posts, so that we can re-share your work with our community!

Instagram: [@LaMarshCentre](#)

Twitter: [@LaMarshCentre](#)

LinkedIn: [LaMarsh Centre for Child & Youth Research at York University](#)

Call for Newsletter Content

Would you like to be featured in the next edition of the LaMarsh newsletter or have your research highlighted as the article of the season? Kindly send content and photos to lamarshmedia@gmail.com by **February 23, 2024**. This newsletter is designed to highlight YOUR accomplishments, including:

- Scholarships/grants you've been awarded
- Articles/books you've published
- Conferences you've presented at
- Community partnerships you've developed
- Past events you've hosted
- Upcoming events you're planning to host
- Any other newsletter-worthy materials!

We look forward to continuing to circulate the LaMarsh newsletter each quarter.

Interested In Joining Our Trainee Network?

The LaMarsh Trainee Network is a group of undergraduate students, graduate students, and post-doctoral fellows studying in the area of child and youth research from a variety of disciplines at York University. The aim of the Trainee Network is to help students establish meaningful academic relationships with researchers in their field of interest, share research with peers, and give talks at symposium events for learning and development purposes. The Network is also designed to broaden interest and awareness of child and youth research, encourage multi-disciplinary research, and provide a means for skill development.

To get involved, email the LaMarsh Centre for Child & Youth Research lamarsh@yorku.ca

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