



Project Title: Unravelling the link between trauma exposure and socially deviant behaviours among young people		Code: SMS5
Host School / Institute: Sydney Medical School/ Matilda Centre		Address: The Matilda Centre, Level 6, Jane Foss Russell Building (G02) University of Sydney, NSW
Certificates & Clearances required: No		
Primary Supervisor: Dr Katrina Prior		
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Co-Supervisor/team: The research team includes a mix of senior (A/Prof Nicola Newton), mid-career Dr Emma Barrett, Dr. Lexine Stapinski), and early career researchers (Dr Katrina Prior), as well as a PhD student (Ms Siobhan Lawler), all of whom are based at the Centre Matilda Centre for Research Excellence in Mental Health and Substance Use.		
Project Type: Clinical; Literature Review; Data Analysis		
Project Category: Mental Health; Public Health		
<p>Skills / Attributes of a successful student: This project would be particularly suitable to students with an interest in psychology, who are interested in applying for Honours. As the focus of this project will be writing a research paper using an existing dataset, ideal candidates will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Know how to search the literature (e.g. PsychInfo, Medline) to find theoretical and empirical research that supports the overall research objectives. -Feel comfortable consolidating findings of existing research studies. -Have some experience using statistical analysis programs (e.g. SPSS) to clean data, analyse data and report on findings. -Be able to draw insights and conclusions from the results of a study, to be included in publications and presentations. -Know how to prepare draft research reports and presentations. -Show initiative and feel comfortable working independently, under some guidance of the supervisors and research team. -Communicate with others about the progress of experimental work. <p>Given the sensitive nature of the data to be used as part of this project (i.e., information on people who may report substance use, aggressive or violent behaviours, and mental health concerns), it is essential that students are compassionate and non-judgemental.</p>		
Project Keywords: Trauma; aggression; violence; social deviance; substance use		
<p>Project Description: Traumatic experiences, such as exposure to violence as a victim or witness, are tragically common in today's society. Exposure to violence and/or other traumatic experiences early in life have been linked to the perpetration of subsequent antisocial behaviour, including acts of aggression, violence, delinquency and criminal activity (Barrett et al, 2011; Becker et al, 2014; Tsang et al, 2017; Vaughn et al, 2006). This pattern of behaviour is commonly referred to as the 'cycle of violence' (DeLisi et al., 2009). Research suggests that the rate of violence and criminal offending peaks in late adolescence and young adulthood then tends to decline. Despite the fact that young adulthood is a critical crossroads between offending and law-abiding pathways, this period has been somewhat neglected in the literature and further research is required. In particular, it is important that we gain a better understanding of whether those who experience violence or other traumatic events during childhood and adolescence are at increased risk for perpetrating violence or other deviant behaviours as young adults.</p> <p>This project provides a unique opportunity for a student to capitalise on a large existing dataset (N>500) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to (and co-author) a research paper on the cycle of violence in young adults, which has prospects of being published in a reputable, peer-reviewed scientific journal • Contribute to (and co-author) a presentation of the findings at a scientific conference 		