

311 N. Fifth Street
Camden, NJ 08102

In the Spotlight: Dr. JJ Cutuli

Q. Why did you choose your university course degree at the University of Minnesota?

A. University of Minnesota is one of only a few programs in the country that has a formalized joint-training program in developmental psychology and clinical psychology. It also has some of the best people in each of those fields on faculty, including some of the folks largely responsible for building up developmental psychopathology and developmental science into the useful frameworks that we have today.

Q. What attracted you to the field of developmental psychopathology?

A. When I was a freshman I remember resolving to stay away from clinical psychology and from work with children because those fields seemed to get enough attention. About two years later I was up to my eyeballs in developmental psychopathology. Probably the most important experiences came while working in an

acute care psychiatric hospital. I had opportunities to get to know many different clients in rather profound ways, and I had the reaction that the dominant ways of thinking about wellbeing and psychopathology (at least the ways of thinking that were available to me at the time) were entirely too simplistic and limited to be of any great use.

Deep down, I have since come to realize that there really is not an independent field of developmental psychopathology, but rather pathology (or any variation of functioning, for that matter) is an outcome of development. In other words, psychopathology and resilience are two different pathways governed by the same general set of rules. It's all development.

Q. What is the nature of your research?

A. I primarily study resilience in development, looking to understand how it is that many children do well despite experiencing very high levels of



adversity. This is a complicated topic that involves many factors across levels of the individual (e.g., physiological functioning; psychological functioning) and her context (family, school, society, etc.) that all interact and interface with each other in complex ways over time. This work is inherently multidisciplinary, involving partners and expertise in developmental, cognitive, and clinical psychology, education, public health and pediatrics, public policy and administration, family social sciences, social work, developmental neuroscience, psychoendocrinology and immunology...the list of relevant disciplines goes on and on, all focused on a developmental science.

Q. What research are you currently conducting?



In the Spotlight (cont'd)

“The reason I do this work is to better understand how families do well, and to communicate that to providers, policymakers, and other decision-makers to help support them in their work on behalf of children and families who experience adversity.”

A. Almost all of my work involves some sort of community partnership to study resilience and risk in development. Some of this involves analyses of integrated administrative records, like the records that public service agencies use to keep track of who receives certain services. For example, I am just wrapping up work on a study of the links between different experiences in the foster care system and whether or not children go on to become involved with juvenile justice. Through the efforts of three fantastic teams in New York, Cleveland, and Chicago, the study was able to use information from the entire populations of children who had been in foster care (45,000+) in each of these three cities and follow them from birth through adolescence to see what child welfare policies and practices might be improved to reduce the number of youth who become involved in juvenile justice. I am working with others to use administrative data to understand how services might (or might not) help children and families who experience other risks, like the links between different sorts of housing programs for homeless families and children's education, or

the pathways from foster care to homelessness in young adulthood.

Next month we will be starting a new data collection project on-site in an emergency shelter for families. The project is in partnership with the shelter, the Homeless Health Initiative of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and the Red Kite Project. The study looks to better understand the strengths and needs of families in shelter, and how these strengths and needs might change over the shelter stay. More importantly, the project is going to test whether and, if so, how some key services that are offered in shelter meet these needs and promote resilience for children and families. For example, self-control and cognitive functioning are an important protective factor that predicts resilience for children in shelter. We are teaming up with our community partners to test ways to increase these important strengths among the children.

Q. What is the most satisfying part of your work in research? What is the most challenging?

A. Generally my work involves a lot of direct contact with children and families, most of which are in the process of showing resilience despite some

recent or ongoing difficulty. I also have found many wonderful partners who work day in and day out to help support families and support the services that allow so many to do well. These relationships can be both the most satisfying and most challenging parts of my work: It is very rewarding when I get to see families doing well and support systems operating well, but it is also upsetting when families do not succeed and sometimes providers and service systems cannot fully meet some need. The reason I do this work is to better understand how families do well, and to communicate that to providers, policymakers, and other decision-makers to help support them in their work on behalf of children and families who experience adversity.

Q. What advice would you give to students who wish to pursue a graduate program in psychology, specifically research?

A. Find what you are passionate about and build the skills you will need to follow that passion well.

Q. Are you accepting any more research assistants for the Spring Semester? If so, what kind of student should apply?

In the Spotlight (cont'd)

A. Currently the opportunities for the spring are mostly full for the projects that are certainly going to happen. That said, in community-based work new projects can gain momentum and very quickly go from concept discussions to launch. It is always worth asking about opportunities for experience. Multiple-year commitments are always valued (freshmen and sophomores: don't be shy!), and the ability to consistently get oneself into the community is a must (e.g., by car or SEPTA). ▪

Upcoming Psychology Club Meetings Spring Semester 2014

Location: CCC - West AB

Time: 12:15 - 1:15

Thursday 1/30

Thursday 2/13

Thursday 3/13

Thursday 3/27

Thursday 4/10



Attention May 2014 Graduates

Diploma applications will be available online starting January 2nd until March 31st for May 2014 graduates. Applications must be submitted online through the registrar's office. Refer to the following links for more information:

<http://advising.camden.rutgers.edu/students/seniors/>

<https://www.ugadmissions.rutgers.edu/Diploma/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=/Diploma/Default.aspx>

Any undergraduates studying psychology are welcome to meet with Dr. August, the Director of the Undergraduate Program, for advising. Her office hours are Monday 4:30 to 5:30 pm and Wednesday 11 am to noon.



Promising Students

The following students have been nominated by the faculty for recognition for their contributions to and accomplishments in the Rutgers-Camden Psychology Department and community for the Fall semester:

John Abbamonte, master's student (2nd year). John is the recipient of Dean's Travel Award. He has presented at the 2013 Gerontological Society of America conference in New Orleans, LA and will be presenting at the 2014 Society of Behavioral Medicine conference in Philadelphia, PA. John is also the co-author on a book chapter ("Psychosocial factors associated with diabetes self-management"). He has guest lectured for me in my Method & Theory in Psychology course. John is currently applying to PhD programs in clinical and counseling psychology.

Recommended by Dr. Kristin August

Kelli Berger. Kelli is an undergraduate who will finish her undergraduate studies this winter (graduating summa cum laude) and is applying to graduate school for speech pathology. She has done an outstanding job as the President of Psi Chi. Under her leadership and through her efforts, Psi Chi published its first

Fall Newsletter for the Psychology Department, and has organized a variety of activities for the 2013-2014 academic year.

Recommended by Dr. Bill Whitlow

I think that my grad student, **Gianna Bowler**, is an excellent candidate for discussion in the newsletter. She was an undergrad at Rutgers, did our dual-degree program, and graduated with a 4.0 GPA. She is one semester away from finishing her MA with a 4.0 GPA. During her time at Rutgers, she has been involved in two publications and has done several poster and paper presentations at various conferences. In Spring 2012, Gianna received several awards such as the Psychology Department Award, Camden Dean's Undergraduate Research Prize, and Camden Women's and Gender Studies Award. She plans to go onto a PhD program next year.

Recommended by Dr. Charlotte Markey

Evelina Eyzarovich. Evelina started in our graduate program in September and has hit the ground running. She has taken the lead on an interesting study examining correlates of purchasing sex among a

sample of high-risk men. She recently submitted her study abstract to the Society for Prevention Research on this subject, and is considering further pursuing this subject for her master's thesis. Evelina is also working on another study led by Dr. Cavanaugh that is examining differences in the correlates of suicidal behavior among African American and Latina victims of intimate partner violence, which has been submitted to the upcoming conference for the American Psychological Association and is currently being developed into a manuscript to submit for publication. Evelina is also contributing to Dr. Cavanaugh's pilot study, which was funded by the National Institute of Drug Abuse. This study aims to adapt an evidenced based intervention for reducing HIV sexual risk behavior for women in domestic violence shelters. Finally, Evelina is assisting to refine one of Dr. Cavanaugh's study protocols and prepare for additional data collection that will begin in the spring. In addition to her coursework and research this semester, Evelina has also served as an ad hoc reviewer for the Journal of Substance Use.

Recommended by Dr. Courtenay Cavanaugh



Patricia Gordon. Patricia Gordon is an undergraduate serving as the President of the Psychology Club this year. She has organized a steady stream of events for psychology majors, from information sessions on graduate study to discussions of careers in psychology.

Recommended by Dr. Bill Whitlow

Caitlin Kelly, master's student (2nd year). Caitlin is the recipient of Dean's Travel Award. She presented at the 2013 Gerontological Society of America conference in New Orleans, LA and will present at the 2014 Society of Behavioral Medicine conference in Philadelphia, PA. She is a co-author on a book chapter ("Psychosocial factors associated with diabetes self-management") and encyclopedia entry ("Marriage, romantic relationships, & mental health"). Caitlin has also guest lectured in my Psychology of Aging and Health Psychology courses. She is currently applying to PhD programs in health and developmental psychology.

Recommended by Dr. Kristin August

Karen Leyden, Karen is a dual-degree student working as Project Coordinator of Hawaii Personality and Health Cohort study. She has assisted in behavioral coding and data

analysis of Healthy Relationships Study, as well as creating the literature review and conceptualization of "Personality Judgment & Self-Presentation" project. Karen has also assisted in drafting IRB proposal and is currently working with MA student to design a project on personality and situational assessment in the workplace.

Recommended by Dr. Chris Nave

Christopher Milane, Christopher has assisted in behavioral coding of Healthy Relationships study, as well as the literature review and conceptualization of "Personality Judgment & Self-Presentation" project. Christopher has also aided in drafting IRB proposal and is currently working with MA student to design a project on personality and situational assessment in the workplace.

Recommended by Dr. Chris Nave

Autumn Nanassy, Autumn is a dual-degree student who has assisted in behavioral coding of Healthy Relationships study, as well as the literature review and conceptualization of "Personality Judgment & Self-Presentation" project. Autumn has also aided in drafting IRB proposal.

Recommended by Dr. Chris Nave

Melanee Nugent. Melanee is a current graduate student who

was an undergrad at Rutgers Camden. She has distinguished herself in doing research on a significant public health problem, Type 2 diabetes management, working with Dr. August. As an undergrad, Melanee was a driving force in organizing a range of activities for psychology majors through Psi Chi and the Psychology Club.

Recommended by Dr. Bill Whitlow

I would like to highlight a promising student **Alexandra O'Donnell.** She is amazing - she works a full time job baking at 3 am and then comes to my lab. I hope to encourage her to do the dual degree program and complete her MA, and she is currently in the development stage of a project.

Recommended by Dr. Sean Duffy

Morgan Rubeo. Morgan is an undergraduate who serves as the secretary for both the Psychology Club and for Psi Chi and has done an outstanding job in both capacities. Morgan has been essential to the organization of activities for psychology majors this year.

Recommended by Dr. Bill Whitlow

Douglas Zacher. Currently a graduate student, Doug was an undergrad at Rutgers Camden and has distinguished himself by his enthusiasm for learning, teaching, and

doing research in psychology. Last year, he presented a poster at the Eastern Psychological Association on work he had done in my lab, and this year he will present another poster at EPA. He has served as a lab assistant for Experimental Psychology this fall and has done an outstanding job in that capacity, both in terms of leading the lab on occasion and, more commonly, helping students understand their laboratory results.

Recommended by Dr. Bill Whitlow

Congratulations, students, for your noteworthy accomplishments! ▪

Freudian Word Search: Find What's Hidden

R V U E E U R B B Q X K N X O
 D E M G N A I I L A R H A N B
 S I P O N X Q P I E K T R K L
 S O G R C E H G G H H C C Z D
 I T Z S E O U R Z A K H I Q E
 X G T E B S E R N V I C S C N
 A Q X I Z S S A O F M J S O I
 R Q A V S U T I M S J V I J A
 P S J I H O Z D O U I X S R L
 A E O J S P T R H N Y S M X L
 R N E N O I T A S N E D N O C
 A V R J U N D O I N G M S W W
 P R P R E C O N S C I O U S J
 W S U O I C S N O C N U B V E
 A I S U P E R E G O S T A A G

CONDENSATION
 DENIAL
 EGO
 NARCISSISM
 NEUROSIS
 PARAPRAXIS
 PHOBIAS
 PRECONSCIOUS
 REGRESSION
 REPRESSION
 SUPEREGO
 THANATOS
 UNCONSCIOUS
 UNDOING

Applying to Psi Chi at Rutgers -Camden

If you are interested in joining Psi Chi, The International Honor Society in Psychology, then submit apply soon! Please note that the application process will be completed differently from now on, and it is to be done online through psichi.org. In order to be approved for Psi Chi membership, you must have a psychology GPA of 3.5 or above and an overall GPA of 3.25. You must have completed at least 9 psychology credits at the Rutgers-Camden campus as well. The deadline for the fall

semester has already passed, but the deadline for the spring semester is March 1st, 2014. All new members that applied in the fall and spring semesters will officially be inducted May 2014. If you do not meet the requirements this semester, there are more opportunities to apply in the semesters to come. If you have any questions, please contact the Psi Chi officers. ■



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