

PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER



Fall 2023



Chair's Welcome

Hello friends of the DelVal Psychology Department! I want to thank all of you for your warm welcome and support as I've moved into the role of Department Chair this year.

One of the hallmarks of the Psychology Programs (B.A. and M.A.) at DelVal is our mentorship of students and connection to the community. I'm excited to share how we've been doing that this fall.

Looking to future newsletters, we'd like to continue featuring our alumni – please reach out if you have news to share! Thanks for being part of our world!

- *Matt Mutchler* – matthew.mutchler@delval.edu

Highlights

Mental Health Crisis Panel
Presented by NAMI and DVU
Psychology Club

Student and Staff Spotlights

Pennsylvania Counseling
Association Annual
Conference

Ecotherapy Training

Faculty Led Events

Psychology Club and the
Graduate Student
Organization



Mental Health Crisis Panel: Path to Help and Hope

On October 5, we worked along with Prof. Marion Callahan and Dr. Brian Lutz from the English Department to host a panel discussion on the mental health crisis in Bucks County and beyond.

Their keynote address featured Mr. Nicholas Emeigh of the Bucks County office of The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

Raising Awareness

After Mr. Emeigh shared his personal story about mental health struggles, we heard about resources in the community and actions that we can take to care of our own mental health, that of our loved ones, and our community. In addition, we also heard personal stories from members of the DelVal Psychology Club and Senator John Fetterman.

Panelists included representatives from state and county mental health officials, the Falls Township Police Department, and local therapists and counselors.

Throughout the evening there was a clear message of hope as audience members learned about many avenues to mental health care.

Nicholas Emeigh



NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Bucks County Associate Executive Director, Nick Emeigh, shared his powerful story of overcoming mental health and giving back to the community. He brought us to tears and to laughter.

Featured Students



Undergraduate Student: Alexandra Hendricks

Alexandra Hendricks, class of 2025, is a leader, advocate, and resilient young adult. Alexandra is also a local through and through. She attended Central Bucks High School East, is the daughter of a DVU alumni, and supervises at the popular local shop, Serendipity (also run by DVU alumni!). Being local gave Alexandra the chance to be a commuter student.

Alexandra loves the small, tight-knit community DelVal has to offer and credits her experience in clubs for getting her well connected. Since 2022, Alexandra has become a change maker for de-stigmatizing mental health by becoming the president of the psych club, speaking up, sharing her experience, and partnering with NAMI for local events.

Alexandra Hendricks proves that you do not have to travel far to make an impact. You can make a difference right in your own community.



Graduate Student: Beth Hafft

We've heard the saying, "it is never too late to follow your dreams." As this may sound cliché, it rings true in my experience. Being well in my third year at Delaware Valley University's Graduate Counseling in Psychology Program I am on my way in achieving my dream.

During this season of gratitude, I want to acknowledge the amazing opportunities offered here including my position as a graduate research assistant to Dr. Timony in the Education Department and my internship at NOVA.

The work with Dr. Timony, on behalf of the APA Division 15 for future educational psychology majors and showcasing the work of educational psychologists in the field who are changing the world with their amazing programs is incredibly rewarding. As an intern counselor at NOVA (Network of Victim assistance) here in Bucks County, the work here can be tough but so empowering. I am not only able to work as a counselor, but I have opportunity to work NOVA's hotline, assist the advocates, and participate in community outreach.

I am grateful for so many things but the amazing opportunities offered through this program has allowed me to experience all the ways that turned my dream into an achievable goal.



Adjunct Focus: Dr. Tamara Monroe

Dr. Tamara teaches at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Some of her courses include Introduction to Psychology, Multicultural Issues in Counseling, Developmental Disabilities, Internship with Seminar, Advanced Multicultural Issues to Counseling, and Lifespan.

There are many profound things to experience as an educator. One of the most profound is having the ability to make an impact on your students. Dr. Tamara does just that in both her undergraduate and graduate courses.

Dr. Monroe is very passionate about teaching Introduction to Psychology. She enjoys having the opportunity to bring specific pieces of psychology to undergraduate students who might not otherwise encounter them. She tries to make each class as exciting as she can, saying “I have to give them a little taste every week.”

One specific intro class, she focused on aggression. Dr. Monroe snuck in a bag of an inflatable Bobo clown doll and a bat. Throughout her lecture she ignored the bagged items and taught about aggression. She shared about what things aggravated her, why they aggravated her, etc. Then she took out the bat and started hitting the clown. The students were shocked! She paused her display and turned on Albert Bandura's classic 1961 Bobo Doll Experiment which showcases how easily adult aggressive behavior can pass down to by-standing children. She finished the lecture by discussing how humans chose to deal with aggression, what drives us toward it, and how we can prevent our aggressive feelings from turning into externalized and, easily repeatable, behaviors. Her students did not realize that psychology could be so exciting or impact so much of the world around them.

Dr. Monroe shared that student participation and engagement can make or break any of her courses. When reflecting on teaching Advanced Multicultural Issues in Counseling to the graduate students, she recalled feeling grateful that students were comfortable enough to open up in such a sensitive class.



Pennsylvania Counselor's Association Annual Conference

Psychology professors Drs. Audrey Ervin, Brianna Morgis and Matt Mutchler co-presented with graduate counseling students Jessica Sanfratello, Amanda Rudolph and Chris Maguire at the Pennsylvania Counseling Association in Harrisburg, PA.

Ervin, Mutchler & Morgis presented "Concrete Strategies for Social Justice Advocacy in Counseling: Moving from Knowledge to Action."

Ervin, Sanfratello, Rudolph & Maguire presented "Anti-Racism Skills for White Counselors."

Graduate Counseling Psychology alumni Jocelyn Balan-Lopez and Emily Easter (2023) presented "Overburdened and Underpaid: Advocacy for Counseling Interns."

Representing in Harrisburg!



Left to Right: Emily Easter, Jocelyn Balan-Lopez, Matt Mutchler, Audrey Ervin, Brianna Morgis, Jessica Sanfratello, Amanda Rudolph, Chris Maguire.



Philadelphia Ecotherapy

In October, GCP Cohort 9 student Jen Wielgus and Dr. Mutchler attended a 2-day training on Ecotherapy. Ecotherapy brings added dimensions of mindfulness to clinical work by using nature not only as a setting for therapy, but as a co-therapist.

Training for Therapists

The training took place in and around the Wissahickon Valley Park in Philadelphia. The training focused on understanding our own history with and connection to nature and finding ways to incorporate counseling techniques in an outdoor setting.

Dr. Mutchler is working on adding Ecotherapy as part of his work with clients, and will be including a module on Ecotherapy in a new class he's developing with Dr. Ricotta in Plant Science on the Intersection of Nature and Mental Health. They hope to run the class in Fall 2024.



“Nature was basically my first therapist, long before I even dreamed of becoming a counselor myself, and there’s no way I’d be sane today without it!”

- Jen Wielgus, GCP Cohort 9



Dr. Allison Buskirk-Cohen hosts Dr. Rabbi Lance J. Sussman

On the evening of November 9, 2023, the Delaware Valley University Honors Program welcomed Dr. Rabbi Lance J. Sussman, Ph.D. to campus to share his family's story of their escape from Nazi Germany and the importance of Holocaust education today.

The event began with a facilitated discussion between Rabbi Sussman and Honors Program Director and Psychology Department faculty, Dr. Allison Buskirk-Cohen. The event ended with questions from the audience.

Graduate counseling psychology students in Dr. Matt Mutchler's Professional and Ethical Issues in Counseling class were invited to attend. They had read and discussed Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* in class, which describes Frankl's experiences as a prisoner in Nazi concentration camps and the psychotherapeutic method he developed.

Robert Weber, counseling psychology graduate student (Cohort 11, Class of 2027) said, "The presentation from Rabbi Sussman had perfect timing because of world events. The most impactful part to me was him speaking from what he and his immediate family experienced." Tracey O'Neill, counseling psychology graduate student (Cohort 11, Class of 2027) added, "Rabbi Sussman was an excellent speaker. It was fascinating to hear what it was like to grow up in a household that tried to shelter him from the horrors that they had experienced in Germany."



Delaware Valley University's Graduate Health Professions Interprofessional Experience

In early October, over 60 students and faculty from the Graduate Counseling Psychology, Physician's Assistant, and Speech Language Pathology programs met via zoom to engage in an interprofessional case collaboration.

Spearheaded by faculty members from three Del Val graduate programs, Drs. Adrian Banning (PA), Laura Lenkey (SLP) & Audrey Ervin (GCP), students from each graduate program were divided into groups of three to discuss a clinical case presentation and contemplate professional identity.

Students reflected on the importance of treating patients through an interprofessional lens and drawing upon skills and interventions from various clinical approaches. Integrating medical, psychological and speech-language interventions helped graduate students to see the importance of a collaborative care model. Furthermore, it gave graduate students from three different programs the opportunity to meet new friends.

Graduate Counseling Psychology student Tracey O'Neill stated, "We all had so much to talk about and learn from each other." A few days later, Tracey randomly ran into some of the students she met in the meeting on campus and stated, "In that moment we formed not only a professional bond but a friendship as well. This collaboration experience has opened the doors to so many new experiences and learning opportunities."



Dr. Audrey Ervin Teaches Ethical Inclusion at the VA Hospital

This semester, Dr. Audrey Ervin presented The Ethics of Working with LGBTQ+ Folx: Practical Strategies. The session was attended by 65+ Coatesville Veterans Affairs psychologists, medical doctors, therapists, interns and trainees. There was productive discussion about the best ways to provide ethical care for LGBTQ+ Veterans.

This interactive workshop addressed working with LGBTQ+ folx. Sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and current terminology was addressed. Participants identified strategies to disrupt microaggressions and applied APA ethical guidelines to create an action plan for working with LGBTQ+ veterans from a strengths-oriented perspective.

At the end of this program, participants were able to:

- Describe the differences between sex assigned at birth, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.
- Identify microaggressions, microassaults, microinsults and microinvalidations.
- Apply APA ethical & aspirational guidelines for working with LGBTQ+ folx from a strengths-oriented perspective.
- Develop an action plan to engage in empowering relationships with LGBTQ+ folx.



DVU Psychology Club

The DVU Psych Club took a very active role this year. This fall, they teamed up with NAMI for a community panel on suicide awareness and the 2023 Stride 5K Walk to End Mental Health Stigma.

The club also sold mental health t-shirts, put on wellness nights, hosted Roxy Therapy Dogs, and took a field trip to All That Rage, a rage room in West Chester, PA.



Graduate Student Organization VP of Philanthropy and Events: Amanda Rudolph

In the new Graduate Student Organization our goal is to create a community for the graduate student community, including mentorship to undergrads in the 4+1 programs. We want to also include alumni in being able to join to mentor our current graduate students. Within the organization we hope to connect with all the graduate programs to create networking opportunities and professional development.