

Psychology Research Day
Missouri Western State University
December 4, 2025

Poster Presentations from 12:45-1:45 p.m.

in

Murphy Hall 2nd Floor Atrium

Research Team

Writing for Wellness: Stress Relief through Journaling among College Students

Ella Fitzpatrick, Madison Lavery, Delaney Massey, Hannah Ramlatchman, Kylie Stagner, & Malaisha Woodson

This study compared the effect of journaling on the topic of stressful life factors versus gratitude journaling on college students' positive and negative affect. Using a pre- and post-test design, we found that when college students journaled about what they were grateful for, they had lower negative affect afterwards.

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Christine Ziemer

Stress and Coping Strategies among College Students and Athletes

Keelan Aita, Alyssa Fanning, Keyanna McAfee, Serah Ryals, & Terri Taylor

College underclassmen, upperclassmen, athletes and non-athletes cope in different ways with mixed findings on impacts on stress levels. We compared participants by class and athletic participation on general stress, coping mechanisms, and athletic strain. Results showed no differences on any variables. Measures focused on college stress may be more sensitive.

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Teddi Deka

Contributions to College Leadership Formation

Ava Garaway, Lauren George, Autumn O'Brien, Kylan Stout, & Erica Terrell

College students have opportunities to participate in organizations to gain leadership experience. Academic motivation, self-efficacy, parenting behaviors and previous participation in organizations may contribute to leadership in college. The current research compared college leaders to non-leaders. Leaders reported higher intrinsic motivation and lower levels of helicopter parenting.

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Teddi Deka

Practicum

Harm Reduction and Substance Use Disorder

Molly Killion

This literature review examines the efficacy of harm reduction policy framed in the context of a practicum experience at an addiction services clinic. The review highlights evidence supporting harm reduction as a pragmatic, evidence-based approach that improves health outcomes and reduces stigma associated with drug use.

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Kayla Waters

Honors/Independent Research

Mindfulness, Distraction, and Accelerated Learning: A Pilot Study

Nathan Sheehan

Participants attempted a standard deviation equation and then either participated in a 10-minute guided mindfulness meditation, or a distraction task. After watching 2x-playback-speed lecture on standard deviation calculation, students were asked to solve another standard deviation equation. Improvement scores were compared in order to see if meditation improved learning.

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