

**The Providence College
Psychology Department Presents:**

Analyze This!

Psychology in Unexpected Places

Issue 27, Volume 1

Friday,
May 9, 2025

Analyze This! ~ Table of Contents

Cover Image, Margaret McFadden & Nicole Sgroi

Background of <i>Analyze This!</i> and Psi Chi Executive Board.....	2
Update from the President, Isabella Glennon.....	3
Psychology in Unexpected Places, Devon Ryan.....	4
Empty Instructions ~ Why Happiness Isn't as Simple as a Few Steps, Joshua Devia.....	5
More Than a Major: How Studying Psychology Shaped My Life, Sofia Flower.....	7
Psychology in Unexpected Settings, Kellyann Taylor.....	9
Psychology in Unexpected Places, Sergio Espinoza.....	11
Showtime's <i>Yellowjackets</i> and Psychopathology Depictions in Media, Sydney King.....	13
Girls with ADHD: The Hidden Struggle, Mary-Margaret de la Peña.....	15
Psychology in Unexpected Places: MLK Convocation, Najoude Claude.....	17
Psychology in Literature, Jillian Mike.....	19
The Eyes are the Windows to the Brain, Olivia Barbarini.....	21
A Letter From the Editor and Resources.....	23

Analyze This! is the Providence College Psychology Department's biannual newsletter. It features articles written by psychology majors, as well department news. The theme of *Analyze This!* is unique to each semester of publication. This semester, we chose to showcase work that demonstrates and examines how the field of psychology can be applied in a variety of unexpected places. Enjoy as you read the Volume 27: Issue 1, Spring 2025 publication of *Analyze This!*



Psi Chi Executive Board 2024 - 2025

President: Isabella Glennon

Vice President: Amber Haray

Secretary: Jillian Mike

Treasurer: Margaret Matthews

Help Helped Me Officer: Audrey Raupp

Psi Chi Executive Board 2025 - 2026

President: Ashley Federico

Vice President: Skate Lapus

Secretaries: Augustine Muller (Fall) and Veronica Smith (Spring)

Treasurer: Brian Murray

Help Helped Me Officer: Emma Nevin

Update From The President

Isabella Glennon

As my time at Providence College comes to an end, I want to thank all the professors, staff, and students who have made this experience so memorable; as a Biology and Psychology double major with a minor in Sociology and a Neuroscience Certificate, I've had the opportunity to pursue a diverse course load that has allowed me to bridge the gaps between disciplines while also becoming a leader, as President of Psi Chi. This past semester, Psi Chi has had an amazing turnout for our events, such as Inside Scoop, the Providence College Psychology Conference, and our annual induction ceremony. While partnering with Flourish and their ambassadors, students and families were educated on the importance of mental health and how people can utilize their resources to best aid them. I am extremely grateful for our executive board, in addition to Mrs. Mullen and our faculty advisors, Drs. Morris and Tighe – none of this would be possible without your support. To the underclassmen, cherish your time here; time flies. Congratulations to all of the seniors, and I wish you nothing but the best in your future endeavors!

Psychology in Unexpected Places

Devon Ryan

When I think about the concept of psychology in unexpected places, I find it amusing. That may be an unexpected reaction, but it comes from a realization I had only a few years ago— that psychology is found everywhere (and truly no place is unexpected). This thought takes me back to what drew me to this field, and as it is for most of us psychology enthusiasts, I was drawn in by the idea of understanding who we are and why it happens. I have always been fascinated by the scientific strides of understanding that we make in this field, motivated by the hope that my learning could lead to my own strides being made. Once I had committed to the decision to make this field my major and I began my academic career at a liberal arts college, I became increasingly enraptured by what an education in psychology could provide me, and I began to see what I was learning everywhere. It started out in my unrelated courses such as theology, philosophy, an introduction to humanities, and intensive writing. It reached the depths of my politics course, women's & gender studies, and even in introduction to painting. I truly felt the definition of what it means to get a liberal arts education, but psychology quickly became a part of more than just my academics. I found it in all my conversations, observations, I could see it in others' experiences, their dreams and goals. It became the motivation behind every form of participation I contributed in my classes, and often seeped into what I had to contribute in late night conversations with friends. Experiencing this, the only conclusion I could come to is that psychology is everywhere, and no place (since this realization) has been unexpected. On the contrary, it has almost become a game to find the psychology in whatever I am learning, observing, or speaking about. A game that truly never gets old. It went so far as to lead me to taking on a philosophy minor, where the origin of the field of psychology began.

Once I realized that psychology could be found everywhere, I noticed that it became intertwined with the way I viewed the world. Before I knew it, my education in psychology became a driving force in my growth as a human. I became radically empathetic and hungry for knowledge in ways I had never experienced before. Future possibilities went from ominous to endless. My confidence grew and natural contentment crept in until one of the strongest emotions I felt for myself was pride. And with that pride, I only grew more motivated, more empathetic, and more confident that I could use my own learned outlook to change the lives of others.

Now, when people ask me about how I feel about my major, I have a smile on my face before words can make it out of my mouth. I truly believe that psychology can be found everywhere, as long as you are open to look for it. One thing I know for sure is that you will find it within me.

Empty Instructions ~ Why Happiness Isn't as Simple as a Few Steps

Joshua Devia

The final week of college is a time described as a time of misery for college students, but it is also a time of resilience against a multitude of stressors. It is after a 3-hour long study guide creation that I am officially beat, I walk to my dining hall to discover my friends. Amazingly, in just a few words I feel rejuvenated and excited to embark on any adventures with them! The fact is happiness isn't as simple as a list of instructions similar to building furniture or cooking. Rather, happiness is finding what pleases you, the distinction of short-term happiness and long-term happiness is one that is heavily prevalent within society today regarding materialism and social media. A tale as old as time, I may not be able to answer what happiness is, but others have certainly tried.

The 2016 film *Trolls* comedically centers its plot around this idea of obtaining happiness; the caveat being that the antagonists eat trolls because they are told it is the only way to obtain happiness. With this, one must ask themselves what environmental influences promise happiness and do not provide? That new expensive phone may bring social acceptance or posting a selfie of you in a cool place perhaps, but these ideas are just as misguided as the antagonist in the aforementioned child's movie! In the classroom you would be told that happiness is the result of microscopic neurotransmitters communicating within the brain. An odd concept, is it not, that the bliss occurring when you are greeted by a fuzzy friend is just a few chemicals in the brain? It is odd because the truth is much more human, one that involves personal experiences and internal factors. But this begs the question, if happiness cannot be explained even by science, how am I supposed to achieve it personally, what is the formula for happiness? If you are someone seeking the formula for happiness, wonder this, imagine asking someone how to obtain a specific favorite food? You can't, as these feelings are subjective in nature, what makes one person happy may not exactly fit for another, for these reasons happiness is an internal discovery.



We must look within ourselves and identify what works within ourselves to be content – in this expedition to the mind is when we must identify short term happiness from long term. For me, I am a gamer, and with my hours of gaming I know that I am not achieving a long term happiness through my behavior, but for example, me engaging in bouts during fencing practice prove to be a better semblance of long term happiness as it is a motivator and will last throughout college. Short term happiness proves to be engaging but does not promise longevity, whereas long term happiness is developed and structured with the expense of being harder to obtain. It is when the artist gazes into the eyes of their creation and promises to never abandon their craft. Importantly, short term happiness is not bad, but it is not forever either, while things of the short term are to be enjoyed, that of the long term is to be cherished.

With all this talk about happiness, it is important to recognize that you may not be happy all the time, you may not be perpetually smiling. The hidden secret is that this is perfectly normal, those mannequin-esque selfies on Instagram of stretched smiles are not completely true, there will be times where you struggle and don't wear a smile. Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, Carl Jung, had this to say about happiness, "Even a happy life cannot be without a measure of darkness, and the word 'happy' would lose its meaning if it were not balanced by sadness." It is with these words that we rid ourselves of the pressure to be constantly smiling, rather we seek within ourselves the causes of happiness, the mind has so much to say yet the average person gives so little to hear. We need not look for false promises of quick fixes, because our minds are not meant to be fixed like that of glassware, the mind needs our attention.

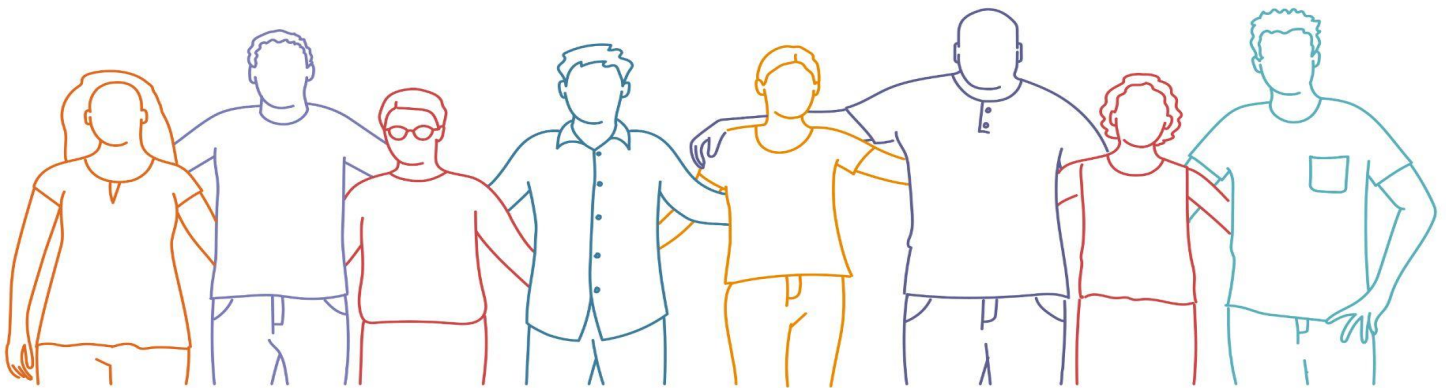


More Than a Major: How Studying Psychology Shaped My Life

Sofia Flower

When people hear that I am majoring in psychology, one of the first things they often say is, "Can you read my mind?" quickly followed by, "What are you going to do with that?". Psychology is a broad and fascinating field offering various career possibilities and insights into human nature. Since declaring my psychology major three years ago, I have realized that its value extends far beyond career preparation. Studying psychology has notably influenced my personal development, shaped my interpersonal relationships, and deepened my understanding of human behavior in everyday life.

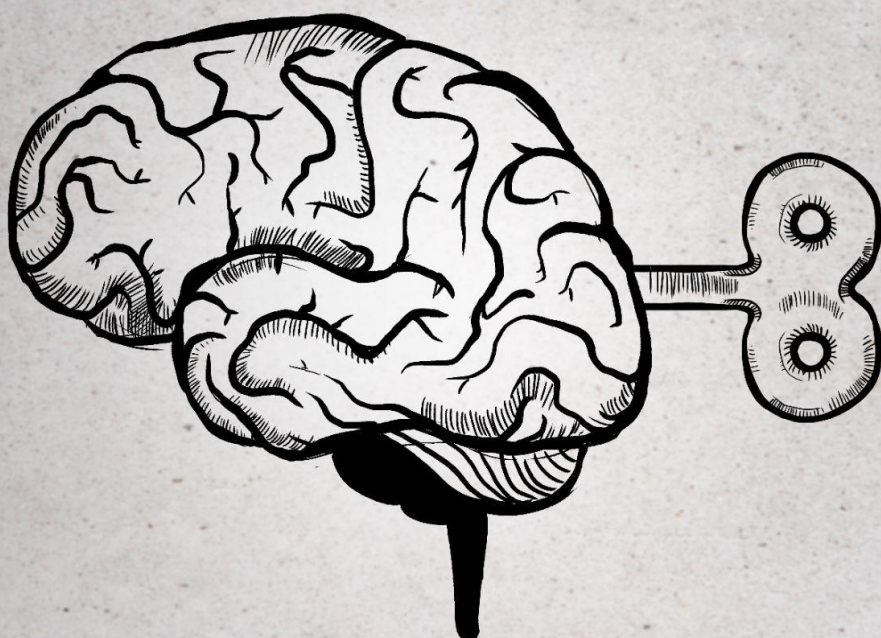
Being a Psychology major has influenced my personal development by strengthening my emotional intelligence. Through taking courses such as Social Psychology and Psychopathology at Providence College, I have gained a deeper understanding of emotional patterns, both in myself and in others. It has led me to become better equipped to interpret nonverbal cues, recognize subtle emotional changes, and how to approach interactions with greater empathy and patience. Even on challenging days, I always make a conscious effort to engage thoughtfully and listen actively, giving others my full attention rather than preparing my response. This has benefited my communication style and has enabled me to create stronger, and more meaningful connections with those around me.



In addition to improving my communication skills, studying psychology has taught me how to recognize common defense mechanisms, such as denial and deflection, both in myself and in others. This has helped me approach conflict with greater compassion and understanding. Rather than reacting impulsively or taking things personally, I make a strong effort to consider the underlying emotions or experiences that might be influencing someone's behavior. This mindset has not only strengthened my relationships but has also given me a sense of emotional strength in challenging situations.

Furthermore, my studies have also deepened my appreciation for individual differences. I have learned to see how others' thoughts, emotions, and behaviors are shaped by a complex interplay of factors. This includes their social upbringing, mental health, culture, and lived experiences. This understanding reminds me that there is much more to a person than what is visible from the outside. It encourages me to approach each interaction I have with empathy and curiosity.

Being a Psychology major at Providence College has provided me with a set of tools that I carry with me every day. It has taught me to think critically, to observe carefully, and to engage with others thoughtfully. Before entering college, I was not nearly as aware of these patterns, nor did I realize the extent to which they influence daily life. Looking back, I realize that choosing to major in psychology was not simply an academic decision; it was a choice that has fundamentally shaped how I understand myself and others. No matter where my career path ultimately leads, the insights and skills I have gained through my studies will continue to guide how I connect with people, solve problems, and navigate the world around me. I have my education to credit for not only preparing me academically but also shaping the person I am becoming every day.



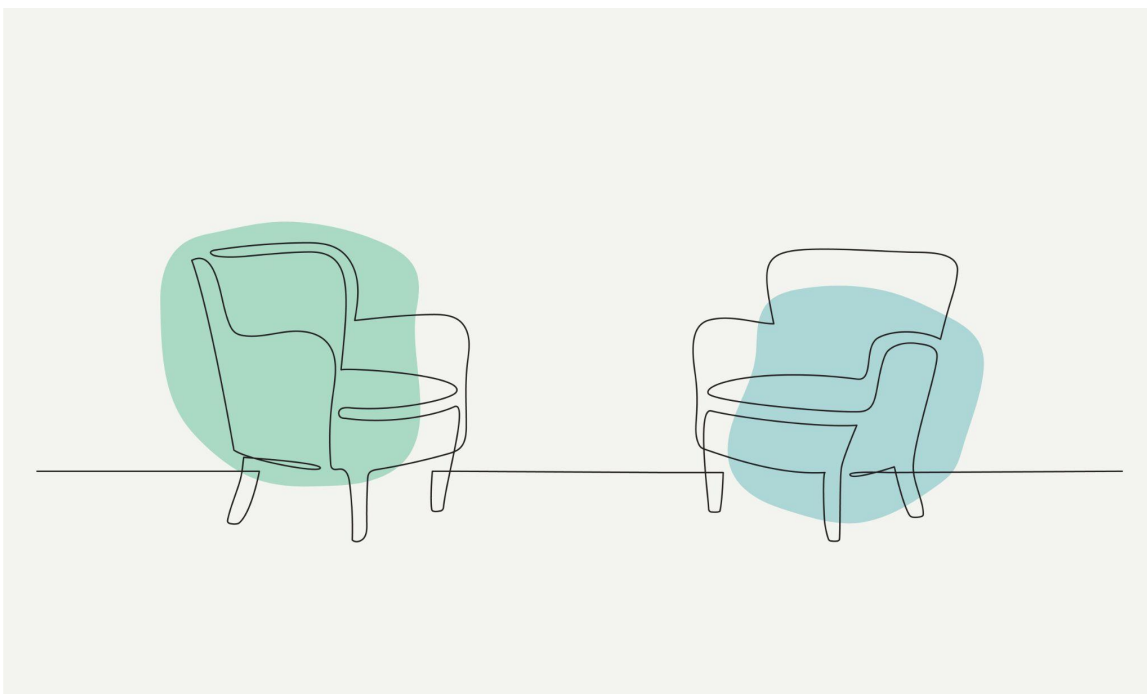
Psychology in Unexpected Settings

Kellyann Taylor

You are sitting in the doctor's office, and you overhear a conversation – someone is refusing to get their child vaccinated. What does the doctor do now? They cannot force the parent to give the child their vaccinations. Game over? No, this is where psychology comes into play in the form of motivational interviewing.

Motivational interviewing is a combination of listening and telling. It is a form of communication that has a specific goal in mind, but acknowledges the wants and needs of the interviewee, and allows them to get to that goal on their own. Unlike coercion, there is no threatening or pressure, rather the interviewing is focused on directing the conversation towards educating those around them.

This strategy of informing patients is derived from social psychology, the form of psychology which “focuses on the scientific study of how other people influence our thoughts, feelings, and actions” (Sanderson & Huffman 497). Motivational interviewing in the medical world influences thoughts on procedures, vaccinations, and various other decisions through informing those who are hesitant of the reality and outcomes of these decisions. With the assistance of motivational interviewing the feelings of unrest about an upcoming procedure or schedules vaccine for a child might be mitigated, knowing the facts and statistics and utilizing those as a source of comfort. Being properly educated on the facts behind a medical procedure or decision, by a medical professional themselves, can ultimately lead to a decision the interviewee might not have initially expected from themselves.





In the times of COVID-19 or the recent measles outbreak, approaching a hesitant patient with motivational interviewing can be beneficial for the entire community. This elicits the motivations of the hesitant for change, rather than imposing said change onto them. The nature of this psychological strategy is also one which is nonjudgmental. Acceptance, compassion, open questions, and reflections, in addition to sharing valuable information, make this process a combination of social psychology, communication psychology, and an example of behavioral changes through a cognitive impact.

The next time you're at a doctor's office, pay attention to how medical professionals address a conversation of hesitation. Say you do not want a vaccine or are debating getting a procedure – are they asking you open questions? Do they understand the emotions that are fueling this decision? Do they reflect on their experiences with the medical decision? Whether it be an ethics committee brought in to discuss a lifesaving procedure with a patient and their family and changing the language to better communicate with the patient, or a simple debunking of a conspiracy theory on vaccines, the style of motivational interviewing seen may vary, but its presence in the medical field is prominent.

Psychology is all around us. Psychology influences decisions in all aspects of life, and is a powerful tool, even for those who specialize in other professional fields. Between my epidemiology class this semester, and my clinical bioethics DWC colloquia, it became clear to me that the themes of psychology are vital to the well-being of the greater good.

Psychology in Unexpected Places

Sergio Espinoza

At the start of my second semester as a sophomore, I was determined to immerse myself in the core pillars of cognitive and developmental psychology. Yet one elective quickly seized my imagination and reshaped my academic trajectory: Psychology & Law. I had anticipated a clinical focus, maybe something on criminal profiling or forensic assessment, but instead, I discovered a rich dialogue between human behavior, legal structures, and social justice.

In the first few classes, I was struck by how neatly psychological research informs courtroom dynamics: from jury selection guided by social identity theory to eyewitness testimony shaped by the science of memory distortion. I had never considered law as “applied psychology,” yet every contract dispute, negligence case, and personal injury claim hinges on people’s perceptions, biases, and decision-making processes. Realizing that psychological insight could improve legal outcomes, not just for individual clients but for entire communities, sparked a new kind of excitement in me. As the semester draws to a close, I not only excelled in the coursework, but I now see law as a natural extension of my psychology training.

Outside the classroom, I find myself using psychological frameworks to better understand everyday relationships and challenges. When a roommate reacts defensively to feedback, I think of Carl Rogers’s concept of unconditional positive regard, the idea that empathy and genuine acceptance opens the door to better communication. Rather than respond with frustration, I try to lead with reassurance and curiosity.

Attribution theory has also changed the way I interpret behavior. If a classmate skips a class, I pause before assuming laziness or carelessness. I remind myself that situational factors, a family emergency, a rough week, might be at play. This shift from blaming individuals to considering context has reduced my stress and strengthened my relationships. Psychology, in that way, has become both a mirror and a map; a way to better understand others, and myself.



If there is one principle that I think everyone, regardless of background, would benefit from understanding, it is cognitive dissonance. This theory describes the mental discomfort we feel when our actions and beliefs do not align, and how we often resolve that discomfort by shifting one or the other. We see it everywhere: the smoker who downplays health risks, the shopper who justifies an impulsive purchase, or the citizen who champions free speech but supports banning opposing viewpoints. Once you learn to recognize those moments of dissonance, they become opportunities for deeper self-awareness. Personally, when I catch myself defending a bad decision, I pause and ask: “Am I adjusting my beliefs to excuse my actions, or can I change my behavior to better reflect my values?” That little moment of honesty makes a big difference.



In the legal world, you can actually watch this mental tug-of-war unfold. In personal injury suits, for example, defendants might minimize their responsibility to ease the discomfort of feeling guilty. In contract negotiations, parties often stick stubbornly to their opening terms even when the facts suggest compromise. But when you really think about it, contracts are just psychological tools in disguise, they formalize our expectations and serve as commitment devices. Whether it's a roommate agreement or a team project plan, contracts reflect how we manage trust and accountability. Even tort law, which centers on negligence and harm, rests on a shared psychological understanding of duty of care, the idea that we all owe each other a basic level of responsibility.

My journey at PC has shown me that the boundaries between disciplines are far more fluid than they seem. Psychology & Law did not just surprise me, it changed everything. It revealed a passion I had not yet tapped into, and offered a roadmap for how I can use behavioral science to drive social change. Whether I am agreeing to a contract, resolving a conflict, or simply listening to someone's concerns, I carry the belief that psychology, when brought into unexpected places, can make the world more fair, more empathetic, and more humane.

Showtime's *Yellowjackets* and Psychopathology

Depictions in Media

Sydney King

With the third season of Showtime's *Yellowjackets* was airing between February-April of this past year, I couldn't help but notice a significant amount of crossover between what I was learning about in my psychology courses and the behavior that I was observing with the characters on the show.

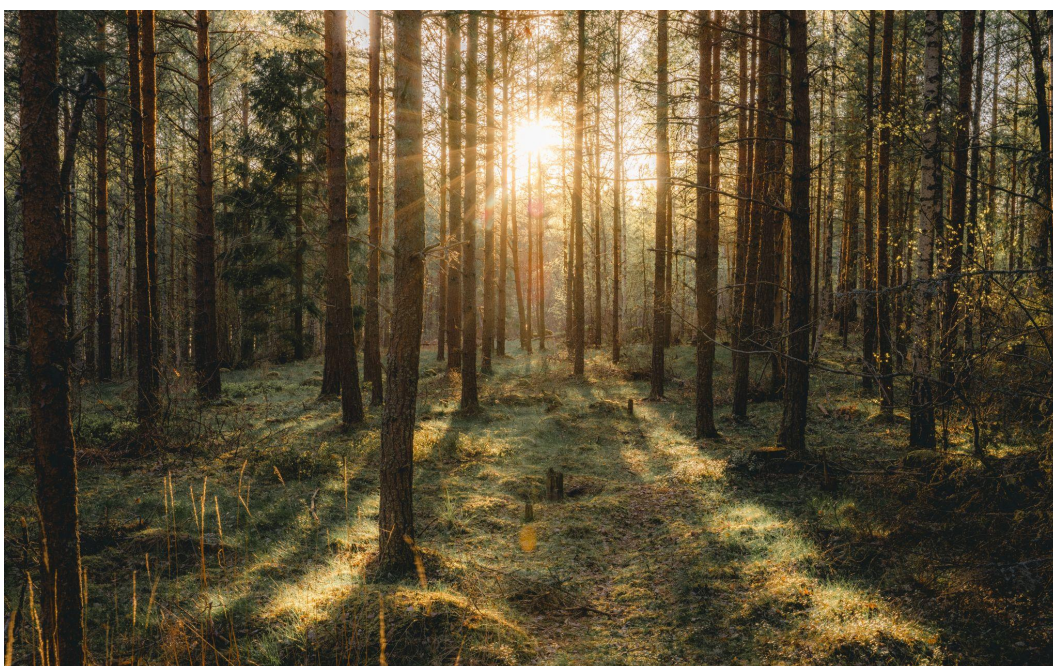
The premise alone sets the scene for an interesting psychological dynamic between all the characters. The high school varsity girls' soccer team is invited to their season's nationals, requiring them to fly from New Jersey to Seattle. Their plane ends up crashing, off course of the path they were going to follow, leaving them stranded in the Canadian wilderness for 19 months. The characters experience trauma from their plane crash and enter a cycle of continuous traumatization by committing atrocious violent acts to survive. One character's psychopathology however, stands out amongst the rest: Lottie Matthews.

Lottie is a particularly captivating character because she is explicitly shown having mental health struggles before the plane crashes. In the scene before they all board the plane, Lottie is seen taking some sort of psychiatric medication, although it is not directly stated what type. As the show progresses, it is revealed that Lottie was being treated for a psychotic disorder for most of her life, and being in the wilderness is the longest she has been unmedicated in years. Lottie's diagnosis is never specifically named, partially because the writing of the show likes to teeter the line between a psychological or supernatural horror, but most fans have agreed that she fits the criteria for schizophrenia—which is somewhat accurate, however, I believe that schizoaffective disorder suites her better because of her periods of elevation and depression.

The point here though, is less about trying to accurately diagnosis a fictional character, and more so about how a canonically mentally ill character is portrayed on screens in 2025. The most important detail about Lottie's potential schizophrenia is that she keeps it a secret from her teammates for the duration of being in the wilderness. Since the show consists of two timelines, with the one where they are stranded being set in the late '90s, experiencing psychosis was not something discussed, even less so than now. Due to this, there is an air of mystery to Lottie's "visions" and "spiritual connections" influencing the girls view Lottie as having a psychic gift, making her to be some sort of prophet to listen to for them to make it out of the wilderness alive.



The most interesting commentary that Lottie's character provides however, is how the mental health treatment system has failed severely mentally ill people. Upon returning to New Jersey and being rescued, Lottie resorts to being mute, presumably because of depression. Although being stranded was a traumatic and life-altering situation, being back in society makes Lottie feel a lack of purpose. When surrounded by a bunch of desperate teenage girls trying to cling onto anything that could give them faith, Lottie's cognitive deficits were perceived as a gift. Back with her parents in the suburbs, her "gifts" are reduced to an impairment. Lottie's parents, desperately begging doctors to "fix her" so that she will talk again, end up giving her shock therapy treatment, which does motivate her to start speaking again, but does not provide a permanent solution to her frequent dissociation, depression, and delusions. After her shock therapy, her specialists and parents decide that the best course of action is for her to go to another country for 24/7 inpatient care, which she resides in for 15 years after the crash. Lottie's attachment to her delusions has only maintained despite decades of treatment because her treatment fails to give her what her psychosis does: validation for living. It is her mental illness that gives her character a sort of unique ambiguity, whilst also being the main source of conflict for her. A common misconception of fans of the show is that Lottie is the villain, because her delusions drive the girls further into madness, however from a psychological standpoint, these delusions are reality for Lottie. Although her actions have indirectly hurt people, her intention is that she is sharing her truth with others. Above all else, Lottie represents the shortcomings of the United States' mental healthcare system, and how an inability to correctly treat and validate those with severe psychiatric problems can result in a lifetime of cycling through inpatient care, without progressed being made or the patient's distortions being addressed.



Girls with ADHD: The Hidden Struggle

Mary-Margaret de la Peña

In classrooms across America, the stereotype of ADHD often conjures images of hyperactive boys disrupting class, fidgeting in their seats, or acting impulsively. Yet, hidden among these obvious presentations are countless girls whose struggles with attention and executive function go unnoticed. This gender disparity represents a significant blind spot in how we understand, diagnose, and treat Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder.

The Invisible Presentation

Research clearly demonstrates that girls are diagnosed with ADHD at approximately half the rate of boys during childhood, with this ratio approaching equality by adulthood (Hinshaw et al., 2022). This discrepancy isn't merely statistical—it represents a fundamental difference in how ADHD manifests across genders and how society responds to these manifestations. Girls with ADHD predominantly exhibit inattention symptoms rather than hyperactivity. Instead of the disruptive behaviors that prompt teacher referrals for boys, girls often struggle silently with disorganization, forgetfulness, and difficulty sustaining attention. Their symptoms frequently manifest as daydreaming, appearing "spacey," or having trouble completing tasks—presentations that may be interpreted as laziness or lack of motivation rather than a neurodevelopmental disorder.

Masking and Compensation

Many girls develop sophisticated compensatory strategies to mask their ADHD symptoms. They may work twice as hard to keep up academically, create elaborate organizational systems, or channel their restlessness into socially acceptable behaviors like talking or helping others. These coping mechanisms may temporarily conceal their struggles but often lead to exhaustion, perfectionism, and anxiety as they attempt to maintain a façade of competence.

This "masking" phenomenon contributes significantly to the underdiagnosis of ADHD in females, as clinicians and teachers may not recognize symptoms that don't fit the stereotypical presentation (Hinshaw et al., 2022).

Neurocognitive Differences

Fascinating neuropsychological research reveals distinct cognitive profiles between boys and girls with ADHD. In a study examining response control under varying cognitive demands, Seymour et al. (2016) found that boys with ADHD demonstrated impaired response control regardless of task complexity, whereas girls with ADHD only showed impairments when cognitive load increased.

These findings suggest different neurological underpinnings: boys with ADHD may have deficits in both premotor and prefrontal brain circuits, while girls' deficits might be primarily localized to prefrontal circuits. Such neurobiological differences underscore the need for gender-informed assessment and intervention approaches.

Developmental Trajectories and Long-term Outcomes

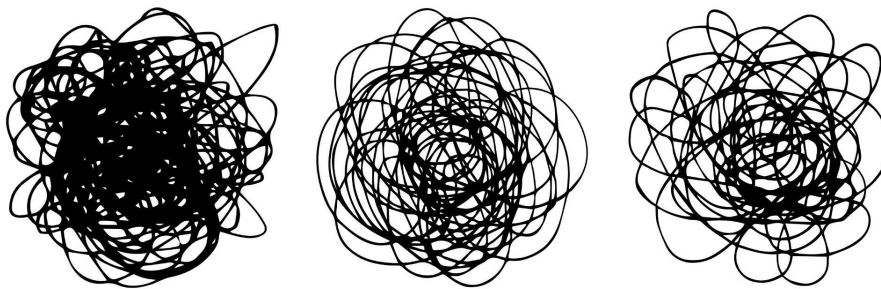
The consequences of untreated ADHD in girls can be significant. Longitudinal research shows that even when their ADHD symptoms diminish over time, girls with childhood ADHD continue to demonstrate executive function deficits throughout adolescence and into emerging adulthood (Gordon & Hinshaw, 2020).

Furthermore, females with ADHD face heightened risks for depression, anxiety, self-harm, and relationship difficulties compared to their neurotypical peers. These outcomes likely reflect both the direct impact of ADHD symptoms and the psychological toll of years spent struggling without appropriate support or understanding.

Implications

Understanding these gender differences is not merely academic—it has profound implications for how we identify and support individuals with ADHD. By recognizing that ADHD often manifests differently in girls, we can develop more sensitive screening tools, train educators to recognize less obvious symptoms, and create interventions that address the specific challenges girls face.

The neurodiversity movement reminds us that ADHD represents a different—not deficient—neurological profile. By expanding our understanding of how ADHD presents across genders, we move one step closer to creating environments where everyone can thrive, regardless of how their brain works.



References

- Bell, L. J., John, O. P., & Hinshaw, S. P. (2024). ADHD symptoms in childhood and Big Five personality traits in adolescence: A five-year longitudinal study in girls. *Research on Child and Adolescent Psychopathology*, 52, 1369-1382. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-024-01204-x>
- Gordon, C. T., & Hinshaw, S. P. (2020). Executive functions in girls with and without childhood ADHD followed through emerging adulthood: Developmental trajectories. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 49(4), 509-523. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15374416.2019.1602840>
- Hinshaw, S. P., Nguyen, P. T., O'Grady, S. M., & Rosenthal, E. A. (2022). Annual research review: Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder in girls and women: Underrepresentation, longitudinal processes, and key directions. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 63(4), 484-496. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.13480>
- Ragnarsdottir, B., Hannesdottir, D. K., Halldorsson, F., & Njardvik, U. (2018). Gender and age differences in social skills among children with ADHD: Peer problems and prosocial behavior. *Child & Family Behavior Therapy*, 40(4), 263-278. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07317107.2018.1522152>
- Seymour, K. E., Mostofsky, S. H., & Rosch, K. S. (2016). Cognitive load differentially impacts response control in girls and boys with ADHD. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 44(1), 141-154. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-015-9976-z>

Psychology in Unexpected Places: MLK Convocation

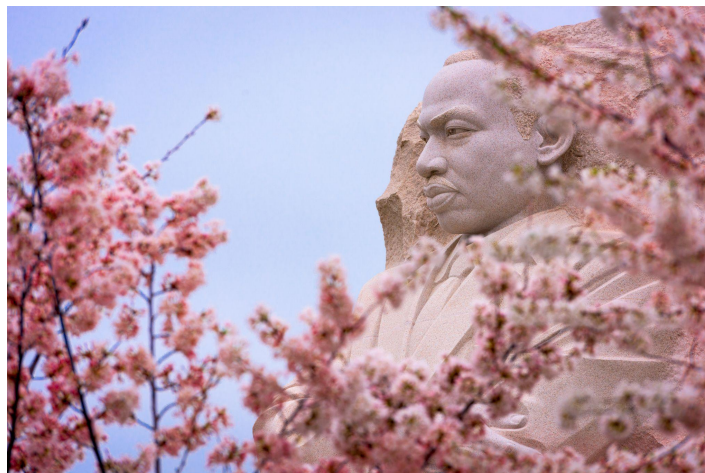
Najoude Claude

This semester, I attended my school's MLK Convocation, an event honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy. I went alone and was not sure what to expect, but the night turned out to be a meaningful experience of connection, reflection, and purpose that stayed with me long after it ended.

The evening began with dinner, where I sat with a mix of people I didn't know well. At first, I felt a little awkward, but as we started talking, things became more comfortable. Being in a shared space and having conversations over a meal helped break down barriers and made it easier to connect with others. By the end of dinner, I felt a real sense of comfort and belonging, which was something I did not expect going into the event. Moments like that are a reminder of how important human interaction and community are, especially in a college setting where it's easy to feel isolated at times.

After dinner, the program continued with the MLK Vision Awards, recognizing people on campus who demonstrate leadership and service in the spirit of Dr. King's work. Watching these awards being handed out was inspiring. It showed how much impact one person can have by simply being committed to making things better for others. It made me reflect on what leadership means—not necessarily holding a title, but consistently working toward fairness and inclusivity in everyday actions.

The highlight of the night was the keynote speech by Matthew Slater. He spoke about the importance of purpose and how it shapes who we are. What stood out to me was his view of football. He said it's not just his career—it's part of his greater purpose, a path where he can serve and inspire others. His message stuck with me because it's easy to think of a job as just something we do to earn money. But hearing him talk about finding meaning in his work made me reflect on my own goals and how I want to approach my future. I realized that whatever path I choose, I want it to have meaning beyond just personal success. His words were a reminder that purpose and passion are key to feeling fulfilled in life.





The night ended with a performance by the Footprints Gospel Choir. Their music created a powerful emotional moment that wrapped up the evening perfectly. There was a real feeling of unity in the room, and it reminded me how shared cultural experiences like music can bring people from different backgrounds together in a meaningful way.

Overall, attending the MLK Convocation was more impactful than I expected. I did not think going to an event alone would be so rewarding, but it pushed me out of my comfort zone and helped me make new connections. It also gave me a lot to think about in terms of my own purpose and how I can be more involved in promoting inclusivity and community on campus. Moving forward, I plan to seek out more events like this and look for ways to get involved in initiatives that reflect Dr. King's ideals of service, leadership, and equality.

This experience showed me that meaningful lessons and personal growth can happen in unexpected places. I'm grateful I attended and know it's something I will carry with me, both personally and in my future efforts to build stronger, more inclusive communities.

Psychology in Literature

Jillian Mike

Throughout my time at Providence College, my favorite aspect of studying psychology is that it is relevant in all other aspects of academia and life. This fact was solidified to me when I took 17th Century Literature in the fall of my sophomore year, my first upper-level literature course. When I added the English Literature major the semester prior, I was not anticipating it overlapping with my Psychology major much, if at all. Reading *Paradise Lost* in 17th Century Lit would quickly prove me wrong, as the epic novel focused heavily on displaying the psychological roots of hubris and the devastation of betrayal.

Since that semester, in every literature class I have taken I have seen a connection to psychology in one way or another. Macbeth falls victim to self-fulfilling prophecy. The Creature in Frankenstein becomes a morally and linguistic educated being through observational learning. Oliver Twist is an excellent example of resilience.

I utilize my knowledge of psychology in most major English assignments, both literature and creative writing. Turning to psychology to conceptualize and understand the interpersonal and internal issues of characters in literary works has always been my go-to method of analysis. Once you read a literary work with a psychological lens, a whole new world of interpretation opens up, with all new conclusions waiting to be drawn.





My favorite novel, for this reason, is Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. As I mentioned, the Creature learns language and develops his own moral code through observing the De Lacey family and their reading of *Paradise Lost* (coincidentally!). Shelley demonstrates the learning theories of social and observational learning, allowing him to eventually draw conclusions about his existence (attributing himself to Milton's Adam) and what he believes Victor Frankenstein owes him (hence, the Creature's demand for a companion). His learning is observational as he must watch through a hole in the wall as the De Lacey's interact. Just as his learning is social because he grows to care for the De Lacey's and therefore wants to relate to them and know what they know.

I added the English Literature major for fun, but it really became my passion project because of the overlap with psychology. Although I am pursuing clinical psychology after graduation and leaving my literary studies in undergrad, I will continue to consider both disciplines in my graduate studies and recreational reading.

The Eyes are the Windows into the Brain

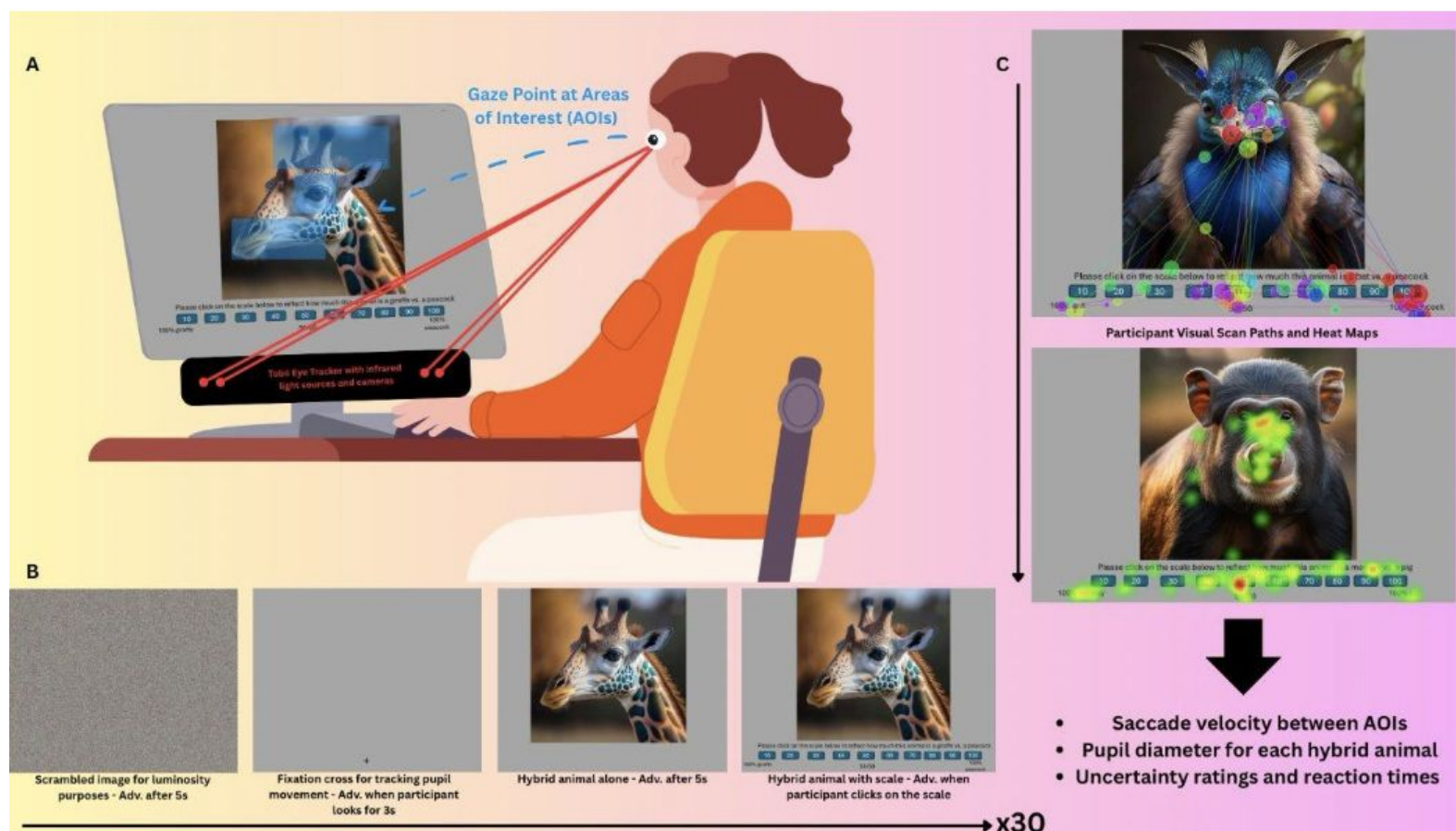
Olivia Barbarini

Many people do not know that eye-tracking has shown to be an effective method of measuring brain activity, particularly with attentional bias in anxiety disorders. Attentional bias refers to our tendency to pay attention to some things while simultaneously ignoring others; in other words, how a person's perception is affected by selective factors in their attention. Individuals with anxiety disorders often exhibit preferential attentional processing of threat-related stimuli like angry faces, spiders, or other fear-related objects. It is maintained in the psychological literature that anxiety plays an important role in what people generally pay attention to, but what happens when we add an eye tracking measure to this phenomena? Furthermore, how do these different types of data inform us on how people with anxiety make decisions based on what they are focusing on?

Eye-tracking technology in neuroscience and psychology research is a quickly-evolving strategy because we are beginning to better understand the role that visual processing plays in cognitive processes. Pupil dilation, for example, is typically associated with norepinephrine release, a neurotransmitter that's linked to our "fight-or-flight" response, arousal, and stress levels. Because individuals with anxiety also tend to exhibit biases in their attention, eye-tracking technologies can specifically measure how much or how little a participant fixates on a certain stimuli feature. And finally, the velocity of a person's saccades—the rapid, jerky eye movements that allow us to shift our gaze quickly from one part of a stimuli to another—can be linked to how confident they are in a particular decision. These are just a few examples of how eye-tracking data can be directly correlated with psychological and behavioral data regarding anxiety and decision-making, but again, this research is constantly on the move and growing.

Dr. Andra Geana is a new professor in the neuroscience and psychology departments here at PC. Her lab is the only one on campus that has eye-tracking software, and as a student researcher in her lab, I had the opportunity to play around with it these past few semesters. The Tobii Eye-Tracker uses infrared light sources and cameras to record even the slightest eye movement and pupil dilation changes in the participant, which can then be linked to any stimuli the researcher wants to present to the participant on the monitor. After a lot of trial and error, we were finally able to release a pilot study this spring that explores the neural mechanisms of uncertainty using eye-tracking. We generated thirty funny-looking 'hybrid' animals with Adobe Firefly—basically typing into this AI Chat to "make a fictional animal that's 80% peacock and 20% bat," for example. The idea is the closer to 50/50 the generated hybrid animal is, the more uncertainty and anxiety it's supposed to evoke in the participant. The participant then clicks on a scale to guess what percentage of each animal they think the hybrid is, and afterward we were able to look at both their eye/gaze data and their behavioral data correlations.

At the most general level, we found that with higher induced uncertainty and anxiety, participants had lower pupil dilation, higher reaction times, and lower saccade velocities. Lower pupil dilation could be linked to more ‘focused’ and intricate attention, higher reaction times are linked to higher gaze fixation times, and lower saccade velocity speaks to having less confidence and more uncertainty in your decision. It is evident how eye-tracking data can be paired with behavioral data to inform us about the psychological mechanisms of how anxiety and uncertainty affect decision-making processes. As both our technologies and our brains evolve in this ever-changing world, it’s important to consider other mechanisms to pair with our current psychological tools. The physiological data that eye-tracking provides us with is crucial in our ability to predict and understand how people with psychological conditions process the world around them and make decisions. The most exciting prospect is that this promising technology is only in its early stages, and we are yet to discover more about what eye-tracking can show us about decision-making in other psychological disorders like OCD, autism, and depression. Who would have thought something as simple as our eye movements can reflect our cognitive processes and psychological behavior?



A Letter from the Editor

Thank you to all of the curious and thoughtful students who decided to share their submissions with us for the Spring 2025 edition of *Analyze This!* I can confidently say that each of the submissions made me consider the psychological disciplines in a new light. One of my favorite things about studying psychology is that it is interdisciplinary and applicable to every aspect of human interaction. I am proud that this issue captures the core, interdisciplinary features of the liberal arts education that we are receiving at Providence College. Thank you to Dr. Morris, Dr. Tighe, Mrs. Mullen, the rest of the Psi Chi Executive Board, and all of the student authors for all of your individual contributions to this journal. Have a great summer!

Jillian Mike



Mental Health Resources

***On-Campus
Resources:***

Personal Counseling Center
Lower Bedford Hall
401-865-2343
Hours: M-F 8:30am-4:30pm

**After-Hours Mental Health
Support**
**(through Personal
Counseling Center)**
401-865-2343

Dial "2" for a Crisis Counselor

**Public Safety/On-Campus
Emergency (24/7 Emergency)**

401-865-2222

**Residence Life Complex
Director On-Call
(Emergencies only)**

401-639-9110

Hall Chaplain On-Call

401-865-2219

Off-Campus Resources:

For Off-Campus Emergency
911 or local emergency contact

National Suicide Hotline

1-800-273-8255

Free and available 24/7

**Day One Helpline (Sexual
Assault and Trauma
Resource)**

1-800-494-8100

Free and available 24/7

Crisis Textline
Text "Hello" to 741-741
Free and available 24/7

**Trevor Project Helplines (for
LGBTQ+ mental health
concerns) Trevor Lifeline:**

1-866-488-7386

Trevor Text: Text START to
678-678

Book Recommendations:

- *Rough Sleepers*, Tracy Kidder
- *Mole People*, Jennifer Toth
- *Atomic Habits*, James Clear
- *The Positive Shift*, Catherine Sanderson
- *Educated*, Tara Westover
- *Unbroken*, Laura Hillenbrand
- *How the Word is Passed*, Clint Smith