

# THE TWELFTH ANNUAL GRADUATE SCHOOL SYMPOSIUM



**Assumption  
University**

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SCHOOL OF  
GRADUATE STUDIES

**APRIL 7, 2022**

**6:00 pm – 8:00 pm**

**Virtual**



## Program Schedule at a Glance

6:00pm - 6:10pm	Welcome Session
6:10pm - 6:30pm	Concurrent Sessions I (4 presentations)
6:30pm - 6:35pm	Transition
6:35pm - 6:55pm	Concurrent Sessions II (4 presentations)
6:55pm - 7:00pm	Transition
7:00pm - 7:20pm	Concurrent Sessions III (3 presentations)
7:20pm - 7:25pm	Transition
7:25pm - 7:45pm	Concurrent Sessions IV (3 presentations)
7:45pm - 8:00pm	Presentation of Certificate of Recognition & Closing Remarks

NOTE: The password for all symposium zoom links is [Assumption](#).

# Symposium Schedule

6:00pm-  
6:10pm

## OPENING WELCOME SESSION

Room A: <https://assumption.zoom.us/j/99034158996?pwd=cko5QjRYbG5QNkorVVhJWTRBTHZIUT09>

Dr. Kimberly Schandel, Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

Dr. Nanho Vander Hart, Director of the Special Education Program

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6:10pm-  
6:30pm

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS I

### School Climate and Positive Behavior Support: Implementation in an Elementary School

Room A: <https://assumption.zoom.us/j/99034158996?pwd=cko5QjRYbG5QNkorVVhJWTRBTHZIUT09>

Presenters: Patricia Genese and Leigh Blanchard

Special Education Program, Positive Behavior Supports

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Samantha Goldman

Positive behavior support (PBS), a three-tiered framework of behavioral supports, has been associated with improvements in school organizational health (i.e., school climate). In this implementation project, staff members and sixth grade students at one Worcester Public Schools elementary school that does not have a comprehensive PBS model in place completed surveys to compare perceptions of school climate. Results indicated that the adoption of PBS could help improve student and staff perceptions of school climate. An action plan with measurable outcomes was developed based on survey results.

### Association of Emotion Regulation and Self-Reported Anger in College Students

Room B: <https://assumption.zoom.us/j/97841394032?pwd=UlpEZkdZNOQ2Qk9TNXhTRnNYSW10dz09>

Presenters: Vanessa Nichols, Emily Barefield, Monika Dhamale, and Madelyn Hass

Clinical Counseling Psychology Program

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Leonard Doerfler

This study recruited 990 undergraduate students from three universities in Worcester. Participants completed the Anger Disorder Scale (ADS) and the Emotion Regulation Scale (ERS). The ADS measures clinically dysfunctional anger. The ERS measures the regulation of emotions by cognitive reappraisal or expressive suppression. The study was designed to examine the relationship between expressive suppression and anger. It was hypothesized that expressive suppression would have a positive correlation with passive or physiological facets of anger, whereas cognitive appraisal would correlate negatively with most aspects of anger. Support for cognitive appraisal's negative relationship with anger was found; however, there was no support for the expressive suppression hypothesis.

### The MindUp Curriculum: Brain-Focused Strategies for Learning and Living

Room C: <https://assumption.zoom.us/j/96243879280?pwd=Y2c1emNtMEFCbVgwM3YvWG9DZUpqZz09>

Presenter: Maureen Soto

Resiliency in the Helping Professions Program

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Mary Ann Mariani

MindUp is an evidenced-based program used to teach strategies to develop resiliency in students. The four pillars of the MindUp program consist of neuroscience, mindful awareness, positive psychology, and social-emotional learning. The MindUp curriculum can be used with students of

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all ages. The MindUp program was implemented in a third grade inclusion classroom to develop strategies for a positive mind-set. The students were taught self-regulation skills and skills to help with their attention and build resilience to stress. Six lessons were implemented over a six-week period, each lesson was 30-40 minutes in length.

### **Difficulties in Using a Discrete-Trial Training Procedure in the Group Home Setting**

Room D: <https://assumption.zoom.us/j/98801814657?pwd=bkRCd1FzUGE5dzZ2TEV2UTh4N0hTdZ09>

Presenter: Chelsea Mahoney

Applied Behavior Analysis Program

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Karen Lionello-DeNolf

Discrete trail training (DTT) is used by many ABA professionals in the school, center, and in-home environments. Behavior therapists utilize this teaching procedure with the goal of creating many opportunities to practice communication and increase vocabulary using the principals of verbal behavior. Direct support staff working with adults with developmental disabilities are rarely trained on these procedures, which makes it difficult to collect quality data and to make progress with the client. This case study shows that progress can be made with some extra work.

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6:35pm-  
6:55pm

## **CONCURRENT SESSIONS II**

### **Improving Soft Skills in Students Preparing for Life after High School through Social Emotional Interventions**

Room A: <https://assumption.zoom.us/j/99034158996?pwd=cko5QjRYbG5QNkorVVhJWTRBTHZIUT09>

Presenter: Ashlee Cabral

School Counseling Program

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Susan Scully-Hill

Soft skills are becoming increasingly pertinent for students to successfully transition from high school to college and/or the workplace, but are in low supply. Students at a Worcester Public High School have self-reported low soft skills including growth mindset, self-efficacy, and more through surveys generated by Panorama. The data contribute to the need for an increase in education surrounding soft skills. A six-week group intervention will be conducted and students in grades ten and eleven will participate in lessons and group activities once a week for six weeks. Data containing student learning outcomes will be recorded and reported.

### **The Relationship between Anger and Perfectionism in Undergraduate Students**

Room B: <https://assumption.zoom.us/j/97841394032?pwd=UlpEZkdZN0Q2Qk9TNXhTRnNYSW10dz09>

Presenters: Madelyn Hass, Emily Barefield, Vanessa Nichols, and Monika Dhamale

Clinical Counseling Psychology Program

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Leonard Doerfler

990 undergraduate students were recruited from three Worcester universities. Participants filled out an online questionnaire which included the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, Brief and the Anger Disorders Scale (ADS). The ADS looks into provocations, arousal, cognitions, motives, and behaviors related to anger. The perfectionism scale focuses on two types of perfectionism: striving (i.e., setting high standards for oneself) and evaluative concerns (i.e., fear of making mistakes and negative evaluation). There were no significant correlations between the ADS subscales and striving, but there were significant small to moderate correlations between evaluative concerns and the ADS subscales, ranging from .122 to .415.

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### **The Distinct Culture of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute – Chestnut Hill, MA**

Room C: <https://assumption.zoom.us/j/96243879280?pwd=Y2c1emNtMEFCbVgwM3YvWG9DZUpqZz09>

Presenters: Olivia Solitro

Health Advocacy Program

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Christine Sawicki

Dana Farber Cancer Institute is one of the most well-known and highly regarded cancer treatment, prevention, and research institutions in the world. Most recently, it ranked third globally for the best specialized cancer care by Newsweek. The attention to detail, patience shown in staff/patient interactions, active listening practiced throughout the facility, and constant evolution coupled with the latest scientific advances and interventions, provide an experience for patients that aims at acknowledging their anxiety and fear. There is a distinct culture at DFCI that both patients and employees acknowledge. The purpose of this research is to define that culture.

### **Use of Train to Code for Discrete Trial Training in ABA Service Delivery Procedures**

Room D: <https://assumption.zoom.us/j/98801814657?pwd=bkRCd1FzUGF5dzZ2TEV2UTh4N0hTdz09>

Presenter: William Roche

Clinical Counseling Psychology Program

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Karen Lionello-DeNolf

Discrete trial training (DTT) refers to specialized training for children with autism and is a commonly used teaching method in applied behavior analysis (ABA) service delivery. Three common DTT programs include social questions, motor imitation, and receptive labeling. Correct implementation of these programs is critical, as errors in program delivery reduce client outcomes. The current study assessed the use of Train to Code (TTC) software to teach staff correct delivery of the DTT programs, which was assessed using a role-play pre- and posttest. In the role-play, the participant took the role of an ABA teacher and a researcher took the role of the learner. The TTC training taught participants to identify correct and incorrect examples of trials from each type of DTT programs from both written descriptions and video clips. Participants included undergraduate students studying ABA and behavior therapists working with children with autism. Data collection is currently ongoing. Pre-test data for three undergraduate participants indicated an overall mean accuracy of 46% (range = 43–50%) in the delivery of DTT. Posttest data for one participant who has completed the study indicated an overall accuracy of 90%. Although preliminary, the results indicated the potential of TTC to increase accurate delivery of DTT programs.

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7:00pm-  
7:20pm

### **CONCURRENT SESSIONS III**

#### **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports in Alternative School Settings**

Room A: <https://assumption.zoom.us/j/99034158996?pwd=cko5QjRYbG5QNkorVVhJWTRBTHZIUT09>

Presenters: Cassie Briganti and Melanie Irwin

Special Education Program, Positive Behavior Supports

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Samantha Goldman

Positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) is an evidence based 3-tiered framework to improve student behavior and achievement. Our research project examined implementation of PBIS in two alternative education settings at different phases of implementation and fidelity (early vs. long-term sustainability). Established measures were used to determine fidelity levels and to identify areas of need in order to develop an action plan. Action plans highlighted the needs for

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such things as increased parental involvement, staff training, and need for consultation. We will be providing a brief overview of these projects.

### **Irritability and the Expression of Anger in Young Adults**

Room B: <https://assumption.zoom.us/j/97841394032?pwd=UlpEZkdZN0Q2Qk9TNXhTRnNYSW10dz09>

Presenters: Emily Barefield, Monika Dhamale, Madelyn Hass, and Vanessa Nichols

Clinical Counseling Psychology Program

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Leonard Doerfler

A sample of 990 undergraduate students, recruited from three universities in Worcester, completed a series of online questionnaires including the Affective Reactivity Index (ARI), an irritability measure, and the Anger Disorders Scale (ADS), a broad anger measure. It was hypothesized that the ARI would highly positively correlate with ADS subscales involving momentary anger, and the ARI would be unrelated to ADS subscales measuring calculated anger. These hypotheses were supported with a few exceptions. The ADS physical aggression subscale showed lower correlation with the ARI than expected; and the ADS coercion, rumination, and hurt/social rejection showed higher than expected correlations.

### **Supporting Educators: Learning to Breathe – A Staff-Focused Intervention on Resilience Building**

Room C: <https://assumption.zoom.us/j/96243879280?pwd=Y2c1emNtMEFCbVgwM3YvWG9DZUpqZz09>

Presenter: Mary Silk

Resiliency in the Helping Professions Program

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Mary Ann Mariani

This project focused on a six-session intervention aligned with the Learning to Breathe (L2B) Curriculum. The Social Emotional Learning (SEL) intervention was to support educators in practicing mindfulness, and present an opportunity to learn resilience strategies. Activities were focused on attention training, problem solving, and self-care. The participants, two high school teachers, completed an array of formative and summative assessments. The summative assessments were Resilience Quotient (RQ), Five Factor Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), and Self-Regulatory Efficacy Scale. The formative assessments included temperature checks and reflections. Results of the assessment data were analyzed based on participants in the intervention.

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7:25pm-  
7:45pm

### **CONCURRENT SESSIONS IV**

#### **Using a Pyramidal BST to Increase Data Collection Accuracy of Paraprofessionals within a Classroom**

Room A: <https://assumption.zoom.us/j/99034158996?pwd=cko5QjRYbG5QNkorVVhJWTRBTHZIUT09>

Presenter: Rebecca Julian

Applied Behavior Analysis Program

Faculty Advisor: Joseph Pannozzo, BCBA, LBA

A research study was conducted in order to investigate the effects of behavior skills training on pyramidal training specific for data collection accuracy. Four staff were participants in this study and accuracy was probed during baseline prior to intervention. The results of this intervention are discussed along with limitations and future research in similar applied settings.

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**Association of Depression, Anger, Alcohol Misuse and Emotion Suppression with Maladaptive Perfectionism, ODD and BPD**

Room B: <https://assumption.zoom.us/j/97841394032?pwd=UlpEZkdZN0Q2Qk9TNXhTrnNYSW10dz09>

Presenters: Monika Dhamale, Emily Barefield, Vanessa Nichols and Madelyn Haas

Clinical Counseling Psychology Program

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Leonard Doerfler

990 undergraduate students were recruited from three universities in Worcester. Participants completed Frost perfectionism multidimensional scale, emotion regulation questionnaire, depression, anxiety and stress scale, young adult alcohol problems test, and personality assessment inventory-borderline scale online. The study hypothesized that anger, depression and alcohol misuse, and emotional suppression would be highly correlated with BPD, alcohol misuse, depression, anxiety, and oppositional defiant disorder. The results showed a low correlation of maladaptive perfectionism with depression than hypothesized; no support was found for other hypotheses.

**MindUP Curriculum: Preschool Motor Group Intervention**

Room C: <https://assumption.zoom.us/j/96243879280?pwd=Y2c1emNtMEFCbVgwM3YvWG9DZUpqZz09>

Presenter: Patricia Grenier

Resiliency in the Helping Professions Program

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Mary Ann Mariani

Five MindUP curriculum based intervention lessons were provided by a physical therapist to a preschool classroom of seven students, assisted by a teacher and instructional assistant during the weekly motor group. The physical therapist provided motor group lessons that focused on motor concepts and the practice of gross motor skills. The motor group serves as a PT inclusion service for those students with special needs based on their IEPs. MindUP lessons included teaching students about the brain, its function, and ways to address self-regulation/attention (e.g., mindfulness, calming strategies).

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7:45pm-  
8:00pm

**PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION  
CLOSING REMARKS**

Room A: <https://assumption.zoom.us/j/99034158996?pwd=cko5QjRYbG5QNkorVVhJWTRBTHZIUT09>

Dr. Kimberly Schandel, Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

Dr. Leonard Doerfler, Director of the Clinical Counseling Psychology Program

**Assumption University  
Graduate School Programs**

Master of Business Administration (MBA)

Master of Arts degrees (MA)

Master of Science degree (MS)

Certificate of Graduate Studies (CGS)

Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies (CAGS)

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Applied Behavior Analysis (MA & CAGS)  
Autism Spectrum Disorders (CAGS)  
Clinical Counseling Psychology (MA)  
Health Advocacy (MA & CGS)  
Physician Assistant Studies (MS)  
Rehabilitation Counseling (MA & CAGS)  
Resiliency in the Helping Professions (CAGS & CGS)  
School Counseling (MA & CAGS)  
Special Education (MA & CAGS)  
Special Ops: SMVF (CAGS & CGS)  
Transition Specialist (CAGS)