

SPRING/SUMMER NEWSLETTER

What's Happening Among Our Canadian Sex Researchers!

Spring/Summer 2020

Vol. 1



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*"The secret of change is to focus all
your energy, not fighting the old, but
on building the new."*

- Socrates



A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT OF CSRF

Nathan Lachowsky



Greetings fellow CSRF members!

This certainly is a time of change, transition, and resilience. This is true for our organization, as I am sure it has been for you all personally and professionally. We are learning to live, work, teach, and learn in new ways. We are uncertain of what the future will hold, but I know that a strong and supportive community of sexuality researchers is a shared value. I am excited to provide my President's update as part of the relaunched CSRF Newsletter. After a wee hiatus, we are excited to bring back this informational and networking tool back as part of our work and benefit to our members.

It already feels like a long time since our Annual Conference in Victoria. It took a lot of people to pull off that event, and I continue to feel the deepest gratitude and appreciation. As a small and member-driven organization, we have the fortune of being able to innovate and adapt quickly. Our previous meeting included a focus on sex and gender science, efforts to advance our understanding and commitment to reconciliation, and facilitated conversations about gender-based and sexualized violence in our sector. We must continue to advance these important issues in new ways moving forward as an organization. If you have ideas or are passionate about something, please reach out!

I want to thank and acknowledge the work and transitions within our organization. At our Annual General Meeting in Victoria we said farewell to Lori Brotto, Jocelyn Wentland, and Melissa Fuller from the Executive Council, and welcomed Natalie Rosen, Shayna Skakoon-Sparling, and Leo Rutherford. Further, as of January 1st, Larry Brockman became our new Executive Director with Lisa Dawn Hamilton completing her term. All of these transitions have prompted us to examine and update some of our systems and processes. For example, with the generous help of Sandra Byers we have updated our member email list, which each of you can use to send messages to the whole membership simply by emailing csrf05@listserv.unb.ca. This is a great way to share information about new studies, professional opportunities, student or job postings, news, and resources.

Enjoy this Newsletter – and many thanks to all the contributors and organizers who made this possible. Please consider providing an update and some content to the next edition!

In the words of my local Provincial Health Officer, Bonnie Henry, “this is our time to be calm, to be kind, and to be safe.”

All my best to you and yours.

Sincerely,
Nathan Lachowsky, PhD; CSRF President

Meet Your CSRF Exec Team!



Nathan Lachowsky

Current President

I lead a Community-based Health Equity Research group at the University of Victoria and serve as Research Director for the national

Community Based Research Centre Society (www.cbrc.net). As CSRF President I facilitate the Executive Council and supervise the Executive Director. I am responsible for overseeing any policy development for the organization, and sit ex-officio on all committees. In my off time I love cycling, volleyball, and wine! I've been a part of CSRF for a long time. I served as a Student Representative from 2011-2013, as Treasurer in 2015-2017, and President-Elect from 2017-2019. My first CSRF conference was in 2008 in Montreal where I co-presented on our team-based approach of Dr. Milhausen's Undergraduate Research Group in Sexuality (URGiS). One of my favourite memories is the wine tasting social and tour of the pyramid at Summerhill winery as part of the 2015 Kelowna meeting!

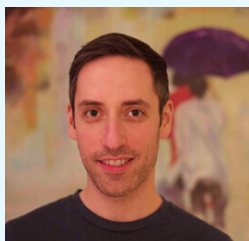


Natalie Rosen

President Elect

I am an Associate Professor at Dalhousie University, in Halifax, Nova Scotia. My research focuses on understanding how

couples cope with sexual dysfunction (e.g., low sexual desire, genito-pelvic pain) or changes to their sexual relationship (e.g., in the transition to parenthood), and translating that knowledge into targeted interventions. I am the President-Elect for CSRF. In this role, I am responsible for planning the annual conference. I also participate in other initiatives of the CSRF Executive. I have 2 energetic boys, Louis (9) and Evan (6), who keep me busy outside of work. I've played Ultimate Frisbee every summer for the last 16 years, my favourite TV show is Survivor (yes, people still watch it!), and my favourite author is Margaret Atwood. I have been a member of CSRF since 2004, coincidentally, the same year that I started playing Ultimate! I have really enjoyed the addition of the "After Dark" program. I found the presentation and conversation with a dom-sub couple in Kingston memorable and enlightening.



Jonathan Huber

Past President

Most of my time is spent doing clinic work with patients as an OB/GYN. My clinical practice focusses on women's sexual function and dysfunction. I'm

also part of a research team at the University of Ottawa investigating factors that contribute to genital pain. I'm currently the Past-President of CSRF, my role includes chairing award and nomination committees, sitting on the scientific committee, and providing longer term institutional advice and support to the Executive Committee. I live in Ottawa with my wife, also a physician, and our two young daughters. I enjoy road cycling, running, the Beatles, and trying to convince people that getting around by bike is better than getting around by car. I've been a member of CSRF since 1999. I served as a student representative for a few terms followed by two consecutive terms as Secretary before being elected President-Elect. My favourite CSRF memory has been the introduction of CSRF After Dark. CSRF After Dark has given us a chance to take off our research hats and learn about and enjoy the non-academic aspects of sex.



Larry Brockman

Executive Director

My work has focused on Participatory Action Research with marginalised communities to develop targeted sexual health programs. I've been involved with CSRF since the 90s - I attended by first meeting in Banff, AB. As the ED of CSRF, my role is largely organizational - keeping the wheels turning behind the scenes to make sure our annual meetings happen without a hitch (or with as few hitches as possible). I live with my partner of 40 years in Alberta. Our children are adults with their own careers and we are shifting toward retirement and looking forward to exploring the possibilities of life as we recreate our home. My favourite CSRF meeting to date was in Montreal, or Ottawa - they key factor was that my spouse joined me for the meeting and was thoroughly fascinated by it!

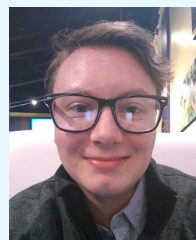
Meet Your CSRF Exec Team!



Kat Merwin
Senior Student Rep.

I am currently a 5th year Clinical Psychology PhD student at Dalhousie University. My research examines the sexual communication that couples engage in during sexual activity (i.e., sexual talk) and how this influences the sexual and relationship well-being of same- and mixed-gender/sex couples. As one of the Student Reps I act as a liaison between student members and the Executive Council and work to increase student engagement within the organization.

Outside of academia and clinical work, I spend time with my two wonderful cats (Mr. Peanut and Cali), row, and am a huge fan of sour beers and all things sci fi. I joined CSRF as a student member in 2016 and began serving on the Executive Council in 2018. My first CSRF meeting was in Quebec City. It's difficult to choose just one, but I loved the trivia event at the 2019 conference! I'm a (very) competitive person, so I quite enjoyed it (plus it was for a good cause!).



Leo Rutherford
Junior Student Rep.

I am a PhD student in the Social Dimensions of Health program at the University of Victoria and am working on several community-based participatory research (CBPR) projects within the trans community. This past October, at the CSRF conference in Victoria, I began my role as junior student representative. Along with Kat, as student reps, we bring voice to student-related ideas, concerns and news to the CSRF executive committee. I am a queer, trans guy who is passionate about research crafted by and for the trans community. Outside of work, I spend most of my time with my partner and our amazing one-year-old half coonhound half mastiff puppy (peaches_thewiggler on insta)! My first CSRF conference was in Toronto in 2018- one of my first conferences as a PhD student! It has been great connecting with other students at each conference since then.



Shayna Skakoon-Sparling
Secretary

I am currently a postdoctoral fellow at Ryerson University and am the national team manager for the Engage Study. My research examines factors that affect sexual health decision-making. Right now my work is exploring how loneliness and wanting to be in a relationship can lead to sexual risk-taking. As your CSRF secretary, my role involves taking meeting minutes, running the CSRF twitter account, and overseeing the production of the newsletter! When I'm not chained to a computer, I enjoy spending time with my friends and family and biking around the city (I typically commute by bike!). I really love watching movies and reading (especially a mystery or sci fi) and enjoying the summer weather from a park or patio or terrace (drink in hand). I've been a CSRF member since 2012 and my first meeting was in PEI. I have SO many fond memories from CSRF meetings, but one that stands out is playing Blackjack with Robin Milhausen in Kewlona!



Samantha Dawson
Treasurer

I am currently a postdoctoral fellow working with Dr. Natalie Rosen and will be joining the Department of Psychology at UBC in July as an Assistant Professor. My multi-method research seeks to understand how cognitive and affective factors contribute to sexual outcomes in individuals and couples. As the treasurer of CSRF, I oversee and manage the budget and finances for the CSRF annual meeting. When I am not busy doing all things research, I am at home being a mom. Jude gives me the best reason to rush home from work each day! I joined CSRF as a student member in 2011 when I was in the first year of my MSc and have been a member ever since. My first meeting was in Vancouver. One of my favourite CSRF memories is Dancing with Ken Zucker 😊 in Charlottetown in 2013.

Recap from CSRF 2019

ANNUAL MEETING IN VICTORIA, BC



Bill White, Coast Salish (Snuneymuxw/Cowichan) Sulalewh/Elder

We were extremely happy to have Bill White deliver a plenary address to kick off CSRF 2019! Throughout the conference, Bill was available to meet, discuss, and answer questions that attendees had about working with Indigenous communities. He was a wonderful presence and many members had valuable conversations with him throughout the conference. Thank you Elder Bill!

Sex Trivia

Our social event this year was a Sex Trivia night that acted as a fundraiser for the local community-based organization Island Sexual Health Society. The evening was hosted by the infamous local quiz guru Benji Duke and we had an entertaining (and competitive) evening of fun! This event was such a hit that I'm sure we'll see another trivia event pop up at CSRF in the years to come. A big congrats to our winning team pictured here!



After Dark: An Evening of Sexy Laughs

CSRF After Dark is an annual tradition—and this year we had “An Evening of Sexy Laughs” with a buffet dinner and stand-up comedy show. Hosted by Dr. Charlotte Loppie, we enjoyed stand-up comedy from local social justice-oriented comedians! After the show, attendees also had the opportunity to ask the performers how they integrate sex and sexuality with humour, without promoting negativity, violence, or stigma.



Conference Logo

You may have noticed our new conference logo—it was designed by the talented artist Dylan Thomas (<http://dylan-thomas.ca>). The design was centered on three concepts based on the writings of Bill White, Sulalewh/Elder, Coast Salish (Snuneymuxw/Cowichan): (1) Protection/guardianship, (2) transformation through union, and (3) balance. For information on the design and concepts, you can check out the program from CSRF 2019 on our website [here!](#)



Meet the 2019 Student Presentation Award Winners!

Best Oral Presentation



Kat Merwin, Clinical Psychology PhD Student from Dalhousie University

DAILY SEXUAL TALK IN SAME- AND MIXED-SEX COUPLES: ASSOCIATIONS WITH SEXUAL SATISFACTION AND SEXUAL DESIRE

Using a 35-day online daily diary study, I examined a largely neglected type of sexual communication—specifically communication that occurs during sex (i.e., sexual talk)—in a sample of sexual and gender/sex diverse couples in long-term relationships. I examined dyadic associations between daily variations in sexual talk and sexual satisfaction and sexual desire, as well as whether these associations were moderated by gender/sex and dyad type (i.e., same- vs. mixed-gender/sex couple). Moderated multilevel modelling showed that using more mutualistic and individualistic sexual talk was beneficial for a person’s own—but not their partner’s—sexual satisfaction. Additionally, while we found that overall greater daily use of individualistic and mutualistic sexual talk was associated with greater dyadic sexual desire, we also found significant moderations for these associations. Specifically, the daily use of individualistic sexual talk appears to matter more for women’s dyadic sexual desire than men’s and that daily use of mutualistic sexual talk matters more for the dyadic sexual desire of men in same-gender/sex dyads compared to all others. Over 50% of couples in long-term relationships experience declines in sexual satisfaction and desire over time. Increasing our understanding of the role of sexual talk for long-term couples, in addition to the ways it differs based on gender/sex and dyad type (especially at the daily level, might help couples capitalize on the most beneficial type of sexual talk for them (and their partner) in their current relationship.

Best Data Blitz



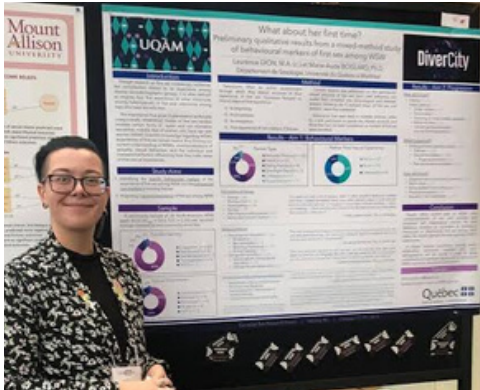
Christopher Quinn-Nilas, PhD from The University of Guelph

MINDFULNESS AND SELF-COMPASSION AS PREDICTORS OF RELATIONSHIP AND SEXUAL SATISFACTION: INSIGHTS FROM SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY

The notion that “loving one’s self” or “knowing one’s self” predicates the ability to love or know others is engrained in person-centered and rational-emotive therapies for decades, and more recently Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. Nested within this broader growing interest, mindfulness and self-compassion have begun to garner attention in the field of romantic relationships. However, the mechanisms through which mindfulness and self-compassion may benefit relationships and one’s Self-Determination within those relationships remains largely unsupported despite significant benefits to applied underlying propositions of mindfulness and compassion-based therapies. The goal of my study was to examine the Self-Determination mechanisms through which mindfulness and self-compassion might benefit relationship and sexual satisfaction. Path modeling of 700 midlife married Canadians showed that mindfulness and self-compassion influence both relationship and sexual satisfaction through increases to the satisfaction of one’s need for autonomy and relatedness. Findings underscore emerging theorizing in this area by showing that mindfulness and self-compassion have a primarily indirect effect on relationship and sexual satisfaction.

Meet the 2019 Student Presentation Award Winners!

Best Poster Presentation



Laurence Dion, M.A. (cand.) from L'Université du Québec à Montréal

WHAT ABOUT HER FIRST TIME? QUALITATIVE RESULTS FROM A MIXED-METHOD STUDY OF BEHAVIOURAL MARKERS OF FIRST SEX AMONG WOMEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH WOMEN

First sex is often defined by penetration, for example through first penile-vaginal intercourse among cisheterosexual individuals. The importance given to penetration as the only accepted marker of first sex has contributed to the invisibility of WSW sexualities. As such, we aimed to explore the behavioural markers and non-markers of first sex among WSW, and propose a typical progression of first sex.

43 WSW ($M = 22.90$, $SD = 2.17$; 84% cisgender) described their experience of first sex. First and foremost, we note that the experience of first sex is highly heterogeneous among WSW in our sample. Behavioural markers of first sex include oral sex and manual-genital contact, while fondling, kissing, and nudity around a partner constitute non-markers and indirect genital contact and masturbation bear ambiguous meaning. No behavioural equivalent to PVI emerges among WSW.

The initiation of first sex includes non-markers such as kissing and progresses to direct genital contact, though reciprocity or penetration are not required. Results show no behavioural indicator of its conclusion; first sex is neither contingent nor concluded by orgasm.

Thank You

TO ALL OUR STUDENT PRESENTERS,
JUDGES, AND CSRF 2019 ATTENDEES!



Join us for CSRF 2020!

We received 121 abstracts from you all!

Our scientific review committee is currently working hard to review these excellent submissions and hopes to send out notifications within the next month or two.

Whatever else happens, the program for our 2020 meeting looks like it's going to be fantastic!

Working from Home

(DURING A PANDEMIC)



For many, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a sudden shift to working from home. Working from home looks different for everyone, so this transition has likely brought about many unique challenges (or benefits!) to your productivity. Here's a handy resource list for how to tackle working from home in a way that works for you!

Put yourself first:

1. **Connect.** Talk to your friends and/or family on the phone or on video chat
2. **Online social parties.** Make dinner and watch a movie together, play an online game.
3. **Move your body.** Participate in YouTube workout videos, do virtual workouts with friends and/or family, walk outside!
4. **Find or continue a hobby that you love.** Baking (if there's flour!), puzzles, drawing, reading, music.
5. **Do nothing.** Need to just lie on the couch and listen to some music? Do it! Binge watch a TV show? DO IT!
6. **Practice self-compassion and be gentle with yourself.** This is a really hard time for so many people. It is stressful! Adding to the weight of a literal pandemic may be concerns about your research and not being able to see your family and/or friends (among many others!). It can be helpful to actively engage in self-compassion exercises to promote your well-being. Here is a helpful resource on how to actually do this because it is tough!: <https://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/>
7. **Take a screen break.** If you're anything like me, I move from my computer, to my TV, to my phone each day. Try putting down your screen and engaging in another non-screen activity (e.g., exercise, puzzles, audiobooks, colouring books, cooking, knitting, cross-stitch, reading).



Getting into that work space and mind:

1. **Set up a dedicated workspace**, even if it's just a side table or a section of the counter.
2. Beyond having a set space, do other things to **signal to yourself that it's time to work**. Play a song you like, brew a pot of coffee, change into a new set of PJs, or what have you.
3. **Make a to-do list every day**. A bullet journal can be helpful. I have the Microsoft To Do application – it makes a satisfying “ding” when you finish a task! Do what works for you.
4. **Use the Pomodoro technique** to keep yourself on-task and work more efficiently.
5. **Add friends or colleagues into the mix!** Create and connect in a Zoom work group to increase motivation and accountability! It also helps reduce social isolation.
6. **Set weekly goals instead of daily goals**. In this uncertain time, your focus may fluctuate day-to-day.
7. **Try to maintain temporal boundaries**. Sticking to a 9-to-5 schedule may be unrealistic. However, carving out time-frames for “work” and “personal life” are important. Without these boundaries, you might feel “on” all the time, which can contribute to more stress and lead to burn-out. Making unconventional hours may be the way to accomplish what you need to do in a day.
8. **Are you stuck?** Go for a walk, vacuum, garden, take a music break. Try doing something away from your screen to get your mind off of where you're stuck.



Set yourself up for SUCCESS:

1. **Set SMART goals**. Check out this resource for a breakdown on how to do this: <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/smart-goals.htm>
2. **Try to set fewer goals for the day**: Try to pick one or two things you really need to accomplish at work, one or two things you want your kids to accomplish, and one family or partner activity. Don't expect to or try to do more, because you'll get frustrated and even more stressed out

Making it work with kids:

1. **Normalize your own and other's expectations for your capacity to work during this time**. Be proactive with employers, staff, graduate students, and colleagues by setting realistic expectations about what you can accomplish.
2. **Experiment to find out what your optimal working hours will be, when you'll be most available, and how much you think you can get done**.
3. **Two-parent homes with both partners at home could plan to work in shifts if possible**, especially if there are small children that require more attention. Breaking your days up into two- or four-hour shifts apiece can provide each partner with dedicated time to focus.
4. **Try to schedule virtual “playdates” for your children** to help occupy them while you're in a meeting
5. **Plan activities that do not require full supervision** (e.g., babies in a bouncy chair, youth playing an online game), **but also plan for interruptions** (e.g., ready on the mute button, informing those in the meeting that you may need to leave).



Student Update

First of all, we'd like to extend a warm welcome to all of our new student members! We're delighted that you've decided to join our wonderful organization and we look forward to your contributions and participation!

Leo and I would also like to extend congratulations to everyone who is graduating this summer and/or moving on to a new internship/practicum/graduate program or finishing up an academic year! As rewarding as research and academic work can be, it's also a challenging path to pursue and we'd like to acknowledge everyone's hard work! As Nathan mentioned above, this is an especially challenging time for everyone both personally and professionally. **We want to celebrate your successes and hard work!** (Speaking of which—do you have any exciting announcements or achievements? Let us know so that we can feature it in our next newsletter!)

Junior Student Representative Position:

Student Representatives serve for two consecutive years—the first year as the Junior Representative and the second as the Senior Representative. **We elect a new Junior Student Representative during the Student Member Meeting at the Annual Meeting**—if you're interested in becoming more involved with CSRF, we encourage you to consider running! Among other things, Student Representatives act as a liaison between student members and the CSRF Executive Council and organize/ host student events at the conference. Details will be sent out in the months leading up to the 2020 conference!

Newsletter:

One of our goals for this year was to increase student engagement and communication by resurrecting the CSRF Newsletter. We're excited to have this as an avenue to celebrate your successes, as well as to communicate with you about CSRF student matters. Leo and I, as well as the other CSRF Executive members would like to thank our student volunteers Meghan Rossi and Grace Schwenck for their contributions to this edition of the newsletter! **If you're interested in becoming involved in the newsletter, please email CSRFNewsletter@gmail.com.** This can be a great way to meet new people within the organization!

Kat's Farewell:

As I approach the end of my time as a Student Representative I want to express my thanks to our student members. You are passionate and invested in this organization and it has been an absolute pleasure representing the wide array of student needs and interests over the past 2 years. While I am sad that my time as student rep comes to an end in October 2020, I am also very excited to continue to be involved in and contribute to CSRF in the future. Thank you for allowing me to represent you!



If you ever have any questions, comments, concerns, or feedback that you'd like to provide us with, please send us an email! We love hearing from student members (seriously—it makes our days a bit brighter!). It's our role to represent your needs within the organization and advocate for positive changes on your behalf, and we cannot do that if we don't hear from you!

You can reach us via the student member email (CSRFStudents@gmail.com) or via our personal emails: Kat (kathleen.merwin@dal.ca) and Leo (leorutherford@uvic.ca).

Cheers,
Kat and Leo

CSRF Member News

Dr. Richard Wassersug, Dr. Sheila Garland, Kathryn Dalton, and the Male Breast Cancer Coalition (MBCC) are excited to announce their new study: Are you a male diagnosed with breast cancer? We would like to understand how you feel about the language used to identify men with breast cancer. The survey should take less than 15 minutes to complete.

Click here to access the survey: <http://bit.ly/2SxCZGa>



Dr. John Sakaluk has accepted a position in the Department of Psychology at Western University, beginning July 1, 2020. Dr. Sakaluk is extremely excited to be returning to Ontario to be closer to his core network of collaborators, friends, and family, and to join forces with the talented pool of scholars at Western with expertise in close relationships and sexuality (e.g., Dr. Sam Joel, Dr. Lorne Campbell). He will be accepting graduate students to join his MaRSS Lab during the 2020-2021 application cycle, and students interested in measurement, dyadic data, norms, R programming, and/or research synthesis should reach out to him for more information about Western's program.



Dr. Samantha Dawson is thrilled to announce that she has accepted a position as Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of British Columbia to begin July, 2020. Her multi-method research program seeks to understand the cognitive and affective mechanisms underlying sexual arousal, desire, and behaviour. She conducts laboratory-based research where she uses psychophysiological measures (e.g., eye tracking, genital plethysmography) to capture the dynamic relationships involved in sexual arousal and desire. She also examines how cognitive and affective factors influence the sexual function and wellbeing of individuals and couples. Sam welcomes applications from potential students for September 2021 in both the clinical psychology and experimental programs offered at UBC.

Dr. Shayna Skakoon-Sparling was recently awarded a CIHR postdoctoral fellowship; this funding will allow her to continue her work on the importance of loneliness and social support in the sexual health and well-being of sexual minorities, working with Dr. Trevor Hart at Ryerson University. Shayna is also pleased to share that her paper "Are we Blinded by Desire..." (<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00224499.2019.1579888>) has been recognised by JSR as an "editor's choice" pick and her latest paper "Sexual Risk Taking Intentions Under the Influence of Relationship Motivation..." was recently published (<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00224499.2020.1743227>). She has a forthcoming publication too, "Sexual Excitation and Sexual Inhibition in the Context of Sexual Risk-Taking" (<https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2020.1776820>).