



PSYCLE LAB

Manual

2024

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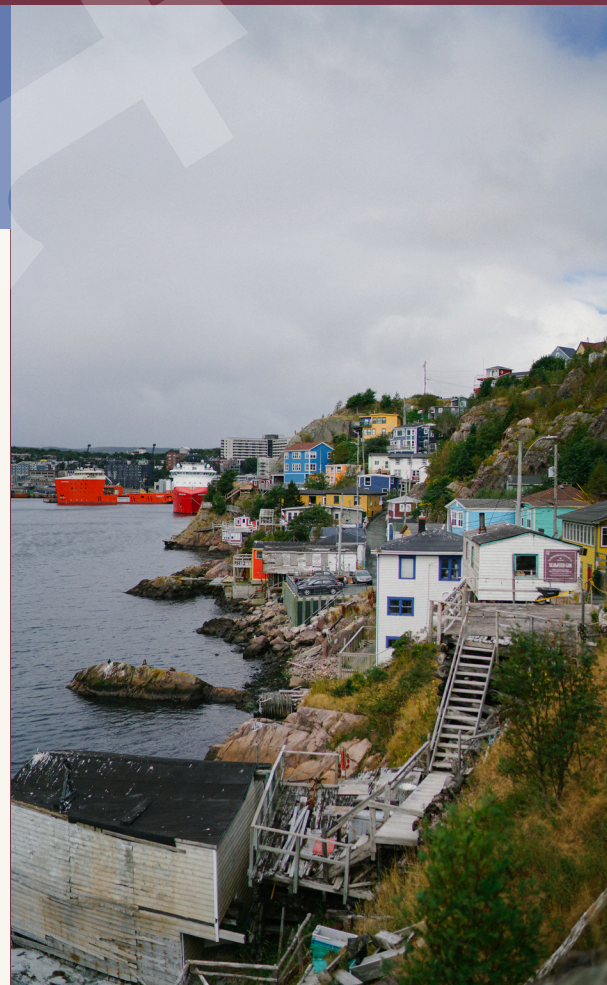


TABLE OF CONENT

Part 1: Getting to know the Lab	1
Welcome	1
New or Future Lab Members	2
The name	3
The logo	4
Lab Values	5
Lab Guidelines	6
Part 2: Lab Processes	7
Basics	7
Questions	8
Volunteering	9
Paid undergraduate experiences	10
Honours Student Information	11
Experimental MSc and PhD Student Information	12
PsyD Student Information	13

TABLE OF CONENT

Authorship	14
Participant population	15
Lab model	16
Lab space	17
Lab meetings	18
Journal club	21

Part One: Getting to know the Psycle Lab

WELCOME

We're excited to share the public version of the Psycle Lab's guidebook with you! This resource offers a snapshot of our lab's core principles and operational practices, reflecting our commitment to inclusive, empathetic, and rigorous research.

This Lab Manual is in large inspired by the work of the Clear Lab (CLEAR. (2021). CLEAR Lab Book: A living manual of our values, guidelines, and protocols, V.03. St. John's, NL: Civic Laboratory for Environmental Action Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador.)

GREETINGS TO OUR NEW LAB MEMBERS

Welcome to the Psycle Lab!

We're thrilled to have you join our vibrant and collaborative team. Starting something new can sometimes feel overwhelming, but we're here to support you every step of the way. As you begin this exciting journey, we encourage you to approach each aspect with curiosity (and some patience). Your contributions are highly valued, and we're confident that you'll grow both professionally and personally through your work here.

This guidebook is designed to help you get acquainted with our lab and understand our daily practices.

- Part 1: Getting to Know the Psycle Lab explores the core principles and values that guide our work and shape our research culture.
- Part 2: Day-to-Day Operations offers practical insights into the processes and procedures you'll be engaging with.

Crafted with input from our dedicated team members, this guidebook aims to be a valuable resource. We welcome your feedback and suggestions to help us keep improving.

We're excited to see your impact at the Psycle Lab and look forward to working together!

Warmest regards,
The Psycle Lab Team

THE NAME

The name "Psytle Lab" originated from a moment of serendipity during Ashley's search for the perfect name for her lab. After exploring countless words and acronyms without success, inspiration struck when she was texting her friend Emily Winters. By accident, Ashley combined "Psychology" and "Cycle," leading to the creation of "Psytle Lab." This name captures the essence of the lab's focus on reproductive psychology, particularly areas related to the menstrual cycle, such as infertility and menopause. "Psytle Lab" reflects the lab's dedication to understanding and addressing issues associated with the reproductive cycle while emphasizing a collaborative and dynamic approach to research.

THE LOGO

Ashley, a settler from Newfoundland and Labrador, was deeply inspired by an Anishinabé teaching she encountered during her clinical training in Saskatchewan. The teaching emphasized the significance of the menstrual cycle, known as "Moontime," as a powerful and sacred period for women. According to the teaching, Moontime is seen as a gift from the moon, a time for women to cleanse and renew themselves mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. It is considered a powerful phase, second only to the Great Spirit's ability to give life. During this time, women are encouraged to seek guidance and healing from Grandmother Moon, who offers wisdom and balancing energy. This period is also viewed as a time for women to step back from their daily responsibilities, allowing others to take over chores and duties, while they focus on reflection and personal rejuvenation. This profound teaching inspired Ashley to incorporate a moon motif into the Psyche Lab's logo, reflecting the lab's focus on reproductive psychology and the respect for the natural cycles that play a central role in women's health and empowerment.



See further information on this teaching: "<https://mushkiki.com/programs-services/moontime-and-grandmother-moon/>"

LAB VALUES

1. **Patient-Oriented Research** — We prioritize the voices and experiences of those most affected by reproductive health issues. Our research is informed by patient partners to ensure our work is relevant, accessible, and impactful.
2. **Inclusion and Diversity** — The Psyche Lab values diverse perspectives and experiences. We actively work to identify and address the needs of historically marginalized or underserved populations, recognizing that inclusive research leads to more comprehensive and meaningful outcomes.
3. **Accessibility of Knowledge** — We are committed to making psychological services and research findings accessible to all. This includes knowledge translation efforts, ensuring that the results of our work are communicated in a way that can be understood and utilized by the general public, healthcare providers, and policy-makers.
4. **Biopsychosocial Lens** — Our approach to research and intervention is holistic, examining the intersection of biological, psychological, and social factors in reproductive health. This allows us to better understand the complexities of human experience and develop comprehensive interventions.
5. **Work-Life Balance** — We believe that research can be both rewarding and sustainable. Lab members are encouraged to prioritize their well-being, find joy in their work, and build a career that supports both their professional and personal growth.

LAB GUIDELINES

1. **Respect for All** — We are committed to maintaining a lab environment built on mutual respect, collaboration, and inclusivity. Differences in experience, background, and opinion are not just welcomed—they are celebrated.
2. **Open Communication** — Clear, respectful, and timely communication is key to our success. Whether in meetings, over email, or during casual discussions, lab members are expected to be transparent and considerate in their communications.
3. **Commitment to Learning** — We embrace a growth mindset. Lab members are expected to actively seek learning opportunities and offer support to fellow researchers. Mistakes are viewed as opportunities for growth, and everyone is encouraged to share their insights and experiences.
4. **Research Integrity** — Honesty and ethical behavior are cornerstones of our research. Every member of the lab must adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity and follow institutional guidelines for research conduct.
5. **Supportive Collaboration** — We work as a team, sharing resources, ideas, and credit. Lab members are encouraged to collaborate on projects and support one another in achieving both individual and collective goals.

Part Two: Lab Processes

BASICS

1. **Onboarding and Integration** — New members—whether volunteers, graduate students, or patient partners—are welcomed through an onboarding process that familiarizes them with the lab's research, values, and expectations. Mentorship is a key component, and new members will be paired with a more experienced researcher for guidance.
2. **Project Planning and Assignment** — Research projects are developed in collaboration with lab members and patient partners. Roles are assigned based on expertise and interest, with clear timelines and expectations laid out from the start.
3. **Regular Meetings** — Lab meetings are regularly to review progress, address challenges, and celebrate accomplishments. Open discussions and brainstorming sessions ensure that everyone has a voice in the direction of the research.
4. **Feedback and Growth** — Constructive feedback is a part of the learning process. Lab members are encouraged to regularly seek feedback on their work and provide thoughtful critiques to others.
5. **Knowledge Translation** — Disseminating research findings is an integral part of the lab's mission. Lab members are expected to contribute to knowledge translation efforts, whether through publications, presentations, or community outreach.
6. **Sustainability and Balance** — While we are passionate about the work we do, we believe in maintaining a healthy balance between work and life. Lab members are encouraged to set boundaries that allow them to recharge and prevent burnout.

LAB FORMS & INTERVIEWS

Our lab forms and interviews typically include many of the following questions:

- Can you tell us a bit about yourself and how you became interested in reproductive psychology and the Psyche Lab?
- What do you know about Psyche Lab and its focus on reproductive psychology?
- What attracted you to the Psyche Lab, and why do you want to work with us?
 - What types of research or projects particularly appeal to you?
 - How many hours per week can you dedicate to lab activities?
- What does feminism mean to you?
- What does accessibility mean to you?
- Psyche Lab values collective work and collaboration. What are your greatest strengths in a collaborative setting? Are there any collaborative skills you are particularly interested in developing or improving?
 - Collaboration preferences
 - Consultative - independent and reporting back (e.g., directed-studies, honours, graduate studies)
 - likely publish papers as a first or second author
 - Teamwork - working on various projects within the lab, contributing to different tasks, gaining diverse skills, and possibly having middle author credits on papers.
- Have you been involved in any activist, advocacy, or volunteer projects? If so, please describe your experiences and contributions.
- Academic Information:
 - What degree are you pursuing, and what year are you currently in?
 - What is your overall GPA?
 - List your major(s) and minor(s).
 - What is your GPA within your major?
 - What are your academic objectives (e.g., graduate school in psychology, medical school, etc.)?
 - Tell us about your quantitative background. What relevant courses have you taken, and what grades did you receive? Do you feel confident in statistics?
 - Are you familiar with APA style writing?
 - What are your goals for participating in the lab (e.g., gaining research experience, presenting at a conference, receiving guidance for a thesis, etc.)?
- Is there anything else you would like us to know about you?

**The information collected on the lab application form helps us match your skills and interests with our current projects, given the high volume of volunteer requests we receive. No single question is used to rule out applicants; instead, we use the details you provide to determine if there is a project that aligns with your expertise and preferences, such as qualitative vs. quantitative research or clinical vs. applied work.

VOLUNTEERING

Volunteers are an integral part of the Psycle Laboratory, contributing valuable support to our research efforts. We encourage individuals interested in gaining hands-on research experience in reproductive psychology and evidence-based interventions to consider volunteering with us.

Commitment and Application:

Time Commitment: Volunteers should be prepared to dedicate at least 4-6 hours per week for a minimum of one academic year.

Application Process: To apply, please complete the lab application form on the lab website www.psycelelab.ca.

Volunteers will have the opportunity to engage in various aspects of research and contribute to our ongoing projects. This role is ideal for those looking to build their research skills and gain valuable experience in a supportive environment.

**The information collected on the lab application form helps us match your skills and interests with our current projects, given the high volume of volunteer requests we receive. No single question is used to rule out applicants; instead, we use the details you provide to determine if there is a project that aligns with your expertise and preferences, such as qualitative vs. quantitative research or clinical vs. applied work.

PAID UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

At Psycle Lab, we are committed to providing valuable research experiences for undergraduate students. We try each year to provide paid research positions for undergraduate students.

1. Science Undergraduate Research Award (SURA)

The SURA program offers undergraduate students the chance to engage in hands-on research projects under the guidance of faculty members. If you are interested in applying for the SURA, please reach out to Dr. Ashley Balsom.

- Summer semester

2. NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Award (USRA)

The USRA program, funded by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), supports students working on research projects in the natural sciences and engineering. If you are interested in applying for the USRA, please reach out to Dr. Ashley Balsom.

- Summer semester

3. Memorials Undergraduate Career Experience Program (MUCEP)

The MUCEP program provides undergraduate students with paid work experience related to their field of study. The MUCEP positions at Psycle Lab offer a chance to work closely with research teams and contribute to meaningful projects.

- Usually one per semester

It's important to note that authorship on publications and contributions to research projects at Psycle Lab are not dependent on whether the work is paid or unpaid. We value your contributions and ensure that all work is recognized appropriately.

We encourage all interested undergraduate students to apply for these awards and take advantage of these enriching opportunities. If you have any questions or need assistance with your application, particularly for the highly competitive USRA or SURA programs, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Ashley Balsom. We are here to support you in your journey and look forward to seeing the innovative work you will bring to our lab.

HONOURS

The Psytle Laboratory is excited to welcome honours students who are passionate about research in reproductive psychology. Applications are (typically) accepted at the beginning of the Fall term. Students must be accepted into the honours program, but can contact Dr. Balsom if they are in the process of applying as well.

Application Process:

- **Eligibility:** Interested psychology majors should complete the lab application form on the lab website www.psyclelab.ca.
- **Selection Process:** Applications will be reviewed, and a limited number of candidates will be invited for interviews. Typically, 1-2 honours students are selected each year.

Honours students will have the opportunity to undertake an honours thesis, contributing to meaningful research while working closely with our team.

It is the expectation of participating in an honours thesis that we will work towards publishing your project.

**The information collected on the lab application form helps us match your skills and interests with our current projects, given the high volume of volunteer requests we receive. No single question is used to rule out applicants; instead, we use the details you provide to determine if there is a project that aligns with your expertise and preferences, such as qualitative vs. quantitative research or clinical vs. applied work.

**Previous volunteering experience in the lab is NOT a requirement of completing an honours with Dr. Balsom but it is an ASSET

EXPERIMENTAL MSC AND PHD

We are looking for candidates who excel academically, possess strong quantitative or qualitative research skills, and demonstrate excellent communication abilities. Ideal candidates will show a strong potential for impactful scholarly contributions and a robust work ethic.

Typical accept 1 MSc student per admission cycle

Process:

- Inquiry: Prospective students should email Dr. Balsom to discuss potential supervision opportunities.
- See the department website for application procedures.

As an experimental MSc or PhD student at the Psycle Lab, you will engage in advanced biopsychosocial research in reproductive psychology. You will have the opportunity to develop your research skills while making meaningful contributions to the field.

Expectations:

- Research Focus: Engage in comprehensive biopsychosocial research within reproductive psychology, contributing to the lab's innovative projects.
- Mentorship: Gain exposure to mentorship opportunities, including assisting in the supervision of more junior students and potentially co-supervising an honours student.
-

This role is designed for those who are passionate about advancing research and excited about contributing to a collaborative and supportive research environment.

****Previous work in reproductive psychology is NOT a requirement but is an ASSET.**

****Students should apply to tri-council funding and include Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador as one of the institutions to hold the award**

PSYD

The Psydle Laboratory welcomes PsyD students who are primarily focused on their clinical training but also seek to engage in research. We value the integration of clinical expertise with research insights and offer opportunities for PsyD students to contribute meaningfully while balancing their clinical commitments.

Typical accept 1 PsyD student per admission cycle

Application Process:

- Inquiry: Interested PsyD candidates should contact Dr. Balsom to discuss potential supervision opportunities.

As a PsyD student in our lab, you will have the chance to participate in research related to reproductive psychology, though your primary focus will be on clinical training.

Expectations:

- Workload: Be prepared for a rigorous schedule that requires balancing clinical responsibilities with research activities. Given the condensed nature of the PsyD program, time for research will be limited but valuable.
- Clinical and Research Integration: While your main focus is on clinical practice, you will engage in research activities, contributing to our understanding of reproductive psychology and applying your clinical insights to research.
- Collaboration: Strong interpersonal and communication skills are essential. You will collaborate with peers on research projects and provide support where needed, integrating your clinical perspective into research efforts.

This role is ideal for those who are committed to applying their clinical skills in a research context and are prepared for the demands of a fast-paced program while contributing to our collaborative environment.

**Previous work in reproductive psychology is NOT a requirement but is an ASSET.

**Students should apply to tri-council funding and include Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador as one of the institutions to hold the award

**Previous clinically relevant experience is NOT a requirement but is an ASSET

AUTHORSHIP ORDER

At Psytle Lab, we emphasize fairness in author order by adopting principles from Liboiron et al.'s feminist approach to authorship.

Key Principles:

- **Equity:** We prioritize fairness in determining author order, ensuring that no single criterion rules out potential contributors.
- **Consensus:** We aim to reach decisions through group consensus, balancing power and advocacy across all team members. Every voice is valued, and we work to support those who may be less vocal. Our discussions are guided by a spirit of mutual respect and balanced participation.
- **Care Work:** We recognize and value all forms of care work, such as training, maintenance, logistical support, and emotional care. We strive to fairly distribute and acknowledge these contributions, understanding that care work can impact different members in varied ways.
- **Social Location:** We consider the diverse social positions of our team members, including their academic and non-academic affiliations, career stage, and personal circumstances. This includes acknowledging the significance of authorship for those who may have fewer opportunities or face particular challenges.

Process:

1. Listing Contributors: We list all contributors, including those who may have been absent during writing but contributed in other ways.
2. Categorizing Contributions: We categorize involvement into areas such as discussion, editing, and writing.
3. Determining Order: We decide on the order of authors based on the nature and value of their contributions, care work, and social context. Discussions are thorough to ensure fair representation.
4. Refinement: For similarly qualified contributors, we assess deeper factors related to care work and social location, making adjustments as needed.

Our approach is adaptive and reflective, designed to uphold our commitment to equity and inclusivity. Each decision is tailored to the specifics of the project, ensuring our process remains fair and responsive.

PARTICIPANT POPULATION

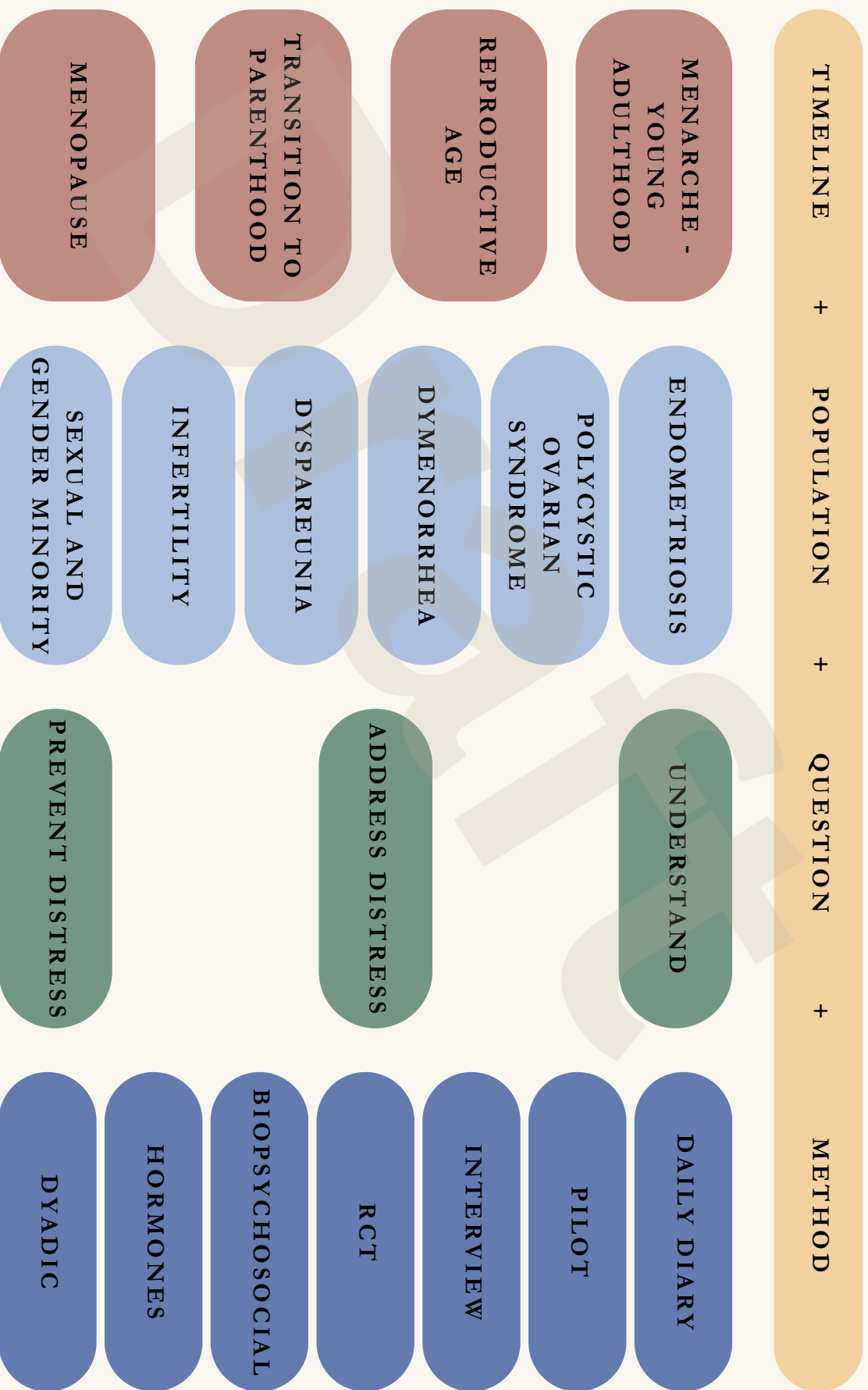
At the Psytle Lab, our research primarily focuses on individuals who were assigned female at birth (AFAB), given our interest in endogenous hormones and their impact on reproductive psychology. These hormones play a significant role in a variety of reproductive and mental health processes, including menstrual cycles, fertility, pregnancy, menopause, and overall emotional well-being. However, while much of our research centers around these biological processes, we recognize that reproductive experiences extend far beyond those traditionally tied to assigned sex at birth.

We are committed to being inclusive, supportive, and affirming of all gender identities. As a lab, we actively work to create space for individuals of marginalized genders, including trans, non-binary, genderqueer, and gender non-conforming participants. We are also interested in the unique psychological and reproductive experiences of individuals who undergo hormone therapy or cross-sex hormone treatment as part of their transition. For example, the introduction of testosterone or the suppression of estradiol and progesterone can have complex effects on both reproductive and mental health, which we strive to better understand and empower.

Psytle Lab recognizes that reproductive psychology is not one-dimensional; it is intricately tied to gender identity, social context, and individual experience. Our goal is to empower and elevate the voices of participants across the gender spectrum. By engaging with and amplifying the experiences of trans and non-binary individuals, we aim to advance our understanding of how transitioning, hormone therapy, and diverse reproductive journeys intersect with mental health, identity formation, and emotional well-being.

We invite participants from all walks of life who identify across a spectrum of gender identities to contribute to this evolving field. Psytle Lab is committed to a participant population that reflects the diversity and complexity of reproductive psychology today. We continually strive to ensure that our research is not only scientifically rigorous but also inclusive, empathetic, and aligned with the needs of individuals from historically marginalized genders. Our work in this area helps to break down barriers and create pathways to better support and understanding for everyone affected by reproductive health challenges.

LAB MODEL



*** This is in no way an exhaustive list but a helpful way to conceptualize your ideas and the vision for the lab

LAB SPACE

At Psytle Lab, we recognize that having a designated space to work, meet, and conduct interviews is crucial for productivity and collaboration. Our lab occupies two rooms on the first floor of the Science Building (SN1085 and SN 1086), which are available for use by all lab members.

1. Student Room: This space is primarily for students to work on their research projects, write, and collaborate with others. It's an open area that is intended to foster a supportive and focused working environment. You are encouraged to make this space your own for the academic year, but please keep in mind that we may need to share it during busy periods.

1. Interview Room and Meeting Space: The second room is designated for conducting interviews, holding small meetings, or quiet work when needed. This space is highly valuable, so we ask that students use the shared calendar to book it in advance. Whether you're conducting interviews for research, needing a quiet space to focus, or having a meeting with collaborators, this room is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Please ensure to reserve it ahead of time to avoid scheduling conflicts.

Space on campus is something we are lucky to have, and it is a shared resource among all of us. If you find that there's no space available or need somewhere to work, please speak to me, and we will find a solution. If necessary, we can arrange for students to use the interview room or work out other accommodations to ensure everyone has access to the space they need. We will also have a discussion at the start of each academic year to ensure everyone's space needs are met and adjust as necessary.

If there's something you believe would improve our lab spaces—whether that's equipment, resources, or small comforts—please feel free to bring your ideas forward. We want the lab to be a productive and comfortable space for everyone. We'll also try to keep essentials stocked, such as snacks, coffee, and some personal care items like pads and tampons, so you can focus on your work without worrying about the little things.

LAB MEETINGS

At the Psyche Lab, we hold both **group lab meetings** and **individual meetings** to ensure smooth communication, support, and progress on all projects. Each type of meeting has its own purpose and expectations, allowing for both collaborative work and more focused, personalized guidance.

Group Lab Meetings

Purpose: Group lab meetings are a time for all lab members to come together to discuss ongoing projects, share updates, brainstorm ideas, and collectively solve challenges. These meetings foster collaboration, provide insight from multiple perspectives, and keep everyone aligned on the lab's goals.

Expectations:

- *Preparation:* Each lab member must come prepared with an update on their current tasks. If specific materials, papers, or data will be discussed, ensure that you've reviewed them ahead of time. Preparation helps keep the meeting productive and focused.
- *Active Participation:* All members are expected to participate in discussions by sharing their progress, offering feedback on others' work, and contributing ideas. Group meetings thrive on collaboration, so feel free to ask questions or offer constructive input.
- *Follow-Up:* After each group meeting, students must send a follow-up email to Dr. Balsom. This email should summarize key discussion points and include action items for both the student and Dr. Balsom, along with deadlines if relevant. Be sure to CC anyone else involved in the action items to ensure clarity and accountability.

LAB MEETINGS

Individual Meetings

Purpose: Individual meetings provide one-on-one time with Dr. Balsom for personalized guidance and support. These meetings are focused on your specific projects, professional development, and any concerns or challenges that may require more in-depth discussion. Individual meetings are an opportunity to get tailored feedback and help you progress in your research and academic goals.

Expectations:

- *Preparation:* Just like group meetings, individual meetings require preparation. Come with a clear agenda of topics you need to discuss, including any project updates, challenges, or questions. Having a prepared list of items ensures you make the most of the focused time.
- *Focused Discussion:* These meetings are your opportunity to dive deeper into specific issues or get more detailed feedback on your work. Be ready to engage in an open, candid conversation about your progress, professional development, or any areas where you need support.
- *Follow-Up:* After an individual meeting, follow up with an email summarizing the key points discussed and any action items for both yourself and Dr. Balsom. As with group meetings, it's essential to include deadlines and CC anyone involved.

LAB MEETINGS

Meeting Etiquette and Time Management

Whether attending a group or individual meeting, respect for each other's time is a priority. Be punctual, come prepared, and be ready to engage meaningfully. If you're unable to attend a meeting, notify Dr. Balsom in advance and follow up on any discussions you may have missed.

In group settings, it's especially important to create space and show compassion for everyone's individual journey. We strive to support each other through a collective approach, aiming to call in rather than call out. This means engaging in constructive feedback and offering support rather than exclusively criticism. Avoid interrupting others when they are speaking, and actively listen to what your peers are saying. By fostering an inclusive and respectful environment, we ensure that everyone's voice is heard and valued. If you have a point to make or a question to ask, wait for the speaker to finish before contributing. This practice helps maintain productive discussions and prevents conversations from becoming one-sided or dominated by any individual.

By maintaining these practices for both group and individual meetings, we ensure that the Psyche Lab remains a productive, respectful, and collaborative environment where everyone can succeed.

JOURNAL CLUB

The Psyche Lab hosts a bi-weekly Journal Club, a key part of our collaborative and scholarly environment. This forum allows lab members to discuss and critically evaluate recent research in reproductive psychology, supporting our commitment to current literature, critical thinking, and collective knowledge.

Structure and Expectations

1. Selection of Articles: Each session features a research article chosen by a rotating lab member. Articles should focus on reproductive psychology topics, such as fertility, menstrual cycles, menopause, or hormonal impacts on mental health. The article should be shared at least one week prior to the meeting for review.
2. Preparation: Participants must read the selected article thoroughly and prepare questions or discussion points. Come prepared to engage in a thoughtful discussion about the article's methodology, findings, and implications.
3. Meeting Format: The presenter will summarize the article's key points, methodology, results, and significance. Following the presentation, the group will discuss the study's strengths, weaknesses, and relevance to current research, as well as potential future directions.
4. Discussion Etiquette: Ensure respectful, constructive dialogue. Allow everyone to speak and share their insights, avoid interruptions, and address disagreements with professionalism and evidence-based feedback.
5. Inclusivity: The Journal Club is open to non-lab members as well. Those interested in joining should contact Dr. Balsom for more information and to be added to the distribution list.

Benefits and Goals

The Journal Club aims to:

- Enhance Research Skills: Improve members' ability to evaluate scientific literature and apply these skills to their research.
- Foster Collaboration: Build a collaborative spirit within the lab, encouraging knowledge sharing and learning.
- Stay Informed: Keep members updated with the latest research to inform and inspire lab projects.

QUESTIONS?
CONTACT US.

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