

Melanie Grad-Freilich

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EDUCATION

University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA **August 2022 – Present**

PhD Student, Clinical-Developmental Psychology Joint Program

Anticipated Certificate in Cognitive Neuroscience from the CMU/Pitt Center for the Neural Basis of Cognition

Anticipated Quantitative Minor

Faculty Advisors: Prof. Jennifer Silk and Prof. Cecile Ladouceur

Yale University, New Haven, CT **2015 – 2019**

B.S. in Psychology, Neuroscience Concentration

Distinction in the Major

Honors Thesis: *Predicting Internalizing Symptoms Related to Suicidality in Children*

Faculty Advisor: Prof. BJ Casey

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

[Families, Emotions, Neuroscience and Development Laboratory](#) **August 2022 – Present**

University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

PI: Prof. Jennifer Silk

Graduate Student

- Completed clinical and quantitative coursework
- Trained to administer clinical assessments in both clinical and research contexts
- Researched online victimization assessments to include in new R01 study studying effect of social media on the development of depression and anxiety among adolescent girls
- Prepared a conference poster submission detailing results from an independent project predicting depressive symptoms from loneliness and negative reactivity to peer rejection

[Affective Neuroscience and Development Laboratory](#) **May 2018 – June 2022**

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

PI: Prof. Leah Somerville

Lab Manager

June 2021 – June 2022

- Managed lab funds and grants, including monthly financial reports
- Onboarded new personnel
- Maintained and updated IRB protocols

Project Manager

June 2020 – April 2022

Project: The Human Connectome Project - Development ([HCP-D](#)) Study, a five-year multi-institutional study of over 1,300 child, adolescent and adult participants examining brain network and behavioral changes from childhood through adolescence and young adulthood

- Oversaw Harvard University's contribution to the HCP-D Study, including protocol coordination and data sharing with other study sites
- Developed and implemented new testing protocols for the COVID-19 era
- Managed research data for over 600 participants on secure cloud-based databases according to IRB protocols
- Structured and curated behavioral testing data
- Began data analysis projects (pre-registration in progress) examining (1) the moderating effect of self-efficacy on the relationship between insufficient sleep and negative affect in youth, and (2) the buffering effects of familial and peer connections against stress in youth during the COVID-19 pandemic

- Supervised and mentored undergraduate research assistants

Research Assistant

May 2018 – June 2020

Project: The Human Connectome Project - Development (HCP-D) Study

- Performed standard psychological batteries and MRI / fMRI scans on over 150 child, adolescent and adult participants and collected their biological samples
- Conducted clinically developed risk assessments with more than 20 participants who indicated suicidal ideation, coordinated with clinicians in cases of immediate risk

[Fundamentals of the Adolescent Brain Laboratory](#)

September 2016 – May 2019

Yale University, New Haven, CT

PI: Prof. BJ Casey

Undergraduate Research Assistant

Project: The Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development ([ABCD](#)) Study, the largest long-term study of brain development and child health in the U.S. following 12,000 children for ten years beginning in September 2016

- Conducted structured clinical research interviews and performed standard psychological batteries
- Screened and conducted phone interviews with dozens of child participants and their parents
- Completed honors thesis examining the relationship between suicidality and performance on working memory and impulse control tasks using initial behavioral and neuroimaging data from the ABCD Study

[Gabrieli Laboratory](#)

August 2016

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA

PI: Prof. John Gabrieli

Research Intern

- Presented to laboratory faculty and staff on recent literature concerning gamma waves and feature binding
- Observed fMRI and MEG scans for the research being conducted by Dr. Dimitrios Pantazis of MIT

[Early Childhood Cognition Laboratory](#)

June – July 2016

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA

PI: Prof. Laura Schulz

Research Intern

- Designed and created stimuli for several behavioral studies investigating early childhood cognitive development
- Tested over 50 four- and five-year-old study participants at the Boston Children's Museum

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

K. Leroy Irvis Fellowship

2022 – 2023

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Sequeira, S.L.*, Silk, J.S., & **Grad-Freilich, M.J.** (In prep). Neural response to social threat predicting changes in reward function and internalizing symptoms.

Butterfield, R.D.*, Silk, J.S., & **Grad-Freilich, M.J.** (Revise and resubmit). The Role of Neural Self-Referential Processes Underlying Self-Concept in Adolescent Depression: A Comprehensive Review and Proposed Neurobehavioral Model.

PRESENTATIONS

- Grad-Freilich, M. J.,** Silk, J. S. (In prep). *The Effects of Loneliness and Negative Reactivity to Peer Rejection in Daily Life on Depressive Symptoms*. [Poster presentation]. Association for Psychological Science Annual Convention, Washington D.C., United States.
- Grad-Freilich, M. J.,** HCP-D Consortium, Somerville, L. H. (2021, November 12). *The Human Connectome Project in Development: Examining sampling, attrition, and COVID-19 impacts at the study's conclusion* [Poster presentation]. Trends in Psychology Summit, Virtual conference.
- Grad-Freilich, M. J.** (2021, October 15). *All About the Human Connectome Project in Development* [Presentation]. Harvard University and Northeastern University Multi-Lab Workshop on Adolescent Brain Development, Cambridge, MA, United States.
- Grad-Freilich, M. J.,** HCP-D Consortium, Somerville, L. H. (2021, September 17-21). *The Human Connectome Project in Development: Examining sampling, attrition, and COVID-19 impacts at the study's conclusion* [Poster presentation]. Flux International Society for Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience Congress, Virtual conference.
- Grad-Freilich, M. J.** (2019, October 17). *Brain Myths* [Presentation]. Harvard Outreach Workshop, Cambridge, MA, United States.
- Grad-Freilich, M. J.** (2019, April 18). *Predicting Internalizing Symptoms Related to Suicidality in Children* [Thesis presentation]. Fundamentals of the Adolescent Brain Lab Thesis Symposium, New Haven, CT, United States.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

[Center for Law, Brain & Behavior](#) **December 2020 – Present**
Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Boston, MA

Supervisor: Dr. Judith Edersheim, JD, MD December 2020 – Present
Research Consultant

- Compiled research for a case with the national Innocence Project to identify possible causes of false confessions, improper interrogation and sentencing of juvenile defendants, and the impact of childhood adversity on risk for justice system involvement
- Provided research support regarding developmental neuroscience and its relevance to criminal law doctrines for a published white paper: Insel, C., Tabashneck, S., Shen, F. X., Edersheim, J. G., & Kinscherff, R. T. (2022). *White Paper on the Science of Late Adolescence: A Guide for Judges, Attorneys, and Policy Makers*.

Supervisor: Dr. Stephanie Tabashneck, JD, PsyD September 2021 – June 2022
Legal Intern

- Investigated evidence of refuse-resist dynamics for custody case affidavit from thousands of legal documents
- Compiled neuroscientific research on late adolescence and young adulthood for expert affidavit on risks to juveniles in the adult criminal justice system
- Observed and debriefed forensic mental health evaluations of prisoners involved in murder and gang violence cases to become familiar with the forensic interview process

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Psychological Society (APS)	2022
National Latinx Psychological Association (NLPA)	2022
Pennsylvania Psychological Association (PPA)	2022

TEACHING AND MENTORING EXPERIENCE

Prospective Ph.D. & RA Event in Psychology (PPREP) program **October – November 2022**
Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

Mentor to PhD applicants

- Mentored three students from underrepresented minority groups in their application process for psychology graduate programs
- Reviewed personal and diversity statements, provided detailed feedback, and in multiple cases met with them to discuss revisions

Yale Community Health Educators **October 2015 – September 2016**
Yale University, New Haven, CT

Mental Health Educator

- Taught mental illness education workshops for New Haven public high school students
- Led mental and physical wellness workshops for Yale first-year students

CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT

Pennsylvania Psychological Association **October 2022 – Present**
University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

Graduate Student Representative

- Dedicated to serving, supporting, and increasing the visibility of graduate students
- Responsible for maintaining communication and passing important updates between the University of Pittsburgh psychology graduate program and the PPA board

Psychology Committee on Equity, Inclusion, and Community. **August 2022 – Present**
University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

Committee Member

- Co-led internal committee on in-house clinic accessibility initiatives
- Surveyed current student clinicians and compiled data for presentation to faculty

Peer Wellness Champions: Student wellness program **2018 – 2019**
Yale University, New Haven, CT

Campus Organizer

- Organized campus events related to mental health education and student wellness
- Participated in monthly motivational interviewing and positive affirmation trainings

Mind Matters: Student organization for mental health advocacy **2018 – 2019**
Yale University, New Haven, CT

Committee Leader

- Led logistics committee for a mental illness education event on campus for over 300 students
- Participated in weekly debates on mental illness research and relevant current events

Women's Leadership Initiative: Student organization to empower women leaders
Yale University, New Haven, CT

2015 – 2017

Membership Chair

- Organized gala recognizing female accomplishment and leadership across campus
- Recruited and mentored younger student members

SKILLS

- Research skills: literature search, quantitative and qualitative data collection and curation, data science and statistical analysis, participant screening and recruitment, MRI scanner operation, CITI trained
- Working knowledge of R and RStudio, SPSS, FSL, Python, MATLAB, PsychoPy, and Qualtrics
- Excellent leadership, presentation, and organizational skills
- Budgeting and quantitative financial skills
- Copyediting of legal documents
- Fluent in Spanish (native speaker)