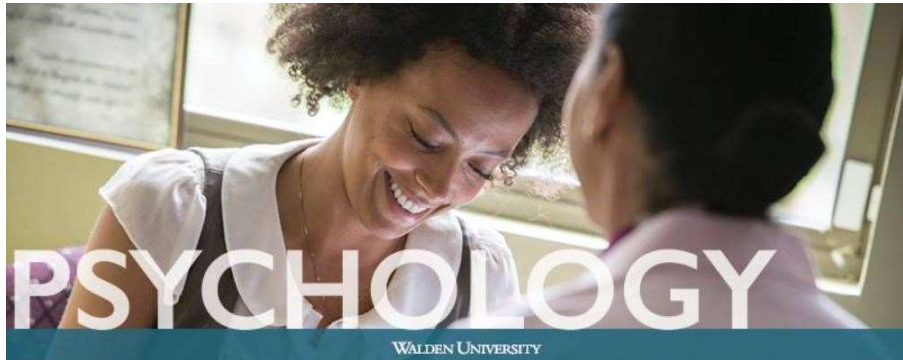


# BS Psychology\_BS Forensic Psychology Summer Newsletter

Summer 2020



Questions? Concerns? Praises? Contact your Academic Program Leader:

Dr. Patricia Costello, Program Director,  
[patricia.costello@mail.waldenu.edu](mailto:patricia.costello@mail.waldenu.edu)

## Have you checked out the American Psychological Association (APA) Career Center?

<https://www.apa.org/careers/index> You can read about:

- Jobs at APA
- Early Career Psychologists
- Career Development



Also, check for APA presentations on *How Did you Get That Job?*

## A Message from Walden CEO Paula Singer



Recent messages have called for all of us to be active advocates for justice. I could not agree more. But, as you know by now, I am as transparent and honest with you as I can be when it comes to communicating hard truths. It is never the easy path to take, but it is the only one I am comfortable

with.

Throughout the past 10 weeks I was confident we would move forward in the face of COVID-19; as I said, “We’ve got this.” And we did. But right now, as images of our burning nation confront us all every day, I don’t believe “We’ve got this.” And, frankly, I am disillusioned, disheartened, and mostly I am tired.

I am tired of knowing that the spouses, fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters of black families are afraid that when their loved ones walk out the front door, they won’t safely make it back home.

I am tired of seeing our good police officers—men and women, of all colors and backgrounds (many of whom are our students and alumni)—pay a steep price for the bad officers who have abandoned their priority to protect for a priority of power.

I am tired of politicians on both sides of the aisle for behaving not for the good of their country but, rather, for the good of their own political future.

I am tired of inauthentic condolences, stale statements rehashed time and again, temporary outrage, and permanent divisions.

I am tired of rioters who usurp the righteousness of peaceful protest for their own personal gain.

And, I am tired of the platitudes and promises of resolution and answers.

You can understand, then, why I am disillusioned and disheartened. Still, I am not without hope. Hope that we can all stand up, dust ourselves off, roll up our sleeves, and get involved in the hard and uncomfortable conversations that must be had. This is not optional, particularly for all of us in the Walden community. Throughout my 25+ years at Walden we have championed our cherished mission of social change. Well, now is the time for all of us to recommit and recognize that we have an opportunity to do something that makes a real difference and that must be continued with intensity and determination.

Our mission is about big change—systemic change: equal access to quality higher education. Access to education long denied women and people of color. Access to graduate education long restricted to an elite few. With access there is real power to drive systemic change, because when you have the credential, you have the opportunity to sit at the table and drive policy and process. To have your voice not only heard but acted on. That is why our mission matters. Walden makes it possible for more African Americans and other minorities to become leaders with influence and decision-making power. In this way we are driving change that can have lasting impact.

So, what else can Walden do now? Walden must be a safe and respectful place for civil discourse among people of different cultures, backgrounds, and points of view. Civil discourse requires a respectful environment where people can speak without fear in the pursuit of solutions to our nation's persistent and debilitating problems. We can provide and promote these kinds of opportunities for our entire Walden family. We can model and teach the skills needed for this kind of dialogue. We may not all be able to participate in peaceful protest, but we all must participate in reinforcing our commitment to access, in assisting our students in using their education for the greater good, in creating a safe environment for academic and civil discourse to solve problems permanently and at scale.

So when I ask myself what it is that we can do to make a difference, I come back to who we are, the relevancy of our work, and the potential it holds to have a positive impact in today's environment. This helps me to clear the fog and the weariness. Standing face to face with this painful moment, I believe we can use it to sharpen our mission as individuals and as a Walden community. My hope comes from knowing the power of our collective strength when we turn the intensity of our feelings into action that ensures everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

I ask that you all join me in the journey from disillusionment to hope and action by remembering what we do every day matters to resolving the disturbing issues at hand. Join me in recommitting to our values. Join me in being Walden strong for the students we serve. And, join me—and join each other—in being Walden determined to help our country live up to its promise of a just, equal, and fair future for all of its people.

Sincerely,

Paula R. Singer  
CEO Walden University

## Participate in psychology research – check out Walden’s

**Participant Pool:** link <https://walden.sona-systems.com/default.aspx>. You must first create an account.



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## Join the Walden Community



Did you know that Walden University has a Facebook group for psychology students? Yes, it’s true! Here, you can:

- Build meaningful relationships and a support network with your peers.
- Share resources, ideas, advice, and personal experiences.
- Receive answers to questions from dedicated Walden staff.

Here is the Admin’s welcome message:

*Welcome to the Walden University Psychology group! Within this community you can ask questions; share information; find resources to facilitate your success; and build connections with others who share similar academic*

*interests.*

*Community managers are available to answer your questions. Additionally, the search bar on the left can be used to find resources from previous conversations.*

*As you participate, please take note of our group guidelines:*

- Admins reserve the right to monitor and remove posts.
- To respect privacy, admins will not accept friend requests.
- Be courteous and respectful of your peers. No offensive or violent language.

*If you have any questions or concerns, please contact an admin via e-mail at [waldensocialmedia@mail.waldenu.edu](mailto:waldensocialmedia@mail.waldenu.edu).*

So far there are more than 1100 members. Here are some of the topics fellow students have posted about:

- Textbook swaps and info on how to find and save money on books
- Questions about courses and instructors
- Should I go on for an advanced degree?
- Excitement around graduating
- Wanting to connect further with fellow students
- APA tips
- How to manage stress

- Support and encouragement
- Rants (polite rants!)
- And more!

You will first need to use the group finder tool which will then direct you to the correct FB page:  
<https://www.waldenu.edu/facebook-group-finder>

We hope to see you soon on the Walden Psychology FB page.

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## Featured BS Psychology Student: Carina Fitzpatrick

**Q: Where were you born and raised? Have you lived anywhere interesting or exciting?**

**A:** Texas! Born and raised. I moved at the age of 12 from Dallas out to the Hill Country with my family. After high school I attended college in Nacogdoches (almost as east as you can get before Louisiana) and stayed there for about 11 years before finally moving back central. Nacogdoches and its piney woods have a special place in my heart because that's where I figured out how to be my own person. When I smell pine needles baking in the sun, I have to stop for minute and reminisce.

I love and plan to stay in my current town, Round Rock; it's becoming more culturally diverse while keeping the small community feel. It's like our family is just getting better as it gets bigger. We have a series of free family-friendly outdoor concerts in the spring and fall along with numerous multicultural festivals promoting awareness and inclusivity. My personal favorites are the Día de los Muertos festival and the Diwali festival (and the food).

The answer to the second question is yes and no. I think every town has something about it that is interesting if you look. I don't I want to live anywhere "exciting" – but I would sure love to visit!

**Q: Do you have any hobbies? What do you like to do in your free time?**

**A:** My hobbies include gardening, camping, sewing, and travelling. My daughter and I have been slowly working on a pollinator garden. The goal is to have native plants that attract



butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds. The few plants we have now are healthy and well-established. I am looking forward to adding more next year.

A couple of years ago my daughter and I joined a local Cub Scout Pack. Scouting was a big part of my life during high school and I'm thrilled to be involved again. I even serve on the Pack Committee as their Assistant Treasurer. During the recent state shutdown, we participated in a virtual campout – each family camped in their own backyard. My daughter and I had so much fun we did it a few more times on our own! I even dug a small firepit so we could roast hot dogs and marshmallows.

**Q: Why did you return to school for your psychology degree? What was your career before returning to school?**

**A:** As a high school senior, I got hooked when I took a basic psychology class. I am at Walden now to pick back up what I started years ago. Although I earned a BA in English in 2004 from Stephen F. Austin University, I started that journey with the intent of earning a BA in psychology and continuing on to earn a doctoral degree. I changed majors after the sudden and unexpected death of my father in 2001. I wanted to finish school as quickly as possible and an English degree offered the path of least resistance. I am so excited to finally be back on track!

Before returning to school in the fall of 2019, I managed the Texas branch of a draft beer line cleaning company. In 2014, I started an entry level position with the company and quickly worked my way up. I was toying with the idea of taking some business management classes when I thought “if you're going back to school, it should be for something you love.” After choosing to temporarily close the company in response to the COVID-19 shutdowns, I am no longer the manager. While that is not something I chose, it has reduced my stress and workload, thereby allowing me to focus more on school.

**Q: What has been your favorite class at Walden and why?**

**A:** All of them. I am in pursuit of my dream; each class is another necessary and wonderful step in the right direction. There have been concepts within courses I have enjoyed more than others and class discussions I have enjoyed more than others, but I am having trouble picking a favorite overall course.

I especially enjoyed learning about cults and A.I. in my Theories of Personality course with Dr. Melissa Scotch, different cultural structures in Cross-Cultural Psychology with Dr. Peggy Samples, and how to interpret statistical results in Intro to Basic Statistics with Dr. Stacy Bjorkman. I am looking forward to each class I have left to take.

**Q: What are your future plans, both for your degree and in general?**

**A:** Many of the application deadlines for local doctoral programs are in early December, so my short-term plan is to begin those applications this fall. I am on track to finish my BS in Psychology through Walden next May – with a 4.0 if I keep up my current effort. If accepted into a doctoral program, I will begin next fall. I plan to spend some quality time with my daughter for a month or two after my Walden graduation. Hopefully, we will be able to do some traveling before I embark on my next academic journey.

After earning my doctoral degree in Counseling Psychology and becoming licensed by the state, I plan to work with adults. I am currently undecided about working with a specific demographic or sticking with adults in general. I feel very strongly that mental healthcare should be available and accessible to everyone, so it is likely that I will choose to work with, and volunteer for, adults from all walks of life.

### **What advice would you give to other B.S. Psychology students?**

**A:** Don't quit!!

Your goal is attainable, and you are worth the effort it takes to achieve it. The trick is to not give up, which can be so much harder than it sounds. There are days when I feel so overwhelmed with parenting and work and school that I just want to quit all three. I take a few minutes (sometimes many minutes) to breathe, reassess the current situation, and remember my motivation. I try to make sure I give full effort in each task (school, work, or home) before calling it a day. I like going to bed knowing I did everything I could (and some days, that isn't much). It's okay to reach out for help, too. There are so many people who want you to succeed, they will do anything they can just to see it happen.

Just. Don't. Quit.

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## **Dear Wally**



Wally is an expert on all things Walden. If you have questions about anything related to your journey as a Walden student, Wally will be able to point you in the right direction. Sometimes Wally's advice may be helpful to everyone, so *periodically we will share some of those questions and answers.*

Dear Wally,

I have been busy avoiding people so that I don't catch the Corona virus. Plus, my kids are home all day and I am supposed to deal with them while keeping up with school and work. It's just too much! Any tips for being a Walden student in the quarantine era?

Sincerely,

Heidi Ng

Dear Heidi,

Thanks for writing, I know a lot of people have the same concerns. I am proud to say that I have been trying to avoid other people for years, so it comes a little more naturally to me. But just being home all day does something to your brain. Just last night I realized my dog and I were both thinking about chewing on the furniture!

Most of the time, when there is an emergency, it is something more like a hurricane or a blizzard, right? We hunker down, and wait it out. Then we go back to normal. The problem with our current situation is that it keeps going on, and we don't know when it will end. That adds to the stress all by itself. My mom used to offer to slap me into next year, and recently I have been thinking about taking her up on it! If you have a job that you can do at home, that is great, but I know many people have been laid off or have to risk infection to go to work. That is a ton more stress. And then all our kids at home. Listen, I feel for the teachers - they were not ready for this by a long shot, but what parents are ready to keep doing all of their usual tasks and add on supervising school? Stress!!!

I keep reminding myself that at least Walden did not have to make enormous changes. While some traditional universities were sending students home, closing campuses, and frantically phoning friends to learn how Zoom works, Walden classes went on exactly as they always do. So while we still have all the other sources of stress, at least this one thing is working for us. Walden students are pretty legendary for their resilience and ability to juggle lots of responsibilities, but sometimes we just can't keep all the balls in the air, right? And listen, our school knows how crazy our lives are right now, and they will work with us so that we can get our class work done and continue pursuing our educational and career goals despite all the craziness around us.

I wish I could give you a magic formula for success or pull out my crystal ball and tell you how this will all turn out. Even Wally has his limits! But let me assure you that we will get through this. Just be smart and keep distancing even when it frustrates you. Focus on the positives instead of the negatives—I am saving tons of money on shampoo and shaving cream right now,



and hardly ever do laundry!—and be sure to go outside sometimes. I have two teenagers, so we used to go whole weeks without the whole family being in the house at the same time. We fix meals together, we eat together, we sit outside, we watch movies that pause all the time because the whole neighborhood is on Netflix, and it's wonderful. Just take it day by day, assignment by assignment. You can do it. Back in 1918 people got tired of staying home during the flu epidemic, and when WWI ended, they ignored safety and gathered in the streets to celebrate. More people died from the flu than from the war (Don't take my word for it, do your research! You are a scholar!). Just sayin'.

Wally

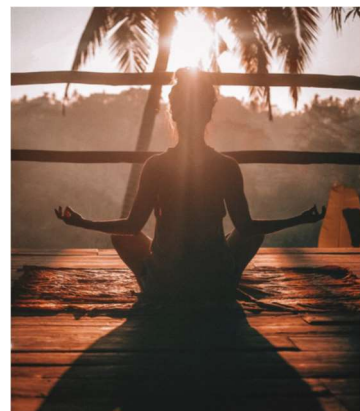
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## Executive Functioning: A Series Focus: focusing, sustaining and shifting attention to tasks.

By: Amy Zafinandro, Associate Director Disability Services

When we're awake, we're paying attention to something. The question is, is it the right thing? Are you reading your textbook, but thinking about your weekend plans? Do you have your Word document open, ready to write your paper, but you're looking at your phone? We can all benefit from learning to focus our minds, some of us more than others!

We've already discussed some of the biggest challengers to Executive Functioning: fatigue, hunger, dehydration. If you're hungry, how easy is it to write a discussion post? If you're exhausted, can you really read that article on Lifespan Development? It's important to be mindful of getting enough sleep and the right nutrition.



Beyond the basics, what else can we do to **focus and sustain attention**?

- **Exercise:** studies have shown that 10-20 minutes of movement can help sustain student attention. Take a quick walk before homework!
- **Manage stress:** a little stress can help motivate. A lot of stress is an obstacle to focus. Meditation and breathing exercises can help – try apps like Calm, Breathe Ball, Kardia, or Insight Timer, if stress is getting in your way.
- **Power nap:** a 10-20 minute nap can help refocus the mind.
- **Get out into nature:** studies show improvement in sustained attention after time in natural settings.

- **Modify your environment:** some people need absolute silence, some need background noise. Try to modify your space to improve sustained attention.
- **Modify your task:** breaking down each assignment into smaller parts, can help with progress. The University of Minnesota has an assignment calculator that will take a larger project and break it into manageable pieces with date goals to hit each milestone.
- **Get Help:** even just sharing your plan can increase the likelihood you'll complete the task. This works really well for me at work – I set my own deadlines and share them with co-workers. It helps keep me on task.

### **Shifting Attention:**

Just as focus can be a concern, so can hyperfocus. Often people with ADHD experience hyperfocus when something interests them. If a student hyperfocuses on one assignment, they might inadvertently ignore other assignments. To prevent hyperfocus, you can set a timer to remind yourself to switch tasks.

### **References**

Dawson, P. and R. Guare. (2016) *The Smart but Scattered Guide to Success: How to use your Brain's Executive Skills to Keep Up, Stay Calm, and Get Organized at Work and at Home*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Honos-Webb, L. (2018) *Brain Hacks: Life-Changing Strategies to Improve Executive Functioning*. Emeryville, CA: Althea Press.