

Laura Machlin, Ph.D.**Clinical Psychology Faculty
Candidate Seminar**

December 1, 2023

1:30-3:00pm (EST)

Psychology Building, Room 105

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EARLY LIFE EXPERIENCES AND YOUTH
PSYCHOPATHOLOGY**

The early environment has a profound influence on behavior and brain development across early childhood and adolescence. However, for youth whose early environment involves exposure to adversity—such as abuse, neglect, chronic poverty, exposure to community violence, or other hardships—these experience-driven changes in neurocognitive development can contribute to mental health problems. In this talk, I will outline my recent work focusing on neurodevelopmental pathways linking early adversity to increased risk for psychopathology across development. First, I will present work that examines associations between early adversity and alterations in brain structure. Second, I will discuss aversive learning as one pathway linking childhood trauma and longitudinal risk for psychopathology in early childhood and adolescence. Third, I will present data from large-scale stressors, such as a natural disaster or the COVID-19 pandemic, to identify at-risk youth with mental health symptoms following these events. Finally, I will discuss how investigating neurodevelopmental pathways linking early life experiences and youth psychopathology makes it possible to identify malleable protective factors that may prevent the emergence of psychopathology following experiences of early adversity.

Please contact Teresa Leyro at tml124@psych.rutgers.edu if you have any questions.