

VTCT Foundation Research at Centre for Appearance Research Newsletter July 2023



Meet the team!

Since the start of the current grant in September 2022, the VTCT Foundation team at CAR has four new team members.



Clare Clement (PhD Student) has a background in Psychology and qualitative and mixed methods health research. Her PhD is developing a tool to identify the support needs of people with visible differences. Clare.clement@uwe.ac.uk

Abbi Mathews (PhD Student) has previous experience working within the VTCT Foundation team at CAR. Her PhD involves investigating the role of social media in reducing stigma towards people with visible differences. Abbi.mathews@uwe.ac.uk



Rosie Thomas (Research Admin) is the administrator for the team. She works part time and is studying to be a Counsellor.

Wylde Robert-Mills (Appearance Research Intern) assists the VTCT Foundation team with several ongoing research projects. Alongside this, he is completing an MSc in Health Psychology.



VTCT Foundation Workshops 2023

January – ‘Moving forward Collectively: Looking ahead to Research with Impact’

In this workshop we gave an overview of our current plans for research over the next 4 years, centring around two key priorities – use of social media and evaluation of evidence-based supportive interventions. We discussed ways to ensure this work is of maximum benefit to the Appearance Collective charities. We also presented the results of our recent survey of the support needs of people impacted by visible differences.



May – Support for parents of children with visible differences

Maia and Clare ran this workshop and provided an overview of the research related to the support needs of parents and carers of children with a visible difference. We discussed the challenges and support practice, and provided an update on evidence-based support developed at the Centre for Appearance Research, including The Parenting Toolkit (see below).

Upcoming workshop: October 2023 (exact date to be confirmed)



The next workshop for the Appearance Collective charities will be delivered by Prof Di Harcourt and Dr Kathleen Bogart (<https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/users/kathleen-bogart>). Kathleen is an Associate Professor of Psychology and Director of the Disability and Social Interaction Lab at Oregon State University. She is a social/health psychologist specializing in disability, ableism, and rare disorders such as facial paralysis. Di co-leads (with Amy Slater) the VTCT Foundation research team at CAR and is a health psychologist

with expertise around research people’s experiences of visible differences and the development and evaluation of supportive interventions.

The workshop will be based on research that Kathleen has conducted in collaboration with the VTCT Foundation team at CAR on people’s experiences of explaining or disclosing their visible difference, and what support and societal changes could help remove the onus of disclosure from them.

Venue: Online (Microsoft Teams). More details to follow, we hope you can join us.

Please email rosie.thomas@uwe.co.uk for workshop summaries or any further information.



Appearance Collective Events

Thank you for inviting us to speak to your events, it is great for us to meet the people who make our work possible. Since the last newsletter we have attended events held by:



Alopecia UK - Maia Thornton and Fabio Zucchelli attended the Alopecia UK Big weekend. They presented a session on managing anxiety for hair loss and had a stall in the conference exhibition hall.



Lipodystrophy UK
Hope Awareness Support

Lipodystrophy UK - Fabio Zucchelli was an invited speaker at the Lipodystrophy UK Patient Day on 31st March 2023, presenting on "Researching the psychology of life with an appearance affecting condition."



Eczema Outreach Support

Eczema Outreach Support - On 14th September 2022, for World Eczema Day, Dr

Ella Guest and Dr Dani Ghio ran a webinar called 'More Than Skin Deep: Eczema and Children's Wellbeing' for members of Eczema Outreach Support. Over 150 families signed up for the event



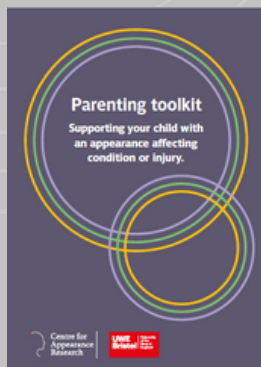
Lipoedema UK -

Di Harcourt was invited by the charity Lipoedema UK to present a webinar on Appearance-Related Support, as part of their Living with Lipoedema Health & Wellbeing Programme (16th Feb 2023). Maia was invited to speak at a 'Living with Lipoedema' online event on the 20th of April. Maia spoke about her work developing evidence-based support for parents of children with visible differences and her research related to concerns about intimacy and romantic relationships for adults with visible differences.



Ella Guest, Abbi Mathews and Morgan Zolkwer will be attending the **Caring Matters Now**

BIG Weekend in July. They will be sharing the findings of their work and running workshops on the psychosocial impact of CMN and becoming more comfortable talking about CMN.



The Parenting Toolkit

Maia is running a study with parents or carers of a child with a visible difference. She is interested in learning about parents experience of using The Parenting Toolkit. The Parenting Toolkit is an e-workbook for parents and carers, which has been developed based on research and in collaboration with parents and carers with lived experience and guidance from clinical advisors.

We would like to find out if The Parenting Toolkit is effective at helping parents and carers to support their child. We are looking for parents and carers to receive a copy of The Parenting toolkit and take part in a series of surveys about their experiences.

Please share with anyone that may be interested. For more information [click here](#) or get in touch with Maia at maia.thornton@uwe.ac.uk.

Publications and conferences

The following are papers published on our work funded by the VCTC Foundation:

- Bogart, K. R., Bryson, B. A., Plackowski, E. F., & Sharratt, N. D. (2022). "The elephant in the room": Disclosing facial differences. *Stigma and Health*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1037/sah0000430>
- Bogart K.R, Bryson B.A, Harcourt D. Disclosing the obvious: Psychosocial implications of (not) explaining facial differences. *Body Image*. 2023 May;46:91-102. DOI: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2023.04.009. PMID: 37247489.
- Cowles, E., Guest, E., & Slater, A. (2023). Imagery versus captions: The effect of body positive Instagram content on young women's mood and body image. *Body Image*, 44, 120-130.
- McWilliams, D., Thornton, M., Hotton, M., Swan, M. C., & Stock, N. M. (2022). Transitioning from child to adult cleft lip and palate services in the United Kingdom: are the NICE Guidelines reflected in young adults' experiences? *Psychology, Health and Medicine*, 1-13.
- Tollow. P., Hamlet, C., Zucchelli, F., Williamson, H. & Harcourt, D. (2023). Experiences and impact of the UK lockdown amongst adults who have a facial visible difference, *Current Psychology*. 10.1007/s12144-022-04089-5
- Zucchelli F, Dalen MV, Bhatia R, White P, Hamlet C, Harcourt D. Do congenital and acquired causes of visible difference predict distinct appearance-related psychosocial outcomes? *Body Image*. 2023 Apr 14;45:355-361. doi: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2023.03.016. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 37062227.
- Zucchelli, F., Sharratt, N., & Montgomery, K., & Chambers, J. (2022). Men's experiences of alopecia areata: A qualitative study. *Health Psychology Open* <https://doi.org/10.1177/20551029221121524>

Below is the link to the CAR repository. Please let me know if there are any papers you are interested in but can't access the full copy.

<https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/tag/788084/centre-for-appearance-research>

We've also recently been disseminating the results of our work at a range of conferences including events hosted by the British Psychological Society Division of Health Psychology, the British Burns Association, the European Hair Research Society, and the European Society of Dermatology and Psychiatry .

Thank you for your on going support. We look forward to seeing you at the VTCT Foundation Showcase on July 14th.

