



UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina

Institute for Mind and Brain Colloquium Series
Invited Speaker



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**“Coping with Ostracism: A Neuroscientific Investigation
of Mindset and Autistic Characteristics”**

Short Abstract: Ostracism, or the perception of being ignored by others, is an aversive behavior that is universal to humans. Autistic individuals are at an increased risk for ostracism which may increase enduring negative mental health outcomes. As such, it is important to better understand what causes differences in coping responses to ostracism to help mitigate these negative outcomes. Two studies were conducted to (1) develop a measure of social and emotional growth mindset and (2) examine how autistic characteristics and social and emotional mindset influence immediate and delayed behavioral and neural responses to ostracism. Across both studies, 463 participants completed the novel Social and Emotional Mindset Scale. A subset of those participants completed tasks that manipulated ostracism conditions and measured later coping responses while functional near-infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS) data was collected. Overall, results indicated that ostracism significantly increased immediate self-reported feelings of distress but not distress as measured by brain activation. There was also a significant interaction between social and emotional mindset and self-reported distress on coping responses such that individuals who felt greater distress and had a growth mindset for social and emotional abilities were more likely to cope in a prosocial way. Taken together with previous research that has demonstrated improved outcomes from mindset training, the present findings could be used to inform social and emotional skills interventions to help individuals remain resilient in the face of ostracism.

October 13, 2023 @ 12:00pm – 1:30pm
Barnwell College – Walsh Conference Room 227