



# Newsletter

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## Editorial

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our lives substantially, confronting many families with harsh financial, social, and personal challenges. Since half a year, the war against Ukraine has added to these problems, forcing high numbers of refugees – mostly mothers and children – to leave their home and seek shelter abroad. Digital tools for communication, cooperation, and support services including therapy have gained salience under these conditions, while digitalization shapes our personal, family and professional lives far beyond coping with crises.

Understanding the challenges involved in individual and family coping with crises and developing effective means of support is essential for scientists as well as practitioners in many fields and particularly for family psychologists. The *Ninth Conference of the International Academy of Family Psychology* addresses these and many other topics focusing on “*Families in Difficult Times: Conflict, COVID, and Cyberspace*”. It will be held online during October 10-12, 2022 and provides a rich program including invited keynotes and symposia of renowned experts in addition to a variety of submissions from around the world. Psychotherapists (at least in Germany) may be interested to hear that the Bavarian Chamber of Psychotherapists (Psychotherapeutenkammer Bayern) has acknowledged the program as an advanced training for psychological psychotherapists and child and adolescent psychotherapists (18 points). Finally, this year’s conference will also celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of IAFP which was in 2020 when the Corona pandemic kept us from meeting and celebrating. The program is shown on the subsequent pages.

The conference also marks the transition of the Executive Board of IAFP. All IAFP members are called on to vote the new members of the Board. In this

newsletter, you will find important information about the candidates. As the next conference is planned to be held in Japan, dedicated colleagues from Japan are ready to assume a key role in IAFP. Please vote! Further instructions how to do this online will be mailed to our members.

In addition, this newsletter includes two articles from Japanese members. The first informs about the changes in Japanese families during the COVID-19 pandemic. The second is about the application of information processing technology to family psychology. We will continue to keep you informed about family psychology in various countries and hope you enjoy the IAFP newsletter.

Koubun Wakashima, Harald Werneck, & Sabine Walper



International Academy  
of Family Psychology

## **Families in Difficult Times: Conflict, COVID, and Cyberspace**

**9th Conference of the International Academy of Family Psychology**

**Online, October 10 – October 12, 2022**

**Preliminary Program**

**Monday, October 10**

09:00 – 09:30 Sabine Walper: *Welcome and Presidential Address*

09:30 – 10:15 Plenary Keynote 1  
Rita Rosner: *Trauma and its Treatment*

10:15 – 10:30

*Coffee break*

### Parallel Sessions

10:30 – 11:45 Symposium:  
*Psychoeducation in Disasters*

*Chair: Koubun Wakashima*

*Discussant: Koubun Wakashima &  
Michiko Ikuta*

Individual Paper Session:  
*Parents in the COVID-19 Pandemic*

*Chair: Harald Werneck*

10:30 – 10:50 Nihonmatsu, N.: *Disaster  
Psychoeducation for Individuals*

Hermesch, N., Salo, K., Randall, A.K.,  
Chiarolanza, C. & Milek, A.: *The  
Double Burden of Work and  
Childcare for Parents during the  
COVID-19 Pandemic: Work-Family  
Conflict as Stressor for Individual  
and Relational Well-Being*

10:50 – 11:10	Sakamoto, K.: <i>Development of Disaster Psychoeducation Content Focused on Family Systems</i>	Neuberger, F., Maly-Motta, H., Grgic, M., Fackler, S. & Kuger, S.: <i>Daycare Closures and Parents' and Children's Subjective Well-being during the COVID-19 Pandemic – A Longitudinal Analysis in Germany</i>
11:10 – 11:30	Takagi, G.: <i>The Effect of Feedback in Self-Care Tool Based on Solution-Focused Brief Therapy: From the Perspective of Providing Psychoeducation for the Community in Disaster</i>	Masturzi, A., Donato, S., Pagani, A.F., Parise, M. & Chiarolanza, C.: <i>Couples' Functioning during Weekdays and Weekends at the time of COVID-19</i>
11:30 – 11:45	Discussion	Discussion

#### 11:45 – 12:45 Coffee & Posters I

- Koiwa, K. & Wakashima, K.: *Comparison of Japanese and American Attitudes toward People who Failed at "Taking a Hint"*
- Seki, F., Koiwa, K. & Wakashima, K.: *An Examination of Related Models of Burnout Tendency in Family Caregivers of Persons with Dementia -Focusing on Caregiving Situation, Social Support, and Sense of Loss*
- Suzukida, E. & Yamane, T.: *Examination of How Families of Children with Developmental Disabilities Demonstrate Family Resilience*
- Asbrand, J., Hilbert, K., Langhammer, T., Ertle, A., Horváth, L., Praxl, B., Wasenmüller, R. & Lueken, U.: *Digital Stepped Care for Children and Adolescents – a Way out of the Psychological Distress of the COVID-19 Pandemic?*
- Schretzmann, J., Fischer, M., Ditzen, B. & Baernighausen, T.: *Relationship Satisfaction and Metabolic Health – a Cross-Sectional Study in a Burkinabe Population of Older Adults*

12:45 – 13:30

Lunch break

#### 13:30 – 15:15 Invited Symposium

*War, Trauma, and Flight: an Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Consequences for Affected Families*

*Chair: Tobias Hecker*

*Discussant: Laura K. Taylor*

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| 13:30 – 13:50 | Scharpf, F., Kyaruzi, E., Mkinga, G., Bwire Masath, F. & Hecker, T.: <i>The Role of Parental Factors for the Mental Health of Refugee Youth: Evidence from a Multi-Informant Study with Burundian Families</i> |
|---------------|--|

- 13:50 – 14:10 Gredebäck, G. & Hall, J.: *How do Parent's Traumatic Experiences and Mental Health Impact the Cognitive Development of Refugee Children?*
- 14:10 – 14:30 Thompson, P.O., Hall, J. & Walsh, J.I.: *Threat, Empathy, and Acceptance of Forcibly Displaced Persons*
- 14:30 – 14:50 Diab, S.Y., Punamäki, R-L. & Peltonen, K.: *Family Approach to Wellbeing and Achievement among War-affected Palestinian Children*
- 14:50 – 15:15 Discussion

15:15 – 15:30

Coffee break

## Parallel Sessions

15:30 – 16:50 Individual Paper Session:  
*Clinical Interventions*

Symposium:  
*A Focus on Children in the Norwegian Dynamics of Family Conflict (FAMC) Study: Children as Reporters, Children as their own Agents and Children in Different Time-Sharing Arrangements*

*Chair: Beate Ditzen**Chair: Linda Larsen, Maria Morbech & Olav Tveit*

15:30 – 15:50 Zhao, H., Zhang, J. & Gao, F.:  
*Parenting Styles and Chinese Youths' Eating Disorder Symptoms: The Mediating Effects of Emotion Dysregulation*

Morbech, M., Gustavson, K. & Holt, T.: *Children in Different Time-Sharing Arrangements when Parents Live Apart in Norway: A Longitudinal Study of Family Relations and Child Mental Wellbeing*

15:50 – 16:10 Meijer, L., Finkenauer, C., Blankers, M., de Gee, A., Kramer, J., Shields-Zeeman, L. & Thomaes, K.:  
*Development and Randomized Controlled Trial of A Preventive Blended Care Parenting Intervention for Parents with PTSD*

Larsen, L., Schaubert, S.K., Holt, T., & Helland, M.S.: *Child Mental Health and Wellbeing during COVID-19: A Focus on Children's Self-Report*

16:10 – 16:30 Dippel, N., Schneider, S., Christiansen, H. & Brakemeier, E.-L.:  
*CBASP@YoungAge - A Modular Treatment Program for Children and Adolescents with Depression and Interpersonal Problems*

Tveit, O. & Helland, M.S.: *Interparental Conflict and Children's Agency during Parental Separation*

16:30 – 16:50 Discussion

Discussion

**16:50 – 17:30 Coffee & Posters II**

- Acuña Arango, L.M., Cabrera García, V.E., Docal Millán, M.C. & Jeanette Samper, J.: *An Experience Accompanying Families Outside the Therapeutic Setting: Family Counseling Process as a Significant System –PAFSS*
- Kadera, S. & Wächter, N.: *Young People on the Internet: To What Extent can Digital Skills Protect against Negative Online Experiences?*
- Körner, R., Schütz, A., Zverling, E. & Sha'ked, A.: *The Power of Attachment: Examining Actor and Partner Associations Between Attachment Models and Experienced Power in German and Israeli Couples*
- Friedrich, A.-S., Freischlager, L., Siegel, M. & Zemp, M.: *Longitudinal Psychological Family Studies in Austria: A Scoping Review*

**17:30 – 18:30 Plenary Keynote Lecture**

John Thoburn & Myroslava Muchkevych: *The PsyCorps Model of Mental Health Support Training – Experiences from Ukraine*

## Tuesday, October 11

08:50 – 09:00 Welcome back (Sabine Walper)

### Parallel Sessions

9:00 – 10:15	<p>Symposium: <i>Family Changes in the COVID-19 Pandemic</i></p> <p><i>Chair: Koubun Wakashima</i> <i>Discussant: Koubun Wakashima &amp; Michiko Ikuta</i></p>	<p>Symposium: <i>Divorce, Parental Conflicts, Coparenting &amp; Adolescent Adjustment</i></p> <p><i>Chair: Rianne van Dijk &amp; Inge van der Valk</i> <i>Discussant: Alexandra Langmeyer</i></p>
09:00 – 09:20	<p>Kamoshida, S. &amp; Kobayashi, D.: <i>Family Changes during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Japan</i></p>	<p>Swartz – den Hollander, E., Van der Valk, I., van Elven, B. &amp; Branje, S.: <i>Parental Divorce and Children's Adjustment: An Updated Meta-Analysis</i></p>
09:20 – 09:40	<p>Asai, K.: <i>Family Functions in COVID-19</i></p>	<p>Van Dijk, R., Van der Valk, I., Deković, M. &amp; Branje, S.: <i>A Meta-Analysis on Interparental Conflict, Parenting, and Child Adjustment in Divorced Families: Examining Mediation Using Meta-Analytic Structural Equation Models</i></p>
09:40 – 10:00	<p>Koiwa, K.: <i>The Role of Family Therapy in the Expanding COVID-19 Condition</i></p>	<p>Rejaän, Z., Van der Valk, I. &amp; Branje, S.: <i>Postdivorce Coparenting Patterns and Relations with Adolescent Adjustment</i></p>
10:00 – 10:15	<p>Discussion</p>	<p>Discussion</p>
10:15 – 10:30	<p><i>Coffee break</i></p>	



## Parallel Sessions

10:30 – 12:05	Individual Paper Session: <i>Young People in the COVID-19 Pandemic</i>	Symposium: <i>Custody Arrangements, Shared Parenting, and Child Adjustment after Divorce</i>
	<i>Chair: Susan Branje</i>	<i>Chair: Inge van der Valk &amp; Zoë Rejaän</i>  <i>Discussant: Inge van der Valk</i>
10:30 – 10:50	Ayiro, L. & Misigo, B.L.: <i>Strategies used by Kenyan Girls to Cope with Stress during the COVID-19 Pandemic</i>	Holt, T. & Helland, M.S.: <i>Interparental Conflict Trajectories across various Post-separation Time-sharing Arrangements: Results from a Family Dynamics Study</i>
10:50 – 11:10	Nunes, F., Pinheiro Mota, C., Ferreira, T. & Mena Matos, P.: <i>Stability and Change in Adolescents' Attachment to Parents: Effects of Sex, Family Disadvantage, and Pandemic Stress</i>	Langmeyer, A., Recksiedler, C., Entleitner-Phleps, C. & Walper, S.: <i>Child Adjustment after Separation and Divorce in Germany: The Importance of Physical Custody Arrangement and Parental Coparenting</i>
11:10 – 11:30	Smrdelj, R. & Lenarčič, B.: <i>When the Crowds are Gone: Sociality and Information-Communication Technologies during the SARS-CoV-2 Epidemic in Slovenia</i>	Rejaän, Z.: <i>Parent-Adolescent Contact and Belonging in Post-Divorce Families: Examining Residential and Digital Contact with Mothers and Fathers</i>
11:30 – 11:50	Reis, O., Kölch, M., Spitzer, C. & Knabe, A.: <i>Families with Mentally Ill Members during the First Wave in Germany – Results from a Qualitative Network Study</i>	Konrath, E. & Werneck, W.: <i>Joint Physical Custody in Austria: Family Characteristics, Factors Affecting the Choice and Effects on Child Well-being</i>
11:50 – 12:05	Discussion	Discussion

12:05 – 12:45

## Membership Meeting

12:45 – 13:30

Lunch break

13:30 – 14:15

## Plenary Keynote 2:

Sonia Livingstone: Opportunities and Challenges of Digitization for Family Life

## Parallel Sessions

14:15 – 15:50	<p>Symposium:</p> <p><i>Screening Instruments and Digital Platforms in Interventions for Divorced and Separated Parents</i></p> <p><i>Chair: Inge van der Valk, Mariska Klein Velderman &amp; Sabine Walper</i></p> <p><i>Discussant: Mariska Klein Velderman</i></p>	<p>Symposium:</p> <p><i>Paternal and Maternal Influences on Child Development: Asian, European, and North American contexts</i></p> <p><i>Chair: Xuan Li</i></p>
14:15 – 14:35	Hald, G.M., Strizzi, J.M., Cipric, A. & Sander, S.: <i>The Divorce Conflict Scale</i>	Yang, R., Li, X. & Zhang, C.: <i>Paternal and Maternal Influences on Children's Gender Beliefs and Self-esteem</i>
14:35 – 14:55	Goorden, O., Janssen, B. & Van der Valk, I.: <i>SCRES – SCReening and Evaluation for Post-Separation Intervention</i>	Walper, S. & Lux, U.: <i>A systemic Perspective on Children's Emotional Insecurity in Relation to Father: Links to Parenting, Interparental Conflict and Children's Social Well-being</i>
14:55 – 15:15	Sander, S., Cipric, A., Strizzi, J.M., Øverup, C.S., Lange, T., Štulhofer, A. & Hald, G.M.: <i>When Marriage Fails: The Content and Effects of the Digital "Cooperation after Divorce" Intervention Platform</i>	Yu, Y.: <i>Comparing Mothers' and Fathers' Pedagogical Questioning during Everyday Conversations with Young Children</i>
15:15 – 15:35	Walper, S., Baumeister, H., Boll, C., Ditzen, B., Fischer, M., Schmidt-Hertha, B., Schumann, E. & Uemminghaus, M.: <i>Supporting Couples in Trouble and Separated Families: The STARK Online Platform</i>	Discussion
15:35 – 15:50	Discussion	
15:50 – 16:15		<i>Coffee break</i>

## Parallel Sessions

16:15 – 17:15 Individual Paper Session:  
*Families in COVID-19*

Invited Workshop:

Lynda Sagrestano: *Landscape Analysis of The Content and Delivery of Online Parenting Programs for Separated and Divorcing Families in the US*

*Chair: Paula Mena de Matos*

*Chair: Janin Zimmermann*

16:15 – 16:45 Acuña Arango, L.M., Aguirre Burneo, M.E., Alcocer Orozco, B.A., Alegría, M., Blanco, V., Bolzon, L.C., Cabrera García, V.E., Campos García, A.X., Carias, D., Castro, R., Cereceda, M., Dimer de Vicente, M.D., Docal Millán, M.C, Fortin, L., González Larre, M.S., Munévar, E.F.R., Valle Galo, E.E., Costa, Z. & Luz, I.: *Family Coping Strategies Post COVID-19 Confinement: Multinational Latin American Study*

16:45 – 17:05 Canzi, E., Ferrari, L., Barni, D., Ranieri, S., Danioni, F.V., La Fico, G., Rosnati, R.: *Adoptive Families and the Prolonged Pandemic: Which Resources and Vulnerabilities?*

17:05 – 17:15 Discussion

17:15 – 17:30

*Coffee Break*

17:30– 18:30 Plenary Keynote 3

Irwin Sandler und Karey O'Hara: *Promoting Resilience for Children Exposed to Post-Separation/Divorce Interparental Conflict: Theory and Intervention*

## Wednesday, October 12

08:50 – 09:00 Welcome back (Sabine Walper)

### Parallel Sessions

09:00 – 10:15	Symposium: <i>Post-Separation Parenting Smartphone Apps: Can they help Families avoid Conflict?</i>	Symposium:	<i>The COVID-19 Pandemic: The Impact on Adolescents, Parents and Gender Equality</i>
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*Chair & Discussant: Leanne Smith*

*Chair: Silje Baardstu*

*Discussant: Mona Bekkhus*

09:00 – 09:20	Smyth, B. & Payne, J.: <i>Family Law Professionals' Views on Post- Separation Parenting Apps</i>		Donker, M., Mastrotheodoros, S., & Branje, S.: <i>The Moderating Role of Personality on Changes in Adolescents' Stress, Parent-Child Relationship Quality and Mental Health during the COVID-19 Pandemic</i>
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09:20 – 09:40	Smyth, B.: <i>A Critical Evaluation of Post-Separation Parenting Apps using Human Computer Interaction Methods</i>		Helland, M.S. & Baardstu, S.: <i>Profiles and Predictors of Parenting Stress throughout the Pandemic</i>
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09:40 – 10:00	Payne, J.: <i>Separated Parents' Experiences with Post-Separation Parenting Apps</i>		Baardstu, S., Helland, M.S. & Holt, T.: <i>Toward a Backlash in Gender Equality? Nuances in the Gendered Division of Family Work among Norwegian Mothers and Fathers during the COVID-19 pandemic</i>
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10:00 – 10:15	Discussion		Discussion
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10:15 – 10:30 *Coffee break*

10:30 – 11:15 **Plenary Keynote 4**  
*Anna Rönkä: Family Services and Social Networks in Supporting  
Coparenthood among New Parents*

## Parallel Sessions

11:15 – 12:45	Symposium: <i>Coparenting as a Family and Social Backbone: Meanings, Outcomes and Change</i>	Symposium: <i>Interventions to Support Positive Coping with Parental Separation</i>
	<i>Chair: Marisa Matias &amp; Paula Mena de Matos</i>	<i>Chair: Mariska Klein Velderman</i> <i>Discussant: Inge van der Valk</i>
11:15 – 11:35	Melim, B., Ito, D., Tamelin, M., Garraio, C., Carvalho, M., Ferreira, T., Mena Matos, P. & Matias, M.: <i>“Expecting our first baby”:</i> <i>Expectations on the Division of Domestic Labour and Care in Prospective Coparenting - A Qualitative and Cross-National Study</i>	Klein Velderman M., Pannebakker F., Huizing A., Wildeman I. & Reijneveld S.: <i>Post-Separation Preventive Group Intervention Divorce Atlas Offers Parents Psycho Education and Support</i>
11:35 – 11:55	Diniz, E. & Duarte, D.: <i>Father Involvement and Maternal Stress: The Mediating Role of Cooperative Co-Parenting</i>	Walper, S. & Amberg, S.: <i>Strengthening Emotional Sensitivity and Competence to Support Coping with Divorce: The Program “Kinder im Blick”</i>
11:55 – 12:15	Lira de Lima Guerra, L., Barham Setti, A.G., Salvadori Sarmiento, R., Ramos de Carvalho, T. & Barham, E.J.: <i>Evaluation of the Effects of the Family Foundations Program for Brazilian Couples</i>	Goorden, O. & Janssen, B.: <i>Ouderschap Blijft (Parenthood Continues)</i>
12:15 – 12:35	Zimmermann, J., Walper, S., Kindler, H. & Lux, U.: <i>Child Adjustment in the Context of High Coparenting and Legal Conflict Following Separation</i>	Discussion
12:35 – 12:45	Discussion	
12:45 – 13:30		<i>Lunch break</i>

## Parallel Sessions

13:30 – 15:10	Individual Paper Session: <i>Family Relations and Support Services</i>	Symposium: <i>Risk Assessment in Child Protection</i>
	<i>Chair: Johanna Löchner</i>	<i>Chair: Judith Iffland &amp; Susanne Witte</i>
13:30 – 13:50	Liese, D., Löchner, J., Paulus, M., Sandner, E. & Lux, U.: <i>A Real-Time Assessment Approach of Risks and Resources for Parenting Stress in the Transition to Parenthood</i>	Iffland, J.A. & Schmidt, A.F.: <i>Risk Assessment of Male Guardians with CSEM or Other Sex Offences in Family Law Proceedings</i>
13:50 – 14:10	Li, X., Sun, K., Ren, L. & Fan, J.: <i>Work-Family Conflict of First time Urban Chinese Fathers</i>	Watts, P.: <i>When does Pornography Become a Risk Factor in Family Assessments?</i>
14:10 – 14:30	Lux U. & Ulrich, S.M.: <i>Use of Prevention Services in Nuclear, Single Parent and Stepfamilies with and without Social Welfare Receipt – What Makes the Difference?</i>	Witte, S.: <i>Risk Factor Assessment in Relation to Mothers and Fathers – a Comparison of Investigations into Suspected Child Maltreatment in Three European Countries</i>
14:30 – 14:50	Siegel, M., Assenmacher, C., Meuwly, N. & Zemp, Z.: <i>Love Makes a Family, Law Shapes a Family: Legal Vulnerability as a Systemic Stressor for Same-Gender Parent Families</i>	Discussion
14:50 – 15:05	Discussion	
15:05 – 15:30	Farewell and Welcome of the New President of IAFP	

## Candidates for the next IAFP Board

**We need your vote for a new IAFP Board. The following outstanding people have been nominated as candidates for positions in the Board:**

- President:** Koubun Wakashima, Ph.D., Professor, Tohoku University
- Vice-President:** Paula Mena Matos, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Pessoal Docente de Universidades
- Secretary:** Christy M. Buchanan, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Wake Forest University
- Treasurer:** Gen Takagi, Ph.D., Assistant professor, Tohoku Fukushi University
- Membership Chair:** Stepanka (Steffi) Kadera, Ph.D., Ludwig-Maximilians-University (LMU)

**IAFP members will soon receive a link for voting online. Please check your mails and vote!**

### Candidate Biographies

#### **President: Koubun Wakashima, Ph.D.**

Dr. Wakashima is a Professor in the Graduate School of Education, Tohoku University. His specialties are Family Psychology and Clinical Psychology and specialty areas include Brief Therapy / Family Therapy / Morita Therapy. Dr. Wakashima is President of the Japanese Association of Family Psychology; a member of the Editorial Board of the Japanese Association of Counseling Science, and PlosOne; a representative of the Shoma Morita Study Group; Vice President of the Miyagi Society of Certified Clinical Psychologists; the Chief Trainer for Brief Therapy and Family Therapy for the National Foundation of Brief Therapy; Supervisor of the school refusal-solving team, Suginami City Board of Education, and a member of Critical Incident Stress committee, Japan Coast Guard.

Dr. Wakashima is a prolific researcher, having authored or co-authored 64 books, and 241 research papers. Other manuscripts total 84.

#### **Vice-President: Paula Mena Matos, Ph.D.**

Dr. Paula Mena Matos is Associate Professor at the University of Porto, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, and coordinator of the research group on Relationships, Change Processes, and Wellbeing at the Centre for Psychology at University of Porto. She teaches in the fields of clinical, health, family and developmental psychology, and has been supervising clinical psychology trainees over the last 20 years. Her research interests include the topics of close relationship dynamics, attachment and emotional processes across different developmental stages (from childhood to adulthood) and domains (e.g., family, work-family balance, residential care, transition

to adulthood, psycho-oncology, psychotherapy). She is also committed to the development and testing of psychological intervention programs with vulnerable populations.

**Treasurer: Gen Takagi, Ph.D.**

Dr. Gen Takagi is a licensed psychologist and an assistant professor at Tohoku Fukushi University in Japan. He received BA, MA, and Ph.D. of education from Tohoku University. As a student, he studied the effectiveness of self-care tools based on solution-focused brief therapy. He is currently developing bi-directional self-care tools based on solution-focused brief therapy by integrating information processing techniques into self-care. In these studies, he values the framework of system and communication theories. He has published many papers and received the President's Award from Tohoku University and the Encouragement Award from the National Foundation of Brief Therapy.

**Secretary: Christy Buchanan, Ph. D.'s**

Christy M. Buchanan is a Professor of Psychology at Wake Forest University. Her research focuses on adolescence and emerging adulthood, and has addressed how characteristics of the family (e.g., family structure, family relationships, parenting practices, ethnicity) and of the individual (e.g., beliefs about development, biological change) are associated with one another and with adjustment during this time of life. She has a special interest in predictors of parenting and parent-child relationships during adolescence. She teaches classes in developmental psychology, parent-child relationships, adolescent development, and child development and social policy.

**Memberships Chair: Stepanka Kadera, Ph.D.**

Dr. Stepanka Kadera studied psychology, education and psycholinguistics in Munich. She is currently a post-doctoral researcher at the Institute of Education at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich and in the Department of Family and Family Policy at the Deutsches Jugendinstitut E. V. in Munich. Her research interests include family research, childhood and youth research, and capacity & quality building in child protection.



## Family changes during COVID-19 pandemic in Japan

Saeko Kamoshida

Tohoku University

### 1. COVID-19 pandemic in Japan, 2022.

Three years have already passed since the spread of the COVID-19. July 2022, Japan is in the midst of the seventh wave of the infection outbreak. On the other hand, restrictions on overseas travel and out-of-prefecture travel have been lifted, and people are regaining their freedom to go out compared to the early stages of the pandemic. In addition, while the government continues to recommend vaccination, it is considering the possibility of treating it as a danger level similar to that of influenza, and a plan to stop monitoring the total number of infected people. In other words, prevention continues, but the excessive risk perception is weakening.

### 2. Family changes during COVID-19 pandemic in Japan

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed many aspects of life. It seems to have affected the way people work, spend their weekends, and social relationship, as well as the trivial choices they make in their daily lives, such as money management, shopping, eating, housing, fashion, and pets (INTAGE QUALIS, 2022). It is interesting to note, for example, that the COVID-19 pandemic has organized socializing, and that telework has led people to choose less constricting clothing rather than formal attire. Unconstrained clothing relaxes the body and mind, and may indirectly affect health in the future. In addition, some people have started to keep pets. The fact that pets have become a part of the family may have a significant impact on their mental health.

On the other hand, these changes are not only positive. In the early days of the pandemic, the significant increase in child abuse, domestic violence, suicide, and depression were frequently mentioned as family problems caused by the change in lifestyle. For example, the number of reports of child abuse increased by approximately 12,000 cases compared to the previous year. The breakdown is as follows: the number of reports of psychological abuse increased, while the number of reports of neglect decreased. The reason for the increase in the number of reports of psychological abuse is related to domestic violence in front of children (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2021). In addition, since digital devices have spread to the compulsory education process due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we often encounter reports of parents being troubled by their children's tendency to depend on the Internet and concerns about lack of exercise. However, regarding these family-related changes, it seems that family therapists around me have pointed out, family and individual problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic only prompted the original family and individual patterns.

### 3. Family Research on COVID-19 pandemic in Japan

Family studies in Japan include a survey on life changes in the COVID-19 pandemic (Recruit Management Solutions, 2020; Hirai & Watanabe, 2021) and a research on family attributes

that are likely to cause family problems in the COVID-19 pandemic (Kamoshida, Nihonmatsu, Takagi, Wakashima, 2022).

Positive results include the fact that many people feel that the introduction of remote work has improved their quality of life, including their own health, because they have more time for housework and communication with their families (Recruit Management Solutions, 2020). In addition, having more time with their families has increased their satisfaction with their lives (Hirai, 2021). (Hirai & Watanabe, 2021).

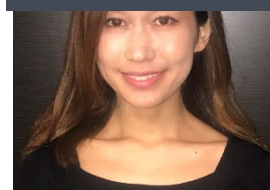
On the other hand, the results showed that smokers were more likely to suffer violence from their spouses. And those with preschool children were more concerned about child abuse. Those who were working and those who were working tended to be dependent on the Internet. Those whose income decreased due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and those who had conflicting opinions about COVID-19 in their families tended to be mentally unhealthy. The fact that people with preschool children are more likely to have abuse anxiety and that people whose income has decreased compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic are linked to mental ill-health has also been described in previous studies unrelated to the COVID-19. However, the researchers believe that the possibility that smokers are more susceptible to spousal violence and that those who work are more likely to become dependent on the Internet may reflect some of the peculiarities of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, smoking is said to be a risk factor for severity of the disease, which may be linked to marital conflict and violence. In addition, while Internet dependence has been seen to be more prevalent among those who do not work, the survey showed the opposite result. The reason for this may be that the introduction of remote work due to the COVID-19 has increased the amount of time spent on the Internet throughout the day, even among those who are working.

In a recent survey of anxiety about infection (Nissay Basic Res. Center, 2021), compared to the early stages of the pandemic, anxiety about infection has decreased among the elderly and those raising children, who had been more anxious. However, the same decrease in anxiety is also observed among single young people, who have been less anxious since the beginning of the pandemic. Therefore, we cannot deny the possibility that some people will regain their lives as they have getting used to the COVID-19, while other family members may experience a further deepening of the interpersonal relationship gap between those who have getting used to the COVID-19.

#### 4. Conclusion

Three years have passed since the COVID-19 pandemic in Japan, and there is a sense of acclimation to the lifestyle. Therefore, it will be necessary to predict problems due to getting used to COVID-19 pandemic. On the other hand, it is also necessary to bear in mind, as many family therapists have pointed out, family and individual problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic only prompted the original family and individual patterns. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are not only physical and direct, but also indirect, such as economic. In addition, it is undeniable that the disparities in anxiety about infection and differences in values may deepen the gap in interpersonal relationships in the future. Even after the wave of COVID-19 pandemic has passed, remote work and educational methods using digital devices that have taken root due to the COVID-19 may create problems in the future. Therefore, families may suffer

Saeko Kamoshida,  
Tohoku Univeristy, Japan



from the effects over a long span of time and should continue to be supported according to their needs.

## First steps towards applying information processing to family support

Gen Takagi

Tohoku Fukushi University

In April 2023, the Children and Families Agency is scheduled to launch in Japan. This is due to the fact that no effective solutions have been found to the problems surrounding families in Japan, such as abuse and non-attendance at school. In order to improve this situation, the Children and Families Agency proposes effective systems and supports for families from the perspective of children and parents. Thus, there is a need for effective ways to support families in Japan.

One innovative way to enhance family support is to utilize information processing. Recent developments in information processing have been remarkable, making it possible to recognize and generate images and text at the same level as humans. In particular, in the area of natural language processing, high-performance language models such as BERT and GPT-3 have been developed. The use of such natural language processing techniques should accelerate the development of more effective family support.

However, research on the application of natural language processing technology to family support has not yet been conducted. One of the primary reasons for the lack of research is the lack of interaction between information processing technology specialists and family support professionals. I have studied family psychology and clinical psychology while learning about natural language processing technology in parallel. Therefore, based on my experience, I will present some important points to help family and clinical psychologists take the first steps in utilizing information processing techniques.

First, if you want to get an idea of how to utilize natural language processing techniques, I recommend starting with a classification task with BERT. A classification task is a task that classifies, discriminates, or judges a particular text. For example, consider the case of evaluating family cohesion from texts about family. First, a text about the family is needed. Next, for each text, the expert assigns a numerical rating of family cohesiveness. Assigning such a rating is called an annotation. Machine learning with BERT, using texts about family as input and expert ratings as output, makes it possible to mechanically predict family cohesion from the text about family. Thus, in order to mechanically classify or predict a particular rating from text, it is necessary to prepare a pair of texts and particular ratings.

In particular, family psychologists play a major role in annotation, as accurate ratings by experts are required. Furthermore, many natural language processing experts do not know how to apply natural language processing techniques to support families. Therefore, another role that family psychologists should play is to come up with ideas for applying natural language processing. Thus, it is important for family psychologists to have contact with natural language processing experts in order to link natural language processing to useful assistance.

If you have a natural language processing expert you know who is willing to work with you, you are very fortunate. Usually, such an expert is not close at hand. If you don't have such an expert close by, you need to learn about natural language processing. Even if such an expert is close to you, learning about natural language processing is important in order to

communicate what you want to do to a natural language processing expert. In the following sections, we will briefly introduce how to learn programming languages to take advantage of natural language processing techniques.

The best way to learn natural language processing is to read books. Especially after 2020, many books on BERT have been published, making it easier to understand and actually analyze natural language processing through books. The following book describes a library called Transformers, which enables natural language processing with BERT.

Tunstall et al. (2022) Natural Language Processing with Transformers, Revised Edition (English Edition). O'Reilly Media.

In addition, natural language processing requires a lot of computational resources, so in the past, a high-spec PC was necessary. However, this is no longer a problem with Google Colaboratory. Google Colaboratory allows us to execute Python programming in a web browser and is equipped with large computing resources. With Google Colaboratory, natural language processing is even easier to perform.

Thus, it is easier for more people to perform natural language processing today than in the past. Still, there will be many challenges in learning to program in order to perform natural language processing. Guts are required in learning programming. The reason for this is that most of the programming time is not spent being creative but identifying and correcting errors.

There are many sample codes in the book. However, attempts to analyze your data using the sample code often result in errors. Without correcting the cause of the error, natural language processing cannot be performed. Search for the error, find the cause, and correct it. After repeating this trial-and-error process dozens or hundreds of times, you will finally be able to run natural language processing. I was also able to get the programming working after repeated setbacks. As a result, I was able to create the following tool that mechanically determines the concreteness and realism of a goal.

<https://goal-cls-v1-lur5uyrhqa-an.a.run.app/>

When goals are entered into this tool, the probability that the goal is concrete and realistic is calculated, and the tool assists the user in setting better goals. Nevertheless, I am still in the process of learning. I believe it is important to apply information processing techniques such as natural language processing to family psychology and family support in the future, and I would like to contribute to further development. I hope that the introduction of my experience will help as many people as possible to start the first step in the application of information processing to family support. I believe that such an increase in the number of family psychologists will help build a society that can properly utilize information processing techniques to assist people.

Gen Takagi, Ph.D.  
Tohoku Fukushi University, Japan

