**Prevalence and Correlates of Trauma Exposure in Justice-Involved Adolescents**

**Presenter: Cassidy Tennity, Emily Feldman (Psychology)**

**Faculty Mentor: Dr. Stevie Grassetti (Psychology)**

Background: Trauma exposure in adolescents is associated with increased rates of externalizing behaviors, substance use disorder and conduct disorder. Youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system have elevated levels of mental health difficulties and the many detained youth who have experienced trauma may be a group with particularly high needs.

Objective: The purpose of this study was to determine the frequency of trauma exposure and correlates of such exposure in a sample of justice-involved youth.

Methods: Staff administered the Massachusetts Youth Screening Inventory (MAYSI-2) to N=41 detained youth upon their arrival at a juvenile justice facility. In the current study, we examined associations between the trauma exposure subscale and the subscales for substance use, suicidal ideation, depression/anxiety, thought disturbance, and anger/irritability. The thought disturbance subscale has only been validated for boys.

Results: 59.2% of youth in the sample endorsed trauma exposure on the MAYSI-2. As hypothesized, we found significant positive correlations between trauma exposure and several MAYSI-2 subscales including substance use (r=.35, p<.05), anger/irritability (r=.49, p<.001), and depression/anxiety (r=.64, p<.001). The thought disturbance subscale yielded a significant positive correlation with the trauma exposure subscale for boys (r=.48, p<.01).

Discussion: Detained youth are a group with heightened psychological needs compared to the general population. Results suggest that those youth who have been exposed to trauma may be a group with particularly high level of needs. Trauma-focused programs and policies can be implemented to mitigate not only posttraumatic stress but also substance use, anger/irritability, depression/anxiety that correlate with trauma exposure.