LOCATING RELEVANT PEER-REVIEWED
JOURNAL ARTICLES IN PSYCINFO DATABASE

Introduction: *Finding relevant peer-reviewed journal articles in PsycINFO can feel overwhelming. The following steps will guide you through this process and make the task manageable and maybe even enjoyable.*

1. Identify keywords in your research question or hypothesis

Formulating a research question or hypothesis will help you generate specific search terms also known as keywords. For example, if you are interested in the effects of meditation on happiness, you will probably want to focus on the keywords "Mediation" and "Happiness."

2. Generate alternative keywords

Ideally at this point you could conduct your search using the keywords you identified in Step 1. However, if you conducted your search with only these two keywords (i.e., Meditation and Happiness) you might be limiting your search significantly. For example, you could expand your search by including related terms such as, "Mindfulness," "Mediate," "Relaxation," "Guided Imagery," and "Hypnotherapy." Therefore, in addition to the keywords you identified in Step 1, you may want to include word variations, synonyms and related terms.

3. Login to PsycINFO

1. Go to the Camosun library homepage
2. Click the Articles & databases link and then click the Databases link
3. Click "A" and then the "APA PsycINFO" link
4. If you are off-campus you will need to login using your student number and password

4. Enter your keywords

Enter your keywords using special modifiers. Below is one example of how to enter the key words Mediation and Happiness using the modifiers:

<u>EXAMPLE</u>: (Meditat* OR Mindfulness OR "Guided Imagery" OR Relaxation) AND (Happiness OR Pleasure OR Flourish*)

-   **OR** – including OR between two or more keywords will search for journals that use at least one of the search terms
-   **AND -** including AND between two or more keywords will search for journals that use all of the search terms
-   **( )** - placing parentheses around two or more words will specify what modifiers relate to which words (e.g., in the example above the search will return articles that use at least one of the Meditation keywords and at least one of the Happiness keywords).
-   ***** - placing an asterisk after the root of a word will allow you to search for several variations of a word. For example, using the keyword Meditat* will search for that specific letter combination plus any ending (e.g., Meditate, Meditation, Meditating, etc.)
-   **" "** – placing quotations around two or more keywords will limit your search to that exact phrase (i.e., the words in the order specified)

5. Limit additional search parameters

Use the "Refine Results" tab or "Advanced Search" window to further refine your search. As a starting point you may want to do the following:

- Check the "Academic Journals (Peer Reviewed / Scholarly)" box. Checking this box will limit the results to journal articles that have been evaluated by experts in the field.

- Specify a publication year. You may want to search for more recent works that have been published in the past 5-10 years.

6. Identify key articles

Focus your energy on locating one relevant article that is especially related to your research question or hypothesis. You can then implement several strategies to locate other relevant articles.

- If available, click on the "Cited References" link below the relevant article. The link will redirect you to a page that lists all of the publications referenced in the article.

- If available, click on the "Times Cited in this Database" link below the relevant article. The link will redirect you to a page that lists all of the publications that referenced this article.

- Identify key authors repeatedly referenced in the article(s) and then conduct another search and include these key author's name(s) in your search criteria.

- Identify relevant keywords used in the article. The keywords are beside the "Subjects" heading, which is below the publication information in the results list.

Using these strategies allows you to conduct a more targeted search but please keep in mind that you still need to review the articles to identify which ones are relevant.

7. Additional Tips:

- Use AskAway. This online chat provides convenient and expert reference help to post-secondary students. Connect with friendly professionals, who respond to questions about literature searches, citations, and referencing. Access AskAway at this link: https://askaway.org/chat

- When you locate a relevant article but do not have access to the full-text version in PsycINFO, you can click on the "Request from another library" link. Sometimes you will be redirected to a page that contains a link to the article; however, if there is no link available you can place an interlibrary loan and have the full-text version sent to you at no cost. Contact the library (250-370-3622) or use AskAway for help with placing an interlibrary loan.