

## Usman Afzali, PhD (Psyc), MD

Postdoctoral Research Fellow  
Lecturer (Teaching and Admin)  
School of Psychology, Speech and Hearing  
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### Contact

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### Employment

2023→	University of Canterbury	Postdoctoral Research Fellow [ <a href="#">Muslim Diversity Study</a> ]
2022→	University of Canterbury	Lecturer (Teaching and Admin) [ <a href="#">Neuroscience &amp; Research Methods</a> ]
2022	University of Canterbury	Postdoctoral Research Associate [Computational Neuroscience]
2021→2022	Victoria University of Wgtn	Research Assistant
2018→2022	University of Canterbury	Teaching Assistant→Teaching Assistant Coordinator →Guest Lecturer→Lecturer (Teaching only)

*Postgraduate Courses:* Cognitive Psychology, Forensic Psychology, Advanced Research Methods & Statistics  
*Undergraduate Courses:* Cognition, Social Psychology, Intermediate Research Methods & Statistics, Introductory Research Methods & Statistics, Introductory Psychology

### Fields of Research

Human Flourishing, Psychology of Religion, Contemplative Neuroscience, Cognitive Psychology:  
Memory suppression, Forensic Neuroscience.

### Education

2022	University of Canterbury, PhD in Psychology
2018	University of Canterbury, BSc with First Class Honours in Psychology
2017	University of Canterbury, BSc in Psychology
2009	Shaikh Zayed University, MD in Curative Medicine

### Awards

2022	<a href="#">UC Foundation</a> Doctoral Publication Prize (1,000 NZD)
2022	<a href="#">SPR</a> Free Membership
2022	Georgina Carvell Memorial Prize (5,000 NZD)
2019	<a href="#">Te Puna Toiora</a> Scholarship (2,500 NZD)
2019	<a href="#">University of Canterbury Doctoral Scholarship</a> (21,000 NZD p.a. plus tuition for 3 years)
2018	Stage 4 Psychology Prize
2017	Stage 3 Psychology Prize (250 NZD)

## Grants

### Principal Investigator

2023

U. Afzali (PI): **TRT-2022-30579** “**A national longitudinal study of Muslim diversity and flourishing**” Templeton Religion Trust, NZD 406,021 (University of Canterbury).

## Publications

(Citations: 69, h-index: 5, i10-index: 3; [Google Scholar](#), Dec, 2023)

### 2023

10. Bulbulia, J. A., **Afzali, M. U.**, Yogeewaran, K., and Sibley, C. G. (2023). Long-term causal effects of far-right terrorism in New Zealand. *PNAS Nexus*, 2(8). <https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgad242>
9. **Afzali, M. U.**, Jones, R. D., Seren-Grace, A. P., Palmer, R. W., Makarios, D., Rodrigues, M. N. B., and Neumann, E. (2023). Classification accuracy of the ERP-based Brain Fingerprinting and its robustness to direct-suppression and thought-substitution countermeasures. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 37(3), 480-495. <https://doi.org/10.1002/acp.4050>

### 2022

8. **Afzali, M. U.**, Seren-Grace, A. P., Palmer, R. W., Neumann, E., Makarios, S., Wilson, D., and Jones, R. D. (2022). Detection of concealed knowledge via the ERP-based technique *Brain Fingerprinting*: Real-life and real-crime incidents. *Psychophysiology*, 00:e14110, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1111/psyp.14110>
7. Byrne, K., Yogeewaran, K., Dorahy, M. J., Gale, J., **Afzali, M. U.**, Bulbulia, J. A., Sibley, C. G. (2022). Psychological impact of far-right terrorism against Muslim minorities on national distress, community, and wellbeing. *Scientific Reports*. 12, 1620. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-05678-x>

### 2021

6. Shanaah, S., Yogeewaran, K., Greaves, L., Bulbulia, J. A., Osborne, D., **Afzali, M. U.**, & Sibley, C. G. (2021). Hate begets warmth? The impact of an anti-Muslim terrorist attack on public attitudes toward Muslims. *Terrorism and Political Violence*. 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2021.1877673>
5. Rucklidge, J. J., **Afzali, M. U.**, Kaplan, B. J., Bhattacharya, O., Blampied, M. F., Mulder, R. T., & Blampied, N. M. (2021). Massacre, Earthquake, Flood: Translational science evidence that the use of micronutrients post-disaster reduces the risk of post-traumatic stress in survivors of disasters. *International Perspectives in Psychology: Research, Practice, Consultation*. 10, 39–54. <https://doi.org/10.1027/2157-3891/a000003>

### 2020

4. **Afzali, M. U.**, Bustos, J. V. C., & Kemp, S. (2020). Perception of financial satisfaction and its implications for free first-year education in New Zealand university students. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, 49(2), 4–14.
3. Sibley, C. G., **Afzali, M. U.**, Satherley, N., Ejova, A., Stronge, S., Yogeewaran, K., ... Bulbulia, J. (2020). Prejudice toward Muslims in New Zealand: Insights from the New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, 49(1), 48–72.
2. Blampied, N. M., Mulder, R. T., **Afzali, M. U.**, Bhattacharya, O., Blampied, M., & Rucklidge, J. J. (2020). Disasters, policies and micronutrients: the intersect among ethics, evidence and effective action. *New Zealand Medical Journal*, 133(1508), 8–11. ([url](#)).

## 2019

1. Yogeeswaran, K., **Afzali, M. U.**, Andrews, N. P., Chivers, E. A., Wang, M.-J., Devos, T., & Sibley, C. G. (2019). Exploring New Zealand National Identity and Its Importance for Attitudes toward Muslims and Support for Diversity. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, 48(1), 29–35.

## Dissertation

**Afzali, M. U.** (2022). *Suppressing unwanted memories and thoughts: Psychological traits and forensic brainwave investigations*. PhD thesis, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, NZ. <http://dx.doi.org/10.26021/13084>

## Supervision

### Ongoing

- 2024→ J. Badis. *BA Hons Psychology*. The New Zealand Attitudes and Values Study. [Primary supervisor].
- 2024→ H. Grace. *MSc Psychology*. Computational Neuroscience. [Secondary supervisor].
- 2023→ L. Rocha. *MSc Psychology*. Computational Neuroscience. [Secondary supervisor].
- 2023→ K. Johnson. *PhD Psychology*. Biomarkers for Early Dementia: Memory suppression, language comprehension and EEG. [Secondary supervisor].
- 2023→ N. Shadbolt. *BA Hons Psychology*. Cognitive Psychology. [Secondary supervisor].

### Completed

- 2023 H. Grace. *BA Hons Psychology*. The Construction and Validation of The Contemplative Experience Scale. [Primary supervisor].
- 2023 R. Heaton. *BA Hons Psychology*. Investigating the Effects of Sleep Deprivation on Memory Suppression Tasks. [Secondary supervisor].
- 2022 K. Johnson. *BSc Hons Psychology*. Testing the Think/No-Think Effect with Same and Independent Cues: Conditionalised Versus Unconditionalised Recall. [Secondary supervisor].
- 2022 P. Theobald. *BSc Hons Psychology*. Actively Forgetting Unwanted Memories: An Inhibitory Account of the Think No/Think Paradigm. [Secondary supervisor].
- 2022 J. Auckram. *BSc Hons Psychology, Victoria University of Wellington*. Powering Through Struggles: Resilience of Muslim Women in Ōtautahi/Christchurch During Covid-19 Lockdowns. [Research mentor].
- 2021→2022 D. Matchett. *MSc Psychology*. Memory Suppression under Sleep Deprivation: The Effects of Sleep Loss and Sleep Time on Suppressing Unwanted Memories. [Secondary supervisor].
- 2021 J. Lynskey. *BSc Hons Psychology*. Memory Suppression in Those Susceptible to PTSD - A Study Adopting the Think/No-Think Paradigm. [Secondary supervisor].
- 2021 J. Newlands. *BSc Hons Psychology*. Does OCD Impact One's Ability to Actively Suppress Memories? A Think/No-Think Paradigm Study. [Secondary supervisor].

## Research Projects

- 2023→ [A National Longitudinal Study of Muslim Diversity and Flourishing \(Muslim Diversity Study\)](#)
- 2023→ Artificial Intelligence-Based Crime Detection in Aotearoa: Real-life and Virtual Reality Applications
- 2022→ [Resting EEG Microstates During Contemplative Practices](#)
- 2022→ [Controlling Unwanted Memories: A Multisite Registered Replication of the Think/No-Think Effect](#)
- 2019→2020 Post-trauma Micronutrients Intervention (*Te Puna Toiora*)
- 2018→2022 Brain Fingerprinting Independent Replication
- 2017→2018 New Zealand Tertiary Students' Financial Stress

## Presentations, Panel Discussions & Talks

- 2023<sup>t</sup> [Long-term Effects of Far-Right Terrorism on Muslims in New Zealand](#) (public lecture). CARE, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand. 17 July 2023.
- 2023<sup>t</sup> Journey from Medicine to Academia: Navigating Challenges and Advocating for Change (invited talk). Afghanistan Independence Day 2023 Event, Afghan Association of New Zealand. Auckland, New Zealand. 21 Aug 2023.
- 2022<sup>p</sup> Behavioural Evidence of Suppression-induced Forgetting and its Interaction with Psychological Traits (research presentation). School of Psychology, Speech and Hearing, University of Canterbury. Jun 2022.
- 2021<sup>p</sup> Brain Fingerprinting with Parolees and Brain Fingerprinting Countermeasures (research presentation). School of Psychology, Speech and Hearing, University of Canterbury. 03 Dec 2021.
- 2021<sup>p</sup> Brain Fingerprinting: Replication and Countermeasures (research presentation). [New Zealand Psychological Society Annual Conference](#). 05 - 07 Sep 2021.
- 2021<sup>t</sup> Navigating Challenges: Immigrant Youth in New Zealand (invited talk). Afghan Association of New Zealand Youth Networking Conference. Auckland, New Zealand. 01 Aug 2021.
- 2021<sup>p</sup> Detection of Concealed Knowledge via the ERP-based Technique Brain Fingerprinting: Real-crime Scenarios (research presentation). [Australasian Society for Experimental Psychology Annual Conference](#). 09 - 11 Apr 2021.
- 2021<sup>d</sup> Navigating the New Zealand Work Environment as an Immigrant (panel discussion). School of Law Graduands Panel, University of Canterbury. Christchurch, New Zealand. 29 Mar 2021.

## Professional Training

- 2023 MATLAB for Neuroscience (University of Canterbury)
- 2022 Git & GitHub with RStudio (edX and Udemy)
- 2022 R, Essential, Basics and Advanced training (LinkedIn Learning)
- 2022 Academic Development for lecturers (University of Canterbury)
- 2022 EEGLab - The Matlab toolbox for EEG and MEG data processing
- 2022 [Causal Diagrams: Draw Your Assumptions Before Your Conclusions](#) (edX Harvard)
- 2021 Python: Basics of programming, data analysis, data visualisation (edX IBM)
- 2021 Meta-Analysis (University of Canterbury)
- 2021 Tutor and Demonstrator Training (University of Canterbury)
- 2020 Teaching in Academia Workshop (University of Canterbury)

## Professional Affiliations

- 2022→2023 [Society for Psychophysiological Research](#): Member
- 2022→ [Centre for Applied Cross-cultural Research](#): Associate
- 2020→ [UC Meta](#): Member
- 2019→2022 [New Zealand Psychological Society](#): Student Member

## Skills

Academic	Applied frequentist statistics, teaching, research (conducting & supervision)
Programming	Python, R, MATLAB
Software applications	SPSS, Jamovi, Statistica, AMOS, L <sup>A</sup> T <sub>E</sub> X, Qualtrics, EEGLab, Git, Quarto

## Service

- 2023→ Academic Programme Co-convenor, [New Zealand Psychological Society Annual Conference - 2024](#)
- 2023→ Trustee, [Asturlab Cultural Centre](#)
- 2023→ Vice President, Muslim Health Council Aotearoa
- 2023→ Research Assistant, School of Psychology, Victoria University of Wellington
- 2023→ Peer Reviewer: Funding agency (e.g., HRC NZ) and academic journals

2021 Academic Rep, Postgraduate Society (SPSH, UC)  
 2020 Founder, Postgraduate Society (SPSH, UC)  
 2020→ Member, School Marketing Committee (SPSH, UC)  
 2020→2021 Administrator, School's social media platforms (SPSH, UC)  
 2020 Founder, School's social media platforms (SPSH, UC)  
 2019 Contributor, Royal Commission Submission on Post-15 March Terrorist Attacks (The Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand)  
 2019 Founder, Social Hour (Facilitating socialization in the postgraduate community) (SPSH, UC)  
 2018→2021 Member, Postgraduate Council (SPSH, UC)  
 2018→2019 Phone Counsellor, Lifeline Aotearoa  
 2016→ Volunteer Imam (Prayers Lead), University of Canterbury Muslim Students' Association

### Languages

Pashto ●●●●●●  
 Farsi/Persian ●●●●●●  
 English ●●●●●●  
 Hindi and Urdu ●●●●●●  
 Arabic ●●●●●●

### Other

Citizenship New Zealand  
 Advocacy Preregistration, Open Science, E-learning  
 Interests History, Historical Period Drama, Islamic Civilization, Nature and Wildlife

### Referees

Available on request.