

EMILY TOWNER

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

|                                    |              |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Postdoctoral Scholar</b>        | 2025-Present |
| California Institute of Technology | Pasadena, CA |
| Supervisor: Professor Dean Mobbs   |              |

EDUCATION

|                                                                        |                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>University of Cambridge</b>                                         | 2025            |
| PhD, Psychology                                                        | Cambridge, UK   |
| Supervisor: Professor Sarah-Jayne Blakemore                            |                 |
| Co-supervisor: Dr. Livia Tomova                                        |                 |
| <b>University of California, Los Angeles</b>                           | 2019            |
| Master of Social Science, Psychology                                   | Los Angeles, CA |
| Advisor: Professor Jennifer Silvers                                    |                 |
| GPA: 4.0                                                               |                 |
| <b>Columbia University</b>                                             | 2018            |
| Postbaccalaureate, Psychology                                          | New York, NY    |
| GPA: 4.3                                                               |                 |
| <b>City University of New York, School of Professional Studies</b>     | 2017            |
| Bachelor of Arts, Communications and Media                             | New York, NY    |
| Summa Cum Laude                                                        |                 |
| GPA: 4.0                                                               |                 |
| <b>Fashion Institute of Technology</b>                                 | 2015            |
| Associate in Applied Science, Advertising and Marketing Communications | New York, NY    |
| Valedictorian, Summa Cum Laude                                         |                 |
| GPA: 4.0                                                               |                 |

GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

|                                                                    |           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Gates Cambridge Scholarship                                        | 2020-2025 |
| Cambridge Philosophical Society Research Studentship               | 2025      |
| St. John’s College Benefactors’ Scholarship                        | 2020-2023 |
| International Society for Developmental Psychobiology Travel Grant | 2022      |
| Cambridge University School of Biological Sciences Fieldwork Grant | 2022      |
| SARMAC Student Caucus Research Grant                               | 2020      |
| International Society for Developmental Psychobiology Travel Grant | 2019      |
| UCLA MaSS Conference Travel Grant                                  | 2019      |
| UCLA MaSS Merit Scholarship                                        | 2018-2019 |

HONORS AND AWARDS

|                                                                    |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| City University of New York’s 50 Under 50                          | 2024 |
| International Society for Developmental Psychobiology Poster Award | 2023 |
| UCLA Grad Slam (3-Minute Thesis) Finalist                          | 2019 |
| CUNY SPS E-Portfolio Showcase Winner                               | 2016 |
| FIT Foundation Distinguished Scholar Award                         | 2015 |
| FIT Alred B. Wagner Award                                          | 2015 |

PUBLICATIONS

Tomova, L., **Towner, E.**, Thomas, K., Zhang, L., Palminteri, S., & Blakemore, S-J. (2025). Acute isolation is associated with increased reward seeking and reward learning in human adolescents. *Communications Psychology*. DOI: 10.1038/s44271-025-00306-6.

**Towner, E.**, Thomas, K., Tomova, L., & Blakemore, S-J. (2024). Increased threat learning after social isolation in human adolescents. *Royal Society Open Science*. DOI: 10.1098/rsos.240101.

- Esfand, S.M., Querdasi, F.R., Gancz, N.N., Savoca, P.W., Nussbaum, S., Somers, J.A., Ditzer, J., Figueroa, M.B., Chu, K., **Towner, E.**, & Callaghan, B.L. (2024). The mind, brain, and body study: A protocol for examining the effects of the gut-brain-immune axis on internalizing symptoms in youth exposed to caregiving-related early adversity. *Brain Behavior Immunity - Health*. DOI: 10.1016/j.bbih.2024.100880.
- Somers, J.A., Querdasi, F.R., Chu, K.A., Gancz, N., **Towner, E.**, & Callaghan, B.L. (2024). Transactional models of depression via caregiver-child interactions: Evaluating conflict resolution as a source of resilience in adversity-exposed families. *Children and Youth Services Review*. DOI: 10.1016/j.childyouth.2024.107945.
- Gancz, N.N., Querdasi, F.R., Chu, K., **Towner, E.**, Taylor, E., & Callaghan, B.L. (2024). Characteristics of the oral microbiome in youth exposed to early adversity. *Brain Behavior Immunity - Health*. DOI: 10.1016/j.bbih.2024.100850.
- Towner, E.**, Chierchia, G., & Blakemore, S-J. (2023). Sensitivity and specificity in affective and social learning in adolescence. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*. DOI: 10.1016/j.tics.2023.04.002.
- Somers, J.A., Chu, K.A., Schwartz, C., **Towner, E.**, & Callaghan, B.L. (2023). Sometimes “we” can help: parents’ pronoun use buffers fear and anxiety transmission. *Anxiety, Stress & Coping*. DOI: 10.1080/10615806.2022.2127694.
- Metcalf, J., Vuorre, M., **Towner, E.**, & Eich, T.S. (2023). Curiosity: The effects of feedback and confidence on the desire to know. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*. DOI: 10.1037/xge0001284.
- Towner, E.**, Tomova, L., Ladensack, D., Chu, K.A., & Callaghan, B.L. (2022). Virtual social interaction and loneliness among emerging adults amid the COVID-19 pandemic. *Current Research in Ecological and Social Psychology*. DOI: 10.1016/j.cresp.2022.100058.
- Towner, E.**, Grint, J., Levy, T., Blakemore S-J., & Tomova, L. (2022). Revealing the self in a digital world: A systematic review of adolescent online and offline self-disclosure. *Current Opinion in Psychology*. DOI: 10.1016/j.copsyc.2022.101309.
- Uy, J., Schwartz, C., Chu, K.A., **Towner, E.**, Lemus, A., Brito, N.H., & Callaghan, B.L. (2022). Parental transmission and buffering of child fear during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Developmental Psychobiology*. DOI: 10.1002/dev.22253.
- Chu, K.A., Schwartz, C., **Towner, E.**, Kasparian, N.A., & Callaghan, B.L. (2021). A mixed-methods investigation of the impact of COVID-19 on family life. *Journal of Affective Disorders Reports*. DOI: 10.1016/j.jadr.2021.100161.

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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- Towner, E.**, Tomova, L., Thomas, K., Norbom, L., Tamnes, C., & Blakemore, S-J. (2025). Neuroanatomical markers of sensitivity to social isolation: amygdala substructure in adolescents. Poster presented at Flux Congress. 2-7 September, Dublin, Ireland.
- Towner, E.**, Tomova, L., Thomas, K., & Blakemore, S-J. (2023). The effects of social isolation on adolescent threat learning. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the International Society for Developmental Psychobiology (ISDP). 26-28 July, Utrecht, Netherlands.
- Towner, E.**, Tomova, L., & Blakemore, S-J. (2023). Investigating the effects of reward and threat on social learning. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Society for the Improvement of Psychological Science (SIPS). 22-24 June, Padova, Italy.
- Towner, E.**, Tomova, L., Thomas, K., & Blakemore, S-J. (2022). Threat learning after social isolation in adolescents. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the International Society for Developmental Psychobiology (ISDP). 9-11 November, San Diego, California.
- Towner, E.**, Tomova, L., Thomas, K., & Blakemore, S-J. (2022). The effects of social isolation and loneliness on fear learning physiology in mid-adolescence. Poster presented at Flux Congress. 7-9 September, Paris, France.
- Towner, E.**, Tomova, L., Thomas, K., & Blakemore, S-J. (2022). The effects of social isolation on fear learning in adolescents. Poster presented at the 18th NVP Conference on Brain and Cognition. 28-30 April, Egmond aan Zee, Netherlands.
- Towner, E.** & Callaghan, B.L. (2020). Distress amid COVID-19 among those exposed to early life stress. Poster presented at the 53rd annual meeting of the International Society for Developmental Psychobiology (ISDP). 21-23 October, Virtual.

**Towner, E.,** Guassi Moreira, J.F., Méndez Leal, A., Waizman, Y., Ninova, E., & Silvers, J.A. (2019). Previous institutionalization worsens the relationship between current life stress, internalizing psychopathology, and adaptive functioning. Poster presented at the 52nd annual meeting of the International Society for Developmental Psychobiology (ISDP). 16-18 October, Chicago, IL.

**Towner, E. & Metcalfe, J.** (2019). The association between confidence and curiosity for general information questions under different feedback conditions. Talk presented at the 13th biennial meeting of the Society for Applied Research in Memory and Cognition (SARMAC). 6-9 June, Cape Cod, MA.

**Towner, E. & Metcalfe, J.** (2018). Confidence in errors predicts curiosity about the correct answers to general information questions. Poster presented at the 59th annual meeting of the Psychonomic Society. 15-18 November, New Orleans, LA.

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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### Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience Lab

2020-2025

Graduate Researcher

Cambridge, UK

*Department of Psychology, University of Cambridge*

*Principal Investigator: Professor Sarah-Jayne Blakemore*

### Tamnes Lab

June 2022

Visiting Researcher

Oslo, NO

*Department of Psychology, University of Oslo*

*Principal Investigator: Professor Christian K. Tamnes*

### Brain and Body Lab

2019-2020

Lab Manager / Staff Research Associate

Los Angeles, CA

*Department of Psychology, University of California, Los Angeles*

*Principal Investigator: Professor Bridget Callaghan*

### Social Affective Neuroscience and Development Lab

2018-2019

Graduate Research Assistant

Los Angeles, CA

*Department of Psychology, University of California, Los Angeles*

*Principal Investigator: Professor Jennifer Silvers*

### Metacognition and Memory Lab

2017-2018

Research Assistant

New York, NY

*Department of Psychology, Columbia University*

*Principal Investigator: Professor Janet Metcalfe*

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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### Guest Lecturer

February 2025 / February 2024

Adolescence (Professor Sarah-Jayne Blakemore)

*Department of Psychology, University of Cambridge*

### Lecturer

June 2024

Adolescent Development and The Teenage Brain

*Downing College Summer Program, University of Cambridge*

### Supervisor (Teaching Assistant)

2021-2024

Adolescence (Professor Sarah-Jayne Blakemore)

Introduction to Psychology

*Department of Psychology, University of Cambridge*

### Demonstrator (Lab Assistant)

2021-2022

Psychological Inquiry and Methods - Neuroanatomy

*Department of Psychology, University of Cambridge*

## SUPERVISION

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### Master's Students

Charis Stanek

2020-2025

### Undergraduate Students

Emily Bagley

2021-2022

Elia Chitwa

2021-2022

Daryl Jia Yi Lee

2020-2021

|                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| Yining Zhang    | 2020-2021 |
| Nicole Fonacier | 2019-2020 |
| Alyssa Ortega   | 2019-2020 |
| Alyssa Wieand   | 2019-2020 |

## ACADEMIC TALKS

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|                                                            |               |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Expanding the Horizons of Brain Research</b>            | April 2025    |
| Cambridge Neuroscience Conference, University of Cambridge | Cambridge, UK |
| <i>Being Alone - Social Disconnection in Adolescence</i>   |               |

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Blakemore Lab Retreat</b>                                          | June 2024     |
| Department of Psychology, University of Cambridge                     | Cambridge, UK |
| <i>Student Wellbeing in the Psychological and Behavioral Sciences</i> |               |

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Annual Academic Staff Meeting</b>                                  | May 2024      |
| Department of Psychology, University of Cambridge                     | Cambridge, UK |
| <i>Student Wellbeing in the Psychological and Behavioral Sciences</i> |               |

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>The Power of Inclusion in Science - Emergence of Diversity</b> | April 2024 |
| Gender Equity Movement, Paris Brain Institute                     | Paris, FR  |
| <i>Social Connection in the Adolescent Brain</i>                  |            |

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|---------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Gates Day of Research</b>                      | May 2023      |
| Downing College, University of Cambridge          | Cambridge, UK |
| <i>Adolescent Sensitivity to Social Isolation</i> |               |

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|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Prediction and Learning Lab (PI: Dr. Rebecca Lawson)</b>  | March 2023    |
| Department of Psychology, University of Cambridge            | Cambridge, UK |
| <i>Threat Learning After Social Isolation in Adolescents</i> |               |

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|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Child Development Forum</b>                               | March 2023    |
| MRC Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit                        | Cambridge, UK |
| <i>Threat Learning After Social Isolation in Adolescents</i> |               |

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|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Tamsin Lab (PI: Professor Tamsin Ford)</b>                | November 2022 |
| Department of Psychiatry, University of Cambridge            | Cambridge, UK |
| <i>Threat Learning After Social Isolation in Adolescents</i> |               |

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|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>7T MRI Methods Group</b>                              | December 2022 |
| Wolfson Brain Imaging Center, University of Cambridge    | Cambridge, UK |
| <i>Adolescent Threat Learning After Social Isolation</i> |               |

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Fear Lab (PI: Professor Dean Mobbs)</b>                                         | November 2022 |
| Division of the Humanities and Social Sciences, California Institute of Technology | Pasadena, CA  |
| <i>Threat Learning After Social Isolation in Adolescents</i>                       |               |

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|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Blakemore Lab Retreat</b>                           | July 2022     |
| Department of Psychology, University of Cambridge      | Cambridge, UK |
| <i>Adolescent Fear Learning After Social Isolation</i> |               |

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|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Gates Day of Research</b>                           | May 2022      |
| Cambridge Union, University of Cambridge               | Cambridge, UK |
| <i>Adolescent Fear Learning After Social Isolation</i> |               |

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Gates Cambridge Internal Symposium</b>                                                                   | March 2021 |
| Gates Cambridge Trust                                                                                       | Virtual    |
| <i>Virtual Social Interaction, Loneliness, and Well-Being Among Emerging Adults Amid the COVID Pandemic</i> |            |

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|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Centennial Celebration - Grad Slam Showcase</b>            | May 2019        |
| University of California, Los Angeles                         | Los Angeles, CA |
| <i>Curiosity and Learning: Curiosity Did Not Kill the Cat</i> |                 |

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

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|                                                     |                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Youth and Family</b>                             |                       |
| Guildford High School                               | Guildford, UK         |
| • <i>Social Connection and the Adolescent Brain</i> | March 2025 / May 2024 |

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Haileybury School (Almaty)                                      | Almaty, KZ   |
| • <i>Adolescent Development and the Teenage Brain</i>           | January 2024 |
| • <i>The Science of Psychology</i>                              | January 2024 |
| • <i>Understanding Stress and Exam Performance</i>              | January 2024 |
| UCL Academy                                                     | London, UK   |
| • <i>The Teenage Brain</i>                                      | March 2022   |
| St. Mary's School                                               | Virtual      |
| • <i>Psychology as an Undergraduate Subject</i>                 | June 2021    |
| • <i>Adolescent Brain Development and the Being Alone Study</i> | June 2021    |

## Educators

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|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Haileybury School (Almaty)                                 | Almaty, KZ     |
| • <i>The Science of Learning</i>                           | March 2024     |
| • <i>Adolescent Social and Emotional Development</i>       | January 2024   |
| • <i>Adolescent Cognitive Development</i>                  | December 2023  |
| • <i>Adolescent Brain Development</i>                      | September 2023 |
| Prince's Trust Institute                                   | London, UK     |
| • <i>Adolescent Development and the Teenage Brain</i>      | March 2023     |
| Haileybury School (UK)                                     | London, UK     |
| • <i>Adolescent Development, Fear Learning and Anxiety</i> | September 2022 |

## SKILLS

- **Statistical Packages:** R, SPSS, JASP
- **Programming Languages:** R, Python, HTML, CSS, LaTeX
- **Neuroimaging:** MRI
- **Physiological data collection:** EDA, ECG, EGG
- **Instrument/interview administration:** WASI, WIAT, KSADS
- **Biological sample collection:** Dried Blood Spot, Saliva, Hair
- **Applications:** REDCap, PsychoPy, Gorilla, GitHub, Adobe Suite

## TUTORIALS

|                                                                                     |                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • <b>Writing A Research Review</b>                                                  | January 2025                                                                          |
| High School Student Course                                                          |                                                                                       |
| ◦ <i>Developed a curriculum to introduce young students to scientific research</i>  |                                                                                       |
| • <b>R for Data Wrangling</b>                                                       | May 2021                                                                              |
| Social Psychology Seminar Series, Department of Psychology, University of Cambridge |  |
| ◦ <i>Tutorial presented to postgraduate students</i>                                |                                                                                       |
| • <b>R for Beginners</b>                                                            | January 2021                                                                          |
| Blakemore Lab, Department of Psychology, University of Cambridge                    |  |
| ◦ <i>Tutorial presented to the Blakemore lab</i>                                    |                                                                                       |
| • <b>Preparing a Three Minute Thesis Presentation</b>                               | March 2020                                                                            |
| UCLA Grad Slam Coaching Session                                                     |                                                                                       |
| ◦ <i>Workshop delivered to postgraduate students</i>                                |                                                                                       |

## SERVICE

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Samuel Butler Room Committee Vice President</b>                                     | 2023-2025    |
| Postgraduate Society of St. John's College, University of Cambridge                    |              |
| <b>Sexual Misconduct Committee Member</b>                                              | 2023-2024    |
| St. John's College, University of Cambridge                                            |              |
| <b>Samuel Butler Room Community Workshop Organizer and Chair</b>                       | October 2023 |
| St. John's College, University of Cambridge                                            |              |
| <i>Panels included: Women at St. John's College and Postgraduate Student Wellbeing</i> |              |
| <b>Beyond Equality Workshop Facilitator</b>                                            | October 2023 |
| St. John's College, University of Cambridge                                            |              |
| <b>Samuel Butler Room Committee Welfare Officer</b>                                    | 2022-2023    |
| Postgraduate Society of St. John's College, University of Cambridge                    |              |
| <b>Postgraduate Student Representative</b>                                             | 2021-2022    |
| Department of Psychology, University of Cambridge                                      |              |
| <b>Hotline Volunteer</b>                                                               | 2016-2019    |
| RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network)                                          |              |

## REFERENCES

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1. **Sarah-Jayne Blakemore, PhD FBA FMedSci FRS**  
Professor of Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience  
University of Cambridge  
Email: [sjblakemore@psychol.cam.ac.uk](mailto:sjblakemore@psychol.cam.ac.uk)  
*Relationship: PhD Supervisor*
2. **Livia Tomova, PhD**  
Lecturer (Assistant Professor) of Psychology  
Cardiff University  
Email: [TomovaL@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:TomovaL@cardiff.ac.uk)  
*Relationship: PhD Co-supervisor*
3. **Bridget Callaghan, PhD**  
Associate Professor of Psychology  
University of California, Los Angeles  
Email: [bcallaghan@ucla.edu](mailto:bcallaghan@ucla.edu)  
*Relationship: Supervisor*