

## Honors Senior Spotlight



**Patrick O'Neill**

**Hometown:** Baldwinsville, New York

**Major:** B.A. in Psychology

**Minors:** Sociology, Criminal Justice

**Thesis Title:** Mental health and substance use issues in the family: An analysis of associations with college performance and attitudes

**Thesis Advisor:** Dr. R. Lillie Macias

---

### **What is your thesis about?**

I evaluated the impact of familial substance abuse and mental illness on collegiate GPA and stress levels. My thesis showed familial substance abuse in childhood can cause increased stress levels in college students. We also found that lower stress levels can have a positive impact on a student's GPA.

### **What motivated and/or inspired you to select this as your research topic?**

I became interested in the topic after being a research assistant in the Community Psychology Lab run by my advisor.

### **Do you have any advice for future Honors students thinking about writing an Honors Thesis?**

Start early with everything. Find an advisor early. Select a topic early. Write your thesis early. The deadlines sneak up on you quicker than you think.

### **After graduating, what are your plans?**

Next August, I plan on pursuing a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology although I am waiting to hear back from 9 programs on my applications.