

# 01| Introducing Navigating Neuropsychology

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**Speakers:** Ryan Van Patten, John Bellone



**Intro Music** 00:00



**Ryan Van Patten** 00:16

Welcome, everyone, to Navigating Neuropsychology: A voyage into the depths of the brain and behavior. This is our first episode, our maiden voyage if you will. I'm your co-host, Ryan Van Patten. And I'm here with my assistant to the co-host, John Bellone. [laughs]



**John Bellone** 00:32

[laughs] Hey, everyone. I'm actually the lead host, but I wanted to let Ryan feel special by having the first word.



**Ryan Van Patten** 00:38

Sure. All right. [laughs] So today's episode is meant to be an introduction to our podcast. We'll run through our ideas and plans, where we envision this endeavor going, the structure and content of our episodes, and several important disclaimers. To begin, what do we mean by "navigating neuropsychology"? We'll provide a more comprehensive discussion of neuropsychology in episode 2. But, in a nutshell, neuropsychology is the study of relationships between the human brain and behavior. So, in this podcast, we hope to guide, or navigate, listeners through a variety of interesting questions, theories, scientific papers, and expert opinions all related to the discipline of neuropsychology.



**John Bellone** 01:23

Yeah, I'd like to add that this podcast is designed to have utility to a broad range of people. We believe that both neuropsychological trainees and professionals will enjoy the content. And we also plan to make it applicable to people in allied medical and scientific fields, such as neurology, psychiatry, experimental psychology, philosophy, occupational therapy, and others. We plan on bringing people from these related disciplines as guests as well. We will strive to make it applicable to anyone who's interested in how our brains and cognitive abilities work.



Before we go any further, I think we should probably tell our listeners a little bit about who we are. I'll start with my co-host here. Ryan Van Patten graduated with his Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Saint Louis University. This past year, he completed a psychology internship at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, and, by the time this episode airs, he will have started his postdoctoral fellowship at the University of California in San Diego pursuing a research-oriented career. I know that our listeners can't see Ryan, but just to paint the picture for you: he stands at a lanky six foot five, which, among other things, makes him easy to spot in a crowd and probably makes flying coach a fun experience for him. [laughs]



**Ryan Van Patten** 02:42

Thank you for captioning my misery, John. [laughs]

**John Bellone** 02:44

Of course.



**Ryan Van Patten** 02:46

John Bellone graduated with his Ph.D. from Loma Linda University in Southern California. He completed his psychology internship at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, and recently completed his postdoctoral fellowship at Brown University. He is currently unemployed and desperately looking for work at any and all establishments in Southern California, including, but not limited, to fast food joints, strip malls, and grocery stores.



**John Bellone** 03:14

Hopefully, by the time I finish postdoc and this episode airs, I will be gainfully employed, thank you very much. But, you know, after six years of grad school and two years of postdoc, working part-time as a grocery bagger without any research deadlines or reports to write - it doesn't seem half bad. [laughs]

But, occupational struggles aside, Ryan and I have both considered the benefits of a neuropsychology podcast for quite some time now. We are both avid listeners of podcasts and love how we can continue to learn while not being hunched over a computer like we are most of the day. We can listen while doing other mindless activities like working out, driving, walking the dog, or doing the dishes. We think this podcast could really fill a gap and provide a launching off point for discussions of important topics in the field. We've both searched for a podcast with direct relevance to neuropsychology, and while there are many science and brain-related ones out there, there's currently no neuropsychology-specific option. And because podcasts are such a great avenue for learning, and we are both so passionate about our field, we didn't want to leave neuropsychology out of this medium.



**Ryan Van Patten** 04:28

Yeah, we're extremely excited to be launching this podcast and we both believe that we're in the right place in our career trajectories to be starting this venture. We've both recently completed our graduate school training, so we have some flexibility in our schedules, and the concepts and ideas we learned as students are still pretty fresh. We're curious people who enjoy intellectual conversations about a diverse set of topics. We have a variety of ideas, opinions, and questions that we're really eager to talk about. We also have differing and complementary interests. So, I'm pursuing a grant-funded academic research career, while John is interested in spending the majority of his time working with individual patients in daily clinical practice and doing community outreach. So we believe that we can provide a range of views and opinions about topics of interests within and pertaining to neuropsychology.

**John Bellone** 05:23



Yeah, I totally agree. And, as in any discipline, neuropsychologists have differing ideas and approaches to issues that face our profession. While diversity of thinking is certainly a good thing, we also hope to draw the neuropsych community closer together and begin working towards unification on important issues in neuropsychology - like, what might be the best structure for the postdoc match system, or the appropriate formatting and style for writing clinical reports, or the use of new innovation and technology to improve the field as a whole, as just a few examples. But this podcast will also allow us a venue for an in-depth exploration of topics that we typically only touch on during our coursework and training in neuropsychology. We take classes that are typically restricted to an hour or so and our supervision meetings are also fairly brief. I think that this constrains our ability to fully explore and discuss interesting and beneficial topics. But, by contrast, there are no strict time limits on podcast episodes so we can allow discussions to unfold naturally. And, you know, of course, if one particular episode feels too long for you, or you just got bored listening to us, then the pause button is right there.



**Ryan Van Patten** 05:25

Can I use the pause button on you right now? [laughs]



**John Bellone** 06:36

Don't you dare. [laughs]



**Ryan Van Patten** 06:46

So, we hope to accomplish our goals through at least two different types of podcast episodes. The first is content-based. These are topics that we typically think about as being associated with neuropsychology and related fields - things such as neuroimaging, cultural neuropsychology, and ways to improve brain health. We're also considering other interesting topics including aviation neuropsychology, mindfulness meditation in neuropsychology, chronic traumatic encephalopathy, and conducting neuropsych evals with transgender individuals. The second type of episode is process-based. So, the focus is more on "the how", as opposed to "the what" and "the why". These episodes will include topics such as professional development, how to effectively use the scientific literature in clinical practice, and efficiency in neuropsychological practice. They might include neuropsychology and work-life balance, successfully navigating graduate school from a financial perspective, and applying and interviewing for internship, postdoc, and professional jobs.

So, now, John and I will transition into a bit more detail about the framework of our podcast. I'll talk about what the podcast will be, and John will talk about what the podcast will not be. To start us off, Navigating Neuropsychology will be grounded in the empirical literature. So although we'll be frequently expressing our ideas and opinions, we will also base our statements in good data whenever possible.

**John Bellone 08:26**



Yeah. However, the podcast will not simply be a space for us to review published manuscripts or to upload our long lecture-style talks. While there's nothing wrong with that type of presentation, Ryan and I feel that we are already exposed to this type of learning extensively in our training, and that podcast episodes are much more interesting if done in a loosely structured discussion-style format. That being said, though, we would consider occasionally using an episode as a pure seminar-style lecture, if that's what our listeners want for some of the topics, but it would likely be a small portion of what we do.

**Ryan Van Patten 09:03**



Yeah, I agree. We want this to be designed for free-flowing conversation - discussion, disagreement, opinions, speculation. We want to be able to step outside the bounds of our intellectual comfort zones and really consider important topics in novel and challenging ways. We want to maximize the depth of discussions in important topic areas. What I mean is, if we're conducting an interview and we come upon an area that we find relevant and intriguing, we want to see that thread to its end rather than quickly moving on to our next scripted question just for the sake of time. We think this is a luxury that we're not usually afforded in our graduate training, and that it could lead to an abundance of useful content in the podcast.

**John Bellone 09:47**



As I mentioned earlier, we don't want to limit the podcast to only neuropsychological trainees or professionals, although this will clearly be the target audience. We also want to try our best not to exclude the pediatric side of neuropsychology. So while Ryan and I have both trained primarily in adult and older adult populations, we acknowledge that our adults were once children and we understand that there are many people in the field who work primarily or exclusively with kids. We want to provide useful content for these folks as well. So we will have pediatric neuropsychologists on the show to talk about peds-specific topics. And much of the content, especially the process-based episodes, should be relevant to listeners of

all backgrounds. But we apologize in advance for any small bias towards adult neuropsych.

**Ryan Van Patten** 10:39



Yeah, we want our content to be useful to general psych students, allied health professionals and really anyone who's curious about neuropsychology, and we definitely want to bring our pediatric friends into the circle.

**John Bellone** 10:51



And finally, NavNeuro, as we are affectionately calling it, is not hosted by omniscient experts, by any stretch.

**Ryan Van Patten** 10:58



Speak for yourself, John. [laughs]

**John Bellone** 11:00



Yeah, Ryan wishes. [laughs] What I mean by that is that we will be discussing a broad, diverse set of topics. We're going to have some knowledge and training in most of these topics, but that doesn't make us experts and it doesn't mean that we will always be right. We're going to omit information, either intentionally or unintentionally, that some of you will have wanted us to include. And we'll make errors, you know, but we're going to do our best to minimize these. We will likely include episodes or portions of episodes where we correct errors of omission and commission that we make along the way and add any new or relevant data that may have been published after we released an episode. We also encourage our listeners to provide feedback, including corrections when my self-proclaimed omniscient co-host happens to misspeak. And we're also open to any dissenting opinions, provided, of course, that it's done politely and respectfully and with the understanding that it's impossible to please everyone.

**Ryan Van Patten** 12:05



Okay. Next on our agenda are a few disclaimers and I'll run through these. First, we are not representing any organization, institution, or any other entity. What we say in this podcast reflects our own ideas and opinions, not those of anyone else. The same goes for our guests unless they state otherwise. Second, what we say and what our guests say is not meant as medical or professional advice, and we do not assume any liability for loss, damage, or disruption caused by errors or reliance on this information. For patients, you should always consult your physician,

neuropsychologist, or other healthcare professional before trying a new medication, procedure, or treatment for a physical, cognitive, or emotional illness. For clinicians and other professionals who are listening, the podcast is meant to supplement, not replace, proper training. You should rely on your training, consult the literature and other licensed professionals, before implementing any of this information into your practice. Furthermore, the podcast should not be used in any legal capacity, including but not limited to, establishing standard of care in a legal sense or as a basis for expert witness testimony. And third, our content will center around issues relevant to people in the United States, and some episodes will be US and Canada centric, such as when we talk about the internship application process. But we don't want to exclude the international community and we'll make every effort to expand our relevance to global levels. We're certainly interested in the practice of neuropsychology in other countries and continents, so this could be an area ripe for future episodes.

**John Bellone** 13:58



I also want to add that there are some areas within neuropsychology where we will need to be particularly careful with respect to what we do and do not say. For example, we don't want to compromise test security by describing the specifics of proprietary cognitive measures. Of course, a large portion of neuropsychology involves utilizing standardized tests to assess brain functioning, and we will talk about this in a general manner while avoiding discussion of any specific details that infringe on copyright materials, violate test security, or could ultimately harm patients by limiting the utility of our profession. And as a last minor note, we're going to ask our guests ahead of time how they prefer to be addressed. So just know that if we use someone's first name instead of Dr. So-and-So, we got the okay to do that.

**Ryan Van Patten** 14:50



All right, we're just about ready to wrap up here. But before that, I'd like to give everyone a sneak peek into a few upcoming episodes. As we alluded to earlier, our second episode will define neuropsychology and describe the field in more detail. This episode will be tailored towards curious people who don't necessarily have formal training in neuropsychology. It could be an excellent resource for family members and friends of neuropsychologists who have questions about the field, or for particularly interested patients. In addition, we also have upcoming episodes with neuropsychologists who have relevant expertise in neuroimaging and in pediatric neuro-oncology. We will include an episode on the ins and outs of interviewing for internship and postdoc. And we'll be launching a mini-series on how

to improve brain health through lifestyle modification. Overall, our ambitious goal is to release an episode every other week, likely on the 1st and 15th of each month. Of course, there are a lot of moving parts to each episode - things like reviewing the relevant literature and guest availability - so, we'll see how things progress in the next few weeks and months. We may be able to release episodes more frequently, or we might have to cut back to about once a month.

**John Bellone** 16:09

All right, so in case we haven't mentioned it yet, we are extremely excited about this endeavor. It's a big task to take on for people working full-time jobs and we're really putting ourselves out there, which is quite anxiety-provoking for us introverts. But we're confident that we're up to the challenge and believe that the personal risk is worth it for the potential benefits that we envision for the field. If you agree with us that this is a worthwhile undertaking, then there are a few ways that you can support us. The first is to tell your colleagues, your supervisors, professors, everyone you know who might be interested about our podcast. Show them how to use the podcast app on their smartphone if they're not super tech savvy.

Number two, leave us a brief written review on iTunes - hopefully with a 5-star rating. This will move NavNeuro up in the rankings and make it more likely that others will see it. And just as a token of our appreciation for this, we will be raffling off one book per month - we'll have a selection of brain-related books that the winner can choose from. So if you want to be entered into the drawing, then just email us at [feedback@navneuro.com](mailto:feedback@navneuro.com) and let us know what screen name you left the review under.



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Before we go, we wanted to acknowledge and thank Dr. Steve Correia and Dr. Meg Collier for listening to our crazy ideas as we were developing NavNeuro and for their very helpful feedback. We're quite appreciative. Well, that brings this inaugural episode to a close. Thanks for listening, and join us next time as we continue to navigate the brain and behavior.



**Exit Music** 18:24

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**End of Audio** 18:24

**Note:**

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