



## Who We Are

A collaborative hub dedicated to unraveling the intricate threads of ethical choices. Formed officially in 2023, the Consortium is multidisciplinary alliance of scholars, thinkers, and practitioners, we delve into the complexities of moral dilemmas, seeking a deeper understanding of how individuals and societies navigate the delicate balance between right and wrong. The Consortium builds on Dr. Cameron's years of interdisciplinary organizational efforts within the Rock Ethics Institute.



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[moralconsortium.psu.edu](http://moralconsortium.psu.edu)

## What We Do



Host regular meetings among Consortium members to develop new interdisciplinary projects, such as studies, papers, and grant proposals. These meetings serve as opportunities to share research and get integrative feedback, workshop grant proposals, focus on specific research topics, or discuss how the Consortium can continue to benefit our research community.



Offer support for Consortium members to engage in research and community-building through our seed grant program, which is meant to energize and give momentum to interdisciplinary social science projects.



Encourage interaction with Consortium members, helping to identify shared points of common emphasis across departments and colleges throughout the Penn State and beyond. We help identify points of complementary methodological strengths by encouraging collaborations across disciplines who might study morality using different tools, nurturing an academic network.

### Research Areas

- Empathy, Morality, and Artificial Intelligence
- Polarization and Morality
- Moral Emotions and Decisions
- Moral Interventions
- Moral Ecologies and Communities

### Penn State Partners

- **Rock Ethics Institute**
- **College of Liberal Arts**
- The McCourtney Institute for Democracy
- Department of Philosophy
- Department of Psychology
- Center for Socially Responsible AI
- Institute for Computational and Data Sciences
- Edna Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Center

### More on What We Do

- Organized regular in-progress research workshops
- Livestreamed external speaker events (e.g., Expanding Empathy Speaker Series)
- Hosted **5** hybrid interdisciplinary conferences (e.g., Political Divisions and Morality in 2025, Moral Boundaries and Fragmentations in 2026, and Empathy, Morality, and AI in 2024 and 2026)
- Funded **\$30,000** in interdisciplinary seed grants to **20** research teams
- Supported **4** graduate students and **2** post-baccalaureate research associates
- Assisted with paper and grant development
- Cultivated strong social outreach and science communication, reaching people in over **25 countries**
- Archived all the Consortium's events on the website

# Success Stories



Daryl Cameron, Consortium Director, received an ICDS Faculty Upskilling Fellowship in AI to study using large language models to facilitate empathy, as well as a grant from Center for Socially Responsible AI to host another AI-empathy conference (with additional support from SSRI) in May 2026. He also published a paper in *Current Directions in Psychological Science* with engineer Alan Wagner and philosopher Martina Orlandi, as well as several former students, on empathy for and from robots.



Paige Amormino, Consortium affiliate, Post-doctoral Associate in Prevention Research Center, published a paper on empathy, morality, and policymaking in *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, with Dr. Cameron and Dr. Joel Segel in Penn State's Health Policy Administration (and Director of the Consortium on Substance Abuse and Addiction).

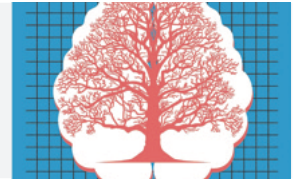


Joshua Wenger, Consortium affiliate, published a paper on choosing to receive empathy from AI in *Communications Psychology*, which shows that people choose human empathy over AI empathy, but nevertheless rate AI empathy as more empathetic and validating.

## Highlights of the Past Year

### Conference on moral psychology in fall 2024

The Consortium hosted a cross-over interdisciplinary conference with the Moral Psychology Research Group.



### Conference on political divisions and moral decision-making in spring 2025

The Consortium hosted a hybrid, interdisciplinary conference on political decision-making in April 2025, with internal and external talks from scholars in anthropology, political science, sociology, philosophy, and psychology.



### Expanding Empathy Speaker Series Returns for 7th Year

Dr. Cameron brought back this series, a Zoom-based internationally focused panel of guests from psychology and philosophy, to talk about the limits of empathy, the use of empathy in moral and social life, and connections to AI and self-development.



### Seed grants awarded to several interdisciplinary research teams

The Consortium awarded seed grants to nine different teams tasked with exploring the nature of human morality.



### Consortium Director, Dr. Cameron, Featured in Several Public Science Communication Efforts

Dr. Cameron led several science communication and outreach efforts to highlight the translational value of this workgroup's efforts. He was on WPSU's Reach podcast for a discussion of empathy. He was on the Maine Calling program, a live panel public radio show, on the topic empathy and society. And he took part in a short film by wildlife cinematographer about empathy for deep-sea animals and their ecosystem.



### Consortium Collaborates with Transatlantic Empathy Observatory

Dr. Cameron took part in a delegation from Penn State Global and the Prevention Research Center, visiting Wilton Park in West Sussex, England for a conference event on empathy and polarization.

