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Conferences and Events

2026 INSA CONFERENCE - ALICANTE, SPAIN

30th September - 2nd October 2026

Hotel Alicante Golf



Preparations for the 2026 INSA Conference are well underway, with the conference organisation team curating a program that pairs scientific presentations with a rich selection of social and cultural activities. These activities are designed to encourage informal networking, strengthen connections across our international community, and offer a taste of local Spanish culture.

Some of the highlights of the social and cultural program include:

- **Breakfast:** Join your colleagues at the hotel each morning for breakfast and that all-important coffee. Prior registration and payment at the hotel is required.
- **An 'Introduction to Golf' Class:** Enjoy an introductory golf session in a relaxed and friendly environment. Explore the neighbouring golf course while connecting informally with colleagues. Prior registration and payment at the hotel is required.
- **Board Games:** Choose from a variety of board games distributed throughout the venue and challenge your colleagues to a friendly game over lunch.



GALA DINNER



1st of October 2026
8:30 p.m.

Hotel Alicante Golf
Register now

The social highlight of the conference will be the flamenco-themed **Gala Dinner**, an immersive cultural experience inspired by the colours, rhythms, and expressive power of flamenco. The evening will feature a vibrant atmosphere that reflects the spirit of this iconic Spanish art form, creating a memorable setting for networking and celebration. Attendees will enjoy a carefully designed event that blends music, movement, and visual elements characteristic of flamenco, encouraging connection and shared enjoyment among colleagues. Be sure to select the “with Gala dinner” registration option when purchasing your conference ticket to secure your place at this special evening.

In amongst the busy conference program, attendees may also wish to take advantage of the Hotel Alicante Golf’s leisure and wellbeing facilities. With a golf course, spa, pool, and relaxation areas all available for conference attendees, there are plenty of ways to unwind and enjoy your stay beyond the formal conference program. **Keen to join us? Register here:** <https://insa.network/events/2026-insa-conference/>. We look forward to seeing you in Alicante!

In Attendance

with

Aaron Lyon



We are pleased to share the next installment of In Attendance with Aaron Lyon, the second keynote speaker at the 2026 INSA Conference.

Could you briefly share your professional background and the path that led you to your current work?

I always enjoyed working with children and adolescents, dating back to my days as a junior camp counselor and, later, as a respite worker for families receiving community mental health services. After college, I took this love to graduate school in clinical child psychology at DePaul University in Chicago, which I chose because of its strong social justice and community orientation. It was at DePaul that I discovered the concept of school mental health; the importance of educational outcomes (e.g., school attendance) for children's success; and persistent gaps between typical and optimal (i.e., evidence-based) practices across service sectors, especially for historically underserved populations (e.g., families from ethnic and racial minority backgrounds). I carried these experiences to the University of Washington in Seattle where I was fortunate to connect with like-minded colleagues focused on implementation science (the study of methods to promote the uptake of research into routine practice) and human-centered design (HCD) (an approach to developing products, services, and systems that centers the needs of the people and places that will use them).

Together with my amazing colleagues, I launched two applied research centers — the School Mental Health Assessment, Research, and Training (SMART) Center (<https://smartcenter.uw.edu/>) and the UW ALACRITY Center (<https://www.uwalacrity.org/>) — integrating these concepts.

How would you describe your main area of research or focus? Why is research in this area meaningful? What is something about this area that people might not expect or know?

My research sits at the intersection of implementation science, human-centered design, and school mental health services. To me, this integrates the most accessible and critical setting for providing mental health care to children and families (schools), the creation of well-designed and scalable interventions or practices (HCD), and supporting systems to deliver them widely and with high quality (implementation science). People might not appreciate just how complementary the fields of implementation science and HCD are, but in combination they do an impressive job of impacting multiple levels of a service system — ranging from the intervention, to individuals, to organizations, and beyond — to support the use of new innovations.

What can attendees look forward to learning or thinking about during your keynote?

I hope attendees consider the assumptions they might make (implicitly or explicitly) about the potential reach of their assessments, interventions, or other practices and consider ways that they might be able to improve their potential impact.

What is something personal about you that might surprise people who are familiar with your work?

I always *loved* the idea of skipping school but was too worried that doing so would negatively impact my grades! 😊

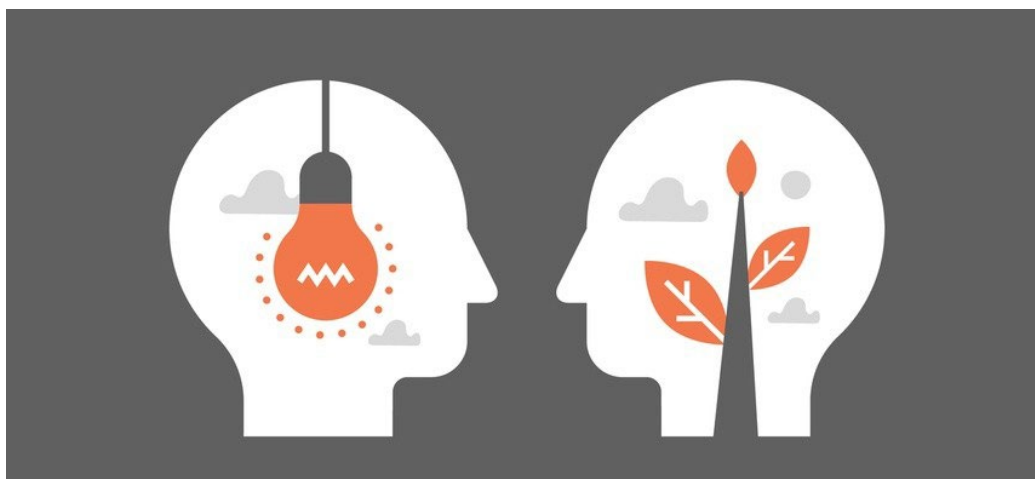
INSA Website Update



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The INSA team thanks you for your patience while we have been working to restore our [website](#). We experienced unexpected disruptions to the service since May, and have taken a staged approach to bringing the website back online. Conference bookings were prioritised and the early-bird period extended to ensure no one was disadvantaged, followed by the restoration of the remainder of the website. Full functionality should now be available. During the downtime, we also took the opportunity to refresh some areas of the website to improve the overall experience.

INSA's Mentoring Program



Are you a Professor or Associate Professor with expertise in school attendance? Are you interested in supporting the development of emerging researchers? Then our mentoring program is for you!

INSA's mentoring program focuses on collaboration, knowledge sharing, and professional development. There may also be opportunities for short research visits, or collaboration on research articles and other short-term projects.

Applications are now being sought from prospective INSA mentors. For further information or to signup as a mentor, please visit the [Mentoring Program](#) page on the INSA website.



It has been a busy quarter for the Emerging Scholars Committee! Since INStAnt's March issue, the Emerging Scholars committee has submitted a response to INSA's development of a Vision Statement and been preparing for the conference in September, alongside our usual program of virtual cafes. Thank you to everyone who engaged in providing feedback that went toward the Vision Statement, and to all those who have joined us at our online events.

Our 5th virtual cafe in May provided an opportunity for Emerging Scholars to come together to network, connect and share their research and research journeys. 14 Emerging Scholars attended from 8 countries and discussed topics including: the unique complexities of school attendance problems, the importance of strength-based approaches and raising the voices of marginalised populations, intervention research and the need for longitudinal perspectives, and how even small changes in the classroom can contribute to substantial differences, especially for neurodivergent students. It was a pleasure to see both new and returning faces come together to share their experience and expertise, and we hope that these discussions will continue in the community at future virtual cafes and beyond!

This month, the committee will be hosting our 6th virtual cafe that will focus on offering Emerging Scholars the chance to practice their presentation skills in the lead up to the conference. Presenters will be invited to share a three-minute overview of their research and receive feedback from the committee and other attendees.

The registration link is here:

<https://deakin.zoom.us/meeting/register/mXXRKBTThRluVbgJsWgTLeA>

Date / Time: 22nd July, 2026

8:30am CEST / 2:30pm AWST /
4:30pm AEST / 6:30pm NZST

Finally, the committee has also been busy behind the scenes working with the INSA Conference Organising Committee on developing the conference program to include events for the Emerging Scholars community. If you are an early career researcher and would like to learn more, you can sign up to receive further information when registering for the conference. In the coming months, we will also be seeking feedback from the community that will guide the committee, and community events in the coming year. Keep an eye out for updates on our [LinkedIn page](#).

Spotlight on Research

A small graphic of a spotlight with a yellow beam and two small orange stars.

School Attendance and Absenteeism: Towards Next Generation Common Measurement

*Christopher Kearney, Laelia Benoit, Carolina Gonzálvez, David Heyne, Glenn Melvin,
Catriona O'Toole, Carolyn Gentle Genitty, Gil Keppens*

This recent article, written by a number of INSA members, highlights the need for a common, valid, and cost-effective measure of school attendance/school absenteeism in order to address the existing limitations in the research literature.

In the article, they discuss current approaches to measurement of absenteeism and the key concerns with these approaches. Key principles for consideration when developing a common measure of absenteeism are proposed to ensure a measure that accurately describes and captures experiences of school non-attendance and absenteeism.

Importantly, the authors position this article as a starting point for the development of a measure that is useful across jurisdictions and geographical locations and highlight the need for a collaborative approach to address this need.

[Read the article here](#)

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