

# Master's thesis project available

**The research project:** 'Wege zum Helfen: Eine experimentelle Untersuchung von Mitgefühl und erlebensbezogener Vermeidung im Hilfsverhalten'.

## Background and Motivation

Helping others is widely associated with enhanced well being, not only for the recipient but also for the helper. However, the underlying motivation for helping behavior remains an open and highly debated question. Is helping primarily driven by compassionate concern, that is, the desire to alleviate another person's suffering? Or is it motivated by experiential avoidance, meaning the desire to reduce one's own discomfort in response to others' distress? At the Chair of Clinical Psychology, Interaction, and Psychotherapy Research, we are conducting an experimental study to directly examine these competing motivational accounts of helping behavior. The project aims to contribute to research at the intersection of compassion, emotion regulation, and prosocial decision making.

## Content & Goals of the Master's thesis

The thesis will be embedded in a randomized experimental study with motivational manipulation and behavioral outcomes. As the project is currently in its implementation phase, tasks as recruitment, data collection in the lab, physiological measurement, and statistical analysis in R will be central components of the thesis. This offers a valuable opportunity to actively contribute to the development and execution of a rigorous experimental study.

## Requirements

We are looking for Master's students in Clinical Psychology or related fields with an interest in research on compassion, emotion regulation, and prosocial behavior. Prior knowledge of statistical analysis in R is required, as this will be central to your work. You should be detail-oriented, organized, and capable of working independently.

## Offer

We provide structured and reliable supervision throughout all phases of the project, with clear timelines and defined milestones. You will gain hands on experience in experimental research, behavioral paradigms, physiological data collection, and advanced statistical analysis in R. The project offers the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to theory driven research while developing strong methodological skills. We also encourage you to bring in your own ideas and interests, ensuring a personalized and rewarding thesis experience.

## Timeline

Beginning: Immediately. The workload can also be distributed across two semesters. Length: 6 Months – Participation in the Masterskolloquium HWS 2026.

## If you are interested or have any questions, please contact:

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