Dr. Chris Fagundes (Ph.D. 2010 U of U Developmental psychology program) is now an Assistant Professor at Rice University (http://psychology.rice.edu/Fagundes/). He has integrated theories and methods from psychology, neuroimmunology, and autonomic psychophysiology in an effort to understand how the mind and body interact to affect those confronted with stressful life events, with a special emphasis on cancer. Because of this work Chris was recently awarded an American Psychological Society’s Rising Star Award.

Dr. Fagundes is the director of the Biobehavioral Mechanisms Explaining Disparities Lab (B-MED Lab) http://bmed.rice.edu/

For more information about his research see

Dr. Fagundes has already greatly contributed to the field of psychoneuroimmunology. He received his Ph.D. from the department of psychology in 2010, and already has close to 50 publications. This includes first author work in Brain Behavior, and Immunity, Psychoneuroendocrinology, Health Psychology, Current Directions in Psychological Science, and JAMA Psychiatry. He has made important contributions to the area of early life stress and psychoneuroimmunology. In breast cancer survivors, he demonstrated that early life stress is associated with more symptom burden and elevated stress, as well as enhanced latent herpes virus reactivation. Based on his work linking early adversity to stress sensitivity, he published a paper in JAMA Psychiatry showing an association between early life stress and an adult immune response to a tumor, which provided powerful evidence for the role of adverse early experiences in creating lasting vulnerabilities with clinically significant health implications. As evidenced by his highly cited review articles on early life stress and immune dysregulation in Brain, Behavior, and Immunity and Current Directions of Psychological Science, he is viewed as one of the central figures in the field of developmental psychoneuroimmunology. In the area of psychoneuroimmunology more
broadly, he has first author published work demonstrating that people who exhibit higher depressive symptoms are more susceptible to a heightened inflammatory response to an experimental stressor compared with those with less depressive symptoms. Based on these findings he recently received a 5 year, 3.7 million dollar grant from the National Institute of Health (NIH) to investigate whether bereaved adults are at heightened risk for both resting and stress-induced inflammatory increases compared with age matched controls. This study will advance our knowledge of how stress raises the risk of cardiovascular disease among those who recently lost a spouse. He also has funding from the American Parkinson’s foundation to investigate the role of inflammation in Parkinson’s related fatigue. He is the principal investigator on both grants. Along with a large staff, he mentors a post-doc and numerous students at the undergraduate and graduate level. The Utah connections are strong in his lab. Dr. Kyle Murdock, Dr. Fagundes’ current post-doctoral fellow, received his bachelor degree from the University of Utah before he left to obtain a Ph.D. in clinical psychology in Illinois. He now works full time in Dr. Fagundes’ lab.