

Presenters:

**Christopher G. Beevers**, University of Texas at Austin

**Bias Is in the Eye of the Beholder: Information Processing and Clinical Depression**

We investigated information processing bias among depressed individuals when a variety of emotionally-evocative stimuli were simultaneously presented for a brief period, using a continuous assessment of visual gaze. Depressed individuals spent more time viewing threatening stimuli, consistent with theories emphasizing negative information processing biases as maintaining factors for the disorder.

**Jutta Joormann**, University of Miami

**Biased Processing of Emotional Stimuli in Girls at Risk for Depression**

We investigated whether daughters of depressed mothers exhibit biased processing of emotional information. The high-risk girls recalled fewer positive words than did the control girls and selectively attended to sad faces. These results indicate that cognitive biases might represent an important risk factor for the development of depressive episodes.

**Regina Miranda**, City University of New York at Hunter College

**Assessing Automaticity in Future-Event Predictions in Suicidality**

We examined automaticity in future-event predictions among college students with a history of suicidal ideation or attempts, compared to non-suicidal controls. Participants made future-event predictions with and without a cognitive load. Individuals with a history of suicidality showed greater cognitive fluency in making pessimistic future-event predictions, relative to controls.

**Matthew K. Nock**, Harvard University

**Using the Implicit Association Test to Assess Suicidal Thoughts**

We examined the ability of a new IAT that assesses implicit thoughts of suicide to: (1) distinguish between non-suicidal individuals, suicide ideators, and suicide attempters presenting to a psychiatric emergency room, (2) detect change over the course of hospital treatment, and (3) predict suicidal behavior over the next six months.

**Gabriele Oettingen**, New York University (discussant)

9:00 AM - 10:20 AM

Georgetown Room East

**The Disobeying Mind: Unwanted Intrusive Thoughts in Different Mental Disorders**

Chair: **Ralph E. Schmidt**, University of Geneva

Unwanted intrusive thoughts have been found to underlie different psychopathological states. The present symposium offers an integrative view of relevant findings from research on thought suppression and on mind-wandering.

The role of mental control processes across different disorders such as anxiety, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and insomnia will be analyzed. (Clinical)

Presenters:

**Ernst H.W. Koster**, Ghent University, Belgium

**How to Control a White Bear? Individual Differences in Thought Suppression Ability**

Co-author: **Barbara Soetens**, Ghent University, Belgium  
Individual differences may play an important role in thought suppression ability. Predictors of self-perceived thought suppression ability and the relation between intrusions and individual differences were examined. Results indicate that suppression ability is related to individual differences in anxiety, attentional control abilities, and particular mental control strategies.

**Jonathan Smallwood**, University of Aberdeen, Scotland, UK

**Mind-Wandering as the Signature of the Dysphoric State**

Research suggests that preoccupation with self-relevant concerns may underlie the experience of depression. Several studies will be presented which demonstrate that dysphoric individuals report greater mind-wandering than controls across a range of task environments. The implications of these findings for the maintenance of depression will be discussed.

**Sadia Najmi**, Harvard University

**How to Respond to an Unwanted, Intrusive Thought in Normal Experience and in OCD**

Co-author: **Daniel M. Wegner**, Harvard University  
Two studies evaluated the relative effectiveness of thought suppression and alternative mental control techniques. Results suggest that the techniques of "focused distraction" and of "creating associates" have potentially salutary effects on non-clinical intrusive thoughts. Furthermore, the effectiveness of specific strategies seems to differ in normal experience and in obsessive-compulsive disorder.

**Ralph E. Schmidt**, University of Geneva

**Feeling Upset Instead of Falling Asleep: Impulsivity as a Risk Factor for Insomnia**

Co-authors: **Philippe Gay**, University of Geneva, Switzerland, **Martial Van der Linden**, University of Geneva, Switzerland  
A study will be presented which investigated the associations between impulsivity, use of different mental control techniques, and insomnia. Results indicated that a specific facet of impulsivity, namely, urgency, is positively related to frequency of thought suppression, frequency of unwanted intrusive thoughts at sleep onset, and severity of insomnia.

**Richard J. McNally**, Harvard University (discussant)