



# World Campus Psychology Club AT PENN STATE

Issue No. 4      September 2019

## Mind Over Matters WCPC Monthly Newsletter

*Building community and identity by encouraging members to share ideas and experiences, and offering support to one another in pursuit of present and future educational goals.*

## Club Updates

by MoM Editor Jessica Kramer

Welcome to the fall semester everyone! For those of you that are just joining us, welcome to the club! I wish you all the very best of luck in all of your classes. Be sure to tune in to our next general meeting on September 17, 2019 with Crisis Text Line representative, Claire LaZebnik. Claire has written over ten novels and has co-authored two books about autism with Dr. Lynn Kern Koegel called *Overcoming Autism* and *Growing Up on the Spectrum*.

This semester, the Mind over Matters (MoM) newsletter will follow a bimonthly publication schedule occurring every two months. If you would like to send in a submission, please email me at [WCPCMindOverMatters@gmail.com](mailto:WCPCMindOverMatters@gmail.com).

## Upcoming Events

**September 24, 2019 @ 10 AM EST**

**[The Treatment of Complex Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Dependence](#) Price: \$89 CE:6**

This webinar is presented by Dr. David McDuff, an active clinician, writer, speaker, and a well-known trauma, addiction, and sports psychiatrist. He will be discussing co-occurring mental disorders of complex addictions, will teach the protective and risk factors related to addiction, and he will teach the different developmental models that will help guide treatment. To register, please click this [link](#).

**September 26, 2019 @ 1 PM EST**

**[Research Ethics, What is it good for?](#)**

This webinar is presented by the Society of Behavioral Medicine (SBM). It is \$15 for non-members and free for members of SBM. If you are interested in conducting research down the road, this webinar will explain how important ethical questions are and it will discuss what is essential in the development of the research process. **To register, please click this [link](#).**

**September 27, 2019 @ 10:00 AM EST**

## **Uncomplicated and Complicated Grief**

**Price: \$89**

This live webinar is presented by Dr. Christina Zampitella, a licensed clinical psychologist who specializes in bereavement, death, and loss. By the end of the seminar, attendees will be able to

distinguish the difference between “uncomplicated” and “complicated” bereavement, will be able to describe cognitive, behavioral, psychological, and emotional responses to loss, will be able to thoroughly understand the grieving process, and more. **To register, please click this [link](#).**

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## **Art for the mind by Jessica Kramer**

**A reprint from the Pennsylvania State University's Psychology 424 [blog](#)**

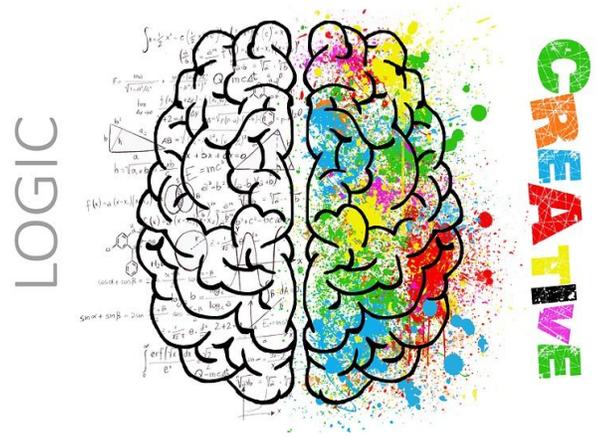
A children’s charity named *The Teapot Trust* is striving to change people’s lives by the use of professional art therapy as a coping mechanism in children’s hospitals. The goal of the charity is to reduce anxiety before children receive their medical procedures, providing a safe environment for children to express themselves, and to reduce the distressing experience for the children as well (Farrugia & Edwards, 2018). By using art therapy in waiting rooms and by telling the children that they may still even come back to the art therapy table at any time of their appointment, it helps to engage the young kids into a therapeutic yet fun activity. Results from a study conducted with 4,154 children using *The Teapot Trust’s* art therapists in hospital waiting rooms reported to have an extremely positive effect on children’s anxiety by reducing it greatly. Thus allowing the child to have a positive experience at their hospital appointment (Farrugia & Edwards, 2018). The art therapist’s table had materials such as clay, paint, brushes, and drawing paper for the kids to express themselves with (Farrugia & Edwards, 2018). By providing the children with this sort of environment, it helps to give them the social support that they need in order to feel comfortable in an unknown environment. The therapist’s table gives the young kids an area where they can talk to other kids who are going through the same exact thing, while also giving the child the ability to have fun while de-stressing from their problems.

Art therapy has been used to treat people with stress, anxiety, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, Alzheimer’s patients, schizophrenia, dementia, psychological distress, patients with autism, post traumatic stress, and many much more facilitated by an art therapist with at least a Master’s degree. Art is a universal non-verbal form of expression that is appreciated by cultures all around the world. It is something that anybody can do; no matter if you have minimal experience with it. The integration of both art and therapeutic techniques is the result of art therapy. The great thing about art is that, there are no rules or limitations. The possibilities are endless.

What other benefits of art therapy are there? It can help patients with the development of personal growth, with trying new things and experimenting by coming out of their comfort zone, and more (Rowley & Comisari, 2016). Art therapy is also supplementing talk therapies because it is seen as a healing strategy

(Rowley & Comisari, 2016). Music therapy is also just as therapeutic in relaxing and de-stressing an individual as well. Healthy relationships may also be enhanced, as well as a deeper reflection on one's own mental health issues (Rowley & Comisari, 2016). Art therapy gives individuals an alternative focus by helping them to focus on something as simple as their own art in replacement for all the stress that is going on in their head and in their life (Rowley & Comisari, 2016).

What parts of the brain are lateralized while one is creating art? It depends if you are drawing or painting. Painting actually is lateralized in 4 different lobes of one's brain, such as the temporal lobe, occipital lobe, frontal lobe, and parietal lobe (Ahmed & Miller, 2003). However, object drawing is found in various cortical regions such as the frontal, temporal, and parietal areas (Makuuchi, 2010). Cortisol levels are actually reduced when one is making art (Kaimal et al., 2017). Even when someone is doodling, the individual is activating their prefrontal cortex (Making Art, 2017). What's even more interesting is that researchers believe doodling can help to engage the reward perception for all artists and non-artists alike (Kaimal et al., 2017). This is because the making of art in art therapy helps to activate feelings of reward and accomplishment. The bottom line is, no matter if you are an artist or even if you are not, anyone will be able to benefit from art therapy. It can help one with depression, anxiety, and anything in between.



For more information about the *The Teapot Trust*, it can be found here at this link:  
<http://www.teapot-trust.org/>

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## **The Future of Your Future Self** **by Miguel Moyano**

One of my favorite short quotes is 'Be Present'. Basically, it encourages individuals to treasure their present moments and not think of their past and future. More objectively, people are encouraged to live in the moment. However, there is an underlying reality about the future, in as much as present moments are golden. Humans are terrible at planning for the future, and that is okay, we evolved for short-term planning and thinking.

After all, we inherited an ability to care for whatever needs to be done at present. Each day we leave the protection of our homes to engage in activities that would ensure our survival, protection, and reproduction. We return home with food, water, clothes, and so forth. So, in a way our short-term evolutionary thinking is helpful. Nonetheless, over the past 20 years, this short-term thinking and planning has alarmingly become dangerous to us, not to our present self, but to our future self.

Recently, while waiting for my favorite sitcom, I watched a tech company food delivery commercial that screamed: "I WANT IT ALL,

AND I WANT IT NOW." At the end of the commercial, a nonchalant female voice tells viewers that "if you want it all, you can get it all". This commercial sums up the state in which we are living in today. We are living in an era in which our present selves are consuming at an amazing rate leaving a challenging situation to our future selves in the form of natural resources depletion, health problems, wealth inequality, and overall quality of life. An era of increasing conveniences like two-day shipping, food delivery, groceries pick-up, automation in payments such as stored credit card information on mobile apps, and pervasive smart devices that enable you to be able to order food and have it delivered to you at home with just the use of your eyes and one thumb. Most technological advances today are no longer for productivity growth or the reduction of person-hours per task but to facilitate higher amounts of consumption "NOW." Our king? Instant gratification.

It is concerning what this does to our future selves. Instant gratification is a significant threat to our future self. On the other hand, long term planning which requires delayed gratification, thoughtful consideration, and undertaking actions that we have not evolved to do, have become a tall order. Meanwhile, commercials such as the one referenced above go straight to our primal instincts of finding the easiest source of food. Moreover, most of us have not developed the mechanism to override the emotional reactions that these types of commercials elicit. In a way, our short-term thinking and planning is being exploited.

Hypothetically speaking, each time that we spend \$50 on our present self without saving or investing \$50 on our future self, we are indicating that our present self is worth more than our future self. So, who is this future self that is devalued? Is he dead? Is he very wealthy that we show no concern for his or her well-being? Many of our actions suggest that we are disconnected with our

future self and therefore we do nothing to make the life of our future self better or improve the chances for positive outcomes. Many of our actions or inactions make our future self worse. A sugary drink makes our present self content. However, cumulative effects may make the future self a diabetic and saddled with medical expenses. A 401(k) withdrawal makes the present self happy to use for current spending but leaves the future self living with less income. Skipping the gym today has no immediate adverse effects for the present self, but over time it leaves the future self with chronic medical conditions.

The implications of this are serious. Our society is cementing habits that perpetuate instant gratification, habits that satisfy the needs and wants of our short-term thinking present self. Meanwhile our future self is distant, at a high risk of chronic diseases and unfunded. This alone is concerning and implies that our constant rate of present self-consumption may lead to the extinction of our own species. If we do not start looking into who is and what kind of planet our future self is going to live in, we may, in fact, end up harming ourselves.

Society has to get to a point at which delayed gratification should be held in high regard. This will be imperative in averting possible future crises. At this juncture, society has to face head on issues on savings, investment, dieting, exercising, sleeping well, and retirement planning to ensure that we are taking care of not only our future self, but also of posterity.

So, who is your future self? In writing this article, I did a bit of a thought experiment. I asked myself this question. The main idea is that if I do not know how my future self looks like or lives like, I will not be able to take the steps now to create that future life. So, if 55-year-old Miguel needs to be able to look like a handsome George Clooney, then I should avoid the 'Just for Men' altogether and age gracefully. If my 45-year-old Miguel needs to be 180lbs and healthy, then I

should exercise regularly and avoid sugary drinks. The idea is to create a mental picture of yourself and familiarize yourself with the older you. Then create a lifestyle now that can lead up to that person you wish to be five, ten, twenty, thirty years from now. In doing this brief thought experiment, I realize that I am, in a weird way, compassionate toward my older self. I feel a bit more responsible for ensuring that at least, I take care of that older person. While we might not have control over certain life aspects, we can shape our

lives in line with that which we envision as our future selves. Knowing this now, I can keep in mind that I should balance the needs of my present self with the needs of my future self, so that my quality of life continues to increase and my standards of life do not decline. I challenge you to paint a picture of your future self and start working towards that vision now, where small steps can account to major results in the future.

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## **Priming prosocial behaviors by Zineb Kobi**

**A reprint from the Pennsylvania State University's Psychology 424 blog**

Imagine that you are working at the Division of Psychology at the University of Newcastle in England. You share a coffee room with your fellow coworkers. Coffee, tea, and milk are provided, but you must pay your consumption using an honesty box. Would you be more likely to pay your drink if an image of eyes is staring at you from above the price list? I guess your response is no. You will argue that you are an honest person and nothing will impact your behavior. Certainly not a fake glance! Bateson, nettle and Roberts (2006) conducted this study. They examined the effect of an image of a pair of eyes on contributions to an honesty box used to collect money for drinks in a university coffee room. People paid nearly three times as much for their drinks when eyes were displayed rather than an image of flowers.

In a study conducted by Josephson (1987), the effect of television violence on boys' aggression was investigated. A group of young boys were the participants of the study, where they watched violent and nonviolent TV. Half of the group was later exposed to a cue associated with the violent TV program. They were frustrated either before or after the TV viewing. Aggression was measured by naturalistic observation during a game of floor hockey. Prior to the study teachers rated the boys' aggressiveness. Groups containing more characteristically higher aggressive boys showed higher aggression following violent TV plus the cue rather than following violent TV alone, which in turn produced more aggression than it did to the nonviolent TV condition.

These two studies illustrated two very different types of priming. Priming refers to the effect of a preceding stimulus or event on how we react to a subsequent stimulus. Priming procedures were first used in cognitive psychology to explore the structure and representation of information within network models of memory. Network models of memory assume that information is stored in memory in the form of nodes. Each node represents a concept. Furthermore, these nodes are connected to related nodes in memory by associative pathways. An additional assumption of network models of memory is that each node has an activation threshold. The node fires if the levels of activation exceed its threshold. When a node fires, it can influence

the activation levels of other related nodes. A final assumption of network models of memory is that the activation level of a node will go away over time, making it a short time effect. Research by cognitive and social psychologist has demonstrated that a prime's effect on a target behavior or thought is related to the intensity of the prime (Gruman, Schneider, & Coutts, 2012).



Cues in our environment are priming our behaviors. This finding can have a practical interest for those designing an honesty based system or wishing to maximize cooperative behaviors. We can also prime our own behavior. Stop reading and take a look around you. What kind of behavior are your surroundings priming?

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*Thank you to all of our contributing writers! See you in November for our next issue!*

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