# New Content From *Current Directions in Psychological Science*

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## [Concepts for Which We Need Others More: The Case of Abstract Concepts](#)
*Anna M. Borghi*

Borghi proposes that people need others more for acquiring, processing, and using abstract concepts (e.g., "truth") than for concrete concepts (e.g., flower). More abstract concepts have more dissimilar exemplars; thus, linguistic interaction and social interaction are crucial for their acquisition and use. Abstract concepts also generate more uncertainty, inducing people to monitor their inner knowledge longer and then to ask others for information and negotiate the concept's meaning. Borghi suggests that future research should, for instance, consider the role of inner speech and uncertainty, and what implications the use of abstract concepts might have for social bonding.

## [Models of Identity Signaling](#)
*Paul E. Smaldino*

Identity signals inform receivers of a signaler's group belongingness, and in doing so shape cooperation, conflict, and social learning. Smaldino argues that formal mathematical and computational models can aid in understanding the use and consequences of identity signaling. The author reviews some formal models of identity signaling and divides them into two categories: (a) models used to study how identity functions as a signal, with a focus on public-health-related behavior and disease transmission, and (b) models used to understand how identity signals operate strategically in different social environments, with a focus on covert, or encrypted, communication.

## [Porosity Is the Heart of Religion](#)
*Tanya Marie Luhrmann and Kara Weisman*

Luhrmann and Weisman argue that studying the sensation that gods and spirits are real (e.g., the feeling that a person who is dead is nonetheless present) may be as important as studying the belief that they are real. They suggest that at the heart of spiritual experiences is the concept of a porous boundary between

mind and world that allows thoughts to move in and out of the mind as if they had agency and power. Luhrmann and Weisman found that porous modes of understanding facilitate spiritual experiences, which are more prevalent among individuals who cultivate an immersive orientation toward experience (absorption) and engage in practices that enhance the inner experience (e.g., prayer, meditation).

## Gender Prototypes Shape Perceptions of and Responses to Sexual Harassment
*Cheryl R. Kaiser, Bryn Bandt-Law, Nathan N. Cheek, and Rebecca Schachtman*

Kaiser and colleagues provide a model describing how the narrow prototype of women as having conventionally feminine attributes and identities serves as a barrier to perceiving sexual harassment and appropriately responding to sexual-harassment claims among victims who do not resemble this prototype. They review research documenting that the conventional prototype overlaps with mental representations of sexual-harassment targets and harms women who diverge from it. When these women experience harassment, they are less likely to be perceived as victims and tend to experience more negative interpersonal, organizational, and legal consequences.

## On the Need to Improve the Way Individual Differences in Cognitive Function Are Measured With Reaction Time Tasks
*Corey N. White and Kiah N. Kitchen*

One approach to measure individual differences is to use tasks designed to tap into specific functions and behavioral measures, such as reaction times (RTs). However, this widespread approach is subject to reverse inference: That is, although different cognitive functions can result in different RTs, different RTs do not necessarily imply differences in that cognitive function. White and Kitchen illustrate this problem with data from a study on aging and lexical processing. They also discuss employing choice-RT models to analyze data and highlight practical approaches to improving and using the models.

## Do Rating and Task Measures of Control Abilities Assess the Same Thing?
*Naomi P. Friedman and Daniel E. Gustavson*

Different measures of self-control (the ability to control one's thoughts and actions)—assessed via questionnaire ratings and cognitive tasks—show only weak relationships with each other. Friedman and Gustavson review evidence that this discrepancy is not just a result of ratings' or tasks' poor reliability or validity. Instead, ratings and tasks seem to assess different aspects of control. To improve the psychological science surrounding self-control, they suggest that researchers investigate the relative importance of these dimensions and explain which aspects of control they are studying and why.

## Well-Being After Psychopathology: A Transformational Research Agenda
*Jonathan Rottenberg and Todd B. Kashdan*

If a person struggles with depression, anxiety, or suicidal impulses, what is the best outcome they can hope for? Can psychopathology be a bridge to a better place where people operate with autonomy and self-mastery, enjoy healthy relationships, experience frequent positive emotions, and view life as meaningful and purposeful? Research has indicated that a substantial number of people with depression, panic disorder, and/or suicidal impulses go on to achieve high levels of psychological well-being. Rottenberg and Kashdan consider the practical and theoretical implications of these findings and call for

a transformational mental-health agenda that focuses on good outcomes.

[Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Work: A Functional-Identity Perspective](#)
*Eva Selenko, Sarah Bankins, Mindy Shoss, Joel Warburton, and Simon Lloyd D. Restubog*

Selenko and colleagues propose a functional-identity framework to examine the effects of artificial intelligence (AI) on people's work-related experiences, including self-understandings and the social environment at work. They argue that the conditions for AI to either enhance or threaten workers' sense of identity derived from their work depend on how the technology is functionally deployed (by complementing tasks, replacing tasks, and/or generating new tasks) and how it affects the social fabric of work. Selenko and colleagues propose that AI-related changes to work affect how workers understand work, themselves in relation to work, and their social environment.