

# New Content From *Perspectives on Psychological Science*

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## [Contact Tracing: A Memory Task With Consequences for Public Health](#)

*Maryanne Garry, Lorraine Hope, Rachel Zajac, Ayesha J. Verrall, and Jamie M. Robertson*

Contact tracing—the process through which public-health officials identify people who contacted someone infected with a virus or other hazard—is among the most powerful weapons against COVID-19. Contact tracing’s efficacy depends on the quality of information that infected people may provide; thus, it might be affected by the same challenges that affect witnesses and investigative interviewing. Garry and colleagues identify these challenges (e.g., imprecision, memory mistakes, omissions) and possible approaches to address them (e.g., use of questions and instructions that promote detail and accuracy, development of good rapport).

## [The Challenges of Military Veterans in Their Transition to the Workplace: A Call for Integrating Basic and Applied Psychological Science](#)

*Steven Shepherd, David K. Sherman, Alair MacLean, and Aaron C. Kay*

Shepherd and colleagues present recent research from different fields relevant to understanding the issues military veterans encounter when transitioning to civilian society and workplaces. The authors propose that veterans have different job outcomes and career prospects than nonveterans because of: (a) trauma during their military experience; (b) differences in demographic and psychological variables; (c) socialization in the military vs. in the civilian world; (d) self-stigma and stereotype threat (i.e., veterans expect to be treated differently by others and thus behave differently); and (e) different treatment from civilians who hold positive and negative stereotypes about the military and veterans. Shepherd and colleagues discuss how the integration of theories may guide future research and inform programs and interventions.

## [Seven Clarifications on the Psychology of Dehumanization](#)

*Jeroen Vaes, Maria Paola Paladino, and Nick Haslam*

In a 2020 article in this journal, Harriet Over proposed seven arguments to challenge the dehumanization hypothesis. Vaes and colleagues argue that Over's description of the dehumanization hypothesis misrepresented contemporary research and theory, and they present seven arguments that clarify the role of dehumanization in social perception. They emphasize that the dehumanization hypothesis describes dehumanization as perceiving someone as lacking humanness by degree and not in an all-or-nothing fashion as Over appeared to suggest. Moreover, they propose, dehumanization extends beyond language (e.g., the use of animal metaphors that Over mentions) and may be a subtle difference between levels of humanness ascribed to different groups, it is distinct from moral evaluation and cannot be reduced to negative evaluation, and it is associated with outcomes beyond harm.

### [Commentary on Over \(2021\): Well-Taken Points About Dehumanization, but Exaggeration of Challenges](#)

*Roger Giner-Sorolla, Pascal Burgmer, and Nuray Demir*

Giner-Sorolla and colleagues suggest that although Over offers useful positive suggestions for understanding dehumanization, her objections to the dehumanization hypothesis are exaggerated. They believe Over's objections target extreme formulations of the dehumanization hypothesis that are not endorsed by researchers. The authors support Over's quest for clarity in this field of research, which often uses the label "dehumanization" for several concepts. Giner-Sorolla and colleagues suggest that dehumanization might be partial and a matter of seeing groups of humans as nonprototypical and therefore metaphorically likened to animals (i.e., prototype categorization rather than all-or-nothing categorization).

### [Falsifying the Dehumanization Hypothesis](#)

*Harriet Over*

In a response to Vaes and colleagues, Giner-Sorolla and colleagues, and others who commented on the original article, Over emphasizes that she does not view the dehumanization hypothesis as a single theory but as a family of theories that can be summarized by two interrelated claims: (a) Victims of intergroup harm are described by horrifying and dehumanizing descriptions (e.g., "rats," "parasites"), and (b) This causes out-group members to be more vulnerable to harm. She comments on different theories of dehumanization and the connection between dehumanization and harm, and she underscores the need for further theoretical clarification and empirical data so researchers can address the shared goal of reducing the consequences of intergroup bias.

### [Statistical Learning and Language Impairments: Toward More Precise Theoretical Accounts](#)

*Louisa Bogaerts, Noam Siegelman, and Ram Frost*

Individual differences in statistical learning (SL) abilities appear to affect linguistic skills, including language impairments. Bogaerts and colleagues review studies testing SL in participants with and without dyslexia and specific language impairment. The authors argue that current studies lack clarity regarding the definition of theoretical constructs (e.g., "SL," "implicit learning") and the overlap between experimental tasks and the constructs they intend to measure. Moreover, most studies do not appear to include appropriate control tasks and were not designed to contrast different theories. Bogaerts and colleagues propose that addressing these issues may advance research on SL deficits in language impairments.