

# New Research From *Clinical Psychological Science*

January 25, 2023



## [Curiosity Disturbed the Cat: Instagram's Sensitive-Content Screens Do Not Deter Vulnerable Users From Viewing Distressing Content](#)

*Victoria M. E. Bridgland, Benjamin W. Bellet, and Melanie K. T. Takarangi*



Warning screens appear to be an ineffective way to deter vulnerable users from viewing negative content, this research suggests. Bridgland and colleagues examined whether people, including vulnerable users (operationalized as people with more severe psychopathological symptoms, such as depression), use the sensitive-content screens as a tool for avoidance. In two online studies, they found that the majority (80%–85%) of participating Instagram users indicated a desire or made a choice to uncover a screened image. Furthermore, vulnerable users were no more likely to use the screens to avoid sensitive content.

## [Examining Unique Associations of Social Anxiety and Depression on Behaviorally Assessed Affective Empathy](#)

*Talha Alvi et al.*

Social anxiety and depression might be more associated with difficulties in cognitive, rather than affective, empathic processes. Alvi and colleagues found that social anxiety or depression did not predict affective empathy—sharing other people's emotional states, or “affect sharing”—when participants rated how they were feeling while watching a video of someone discussing positive or negative autobiographical events. Anhedonia and stimuli valence also did not appear to impact affect sharing. These findings suggest that previous research showing associations between social anxiety or depression and social cognition may be specific to cognitive empathic processes.

## [Mood Symptom Dimensions and Developmental Differences in Neurocognition in Adolescence](#)

*Roselinde H. Kaiser et al.*

Neurocognitive development might be altered in adolescents with mood pathology, this study suggests. Kaiser and colleagues tested 419 adolescents (246 with current mood disorders) who completed reward-learning and executive-functioning tasks and reported on their age, pubertal development, and mood symptoms. The researchers found that in early puberty, adolescents reporting higher manic symptoms exhibited heightened reward-learning performance (i.e., better maximizing of rewards on learning tasks), whereas adolescents reporting elevated anhedonia showed blunted reward-learning performance. They also found that adolescents reporting higher mania showed poorer executive functioning at older ages.

### **Interpersonal Relationships and Callous-Unemotional Traits During Adolescence and Young Adulthood: An Investigation of Bidirectional Effects in Parent, Peer, and Romantic Relationships**

*Erin P. Vaughan et al.*

Callous-unemotional (CU) traits, or limited prosocial emotions, are associated with low quality of interpersonal relationships. This research suggests that CU traits predict reductions in warmth with parents and that the negative association is bidirectional in romantic relationships. Vaughan and colleagues investigated the longitudinal associations between CU traits and warmth with parents, friends, and romantic partners over a 5-year span in a sample of justice-involved adolescent and young-adult males. They found that: CU traits predicted reductions in parental warmth throughout adolescence and young adulthood; higher CU traits and less romantic warmth were bidirectionally associated during young adulthood; but CU traits did not predict less warmth in friendships over time.

### **Examination of the Factor Structure of Psychopathology in a Mozambican Sample**

*Ali Giusto et al.*

Giusto and colleagues examined the structure of psychopathology and a general psychopathology (p) factor using data from a study of 971 adults in Mozambique. The researchers used confirmatory factor analyses of symptoms from 15 psychiatric disorders. Models that included Internalizing (e.g., depression, anxiety), Substance Use, and Thought Disorder (e.g., mania) factors as well as a general p factor fit the data well. Higher levels of p, Internalizing, and Thought Disorder factors were associated with greater suicide risk, psychiatric comorbidity, chronic medical illnesses, and poorer functioning. Understanding psychopathology dimensions might help to build more scalable mental health service approaches globally.

### **Detecting Impending Symptom Transitions Using Early-Warning Signals in Individuals Receiving Treatment for Depression**

*Marieke A. Helmich et al.*

Helmich and colleagues tested individuals with depression who were starting psychological treatment. They measured positive and negative affect 5 times a day using ecological momentary assessments over 4 months and depressive symptoms weekly over 6 months. Results indicated that individuals with symptom transitions in psychopathology took longer to return to the equilibrium position (rising autocorrelation between emotions) than those whose symptoms did not change. Only a few individuals presented extreme fluctuations (rising variance in emotions), and these could precede symptom transitions or not. Also, some participants showed critical slowing down (destabilization and less resilience to external shock).

### **Anticipating Transitions in Mental Health in At-Risk Youths: A 6-Month Daily Diary Study Into Early-Warning Signals**

*Marieke J. Schreuder et al.*

Schreuder and colleagues investigated whether early-warning signals (EWSs) could reflect personalized warning signals for impending psychopathology in a sample of at-risk youths. Participants provided daily emotion assessments for 6 months. An analysis of their EWSs (rising autocorrelations and standard deviations in emotions) indicated low and moderate specificity in signaling transitions toward psychopathology. Thus, the investigation did not support EWSs' generic nature and clinical utility. The authors call for a more nuanced view of applying complex-dynamic-systems principles to psychopathology.

### **Psychosocial Predictors of Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors in Mexican-Origin Youths: An 8-Year Prospective Cohort Study**

*Lauren C. Gonzalves, Emilio Ferrer, Richard W. Robins, Amanda E. Guyer, and Paul D. Hastings*

Interpersonal relationships and cultural values may be key levers for decreasing suicidality in youths with Mexican origins. Data indicate that Latino adolescents are more likely to report suicidal thoughts and/or behaviors (STBs) than other youths. Gonzalves and colleagues evaluated the progression of STBs in 674 Mexican-origin youths from fifth grade (10 years old) to 12th grade (17 years old) and identified predictors of changes in STBs across this period. Results indicated that females and second- or later-generation youths showed increasing prevalence of STBs across adolescence. Family conflict and peer conflict also predicted increased STBs, whereas greater familism predicted fewer STBs.

### **Examining Blunted Initial Response to Reward and Recent Suicidal Ideation in Children and Adolescents Using Event-Related Potentials: Failure to Conceptually Replicate Across Two Independent Samples**

*Austin J. Gallyer et al.*

A previous study found that children with recent suicidal ideation had blunted neural reward processing compared with children without suicidal ideation, a difference driven by reduced neural responses to loss rather than to reward. Gallyer and colleagues aimed to replicate and extend these findings in two samples of children and adolescents (8–15 and 11–15 years old). Results provided no evidence that children and adolescents with suicidal ideation have abnormal loss or reward processing, nor that reward processing predicts suicidal ideation. These results highlight the need for continued research on suicidal ideation.

***Feedback on this article? Email [apsobserver@psychologicalscience.org](mailto:apsobserver@psychologicalscience.org) or login to comment.***  
***Interested in writing for us? Read our [contributor guidelines](#).***