

# New Research From Clinical Psychological Science

July 17, 2015

Read about the latest research published in *Clinical Psychological Science*:

## [Clarifying the Behavioral Economics of Social Anxiety Disorder: Effects of Interpersonal Problems and Symptom Severity on Generosity](#)

*Thomas L. Rodebaugh, Richard G. Heimberg, Kristin P. Taylor, and Eric J. Lenze*

Social anxiety disorder (SAD) is associated with lower interpersonal warmth, something previous studies have detected via behavioral economic tasks. In two studies, the researchers attempted to replicate and expand on these findings by having participants with and without an anxiety disorder complete a flexible iterated prisoner's dilemma (FIPD) task. In neither study did participants with SAD give less in the task than participants without SAD; however, the researchers did find that patterns of giving throughout the task were associated with the severity of SAD symptoms and with self-reported vindictiveness. Future research using multiple methodologies may help researchers better understand mechanisms and treatment targets for the interpersonal impairments seen in those with SAD.

## [Accounting for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptom Severity With Pre- and Posttrauma Measures: A Longitudinal Study of Older Adults](#)

*Christin M. Ogle, David C. Rubin, and Ilene C. Siegler*

To understand the contributions of the many factors that interact to influence posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) severity, the authors examined 15 factors shown to correlate with PTSD symptom severity and 12 theoretically and empirically supported individual difference, trauma memory-related, and behavioral-health factors related to PTSD in a single sample of older adults drawn from the longitudinal University of North Carolina Alumni Heart Study. They found that PTSD symptom severity was driven by a combination of properties of the current trauma memory, posttrauma measures of insecure adult attachment, appraisals of event severity, centrality of the event to personal identity, and depressive symptoms. This finding suggests that reducing properties of traumatic memories, such as the centrality of the memory to a person's identity, may help reduce PTSD symptoms.

## [Targeting Biased Emotional Attention to Threat as a Dynamic Process in Time: Attention Feedback Awareness and Control Training \(A-FACT\)](#)

*Ariel Zvielli, Iftach Amir, Pavel Goldstein, and Amit Bernstein*

Attention bias to emotional stimuli has traditionally been conceptualized as a stable trait; however, new research has suggested that it is more dynamic than once thought. A novel cognitive bias modification intervention — Attention Feedback Awareness and Control Training (A-FACT) — that is sensitive to

variability in biases of emotional attention (BEA) was tested against a placebo training in high-anxiety young adult participants. Participants completed a measure of attention bias before and after completing the intervention and a measure of stress reactivity and recovery after completing the intervention. A-FACT training led to reductions in attention bias toward and away from threat, BEA variability, and emotional reactivity to a stressor compared with the placebo condition. These findings indicate that A-FACT may be a promising intervention for reducing maladaptive attention bias patterns.