

Advancing New Frontiers with *Clinical Psychological Science*: Interview

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Founding *Clinical Psychological Science* Editor Alan E. Kazdin is the John M. Musser Professor of Psychology and Child Psychiatry at Yale University and Director of the Yale Parenting Center, a clinical-research service for children and families. He received his PhD in Clinical Psychology from Northwestern University (Evanston, Illinois).

Kazdin is a world-renowned researcher and methodologist who has developed, rigorously tested, and implemented effective cognitive-behavioral treatments, including parent-management training and problem-solving skills training, for children with severe aggressive and antisocial behavior. He has provided a model for how to implement high-quality, programmatic treatment research that examines moderators and mediators of change, as well as core issues of treatment efficacy, breadth of impact at home and in school, and factors such as parent psychopathology, stress, and perceived barriers in treatment that predict participation, adherence, and therapeutic change. In a field that has a history of



flashy treatments that have proven to be failures, Kazdin has used carefully designed experimental methodology to show the effectiveness of his treatment protocols. As a leader in the field of clinical methodology, Kazdin has been an advocate for expanding the range of methods we use in psychological research, as reflected in his influential texts on research designs in clinical psychology. He has also been an articulate proponent for how research methods can be used in clinical practice as well as a central influence on how to develop and synthesize the evidence needed to identify evidence-based treatments.

A prolific and distinguished scholar, Kazdin has approximately 700 publications, was editor of five journals prior to *CPS*, and was the recipient of the 2010 James McKeen Cattell Fellow Award from APS and the 2011 Distinguished Scientific Achievement Award for the Application of Psychology from the American Psychological Association, along with many other grant awards and honors. Kazdin has

advanced the application of psychological science throughout his career and is considered to be among the highest-impact psychologists of any era.

Kazdin shared some thoughts with the *Observer* about APS's newest journal.

Why is this the right time to start this new journal?

Beginning a new journal in clinical psychological science is timely for several reasons related to changes in science itself — how research is done, by whom, and where. *Clinical Psychological Science (CPS)* is part of an effort to accommodate these changes. First, clinical psychological science and its many publication outlets are fractionated into specialties and subspecialties (types of disorders, personality, treatment or prevention, subtypes of addiction, and so on). Specialization has its virtues, but we recognize that several phenomena span many specialty areas and that at some point, integration is just as important as specialization. For example, interpersonal violence and stress are two topics well within the domain of clinical psychological science. Research on either topic can focus on underlying processes leading to clinical dysfunction; on risk and resilience; on treatment, prevention, and rehabilitation; or on multiple mental and physical health consequences. Understanding these and other clinical phenomena requires integration of diverse perspectives and lines of inquiry. *CPS* publishes work from all the specialty areas of clinical psychological science, but like few other journals, it is keenly interested in understanding phenomena from diverse perspectives that usually could not be accommodated in a single outlet.

Second, enormous advances in core areas of psychological science (e.g., cognitive neuroscience, emotion, learning, perception) often elaborate processes and mechanisms directly related to clinical phenomena. For example, our understanding of disorders will increasingly stem from basic psychological processes on emotion and emotional processing that help explain broader in areas of functioning in daily life. *CPS* provides an integrative home for such work to convey the full range of psychological research that informs clinical phenomena.

Third, science is increasingly multidisciplinary and collaborative. The needed expertise in conceptual models, methodological tools, and data analyses rarely emanates from a single lab or group. For example, understanding mechanisms that foster clinical dysfunction and its amelioration requires multiple levels of analysis and methodologies to elaborate core processes. Among the barriers to such research is a lack of suitable publication outlets explicitly committed to such collaborations. *CPS* recognizes that multiple disciplines are required to advance knowledge on topics that we might once have considered an exclusive or relatively exclusive domain.

Fourth, the other APS journals have established well-recognized standards for high-quality research and substantive advances. Along with our sister journals, we too seek the best of science. The successes of the APS journals and the changes in science on which I have touched make this an opportune time to expand the reach of the journal program to develop and help define clinical psychological science.

How do you think *CPS* will reflect what is happening in the field of clinical psychological science?

What is happening in clinical psychological science has a larger and more diverse stage than ever before. Science is accelerating in many countries because research not only helps drive economic advances but also addresses critical social and personal issues (e.g., engaging in healthful life-style practices, promoting environmentally sustainable behaviors, adhering to medication regimens). Globalization characterizes many fields, including clinical psychological science, and many core topics in our field have captured global attention — global initiatives to address mental health, drug addiction, and cigarette smoking for example. We seek to elaborate clinical phenomena with the best empirical research free from geographical and disciplinary boundaries.

CPS is interested in *reflecting* what is happening in the field and in related disciplines that speak to clinical psychological topics. At the same time, the journal is interested in *guiding* the field ever so gently. The journal itself ought not to have any substantive or content agenda, but could take a role in accelerating advances by fostering dialogue that sparks new lines of work, new collaborations, or breakthroughs. What is happening reflects where we are at the moment. Perhaps with *CPS* we can advance empirical research by considering priority areas that will enhance progress for the future.

What do you hope to accomplish as Founding Editor?

As Founding Editor, I have three major goals. First, those who conceived the idea of the journal had a vision of developing it to reflect the highest standards of relevance and rigor, to reflect multiple disciplines that connect with clinical psychological science, and to be open to conceptual and methodological diversity. I enthusiastically embrace the wisdom of their view and, with the help of others, seek to implement that vision.

Second, a Founding Editor ought to assemble a leadership team that exemplifies key features of the journal's goal and standards. I have been extremely fortunate to have enlisted Associate Editors who not only share the vision but have made remarkable theoretical and empirical contributions. The works of Tyrone D. Cannon (University of California, Los Angeles), Emily A. Holmes (University of Oxford), Jill M. Hooley (Harvard University), and Kenneth J. Sher (University of Missouri) demonstrate the standards we intend to set for *CPS*. We have also recruited a distinguished group of Consulting Editors, whose scholarly records traverse diverse disciplines and whose areas of expertise reflect the mission of the journal.

Third, the mission of the journal is novel, and I hope to convey that as the journal begins. We wish to capture the best science worldwide, and that requires reaching out in ways that are quite different from other journals. One can be open for business but still have no customers. As Founding Editor, I hope to communicate with leading researchers throughout the world about the mission and our interest in reflecting the best science worldwide.

Moving from vision to action and from laudatory intentions to implementation is challenging. We are founding not merely a journal but a new way to conceptualize clinical psychological science and the domains that will elaborate key topics. Implementation of our goals will require a stellar set of collaborators in both the Associate and Consulting Editor positions. I believe we have that now. Even so, the position is not worry free. It is such a small change to move from Founding Editor to Floundering

Editor. A final hope of course is to not allow that to happen.

How do you think *CPS* will shape the field?

Clinical Psychological Science is not just the name of the journal. I see it as a term that can help define a field; a field that is not clinical psychology as it was traditionally conceived, but rather a field that encompasses the full range of clinical theory, research, and practice. For example, in clinical science, we wish to understand traditional topics within clinical psychology (e.g., trauma, schizophrenia, the nature of spectrum disorders, prevention of teen smoking, disparities of mental health). Clinical psychological science goes beyond the topics by asking what disciplines could possibly inform them. The list is long and includes public health, psychiatry, law, neuroscience, and molecular and cellular biology, among other fields. The goal of *CPS* is to deepen our understanding of critical topics, and diverse conceptual and empirical approaches from various disciplines can help tremendously. Types of research — molecular and molar, basic and applied, non-human and human animal studies, and small-scale to international-scale studies — can all contribute to the common goal of understanding these clinical topics and defining clinical psychological science.

We can also shape the field by being open to diverse methodologies. For example, intervention researchers are fond of noting that randomized controlled trials are the “gold standard.” This characterization has moved in some quarters from the gold standard to the only standard. *CPS* is quite interested in randomized trials. There are multiple methodologies, however, and a broad lesson from science is that different methods, ways of observing, and ways of collecting data can contribute greatly and in different ways to our understanding (e.g., NASA’s Great Observatories program). We seek to advance clinical psychological science, and diversity of methodological approaches (e.g., qualitative research, single-case designs, and well-controlled non-randomized designs using advanced statistical controls) is quite relevant to that pursuit.

Finally, we can shape the field by encouraging, by being open to, and by seeking the involvement of many scientists. We are interested in publishing the best empirical research available and in helping the field move toward needed but not-yet-available research. It is a privilege to be part of an organization and editorial team committed to these goals.