



TCU's EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGIST

Faculty Thoughts: Ken Leising



At a recent conference talk, the speaker suggested that it can be helpful for a person to attribute their behavior to their mental illness, for example, "my OCD made me do it". This creates a division between the client and the mental illness, which was suggested to promote improvement. Without any training in clinical psychology, my perspective that mind and body are manifestations of the same thing makes it difficult for me to encourage the use of this technique. Any behavior is the result of many variables outside (e.g., noise level) and inside (e.g., neurotransmitter level) the organism, but science has not found any independent part of "you" that makes another part of "you" do anything. A client adopting this false belief *might* improve with respect to the target behavior, but the belief *might* also lead to all sorts of new problem behaviors. The technique highlights the challenge that can occur for therapists when interventions seem to help, but promote scientifically inaccurate information. We have many future clinicians in our major that will face this challenge in the near future, and my hope is that they, and we, seek out opportunities to discuss this challenge.

Publications

- Guarino, S., Hagen, C., Nguyen, Q., & Papini, M.R. (2023). Frustrative nonreward and the basal ganglia: Chemogenetic inhibition and excitation of the nucleus accumbens and globus pallidus externus during reward downshift. *Neurobiology of Learning & Memory*, 200, 107736. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nlm.2023.107736>
- Hill, S.E., & Mengelkoch, S. (2023). Moving beyond the mean: Promising research pathways to support a precision medicine approach to hormonal contraception. *Frontiers in Neuroendocrinology*, 68, 10142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.yfrne.2022.101042>.
- Kersten, M., & Cox, C.R. (2023). The past promotes the picture of health: Nostalgia as a resource for physical well-being. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 49, 101522. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352250X22002433>
- Sease, T.B., Cox, C.R., & Knight, K. (2022). Existential isolation and well-being in justice-involved populations. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 1092313. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1092313/full>

Conferences

- Becan, J.E., Olson, D., Painter-Davis, N., Lux, J., & Ducharme, L. (2022). *Justice Community Innovation Network (JCOIN): A system level implementation intervention to improve justice-health service linkage*. Panel Presentation at the American Society of Criminology (ASC), Atlanta, GA.
- Hill, S.E. (2023). *A successful research career is paved with self-doubt and failure*. Graduate School of Health and Interdisciplinary studies. Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark. [Keynote Address at Ph.D. Day](#).
- Soto, I., Nejtek, V., Boehm, G., Brice, K., Braden-Kuhle, P., Kasanga, A.E., Barahona, N., McManus, R., Salvatore, M.F. (2022). *Establishing the impact of aerobic exercise on biomarkers, mobility, and cognitive functioning of Parkinson's disease: A translational study*. Society for Neuroscience, virtual conference.

Grants

- Papini, M.R. (2022). Neurobiology of reward loss. Dean's Opportunity Fund, TCU College of Science & Engineering. Amount: \$13,800.

Faculty in the News

- Sarah Hill (2022). *Do economic downturns make us buy more makeup?* TCU Today, College of Science & Engineering. <https://cse.tcu.edu/stories/posts/lipstick-effect.php>
- Cathy Cox was interviewed by TCU Endeavors, Spring 2023. *The shadow of death*. <https://endeavors.tcu.edu/the-shadow-of-death/>