

Six Things Psychologists Are Talking About ...

November 19, 2024

ADVOCACY



1. Election Raises the Stakes for Psychology Advocacy

Following the 2024 election, APA Services will step up its focus on protecting access to psychological services and funding. A key priority will be renewing the 2017 tax cuts that are set to expire at the end of 2025. Paying for the cuts will likely lead to deep reductions in discretionary

spending, including cuts to research, education, and health programs. While this poses significant challenges, APA Services and its members will continue to advance its advocacy priorities. These priorities, grounded in psychological science, include expanding access to psychological services, integrated health care, and programs that promote health equity and human rights, address population health, and protect investments in the psychology workforce, research, and education. Read more from APA Services on state level legislative activity and actions to take now.

SPEAKING OF PSYCHOLOGY



2. Why Are Some Kids Shy?

U.S. culture tends to prize being bold and outgoing, making the world harder to navigate for kids who are shy. **Koraly Pérez-Edgar, PhD**, joined APA's *Speaking of Psychology* podcast to talk about temperament in young children, how shyness develops from babyhood on, the difference between shyness and introversion, how parents and other caregivers can best support shy kids, and recognizing the advantages of a shy temperament.

HIGH DEMANDS



3. Is Being Busy Good for People With ADHD?

People with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) “seem to do best when there’s an urgent deadline or when the stakes are high,” said **Margaret Sibley, PhD**, a professor at the University of Washington School of Medicine, in a *New York Times* article. This may play into Sibley’s recent research findings that periods of higher responsibilities and obligations may be associated with periods of milder ADHD.

TOUGH TALK



4. How To Have Hard Conversations With Your Kid About Quitting

In an NPR article, experts advise how to navigate when your child wants to quit an extracurricular activity. **Vanessa Lapointe, PhD**, a child psychologist and parenting coach, notes, “A lot of times our intentions get muddled by our own desires.” If your child’s confession of a desire to quit hits you hard, it might be best to first unpack your own feelings. Children might also struggle to fully articulate their experience so observe your child, ask questions, and make them feel heard. You might discover there are issues you can help fix, or an alternative approach that better fits your child’s needs, such as taking a short break from the activity.

EMOTIONAL TEARS



5. Why Humans Cry

Humans are the only species that cry emotional tears—how did that response develop evolutionarily? In a *New York Times* article, researchers share how helplessness leads to tears, why some people cry more than others, and the benefits of a good cry.

FEELING HOPELESS?



6. The Case Against Cynicism

Though understandable in the face of injustice, cynicism does more harm than good—cynics suffer poor mental and physical health, and social mistrust increases crime, polarization, and disease. Hopeful skepticism, on the other hand, encourages an open mind, acknowledging we don't know the future yet believing we can make a difference. **Jamil Zaki, PhD**, a professor of psychology at Stanford University and director of the Stanford Social Neuroscience Lab, spoke with CNN about replacing cynicism with hopeful skepticism.

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They may not be crying because of their depression.

It may be Pseudobulbar Affect (PBA).

Screen for PBA

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MORE CHATTER

Psychologists We're Talking About ...

Annie Pezalla, PhD, an assistant professor of developmental psychology and family studies at Macalester College in Minnesota, and **Janine Domingues, PhD**, senior director of professional training, school, and community programs at the Child Mind Institute, were featured in a *US News* article on [the role of positive affirmations in K–12 learning](#), where uplifting statements from parents, focused on progress and perseverance, can boost student confidence, and academic performance. They discuss encouraging students to write down affirmations and attach them to goals that allow them to take ownership of their learning.

Colleen Campbell, PhD, a clinical psychologist and executive coach in California, **Elnur Gajiev, PsyD**, a psychologist, coach, and consultant in Hawaii and New York, and **Pamela Sheffler, PhD**, an assistant professor of psychology at Landmark College in Vermont were featured in a *Women's Health* article about [how to develop a growth mindset](#). They advise noticing when a fixed mindset is taking hold and working to reframe, replacing your inner critic with curiosity, and identifying why you care about your goal. Other effective strategies include surrounding yourself with growth-minded people, embracing failure, and channeling your inner child to tap into your “beginner’s mind.”

Jade Wu, PhD, a behavioral sleep medicine psychologist and author of the book *Hello Sleep* was a guest on NPR’s *Short Wave* show to discuss [getting enough sleep while traveling for the holidays](#) and how to prepare for a flight across time zones. “We need sleep like we need water,” said Wu.

What are you talking about?

Email us at SixThings@apa.org
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