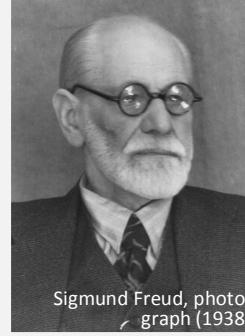


The Freudian Slip

CSB/SJU Psychology Department Newsletter
College of Saint Benedict & Saint John's University



Sigmund Freud, photograph (1938)

DSM-5

By Hannah Stevens

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders or DSM is a manual giving the criteria for all recognized mental disorders. The first DSM dates back to before World War II and provided seven different categories of mental health: mania, melancholia, monomania, paresis, dementia, dipsomania, and epilepsy. Since then the DSM has been revised to fit mental health as we know it today. It is currently in its fifth revision and is due to come out this May. The current DSM, the DSM-IV-TR (text revision) reflects what information we have gained in mental health and our newest knowledge and research on it. In past revisions major changes have been made because of research including adding new disorders or even taking out old ones. The new data we have supports new changes to be made in the DSM V. One of the biggest and most talked about changes is how it will address autism. Instead of having separate diagnoses for autistic disorder, Asperger's disorder, and others, there will be one disorder; Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The idea is that ASD will represent the symptoms on a scale from mild to severe instead of a yes or no diagnosis.

Autism Spectrum Disorder is one example of a change that will be made to the DSM-5. Other changes include changing the name of Gender Identity Disorder to Gender Dysphoria, it will also include a Binge Eating Disorder that is currently not in the DSM-IV-TR. These are just a few examples of changes being made, many of which are controversial. Since these changes greatly impact the psychology field it is important to look

at who is making these decisions. The decisions about changes are made by 13 different work groups specializing in different sections. There are a total of 160 psychiatrists, psychologists, and other health professionals. It is a long process that requires looking at recent research and debating with other professionals.

The changes in the DSM-5 will have a significant impact on the field of psychology. Many practicing psychologist will have to relearn new criteria for mental disorders, as well as new mental disorders all together. This may be the cause of some of the controversy, however hopefully with new research the DSM-5 will better represent mental health. Through history it has come from a small pamphlet to a large book and as research has progressed we have come to the most precise ways we know how to diagnose mental health. Hopefully the DSM-5 will help us better diagnose people in the future.

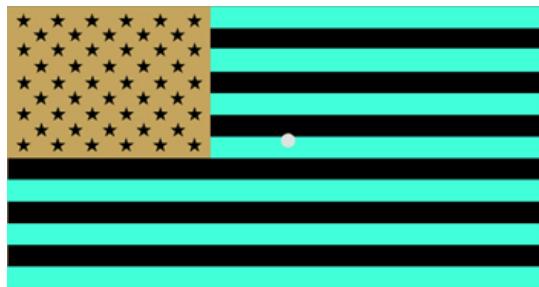


Imperfections of Perception

What we see is not always what is there; our visual system is far from perfect, and is capable of being tricked by a variety of sources. Visual (or optical) illusions highlight several of the imperfections of perception. Take a break from studying for finals, and enjoy these visual illusions and their explanations!

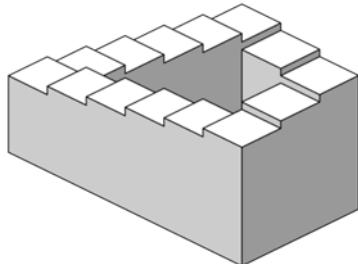
Afterimages

If you stare at the white dot in the center of the image below for several seconds, and then stare at a blank white page, what do you see? Because of the negative afterimage, you should see an American flag, complete in red, white, and blue. The photoreceptors in the eyes must adapt from overstimulation, and they lose sensitivity when you switch from the image to the blank page. The brain interprets the image as though it is looking at an image of the opposite color, which is why these are called negative afterimages.



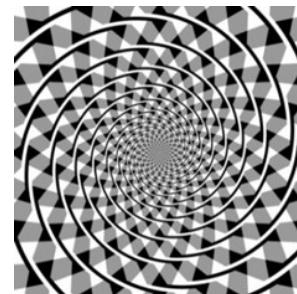
Penrose Stairs

Are the stairs below going up or down? Depending on whether you interpret them as going clockwise or counterclockwise, your answer will change; the steps appear to be endless. How is that possible? The simple answer: it isn't. This illusion only works in 2D; building a 3D model is impossible. What we can't see in this image is that there is actually a gap between two of the walls. However, the angle of the steps drawn in 2D makes us perceive it as an endless set of stairs.



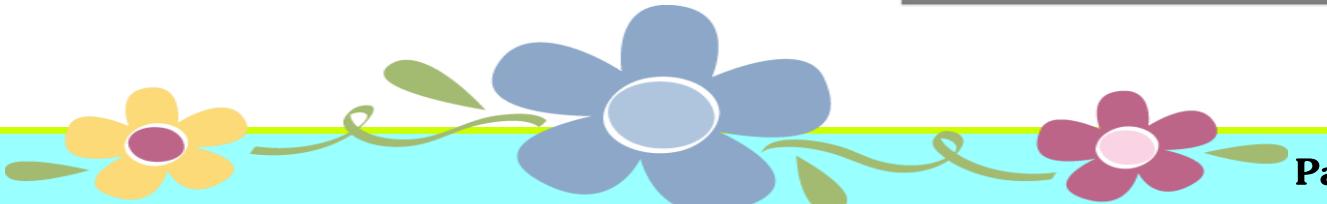
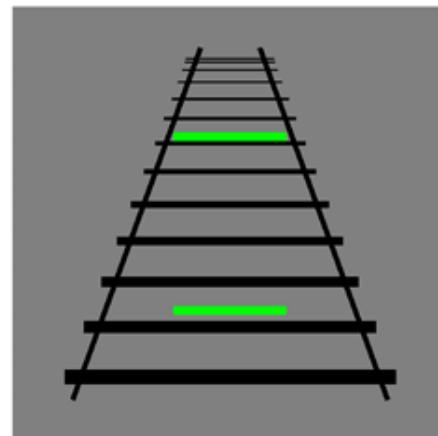
Fraser Spiral Illusion

Take a look at the image below. Do you see a spiral? What we often perceive as a spiral is actually a set of circles. Because the circles are made up of two different twisting strands, we have difficulty perceiving the arcs as separate circles. The addition of the checkerboard background only adds to the confusion, and our brains incorrectly process the image.



Ponzo Illusion

Look at the two green lines in the image below. Which line is longer? Surprisingly, the answer is not the line near the top of the image; the lines are actually the same size. We tend to judge the size of an object based off of the background or context of the image, as discovered by psychologist Mario Ponzo in the early 1900s. In this image, we see the line near the top as being farther away, and so we rationalize that the line must be longer. However, the context is misleading – the lines are identical.

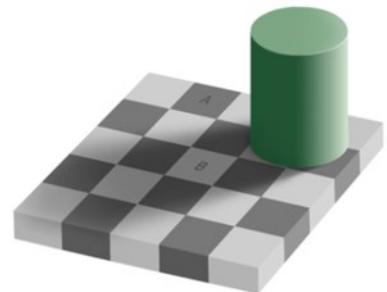


Imperfections of Perception Continued:

Checker Shadow Illusion

In the checkerboard below, which square is darker: A or B? While it seems unbelievable at first, they are actually the exact same shade of gray. One contributing reason as to why we interpret the colors wrong is that square B is surrounded by darker squares, and square A is surrounded by lighter squares. As a result, we see square B as being much lighter, and square A as

being much darker. The shadow from the cylinder also plays a role. The shadow has soft edges while the squares have sharp edges, and our visual system tends to focus on the sharper edges. Since we can see the object that is casting the shadow, our visual system does pick up on the shadow, and knows that shadows tend to dim the surface of an object, which also makes it difficult to see that A and B are the same.



Mental Health Awareness Month

May is finally here! After a much too long winter, we can rest assured that “may flowers” will be in bloom soon. Along with the promise of warmer weather, May also brings us an important reminder to take care of our mental health. For over sixty years now, the National Institute of Mental Illness (NAMI) and Mental Health America (MHA) recognize May as “Mental Health Awareness Month.” This year, the theme for the month focuses on the “Pathway to Wellness.”

Therefore, as you pack up your clothes and plan your summer instead of cramming for that last final, take some time to think about your mental health and your path to wellness with some of these main points:

1. Wellness - it's essential to living a full and productive life. It's about keeping healthy as well as getting healthy.
2. Wellness involves a set of skills and strategies that prevent the onset or shorten the duration of illness and promote recovery and well-being. Wellness is more than just the absence of disease.
3. Wellness is more than an absence of disease. It involves complete general, mental and social well-being. And mental health is an essential component of overall health and well-being. The fact is our overall well-being is tied to the balance that exists between our emotional, physical, spiritual and mental health.
4. Whatever our situation, we are all at risk of stress given the demands of daily life and the challenges it brings-at home, at work and in life. Steps that build and maintain well-being and help us all achieve wellness involve a balanced diet, regular exercise, enough sleep, a sense of self-worth, development of coping skills that promote resiliency, emotional awareness, and connections to family, friends and community.
5. These steps should be complemented by taking stock of one's well-being through regular mental health checkups and screenings. Just as we check our blood pressure and get cancer screenings, it's a good idea to take periodic reading of our emotional well-being. Fully embracing the concept of wellness not only improves health in the mind, body and spirit, but also maximizes one's potential to lead a full and productive life. Using strategies that promote resiliency and strengthen mental health and prevent mental health and substance use conditions lead to improved general health and a healthier society: greater academic achievement by our children, a more productive economy, and families that stay together.



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Have A Great Summer Vacation!