The science behind wanting what you can’t have

By: Joe Meystre

Have you ever caught yourself wanting the guy or girl that is in unavailable? If so, join the club! We tend to want what we can’t have and that’s often problematic because it only leads to nothing but heartache.

I have certainly gone through similar situations before, so I decided to do a dig into the science behind it. Turns out, dopamine, one of the neurotransmitters in our brains, is heavily involved in the “reward system” of the brain. This means that your level of dopamine increases when you get that butterflies-in-your-stomach feeling when you’re satisfied with something. The longer you wait for something, the more valuable it is, the more active the dopamine in your brain is.

That would explain the addictive nature of wanting what you can’t have. There is something deeply satisfying about longing for something or something that seems a little out of reach but that could also be due to the fact that nobody likes anything that falls into your lap easily. However, it is also extremely important for us to have a strong support system, whether that’s our close family members or friends. Don’t dwell on the aspects of life that don’t contribute to your mental wellness.

Going through adolescence is more than just yearning for something or someone you can’t have — it’s also when you take the most risks. Studies show that one of the reasons why adolescents engage in risky behaviors is associated with high levels of dopamine that spike during the period of adolescence.

If you’re interested in learning more about the physical, emotional and mental changes that come with being an adolescent, be sure to check out “Born to Be Wild” by Dr. Jess Shatkin or take a CAMS course called “The Adolescent Paradox: Emotion, Behavior, and Identity.”
Have you ever heard of the word “fitspiration”, or “fitspo” for short? If you have, chances are, they are accompanied by images of beautifully toned, healthy, “fit” bodies, or some motivational quotes that urge you to pursue a healthy lifestyle.

The trend behind fitspiration has permeated every medium of social media there is: whether it be on your Facebook feed with nutritious meal-prep videos, on your Tumblr with before-and-after weight loss pictures, on your Instagram with videos of 5-minute exercises you can do on your bedroom floor, or on your Pinterest with inspirational quotes for working out.

But, have you heard about “thinspiration”, or “thinspo”? Thinspiration is a part of a movement called ‘Pro-Ana’, with the ‘Ana’ being short for Anorexia Nervosa: an eating disorder with an extremely high mortality rate and medical complications. This controversial online movement supports various virtues of this mental illness, such as the idealisation of thin body shapes, aversion of fat or being overweight, and encouraging the restriction of diet and energy/food intake. Blogs, forums, galleries, and websites have emerged all over the internet that encourage and endorse this thinspiration. Accessible via a mere Google search, these mediums can be extremely triggering for those with disordered eating psychopathologies (e.g. low self-esteem, body dissatisfaction, negative affect, dieting) or for even the normal, ‘healthy’ individual. Indeed, research has shown that a mere exposure to a pro-anorexia website can lead to significantly detrimental effects. Unfortunately, there is no modulation that prevents access of these dangerous ‘thinspo’ content from those who are most at risk of developing eating disorders: children and adolescents. What’s worse, studies have further shown that both ‘fitspiration’ and ‘thinspiration’ can have hazardous implications for its viewers/users. Even sites devoted to healthy pursuits (i.e. ‘fitspo’) can contain dangerous content and thus, result in negative consequences, such as restriction, stigmatisation, objectification, and guilt. In light of this, perhaps we ought to be wary of what our online environment bombards us with, if they relate to certain lifestyles of health and thinness.

If this article interested you, be sure to check out the CAMS course: Advanced Seminar in Eating Disorders

Midterms stressing you out! Check our some of our Tips and Tricks to de-stress!

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to see more and to keep up with
Careers in Mental Health Night

By: Allie Degan

On Wednesday, October 18th, NYU CAMS on Campus invited five professionals and post-graduate students working in the field of psychology to combine their insights in a panel at Careers in Mental Health Night. The panelists were Christina Di Bartolo, LCSW; Gaby Goldstein, MD; Samantha Busa, Psy.D.; Michael Feder, Ph.D. candidate; and Rachel Perkins, Mental Health Counseling student intern. Since each of them had earned or was working toward a different psychology degree, CAMS students were able to gain perspective on various routes to take and what the outcomes of each may be.

The NYU CAMS department kicked off the night with free snacks, as well as an introduction of each of the panelists. CAMS students heard more from the panelists about how they made their decisions to pursue each degree and any challenges and triumphs they faced during the process. Students also had the opportunity to ask questions throughout the night, including the number of years of schooling required to complete each degree, the difference between a Ph.D. and Psy.D., and how a typical day in each career may look. After the panel ended, students were invited to network with the panelists and gain insight on their backgrounds and everyday lives.

While each speaker had the floor to themselves at various times, the five of them also engaged in discussion, comparing their past and present experiences. Many of the CAMS students, undergraduates who may still be debating which path to follow after graduation, found this unique kind of exposure extremely useful. Stephanie Hauck, a CAS junior, commented, “being able to hear from a mental health counselor, a clinical social worker, and clinical psychologists made me realize there is a broad range of careers available for anyone interested in working to promote mental health... [and] there is more than one path to reaching the goal of becoming a mental health professional.”

The panel was incredibly informative and insightful for undergraduate CAMS students. Obtaining knowledge from people working in different psychology-related professions in this organized way was beneficial, and is something all minor departments at NYU should consider authorizing. Careers in Mental Health Night was a success and hopefully will anticipate planning of similar events in the future. NYU, the CAMS community thanks you.

Be sure to come out to the next Careers in Mental Health Night to learn more!
What Fall De-Stress Activity Should YOU Try: Quiz

1. **What is the best part of fall?**
   A: Cuddling up with hot chocolate and a good book
   B: Watching all the leaves change color
   C: The Holidays!
   D: Best part? It’s cold and miserable!

   Mostly A’s: Use up those dining dollars and try all the new Fall drinks from Starbucks and Peets!

2. **As a kid your favorite holiday “chore” was….**
   A. Helping my parents cook holiday dinner
   B. Watching all my younger siblings/cousins
   C. Decorating the house
   D. I didn’t do any of those growing up!

   Mostly B’s: Try exercising outside! Take a run and check out the changing leaves, or try your hand at yoga in the park

3. **What is your opinion on “The Great Outdoors?”**
   A. Eh, don’t really have an opinion
   B. I love being outside!
   C. Watching the leaves change is great... but it gets cold quick!
   D. Please don’t make me go outside

   Mostly C’s: Take your mind off things with a detail oriented task, like holiday present wrapping!

4. **What is your favorite movie genre?**
   A. Rom-com!
   B. Action/Adventure
   C. A really interesting documentary
   D. Sci-Fi/Fantasy

   Mostly D’s: Stay in and take some time for yourself! Take a chill day and watch Netflix in your pj’s with a nice warm cup of tea!
Mental Health is NOT a Costume

By: Meghan Morrongiello

When you start looking for a Halloween costume next year, here is a little tip to consider while shopping: mental illness is not a costume! A seemingly self-explanatory statement, mental illness has been continuously appropriated by the Halloween costume industry, and it seems that every year there is a flood of on-line articles to remind the masses that that is not okay. The horror industry has profited immensely from marginalizing the mentally ill.

The perception of the mentally ill being one in the same with monsters can explain that popularity of costumes related to mental illness. A quick on line search of “Mental Illness Halloween Costume” produces a wide array of options from a number of big name companies. For $154.99 at Party City, you can “make your Halloween insane” with the “ultimate” Halloween decor, an Animated Asylum Patient, complete with distorted facial features, disarrayed hair, and a bloodspattered straight jacket. It is sure to, “Give trick-or-treaters a fright that will send them into insanity with this terrifying institutionalized lunatic!” This overwhelmingly offensive sentiment that asylum patients are a thing to be feared is not unique to this product. Costumes with names such as, Nutty Gone Wild, Sexy Psycho, and Insane Asylum Straight Jacket can be purchased at Walmart, Yandy, and Halloween Costumes, respectively.

It really cannot be stated any clearer: mental illness is not a costume. Furthermore, the continued production and purchase of such costumes only reinforces the association between mental illness and violence, when, in fact, only 3 to 5% of violent acts committed in the U.S. can be attributed to someone who is mentally ill. It’s time for the mentally ill monster myth to end, and time for articles like this to be so self-explanatory that they no longer need to be written.

The blood thirsty escaped mental-patient trope a la Mike Myers (Halloween, 1978) has become as iconic of a villain as Dracula or Frankenstein’s Monster. Murderer, monster, and mentally ill seem to have become interchangeable. And while characters like Mike Myers are fiction, they are not creatures. That is, mentally ill people are very much real, in a way that Dracula and Frankenstein are not. And the vast majority are not possessed with the desire to kill. Characters such as Mike Myers are defined by their mental illness, making it impossible to separate the two, but in no way do they accurately represent mental illness.

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Dec 5: End of Stressmester
One of CAMS on Campus’s most popular events of the semester. Enjoy food, refreshments, gift bags, coloring stations, and of course, the chance to play with PUPPIES!
Kimmel 802; 3:00-5:00pm

Spring 2018: This is Everything: Gigi Gorgeous Film Screening and Talk-Back. Join us to watch the documentary, “This is Everything” following a talk-back with Professor Sam Busa, and hopefully the director. Date: TBD

A big Thank You to everyone who contributed to the CAMS on Campus Newsletter:
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Kiran Khatau
Joe Meystre
Meghan Morrongiello
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To get involved, email Kiran Khatau
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CAMS on Campus 2017-2018 Executive Board!
President: Rebecca Cohen
Events Chair: Grace Chen
Volunteer Chair: Jennifer Ra
Publicity Chair: Kiran Khatau
Secretary Chair: Christina Sim

Why you should get involved in writing for The CAMS on Campus Newsletter:
“everything in life is writable about if you have the outgoing guys to do it, and the imagination to improvise.”
-Sylvia Plath

end of stress-mester

DECEMBER 5 • 3-5PM • KIMMEL 802 SHORIN ROOM