**Boredom and EAH**

The concept of *boredom* and recent research on boredom was explored on several podcasts:

* <https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/the-natural-experiment/2/> (psychologist Erin Westgate)
* <https://freakonomics.com/podcast/boring-rebroadcast/> (psychologists Dan Gilbert and Angela Duckworth)
* <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/why-is-it-so-hard-to-be-alone-with-our-thoughts/id1510056899?i=1000484550308> (Is mind wandering without purpose connected to happiness?)

*Research on boredom that is described in these podcasts appears in the following articles:*

Bench, S. W., & Lench, H. C. (2013). On the function of boredom. *Behavioral sciences*, *3*(3), 459-472.

Chin, A., Markey, A., Bhargava, S., Kassam, K. S., & Loewenstein, G. (2017). Bored in the USA: Experience sampling and boredom in everyday life. *Emotion*, *17*(2), 359.

Markey, A., Chin, A., Vanepps, E. M., & Loewenstein, G. (2014). Identifying a reliable boredom induction. *Perceptual and motor skills*, *119*(1), 237-253.

Pfattheicher, S., Lazarević, L. B., Westgate, E. C., & Schindler, S. (2020). On the relation of boredom and sadistic aggression. *Journal of personality and social psychology*.

Westgate, E. C. (2020). Why boredom is interesting. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *29*(1), 33-40.

Westgate, E. C., & Steidle, B. (2020). Lost by definition: Why boredom matters for psychology and society. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *14*(11), e12562.

Students can measure their propensity for boredom using the following scale, the **Boredom Proneness Scale (BPS)**:

<https://www.questionpro.com/survey-templates/boredom-proneness-scale-survey-template/>

* If comfortable, students can share their results with the class.

For the present purposes, turn the conversation about boredom to its relation with consumption. **Eating in the Absence of Hunger (EAH) is more likely in the presence of boredom.** This boredom-eating cycle, in turn, can impact health. Among children of average age of 7.8 years, those who were overweight were more likely to engage in EAH when stressed than children who are not overweight. Children who are underweight were less likely to engage in EAH when stressed (Miller et al., 2019).

* The following article summarizes EAH and tests a questionnaire designed to measure its occurrence: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2424281/>
* Based on the boredom research described above, ask students why people might be likely to eat when bored. What strategies might prevent people from eating when bored?
* Ask students to connect their BPS scores with their tendency to EAH. Are they related in predictable ways?
* Connect this line of research with COVID-19 shutdowns and increases in reported boredom. Ask students to consider reported overeating and weight gain among Americans: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/covid-weight-gain-30-pounds-pandemic/>
  + What factor (think: BPS score) might have predicted whether people gain weight during closures?

**Resources about boredom, EAH, and health:**

Tanofsky-Kraff, M., Ranzenhofer, L. M., Yanovski, S. Z., Schvey, N. A., Faith, M., Gustafson, J., & Yanovski, J. A. (2008). Psychometric properties of a new questionnaire to assess eating in the absence of hunger in children and adolescents. *Appetite*, *51*(1), 148-155.

Shomaker, L. B., Tanofsky‐Kraff, M., Mooreville, M., Reina, S. A., Courville, A. B., Field, S. E., ... & Yanovski, J. A. (2013). Links of adolescent‐and parent‐reported eating in the absence of hunger with observed eating in the absence of hunger. *Obesity*, *21*(6), 1243-1250.