

Behavior Therapy for Adolescent Depression

Friday, Oct. 16, 2015
1720 Chem Building
4 p.m.



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From a behavioral perspective, depression is a summary label for a set of responses emitted in a context, not an internal (neurobiological or psychological) defect within a person. As such, depressive symptoms should be treatable by changing environment-behavior interactions and the context in which they occur. Behavioral activation (BA) and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) are two behavioral approaches to treating depressive symptoms. The goal of BA is to promote contact with positive reinforcement by engaging clients in focused activation strategies to counter avoidance/withdrawal and to increase goal-directed and values-guided behavior. ACT shares a similar goal, but adds mindfulness (acceptance and defusion) strategies in an effort to increase willingness to engage in activities despite unpleasant thoughts or emotions. This talk will describe what the Behavior Research and Therapy Lab at WMU has learned in our attempts to develop, implement, and evaluate behavior therapy interventions with youth reporting depressive symptoms.

Scott Gaynor received his Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro where he had the good fortune to be mentored in behavior analysis by Rick Shull and clinical behavior analysis by Scott Lawrence and Rosemary Nelson-Gray. He completed his clinical internship and a post-doc at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center's Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic working with David Brent. The next step was WMU where he has been on the faculty for 14 years. At WMU he has had the ongoing pleasure of mentoring groups of fantastic students in the Behavior Therapy and Research Lab.

