

What's happening in Psychology?

- Tutor2u Strong Foundations Workshop
- Year 13 London Residential
- Psychology Society: every Friday @ 13.15 in S2

PSYCHOLOGY Newsletter

PsychSoc

This society is your opportunity to learn more about Psychology beyond the specification! We discuss many interesting ideas and theories, and attending is your chance to choose a topic you want to learn more about. Over the past few weeks, we have had presentations on the Overview Effect in space, Dream Analysis and The Psychology of Pain from our very own wonderful students. It is student led and would not be able to take place without you guys - everyone is welcome! Come along every Friday lunchtime at 1:15 to watch, learn and even present yourself!

Here is a brief description Mellissa gave about her presentation on the Overview effect.

Hello, my name is Mellissa P (Year 9). My presentation was about the Psychology of the Overview Effect, which is a mental shift in perception that astronauts experience after viewing Earth from space.

I discussed the fundamental characteristics of the Effect: awe and self-transcendence, its long-term impacts on astronauts and how it is simulated on ground. It is important to recognise that the Overview Effect is not restricted to astronauts alone; anyone who looks at Earth from a height above (e.g. from a mountaintop or an airplane window) can get a mild taste of it! In addition, scientific literature has demonstrated that virtual reality (VR) technology, psychedelic drugs, and meditation can recreate the Effect and enhance nature-connectedness.

This brings us to my favourite part of my presentation: the audience-interactive meditation! I guided my audience along the 'View From Above' meditation developed from ancient Stoic philosophy. Meditation relaxes the brain's default mode network - a group of interacting brain regions that are active when the mind is at rest – e.g. being lost in thought or worrying about the past or future. When there is a reduction in DMN activity, individuals experience ego dissolution; the me-centred narrative no longer exists, and you lose this sense of a separate self. Personally, I find this fascinating because when I tried the meditation myself, I knew I experienced ego dissolution as I felt like I was floating and connected to the entire universe. Furthermore, it was quite fun to watch the audience with their eyes closed, trying to visualise themselves rising above Earth and the solar system. I really hoped that my words came across the right way and that everyone could experience the unique, self-transcendent feeling as I did.

Psychology Awards

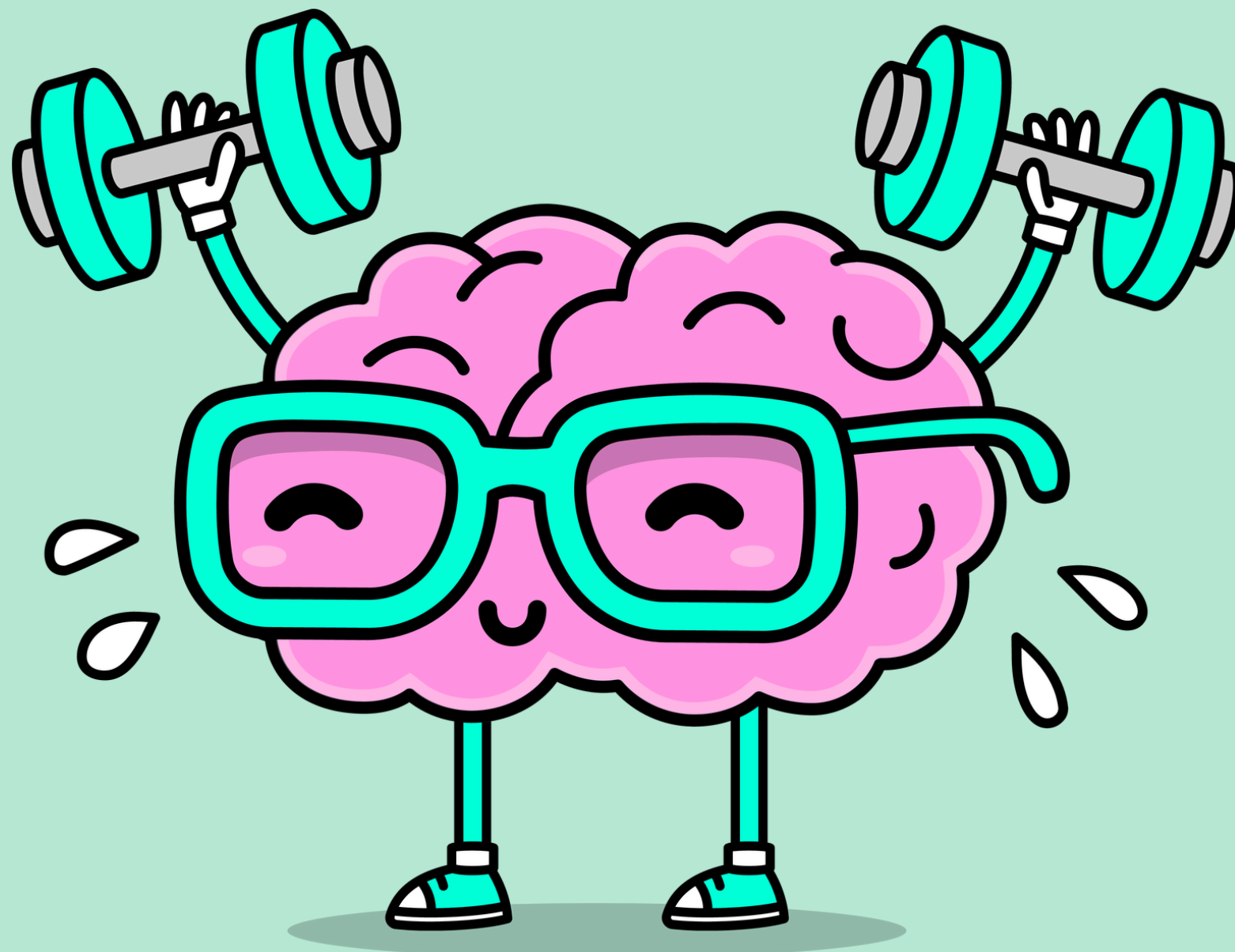
The WKGS Bandura Award For outstanding teamwork, cooperation, and learning
Divine-Favour (Y12)

The WKGS Piaget Award For excellent problem-solving and independent thinking
Milo P (Y12)

The WKGS Maguire Award For excellence in scientific enquiry and research methods
Evie B (Y13)

The WKGS Ainsworth Award For understanding, curiosity and commitment
Hannah M (Y12)

The WKGS Maslow Award For showing personal growth and working towards their potential
Megan T (Y13)



Halloween Special:

The Psychology of Fear: Why do we love being scared?

Every October, haunted houses, horror films and creepy costumes become part of the Halloween fun. But why do we deliberately seek out experiences that make us feel afraid? Surely, our brains should be telling us to run away!

The science behind the scare

Fear is a survival mechanism designed to protect us from danger. When we perceive a threat, our fight-or-flight *response* activates, preparing the body to respond. Our heart rate increases, breathing quickens and adrenaline is released. However, when watching a horror film or entering a haunted house, we usually know that we are safe. This allows us to experience the physical excitement of fear without facing genuine danger.

Is there such a thing as too much fear?

Interestingly, research suggests that the most enjoyable scares strike a balance. A study of 110 visitors to a haunted attraction in Denmark found that enjoyment was greatest when fear reached a moderate level, rather than being too mild or overwhelming. This suggests that the thrill comes from experiencing fear while still feeling in control.

Why are we curious about the creepy?

Another explanation is *morbid curiosity* – our interest in frightening or disturbing topics. Halloween allows us to explore the unknown, from supernatural stories to fictional monsters, in a relatively safe environment. Horror can also let us imagine how we might react to threatening situations without experiencing them ourselves.

Perhaps the best part of being scared is the relief that follows. Once we realise the threat is not real, tension fades and fear can turn into laughter. Sharing these experiences with friends can make them even more enjoyable.

So, this Halloween, when you scream at a jump scare, remember: your brain may be responding as though danger is near, even when you know it is all make-believe.

Sometimes, the scariest experiences are the ones we enjoy the most!

References

Liu, A. (2026). *Why do we love being scared? The psychology behind Halloween.*

University of East London. Available at: <https://www.uel.ac.uk/blog/why-do-we-love-being-scared-psychology-behind-halloween>

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