

# PARADIGM OF PERSISTENCE: RE-EXAMINING MULTIPLE INTRUSIONS

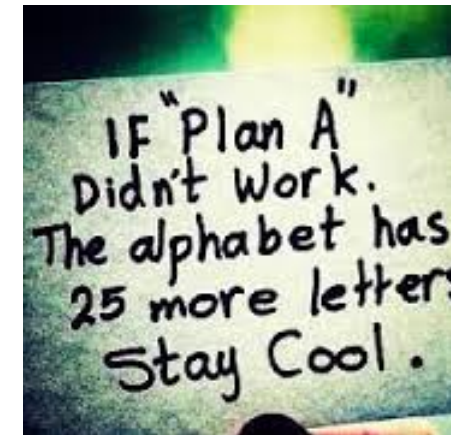
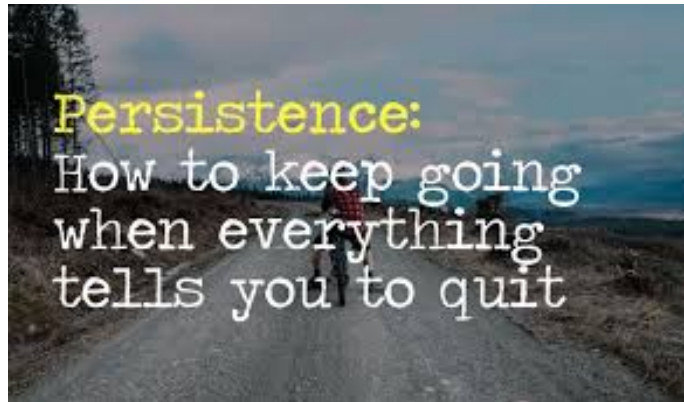


- Frequently a feature of difficult (and expensive) cases
- Emerging protocol for assessment in stalking cases
- No evidenced based management strategies in TM
- Considering persistence as a variable in every case
  - How important is measuring the risk of persistence in this threat assessment (ie: this person at this time)?
  - Can the role persistence plays be moderated in the management?



# AN OVERVIEW OF PERSISTENCE

# Subject of Motivational Posters



***If you're going through hell, keep going***

-- Winston Churchill

- OED definition:
  - Continuing firmly or obstinately in some state, opinion, purpose, or course of action, esp. despite opposition, setbacks, or failure
- Psychological definition:
  - Variable capacity to continue to expect and seek rewards in spite of fatigue or frustration
- Sport Psychology:
  - Motivation (initiating + persisting) is discussed as the only contributor to sport performance over which the athlete has control
- Stalking Risk Profile definition:
  - The likelihood the intrusions won't stop
  - As damaging, if not more, than violence



- Measurement developed from Purcell and colleagues:
  - Surveyed 1844 adults registered on Australian electoral roll
  - 23% stalked (n=432)
  - Differentiated brief bursts of intrusion from persistent stalking



**Brief  
bursts of  
intrusions**



**Persistent  
stalking**

*Purcell et al (2002)*

- What is persistent stalking:
  - 45% stalked < 2 weeks (median = 2 days, mode = 1 day)
  - 55% stalked > 2 weeks (median = 6 months, mode = 12 months)
- Who commits persistent stalking:
  - Stalked < 2 weeks: 75% by strangers
  - Stalked > 2 weeks: 82.5% people who knew target well
  - SRP stalking types: intimacy seekers, resentful stalkers, some rejected stalkers
- Stalking behaviours:
  - More types of intrusions, more threats, assaults, property damage

*Purcell et al (2002)*

- Studied 200 stalkers to establish which characteristics of the stalker and the stalking were associated with persistence
- Persistence is continuing to intrude despite intervention
- If an intervention works, then a resumption of stalking (with same or different target) is recurrence
- Study provided the map of what to look for, the topography of persistence in stalking

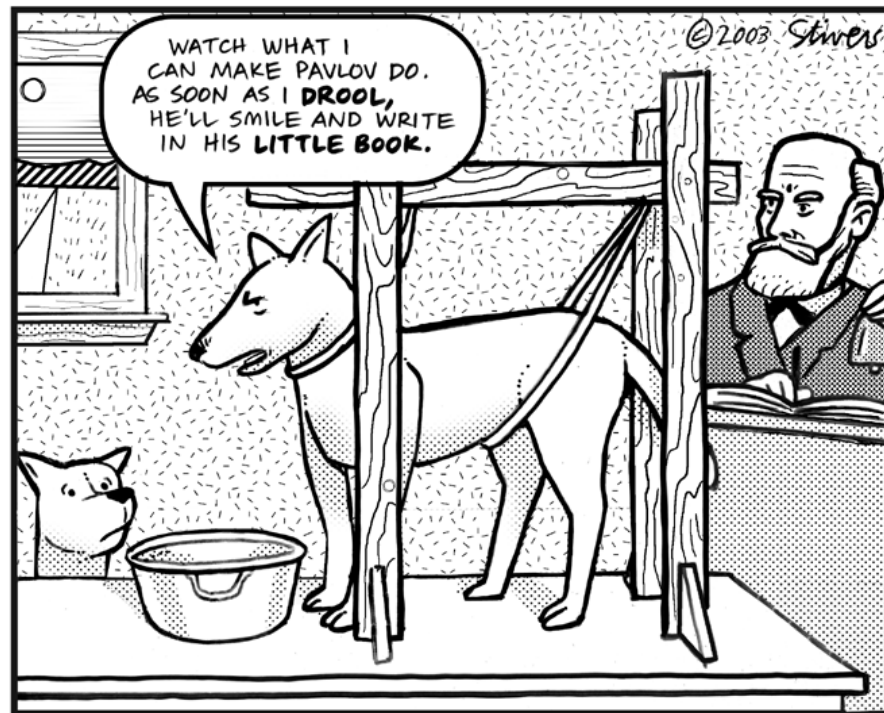
*McEwan et al (2009)*



- Examined stalking duration in three temporal points:
  - When they stop within 2 weeks:
    - Single, strangers, aged under 30, followed victim, didn't write to them
  - More than 12 weeks:
    - Writing and sending unsolicited material when intimacy seeking
    - Ex-intimates with a personality disorder
  - More than 52 weeks
    - Being a woman, over 30, seeking intimacy with a prior acquaintance
- It is important to assess these persistence characteristics but it is not the whole picture
  - Rewards from persisting
  - The personality trait of persistence

*McEwan et al (2009)*

- Two schools of psychology prominent in persistence research
- 1. Experimental psychologists:
  - Reinforce a behaviour using rewards
  - Remove/change the rewards and watch how long the behaviour lasts



## 2. Personality theorists:

- Persistence is a personality trait that can be studied by examining cognitive and individual difference
- Claude Cloninger and colleagues @ University of Washington
  - Seven factor personality theory
  - Originally thought of as a facet of reward dependence
  - Reviewed as a distinct personality trait **NOT** dependent on rewards
  - Persistence as a trait largely inherited, consistent brain mechanisms

- Seven Factor Personality Theory
  - Defined persistence as perseverance in spite of fatigue or frustration
  - The ability to persevere when confronted with partially reinforced responses and differences in resistance to extinction
  - Has 4 components:
    - Eagerness to put in effort
    - Being work hardened
    - Being ambitious
    - Being a perfectionist

*Cloninger et al (2012)*



- Psychological research reveals associations to promote or change:

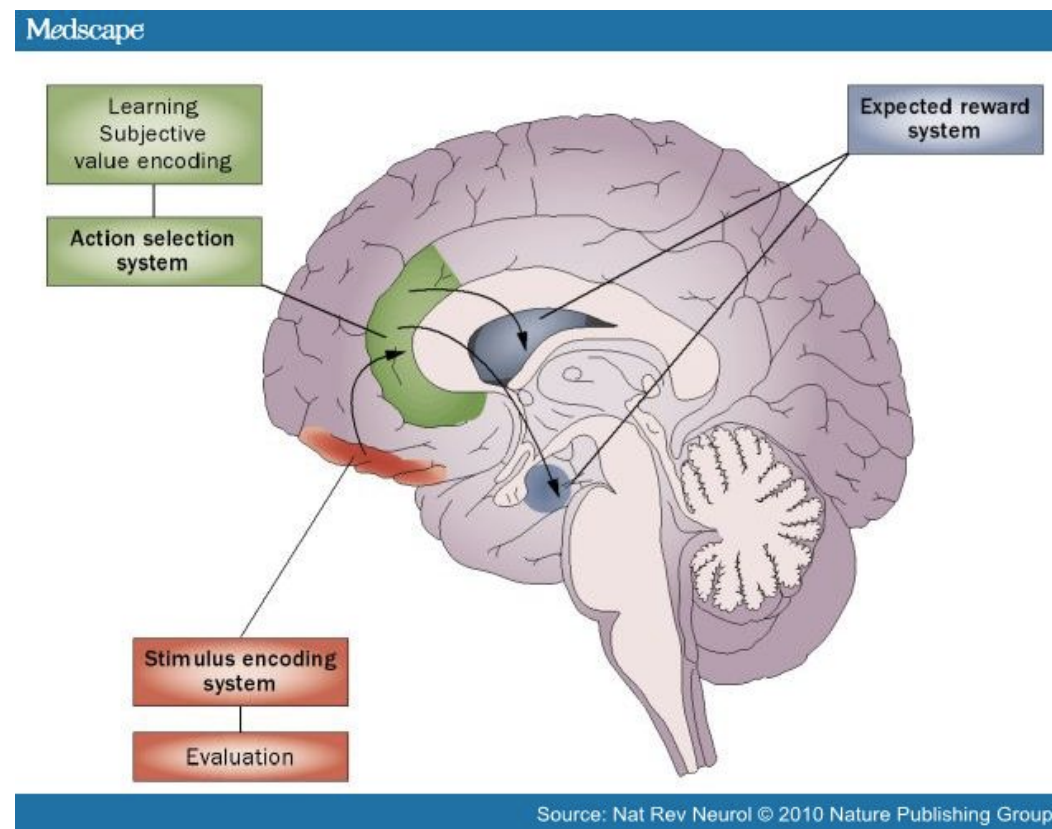
Association	Relevance to Assessment of Persistence
Resilience (Garcia et al, 2011)	How quickly they bounce back to resume their crusade
Perfectionism (Fleet & Hewitt, 2002)	Seen in judgments of self and others
Mood disorders (Cloninger et al, 2012)	Persistence tends to be protective against depression in psychologically healthy people
Anxiety (Cloninger et al, 2012)	Most concerning when combined with perfectionism, low frustration tolerance and limited regulation skills
Compulsiveness (Bulik et al, 2000)	Fixation, obsessionality

- fMRI studies suggest key brain regions that may help explain differences in the ability to persist (Gusnard et al, 2002)



- Gusnard's study linked differences in a well known anatomical circuit (learning & encoding) and its projection to ventral striatum to the capacity to persist

Those with more persistence showed differences in the structure of these brain regions and in the activity levels of those regions compared to controls



- Gunsard et al found:
  - Persistence is related to the ability to generate and maintain arousal and motivation internally when external rewards delayed
  - Explains why incentive info held differently in representational memory during delay periods
  - They related differences in the medial networks and how that projects to the reward system in the brain to persistence
  - Knowing more about the circuitry will help bridge our knowledge of differences in people's behaviours, genetics and brain structure and chemistry



- The use of persistence in threat assessment:
  - What are the rewards for this POC in this situation?
  - What is their level of dependence on this reward?
  - Is persistence a feature of their personality?
  - Have they been rewarded at any point
    - Objective evidence
    - Their subjective view

- Threat Management Planning:
  - A circumstance we have considered personality/biology is response to IVO/RO
    - Breached quickly – has very little impact on persistence
    - Not breached – respondent able to undertake a rational cost/benefit analysis
    - Breached day after it expires
      - described in the SRP as recurrence
      - Provided important data about their capacity to persist

- Developing a Threat Management Plan:
  - Use of persistence assessment data:
    - Impact of reward removal in returning to functioning before their persistence caused them harm
  - Impact of reinforcement manipulation
  - Use their persistence to their advantage
    - Persistently let go of self defeating drives
    - Persistently practice embodied self awareness to:
      - Regulate distress
      - Challenge anxiety and impossible expectations
      - Practice well being

- Developing a Threat Management Plan:
  - Looking through the persistence lens at a rewards-based approach:
    - Support stalking victims – make no contact – give no reward
    - NSW Ombudsman – manage yourself to minimise rewards for persistence
  - These suggestions prioritise the role of reward and presume reward reduction will (eventually) lead to behavioural extinction



- Developing a Threat Management Plan :
  - In some cases persistence can resolve with reward removal
  - Promote behavioural extinction by removing the reward systems
    - Need to define the reward in each case and the means that the reward schedule can be varied
    - Help them appreciate the time when a cost benefit analysis should be done and then done again
  - Does not take into account
    - The prominence of persistence in their personality
    - Their ability to generate and maintain arousal and motivation internally when external rewards delayed – has a biological basis