

Selected Findings from May
2016 – December 2017
Graduating Senior Exit Survey

Respondents

- 157 respondents (32% of 499 of those who applied to graduate)
 - 83.3% female
 - 32.1% reported ethnic minority background
 - 15.8% reported English was second language
 - Average age was 25 years old (SD=4.79)
 - 60.5% first generation college students (neither parent earned a BA/BS degree or higher)

Based on your experiences, please rate the following aspects of the psychology department:

Ratings range from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent).

	Mean	SD
Quality of instruction	3.87	0.83
Opportunities for personal growth	3.80	1.03
Course content was relevant	3.78	0.88
Clear degree requirements	3.66	1.03
Frequency of courses that interested you	3.56	1.01
Variety of psychology courses offered	3.35	0.98
Frequency of courses needed for graduate program requirements	3.11	1.01
Available days and times for courses	2.85	1.11
Frequency of online SSU psychology courses	2.13	1.14

Classes missed

- 41.4% wanted a class that they were unable to take. Of these students, they answered the following:

Why did you want to take these classes?	Percent
for graduate school requirements	12.1
for personal interest	11.5
they were listed in catalog but not offered	7.0
for job requirements	2.6

To what extent did the psychology major (courses and internships) develop the following interpersonal skills: Ratings range from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extensively).

	Mean	SD
Read a peer reviewed psychology journal article	4.14	0.92
Use active listening techniques	4.08	0.84
Facilitate small group discussions	4.06	0.81
Use mindfulness techniques	4.05	0.98
Use library databases to locate psychological research and theory	3.98	1.07
Regulate my emotions effectively	3.88	1.04
Solve interpersonal problems effectively	3.80	0.86
Prepare and give a professional oral presentation	3.69	1.16
Effectively serve diverse populations	3.66	1.06
Write effectively for different audiences	3.63	1.03
Change or improve a health-related habit	3.53	1.11
Interact with diverse demographic groups	3.47	1.00
Work with people who disagree with you	3.34	0.90
Conduct an interview	3.04	1.22
Construct a questionnaire	3.00	1.12
Use EXCEL or other spreadsheet programs	2.34	1.25
Write cover letters and resumes	2.34	1.32
Use SPSS or other data analysis program	2.08	1.27

Skills missing? (Selected from 29)

- I wished that I took more classes learning how to do a research work and understand the purpose.
- I felt this major lacked in teaching about diversity in class, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status etc. If I hadn't taken Psychology of Gender and Child Psychopathology, these topics would barely have been covered at all in my psychology major classes. Since these classes are electives rather than required, this lack of diversity (in lessons and teaching) needs to be addressed.
- I see a lot of my peers missing the ability to conduct a basic conversation on the biological underpinnings of psychology. I was lucky enough to start as a bio major and change over to psychology, giving me an understanding of that stuff beforehand. All the same, my peer's lack of knowledge about things as basic as a synapse or neurotransmitter is a major problem that the department needs to take on.
- Psychology major should require counseling class and careers in psychology class because those classes touch on possible careers, career plan, resume writing, and grad school requirements.
- I believe that the department should make more of an effort to develop graduate program interview skills as more and more students are interested in attending graduate programs.

Department Advising

- 27.4% saw a faculty advisor at least twice a semester, 22.9% just one or twice while at SSU and 4.5% never saw an advisor
 - Rated satisfaction as 2.95 (SD=1.80) from 1 (very effective) to 7 (not at all effective)
 - 53.6% reported that they attend group advising (M(satisfaction)=2.65, SD=1.08 rated from 1 (very effective) to 7 (not at all effective))

Help sought; Help wanted

Help Sought	Percent
Choosing courses in major	54.1
Problems with AAR report for psychology requirements	41.4
Advice about GE courses	37.6
Requirements for graduate school	33.1
Career options in psychology	31.9
Graduate school training options in psychology	30
Information about specific graduate school programs	21.0
Counseling related career options	15.0
Problems with AAR report for non-psychology requirements	14.0
Other (included question about business minor, class help, study abroad, extra unit petition and graduation requirements (5).	6.4

Help Wanted	Percent
More discussion of graduate school training options in psychology	51.0
More discussion of graduate school requirements	50.3
More discussion of specific graduate school programs	41.4
More discussion of non-counseling career options in psychology	38.9
More direction in choosing courses in the major	31.9
More advice about GE courses	24.8
More discussion of counseling related career options	19.8
Other	5.1

Selected comments about advising (n=41)

- Because of how loosely the major is structured, I didn't feel like it was worth it to seek out an adviser. If I had planned on going to grad school that might have been different, and I also probably would have gone to and adviser more often had I been assigned one. I think it's stupid that we aren't assigned advisers because we're an impacted major.
- I feel that advising is very focused on graduation and ARR requirements, and is less focused on what comes next. It is equally important to have a plan after graduation as it is to graduate and I feel that is not the ideal that is often displayed in most advising.
- I think it would have been helpful to have an advisor assigned to me. While I understand the concept behind being able to choose an advisor who fits best with me, it was difficult at first to find someone to meet with when I had to choose someone at random off a list. Maybe students could get an advisor assigned at the beginning and could later have the option to switch.
- The faculty advisors that I have met with have not all been reliable resources. Many of them were also not aware of broader campus information.
- Being the first member of my family to attend college means that I am unfamiliar with the process and the path to do things, and I could have really used more help in this area. I have been extremely disappointed with the psychology advising at Sonoma State.
- I think it would be a good idea to give psych students new to the department different career possibilities and perhaps a couple meetings a semester showing the different paths to look into post-bachelors. Not everyone is interested in depth psychology or an MFT or working in research or with children & autism.

Percent of Respondents who participated in “High Impact Experiences”

Community Internships	Undergraduate research	Service Learning class	Teaching Assistant	Studied Abroad
18.7%	15.3%	35.7%	33.1%	3.2%

Future Plans

What best describes your plans after graduation?	Percent
You plan to continue your graduate education in any field	43.7
You are or plan to be employed in a field related to psychology	36.1
You are unsure	13.4
You are or plan to be employed in a field unrelated to psychology	5.9
Other (please describe): find job ASAP	0.8

Job titles of those already employed

Administrative Assistant for Adults with Developmental Disabilities	Administrative Assistant
Behavior interventionist (2)	
Behavioral Assistant for an Elementary Special Education Classroom	Assistant Manager
Community Services Program Coordinator	Event Planning
I am a teacher's assistant in a special Ed classroom	
I work in a school	
Police Officer	
Special education teacher	
work with people who have an ASD	

Graduate Training Intentions (n=52)

	Percent
Marriage and family therapy	19.2
Social work	19.2
Masters training in a non-clinical psychology research area (e.g., social, development)	17.3
Other (please specify): masters in clinical psychology y(2), any grad school (5)	13.5
Doctoral training in a non-clinical psychology research area (e.g., social, development)	11.5
Law school	11.5
School counseling	9.6
Doctoral training in clinical or counseling psychology at a Research 1 university (e.g., U.C. Berkeley)	9.6
Doctoral training in clinical psychology at a professional school (e.g., Argosy, Alliant)	5.8
Medical school	5.8
Occupational therapy	3.5
Teaching certificate	1.9
Nursing school	0

Graduate program applications

- 45.5% (n=24) applied to a graduate program
- 13 students listed programs to which they were accepted

Specific program to which respondent was accepted

Clinical Psychology, CSU Dominguez Hills

Counseling program at SSU

distance learning MSW programs at San Jose State, CSU San Bernardino & CSU Northridge

MSW from CSU Long Beach

Online MA in Professional Counseling /Ed.S in Professional Counseling at Seton Hall University

Post Baccalaureate- Pre Health Professions- CSUF

SDSU psychology MA

SFSU School Psych Program

SJSU, Counselor Education program, PPS Credential

Tulane Medical School- Master of Anatomy Program. This is a backup right now, I am still waiting acceptance to a medical program.

University North Carolina Wilmington, Masters in Social Work (2)

University of San Francisco

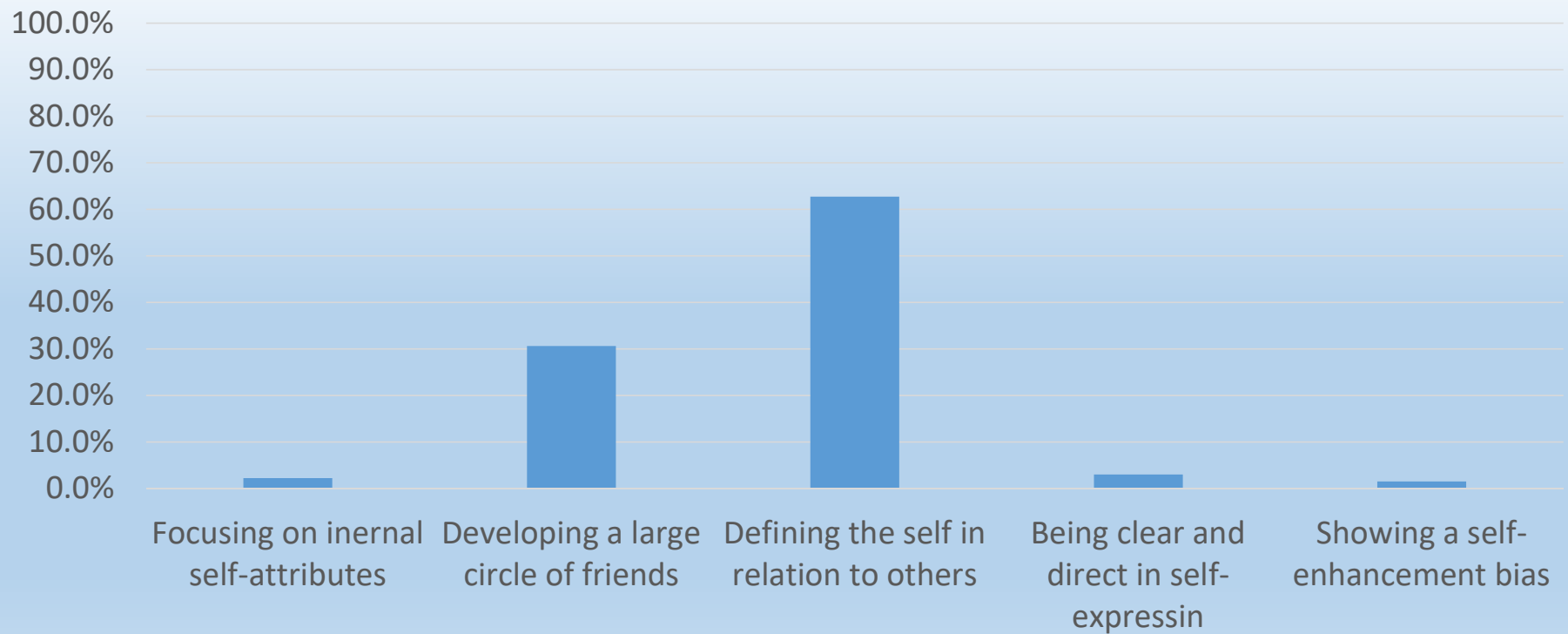
University of Texas, Austin, MSW program

Selected GRE Questions

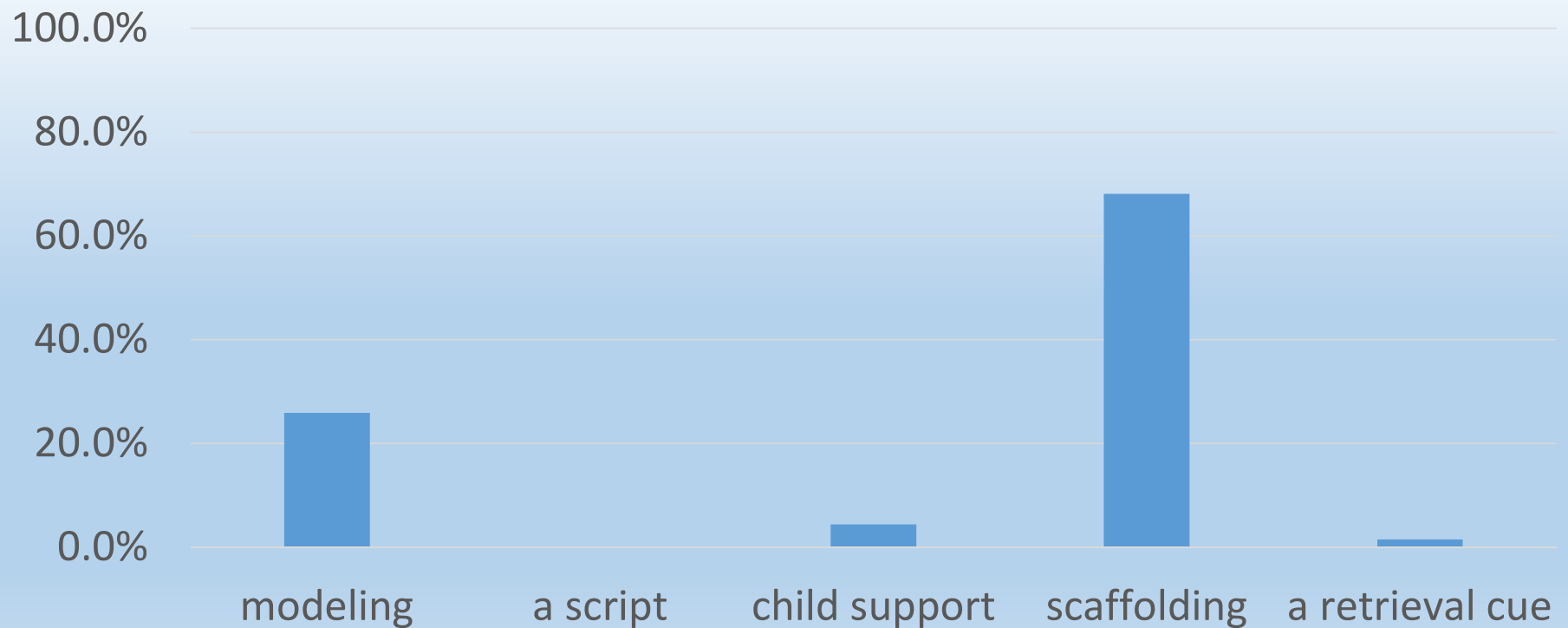
Direct Assessment of Department Goal:

Understand the major concepts, theories, and perspectives in psychology

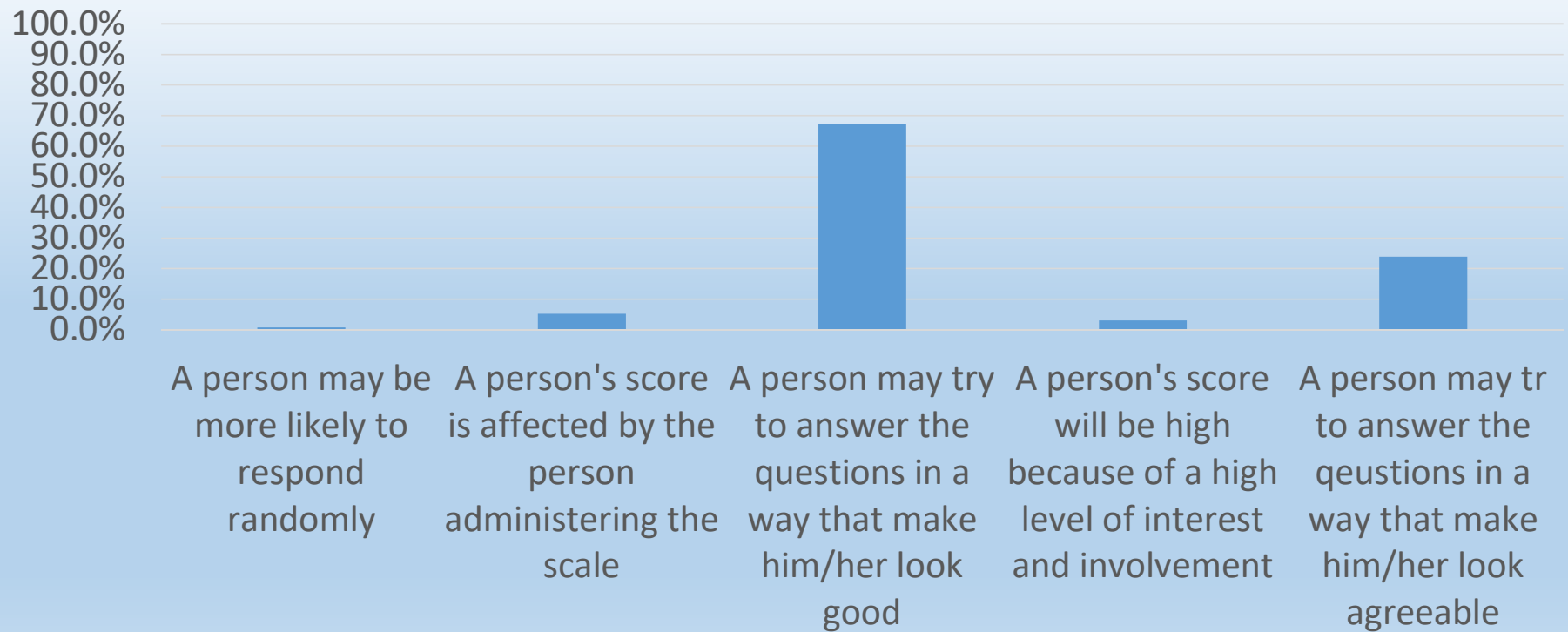
People from collectivist cultures are more likely than people from individualistic cultures to engage in which of the following behaviors?



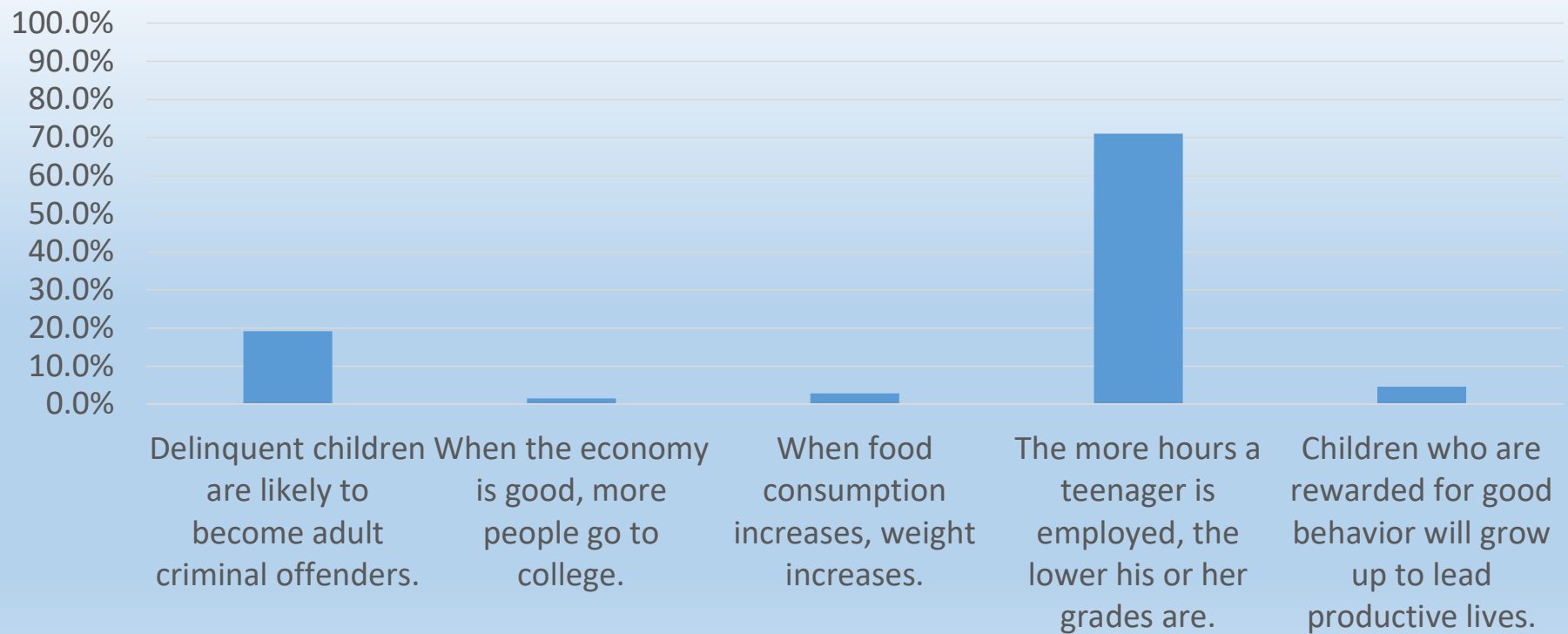
A woman helps her daughter tie her shoes by providing a good deal of help at first and then providing less and less help until the child is able to do it by herself. This is an example of:



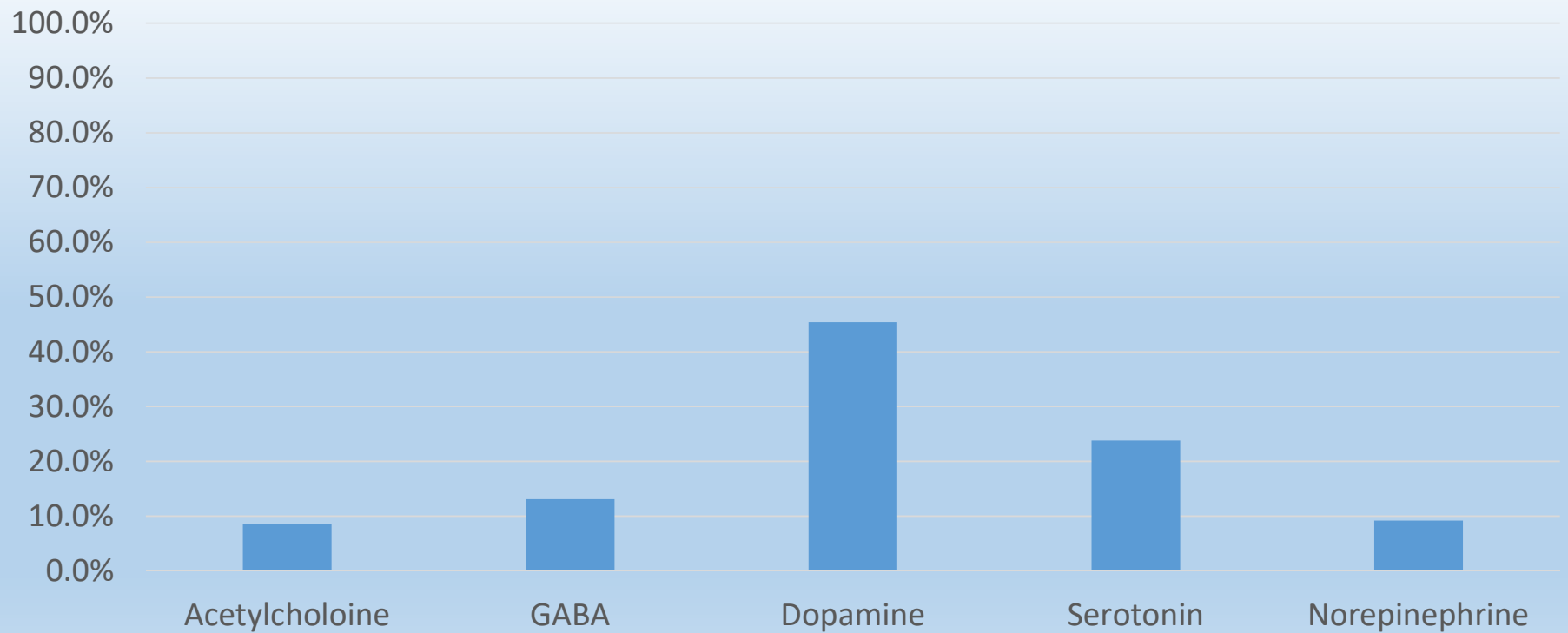
How might the response tendency referred to as "social desirability" relate to a person's performance on a prejudice scale?



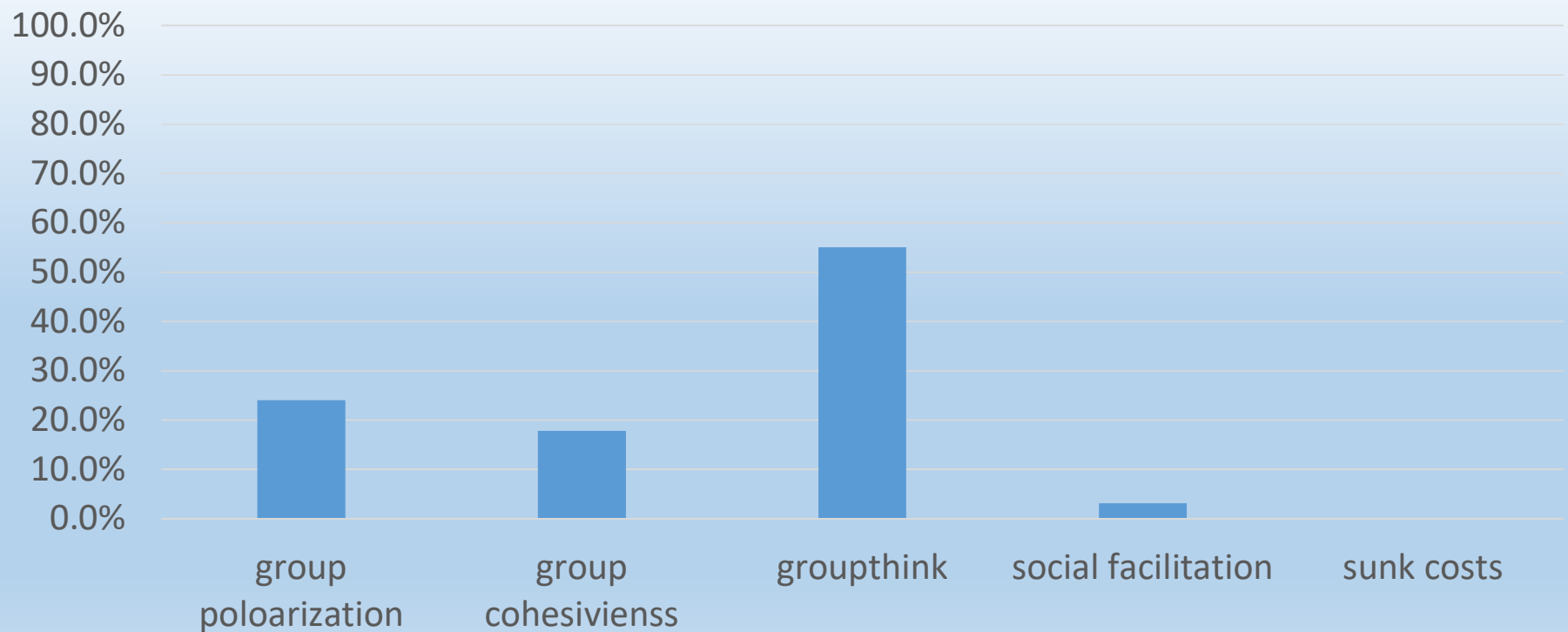
Which statement is an example of a negative correlation?



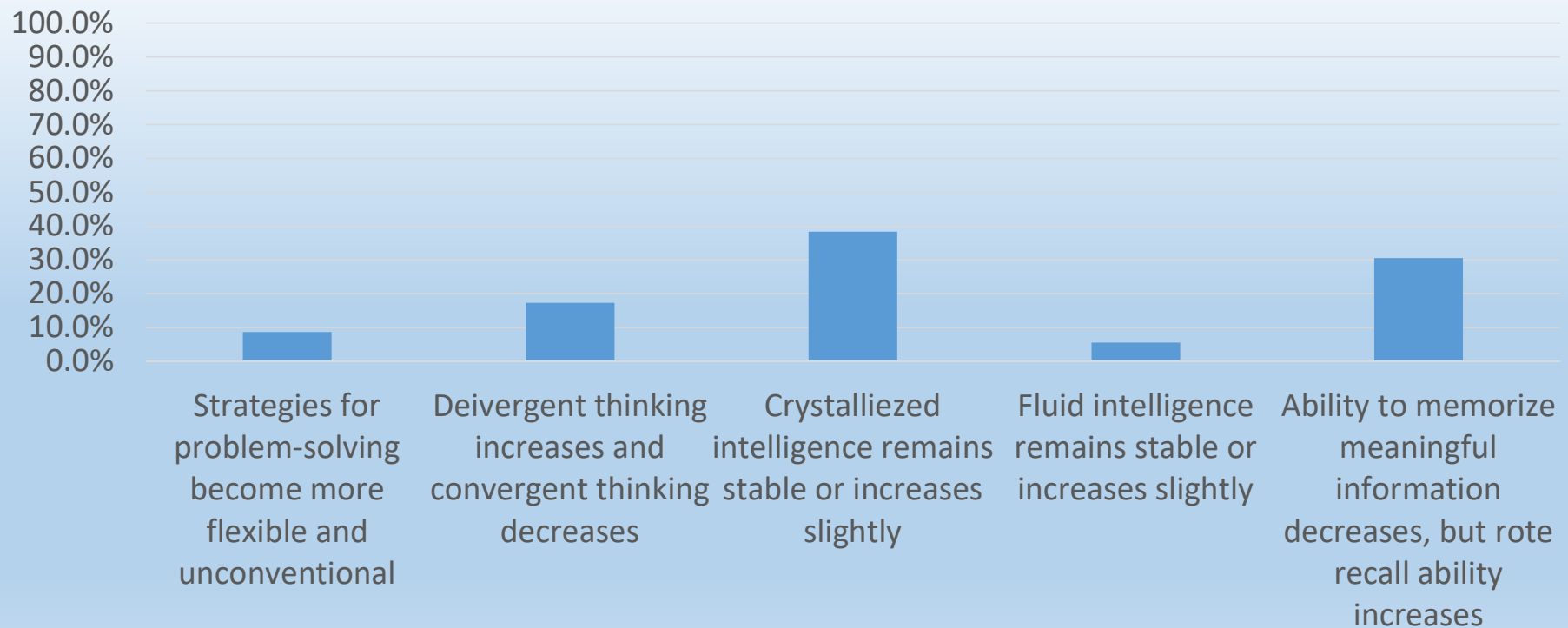
Most anti-psychotic medications work by blocking receptors for which of the following neurotransmitters?



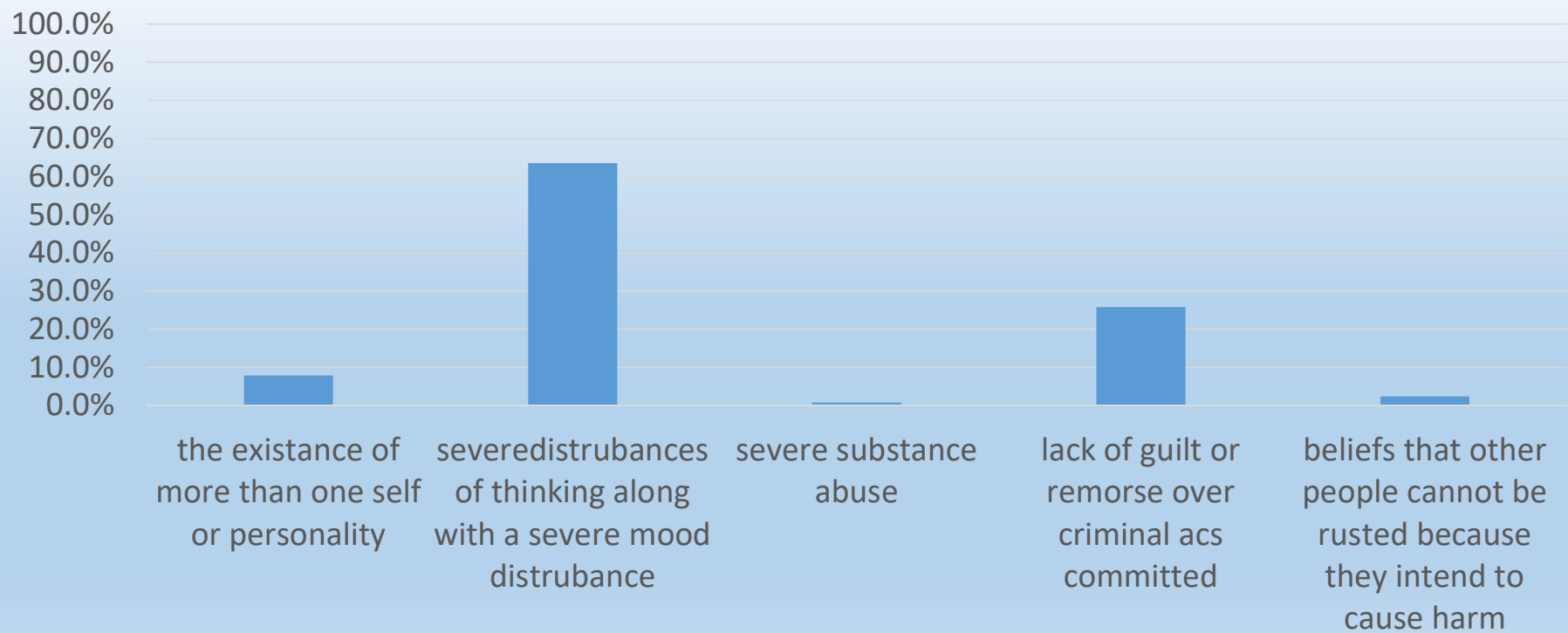
While a board of directors was attempting to make a major decision, all members felt pressure to support the group's views and to reject ideas that were contrary to the opinions of the group. The example best illustrates:



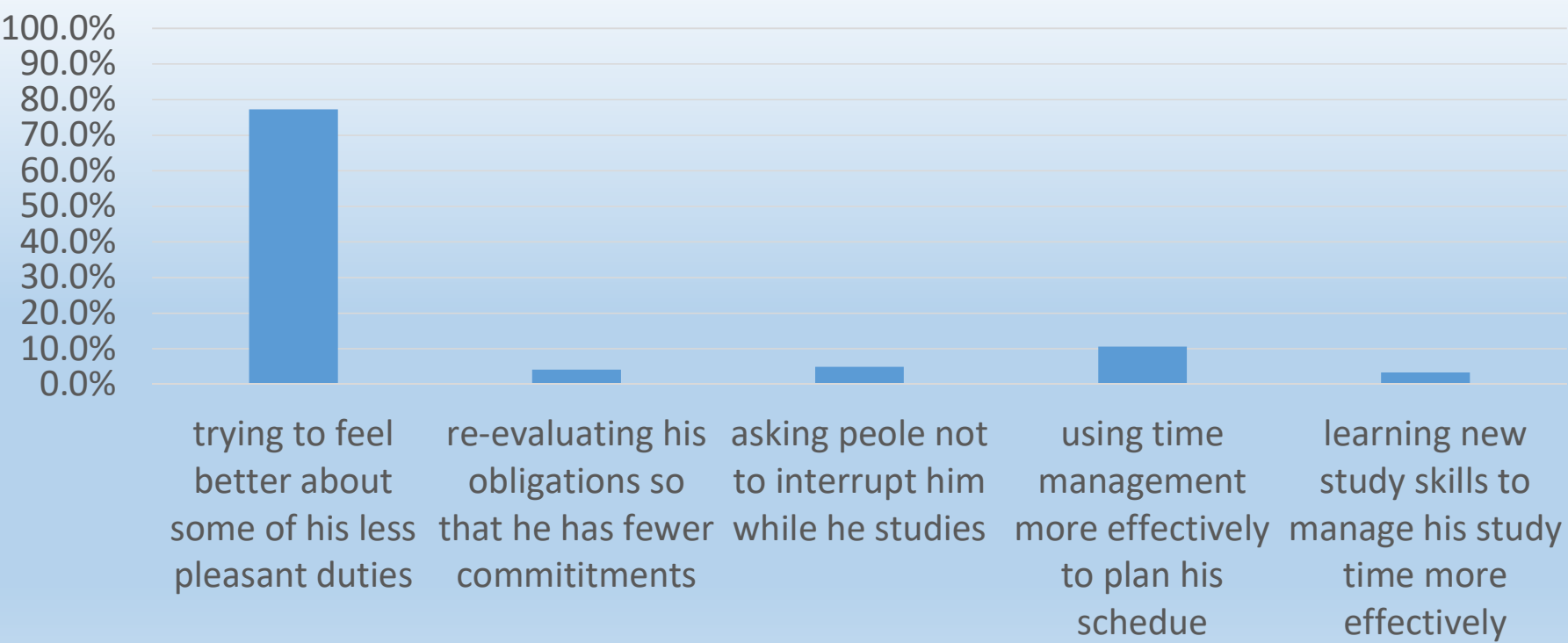
Which of the following best describes intellectual changes that typically occur in older people?



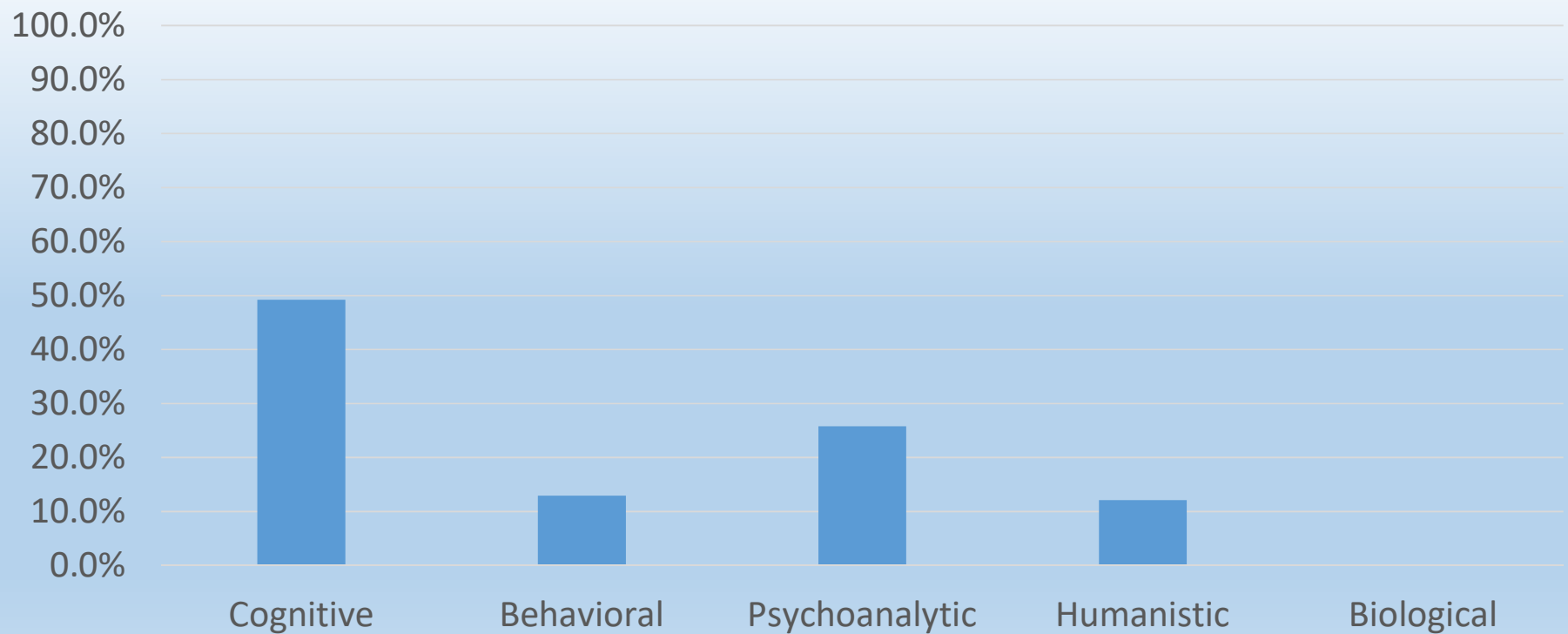
Schizoaffective disorder is the diagnosis given when a person shows which of the following symptoms?



David has found that emotion focused coping helps him handle some of the stress related to his many responsibilities at school. An example of this type of coping strategy is:



Following several sessions with Cathy, Dr. Wright makes the following statement to her about her depression: "Your depression may be due to your interpretation of the events in your life." Dr. Wright's position best illustrates which theory of depression?



Percent who scored between 1 and 10 right



Experiences outside department

- Of those who started at SSU in first year, 50.9% took psychology in high school
- 26.7% member of Psi Chi
- 6.8% experienced academic probation
 - Report reliably higher psychology grades (A- average) compared to overall GPA (B+ average)
- 73.7% of the respondents work close to 20 hours a week ($M=2.90$, $SD=1.09$)
 - 45.3% planned to stay in same job after they graduated

17.8% reported minors

AMCS

Applied Statistics (3)

Native American Studies

Business (2)

Criminal Justice (4)

Early Childhood Education

German

Gerontology

I declared both biology and chemistry minors but did not complete either.

Sociology

sociology, but only for a semester

Spanish

Studio Art

WGS

Note. Just 1 respondent unless a different number is indicated in parentheses.

Is there anything else that you would like us to know? (n=39)

- More psych classes should be in the 2 hours twice a week time slots instead of the once a week for 4 hours. It's exhausting to sit through these long classes and probably difficult for the professors as well.
- More classes need to be offered to psych students, both in the major and GEs. it is very hard to get any classes you need, even in your last semesters.
- I really enjoyed my two years here at SSU. Especially being in the Psychology Department. My two years went by so fast! I have had really great professors and have enjoyed my classes. The Psychology Department and faculty have been a great help.
- If I could do it all over again, I would have studied harder (especially in the beginning) and spent less time on social media/ tv. I also wish that my financial situation was better so that I did not have to work as many hours as I did especially during the weekends when I could have been studying. I will keep track of this as a reminder for graduate school so that I can do better academically.
- I'm happy to see that the psychology department has restructured itself since my time there. I think current/future psychology students are lucky to be part of the department.

Observations

- Many first generation college students
- Many first year students already completed introduction to psychology in high school
- Interest in assigned advisors
- Interest in general career information and preparation
- Interest in more diversity
- Better at methods and developmental content, worse at psychopathology content
- Very few have participated in high impact experiences

Recommendations

- Improve how students new to department learn about community internships, research opportunities, graduate school requirements, career alternatives
- Improve communication to students about advising expectations and limitations