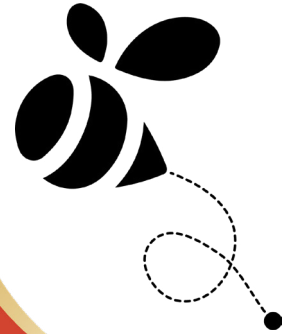


# research snapshot

summarize mobilize



## The Propensity to Feel Bored is Predictive of Depression and Anger Problems

### WHAT IS THE RESEARCH ABOUT?

Boredom is thought of as a common, yet harmless experience. However, boredom can be debilitating. Research has found that trait boredom, the propensity to become bored, is associated with psychosocial problems such as depression, anxiety, gambling behaviour, alcohol abuse, and anger. However, research has examined boredom's relationship with these psychosocial problems without considering if other variables might be better predictors (of these problems). The purpose of this paper was A) to determine whether trait boredom is a unique predictor of psychosocial problems over and above other variables, and B) whether popular scales of trait boredom measure different varieties of trait boredom.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

Trait boredom, the propensity to become bored, uniquely predicts depression and anger over and above other variables (such as neuroticism and inattention). Furthermore, there is reason to believe that the BPS and ZBS measure different types of trait boredom; the BPS is associated with inwardly directed issues (such as depression) and the ZBS is associated with outwardly directed issues (such as gambling). These results highlight the need for further boredom research and awareness that boredom is not a trivial malady and can cause significant psychological impairment.

### WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS DO?

The researchers asked undergraduates to complete self-report scales measuring: trait boredom, psychosocial problems (depression, anxiety, gambling behaviour, alcohol abuse, and anger), and alternative variables (neuroticism, inattention, emotional awareness, impulsivity, behavioural inhibition, and behavioural activation).

## WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS FIND?

Researchers found that trait boredom uniquely predicted depression and anger over and above alternative variables. Moreover, the Boredom Proneness Scale (BPS) and Boredom Susceptibility Scale (ZBS) appeared to measure different types of boredom. The ZBS was linked to outwardly directed issues such as gambling and alcohol abuse, while the BPS was linked to inwardly directed issues such as depression and anxiety.

## HOW CAN YOU USE THIS RESEARCH?

This research is the starting point for deciphering the relationship between trait boredom and psychosocial problems and helps guide the direction of future research. Specifically, this study showed that trait boredom indeed has a unique relationship with anger and depression and thus, future work should aim to further understand this relationship. In particular, future studies should analyze if boredom causes anger and/or depression, if anger and/or depression causes boredom, or if another factor causes both. By gaining a better understanding of these relationships, experts may be better able to identify individuals prone to severe boredom, anger, and depression and can provide better therapy and support. In regards to the second purpose of the study, the finding that the BPS and ZBS measure different types of trait boredom indicates that trait boredom is a multifaceted concept. Therefore, researchers are urged to consider the differences between these types of boredom and not to measure these different varieties interchangeably across studies.

## ABOUT THE RESEARCHERS

Kimberley Mercer-Lynn and Jennifer Hunter are completing their Ph.D.'s in Clinical Psychology. Dr. John Eastwood is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at York University.

## KEYWORDS

Boredom, Trait Boredom, Psychosocial problems, Prediction measure, Depression, Internalizing problem, Anger, Externalizing problem

## CITATION

Mercer-Lynn, K., Hunter, J. A., & Eastwood, J. D. (2013). Is trait boredom redundant? *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 32*, 897-916. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1521/jscp.2013.32.8.897>

Summary prepared by: Carla Rumeo

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