

Behavioral Research Program Invited Speakers Series

THE IMPACT OF SELF-AFFIRMING ON HEALTH COGNITION AND BEHAVIOUR

Dr. Peter Harris
Department of Psychology
University of Sheffield, England

Tuesday, October 13, 2009 • 4:00 pm
EPN Conference Room X



Results of several of our recent studies show that self-affirming (by reflecting upon one's cherished strengths or values) results in less biased processing of health-risk messages, producing potentially beneficial changes in health-related cognitions and health behaviour. Health topics have included breast cancer risks from alcohol, the benefits of eating fruit and vegetables, and graphic warnings on cigarette packs. I will briefly describe these studies and the theoretical underpinnings of this approach. In questions we can consider the theoretical and applied implications of our findings.

Dr. Harris holds a BSc and PhD from the University of London. His research topics include self-affirmation and health, the defensive processing of health information, the Internet and health risk perception, optimistic bias, coping with chronic illness, and predicting health behaviour (especially smoking and exercise). Recent publications include:

Klein, W. M. P., & Harris, P. R. (in press). Self-affirmation enhances attentional bias toward threatening components of a persuasive message. *Psychological Science*.

Harris, P., Griffin, D. W., & Murray, S. (2008). Testing the Limits of Optimistic Bias: Event and Person Moderators in a Multi-Level Framework. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95, 1225-1237.

Epton, T. and Harris, P. R. (2008) Self-affirmation promotes health behavior change. *Health Psychology*. 27(6), 746-752.



The University of Sheffield
Sheffield S10 2TP, UK
Room 2023

P.Harris@sheffield.ac.uk

www.shef.ac.uk/psychology/staff/academic/peter-harris.html