

Psychology Professor Michael Twohig Presents Inaugural Lecture: Acceptance & Commitment Therapy May Help Those with OCD | CEHS

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Michael Twohig, a professor of psychology in the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services, recently presented his inaugural lecture in the home of Noelle and John Cockett, president and first gentleman of Utah State University, to commemorate and celebrate Dr. Twohig's promotion to full professor.

Dr. Twohig works in the Combined Clinical/Counseling Ph.D. program within the Psychology Department, focusing his research on developing effective treatments for anxiety disorders—primarily obsessive-compulsive disorder and other OC-spectrum disorders. He is licensed as a psychologist in the state of Utah and works with graduate and undergraduate students at USU to train the next generation of psychologists. “I’m trying to move the field of clinical psychology forward in a science-based way,” Dr. Twohig said.

While working toward a Ph.D. in clinical psychology at the University of Nevada, Reno, Dr. Twohig was introduced to Dr. Steven Hayes, a researcher at the university who is recognized for developing of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. While still relatively unknown at the time, the ACT method of using mindfulness and acceptance techniques to manage psychological disorders intrigued Dr. Twohig. As his educational career advanced, Dr. Twohig began applying ACT techniques to OC-spectrum disorders.

Following the completion of his doctoral degree, Dr. Twohig moved to British Columbia to complete his clinical internship at a premiere OCD treatment and research center in Vancouver. A year later, Dr. Twohig moved to Logan to begin his first academic position.

“I really appreciate where I work,” Dr. Twohig said. “I appreciate what people at all levels of USU have done for me, whether that’s my department head, dean, the provost, or the president. They’ve all done significant things to help me.”

Dr. Twohig has seen the ACT method grow significantly since he began his research in the field 15 years ago. While at a conference Dr. Twohig attended recently, a presenter stated that ACT is now the third most-used method of therapy in North America.

Outside of his time at the university, Dr. Twohig enjoys the outdoor lifestyle that life in Cache Valley provides. He and his family can often be found bicycling, skiing, snowboarding, hiking, running and climbing through the mountains around Logan.