The Overheard Communication Technique:

- History
- Current Applications
Study 1: Hypothesis

- A relevant “overheard” communication will be counterargued less and therefore more persuasive than a direct message.
Operational Hypothesis:

- **H1:** People with depression will report less favorable attitudes towards help seeking, and greater self-stigma than nondepressed people.

- **H2:** Exposure to a D-PSA utilizing the overheard communication technique will increase the likelihood of help-seeking among people with depression and reduce self-stigma.
Study 1: Methods

- Mturk Sample
  - N = 550
  - Mean age = 32.38, SD = 12.25
  - Female: 63.1%
- Ethnicity
  - 73.40% White (n = 400)
  - 6.60% Asian (n = 36)
  - 6.10% Black/African American (n = 33)
  - 5.10% Hispanic (n = 28)
  - 4.0% Multi-Ethnic (n = 22)
  - .60% Native American or Alaska Native (n = 3)
  - .20% Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander (n = 1)
  - 4.00% Other (n = 22)
Experimental Stimuli:
Where do the great outdoors meet the city? Everyone should know it’s Colorado.

Many people have discovered the magic of Colorado. The Rocky Mountains have parks, forests, lakes, rivers, canyons, and peaks. This diverse landscape offers the opportunity for mountain biking, hiking, fishing, horse riding, kayaking, mountain climbing, cliff diving, rafting, camping, skiing and snowboarding.

Denver offers the comfort and culture of cities like Los Angeles and New York City in a more relaxed environment. Denver has museums, parks, gardens and a bustling downtown area with great shopping and entertainment.

Visit Colorado.
Do you have a friend who is depressed? There is something you should let them know.

Tell them that many people have overcome depression. Depression is real. Let them know that they are not the only one who feels this way. Tell them that many people have fought with the same feeling they are feeling. Make sure they know they are not alone, even if it seems that way.

Tell them they should talk to someone and seek help. Let them know that others have overcome depression, why can't they? Isolation is not an answer. If left untreated, depression may be responsible for the death of your friend.

Get them help.
Measures:

- **Predictor Variable (α = .94):**
  - *Depression (Beck Depression Inventory-II)*
    - 21 items, four statements each
      - “I have not lost interest in other people or activities” (score of 0).
      - “I am less interested in other people or things than before” (score of 1).
      - “I have lost most of my interest in other people or things” (score of 2).
      - “It’s hard to get interested in anything” (score of 3).
Measures:

- **Dependent Variables**
  - *Ad Statements* ($\alpha = .71$):
    - “Depressed people should seek help,”
    - “Depression is treatable,”
    - “Depression is a real illness,”
    - “Depressed people can get the support they need.”
Measures:

- **Dependent Variables**
  - **Self-Stigma of Seeking Professional Help (α = .80):**
    - Seeking psychological help would make me feel less intelligent,”
    - “My self-confidence would NOT be threatened if I sought professional help.”
    - “My self-esteem would increase if I talked to a therapist.”
    - “If I went to a therapist, I would be less satisfied with myself.”
Measures:

- **Dependent Variables**
  - *Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Help (α = .86):*
    - “I might want to have psychological counseling in the future”
    - “A person should work out his or her own problems; getting psychological counseling would be a last resort”
Measures:

- **Dependent Variables**
  - *Professional Help Seeking Intentions (α = .61):*
    - “If you were experiencing depression, from who would you seek help?”
      - Mental Health Professional
      - Doctor/General Practitioner
Measures:

- **Control Variables**
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Current Diagnosis of Depression
## Results

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*Note: *** p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05*
Figure 1. Model of interaction between ad condition and depressive symptoms on agreement with ad statements. Note that the y-axis does not start at zero, and estimates are based on standardized BDI-II scores.

Main effect for depression, Significant Interaction.
Figure 2. Model of interaction between ad condition and depressive symptoms on self-stigma of seeking professional help. Note that the y-axis does not start at zero, and estimates are based on standardized BDI-II scores.

Main effect for depression, Significant Interaction.
Figure 3. Model of interaction between ad condition and depressive symptoms on attitudes towards seeking professional help. Note that the y-axis does not start at zero, and estimates are based on standardized BDI-II scores.
Figure 4. Model of interaction between ad condition and depressive symptoms on intention to seek help from professionals. Note that the y-axis does not start at zero, and estimates are based on standardized BDI-II scores.

Main effect for depression, Significant Interaction.
Study 2: Hypothesis

- A relevant “overheard” communication will be counterargued less and therefore more persuasive than a direct message.
Operational Hypothesis:

- **H1:** People with depression will report less favorable attitudes towards help seeking, and greater self-stigma than people without depression.

- **H2:** Exposure to a D-PSA utilizing the overheard communication technique will increase the likelihood of help-seeking among people with depression.
Study 2: Methods

- Mturk Sample
  - N = 655
  - Mean age = 32.02, SD = 11.20
  - Female: 61.1%
- Ethnicity
  - White/Caucasian (N = 520, 79.4%)
  - Black/African American (N = 39, 6.0%)
  - Asian or Pacific Islander (N = 38, 5.8%)
  - Multi-Racial (N = 24, 3.7%)
  - Hispanic (N = 20, 3.1%)
  - Native American or Alaska Native (N = 1, 0.2%)
  - Other (N = 7, 1.1%)
  - Decline to Respond (N = 6, 0.9%)
DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE IN NEED OF AN ADVENTURE?
They should visit Colorado!
Many people have discovered the magic of Colorado.
They should too!

The Rocky Mountains have parks, forests, lakes, rivers, canyons, and peaks. This diverse landscape offers the opportunity for mountain biking, hiking, fishing, horse riding, kayaking, mountain climbing, and skiing.

Denver is the perfect vacation site.
Do a favor for your loved ones...

TELL SOMEONE YOU KNOW TO VISIT COLORADO!!
COLORADO TRAVEL AGENCY
1-800-COLORADO

ARE YOU IN NEED OF AN ADVENTURE?
You should visit Colorado!
Many people have discovered the magic of Colorado.
You should too!

The Rocky Mountains have parks, forests, lakes, rivers, canyons, and peaks. This diverse landscape offers the opportunity for mountain biking, hiking, fishing, horse riding, kayaking, mountain climbing, and skiing.

Denver is the perfect vacation site.
Do a favor for yourself.

VISIT COLORADO!!
COLORADO TRAVEL AGENCY
1-800-COLORADO
ARE YOU DISTRESSED?
FEELING HOPELESS? WORTHLESS?
You might be depressed.
It is not your fault that you are depressed.
You are not weak. You did nothing wrong.
You have an illness—an illness that can be overcome!
You will not be depressed forever, but you must take the first steps toward recovery: talking to someone.

SEEKING HELP IS THE FIRST STEP.

THE LONGER YOU WAIT, THE MORE DIFFICULT IT GETS.
Please talk to family, friends, a professional.
Talk to us.
THE ALLIANCE FOR DEPRESSION AWARENESS
1-800-273-TALK

Show your strength by asking for help.

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS DISTRESSED?
FEELING HOPELESS? WORTHLESS?
They might be depressed.
It is not their fault that they are depressed.
They are not weak. They did nothing wrong.
They have an illness—an illness that can be overcome!
They will not be depressed forever, but they must take the first steps toward recovery: talking to someone.

SEEKING HELP IS THE FIRST STEP.

THE LONGER THEY WAIT, THE MORE DIFFICULT IT GETS.
Please ask them to talk to family, friends, a professional.
Ask them to talk to us.
THE ALLIANCE FOR DEPRESSION AWARENESS
1-800-273-TALK

Ask them to show their strength by asking for help.
Measures:

- **Predictor Variable (α = .94):**
  - *Depression (Beck Depression Inventory-II)*
    - 21 items, four statements each
      - “I have not lost interest in other people or activities” (score of 0).
      - “I am less interested in other people or things than before” (score of 1).
      - “I have lost most of my interest in other people or things” (score of 2).
      - “It’s hard to get interested in anything” (score of 3).
Measures:

- **Dependent Variables**
  - *Ad Statements* ($\alpha = .72$):
    - “Depression is treatable”
    - “Depression can be overcome”
Measures:

- **Dependent Variables**
  - *Help Seeking Intentions from Close Others (α = .75)*:
    - “If you were experiencing depression, from who would you seek help?”
      - Romantic Partner
      - A Close Friend
      - Family
        - Parent
        - Family (non-parent)
Measures:

- **Dependent Variables**
  - *Professional Help Seeking Intentions (α = .81):*
    - “If you were experiencing depression, from who would you seek help?”
      - Counselor/psychologist
      - Psychiatrist
      - Doctor/general practitioner
Measures:

- **Control Variables**
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Current Diagnosis of Depression
  - Time to complete survey (due to MTurk)
## Results:

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*Note: *** p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05*
Figure 5. Model of interaction between condition, message type, and depressive symptoms on agreement with ad statements. Note that the y-axis does not start at zero, and estimates are based on standardized BDI-II scores.
Figure 6. Model of interaction between condition, message type, and depressive symptoms on intention to seek help from a romantic partner. Note that the y-axis does not start at zero, and estimates are based on standardized BDI-II scores.
Figure 7. Model of interaction between condition, message type, and depressive symptoms on intention to seek help from a close friend. Note that the y-axis does not start at zero, and estimates are based on standardized BDI-II scores.
Figure 8. Model of interaction between condition, message type, and depressive symptoms on intention to seek help from family. Note that the y-axis does not start at zero, and estimates are based on standardized BDI-II scores.