

WEBINARS

Randy Buckner discusses the brain's default network

BY GREG BOUSTEAD

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Randy Buckner

We invite you to join us for the next **SFARI webinar** on **Wednesday, 25 March, 3-4 p.m. EDT**, featuring **Randy Buckner**, professor of psychology and neuroscience at Harvard University.

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In this webinar, Buckner will review more than 30 years of brain imaging research on the default network — a distinct set of connections in the brain thought to be involved in daydreaming, rumination and self-reflection.

Parts of this network **may be out of sync** in individuals with autism or other psychiatric conditions, such as schizophrenia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Buckner believes that a better understanding of this ‘daydreaming’ state might reveal something fundamental about these disorders.

Here’s how Buckner describes the session:

*The default network is a specific, anatomically defined brain system that becomes active when individuals are not focused on the outside world. This system has become an area of increasing interest among neuroscientists. In this webinar, I will discuss the **serendipitous discovery** of the default network and recent findings that provide insight into its anatomical organization and function.*

*Probing the functional anatomy of the network in detail reveals that it is best understood as **multiple interacting subsystems** that have expanded during human evolution and are specialized for internal modes of cognition. The default network becomes active when individuals engage in internally focused tasks, including autobiographical memory retrieval, envisioning the future and conceiving the perspectives of others (i.e., **theory of mind**) — cognitive states that are often disrupted in individuals with autism.*

I will explore the implications of these functional and anatomical observations in relation to possible adaptive roles of the default network for using past experiences to plan for the future and navigate social interactions. I will also discuss the relevance of the default network to understanding autism and related neuropsychiatric disorders.

You can register for the session **here**. To add the event to your calendar, **click here**.

At the event time, log in to **readytalk.com** and enter the participant access code **2979382** to watch the talk.

There will also be a Q&A session directly following the talk. Or submit your questions now, either by posting them in the comments section below or by emailing them to community@sfari.org.

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