Introduction

For higher degree, or postgraduate searching, you’ll be performing mini searches to test individual terms and combinations in order to find the best words for your final search. Eventually you will discard all of these test searches and construct a comprehensive search using the lists of terms you have created in the logic grid in your Word document. Unfortunately a search done in one database cannot be simply copied and pasted into another. Although there may be many similarities, field names and abbreviations will be different, and the user interface will sometimes require a slightly different method.

**NOTE:**- PsycINFO indexes all of the material in the following APA products:-

PsycARTICLES,
PsycBOOKS,
PsycCRITIQES,
PsycTESTS, and
PsycTHERAPY.

So you don’t need to search individual databases separately.

Like PubMed PsycINFO also has a Thesaurus of indexing terms but these terms may be rather different from PubMed’s MeSH terms. Unlike PubMed it does not automatically explode terms from its thesaurus - you have to instruct it to do so.

Using additional fields is essential in high level searching, but many of the fields are different from PubMed’s, and the labels are all applied in a different way.
PsycINFO Advanced Searching Help – updated June 22 2017

PsycINFO Field Codes
When searching PsycINFO it’s essential to tell the database where to look for words or phrases - titles of articles, abstracts, the indexing language of the database. To do this you need to use field codes.

PsycINFO has a wide range of field codes, but the codes you’re most likely to use are:-

**TI** – Article title
e.g. cognitive therapy.ti
You can even search the whole title of an article
e.g. Dispositional mindfulness is associated with reduced implicit learning.ti

**AU** – Author
e.g. Matthews G.au
Enter the last name, or if it is a common name, enter the last name, a space, and the first initial.
You can even use a wildcard to allow for either first initial or Christian name
e.g. Matthews G$.au

**AB** – Abstract
e.g. cognitive therapy.ab

**SH** - Exact Subject Heading
e.g. mind body therapy.sh
You can look up any of these terms by using Search Tools tab, and choosing the Thesaurus option

**NOTE:-** When search results are displayed, subject headings which describe the major point (focus) of a document will be preceded with an asterisk (*)
e.g. *mindfulness

**EXP** - Explode a Subject Heading
e.g. exp counseling. This will search the more specific categories of counseling listed below it, and described in the thesaurus as Narrower Terms
PsycINFO does NOT automatically explode terms in its thesaurus, so you remember to use exp before the subject heading if you want to include the Narrower Terms

**HW** - Heading word - a word anywhere in a Subject Heading
e.g. behavior therapy.hw would find not only the heading behavior therapy, but also the headings cognitive behavior therapy, and dialectical behavior therapy

**JN** - Journal name
e.g. cognitive science.jn
Or you could just enter as many of the words or letters in a journal name as are needed to distinguish it from other Journals, for example, "cognitive sci$" for "Cognitive Science."

**JW** - Journal word - a word anywhere in a journal name
e.g. occupational.jw will find any journal with this word in its title.

**TW** – Text word in PsycINFO includes title, abstract, table of contents, and key concepts (NOT thesaurus terms)
e.g. organizational culture.tw

**MP** - Used for exhaustive searching of multiple fields. Fields searched are title, abstract, heading word, table of contents, key concepts, original title, tests & measures.
e.g. mindfulness.mp

**For higher degree searching a combination of thesaurus terms and either .tw or .mp is a useful option**

**PT** - Publication type. Publication types are also available as Limits
e.g. peer reviewed journal.pt

A word or phrase can be searched in multiple fields at the same time - simply separate the field codes with a comma.
e.g. anxiety.sh,ti,ab
anxiety.sh, tw

**BUT** if you include .sh, you must be sure that the word or phrase is an exact match with a Thesaurus term.
PsycINFO Useful Tips

- Open two tabs or browser windows when searching PsycINFO - this will allow you to have the Thesaurus open in one (use the Search Tools option to access the Thesaurus), and PsycINFO Advanced Search open in the other. That way it’s easy to move between looking up terms and testing searches.

- Click on the Title of an article, choose Customize Display from the widget at the left of the display screen - then select Citation + Abstract + Subject Headings to see the complete list of Subject Headings used to index it.

- Subject Headings alone will not produce a comprehensive search, and at times the concept you’re dealing with may not even have an appropriate term in the Thesaurus. So always remember to search for words at least in titles and abstracts as well.

- Check the Used for lists in the Thesaurus to find words to search in titles and abstracts (to see the Used for list click on the Thesaurus term)

- PsycINFO does not “explode” Subject Headings automatically. You will need to instruct it to do so. You can do this simply by typing exp before the term in question. PsycINFO will then search the Narrow Terms listed below the term

- PsycINFO also has an HW option which allows a word to be searched anywhere in a subject heading.

- Use truncation (*) ONLY for words in titles or abstracts. DO NOT TRUNCATE Thesaurus terms

- Add limits (such as English language or date limits) only when you have completed your search.
PsycINFO Age Ranges

PsycINFO has a selection of age ranges which can be very useful in searching. You may want to use them at the end of your search, after you have combined the other components.

**AG Age Group [Phrase and code Indexed]**

e.g. adulthood 18 yrs older.ag. - Phrase

e.g. 100.ag. – code for childhood

The Age Group (AG) field contains a standardized description of specific population age groups related to the content of the document. A record may contain multiple Age Groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search for</th>
<th>Or search for</th>
<th>To find</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100.ag</td>
<td>childhood birth 12 yrs.ag</td>
<td>Childhood, from birth to 12 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120.ag</td>
<td>neonatal birth 1 mo.ag</td>
<td>Neonatal, from birth to 1 mo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140.ag</td>
<td>infancy 2 23 mo.ag</td>
<td>Infancy (2 to 23 mo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160.ag</td>
<td>preschool age 2 5 yrs.ag</td>
<td>Preschool Age (2 to 5 yrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180.ag</td>
<td>school age 6 12 yrs.ag</td>
<td>School Age (6 to 12 yrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200.ag</td>
<td>adolescence 13 17 yrs.ag</td>
<td>Adolescence (13 to 17 yrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300.ag</td>
<td>adulthood 18 yrs older.ag</td>
<td>Adulthood (18 yrs &amp; older)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>320.ag</td>
<td>young adulthood 18 29 yrs.ag</td>
<td>Young Adulthood (18 to 29 yrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>340.ag</td>
<td>thirties 30 39 yrs.ag</td>
<td>Thirties (30 to 39 yrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>360.ag</td>
<td>middle age 40 64 yrs.ag</td>
<td>Middle Age (40 to 64 yrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>380.ag</td>
<td>aged 65 yrs older.ag</td>
<td>Aged (65 yrs &amp; older)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>390.ag</td>
<td>very old 85 yrs older.ag</td>
<td>Very Old (85 yrs &amp; older)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both the code and the term are searchable. The results are displayed as part of the Population Group (PO) field in each record. Age Groups are also available as a limit. To see them, click on Additional Limits.
Language Part 1 - looking for subject headings using the PsycINFO Thesaurus

1. Open a Word document and set up a logic grid - you'll need a column for each concept.

2. Open two browser windows - one for PsycINFO Advanced Search, and one for Search Tools (Right click on Search Tools and choose Open Link in New Tab - then choose Thesaurus from the drop down box)

3. **Turn off Map term to Subject Heading**

4. Perform a simple search in PsycINFO, using your own words - cognitive therapy AND PTSD.

5. Click on **Display** to see the results of your search

6. Choose **Customize Display** from the widget at the left of the display screen - then select Citation + Abstract + Subject Headings

   ![Customize Display of Results]

   and **Save Changes**

7. Scroll through the results to see if there are any articles that look as if they're on your topic.

8. Check the Subject Headings used to index a selection of relevant articles.

9. Look up **Cognitive Behavior Therapy** in the PsycINFO Thesaurus.

10. Click on the term.
The PsycINFO Thesaurus allows searching not just of Cognitive Therapy, but specifically of Cognitive Behavior therapy, and this term might be a useful addition to your search.

You could choose to "explode" the term Cognitive Behavior Therapy, **exp Cognitive Behavior Therapy** in which case you would also search the Narrower Term Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. You might also choose to add some of the Related Terms to your search.

If you click on the Scope Note for Cognitive Behavior Therapy,
you will see that it was introduced as a Subject Heading in 2003. Prior to that date only the Subject Heading Cognitive Therapy was available

11. Look up Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in the Thesaurus.

12. Click on the term. Under Used For is a list of synonymous words or phrases which may be useful in searching titles and abstracts of articles.

13. Click on the Scope Note icon in the right hand column

This Subject heading has not always been available in the Thesaurus. It was introduced in 1985. Prior to this date you would need to use the Subject Headings Traumatic Neuroses, or Traumatic Stress Reactions in your search.

14. Now update your logic grid with the appropriate Thesaurus terms.
**Language Part 2 - looking for words in other fields**

In more advanced searching you will need to allow for indexer error, or variation in the way indexers interpret the content of an article, so in PsycINFO words in titles and abstracts need to be searched too.

1. Use the lists of **Used For** terms from Subject Headings to give you ideas for words to search in titles or abstracts. You will probably think of additional possibilities.

   *PsycINFO allows you to combine title and abstract searching if you separate the fields with a comma*

   e.g. cognitive therapy.ti,ab

   *You can even search thesaurus terms plus the same term in titles and abstracts – as long as the thesaurus term is exactly the same*

   e.g. cognitive therapy.sh,ti,ab

2. Check titles and abstracts of articles from your initial search for additional synonyms and other alternative words or phrases to add to your search.

3. Test each term before adding it to the logic grid - the table (logic grid) below is not intended to be comprehensive, but will give you an idea of how you might build a search.

   **For broader searching consider using .tw instead of .ti,ab**

   **.tw** includes the following fields

   - **Title** - e.g. cognition.ti, cognitive therapy.ti
   - **Abstract** - e.g. Meyers Briggs.ab, clinical trials.ab
   - **Table of contents** - (for book records) e.g. glossary.tc
   - **Key concepts** - (indexers use these to supplement subject headings) e.g. psychosis.id, bipolar.id

   It does **NOT** include words in Subject Headings (Thesaurus terms)

   **For more exhaustive searching consider using .mp instead of .ti or .ab, as this will expand your search to include additional fields**

   **.mp** includes the following fields

   - **Title** - e.g. cognition.ti, cognitive therapy.ti
   - **Abstract** - e.g. Meyers Briggs.ab, clinical trials.ab
   - **Heading word** - (a word in the subject headings) e.g counseling.hw, academic achievement.hw
   - **Table of contents** - (for book records) e.g. glossary.tc
   - **Key concepts** - (indexers use these to supplement subject headings) e.g. psychosis.id, bipolar.id
   - **Original title** - (non-English titles, where the original title was in another language) e.g. evidencias.ot
   - **Tests and measures** - (names of tests and measures identified in the source document) e.g. interview.tm
### Cognitive Therapy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Therapy</th>
<th>PTSD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cognitive behavior therapy.sh</td>
<td>posttraumatic stress disorder.sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cognitive therapy.sh</td>
<td>traumatic neurosis.sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cognitive therap$.ti,ab</td>
<td>stress reactions.sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cognitive psychotherap$.ti,ab</td>
<td>stress reaction$.ti,ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cognitive behavior therap$.ti,ab</td>
<td>PTSD.ti,ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cognitive behaviour therap$.ti,ab</td>
<td>post traumatic stress.ti,ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cognitive behavioural therap$.ti,ab</td>
<td>posttraumatic stress.ti,ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cognitive behavioral therap$.ti,ab</td>
<td>post-traumatic stress.ti,ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTSD.ti,ab</td>
<td>war neuros$.ti,ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cognitive behav$ therap$.ti,ab</td>
<td>combat stress.ti,ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBT.ti,ab</td>
<td>traumatic stress.ti,ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>shell shock.ti,ab</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This logic grid can be condensed, yet still maintain the breadth of the search by additional truncating of phrases - cognitive behav$ therap$.ti,ab

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Therapy</th>
<th>PTSD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cognitive behavior therapy.sh</td>
<td>posttraumatic stress disorder.sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cognitive therapy.sh</td>
<td>traumatic neurosis.sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cognitive therap$.ti,ab</td>
<td>stress reactions.sh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cognitive psychotherap$.ti,ab</td>
<td>stress reaction$.ti,ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cognitive behav$ therap$.ti,ab</td>
<td>PTSD.ti,ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBT.ti,ab</td>
<td>post traumatic stress.ti,ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTSD.ti,ab</td>
<td>posttraumatic stress.ti,ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTSD.ti,ab</td>
<td>post-traumatic stress.ti,ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTSD.ti,ab</td>
<td>war neuros$.ti,ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTSD.ti,ab</td>
<td>combat stress.ti,ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTSD.ti,ab</td>
<td>traumatic stress.ti,ab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td>OR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTSD.ti,ab</td>
<td>shell shock.ti,ab</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Logic

You will need to OR the individual words in each column, and then AND the two groups of words together.

This is how the search will appear:

**Column One**

cognitive behavior therapy.sh OR cognitive therapy.sh OR cognitive therap$.ti,ab OR cognitive psychotherap$.ti,ab OR cognitive behav* therap$.ti,ab OR CBT.ti,ab

**AND**

**Column Two**

posttraumatic stress disorder.sh OR traumatic neurosis.sh OR stress reactions.sh OR stress reaction*.ti,ab OR PTSD.ti,ab OR post traumatic stress.ti,ab OR posttraumatic stress.ti,ab OR post-traumatic stress.ti,ab OR war neuros$.ti,ab OR combat stress.ti,ab OR combat neuros$.ti,ab OR traumatic stress.ti,ab OR shell shock.ti,ab

**Performing the Search**

In PsycINFO, as in PubMed, when searching each column separately, you don’t need to use parentheses around the groups of terms.

Using PsycINFO’s Advanced Search

- Clear your search history
- Make sure that Map Term to Subject Heading is TURNED OFF
- Copy and paste the first set of terms into the search box
- Click on Search
- Copy and paste the second set of terms into the search box
- Click on Search
- Now use the search history box to combine the two searches by clicking in the box next to each search and combining them with AND
- Click on Search
Summary

- Create a logic grid with one column for each concept.
- Look for appropriate **Subject Headings** from the Thesaurus.
- Look for words to search in titles and abstracts - check the **Used for** terms listed with Subject Headings for suggestions, as well as words from titles and abstracts of articles you have found.
- If you are not sure how a word or phrase will work in titles or abstracts, test it by doing a title search. For example - cbt.ti I **always** test truncated words or phrases, as these can be a trap.
- Add these to your logic grid.
- Clear your search history.
- Perform the search.
- Add **limits**.
Saving Searches and Setting up Auto-Alerts

- You can save your search and rerun it at any time
- You can set up an auto-alert - which will automatically notify you of new material on your topic

To save searches or to set up autoalerts of new articles on your topic you will need to create a personal account. The first time you attempt to save a search you will be prompted to do this, or you can simply click on My Account, at the top of the search screen, and follow the prompts.

Save your searches by clicking the **Save All** button from the Search History window.

The following options are available

**Temporary** - Saves the search for a period of twenty-four hours, then deletes it.

**Permanent** - Saves the search indefinitely. Use this option to save and rerun at another time or for base strategies from which you can develop further searches.

Ovid’s [video tutorial on saving searches](#)

**Auto-Alert** - Creates a search that runs automatically on a regular basis and emails results. Use this option to keep you up to date with new articles on your topic. You can also use it to keep up to date with a specific journal or author.

Ovid’s [video tutorial on setting up Auto-Alerts](#)
Exporting references to EndNote.

**Internet Explorer**
From your search results list, you can either:
1. Mark selected references you want
2. Click on All – at the top left of your results list
3. If your result list is so large that All won’t work, you may have to export results in batches, by choosing Range and exporting your results in batches

- Click Export
- At the Export Citation List: window choose Export To- EndNote – from the dropdown menu
- Choose what you want from the Select Fields to Display options
- Click Export Citation(s)
The chosen references will then be exported to an open EN library

**Firefox**
From your search results list, you can either:
1. Mark selected references you want
2. Click on All – at the top left of your results list
3. If your result list is so large that All won’t work, you may have to export results in batches, by choosing Range and exporting your results in batches

- Click Export
- At the Export Citation List: window choose Export To- EndNote – from the dropdown menu
- Choose what you want from the Select Fields to Display options
- Click Export Citation(s)
- At the next window click the open with button, and select EndNote from the dropdown window
- Click OK
The chosen references will then be exported to an open EN library