



## The Jacobs Center Research Seminar Series

### Prof. Philipp Kanske

TUD Dresden University of Technology



### The Social Brain - Empathy and Perspective Taking as Risky Strengths

Social relationships are among the most important factors for both mental and physical health. Therefore, the question of which abilities enable us to form and maintain good social relationships is of central importance. The talk focuses on the remarkable capacity to understand the inner, mental states of others. This includes empathy — sharing others' feelings — and perspective taking — the abstract representation of others' mental states. Extensive research over recent years shows that empathy and perspective taking are separable and supported by distinct neural networks. Mental disorders can be associated

with specific deficits in either of these capacities. For understanding social difficulties in people with mental disorders, (1) the interaction between empathy and perspective taking and (2) methodological advances toward more ecologically valid, (inter)active neuroscientific study designs may be crucial. The talk concludes with new prevention and treatment approaches that rely on social interactive elements and specifically aim to improve empathy and perspective taking.

**Monday, May 18, 2026, 14:30 h**

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