

DEPRESSION AND ATTACHMENT: EFFECTS ON REAPPRAISAL PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine whether depression is predictive of attachment style and cognitive reappraisal success. Statistical analysis indicated no significant effect of depression on reappraisal performance. Additional statistical analysis indicated no significant relationship between depression and reappraisal with mentalizing in this sample. Implications and future directions are reviewed.

BACKGROUND

DEPRESSION AND COGNITIVE REAPPRAISAL

- Individuals with depression show impaired cognitive reappraisal capability, and imbalances in pre-frontal-subcortical brain activity may be a causal factor (Stephanou et al, 2017)

ATTACHMENT STYLE

- Insecure attachment styles are correlated with increased levels of depression (Spruit et al, 2019)

MENTALIZATION

- Female inpatients with depression display impaired mentalization capabilities (Fischer-Kern et al, 2013)
- Social context influences the correlation between attachment style and mentalization (Bączkowski & Cierpiąłkowska, 2015)

PURPOSE & HYPOTHESES

To examine the relationships between depression, attachment and cognitive reappraisal performance.

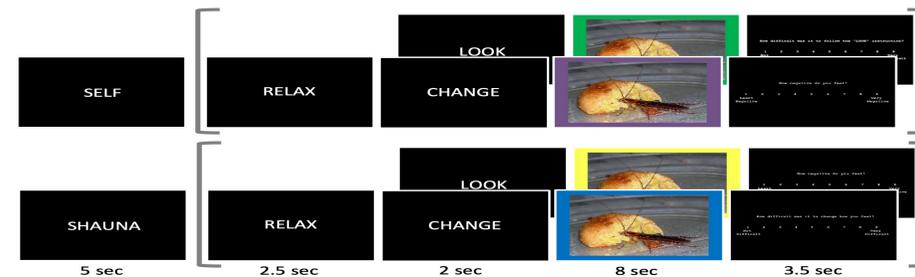
HYPOTHESIS 1: The presence of depression in a participant will correlate with a decrease in their ability to reappraise negative stimuli

HYPOTHESIS 2: Attachment style will mediate the relationship between depression and the style of reappraisal performance that requires mentalization



MATERIALS, PARTICIPANTS, AND PROCEDURE

- **STIMULI:** 4 SELF and 4 OTHER blocks for a total of 192 trials



- **PARTICIPANTS:** 124 psychology undergraduate students were recruited to take the study for partial course credit. Exclusion criteria were applied to yield 78 participants.
- **DEMOGRAPHICS:**
 - *Mean Age:* 19.56; *SD:* 1.85
 - *Gender demographics:* 15.4 % male; 84.6% female
 - *Race/Ethnicity demographics:* 14.1% Asian, 1.3% American Indian/Alaskan Native 2.6% Black, 73.1% White, 2.6% multiple races, 6.4% no response
- **PROCEDURE:** For each image, participants responded naturally to an image or reappraised based on the perspective of themselves or a chosen friend. Participants also rated negative affect or perceived difficulty in reappraising.

RESULTS

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

- Individuals with depression may possess the same capability for cognitive reappraisal and mentalization as individuals without depression
- Attachment style may have a link to depression but does not mediate the relationship between the disorder and reappraisal success

IMPLICATIONS

- Cognitive reappraisal might be successfully utilized by patients with Major Depressive Disorder to down-regulate negative symptoms associated with depression

LIMITATIONS

- Intricacy of mentalization instruction

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