

The Effects of Emotion Regulation Strategies on Emotion Recognition in Depression

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My project aimed to investigate the connection between depression, emotion regulation strategies, and emotion recognition. Firstly, depression is a serious mood disorder that affects many individuals worldwide. In America, millions of individuals will suffer from at least one depressive episode a year. Additionally, with depression, if an individual suffers from one depressive episode, they are more likely to suffer from another episode. This underlines the importance of research into the disorder in order to create and better treatment options. Depression influences and is influenced by emotion regulation and emotion recognition. My project studied two emotion maladaptive regulation strategies and one healthy strategy: expressive suppression, rumination, and cognitive reappraisal. Expressive suppression refers to subduing one's outward expression of a negative emotion in order to stop feeling it. Rumination involves repetitively thinking about a negative experience. Cognitive reappraisal is a healthy strategy and involves reframing a negative experience into a productive one. This study assessed how each regulation strategy influenced the accuracy of identifying happy, sad, fearful, angry, and neutral faces.

Participants were recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk completed a depression questionnaire, measures of emotion regulation, and an emotion recognition task. It was predicted that rumination would be associated with higher accuracy for assessing angry, fearful, and sad faces, but would be associated with poorer recognition for happy and neutral faces. It was also