**WHAT WE LEARNED**

- The motivation to worsen their own moods was related to less successful emotion regulation for older adults, but not young adults.
- Motivations to regulate emotions may play a larger role in emotion regulation success for older adults than young adults.
- Older adults’ changing available resources, such as executive functioning, may elevate the impact of individual differences in emotion regulation preferences on emotion regulation success.

**BACKGROUND**

Older adults (OA) tend to be better than young adults (YA) at emotion regulation (Scheibe & Blanchard-Fields, 2009; Shiota & Levenson, 2009). However, these findings are somewhat mixed. One possible explanation for disparate age effects for different emotion regulation strategies could be the SOC-ER model (Unry & Gross, 2010), which suggests that individuals select and optimize their emotion regulation strategies to reflect their available resources. Because executive functioning decreases with age (Raz et al., 1998), it is likely more difficult (and therefore requires greater motivation) to utilize certain cognitively-taxing emotion regulation strategies (e.g., cognitive reappraisal; Shiota & Levenson, 2009).

**RESEARCH QUESTION**

Do individual differences in emotion regulation styles relate to emotion regulation success more among OA than YA?

**HYPOTHESES**

Hypothesis 1 (H1)

Individual differences in emotion regulation style will be related to emotion regulation success.

Hypothesis 2 (H2)

Motivations to regulate emotions will be more related to emotion regulation success among older adults than young adults.

**MEASURES**

- **Aversive Impact Measure for Mood** ($\alpha = .91 - .98$)
  - 12 items, 9-point Semantic Differential with Polarized words
  - Subscales: belonging, control, mood, comfort; used composite

- **Emotion Regulation of Others and Self** (EROS; Niven et al., 2011)
  - 24-item, 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = Not at all to 5 = A great deal)
  - EROS subscales: belonging, control, mood, comfort, used composite

**METHODS**

**PARTICIPANTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OA</td>
<td>18-29 years; 77% Female</td>
<td>$M_{age} = 20.68$ years, $SD = 2.95$</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YA</td>
<td>58-80 years; 56% Female</td>
<td>$M_{age} = 69.38$ years, $SD = 5.33$</td>
<td>36</td>
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</tbody>
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**PROCEDURE**

- **Cyberball Task** (Williams & Jarvis, 2006; adapted by Lickelhoff, Cook, Anderson, & Zayas, 2013)
  - Virtual game of “keep away”
  - Induce negative mood and social exclusion
  - 27 trials (tosses) in each of 5 rounds
  - Progressive exclusion paradigm (e.g., 9 tosses, 7 tosses, etc.)

**RESULTS**

**H2: Regulation Style is Related to Regulation Success for OA, but not YA**

For OA (but not YA), scores on the Intrinsic Affect Worsening subscale were negatively related to mood change from the beginning to the middle of the task ($r = -.46$, $p < .01$).

OA who endorsed greater worsening of their own moods were more likely to feel worse as the task progressed.