

VULNERABLE ATTACHMENT, INFLUENTIAL TO EMOTIONAL REGULATION

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INTRODUCTION

“Vulnerable attachment is important because a mother’s bond to their child shapes a child’s brain, which influences their self-esteem, expectations of others, and the ability to attract and maintain successful relationships.”

WHOSE AT RISK FOR VA?

Children & Adults

- Individuals who have been placed in foster care.
- Individuals whose parents were incarcerated.
- Individuals diagnosed with a mental health illness.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Do adults in the state of New Mexico report vulnerable attachment issues and how does this relate to their emotional regulation process?

Hypothesis

- Insecure attachment, (vulnerable) attachment styles involving attitudes of enmeshment, fearfulness, angry, dismissive, withdrawn-avoidance.
- The tendency to regulate emotions in two ways
 - (1) Cognitive Reappraisal
 - (2) Expressive Suppression

RESULTS

Vulnerable Attachment Style Questionnaire

(VASQ; Prof. Antonia Bifulco 2012)

Participants answered each item on a 5-point liker-type scale.

1 strongly-disagree-5 strongly-agree

The VASQ focused on the factor of insecurities, based on emotions and behaviors, determined by participants answers.

- The sum above 30 indicated a high level of vulnerable attachment.

The highest score totaled 45

The lowest score totaled 40

VULNERABLE ATTACHMENT			
	Linear Scale 1-5	Total Percentage	Participant total N=67
OTHERS HELP ME MAKE DECISIONS	1	26.90%	18
I MISS OTHERS COMP.	4	22.40%	15
I WORRY WHEN PEOPLE COME HOME LATER THAN EXPECTED	5	25.80%	17
I RELY ON OTHERS ADVICE	2	19.70%	13
I WORRY ABOUT CLOSE FAMILY/FRIENDS	5	35.80%	24
I AM CLINGY	1	37.90%	25
I ENJOY ALONE TIME	1	34.30%	23
I MAKE MY OWN DECISIONS	1	34.80%	23
I AM ANXIOUS WHEN OTHERS ARE AWAY	3	22.40%	15
I WANT OTHERS AROUND	4	25.40%	17

RESULTS

Emotional Regulation Questionnaire

(ERQ; Gross and John, 2003)

Participants answered each item on a 7-point liker type scale.

1 strongly-disagree - 7 strongly-agree

(1) COGNITIVE REAPPRAISAL

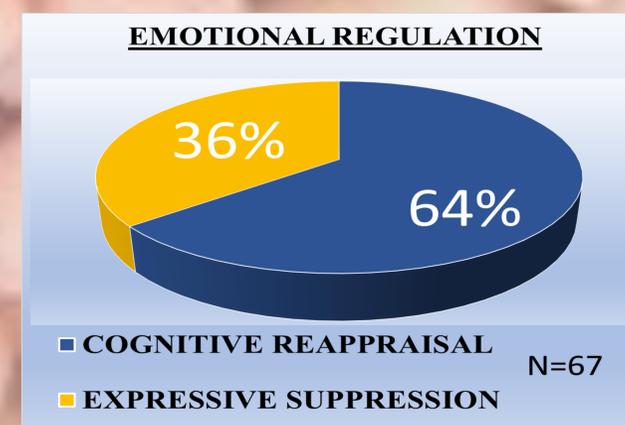
Changing the way one thinks about a stressor and the way they respond to the stressor. These individuals can downregulate their emotions. Cognitive reappraisal is a healthier response than ES.

Questionnaire response 64%

(2) EXPRESSIVE SUPPRESSION

A response focused strategy that intervenes with an emotion. An attempt to hide, inhibit or reduce ongoing emotion in expressive behaviors.

Questionnaire response 36%



CONCLUSION

There are theories and concepts, joining within the state, to further support adults and children who suffer from attachment issues. Unfortunately there is little to no research within the state of New Mexico. It is hoped that research continues to develop on this issue, to build mindfulness, awareness and programs, to better serve the community members, who are in great need of healing. Program awareness is also key to reducing transgenerational trauma, that’s produced through vulnerable attachment.

Creating awareness provides a hopeful future for adults and children



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Northern New Mexico College
Dr. Robert Beshara
Research Participants