

The Effect of Creativity on Cognitive Reappraisal Effectiveness: An Experimental Study in a Sample of Older Adults.

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Emotion regulation (ER) has been acknowledged as an important factor for older adults' well-being. Recently, it has been suggested that creativity may play a role in the effectiveness of cognitive reappraisal, an adaptive form of ER. The present study aims to test whether creativity is linked to greater effectiveness in the use of cognitive reappraisal in a sample of older adults.

A preliminary sample of 43 healthy older adults (age range 62-100) living in nursing homes was randomly assigned to either the experimental group (who completed a primer creativity task) or the control group (who completed a filler task). After this first step, all participants performed an ER task, involving the observation of thirty images (neutral or negative). Each image was preceded by an instruction to either watch or use positive reappraisal. After watching each image, the participants were asked to rate their affective experience (valence and arousal plus a list of emotional labels).

Results showed that the experimental group reported less unpleasantness and less intense negative emotions when using positive reappraisal compared to the control group while observing negative images. However, no significant differences between groups were found concerning self-reported arousal.

Overall, these findings support a significant effect of creativity on the use of cognitive reappraisal in older adults: Creativity seems to improve the effectiveness of this ER strategy in decreasing unpleasantness of negative stimuli. Providing new evidence about the links between creativity and ER, the results of this study hold significant implications to foster healthy aging.

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