

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Civilian

Parental Emotion Regulation Strategy Use and Responses to Youth Negative Affect

Remmes, C. S. (2014). Parental emotion regulation strategy use and responses to youth negative affect. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy*, 28(1), 34-47. doi:10.1891/0889-8391.28.1.34

SUMMARY: Adolescents and their parents were surveyed about their emotion regulation strategies, emotion awareness, and adolescent negative affect in an effort to better understand how parents influence adolescent emotional development. Associations were found between parent emotion regulation and adolescent emotional awareness and negative affect.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Parents who more often used suppression to regulate their emotions had children who were less emotionally aware (i.e., difficulty labeling their own internal emotional states).
- Parents who tended to use reappraisal to manage emotions (i.e., thinking about an emotional situation in a way that makes it less intense) tended to use emotion coaching strategies (i.e., encouragement, problem and emotion focused coaching) with their children.
- No differences by gender were found in these analyses.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MILITARY PROFESSIONALS:

Military professionals could:

- Help develop modules to inform staff working with military families with children the influence parenting behaviors have on youth's emotional regulation
- Facilitate support groups for military parents struggling with their own emotional regulation

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Add components to their curricula on positive approaches to managing emotions for both parents
- Provide military youth with activities that teach children how to reappraise an emotional situation to help it feel less intense

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Support programs that offer professional development for staff who work with military families be trained in emotion regulation strategies and how to encourage others to use them
- Recommend that public school educators be trained on how to foster positive emotion regulation strategies in the classroom

This product is the result of a partnership funded by the Department of Defense between the Office of Military Community and Family Policy and the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture through a grant/cooperative agreement with The University of Minnesota.



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METHODS

- Families were recruited from a clinic that specialized in anxiety and mood disorder treatment.
- Adolescents and their parents completed surveys on emotion regulation, emotional awareness, and adolescent emotional well-being.
- No other recruitment details were provided.

PARTICIPANTS

- Participants were 67 adolescents and their parents.
- Almost half (48%) of the youth were male.
- The adolescent sample was 64% Latino/Latina, 24% White, 5% Black, 2% Asian-American, and 6% other race or ethnicity.
- Adolescent age ranged from 12-18 years (M = 15.48 years).

LIMITATIONS

- This study was primarily limited by its sample size (n = 67) and the clinically based sample, which limits the generalizability of results.
- Cross-sectional associations between measures taken from the same person may appear larger than they actually are due to short temporal spacing and the same reporter completing the same measures.
- All data in this study were self-report, which could bias the results as participants may have tried to answer in the "best" way.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Utilize a larger community sample to determine if these results generalize to other populations
- Rule out third variable confounds between parent emotion regulation strategies and adolescent emotional well-being, such as shared psychopathology or genetics
- Conduct a similar study with a military sample to explore how parenting behaviors influence youth's emotional regulation and whether military status effects this relationship

ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS



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