

## Gender differences using positive reappraisal in depression

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### Abstract

One of the most significant findings in psychology over the past 20 years is that individuals can choose the way they think and these thinking habits can be changed. As a result, there has been increasing attention directed towards psychological treatments of depression, especially reactive types. One of the popular strategy is positive reappraisal using in depression. Recent research was carried out to find the gender differences while using positive reappraisal in depression. 100 boys and 100 girls have been selected through Beck Depression Inventory II. The collected sample was assessed by Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire for scores of positive reappraisal. The findings revealed significant difference using positive reappraisal in depression.

**Keywords:** positive reappraisal, depression, gender differences

### Introduction

If someone enters a library or browses through the internet for books and articles on depression, they will very quickly realize that there is a vast amount of work on this widespread human experience. According to Leader (2008), depression today can be found everywhere, on films and television, in GP's referral letters, in magazine articles and celebrities' interviews. It is of no surprise then that depression is considered by some as "the common cold of mental health" (Harvard Mental Health Letter, 2006).

Depression then, seems to be as old as the human race, and is an experience that more or less everyone has felt at times (Rowe, 2003). We can all recall times when we confessed being 'down in the dumps', having 'low mood', being 'fed up', feeling 'down' or 'having the blues'. We have heard our friends and family use these terms, and read about them in magazines and books. In this article, the researcher has focused on depression in adolescents.

During adolescence, affective situations often result in heightened emotional responses. Although adolescents have a more sophisticated awareness of emotions than children do, in general, the control functions exerted by adolescents are often regarded as inadequate (Casey, Jones, & Hare, 2008) [4]. One cause for particular concern is the fact that adolescence is a critical period for the onset of depressive symptoms, especially among girls (Saluja *et al.*, 2004) [15].

It is therefore not surprising that emotion regulation has emerged as an important topic in the study of adolescent depression. Emotion regulation is often defined as the processes responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and modulating emotional reactions in order to accomplish individual goals and facilitate adaptive social functioning (Thompson, 1994) [16].

To cope with trying times, individuals employ a wide variety of emotion-regulatory strategies (Gross, 1998; Ochsner and Gross, 2004) [7, 12]. One common strategy alters the trajectory of an unfolding emotional response by mentally transforming, or reappraising, the meaning of the emotion-eliciting

situation. In comparison to other regulatory strategies, such as suppressing emotion expressive behavior, reappraisal appears to provide one of the most flexible and effective means of diminishing the negative impact of an aversive event (Gross, 2002; Gross and Levenson, 1993; Richards and Gross, 2000) [8, 9, 13]. Positive reappraisal is used not just to mentally better our bad situations, however. It also is used to mentally make bad situations worse. In the current research, the researcher showed the gender differences using positive reappraisal in adolescent depression.

### Objective

- To find out the gender differences by using positive reappraisal among adolescents in depression.

### Hypothesis

- There would be no gender differences by using positive reappraisal among adolescents in depression.

### Sample

The sample comprised 200 adolescents (100 boys and 100 girls) suffering from depression. It has been taken from R.N.S. World School Jhansi by purposive sampling technique. Their age range was 15-18 years.

### Tools

- **Beck Depression Inventory-II (Beck, 1996):** This inventory was used for scores on depression. BDI-II is a self-report instrument for measuring the severity of depression in adults and adolescents aged 13 years and older. The coefficient alpha of the BDI-II for the out patients was. 92 and for college students. 93.
- **Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (Garnefski, Kraaij *et al.*, 2002):** The CERQ was used to assess positive reappraisal. The strategy was measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always). The coefficient alpha of this strategy is. 76.

**Statistical Technique**

‘t’ test was used for analyzing the scores.

**Variables**

**Independent variable-** Gender

**Dependent variable-** Positive reappraisal

**Result**

**Table 1**

Groups	Mean	S.D.	t	Significance
Boys	11.98	3.01	-3.20	.01
Girls	13.4	2.86		

\*\*P< 0.01

The table shows that the obtained ‘t’ value for the two groups is significant at 0.01 level thus the hypothesis i.e. “There would be no gender differences by using positive reappraisal among adolescents in depression” is rejected.

**Discussion**

In the present research, it was found that girls use more positive reappraisal than boys do in depression. It may be that, girls are more aware of and attentive to their emotions and more likely to engage in concerted efforts to change their emotions. Women show more awareness of their own and others’ emotions and pay more attention to these emotions compared to men on both self-report and performance-based measures (Brody & Hall 1993, Joseph & Newman 2010) [3, 10]. On measures of emotional understanding, which present participants with a variety of scenarios, women show greater understanding of what emotions they or others would feel across different contexts and what the sources of these emotions would be (Barrett *et al.* 2000, Joseph & Newman 2010) [2, 10]. Moreover, women show more complex and differentiated conceptualizations of emotion than men do, even when accounting for gender differences in verbal intelligence (Barrett *et al.* 2000) [2]. Women encode events, recall memories more in terms of their emotional content than men do, and have more elaborated memories of autobiographical events than men do (Davis 1999) [5]. Women are more likely than men to see their emotions as providing useful information that it is important to analyze (Gohm 2003) [6]. Finally, whereas people tend to view men’s emotions as the result of external situations, they view women’s emotions as more likely due to internal, dispositional characteristics, seeing them as meaningful information to analyze (Barrett & Bliss-Moreau 2009) [1].

**Conclusion**

This greater attention to, use of, and understanding of emotion may lead girls and women to engage in more attempts to modify their emotions to meet environmental demands or to pursue their goals, i.e., to engage in emotion regulation strategies of a variety of kinds.

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