

ICAP 2014 Abstract

Health Psychology / Psychologie de la santé

DIV08-OC12002

Emotion Regulation, affect and life engagement.

Marie Louise Caltabiano ^{1,*}, Donna Fyfe ²

¹Psychology, JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY, ²Department of Community Safety, Qld Government, Cairns, Australia

Abstract: An individual's perception of stress and the emotion regulation strategies used to cope with stress have implications for well-being and life engagement. Gross (1998) and Gross and John's (2003) process model of emotion regulation was utilised as a theoretical framework for this research. The study examined emotion regulation strategies in relation to perception of stress and how this impacts on affect (positive/negative) and life engagement. Respondents (N=337) recruited through the electronic social networking site, Facebook, participated in an on-line survey and provided information about their emotion regulation strategies, perception of stress, affect and life engagement. Emotion regulation strategies were measured utilising the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) measured subjective stress. The multiple affect adjective check list-revised (MAACL-R) was used to assess affect. Scheier et al. 's (2006) life engagement test was used to measure purpose in life by assessing the extent to which a person engages in activities that are personally valued. Results indicated that respondents who reappraised emotions had a lower perception of stress, more positive affect and more life engagement in comparison to respondents who suppressed their emotions. Those respondents who used suppression as an emotion regulation response perceived more events as stressful, experienced more negative affect and lower life engagement. These findings have clinical application in the training of clients in the use of reappraisal to mitigate the effects of stress so clients can be more fully engaged in life experiences. Future research into this area could include the analysis of neurobiological evidence in conjunction with the self-report questionnaires to

ascertain if the results are in agreement.

Keywords: Affect Emotion regulation life engagement Stress Well-being