

Psychologists develop new model that links emotions and mental health

19 October 2017

	Diagnosis	Identifying	Processing	Expressing
Anxiety Disorders	Generalized Anxiety Disorder	↑	↓	↑
	Obsessive Compulsive Disorder	---	---	---
	Panic Disorder	↑	↓	---
	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	↑	↓	---
	Social Anxiety Disorder	↑	↓	↑
Mood Disorders	Bipolar Disorder	↑	↓	---
	Depression	↑	↓	---
	Seasonal Affective Disorder	---	↓	---
Neurodevelopmental Disorders	ADHD	↑	---	↑
	Autism	---	↓	---

The novel MAS model linked emotion regulation to personality and wellbeing in surprising and unexpected ways. Credit: City College of New York

For decades psychologists have studied how people regulate emotions using a multitude of ways to conceptualize and assess emotion regulation. Now a recent study published this week in the journal *PLOS ONE* by Elliot Jurist and David M. Greenberg of The City College of New York, shows how a new assessment model can give clinicians an exciting new way to think about clinical diagnoses including anxiety, mood, and developmental disorders.

The authors developed the Mentalized Affectivity Scale (MAS) - a novel assessment model which breaks emotion [regulation](#) into three elements:

- Identifying: the ability to identify emotions and to reflect on the factors that influence them (e.g. childhood events)
- Processing: the ability to modulate and distinguish complex emotions

- Expressing: the tendency to express emotions outwardly or inwardly

Jurist and Greenberg administered the MAS to nearly 3,000 adults online. Statistical modeling of the results showed: processing emotions delineates from identifying them and expressing emotions delineates from processing them.

The team of psychologists also found that emotion regulation was linked to personality and wellbeing in surprising and unexpected ways and that the ability to process and modulate emotions was a positive predictor of wellbeing beyond personality and demographic information. As the accompanying chart shows, one of the most important findings was how the three elements linked to the participants' prior clinical diagnoses across anxiety, mood, eating, and neurodevelopmental disorders.

"We have introduced a way for psychologists and psychiatrists to use [emotion regulation](#) to supplement diagnoses," said Greenberg, the lead author who is a postdoc student at Colin Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership.

Jurist, the senior author and director of the Mentalized Affectivity Lab at CCNY and Professor at the Colin Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership said: "For the first time we have empirical evidence for the validity and usefulness of the theory that can be carried out into the mainstream by neuroscientists, emotion researchers and psychiatrists."

Provided by City College of New York

APA citation: Psychologists develop new model that links emotions and mental health (2017, October 19) retrieved 12 November 2019 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-10-psychologists-links-emotions-mental-health.html>

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