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Emotion Regulation and Adherence to Display Rules after Experiencing Childhood Trauma

Courtney Hagan

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EMOTION REGULATION AND ADHERENCE TO DISPLAY RULES AFTER
EXPERIENCING CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

A Thesis

Submitted to Duquesne University

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Education

By

Courtney Hagan

December 2015

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Courtney Hagan

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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Department of Counseling, Psychology and Special Education

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Presented by:

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EMOTION REGULATION AND ADHERENCE TO DISPLAY
RULES AFTER EXPERIENCING CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

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ABSTRACT

EMOTION REGULATION AND ADHERENCE TO DISPLAY RULES AFTER EXPERIENCING CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

By

Courtney Hagan

December 2015

Thesis supervised by Dr. Matthew Bundick

The present work provides a synthetic review of the literature on emotion regulation, display rules, and trauma, and examines how these constructs may influence or relate to one another. The literature review shows that previous research has revealed how trauma affects the use of emotion regulation; that emotion regulation is a part of the display rule system; and that experience of trauma can influence adherence to display rules. In light of these previous findings, this thesis proposes an original model that incorporated the three variables into a system, wherein trauma directly and indirectly influences the ways in which emotions are regulated and display rules are adhered to.

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Introduction

Often when we encounter situations throughout our daily lives, we are faced with how to express and manage our emotions that arise as a result of the situation. The emotions we express and display help to facilitate social relationships and help us to complete social goals. For example, the display of sadness helps the displayer obtain social support from peers. Yet it is important to also regulate emotions and not display everything that we feel. For example, one may feel intense anger towards a friend, but displaying all of that anger may damage the relationship with that friend. Therefore, the regulation of emotions and choosing what to display is an important part of furthering social relationships and completing social goals.

With the tight intertwining of the management and expression of emotions, what may happen if one of the parts of the emotion regulation system were dysfunctional? Research suggests that people who have experienced some type of childhood trauma have difficulties regulating and controlling their emotions, especially when feeling a negative emotion (Fernando et al., 2014). Moreover, individuals with emotion regulation difficulties can have problems containing or expressing their emotions (Jackson & Harding, 2010). Given that individuals who have experienced trauma may have difficulties regulating their emotions, how would this affect the expression of emotions within the context of social expectations of emotional display?

This could potentially be an indicator that individuals who have experienced trauma have trouble regulating their emotion to the set standard of emotion that society expects people to display within different social contexts and situations. Being able to regulate one's emotion to match the expected display is an important step in models for display rules (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003). If one cannot properly regulate one's emotion, how can one successfully match the display rule of the social situation? The present thesis will consolidate and synthesize

the literature that lies at the intersection of childhood trauma, emotional regulation and expression, and the developmental underpinnings of the capacities for adhering to display rules. In particular, it will explore the development and use of various emotion regulation strategies; the development and use of display rules; traumatic events and their impact on the individual; and finally, explore the connections among these different constructs.

Methodology

This thesis was conducted by utilizing search engines from PsycInfo and Google Scholar. Broader terms and ideas (such as emotion, trauma, and emotional expression) were searched using Google Scholar to gain an understanding and a breadth of the general literature to narrow it down to a few key search terms. Key search terms that were utilized to conduct this thesis included: emotion regulation, display rule, emotion labor, trauma, emotion models, and a combination of trauma and emotion regulation strategies. Key author search terms included: James Gross (expert in emotion regulation), Diefendorff, J., Gosserand, R. (experts in display rules), James & Gilliland, and Lisa Levers (experts in trauma). Key models and theories that were utilized within this thesis include the modal model of emotion, the process model of emotion, emotions as social information model, control theory model of emotional labor, and Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model of Human Development. These search terms, authors, and models were the foundation of this thesis, and allowed other pertinent terms and theories to play a role.

Emotion Regulation

Emotions are vital to the existence of humans, are essential to live out daily life, and both help and hinder different processes in various ways. Emotions can be classified as physiological and psychological reactions to stimuli (Gross & Jazaieri, 2014). When people feel an unwanted emotion, they typically employ strategies to change or regulate that certain emotion. They do so by utilizing a set of processes that regulate the emotion itself, which could be conscious or nonconscious, and automatic or controlled (Gross, 1999). People begin the emotion regulation process when they attempt to alter their emotion in any way, such as modifying their expression or reappraising the situation to feel a different emotion.

There are several functions that emotion regulation serves, but the main and most important one is to produce appropriate and adaptive responses to the situation at hand (Aldao, 2013). For example, if one was in a negative mood at work, one would still have to maintain a socially acceptable baseline emotion to express to customers and coworkers. People generally learn over time and through emotional development that there are consequences to emotional responses that they display. By adjusting their response via the appropriate application of emotion regulation, they are likely to produce an adaptive emotional response. Such emotion regulation entails adjusting their perceived experience of the intensity of the emotion at hand typically involving either upregulating positive emotions, such as love or happiness, or downregulating negative emotions, such as hate or anger, in accordance with the social situation (Gross, 1999). For example, when experiencing intense anger, a person would try to downregulate the anger emotion to effectively communicate or function. Emotion regulation can be particularly helpful when experienced emotions are of a strong intensity, the wrong emotion for the situation, or the emotion lasts longer than intended (Gross, 2006).

To examine models of emotion regulation, there first needs to be an understanding of the models of emotion. The concept of emotion regulation is based off of the modal model of emotion (Gross, 2006) that depicts how emotions are produced from stimuli. This model lays its features on several foundations that are essential for the model to work. The modal model of emotion is depicted step-by-step in Figure 1.

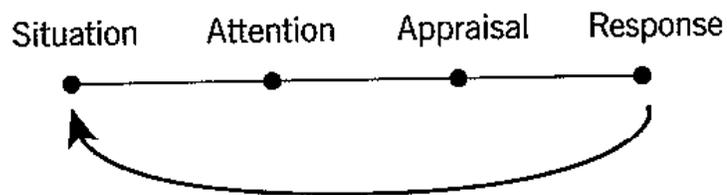


Figure 1. The modal model of emotion (Gross, 2006).

There needs to be a situation and stimuli that produces the emotional reaction that is experienced. According to Gross (2006), this situation can arise from the outside environment (external) or from self-talk or thoughts (internal). The next step in this model of emotion is to attend to this specific situation that has the potential to produce the emotion. Attention to the situation is needed to give the situation the continuance of power it needs to produce the response. Once attention is given, the next step is to appraise or evaluate the situation. This appraisal can be considered the cognitions or thoughts that determine whether or not the situation is worth giving a response to and to what degree intensity the situation deserves. The response, therefore, is derived from the attended present situation and the appraisal that is given to the situation. The response can be classified as the changes in physiological response systems, behavior, and the brain circuits (Gross, 2006). The modal model of emotion also shows an arrow from the response back to the situation. This shows that the response that is given to the environment changes or modifies the original situation through a feedback loop. For example, a

child is scolded by a parent (situation), the child attends to what the parent is shouting (attention), gives meaning to the shouting (appraisal), then the child starts to cry (response), the parent sees the child crying and stops scolding him/her (feedback loop). The response of crying modifies the original situation that had produced the emotion of sadness. The modal model of emotion is important to understand in terms of specific emotion regulation strategies that can be deployed throughout the emotional response process.

Before an individual can influence or regulate his or her emotions, there needs to be some recognition of those emotions (i.e. the individual needs to be able to label various emotions). This ability for an individual to recognize his or her emotions, label them, and discriminate between different feelings is called emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995). This recognition and discrimination of emotions is important to obtain before regulating emotions because the individual needs to know what they are trying to regulate for the emotion regulation strategy to be effective. Mayer and Salovey (1995) discussed that emotional intelligence is the intersection between cognitive and emotional systems, suggesting that for an emotional system to operate (i.e. emotion regulation models and strategies), there needs to be a cognitive awareness of those emotions (i.e. ability to recognize those emotions).

The emotion regulation process is set into motion once an individual sets a goal to influence their emotion (Gross & Jazaieri, 2014). This process may or may not be effortful for the individual and therefore has the potential to tax the individual's resources (Gross, 1998). While there are several different types of emotion regulation strategies, there are three basic factors that need to be in play for the strategy to be adaptive: awareness, goals, and strategies (Gross & Jazaieri, 2014). First, there needs to be an awareness of both the emotion being felt and the situation that the emotion is occurring in. Without this awareness, there would not be an

awareness of the need to regulate that emotion. The second factor, having a goal, means that one knows what one wants to achieve in terms of changing that emotion. Emotion regulation goals could include augmenting or reducing the emotional experience, the emotional intensity or expression, and influencing the duration of the emotion. The last factor of emotion regulation is utilizing a specific strategy when engaging in the emotion regulation process. Keeping in mind that the individual has both an awareness of and a goal to change that specific emotion, the strategy would help that person achieve their goal and alter the emotion in some way (Gross & Jazaieri, 2014). All three of these factors need to be met to induce an adaptive emotional change through the use of emotion regulation.

There are several emotion regulation strategies that can take place over the course of the emotion generative process. There are five overarching categories of strategies which include: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation (Gross & Jazaieri, 2014). These strategies are depicted below in Figure 2 and are positioned over the step in the emotion generative process they can occur in.

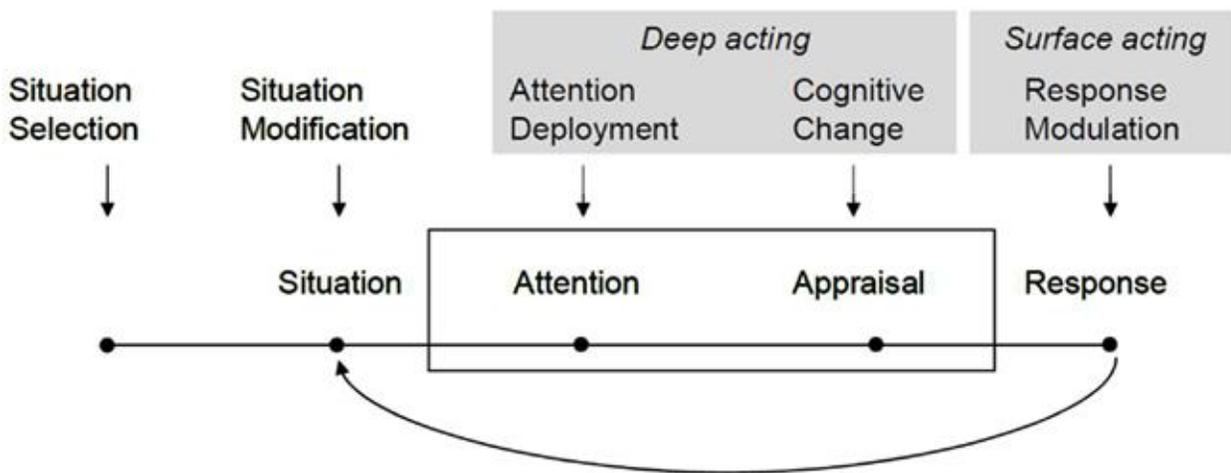


Figure 2. The process model of emotion regulation (Gross & Jazaieri, 2014).

The first strategy, situation selection, refers to whether or not the individual selects to attend to the situation that would cause the response of an emotion (Gross, 2006). Situation selection could even refer to if one places oneself in a situation. For example, when an individual who knows that talking to a certain person or being in a certain place is likely to evoke an undesirable emotion, he or she can choose not to enter into that situation.

The next strategy, situation modification, refers to changing or modifying the external environment that the individual is currently in to change the anticipated emotional response (Gross, 2006). This could look like a child cleaning their room so their parent will not scold them when the parent walks into the room. The child is modifying their surrounding environment to prevent the response that the situation of a dirty room would have led to.

The next strategy, which falls under the step of attention in the emotion generative process, is attentional deployment. Attentional deployment refers to how individuals may direct their attention to alter or change the emotional response (Gross, 2006). Some examples of strategies that utilize attentional deployment are distraction and rumination (Gross, 1999). Distraction helps direct attention away from the situation that the individual is in and gives that attention to a stimulus that most likely produces a neutral emotion or directs attention away from the situation completely. In contrast, rumination gives full attention to the situation, the emotion that the situation produced, and the consequences that the emotion will have. In both strategies, attention is manipulated to either increase or decrease the emotion that was produced from the situation.

Cognitive change is another emotion regulation strategy that can help influence the emotion that results in the emotion generative process. Cognitive change can be described as reevaluating or appraising the situation in a different way to modify the emotions that are elicited

from the situation or to alter the significance of the situation (Gross, 2006). There are several strategies that can fall under this category, such as denial, intellectualization, downward social comparison, cognitive reframing, and reappraisal. Reappraisal is the strongest form of cognitive change that can alter emotions because it helps to change the evaluation of the situation, and thus changes the emotion that is produced ((Gross, 1998; Gross, 1999). An example of reappraisal would be if one saw a mistake or failure as an opportunity to grow. Because the evaluation of the situation is what produces the emotional reaction, instead of the situation itself, changing the evaluation of the situation would have a stronger effect on altering the emotion.

The last form of emotion regulation strategies is response modulation. Response modulation is deployed when the emotion already arises and the individual seeks to modify the outward response that is given, such as influencing the physiological or behavioral responses (Gross, 2006). A common form of response modulation is suppression of emotional expression. Gross (1998), showed that suppressing emotion does not decrease the emotional experience of the emotion and increases sympathetic nervous system responding. Another form of a response modulation strategy is substance use, such as alcohol or other drug use (Gross, 1998). Although not an adaptive form of emotion regulation, these substances can modify emotional experience and even suppress or dull the emotion. By altering or influencing the emotional response an individual hopes to regulate their emotion, but instead alters their emotional experience.

All five of these emotion regulation strategies can be classified into either antecedent-focused or response-focused emotion regulation. The antecedent-focused regulation occurs before the emotion is generated, while the response-focused regulation occurs after the emotion is generated (Gross, 1998). Figure 3 depicts a more in-depth look at the process model of emotion regulation, splitting the emotion regulation strategies up into antecedent and response-

focused categories. This model depicts the various pathways that different emotion regulation strategies can take. For instance, individuals can select how they chose to modify the situation, what aspect of the situation to pay attention to, and the meaning of the situation at hand. The individuals could even modify their emotional response by attempting to alter their behavior output, control their experience of the emotion, or modify their physiological response to the emotion.

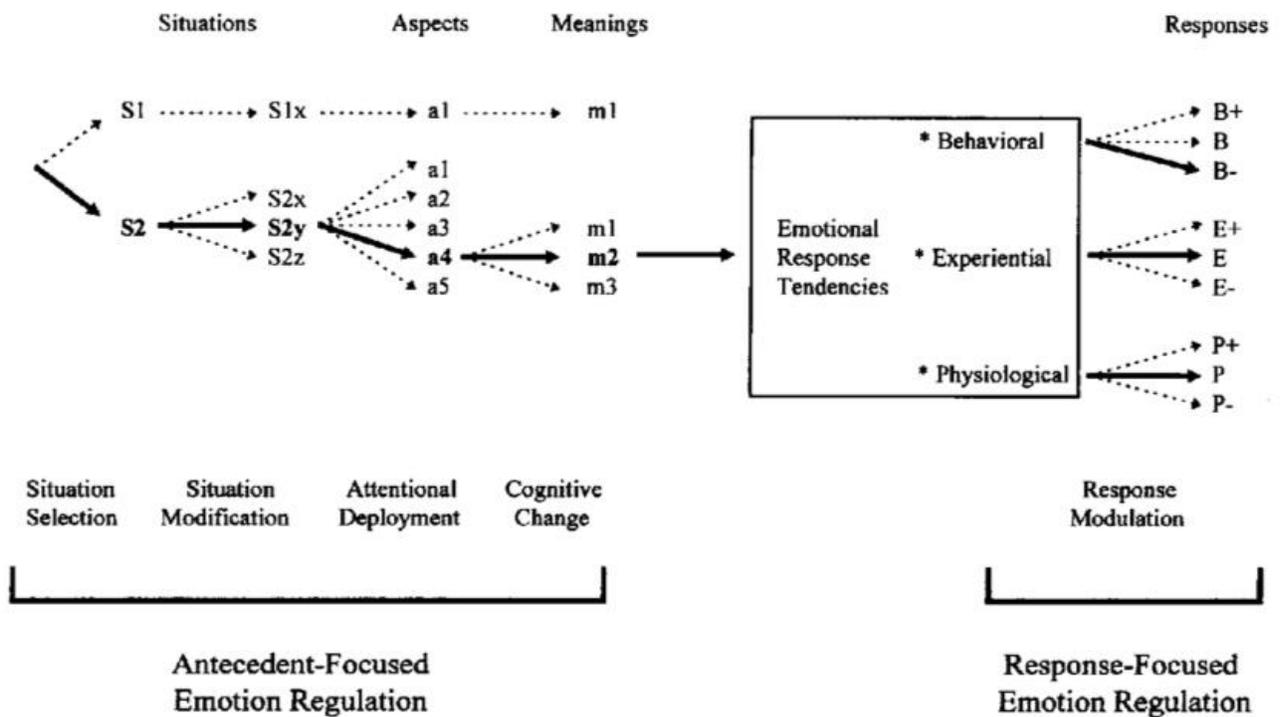


Figure 3. A process model of emotion regulation (Gross, 1998).

As shown, the first four strategies are considered antecedent-focused because they are utilized before the emotional reaction is generated. While response modulation is considered a response-focused strategy because the emotion is already generated and the focus of regulation is left on how to manage the response of the emotion. Therefore, regulation strategies are divided

up into either input (antecedent) or output (response) phases of the emotion generative process.

The antecedent-focused strategies are considered to be significantly more effective in regulating emotions rather than the response-focused strategy because the response-focused attempts to regulate the emotion after the emotion has already generated to its full force (Aldao, 2013).

Therefore the antecedent-focused strategies have a better chance of regulating the emotion before it is fully generated.

The ultimate goal of emotion regulation is to produce adaptive and appropriate emotional responses to the environment, but this dynamic process can sometimes fail us (Gross & Jazaieri, 2014). When emotion regulation fails, it can be classified as emotion dysregulation. This can be caused by either emotion-regulation failures or emotion misregulation (Gross & Jazaieri, 2014). Emotion-regulation failures occur when the individual does not engage in the process of emotion regulation, while emotion misregulation occurs when the individual utilizes a regulation strategy that is not suited for the situation or is not placed in the correct context.

Emotion regulation is an important process that allows people to tend to their daily lives without their emotions exercising too much control over them. While this system can sometimes fail, it can be extremely helpful in matters where emotion regulation strategies are deployed properly and utilized within the correct context.

Display Rules

People experience a wide variety of emotions throughout any given day. While they experience these emotions, they can express or suppress these felt emotions in multiple possible ways. Given that emotions are usually displayed and expressed within a social context, there are certain guidelines that postulate when or how the emotions are expressed (Underwood, Coie, & Herbsman, 1992). Display rules can be defined as altering a felt emotion to comply with the social guideline and standard for what is expected (Jones, Abbey, & Cumberland, 1998). This could include masking, substituting, minimizing, or augmenting the emotion that the individual is experiencing. Essentially, the individual draws on acquired knowledge about the social context and environment about what emotion would be appropriate or expected of them to display (Zeman & Garber, 1996). The social environment then provides cues for what emotion or emotions are more socially acceptable, and it is up to the individual to accommodate. Thus, displays rules have to operate from a social perspective and involve intentional control over emotions to gain the anticipated emotion (Jones, et al., 1998). Understanding and acting in accordance with display rules help to facilitate social interaction. Interpersonal relationships can be further benefitted by this process when it promotes the development of a prosocial orientation stemming from a desire to place others' emotions above one's own emotions. This social need to adhere to certain display rules within various situations utilizes multiple skills, including emotion regulation.

Learning how to utilize display rules occurs in childhood (Banerjee, 1997), and develops in a progression (Jones, et al., 1998), with knowledge of rules, regulation, and goals being developed in conjunction with successful implementation. Malatesta and Haviland (1982) suggested that children are exposed to display rules as young as infancy, when their mothers not

only differentially reinforce the infant's expressive emotion, but also usually limit their own display of emotions to only positive expressions. This suggests that family background and culture and caregiver approach have an impact on the development of display rule knowledge. Display rule knowledge develops at an exponential rate during first through fifth grade when socialization with peers comes into center stage as the child begins their schooling (Jones et al., 1998). Since children have a greater motivation to gain peer acceptance, and negative emotions are correlated with peer rejection, children will more likely attempt to regulate their negative emotion, such as anger, because of assumptions about friends' reception of displayed emotion (Lemerise & Harper, 2010). Children also can learn display rules through modeling from others (Malatesta & Haviland, 1982), their cultural environment (McDowell & Parke, 2000), socialization (Banerjee, 1997), and reinforcement (Jones et al., 1998). By learning these display rules, children can create schemas of appropriate emotions in social situations as they further develop their emotional knowledge (Jones, et al, 1998). However, it is not display rule knowledge alone that provides the successful implementation of adherence to the rule, but a variety of factors.

The utilization of display rules includes many factors, such as knowledge about the meaning of various forms of emotional expression, social situations and contexts, knowledge of emotional experience, and emotional intelligence (Austin, Dore, & O'Donovan 2008; Jones et al., 1998). An individual needs to understand and have a certain degree of knowledge about different expressions of emotions to be able to detect and display the intended emotions, such as, altering one's facial expressions to reflect the emotion one is trying to get across. In addition to this, the individual must also have an understanding of social situations and contexts, meaning that the individual must have knowledge of expected and normative emotional reactions within

the contexts of the situation. Another fundamental skill that an individual needs to successfully implement an emotion according to a display rule is the knowledge of what different emotions feel like while being experienced. For example, Jones et al. (1998) suggest that an individual needs to be able to differentiate between feeling happiness and feeling anger. The final skill an individual must possess to demonstrate a display rule is emotional intelligence. Austin, Dore, and O'Donovan (2008) argued that individuals with high emotional intelligence are better able to regulate their emotions and more accurately determine what emotion would best be appropriate to display given the situation. Emotional intelligence should help aid individuals when utilizing display rules, because individuals are better at recognizing and discriminating between different emotions. Austin, et al. (2008) also found that individuals with high emotional intelligence were negatively associated with surface acting strategies to change their emotion. These four factors make a solid foundation for an individual to successfully follow a display rule in a variety of situations. Moreover, Zeman and Garber (1996) have also suggested that in addition to motivation to use a display rule, the individual must know how to change their expression, and have the capability to physically control their facial muscles. This suggests that individuals need to have knowledge and skills to successfully implement and use a display rule along with motivation.

Underwood, Coie, and Herbsman (1992) have suggested that there are two broad types of display rules that can be generalized to all social situations. The first type of display rule is guidelines for controlling emotions, meaning that the individual exerts control or manages the emotional behavior they display. The other type display rule is the guidelines for expressing emotions. This display rule focuses on how the individual expresses a specific emotion. While

these two types broadly define display rules, there are more detailed nuances that go into what makes up a display rule.

Display rules serve a specific function within the daily life of people across cultures. However, the function depends on what the goal of the individual is in utilizing and adhering to the display rule (Jones, et al., 1998). Before an emotion is altered due to a display rule, the individual must have motivation to adhere to and follow the display rule. This motivation is a crucial piece to successful implementation of a display rule because without it the individual may not have a reason to alter their emotion even if they had the knowledge and skill to change or regulate their emotion.

Goals in social situations help to motivate and justify altering an emotion or a facial expression. Jones, Abbey, and Cumberland (1998) suggested that there were three main goals in terms of using display rules. The first goal was prosocial, meaning that an individual would be concerned with protecting the feelings of others in a social situation. This can be best exemplified when interacting with a friend or family member. When a loved one asks you if you like their casserole, even if you hate it, you may be inclined to smile and say that you like it to protect their feelings. This goal emphasizes empathy, which requires a true understanding of others' emotions.

The second goal that Jones et al. (1998) discussed was norm maintenance. This means that the individual is concerned with maintaining what social rules dictate or what is expected of the individual to display in the situations. This goal is most clearly displayed in the disappointing gift paradigm, where children were led to believe that they were about to receive an enticing gift, only to discover that they received an unappealing toy (Underwood, et al., 1992). This scenario was meant to induce the feeling of disappointment, to study whether they

would display that the felt emotion or instead inauthentically display a positive emotion. The researchers found that younger boys were more likely to express their emotion, while older girls were more likely to maintain a positive emotion within the paradigm. This paradigm is an example of what emotion (positive) is socially expected when receiving a gift from someone, even if we do not like the gift (negative). Therefore, an individual would be expected to display a positive emotion even when faced with disappointment because it is socially expected of them.

Jones et al.'s (1998) last goal of display rules is self-protective, meaning that individuals will attempt to alter their actual emotion (not just their displayed emotion) to avoid the potentially socially undesirable consequences of displaying their true emotion. This goal could also be influenced by the desire to protect the self from others' negative perceptions that could affect one's self-esteem. For example, one might not want to cry in front of others to avoid being perceived as weak, and thus alter the emotion to protect the self. Another example of a self-protective goal would be if a child wanted to display anger towards an adult, the child would alter their emotion to not get into further trouble and maintain a neutral position. A final example of a self-protective goal is the need for social approval (Zeman & Garber, 1996). Since negative emotions are perceived less favorably than positive emotions, people would be more likely to display positive emotions than the negative emotions they feel to protect themselves and their interpersonal relationship.

While those three examples exemplify the different goals that drive the use of display rules, Van Kleef (2009) suggested that there may be another reason or goal for altering one's emotional expression. The Emotions As Social Information (EASI) model (Figure 4) demonstrates that people may use displays of emotions to manipulate or influence others.

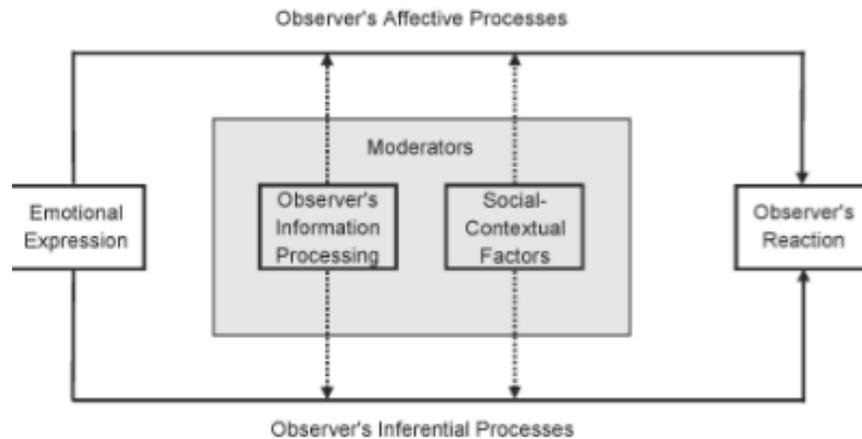


Figure 4. The emotions as social information model (Van Kleef, 2009).

This model explains that observers use a feedback loop from an individual's emotional expression and inferences that the observer can make based on that expression. The individual's expression provides information to the observer about how the situation is affecting the individual. This in turn may lead the observer to change their behavior to suit the individual's need. For example, if an individual portrays a sad display, the observer may feel inclined to help the individual in some way. By utilizing a display rule and the emotional expression, an individual can influence an observer's behavior to benefit or help the individual.

Another way display rules are utilized is in the work environment, which is typically called emotional labor since it is limited to only the occupational environment and emphasized as part of the work role (Diefendorff & Greguras, 2009; Diefendorff & Richard, 2003). Emotional labor can be defined as employees altering their emotions to best fit the display rule that the organization defines as being acceptable (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003). Emotional labor is particularly important in work roles that deal and interact with customers because employees may need to regulate their emotions to portray a positive emotion to the customer (Diefendorff & Richard, 2003).

Diefendorff and Gosserand (2003) applied emotional labor to a control theory process model to conceptualize what the employees' emotions may look like throughout each stage. Figure 5 depicts the control theory model that Diefendorff and Gosserand utilized when explaining the process and system of emotional labor within the work role of employees.

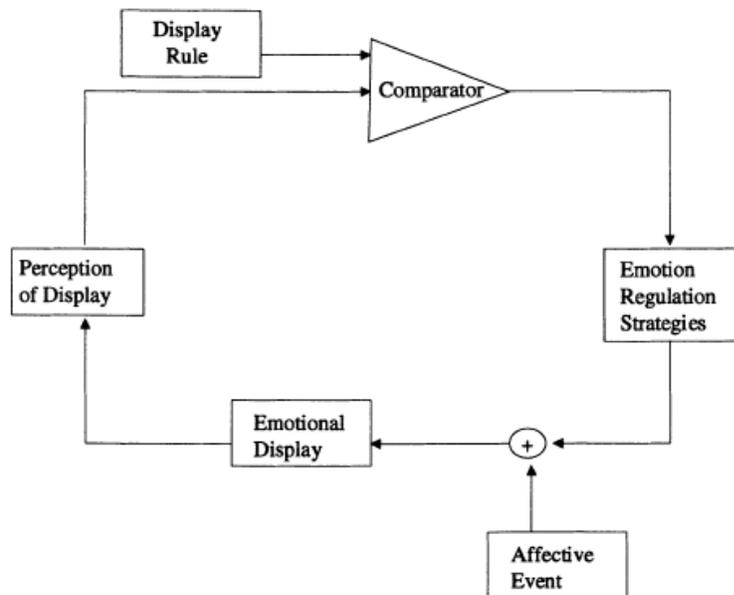


Figure 5. The control theory model of emotional labor (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003).

Diefendorff and Gosserand (2003) explained that the input into the system was the perception of the display, meaning that the individual monitored and perceived what emotional expression they were displaying. Next, they would match their emotional display (or the comparator) to the display rule (or the standard). If there was a discord, then the individual would utilize some type of emotion regulation strategy to alter the emotional display. However, if there was no such perceived discrepancy, then the individual would keep displaying the emotional expression. The more demanding the display rule, or the more energy it takes to maintain the display rule, the harder it will be to conform to the display rule (Morris & Feldman, 1996). While Diefendorff and Gosserand developed this model to use specifically with the work

environment, it can be generalized to settings beyond work because virtually every social setting that is encountered carries display rules with it. This model of emotional labor can be utilized to generally examine how individuals use display rules to compare their felt emotion to the emotion that the situation demands, and how the individual goes about altering their emotion.

Adherence to display rules can help to facilitate social and interpersonal relationships in a variety of areas in one's life, and across the lifespan, from infancy to old age. By utilizing display rules and regulating emotions, individuals can benefit from experiencing social acceptance and social competence, thus increasing relations with others (Lemerise & Harper, 2010).

Trauma

When particularly negative, out of the ordinary experiences happens to an individual, depending on their nature they can leave behind wounds that are potentially, physical, emotional, and psychological. These extraordinary events can be traumatizing to an individual because they are unpredictable, uncontrollable, and can cause a breakdown of coping (James & Gilliland, 2013). A traumatic event can lead to distress because there is no typical response or set way to make it through the event. A crisis also can cause disorganization, upsetting, and abrupt changes to daily life that may not have been experienced before.

A traumatic event or a crisis can occur at any age, at any time, and at any place. A crisis can be experienced on an individual level or a community level. Although, traumas experienced by an individual person can have an effect on others who come into contact with that individual person (James & Gilliland, 2013). Therefore, crises and traumatic events should often be considered within the context of a system and operating within Bronfenbrenner's bioecological

model (Figure 6), where the individual is understood to operate within multiple, interacting systems. Each system exerts an influence on the individual and helps display the effects of the interaction between heredity and environment (Levers, 2012). In turn, the individual also exerts an influence of his or her surrounding systems, meaning that symptoms of trauma may be felt within those systems as well.

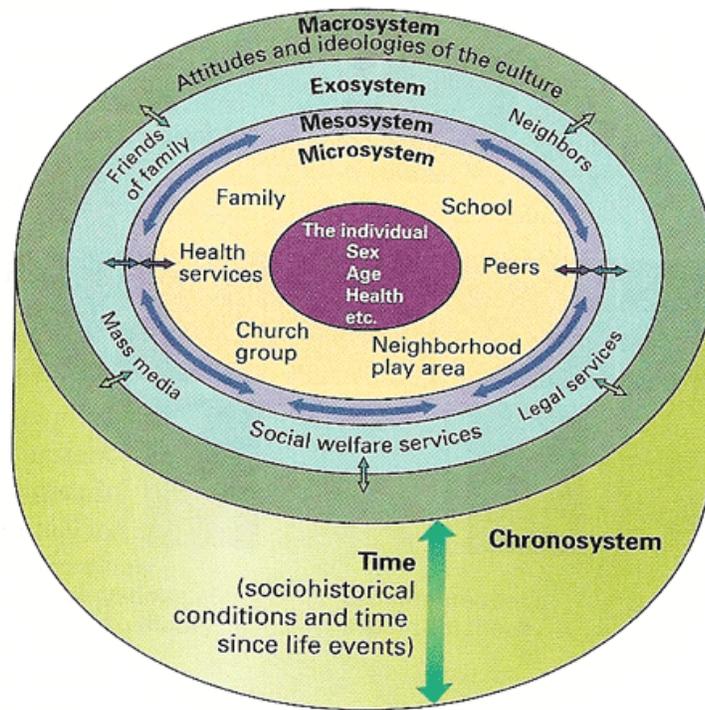


Figure 6. Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model of Human Development (Levers, 2012).

Individual traumas come in many forms. One form is sexual violence, which include any type of unwanted or nonconsensual sexual acts, such as rape, sexual contact, or sexual exposure (Levers, 2012). Another trauma that can be experienced is domestic violence or intimate partner violence. This occurs when there is physical violence between intimates, including husband and wife, homosexual couples, date rapes, and domestic abuse (James & Gilliland, 2013). While

women are typically seen as the victim in domestic violence situations, men can also be the victim to other men or women. While there could be a physical component to the abuse, there could also be an emotional abuse (James & Gilliland, 2013); this could cause a learned helplessness or dependency on the abuser.

There are also traumas that affect groups or communities and may leave disasters in their wake. For instance, a natural disaster-such as a major hurricane, earthquake, or tsunami-can leave millions without homes and communities and cause significant loss of life, oftentimes leaving many mentally distraught and traumatized (James & Gilliland, 2013). Man-made disasters, such as terrorist attacks or mass shootings, can also result in community-level trauma (James & Gilliland, 2013).

These various types of traumatic events can occur at different stages of the lifespan, and may have different effects on the individual depending on their age. For example, children who experience a crisis or trauma may react or behave differently than an adult would if experiencing the same trauma (Armsworth & Holaday, 1993). Children are a much more vulnerable population when it comes to experiencing trauma because they depend on the attachment and protection from their parents when processing or dealing with a traumatic event (Levers, 2012). Because of this dependency, if children are not provided for and protected, they may experience a trauma that is rooted in neglectful or emotional trauma (Burns, Jackson, & Harding, 2010). This is especially true for children who experience repeated trauma throughout their development, such as child maltreatment, rather than one specific event. Since children are a more vulnerable population when it comes to experiencing trauma and they are still developing in many ways, they may not be as equipped to handling a trauma as an adult would. Lubit, Rovine, Defrancisci and Eth (2003) have suggested that experiencing trauma in childhood may

alter the child's belief about the world, others, and oneself because these beliefs are still being developed. This suggests that special consideration needs to be given when working with or assessing children who have experienced a trauma.

There are several potential effects that trauma leaves behind on its victims and survivors. When an individual experiences a traumatic event, it could lead to increased levels of depression, anxiety, dissociation, substance abuse issues, low self-esteem, poor emotion regulation, and behavior issues (Burns, Jackson, & Harding, 2010; Coyle, Karatzias, Summers & Power, 2014). The lasting effects may not only be physical, but emotional and psychological as well. Individuals may also experience cognitive effects in the wake of trauma, such as impairment of intellectual functioning and memory distortion (Armsworth & Holaday, 1993). When individuals experience a trauma or crisis, their symptoms may develop into post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (James & Gilliland, 2013). Not everyone who experiences a trauma develops PTSD because certain criteria must be met for the individual to be diagnosed. However, the effects of any crisis or trauma may affect the individual for their lifetime (James & Gilliland, 2013).

Trauma's Effect on Emotion Regulation and Display Rules

Experiencing a trauma in childhood could lead to significant impairments in functioning and development (Lubit, Rovine, Defrancisci & Eth, 2003), in particular emotional development and emotional regulation (Fernado et al., 2014). However, exposure to a traumatic event does not always lead to dysfunction for the child. Some individuals can effectively cope with the experience of trauma, while others may not. Everly and Lating (2004) suggested that events are perceived as traumatic because of the view people take on them. That is, the subjective

interpretation of the event influences the degree to which it is experienced as traumatic, and thus could further influence how the event affects the individual's functioning.

Ehring and Quack (2010) suggested that those individuals who have impaired functioning from experiencing trauma may exhibit reduced levels of emotional awareness, high levels of emotional suppression, and low levels of reappraisal. This can have a significant impact on the proper functioning of emotion regulation because individuals need to have emotional competence to regulate the emotion. This is particularly problematic, given that reappraisal is a relatively effective emotion regulation strategy, whereas emotional suppression is a surface acting approach to regulating emotions (Gross & Jazaieri, 2014). Therefore, individuals who continually use emotional suppression will have increased difficulty maintaining the regulation with a higher intensity emotion. Continued use of ineffective emotion regulation strategies, combined with limited reduced emotional awareness, can create the conditions for emotional dysregulation.

Moreover, Armsworth and Holaday (1993) discussed how traumatized children may display hyperresponsivity or hyporesponsivity in the wake of trauma. Hyperresponsivity occurs when children who have experienced trauma might have difficulties regulating their anger, rage, and aggression; hyporesponsivity occurs when children who have experienced trauma display constricted emotions and an inability to express or experience emotions. Armsworth and Holaday further discussed that traumatized children will often display heightened awareness and sensitivity to environmental threats, thus potentially perceiving the interactions among their different ecological systems and social cues from other individuals differently than non-traumatized peers.

While it is evident that individuals who have experienced trauma also may experience emotional dysregulation, Kulkarni, Pole, and Timko (2013) suggest that children who have experienced sexual victimization also typically display inappropriate affect and situational inappropriateness within social contexts. Because of this inadequacy of emotion regulation, individuals who may not have the tools to regulate or control their emotions, in turn may have reduced capacities for properly identifying and adjusting their emotions to a specific display rule. This suggests that since trauma has an effect on emotion regulation, it may (perhaps indirectly) also have an effect on the use of display rules. For example, a teenager who has experienced trauma in the past, and consequently is more likely to currently have issues with emotion regulation, may have difficulty adhering to the display rules at school that guide interactions with teachers, such as noncompliance and disruptive behaviors (Armsworth & Holaday, 1993). This disconnect can have negative behavioral consequences for the student. Taking this example a step further, if the teenager receives a bad grade from the teacher, he may have difficulty using the proper display of emotion and instead react in a negative way. Of course, other factors may be at play in determining whether or not an individual properly identifies and complies with a display rule, but the focus here is on the as-yet-uninvestigated potential relationship between trauma, emotional regulation, and the use of display rules.

When looking again at the control theory of emotional labor (Figure 5), it is apparent that the use of emotion regulation strategies is an important part of the process that allows the individual to attain the proper emotion for the display rule. According to this model, if there is a problem with one aspect of this system, then the rest of the system is affected and fails to operate to the specific display rule. Therefore, after someone experiences a trauma, and suffers with emotion dysregulation, then their system of following display rules could be affected.

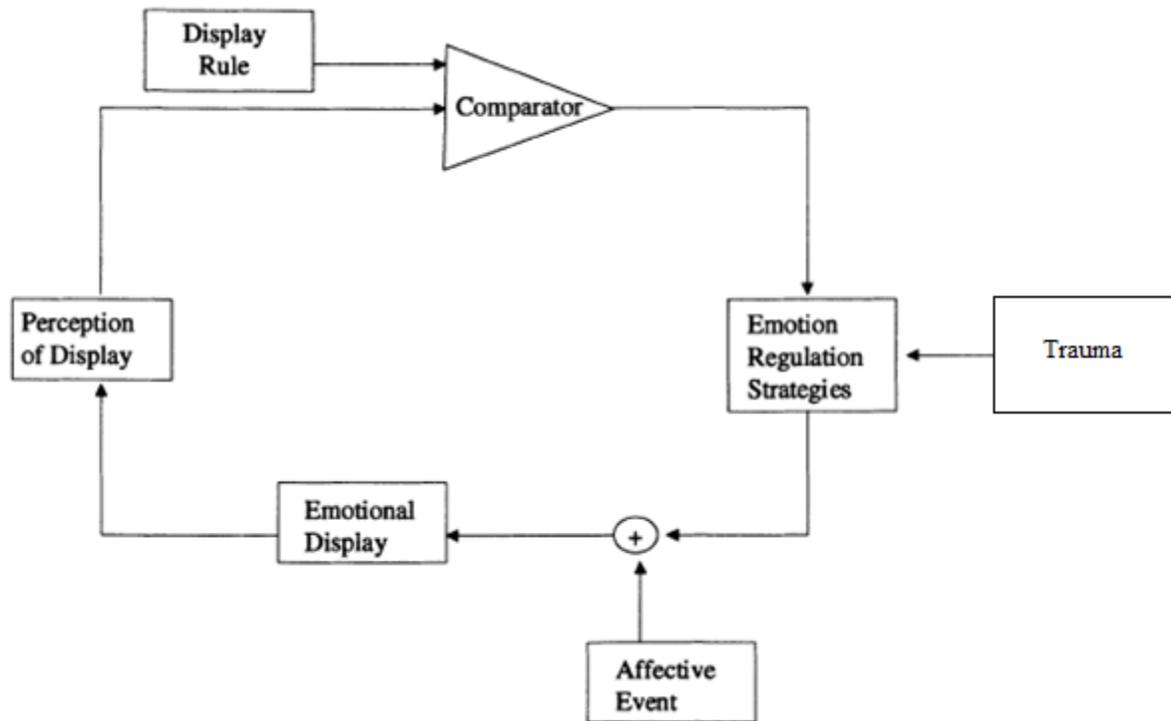


Figure 7. Trauma's implicit impact on the control theory of emotional labor

As depicted in the adjusted model in figure 7, trauma is factored in to the system because of its impact on emotion regulation. As suggested by the literature reviewed herein, the experience of trauma has the potential to alter the effective use of emotion regulation strategies, and thus can result in the disruption of the adherence to specific display rules in social situations. This adjusted model is important in understanding the relationship between trauma, emotion regulation, and the adherence to display rules.

Individuals who have experienced trauma, demonstrate ineffective emotion regulation strategies, and fail to adhere to display rules, are also less likely to achieve the social goals that display rules are intended to produce. For example, one of the goals mentioned by Jones et al. (1998) was self-protection, which means that individuals would adjust their emotion to fit the socially accepted display rule to protect themselves from others' negative perceptions. This

may, at least in part, explain why individuals who have experienced trauma feel unpopular and are more likely to be rejected by peers (Armsworth & Holaday, 1993). Another goal of display rules, as set out by the Emotions as Social Information model (Van Kleef, 2009), is to influence others by way of displayed emotions. If children with a trauma history cannot effectively alter their emotion to a display that would influence peers, then their relationships may suffer.

One way to test for this correlation would be to conduct a moderation study that screens for trauma, assesses use of emotion regulation strategies, and analyzes adherence to various display rules. The sample used in this study should include a mix of young people who have experienced trauma in the past and those who have not. This study could be done with kids from the ages of 10 to 21, factoring in different age groups within that range. Useful assessments that could be utilized within this study are the Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children (Briere, 1996), which assesses and measures trauma symptoms within children as young as 8 years old. This checklist was normed and is based off of the child's self-report of experiences ranging from physical abuse to loss. Another assessment that could be utilized in this study is the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (Gratz & Roemer, 2004), which measures the awareness and understanding of emotion, the acceptance of emotion, the ability to control impulsive behaviors, and the ability to use situationally appropriate emotion regulation strategies. This tool would be useful to gain a comprehensive understanding of how the child has an understanding for and uses emotion regulation strategies. Finally, the last assessment tool that can be utilized is the Display Rule Assessment Inventory (Matsumoto, Yoo, Hirayama, & Petrova, 2005), which provides social stories that individuals have to respond on what people should do versus what they believe they actually will do. By obtaining the information provided by all of these various instruments,

it allows the researcher to compare the scores from the trauma screening, the emotion regulation assessment, and the display rule paradigm to find a correlation between the different variables.

Alternatively, while using the Display Rule Assessment Inventory would be a useful tool within the study, having the participant actually demonstrate his or her ability to recognize and adhere to a display rule within an experimental setting may be more beneficial. Therefore, a follow-up study could be done using the disappointing gift paradigm. The disappointing gift paradigm, where the child receives an unappealing gift after he or she was told he/she would receive something special, would be one example of the child having to use a display rule within the context of the experiment. Social convention would suggest that when one receives a gift, the individual is expected to display gratitude and happiness towards receiving the gift, no matter how displeasing they may find it. This paradigm and assessment tool will allow the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of how the child utilizes and adheres to display rules in social situations. Taken together, these two proposed studies could help to further determine the impact that trauma could have on emotion regulation and emotional expression within social situations.

Conclusion

When individuals encounter different stimuli throughout the environment, emotions may arise that need to be regulated and managed. Emotion regulation strategies are tools that individuals develop to help regulate those unwanted, or possibly socially unacceptable, emotions. When individuals utilize ineffective strategies, this may hinder their ability to handle those unacceptable emotions. Individuals need strong emotion regulation skills to regulate their feelings throughout any given day.

Not only do individuals need emotion regulation strategies to manage every day emotions, but they also need to use those strategies to regulate their emotions to set social display rules. Through a feedback model, individuals gather information about the social situation, the appropriate emotion they need to display, and their current felt emotion. Through this process, emotion regulation strategies are needed to facilitate the felt emotion to the displayed emotion, thereby rendering emotion regulation as one of the essential parts to the display rule model.

When an individual experiences a traumatic event, emotion regulation is one system among many that is explicitly impacted. This disturbance of emotion regulation strategies can cause a ripple effect in the individual's life, like disruptions in relationships with others and hindrances in their ability to perform well in school. With the disruption and ineffectiveness of emotion regulation come disturbances of other systems, such as the use and adherence to display rules within social situations. Because of the strong need to utilize effective emotion regulation strategies to alter the felt emotion to the accepted displayed emotion, children with a trauma history may be less inclined to follow display rules. This is an important theory to consider when working with individual with a trauma background, since they may be less likely to display the more socially appropriate emotion when interacting with others. While this paper takes an important step toward a better conceptual understanding of the impact of trauma on emotion regulation and display rules, more empirical research—like the suggested studies—needs to be conducted to empirically validate these ideas.

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