

Childhood Adversity Predicts Use of Cognitive Reappraisal Across the Lifespan

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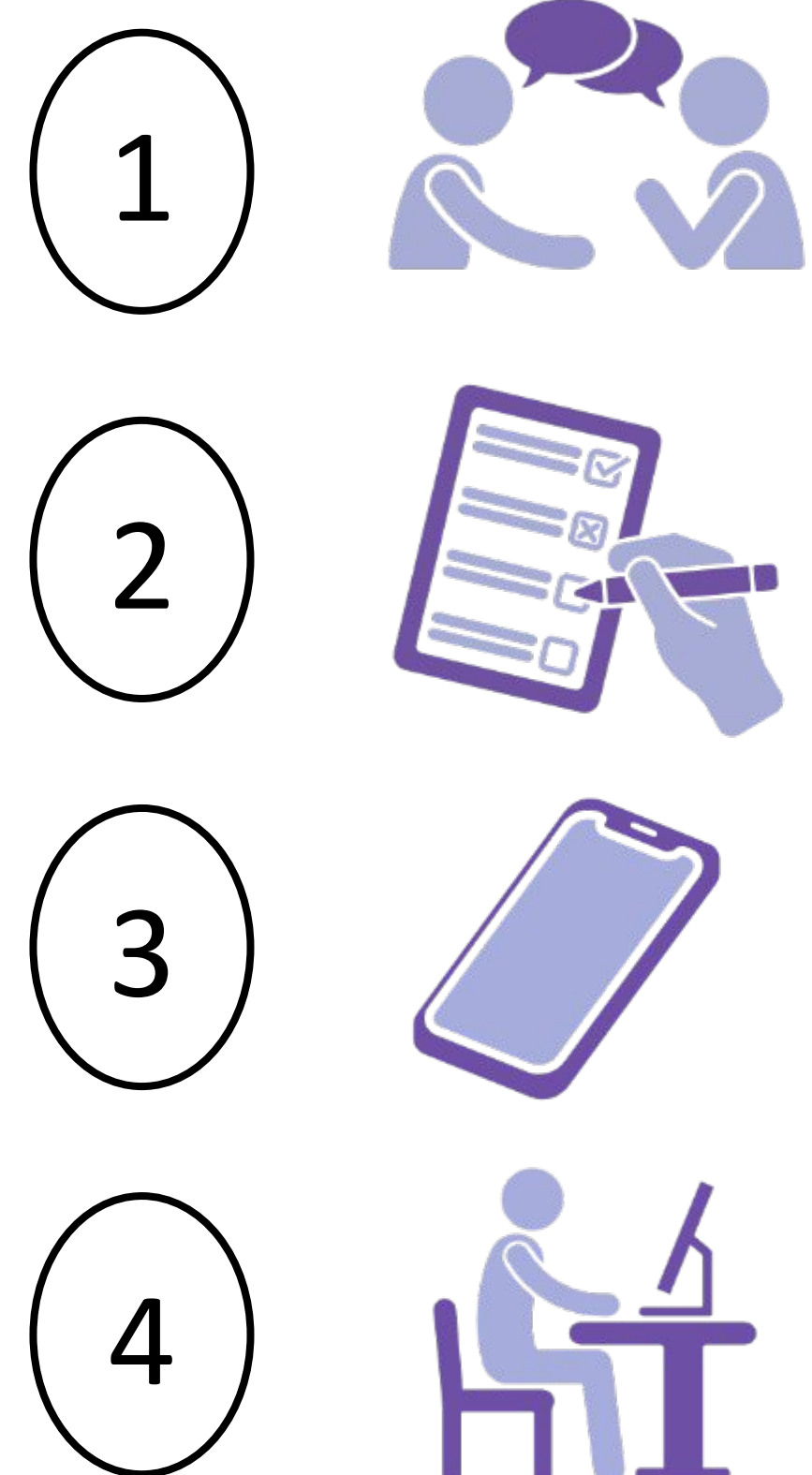
Introduction

- **Childhood maltreatment**, including physical, emotional, verbal, and sexual abuse and neglect has always been a prominent public health issue with **millions of children who experience it each year**¹
- Of particular importance is understanding the impact of childhood adversity on individuals' use of healthy **emotion regulation strategies** such as **cognitive reappraisal**, as healthy emotion regulation is a key aspect to individuals' **well-being**²
- Very **minimal** literature examines the relationship between maltreatment and cognitive reappraisal use in **adult** samples through **experience sampling**, which captures individuals' daily use through multiple assessments, making responses not subject to **recall bias**³

Hypothesis

Exposure to greater levels of childhood maltreatment will lower the use of cognitive reappraisal in daily life throughout adulthood

Study Design



Participants ages 18-80 were screened for healthy cognitive functioning through a **neuropsychological evaluation**

Participants took the **Maltreatment and Abuse Chronology of Exposure (MACE)** questionnaire

Participants underwent a week of **Experience Sampling (ESM)** where they took a virtual survey at the end of each day asking about their **daily affective experiences**

Data was analyzed through **multilevel modeling (MLM)** analysis in R Studio

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Multilevel Modeling

- A multilevel model (MLM) is a type of regression model that is used when data is in a **nested or hierarchical structure**
- In this study, the hierarchical structure has two levels: **level 1** = each individual ESM response and **level 2** = ESM responses from the entire week by one individual
- A MLM allows us to find **within-person and between-person differences** in daily cognitive reappraisal use

Results

Adversity Exposure and Daily Cognitive Reappraisal Use

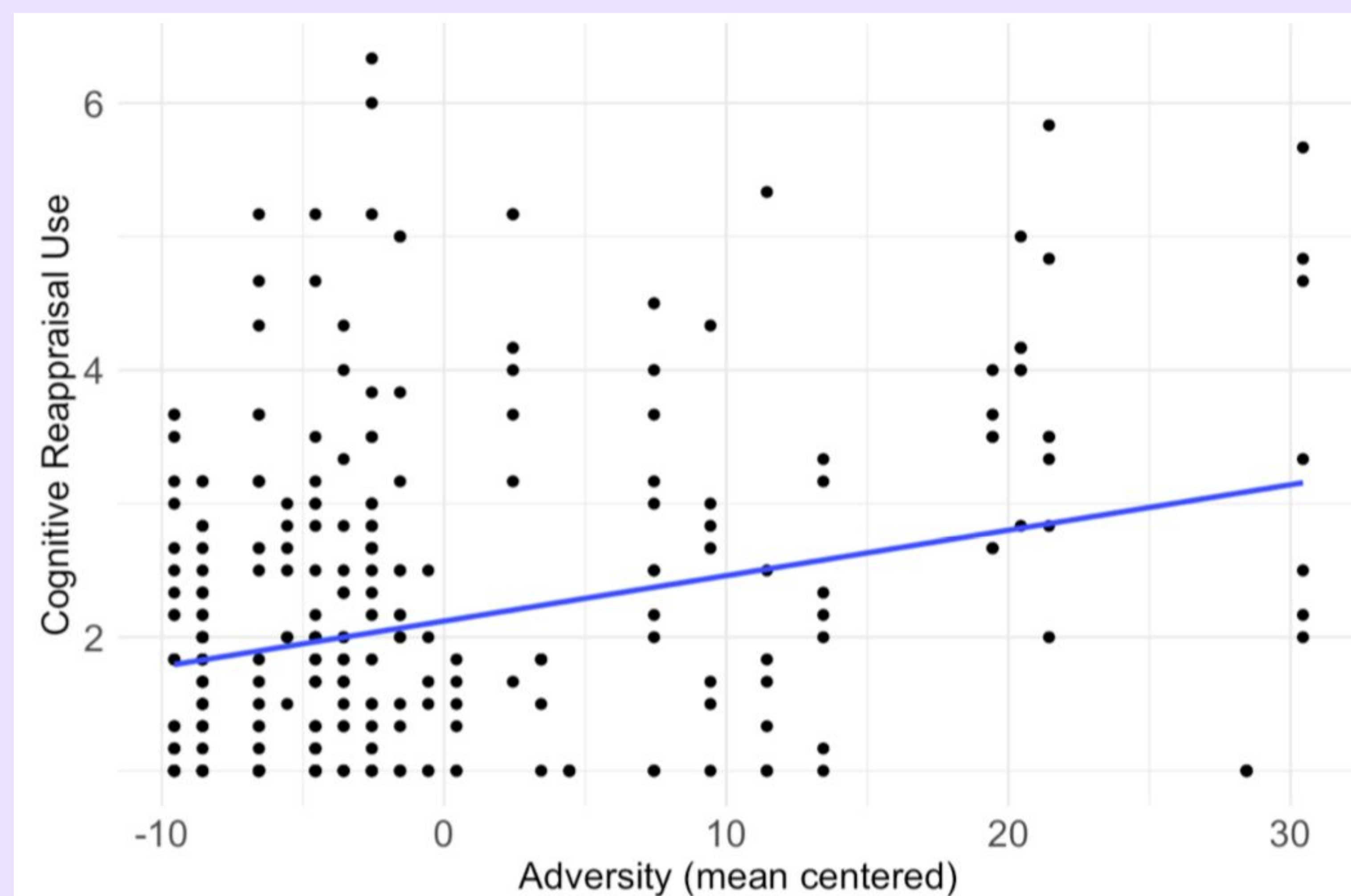


Figure 1: Exposure to childhood adversity is associated with greater use of cognitive reappraisal in adulthood. A significant positive linear relationship exists between adversity exposure and daily cognitive reappraisal use ($n = 47$, $b = 0.006$, $SE = 0.003$, $t(43.770) = 2.295$, $p = 0.027$). Age was a covariate, and was found to not predict cognitive reappraisal use ($b = -0.001$, $SE = 0.002$, $t(43.371) = -0.745$, $p = 0.460$). Participant breakdown: 46.8% White or Caucasian, 59.6% female, mean age: 42, mean MACE Severity score: 60.6, mean cognitive reappraisal use: 2.1.

Discussion

- Contrary to our hypothesis, we found that **increased exposure to childhood maltreatment/adversity results in greater daily cognitive reappraisal use**
- Previous literature has shown that childhood maltreatment is generally related to an increase in **negative affective experiences**⁴ (eg. unhealthy regulation strategies), but minimal have looked closely at whether this finding can be applied to cognitive reappraisal use **in particular**
- In addition, the majority of studies use one-time assessments instead of ESM to measure emotion regulation strategy use, which is subject to **recall issues**³. The methods used also vary greatly, making concluding definite answers in emotion regulation use **difficult**³

Future Directions

- Given that there are **contrasting results** to the present study and some previous studies, it is vital that this topic continues to be examined
- The following **improvements** can be made to the current study for future studies:
 - Greater sample size
 - Ask participants to provide the context in which they filled out responses asking about their cognitive reappraisal use

References

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