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Examining the Role of Self-esteem in the Association between Emotional Vulnerability and Psychological Well-being

Kathryn Schilling
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Method

Participants were 68 (75% female) University of Dayton undergraduate students participating in exchange for course credit. All participants first completed the following measures:

- Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), $\alpha = .85$
- Self-compassion Scale (Neff & Van Gucht, 2011), $\alpha = .75$
- Rejection Sensitivity Scale (Downey & Feldman, 1996), $\alpha = .87$
- Inclusion of Other in Self Scale (Aron & Smollan, 1992)

Participants were assigned to:
- write about a time the felt emotionally vulnerable
- describe their average Tuesday (control group)

To assess psychological well-being, participants then completed the Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-being (Ryff 1989).

The Ryff measures has 6 subscales that assess different dimensions of psychological well-being:
- Autonomy, $\alpha = .88$
- Environmental mastery, $\alpha = .81$
- Personal growth, $\alpha = .81$
- Positive relations with others, $\alpha = .83$
- Purpose in life, $\alpha = .82$
- Self-acceptance, $\alpha = .85$

Table 1 includes the correlations between self-esteem and each psychological well-being subscale.

Results

We predicted that the level of self-esteem would interact with condition to predict well-being.

- People with higher self-esteem should report better psychological well-being after writing about EV compared to people with lower self-esteem.

Results (continued)

Self-esteem was positively associated with well-being for the following sub scales:
- Autonomy $t(67) = -4.80, p<.001$
- Environmental Mastery $t(67) = -15.7, p<.001$
- Personal Growth $t(67) = -22.3, p<.001$
- Positive Relations With Others $t(67) = -18.97, p<.001$
- Purpose in Life $t(67) = -17.2, p<.001$
- Self-Acceptance $t(67) = -22.9, p<.001$

Instead, people with higher trait self-esteem expressed a higher level of well-being.

Selected References