Emotion Regulation and Suicidal Ideation among Individuals with First-Episode Psychosis

By: Heather Wastler, PhD

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American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

Disclosures

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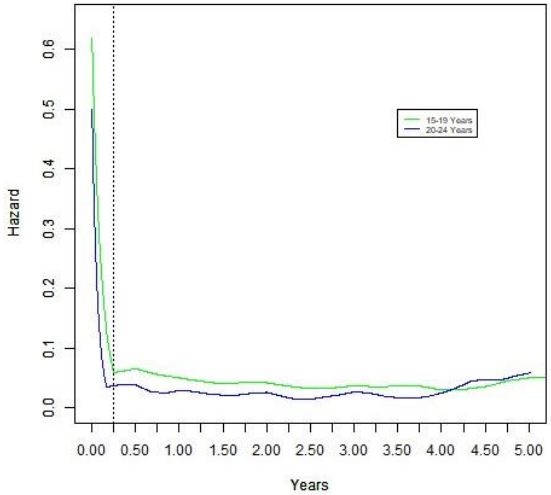
Why focus on *early* psychosis?

- Suicide rates in psychosis are ~13x greater than general population
- Risk is greatest during early stages of illness
- FEP: 30% ideation &10% attempts
- Highest risk is within first 3mo

Moe, Llamaco, Wastler et al., 2021



Bornheimer et al., 2019; Nordentoft et al., 2002; Nossel et al., 2018; Pelizza et al., 2020; Srihari et al., 2015; Too et. al 2019

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What do we know about suicide risk & psychosis?

Bornheimer et al. 2019; Cassidy et al 2018; Honings et al 2016; Hor & Taylor, 2015; Huang et al 2018; McGinty et al 2018; Pelizza et al. 2019; Pompili et al 2011; Sicotte et al 2021; Taylor et al. 2015; Ventriglio et al 2016; Wastler et al. 2021; Yates et al. 2019

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Why study emotion regulation?

- Transdiagnostic mechanism
- Difficulties exist across the psychosis continuum
- Modifiable treatment target

Anestis et al. 2011; Beauchaine et al 2019; Bryan et al. 2018; Klonsky et al 218; Linehan 1993; Ludwig et al., 2019, 2020; O'Driscoll et al., 2014; Raugh & Strauss, 20220; Strauss et al., 2019, 2022; Visser et al. 2018

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What do we know about emotion regulation, suicide, and psychosis?

Suicide Risk & Emotion Reg

- Emotion Dysregulation
- Maladaptive Strategies

Emotion Reg & Psychosis

- Difficulties across all stages
- Regulate at the wrong time
- Maladaptive strategies
- Excessively switch
- Reduced effectiveness

Emotion Reg, Suicide Risk, Psychosis

- Childhood dysreg & later SA
- Coping beliefs
- Social problem solving
- Reappraisal mediates AH/SA

Suicide risk & Emotion Reg: Anestis et al., 2014; Harris et al., 2018; Hatkevich et al., 2019; Neacisu et al., 2018; Rajappa et al., 2012 Brausch & Woods, 2019; Forkmann et al., 2014; Lynch et al 2004; Miranda et al., 2013; Miranda & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2007. Emotion Reg & Psychosis: Bartolomeo et al., 2022; Ludwig et al., 2019, 2020; O'Driscoll et al., 2014; Raugh & Strauss, 2022; Straus et al., 2019; Visser et al. 2018. Emotion Reg, Suicide risk, Psychosis: Breitborde et al. 2020; Chang et al., 2014; Grattan et al., 2020; Hielscher et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2010

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Emotion Regulation & SI in FEP (n=32)

	r_{PB}	p
Situation selection	-0.29	0.12
Situation modification	-0.28	0.14
Distraction	0.18	0.42
Reappraisal	-0.45	0.01
Rumination	-0.16	0.39
Emotion suppression	0.38	0.05
Masking emotion	0.09	0.67
Expressive Suppression	-0.12	0.60
Sharing emotions	-0.21	0.33

Wastler et al. 2022

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Broadening Our Perspective: The Extended Process Model

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Emotion Regulation as a Multi-Faceted Construct

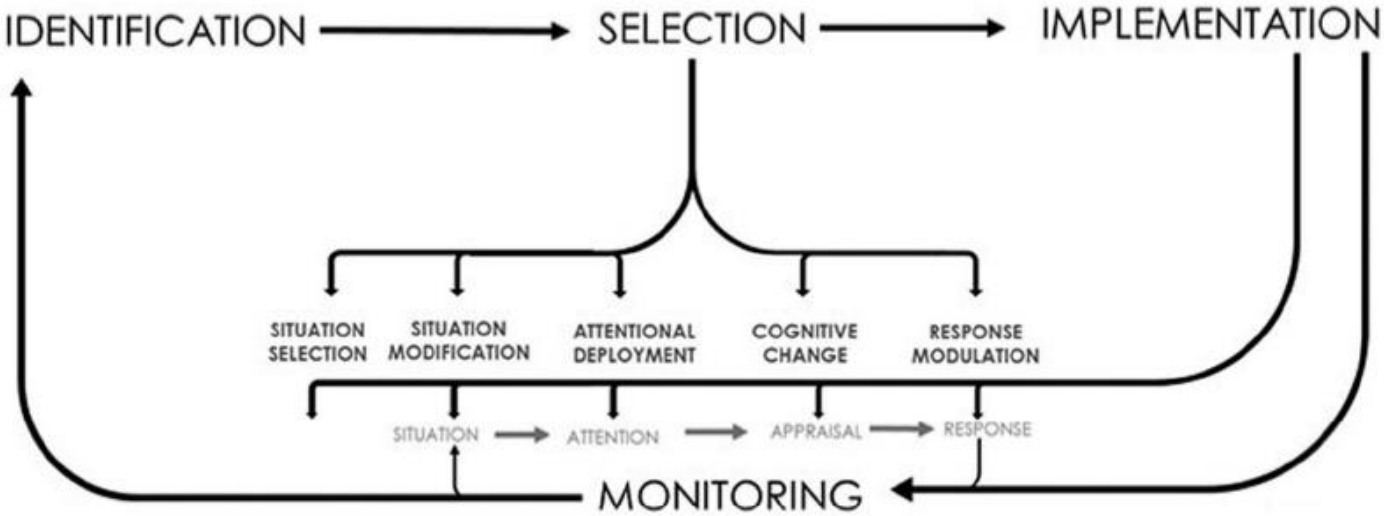

Image from: McRae, K., & Gross, J. (2020).Emotion Regulation. *Emotion*. 20(1). doi: 10.1037/emo0000703

Gross, 1998, 2015; McRae & Gross, 2020; Sheppes et al. 2015

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Emotion Regulation as a Dynamic, Iterative Process

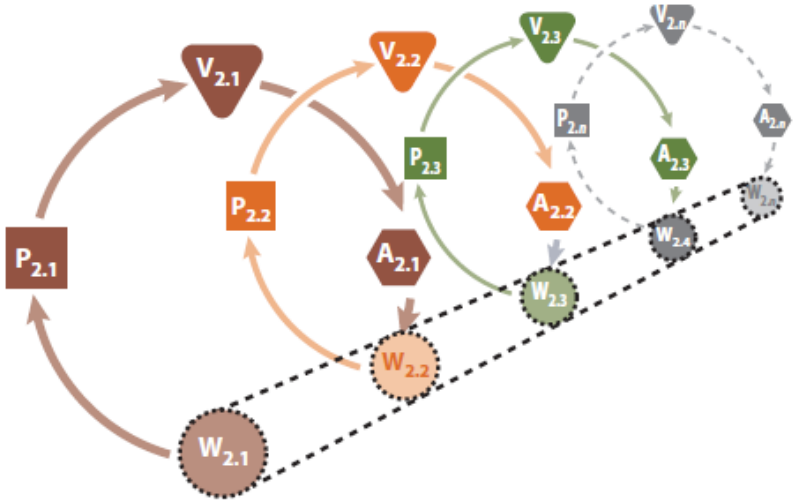

Image from: Shepes, G., Suri, G., & Gross, J. (2015). Emotion Regulation and Psychopathology. *Annu Rev Clin Psychol*. 11(1). doi:10.1146/annurev-clinpsy-032814-112739

Gross, 1998, 2015; McRae & Gross, 2020; Sheppes et al. 2015

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AFSP Funded Study

Ongoing study

- Individuals with FEP; ages 18-35
- Target n= 31 with SI; 31 without SI
- Preliminary analyses= 20 (13 SI; 7 no SI)
- Baseline→28 days of (EMA) →Follow Up

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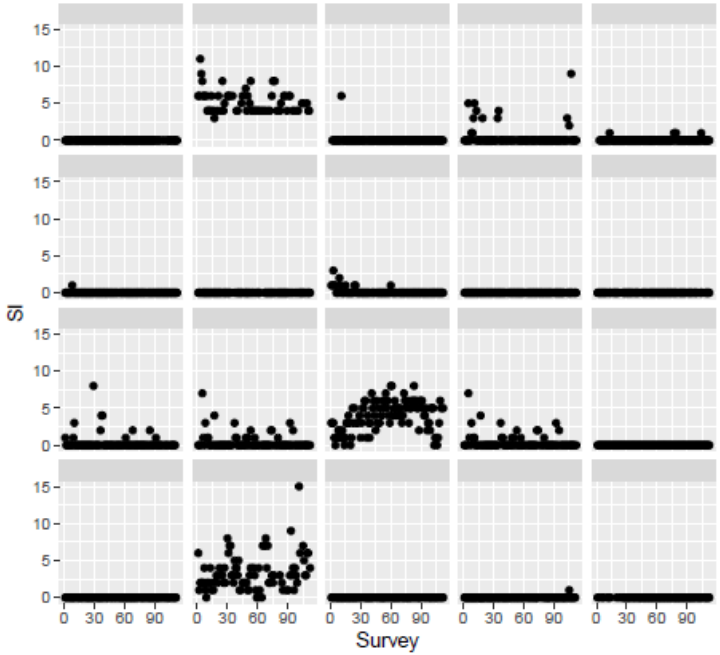
Preliminary Findings: EMA Overview (n=20)

~1930 surveys; 314 instances of SI

~86% compliance



**Unpublished data; do not cite*

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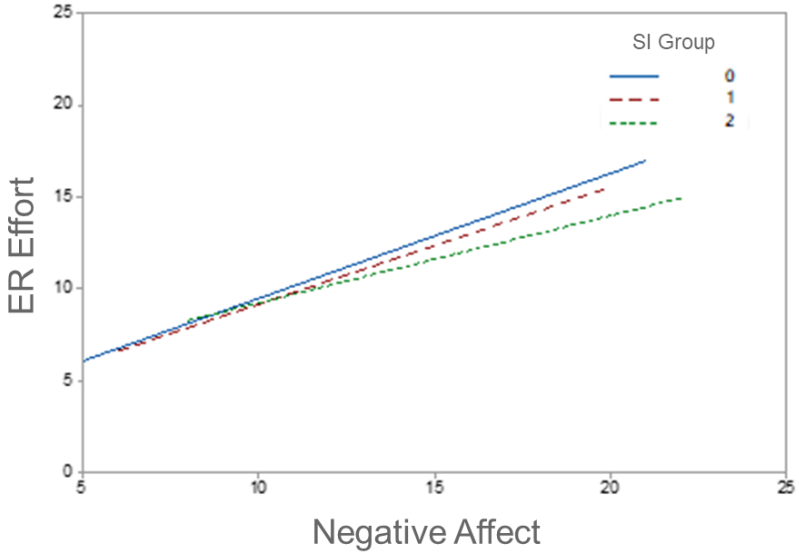
Preliminary Findings: Identification

- A *higher* regulation threshold is associated with the presence of SI during EMA (r =0.46, p =0.042).
- Greater NA (B= 0.13, p<0.01) & lower regulation effort (B=-0.03, p<0.01) are associated with SI
- NAxER interaction is associated with SI (B=0.006, p<0.01)



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Preliminary Findings: Selection

8 Strategies: Avoidance, Distraction, Rumination, Acceptance, Reappraisal, Expressive Suppression, Physiological Intervention, and Social Support

Maladaptive v Adaptive

- Increased use of maladaptive strategies (B=0.06, p<0.01)
- Decreased use of adaptive strategies (B=-0.05, p<0.01)

Separate Models

- Rumination (B=0.13, p<0.01)
- Ex supp (B=0.06, p=0.018)
- Avoidance (B=0.06, p= 0.03)
- Acceptance (B-0.11, p<0.01)

One Model

- Rumination (B=0.16, p<0.01)
- Acceptance (B=-0.14, p<0.01)

Relationship between acceptance and SI remains even when including negative affect in the model.

**Unpublished data; do not cite*

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Preliminary Findings: Implementation

- Ineffective regulation = No change or worsening NA (t+1) following a regulation attempt (t)

- Ineffective emotion regulation is associated with greater severity suicidal ideation (B=0.078, p<0.01).

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Limitations & Future Directions

- Replicate with full sample (target n=62)
- Time lagged models
- Group (SI/No SI) and psychotic sx as moderators
- Psychiatric control group
- Examine other stages of illness (CHR, FEP, SMI)

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Takeaways

- Emotion regulation is a dynamic, multi-faceted process
- Specific emotion regulation abnormalities might contribute to suicide risk
- Emotion acceptance/suppression might be a key, understudied risk factor in FEP
- Focusing on ER strategies might not be enough

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Thank you

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