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The effects of stress and anxiety on memory, self-efficacy, and impulsivity among adolescents ages 13-17

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Stress and anxiety are key mental factors that are a part of the brain's extensive network. Caused by the hormone cortisol, stress and anxiety can bring detrimental effects to other aspects of the mind. Previous literature has identified a correlation between adult stress and anxiety, low self-esteem, a loss in the ability to retain memories, and impulsive decision-making. Adolescents, ages thirteen to seventeen years old, have not been investigated due to the shortened duration of human adolescence. However, this adolescent time frame plays a crucial role in

the developmental stages of the mind. Self-efficacy inductions of positive, negative, and neutral emotions were used as an indicator of the functionality of memory and impulsivity. The survey-based analysis was used through the combination of episodic memory tasks and compared to the induced emotional states. This research investigated past and present memories that involved stressful situations that prompted a teenager to change their behavior and ability to properly complete described tasks. Results suggest that during adolescence, memory retention is higher when positive self-efficacy was utilized, in comparison to the low self-efficacy induction. Impulsivity was relatively the same throughout each self-efficacy group. The high self-efficacy group scored higher ($m=18.1429$) in comparison to the low ($m=8.4286$) and

neutral ($m=13.3571$) inductions. Significant results for positive self-efficacy caused a higher ability to retain memories and be descriptive ($p=0.01912$). Further research should explore the integration of positive self-efficacy in episodic memory exercises to improve brain functionality, memory retention, and impulsivity.

Biography

Veronica Bucci is a Senior at Pawling High School in Pawling, New York and has researched Psychology for the past 3 years as part of the SUNY Albany Science Research course. She completed her first project involving teenagers and how they respond to stressful and anxious situations based on a variety of episodic memory tasks. She has successfully competed in numerous competitions with her research and has traveled to locations such as San Francisco, California, and Paris, France in order to present her various projects. After the success of her first project, SHE is continuing her work in the field of Psychology involving reliability in a child's environment influencing lie-telling and decision making. She hopes her research has the power to give children and teenagers a better grasp on the way to live a truly meaningful life.

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