

The temporal dynamics of emotion regulation: an EEG study of distraction and reappraisal.

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Source

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Abstract

Distraction and reappraisal are two widely used forms of emotion regulation. The process model of emotion regulation (Gross, 1998) holds that they differ (1) in when they act on the emotion-generative process, and (2) in their impact on subsequent responses to regulated stimuli. We tested these two predictions by measuring electrocortical responses to neutral and emotional images during two phases. In the regulation phase, images were watched or regulated using distraction or reappraisal. During the re-exposure phase, the same images were passively watched. As predicted, during regulation, distraction reduced the late positive potential (LPP) earlier than reappraisal. Upon re-exposure, images with a distraction (but not reappraisal) history elicited a larger LPP than images with an attend history. This pattern of results suggests that distraction and reappraisal intervene at separate stages during emotion generation, a feature which may have distinct consequences that extend beyond the regulatory episode.

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