

The Impact of Invalidating Emotional Experiences in Childhood on Forgiveness in Close Relationships

Psychological Reports
2026, Vol. 0(0) 1–23
© The Author(s) 2026



Article reuse guidelines:

sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: 10.1177/00332941261436657

journals.sagepub.com/home/prx



Paige A. Leggett¹ , Veronica M. Lamarche¹ , and Megan Klabunde¹ 

Abstract

Effective emotion regulation is essential for interpersonal contexts in which people need to prioritise prosocial motivations over self-protective motivations, such as forgiving someone after a transgression. However, people who grew up in emotionally invalidating home environments where their reactions were dismissed may struggle to appropriately respond to transgressions as well as experience difficulties with emotion regulation, including reactivity, inhibition and suppression. Across three correlational studies ($N_{total} = 691$) that examined forgiveness towards a partner's transgressions (i.e., infidelity, Study 1; participant-generated, Studies 2-3), we found that people who reported that they grew up in emotionally invalidating environments were less forgiving, espousing less benevolence motivations (Studies 1-2), and more avoidance (Studies 1-3) and revenge (Studies 2-3) motivations after a transgression. Serial mediation models suggested that these associations may be explained by the indirect effects of negative emotional reactivity and lower self-control. People who experienced relatively greater emotional invalidation in childhood were less likely to forgive their close others for transgressions, in part because they experience more intense reactions to their negative emotions and are less able to engage self-control. This collection of studies provides important insights into how people who believe they have been invalidated by *caregivers* in the past feel about forgiving their *partners* in the present and

¹Department of Psychology, University of Essex, Colchester, UK

Corresponding Author:

Paige A. Leggett, Department of Psychology, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester CO4 3SQ, UK.

Email: p.leggett@essex.ac.uk

Data Availability Statement included at the end of the article

further supports existing literature on the negative consequences of invalidating emotional environments on the self and emotional processes.

Keywords

invalidating childhood experiences, emotion, regulation, forgiveness, relationships

Our childhood environments profoundly impact our emotion regulation and self-view as adults. We learn from our caregivers how to respond to emotional situations and how to react to them (Denham, 2007; Miller et al., 2010) and these experiences can have lifelong implications. For example, having your emotional needs invalidated during childhood can lead to emotional and interpersonal dysregulation in adulthood (e.g. Braithwaite et al., 2011). Studies have indicated emotional invalidation during childhood, whereby a child is continuously criticised and dismissed by caregivers for expressing and communicating their thoughts and feelings (Linehan, 1993), is associated with the emotion regulation strategy of suppression (i.e. not expressing emotions; Krause et al., 2003) in addition to increased emotional reactivity (i.e., feeling negative emotions more intensely; Shenk & Fruzzetti, 2011).

Given the connection between childhood emotional invalidation and emotional regulation (e.g., emotional inhibition; emotional reactivity), emotional invalidation may also influence interpersonal behaviours, namely forgiveness. Forgiveness can be characterised as the expression of benevolent motivations towards a transgressor, and/or the inhibition of malevolent motivations including vengeance and the desire to withdraw and avoid that person (Worthington Jr. & Wade, 1999). With forgiveness being an emotional process (Ho et al., 2020), those who experience this dysregulation in adulthood as a result of emotional invalidation may struggle to overcome transgressions more positively. For instance, they may want to respond to a transgression by walking away from, or even seeking vengeance against the person who inflicted harm. With satisfying long-term relationships being characterised as the ability to inhibit selfish and self-protective impulses in order to prioritise prosocial motivations (Murray, 1999; Murray et al., 2006), it is vital to put personal impulses aside and behave in the best interest of the relationship by offering forgiveness (Finkel et al., 2002). Thus, we propose that emotional invalidation in childhood influences forgiveness in close relationships. We suggest that this could perhaps be due to the emotion dysregulation commonly associated with emotional invalidation in childhood.

The Impact of Emotional Invalidation in Childhood on Emotion Regulation

Early childhood experiences with primary caregivers are the first environments in which individuals learn to understand their emotions and its consequences (Denham et al., 2003). This is achieved not only through observation of caregivers (Denham, 2007), but also through experiences in which caregivers validate (or invalidate) their emotional experiences. In emotionally invalidating childhood environments, children are continuously criticised and punished by caregivers for expressing and

communicating their thoughts and feelings, even when these reactions are contextually appropriate (e.g., crying after an injury; Linehan, 1993). Consequently, children in these environments develop a weakened sense of awareness of their own emotions and feel like they are not allowed to express them, leading to self-invalidation (i.e., dismissing and criticising one's own emotional experiences; Lambie & Lindberg, 2016; Williams, 2010).

The consequences of these negative early emotional environments extend into adulthood. For example, people who grew up in emotionally invalidating environments struggle with emotion regulation strategies in adulthood compared to those with emotionally validating childhood environments (Hope & Chapman, 2019; Reeves, 2007). Furthermore, past research has shown that emotional invalidation in childhood is associated with heightened emotional reactivity (Shenk & Fruzzetti, 2011), such that they are more likely to feel caught up and carried away by both positive and negative emotional experiences. This emotional dysregulation also takes the form of chronic inhibition and suppression of emotions (Krause et al., 2003), often occurring as a consequence of their negative attitudes towards emotional expression and their belief that expressing emotions is something to be avoided (Haslam et al., 2012). However, despite recognising the important consequences emotional invalidation in childhood has on adult emotion regulation and functioning (Reeves, 2007), there is limited research examining the specific consequences for processes which shape healthy adult relationships.

Emotion Regulation and Forgiveness in Adult Relationships

Emotion regulation plays a critical role in supporting healthy adult relationships (English et al., 2013; Gross & John, 2003). Even in loving and supportive relationships, hurt feelings and disappointment are inevitable. To protect the relationship, one has to be able to override the self-protective motivations (such as avoidance or vengeance) that arise from these negative emotions, and instead prioritize reconnection with a partner following such transgressions (Cavallo et al., 2014; Murray et al., 2006). Forgiveness is one such prosocial behaviour that captures the willingness to forgo destructive responses—such as retaliation, resentment, and avoidance—in favour of more constructive responses such as benevolence (Ehteshamzadeh et al., 2011; McCullough, 2000, 2001; McCullough et al., 1997; Rusbult et al., 1991). Forgiveness is essential for long-term relationship success, contributing to greater trust and harmony (Exline & Baumeister, 2000), relationship satisfaction and commitment (Braithwaite et al., 2011; Worthington, 1998), and marital adjustment (Woodman, 1991).

This balance between constructive and destructive responses to transgressions means that forgiveness is heavily influenced by a person's ability to recognise and regulate their emotions (Ho et al., 2020). Inhibiting the desire for vengeance or avoidance following a transgression requires self-control (Finkel & Campbell, 2001; Ho et al., 2024; Pronk et al., 2019) while simultaneously upregulating their experience of positive emotions in order to adopt benevolent motivations (i.e. empathy, compassion; Worthington Jr & Wade, 1999). Low self-control and inhibition makes people

more inclined to act vengefully and resentfully, and less likely to behave from benevolent pro-relationship motives when they have experienced a transgression (Burnette et al., 2014). Forgiveness is also more challenging for people who experience strong emotional reactivity (Ercengiz et al., 2023), and those who struggle to inhibit their negative emotions (Berry et al., 2005).

Given that emotional invalidation in childhood is associated with emotional dysregulation processes in adulthood, including reactivity, and inhibition, people who have grown up in invalidating environments may struggle with forgiveness in their adult relationships. However, the association between emotional invalidation and forgiveness has not been explored in past research. Consequentially, there is a gap in the broader understanding of how emotional invalidation in childhood shapes the mechanisms which support healthy relationship functioning.

Current Research

The experiences people have in childhood have important implications for interpersonal wellbeing in adulthood. This should be particularly true for emotion regulation processes, which shape how people respond to situations in which people must prioritise prosocial motivations over more self-protective ones in their relationships, such as forgiveness. However, this association has not been previously investigated. The current research aimed to address the limitation in the extant literature by testing, across 3 cross-sectional studies, whether emotional invalidation is positively or negatively associated with forgiveness and the underlying emotion regulation mechanisms which support this association. Because forgiveness is a complex process that involves upregulating prosocial emotions (e.g., benevolence) while simultaneously downregulating destructive emotions (e.g., avoidance, resentment, vengeance), we had competing hypotheses as to whether the association between emotional invalidation in childhood and forgiveness would be positive or negative depending on whether it was driven by emotional inhibition or emotional reactivity.

Emotional invalidation in childhood is associated with emotional inhibition and suppression (Krause et al., 2003). Thus, although this may make it easier for people to inhibit their more destructive motivations such as avoidance and vengeance following a transgression, it may also inhibit their prosocial feelings of benevolence making forgiveness less likely. Similarly, emotional invalidation in childhood is also associated with emotional reactivity (i.e., more intense emotional reactions; Shenk & Fruzzetti, 2011) to interpersonal events and stressors. This means that people might feel hurt associated with transgressions more intensely, and for a longer period of time, than people who are less emotionally reactive. Consequently, this might lead someone with a history of emotional invalidation in childhood to prioritise self-protection motivations by endorsing avoidance and/or revenge following a transgression, rather than the more prosocially oriented motivations of benevolent forgiveness.

Specifically, we predicted that if emotional invalidation led to inhibition of destructive emotions, people may be able to experience more benevolence towards transgressors and therefore more forgiveness. By contrast, if emotional invalidation led

to greater negative emotional reactivity that made it challenging to suppress negative motivations following a transgression, then people would express less forgiveness. The analytic strategy for each study was pre-registered. The pre-registration of the analytic strategy¹, survey materials, aggregate data, and syntax can be found on the project repository on the Open Science Framework (OSF; <https://osf.io/vyx3c>). All studies reported in this paper received approval from the [Redacted for Peer Review] Ethics Sub-committee 3.

Study 1

Study 1 provided our initial test of whether emotional invalidation in childhood influences forgiveness in the context of infidelity, and further examined whether emotional reactivity, emotion regulation and self-control mediates this association.

Method

Participants. Three hundred and fifty-four participants aged 18 and older consented to take part in the study. Participants ($M_{age} = 30.960$, $SD = 13.682$) were recruited from the departmental research participation subject pool, as well as via social media platforms (e.g., Facebook) between January and April 2023. Participants who were eligible for course credit (e.g., psychology students in the department) received 0.5 credits for participating. All others were uncompensated volunteers. Of the eligible participants, sixty-five were excluded from analyses for incomplete responses, for a final sample of 289 participants. Most participants were women (74%; 24% men; 2% other gender identity), white (80%; 9% Asian; 4% Black; 3% Mixed ethnicity), straight (86%; 4% gay/lesbian; 9% bisexual; 1% not listed) and in monogamous relationships (92%; 4% consensually non-monogamous; 4% other). Participants had been in a relationship for 8.43 years on average ($SD = 9.75$) and the highest percentage of participants were single (35%; 3% casually dating; 35% in a committed relationship; 5% engaged; 22% married).

Procedures. Eligible participants who consented to participating in the study were asked demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, relationship status) followed by measures of emotional invalidation in childhood, emotion inhibition, emotional reactivity and self-control. Next, participants were asked to think about a time when either their current partner, an ex-partner, or a hypothetical partner had committed an infidelity. Participants then completed a measure of forgiveness which taps into benevolence and avoidance motivations. Finally, all participants were thanked for their participation and fully debriefed. [Table 1](#) presents the descriptive statistics for Study 1.

Materials. Emotional Invalidation in Childhood. Emotional invalidation in childhood was measured using the 14-item ($\alpha = .922$) Invalidating Childhood Environment Scale (ICES; [Mouniford et al., 2007](#)), adapted to refer to both parents rather than each caregiver individually (e.g. “My parents would become angry if I disagreed with

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Study I

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Emotional invalidation	-	.053	-.048	-.326***	.226***	-.299***	.261***
2. Avoidance		-	-.490***	-.224***	.055	.041	.240***
3. Benevolence			-	-.034	.021	.016	.068
4. Self-control				-	-.095	.184**	-.410***
5. Emotion inhibition					-	-.160**	.081
6. Positive reactivity						-	-.170**
7. Negative reactivity							-
M	2.213	3.630	2.177	3.000	3.806	3.656	3.534
SD	.800	.830	1.083	.744	1.331	.785	.909
Scale range	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-7	1-5	1-5

Note. † $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

them.”; 1 = *never*, 5 = *all the time*). Items were averaged after being reverse coded, with higher scores reflecting greater emotional invalidation in childhood.

Forgiveness. Forgiveness was measured using the 10-item Marital Offence-Specific Forgiveness Scale (Paleari et al., 2009, 1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). The scale includes two subscales: resentment-avoidance motivations ($\alpha = .727$; e.g. “Since my partner behaved that way, I have been less willing to talk to her/him.”) and benevolence motivations ($\alpha = .838$; e.g. “Since my partner behaved that way, I have done my best to restore my relationship with her/him.”). Items were averaged within subscales, with higher scores reflecting more resentment-avoidance and benevolence motivations respectively. Following past research, forgiveness was characterised as relatively higher benevolence motivations, and relatively lower resentment-avoidance motivations (McCullough, 2001).

Positive and Negative Emotional Reactivity. Participants completed a measure of emotional reactivity using the Perth Emotional Reactivity Scale – Short form (Preece et al., 2019). This is an 18-item scale assessing individual differences in emotional reactivity, specifically activation, intensity and duration (e.g. “When I’m happy, the feeling stays with me for quite a while.”, “When I’m upset, it takes me quite a while to snap out of it.”; 1 = *very unlike me*, 5 = *very like me*). This scale measures reactivity to positive and negative emotions separately. Items were averaged across items of the same valence to create sub-scales of positive reactivity ($\alpha = .898$) and negative emotional reactivity ($\alpha = .906$), collapsing across the domains of activation, intensity, and duration. Higher scores reflect greater positive and negative emotional reactivity respectively.

Emotion inhibition. Emotion inhibition was measured using the four² expressive suppression items ($\alpha = .799$) from the 10-item Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ; Gross & John, 2003; e.g. “I control my emotions by not expressing them.”; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). Items were averaged and higher scores reflect greater emotional inhibition.

Self-control. Participants completed the 13-item Brief Self-Control Scale ($\alpha = .845$; Tangney et al., 2018; Lindner et al., 2015) assessing dispositional self-regulatory behaviours (e.g., “I am good at resisting temptation”; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). Items were averaged and higher scores reflect greater self-control.

Results

We first tested the hypothesis that emotional invalidation in childhood would be associated with (a) benevolent motivations and (b) avoidance motivations regarding infidelity, using linear regression controlling for the effect of transgression target (dummy coded with hypothetical partners as the referent group; Table 2). As predicted, childhood emotional invalidation was negatively associated with benevolence motivations when thinking about an infidelity, $b = -.165, t(288) = -2.257, p = .025, 95\% CI [-.309, -.021]$, and positively associated with resentment-avoidance, $b = .120, t(288) = 2.035, p = .043, 95\% CI [.004, .236]$. This suggests that people who recalled experiencing relatively greater emotional invalidation in childhood were less likely to have experienced (past & current partners) or anticipated experiencing (hypothetical partners) less benevolent motivations for forgiving their partners, and more resentment and avoidance motivations when thinking about an infidelity, than those who recalled relatively less emotional invalidation in childhood.

Indirect Effects of Emotion Regulation. Consistent with past literature, emotional invalidation was significantly and positively correlated with emotional inhibition and negative emotional reactivity, and negatively correlated with self-control and positive emotional reactivity ($ps < .001$). In order to understand whether the observed negative association between emotional invalidation and forgiveness can be understood through differences in emotion processing, we tested for the indirect effects of emotional inhibition, positive and negative emotional reactivity, and self-control using Hayes PROCESS Model 4 (Hayes, 2017). The indirect effects were tested using the percentile bootstrapped estimation approach with 10,000 samples (Shrout & Bolger, 2002).

Table 2. Model Coefficients Predicting Avoidance and Benevolence Study I

Predictors	Dependent variables			
	Avoidance		Benevolence	
	b	t	b	t
Emotion invalidation	.120	2.035*	-.165	-2.257*
Partner as transgressor	-.940	-5.925***	1.629	8.257***
Ex-partner as transgressor	-.263	-2.661**	.203	1.650

Note. † $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. The referent group for transgressors were hypothetical partners.

Both the indirect effects of self-control ($\beta = .083$, $SE_{bootstrapped} = .027$, $CI_{bootstrapped} [.037, .142]$), as well as negative reactivity ($\beta = .072$, $SE_{bootstrapped} = .024$, $CI_{bootstrapped} [.031, .124]$), predicted resentment-avoidance motivations after an infidelity were significant. People relatively higher in emotional invalidation were more likely to experience negative emotional reactivity and less self-control, which made them more inclined to engage in resentment-avoidance motivations when imagining or recalling an infidelity (Figure 1a and 1(b)). Furthermore, serial mediation analyses using Hayes PROCESS Model 6 suggests that negative emotional reactivity contributes to lower self-control, thus contributing to greater resentment and avoidance motivations ($\beta = .016$, $SE_{bootstrapped} = .008$, $CI_{bootstrapped} [.004, .033]$; Figure 2).

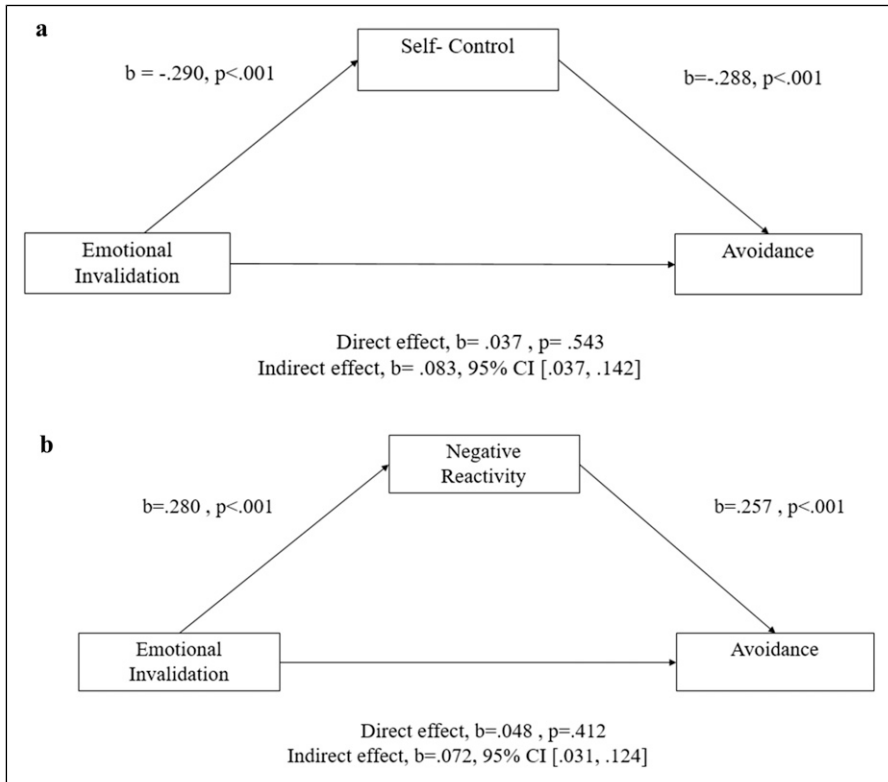


Figure 1. (A) Indirect association between emotional invalidation and avoidance motivations via self-control (B) Indirect association between emotional invalidation and avoidance motivations via negative reactivity

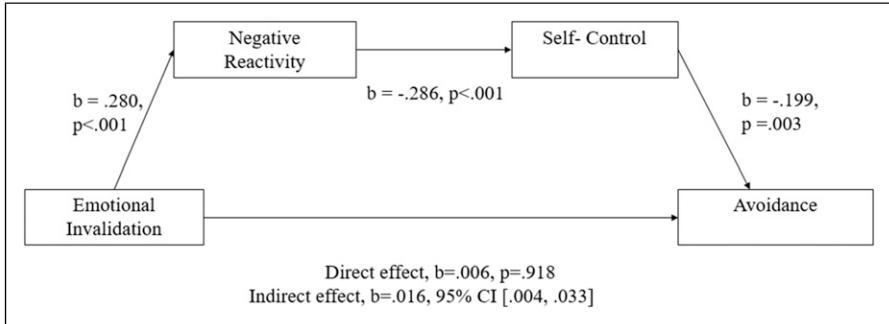


Figure 2. Indirect associations between emotional invalidation and avoidance motivations via negative reactivity and self-control

The indirect effects of positive reactivity were not significant, nor were the indirect effects predicting benevolence motivations (see Online Supplemental Materials [OSM]).

Study 2

Study 1 provided preliminary evidence that emotional invalidation in childhood was negatively associated with forgiveness (i.e., lower benevolence and greater avoidance) when people thought about real or imagined infidelities by a past or present partner. However, not everyone in the sample had experienced an infidelity, and for those who had, not all were still with the transgressing partner. Thus, the forgiveness context in Study 1 may have lacked self-relevance in many meaningful ways. Thus, the aim of Study 2 was to replicate the findings from Study 1 and extend them beyond a specific transgressional context identified by the researchers, by asking participants to self-select a past transgression by their current partners.

Method

Participants. Two hundred and twenty-three participants aged 18 and older consented to take part in the study. Participants ($M_{age} = 26.180, SD = 8.649$) were recruited from the departmental research participation subject pool, as well as via social media platforms (e.g., Facebook) between January and April 2023. Participants who were eligible for course credit received 0.5 credits for participating. All others were uncompensated volunteers. Twenty-one of the eligible participants were excluded from analyses for incomplete responses, leaving a final sample of 202 participants. Most participants were women (76%; 21% men; 3% other gender identity), white (57%; 21% Asian; 9% black; 6% mixed ethnicity), heterosexual (73%; 5% gay/lesbian, 17% bisexual; 5% not listed) and in monogamous relationships (90%; 4% consensually non-monogamous; 6% other). Nearly half of the participants were single (43%; 31% exclusively dating or in a committed relationship; 11% casually

dating; 4% engaged; 11% married). Of those that were in a relationship, the average relationship length was 4.87 years ($SD = 5.68$).

Procedures. Eligible participants were first asked background and demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, relationship satisfaction), followed by the same measure of emotional invalidation in childhood, emotional inhibition³, positive and negative emotional reactivity, and self-control as Study 1. Next, participants were asked to think about a time when either their current partner (romantically attached participants), an ex-partner (single participants who had dated before), or their best friend (single participants who had never dated) had betrayed their trust or hurt their feelings. Participants then completed a new measure of forgiveness which taps into benevolence, avoidance, and revenge motivations. Finally, participants were thanked for their participation and fully debriefed. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for Study 2.

Materials. Forgiveness. Forgiveness was measured using the 18-item Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations scale (TRIM-18; McCullough & Hoyt, 2002). The TRIM-18 captures benevolence motivations. However, unlike the Marital Offenses Inventory, it delineates between more inhibitory destructive motivations like avoidance, and more approach-oriented destructive motivations like vengeance. Participants indicate their agreement to each item on a 5-point Likert scale (e.g., avoidance motivations; $\alpha = .898$; "I am living as if he/she doesn't exist, isn't around"; vengeance motivations; $\alpha = .833$; "I'm going to get even"; benevolence motivations; $\alpha = .877$; "I want us to bury the hatchet and move forward with our relationship"; 1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). Items were averaged across each motivational subscale, and higher scores reflect greater endorsement of each motivation.

Results

We used the same analytic strategy as Study 1, regressing emotional invalidation on (a) benevolence, (b) avoidance, and (c) revenge motivations, controlling for target (dummy coded with partner as the referent group). Table 4 presents the model coefficients. As hypothesised, we found that our hypotheses were fully supported; emotional invalidation in childhood significantly predicted avoidance, vengeance and benevolent motivations. When controlling for the target they are forgiving i.e. a current partner, former partner, or a best friend, emotional invalidation significantly predicted avoidance, benevolent and revenge motivations. Consistent with the findings from Study 1, and with our hypotheses, emotional invalidation in childhood was positively associated with avoidance, $b = .339$, $t(201) = 4.379$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.187, .492], and revenge motivations $b = .354$, $t(201) = 4.883$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.211, .497], and negatively associated with benevolence motivations $b = -.219$, $t(201) = -2.893$, $p = .004$, 95% CI [-.369, -.070]. Thus, people who experienced relatively greater emotional

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Study 2

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Emotional invalidation	-							.253***
2. Avoidance		-						.092
3. Benevolence			-					.070
4. Revenge				-				.181**
5. Self-control					-			-.394***
6. Emotion inhibition						-		.086
7. Positive reactivity							-	-.076
8. Negative reactivity								-
M	2.467	3.214	3.209	2.218	3.029	2.959	3.631	3.451
SD	.808	.990	.911	.875	.731	.943	.780	.880
Scale range	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5

Note. †p < .1, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Table 4. Model Coefficients Predicting Avoidance, Benevolence and Revenge Study 2

Predictors	Dependent variables					
	Avoidance		Benevolence		Revenge	
	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i>
Emotion invalidation	.339	4.379***	-.219	-2.893**	.354	4.883***
Ex-partner as transgressor	.718	4.938***	-.606	-4.262***	.307	2.260*
Friend as transgressor	.846	4.899**	-.378	-2.239*	.247	1.528

Note. † $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. The referent group for transgressors were partners.

invalidation in childhood were less forgiving of close others' transgressions, as evidenced by having more negative motivations and less benevolent motivations when thinking about a past transgression.

Indirect Effects of Emotion Regulation. Although we tested all the same indirect effects as Study 1, we limit our discussion to the indirect effects of self-control and negative emotional reactivity which were significant in the previous study. All models are available in the OSM. Unlike in Study 1, the indirect effects of self-control and negative emotional reactivity, and their serial mediation effect, were not significant. Thus Study 2 failed to provide support for how specific emotion regulation experiences for people who have experienced emotional invalidation in childhood may influence their avoidance motivations and forgiveness.

Study 3

Studies 1 and 2 provided consistent support for our hypotheses using two different measures of forgiveness, and two different types of transgressions (i.e., specific transgressions such as infidelity vs. transgressions self-identified by the participants). However, some inconsistencies emerged across studies when testing the indirect effects models. Direct replications are encouraged to be routinely included in psychological science in order to provide accumulated evidence for reliable effects (e.g., Simons, 2014; Zwaan et al., 2018). In Study 3 we therefore directly replicated Study 2 in a novel sample to illustrate the reliability of our findings across studies.

Method

Participants. Two hundred and thirty-five participants aged 18 and older consented to take part in the study. Participants ($M_{age} = 22.310$, $SD = 6.323$) were recruited from the departmental research participation subject pool, as well as via social media platforms (e.g., Facebook) between January and May 2023. Participants who were eligible for course credit received 0.5 credits for participating. All others were uncompensated

volunteers. Thirty-five participants were excluded from analysis for incomplete responses, leaving a final sample of 200 participants.

The majority of participants were women (78%; 20% men; 2% other gender identity), white (56%; 19% Asian; 14% Black; 6% mixed ethnicity), heterosexual (78%; 3% gay/lesbian, 18% bisexual; 1% not listed) and in monogamous relationships (92%; 3% consensually non-monogamous; 5% other). Almost half of the participants were single (42%), with a similar percentage of participants exclusively dating/in a committed relationship (41%; 9% casually dating; 4% engaged; 4% married). Those that were in a relationship had been for 3 years on average (*SD* = 5.44). Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics for Study 3.

Results

Replicating the findings from Studies 1 and 2, emotional invalidation in childhood was positively associated with both avoidance, $b = .260, t(199) = 3.240, p = .001, 95\% CI [.102, .419]$ and vengeance motivations $b = .233, t(199) = 3.075, p = .002, 95\% CI [.084, .383]$. However, unexpectedly, the association with benevolence motivations was not significant, $b = -.051, t(2, 196) = -.685, p = .494, 95\% CI [-.197, .095]$. This suggests that emotional invalidation in childhood may be more reliably associated with a lack of forgiveness following a transgression due to more negative motivations (i.e., avoidance, revenge) rather than the absence of more positive motivations such as benevolence. Table 6 presents the model coefficients for Study 3.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Study 3

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Emotional invalidation	-	.236***	-.073	.229***	-.299***	.330***	-.268***	.221**
2. Avoidance		-	-.609***	.516***	-.318***	.228***	-.179*	.239***
3. Benevolence			-	.479***	.192**	-.062	.230**	-.103
4. Revenge				-	-.251***	.170*	-.217**	.084
5. Self-control					-	-.193**	.315***	-.438***
6. Emotion inhibition						-	-.291***	.163*
7. Positive reactivity							-	-.093
8. Negative reactivity								-
M	2.395	3.106	3.391	2.218	2.795	3.105	3.683	3.712
SD	.819	1.022	.900	.928	.715	1.001	.745	.921
Scale range	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5

Note. † $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 6. Model Coefficients Predicting Avoidance, Benevolence and Revenge Study 3

Predictors	Dependent variables					
	Avoidance		Benevolence		Revenge	
	b	t	b	t	b	t
Emotion invalidation	.260	3.240**	-.051	-.685	.233	3.075**
Ex-partner as transgressor	.800	5.070***	-.652	-4.483***	.577	3.877***
Friend as transgressor	.770	4.291**	-.592	-3.579***	4.94	2.917**

Note. † $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. The referent group for transgressors were partners.

Indirect Effects of Emotion Regulation. Again, focusing on replicating the indirect effects from Study 1, we found that the association between emotional invalidation in childhood and avoidance motivations was mediated by the indirect effects of self-control ($\beta = .088$, $SE_{bootstrapped} = .031$, $CI_{bootstrapped} [.034, .156]$), and negative emotional reactivity $\beta = .060$, $SE_{bootstrapped} = .026$, $CI_{bootstrapped} [.015, .118]$). Furthermore, serial mediation effects highlight the potential importance of how emotional reactivity influences self-control. Notably, replicating the findings of Study 1, the serial indirect effect of negative reactivity and self-control on avoidance motivations was significant ($\beta = .021$, $SE_{bootstrapped} = .011$, $CI_{bootstrapped} [.004, .045]$). See Figures 3-4 for model coefficients.

General Discussion

Past work has shown that children who grow up in emotionally invalidating home environments—such as those in which one or both caregivers negate, belittle or otherwise trivialize a child’s emotional world—are more likely to struggle with emotion regulation in adulthood (e.g., more emotional inhibition; more emotional reactivity). Emotion regulation is important for navigating adult relationships, particularly in situations where people must prioritise more prosocial motivations over relationally harmful ones. Forgiveness is also essential for the long-term success of close relationships and requires individuals to override self-protective motivations (e.g., avoidance, resentment, revenge) in favour of connection motivations (e.g., benevolence). As such, we hypothesised that those who had recalled experiences of emotional invalidation in childhood were more likely to struggle with forgiveness in adulthood.

As predicted, across three studies, we found consistent evidence that people who recalled experiencing emotional invalidation in childhood were more likely to struggle with forgiveness in adulthood. Notably, emotional invalidation was associated with more avoidance and vengeance motivations (Studies 1-3), and less benevolence motivations (Studies 1 & 2 only), as characterised by McCullough (2001), when recalling past transgressions or imagining future ones. Furthermore, we found that these associations may be best understood through the indirect effects of emotional dysregulation and low self-control. People

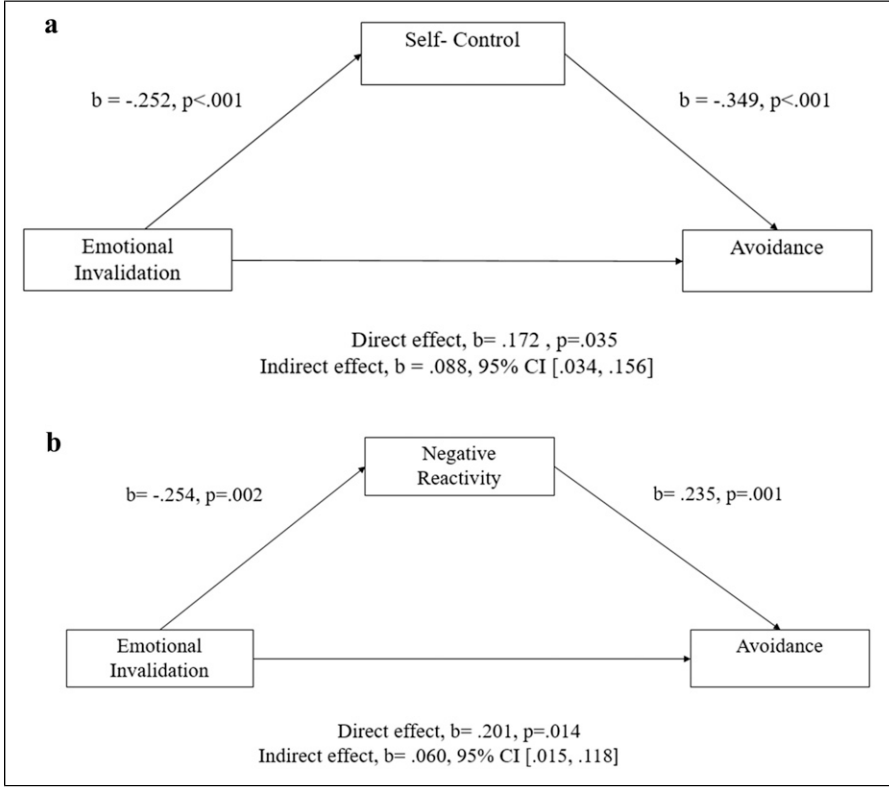


Figure 3. (A) Indirect association between emotional invalidation and avoidance motivations via self-control (B) Indirect association between emotional invalidation and avoidance motivations via negative reactivity

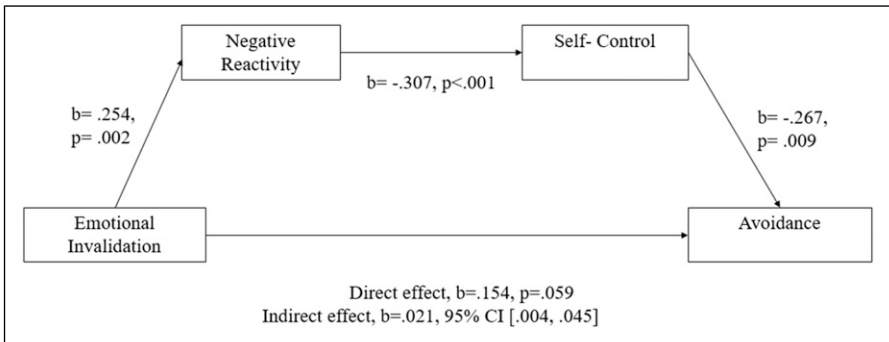


Figure 4. Indirect association between emotional invalidation and avoidance motivations via negative reactivity and self-control

who experienced emotional invalidation in childhood were more likely to experience reactivity to negative emotions, which was subsequently associated with poor trait self-control, and less forgiveness (Study 1 and 3).

Despite some of the inconsistencies across studies, our findings nonetheless have important implications for the broader understanding of how life histories shape experiences in adulthood. First, the findings build on past work (e.g., [Hope & Chapman, 2019](#); [Krause et al., 2003](#); [Reeves, 2007](#); [Shenk & Fruzzetti, 2011](#)) by illustrating how childhood experiences with emotional invalidation can have important consequences for emotion regulation later in life by influencing interpersonal processes such as forgiveness. Although this project focuses on just one interpersonal process influenced by emotion regulation (e.g., forgiveness), the interdependent nature of relationships means that people are regularly faced with dilemmas which pit self-protection goals against prosocial goals, and navigate both positive and negative experiences with close others ([Holmes, 2002](#); [Murray et al., 2008](#)). Our findings suggest that experiences with invalidation early in life is likely to have important consequences for many different facets of interpersonal life (e.g., navigating conflict, sharing positive news, providing emotional support).

Additionally, our findings suggest that emotional invalidation has several negative consequences for the self. We have extended previous literature by exploring self-control (e.g. self-criticism; [Naismith et al., 2019](#)) and provided insight into how the consequences of invalidation in childhood go beyond processes associated with emotion regulation but also self-regulation (i.e. exhibiting less self-control). These feelings of dysregulation are a problem because of the effort it takes to inhibit destructive bad behaviours and engage in prosocial ones instead ([Tangney et al., 2018](#)), something that is an important process needed in interpersonal relationships. In the context of forgiveness, low self-control will make you more inclined to act impulsively, including more vengefully and less likely to behave from pro-relationship motives when you have experienced a transgression. When people have high self-control, they are better equipped to override selfish and destructive impulses in favour of more adaptive behaviours ([Baumeister & Vohs, 2007](#)) and thus more likely to forgive ([Burnette et al., 2014](#); [Finkel & Campbell, 2001](#); [Ho et al., 2024](#); [Pronk et al., 2019](#)). Our findings have extended this literature by illustrating that childhood experiences with emotional invalidation have negative consequences on self-regulation as well as emotional mechanisms.

Our findings are of importance as much of the past work on emotional invalidation has focused on the struggles among people who have been clinically diagnosed, or have symptomologies consistent with mental health disorders (e.g., eating disorders, [Gonçalves et al., 2020](#); borderline personality disorder, [Selby et al., 2008](#)). As not everyone who experiences adversity in childhood develops psychological disorders ([Fergusson & Horwood, 2003](#); [Seery, 2011](#); [Seery et al., 2010](#)), it was of importance to explore and provide support for how experiences with emotional invalidation in childhood affect important relational processes more broadly speaking, which our research has successfully done.

Limitations & Future Directions

Despite the novelty and important implications of our studies, they are not without their limitations. Firstly, it is important to note that not all of our findings consistently replicated across all studies. Although the associations between emotional invalidation and avoidance and vengeance replicated across the studies, the associations with less benevolence only replicated in two of the three studies. Likewise, the indirect effects of negative reactivity and self-control only replicated in two of three studies. Inconsistencies across studies are a common feature of psychological research, particularly when effects are small or influenced by context (e.g., nature of the transgression; how *partners* behave following transgressions; [Maner, 2014](#)). And singular failures to replicate should not be considered conclusive evidence that a theory is invalid or a finding is noise ([Simons, 2014](#)). Likewise, it is important to avoid interpreting null effects. The inconsistencies observed in our studies may also be due to differences in methodologies (e.g., reflecting on a specific type of transgression vs. prompt for participants to self-select transgression; hypothetical vs. lived transgressions), or because reflecting on a transgression in hindsight may not reliably activate the same emotional processes as they do when they are experienced *in vivo*.

Likewise, some of the inconsistencies between studies may be due to differences in the transgression measures. In Study 1, the transgression measure used only included two subscales (benevolence and avoidant-resentment), whereas in Studies 2 and 3, there were three subscales (benevolence, avoidance, vengeance). Thus, these subtle differences may influence how variance was partitioned across outcomes. Following guidance on effect size benchmarks from [Kenny \(2025\)](#), the indirect effects observed in Studies 1 and 3 were small to moderate ($\beta s = .016-.088$; $01 = \textit{small}$, $.09 = \textit{medium}$, $.25 = \textit{large}$; [Kenny, 2025](#)). Small effects are more susceptible to sampling variability and measurement error. Consequently, small effects can be less stable across samples, and their magnitude may vary substantially from study to study. Thus, future research should consider replicating these findings in larger samples to help identify the more robust associations and mechanisms which link childhood emotional invalidation with forgiveness in adult relationships. Nonetheless, small effects can still be meaningful when they reflect patterns that extend to large proportions of the population (e.g., [Carey et al., 2023](#); [Etz & Arroyo, 2015](#)), and are essential to cumulative scientific contributions ([Götz et al., 2022](#)).

Another potential limitation is that participants were instructed to think about a recent transgression, but there was no mechanism in the study through which to control for how long it had been since the transgression had occurred. This may have introduced substantial variability in the emotional saliency of these experiences across participants, particularly in Study 1 where some participants were recalling past infidelities by a partner with whom they were no longer in a relationship ([Phelps & Sharot, 2008](#)). Such measurement inconsistencies can undermine the reliability of the observed effects. Similarly, the approach of retrospective self-reports of emotional invalidation in childhood, as well as reactions to past transgressions, are susceptible to inaccuracies and biased recall, and may not evoke the same emotional procedures as

when they are experienced in real time. However, this research is not the first to use retrospective measurements of emotional invalidation in adult populations (e.g., Mountford et al., 2007), and forgiveness (e.g., McCullough & Hoyt, 2002; Paleari et al., 2009).

Nonetheless, future studies could use methods which measure transgressions closer to their point of occurrence. For example, momentary experience sampling techniques and/or daily diary sampling would allow people to reflect on transgressions and how they have responded to these transgressions, within more constrained timeframes. Additionally, longitudinal studies tracking people from childhood through adulthood could more objectively measure emotional invalidation in formative years, and track its implications for adult relational well-being. Nonetheless, despite the potential limitations of our studies, they provide important insights into how people who believe they have been invalidated by *caregivers* in the past feel about forgiving their *partners* in the present.

Conclusion

To maintain long-term, satisfying relationships, people need to be able to forgive others following a transgression by overriding self-protective motivations in favour of more prosocial connection motivations. However, not everyone grows up in environments which equip them with these skills. People who experience more emotional invalidation in childhood are less likely to forgive close others who transgress against them, in part because they lack the effective emotional regulatory skills to do so. Our studies support the idea that emotional validation in childhood has important consequences for relationships in adulthood, in particular for processes which rely on effective emotional regulation such as forgiveness.

ORCID iDs

Paige A. Leggett  <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-8936-7328>

Veronica M. Lamarche  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2199-6463>

Megan Klabunde  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4210-7968>

Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Data Availability Statement

The data that supports the findings of this study will be openly available in OSF website at <https://osf.io/vyx3c>.

Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

Notes

1. Due to a typo in the pre-registration document that was not identified prior to submitting the document, we are only pre-registering the analytic strategy for these studies rather than the hypotheses.
2. Participants completed the entire 10-item scale, however we only focused on the suppression subscale as we had no a priori hypotheses as to the association between cognitive reappraisal, emotional invalidation in childhood and forgiveness.
3. Note that in Study 2, emotion inhibition was measured using the same scale as Study 1 but measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*) instead of the 7-point scale used in Study 1. This methodological change should have minimal impact on the reliability of the pattern of effects across studies, as scales using 5- and 7-point scales result in nearly identical means when rescaled, suggesting they capture similar sentiments (Dawes, 2008). Nonetheless, readers should exercise caution when interpreting the raw means across studies.

References

- Baumeister, R. F., & Vohs, K. D. (2007). Self-regulation, ego depletion, and motivation. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 1(1), 115–128. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2007.00001.x>
- Berry, J. W., Worthington Jr, E. L., O'Connor, L. E., Parrott, I. I. I. L., & Wade, N. G. (2005). Forgiveness, vengeful rumination, and affective traits. *Journal of Personality*, 73(1), 183–226. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2004.00308.x>
- Braithwaite, S. R., Selby, E. A., & Fincham, F. D. (2011). Forgiveness and relationship satisfaction: Mediating mechanisms. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 25(4), 551–559. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024526>
- Burnette, J. L., Davison, E. K., Finkel, E. J., Van Tongeren, D. R., Hui, C. M., & Hoyle, R. H. (2014). Self-control and forgiveness: A meta-analytic review. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 5(4), 443–450.
- Carey, E. G., Ridler, I., Ford, T. J., & Stringaris, A. (2023). Editorial perspective: When is a 'small effect' actually large and impactful? *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 64(11), 1643–1647. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.13817>
- Cavallo, J. V., Murray, S. L., & Holmes, J. G. (2014). Risk regulation in close relationships. In M. Mikulincer & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Mechanisms of social connection: From brain to group* (pp. 237–254). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/14250-014>
- Dawes, J. (2008). Do data characteristics change according to the number of scale points used? An experiment using 5-point, 7-point and 10-point scales. *International Journal of Market Research*, 50(1), 61–104. <https://doi.org/10.1177/147078530805000106>
- Denham, S. A. (2007). Dealing with feelings: How children negotiate the worlds of emotions and social relationships. *Cognition, Creier, Comportament/Cognition, Brain, Behavior*, 11(1).

- Denham, S. A., Blair, K. A., DeMulder, E., Levitas, J., Sawyer, K., Auerbach–Major, S., & Queenan, P. (2003). Preschool emotional competence: Pathway to social competence? *Child Development, 74*(1), 238–256. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00533>
- Ehteshamzadeh, P., Ahadi, H., Enayati, M. S., & Heidari, A. (2011). Construct and validation of a scale for measuring interpersonal forgiveness. *Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Clinical Psychology*.
- English, T., John, O. P., & Gross, J. J. (2013). *Emotion regulation in close relationships*.
- Ercengiz, M., Safali, S., Kaya, A., & Turan, M. E. (2023). A hypothetic model for examining the relationship between happiness, forgiveness, emotional reactivity and emotional security. *Current Psychology, 42*(21), 18355–18369. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-02909-2>
- Etz, K. E., & Arroyo, J. A. (2015). Small sample research: Considerations beyond statistical power. *Prevention Science, 16*(7), 1033–1036. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-015-0585-4>
- Exline, J. J., & Baumeister, R. F. (2000). *Expressing forgiveness and repentance: Benefits and barriers*.
- Fergusson, D. M., & Horwood, L. J. (2003). Resilience to childhood adversity: Results of a 21-year study. *Resilience and vulnerability*, 130–155 Adaptation in the context of childhood adversities.
- Finkel, E. J., & Campbell, W. K. (2001). Self-control and accommodation in close relationships: An interdependence analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 81*(2), 263–277. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.81.2.263>
- Finkel, E. J., Rusbult, C. E., Kumashiro, M., & Hannon, P. A. (2002). Dealing with betrayal in close relationships: Does commitment promote forgiveness? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 82*(6), 956–974. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.82.6.956>
- Gonçalves, S., Moreira, C., Gonçalves, M., Vieira, A. I., & Machado, B. C. (2020). The role of the perception of family environment in relation to body dissatisfaction, disordered eating and difficulties in close relationships. *Eating and Weight Disorders-Studies on Anorexia, Bulimia and Obesity, 25*(1), 205–213. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40519-018-0551-9>
- Götz, F. M., Gosling, S. D., & Rentfrow, P. J. (2022). Small effects: The indispensable foundation for a cumulative psychological science. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 17*(1), 205–215. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691620984483>
- Gross, J. J., & John, O. P. (2003). Individual differences in two emotion regulation processes: Implications for affect, relationships, and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85*(2), 348–362. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.85.2.348>
- Haslam, M., Arcelus, J., Farrow, C., & Meyer, C. (2012). Attitudes towards emotional expression mediate the relationship between childhood invalidation and adult eating concern. *European Eating Disorders Review, 20*(6), 510–514. <https://doi.org/10.1002/erv.2198>
- Hayes, A. F. (2017). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. Guilford Publications.
- Ho, M. Y., Liang, S., & Van Tongeren, D. R. (2024). Self-regulation facilitates forgiveness in close relationships. *Current Psychology, 43*(3), 2679–2689. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-023-04504-5>
- Ho, M. Y., Van Tongeren, D. R., & You, J. (2020). The role of self-regulation in forgiveness: A regulatory model of forgiveness. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*, 1084. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01084>

- Holmes, J. G. (2002). Interpersonal expectations as the building blocks of social cognition: An interdependence theory perspective. *Personal Relationships*, 9(1), 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6811.00001>
- Hope, N. H., & Chapman, A. L. (2019). Difficulties regulating emotions mediates the associations of parental psychological control and emotion invalidation with borderline personality features. *Personality Disorders: Theory, Research, and Treatment*, 10(3), 267–274. <https://doi.org/10.1037/per0000316>
- Kenny, D. A. (2025). Mediation. <https://davidakenny.net/cm/mediate.htm>
- Krause, E. D., Mendelson, T., & Lynch, T. R. (2003). Childhood emotional invalidation and adult psychological distress: The mediating role of emotional inhibition. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 27(2), 199–213. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0145-2134\(02\)00536-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0145-2134(02)00536-7)
- Lambie, J. A., & Lindberg, A. (2016). The role of maternal emotional validation and invalidation on children’s emotional awareness. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 62(2), 129–157. <https://doi.org/10.13110/merrpalmquar1982.62.2.0129>
- Lindner, C., Nagy, G., & Retelsdorf, J. (2015). The dimensionality of the brief self-control scale—an evaluation of unidimensional and multidimensional applications. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 86, 465–473. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2015.07.006>
- Linehan, M. (1993). *Cognitive-behavioral treatment of borderline personality disorder*. Guilford press.
- Maner, J. K. (2014). Let’s put our money where our mouth is: If authors are to change their ways, reviewers (and editors) must change with them. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 9(3), 343–351. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691614528215>
- McCullough, M. E. (2000). Forgiveness as human strength: Theory, measurement, and links to well-being. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 19(1), 43–55. <https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.2000.19.1.43>
- McCullough, M. E. (2001). Forgiveness: Who does it and how do they do it? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 10(6), 194–197. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8721.00147>
- McCullough, M. E., & Hoyt, W. T. (2002). Transgression-related motivational dispositions: Personality substrates of forgiveness and their links to the big five. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 28(11), 1556–1573. <https://doi.org/10.1177/014616702237583>
- McCullough, M. E., Worthington Jr, E. L., & Rachal, K. C. (1997). Interpersonal forgiving in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73(2), 321–336. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.73.2.321>
- Miller, P. A., Kliever, W., & Partch, J. (2010). Socialization of children’s recall and use of strategies for coping with interparental conflict. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 19(4), 429–443. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-009-9314-6>
- Mountford, V., Corstorphine, E., Tomlinson, S., & Waller, G. (2007). Development of a measure to assess invalidating childhood environments in the eating disorders. *Eating Behaviors*, 8(1), 48–58. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eatbeh.2006.01.003>
- Murray, S. L. (1999). The quest for conviction: Motivated cognition in romantic relationships. *Psychological Inquiry*, 10(1), 23–34. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli1001_3
- Murray, S. L., Derrick, J. L., Leder, S., & Holmes, J. G. (2008). Balancing connectedness and self-protection goals in close relationships: A levels-of-processing perspective on risk

- regulation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 94(3), 429–459. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.94.3.429>
- Murray, S. L., Holmes, J. G., & Collins, N. L. (2006). Optimizing assurance: The risk regulation system in relationships. *Psychological Bulletin*, 132(5), 641–666. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.132.5.641>
- Naismith, I., Zarate Guerrero, S., & Feigenbaum, J. (2019). Abuse, invalidation, and lack of early warmth show distinct relationships with self-criticism, self-compassion, and fear of self-compassion in personality disorder. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy*, 26(3), 350–361. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.2357>
- Paleari, F. G., Regalia, C., & Fincham, F. D. (2009). Measuring offence-specific forgiveness in marriage: The marital offence-specific forgiveness scale (MOFS). *Psychological Assessment*, 21(2), 194–209. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016068>
- Phelps, E. A., & Sharot, T. (2008). How (and why) emotion enhances the subjective sense of recollection. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 17(2), 147–152. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8721.2008.00565.x>
- Preece, D., Becerra, R., & Campitelli, G. (2019). Assessing emotional reactivity: Psychometric properties of the Perth emotional reactivity scale and the development of a short form. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 101(6), 589–597. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223891.2018.1465430>
- Pronk, T. M., Buyukcan-Tetik, A., Iliás, M. M., & Finkenauer, C. (2019). Marriage as a training ground: Examining change in self-control and forgiveness over the first 4 years of marriage. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 36(1), 109–130. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407517721065>
- Reeves, M. D. (2007). *The effect of invalidation on emotion regulation: An empirical investigation of Linehan's biosocial theory*.
- Rusbult, C. E., Verette, J., Whitney, G. A., Slovik, L. F., & Lipkus, I. (1991). Accommodation processes in close relationships: Theory and preliminary empirical evidence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 60(1), 53–78. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.60.1.53>
- Seery, M. D. (2011). Resilience: A silver lining to experiencing adverse life events? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 20(6), 390–394. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721411424740>
- Seery, M. D., Holman, E. A., & Silver, R. C. (2010). Whatever does not kill us: Cumulative lifetime adversity, vulnerability, and resilience. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 99(6), 1025–1041. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021344>
- Selby, E. A., Braithwaite, S. R., Joiner Jr, T. E., & Fincham, F. D. (2008). Features of borderline personality disorder, perceived childhood emotional invalidation, and dysfunction within current romantic relationships. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 22(6), 885–893. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013673>
- Shenk, C. E., & Fruzzetti, A. E. (2011). The impact of validating and invalidating responses on emotional reactivity. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 30(2), 163–183. <https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.2011.30.2.163>
- Shrout, P. E., & Bolger, N. (2002). Mediation in experimental and nonexperimental studies: New procedures and recommendations. *Psychological Methods*, 7(4), 422–445.

- Simons, D. J. (2014). The value of direct replication. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 9(1), 76–80. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691613514755>
- Tangney, J. P., Boone, A. L., & Baumeister, R. F. (2018). High self-control predicts good adjustment, less pathology, better grades, and interpersonal success. In *Self-regulation and self-control* (pp. 173–212). Routledge.
- Williams, J. V. (2010). *Parental emotion invalidation, emotion inhibition, and rumination in relation to adolescent depression*.
- Woodman, T. (1991). The role of forgiveness in marital adjustment. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Fuller Graduate School of Psychology, Pasadena, CA.
- Worthington, J. , E. L. (1998). The pyramid model of forgiveness: Some interdisciplinary speculations about unforgiveness and the promotion of forgiveness. *Dimensions of forgiveness: Psychological research and theological perspectives*, 50, 107–137.
- Worthington Jr, E. L., & Wade, N. G. (1999). The psychology of unforgiveness and forgiveness and implications for clinical practice. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 18(4), 385–418. <https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.1999.18.4.385>
- Zwaan, R. A., Etz, A., Lucas, R. E., & Donnellan, M. B. (2018). Making replication mainstream. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 41, Article e120. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525x17001972>

Author Biographies

Paige A. Leggett is a PhD student in the Department of Psychology at the University of Essex. Her research focuses on romantic relationships, emotion and wellbeing.

Dr Veronica M. Lamarche is a social-personality psychologist in the Department of Psychology at the University of Essex. Her research focuses on the psychological mechanisms associated with balancing risk, vulnerability, trust, and dependence in relationships.

Dr Megan Klabunde is a clinical child psychologist and developmental neuroscientist in the Department of Psychology at the University of Essex. Her research focuses on the development of mental health in children and specifically, how our perceptions of the body shape developing mental health, wellbeing and health behaviours.