

# The Role of Adverse Childhood Experiences in Social Functioning Through Emotion Dysregulation and Attachment Anxiety

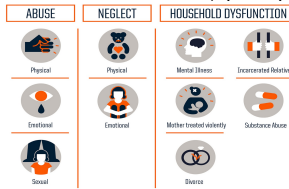


Amanda Parish, Samantha Castelblanco, & Ginette Blackhart  
East Tennessee State University



## Introduction

- Several prior studies show a significant positive relationship between adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and emotion dysregulation and between ACEs and attachment anxiety.
- Further, these studies show that emotion dysregulation or attachment anxiety mediate the relationship between ACEs and physical and mental health.
- Purpose: Examine relationships between ACEs, emotion dysregulation, attachment anxiety, rejection sensitivity (RS), and social interaction anxiety (SIA).
- We predicted that ACEs would significantly predict RS and SIA through emotion dysregulation and attachment anxiety.



## Method

- 517 participants (361 female, 146 male, 10 other gender identity),  $M_{age} = 23.40$ ,  $SD = 9.03$ .
- Data collected online through Sona:
  - Adverse Childhood Experiences Questionnaire
  - Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale
  - Experiences in Close Relationships Scale
  - Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire Adult Version
  - Social Interaction Anxiety Scale
- All analyses (correlation, multiple regression, and bootstrap mediation w/ 5000 replications) conducted in JASP 11.1.

## Contact Information

- Amanda Parish: [parisha@etsu.edu](mailto:parisha@etsu.edu)
- Samantha Castelblanco: [castelblanco@etsu.edu](mailto:castelblanco@etsu.edu)
- Dr. Ginni Blackhart: [blackhar@etsu.edu](mailto:blackhar@etsu.edu)

## Results

	1	2	3	4	5
1. ACEs	–				
2. Emotion Dysregulation	0.44*	–			
3. Rejection Sensitivity	0.36*	0.57*	–		
4. Attachment Anxiety	0.35*	0.60*	0.62*	–	
5. Social Int. Anxiety	0.29*	0.62*	0.63*	0.59*	–
$\alpha$	0.78	0.95	0.87	0.94	0.95
Mean	2.49	38.76	10.16	3.71	34.50
SD	2.37	15.33	5.36	1.45	17.42

\* $p < .001$

### Multiple Regression Analyses:

#### Rejection Sensitivity

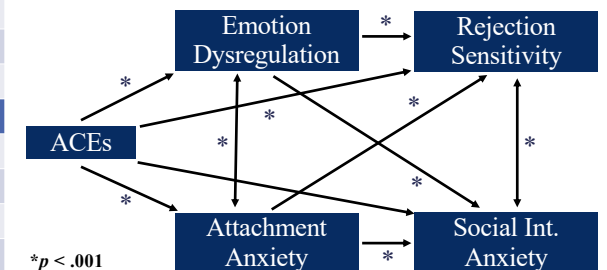
	$\beta$	$t$	$p$ -value
ACEs	0.09	2.36	0.019
Emotion Dysregulation	0.28	6.55	<0.001
Attachment Anxiety	0.42	10.21	<0.001

#### Social Interaction Anxiety

	$\beta$	$t$	$p$ -value
ACEs	-0.02	-.54	0.589
Emotion Dysregulation	0.42	9.95	<0.001
Attachment Anxiety	0.34	8.45	<0.001

### Bootstrap Mediation Analyses:

	Z	$p$ -value	95% CI
ACEs → Emotion Dysregulation → RS	5.67	<0.001	0.19, 0.40
ACEs → Attachment Anxiety → RS	6.60	<0.001	0.24, 0.46
ACEs → Emotion Dysregulation → SIA	7.45	<0.001	1.03, 1.80
ACEs → Attachment Anxiety → SIA	6.05	<0.001	0.62, 1.25
Emotion Dysregulation → Attachment Anxiety	10.61	<0.001	8.14, 11.65
Rejection Sensitivity → SIA	7.12	<0.001	11.93, 22.36



\* $p < .001$

## Discussion

- We found significant direct and indirect relationship between ACEs and rejection sensitivity through emotion dysregulation and attachment anxiety.
- Although we did not find a direct relationship between ACEs and social interaction anxiety, we also found a significant indirect relationship between ACEs and social interaction anxiety through emotion dysregulation and attachment anxiety.
- We are currently conducting a follow-up study in order to attempt to replicate these results and to examine the relationships between these variables and experiential avoidance.
- One limitation of this research is that data are cross sectional and we therefore cannot make causal conclusions. Future longitudinal research is therefore needed to determine directionality within these relationships.