



**SUICIDE IDEATION:
PSYCHOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS AND TREATMENT**

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Introduction: Suicide ideation includes a range of thoughts, wishes, or contemplations about committing suicide. Approximately 10 million Americans struggle with suicide ideation, and suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the United States (Harmer et al., 2021; Ahmad and Anderson, 2021). In the absence of an intervention, one-third of individuals with suicide ideation may attempt suicide within the first year of experiencing suicide ideation (Harmer et al., 2021). Elevated stressful experiences can heighten suicide ideation (Vilhjálmsson et al., 1998). In addition, emotion dysregulation may further contribute to the emergence of suicide ideation in high-stress contexts (Swee et al., 2020). The current study investigated how emotion dysregulation may explain the relationship between stressful experiences and suicide ideation. We predicted that emotion dysregulation would mediate the positive association between three stress-related risk factors — stress exposure, perceived stress, and negative affect (Duprey et al., 2021; Wong et al., 2019; Teismann et al., 2019).

Method: A sample of 3929 participants reported their levels of suicide ideation (via the Beck Suicidal Intent Scale), emotional dysregulation (via the Difficulties in Emotional Regulation Scale), stress exposure (via the Holmes-Rahe Stress Inventory), and perceived stress (via the Perceived Stress Scale), and negative affect (via the Negative Affect Scale).

Results: Emotion dysregulation significantly mediated the positive relationships between suicide ideation and stress exposure (see *Figure 1*), perceived stress (see *Figure 2*), and negative affect (see *Figure 3*).

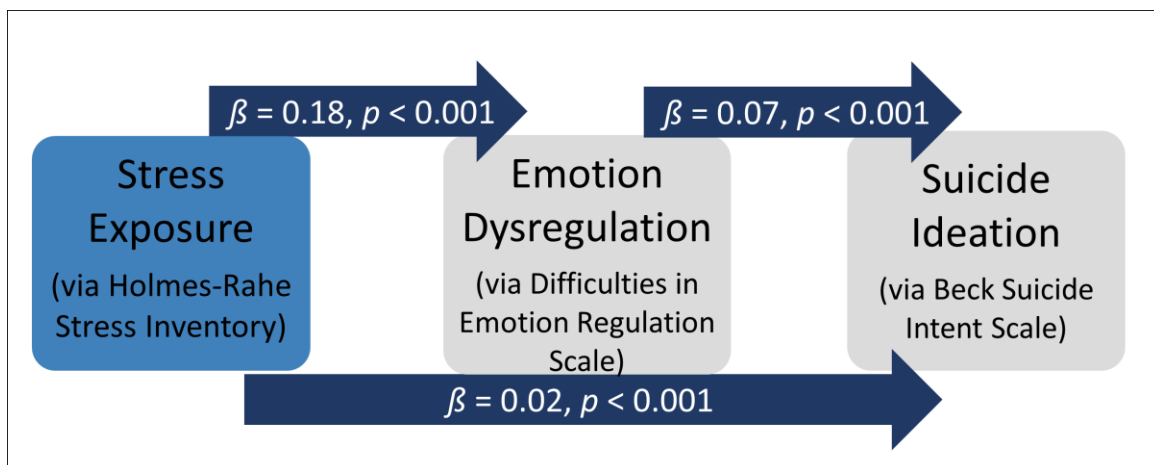


Figure 1. Emotion dysregulation mediated the relationship between stress exposure and SI.

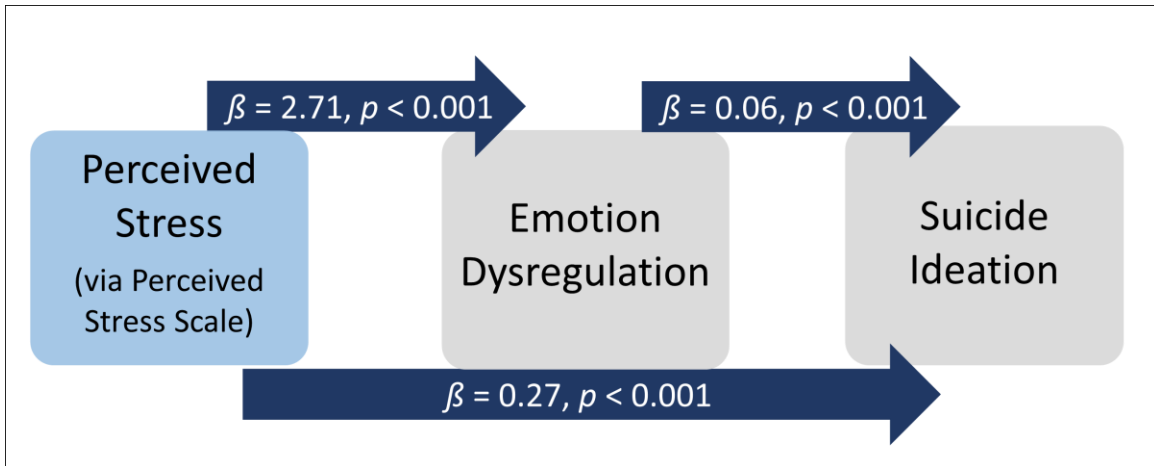


Figure 2. Emotion dysregulation mediated the relationship between perceived stress and SI.

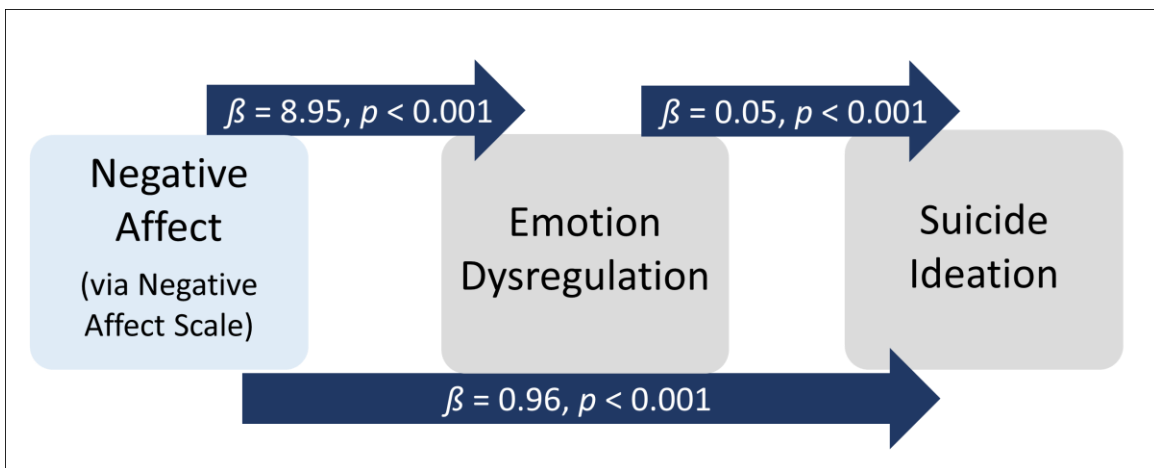


Figure 3. Emotion dysregulation mediated the relationship between negative affect and SI.

Discussion: The current findings highlight the importance of targeting emotion regulation skills in suicide prevention treatments. Timely intervention may help identify personal warning signs and adopt coping strategies to manage emotional dysregulation. Our lab's ongoing work explores the refinement of a suicide risk management intervention to teach effective emotion regulation that may reduce suicide ideation and attempts.

Citations

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