

New Research From Psychological Science

May 15, 2015

Read about the latest research published in *Psychological Science*:

[Not So Innocent: Toddlers' Inferences About Costs and Culpability](#)

Julian Jara-Ettinger, Joshua B. Tenenbaum, and Laura E. Schulz

How do perceptions of competence and motivation influence children's social evaluations of others? Children watched two puppets push a button on a toy. When the button was pushed, the toy played music. One puppet correctly pushed the button on the first try; the other puppet correctly pushed the button only after several unsuccessful attempts. When asked, both puppets refused to help the child's accompanying parent push the button. Children said that they would rather play with the more competent puppet, but they judged the less competent puppet to be nicer. Although children prefer those who are competent, they judge them more harshly for failing to help than those who are less able to provide assistance, suggesting that children are sensitive to the costs of actions.

[Perceived Stigmatization, Resilience, and Diurnal Cortisol Rhythm Among Children of Parents Living With HIV](#)

Peilian Chi, Richard B. Slatcher, Xiaoming Li, Junfeng Zhao, Guoxiang Zhao, Xuequn Ren, Jianfeng Zhu, and Bonita Stanton

Although stigma is known to negatively influence psychological well-being, not much is known about its influence on physical health and health-related biology. Children between the ages of 8 and 15 who had a parent with HIV were assessed for perceived stigmatization, resilience, socioeconomic status, sleep quality, perceived health, stressful life events, and parental death related to HIV/AIDS. Children also provided saliva samples (used to assess cortisol level) four times a day for 3 days. The researchers found that greater perceived stigmatization was associated with lower cortisol levels at awakening and with flatter diurnal cortisol slopes — a marker of dysregulated hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis function. Children with higher levels of resilience were found to perceive lower levels of stigmatization and, in turn, to have healthier diurnal cortisol patterns, indicating the importance of resilience for coping with parental HIV/AIDS.

[Distracted by Cues for Suppressed Memories](#)

Paula T. Hertel and Jeffrey A. Hayes

In a study examining the costs of thought suppression on an unrelated task, participants completed a think/no-think task that used previously learned pairs of cue and response words. On the no-think trials, participants were instructed to suppress their thoughts by thinking of something else (direct-suppression

condition) or by focusing on a substitute word supplied by the researcher (substitution condition). Participants then completed a flanker task in which the cues for the previously suppressed or unsuppressed response words served as flankers. After that, they completed a surprise recall test of the response words. In the direct-suppression condition, delayed response on the flanker task was associated with suppression-induced forgetting on the recall task, demonstrating that suppression in one task can influence another task.