Christine Rotondo

Adolescent Romantic Relationship Satisfaction and Perceived Stress is Easily Manipulated by Relationship Primes

Background:

Romantic relationships have been shown to involve stress as well as satisfaction. Previous research conducted on adults reflected an increase in overall well-being when in romantic relationships. This study compares romantic relationship satisfaction and perceived stress in adolescents when presented with positive, negative, and neutral verbal prompts.

Methods:

60 heterosexual participants from a suburban High School in New York who were in a healthy romantic relationship were paired off into their designated couples and randomly assigned into one of three groups: positive, negative, neutral. Each group was read aloud the corresponding prompt to their group and asked to silently write a written reflection for 10 minutes. Participants were then asked to complete a relationship assessment scale (RAS), stress survey, and self-disclosure index (SDI).

Results:

A higher RAS score and lower stress score was associated with participants who received and reflected on a positive prompt. Moreover, a lower RAS score and higher stress score was associated with participants who received and reflected on a negative prompt. Results of participants who received and reflected on the neutral prompt fell in between positive and negative scores for the RAS and stress survey. SDI was insignificant compared to the differing prompts.

Conclusion:

It can be suggested that healthy romantic relationships can benefit adolescents' wellbeing when based around positive emotions and activities. The insignificance of the SDI shows that no matter how the adolescent is feeling in regards to their partner and romantic relationship, he/she is not affected to the point where they lose trust or confidence in their partner. The next step of this study is to repeat the procedure with adults and compare that data between the two, adolescents and adults. This would connect the generation gap in regards to romantic relationships in general.