

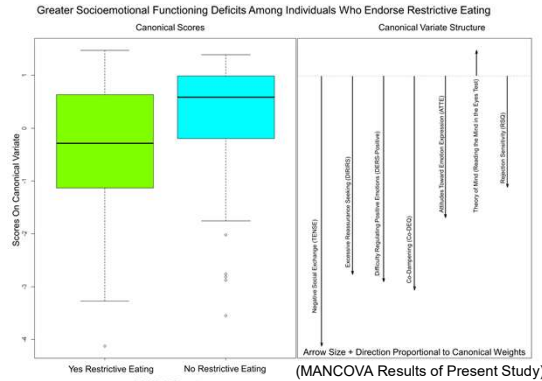
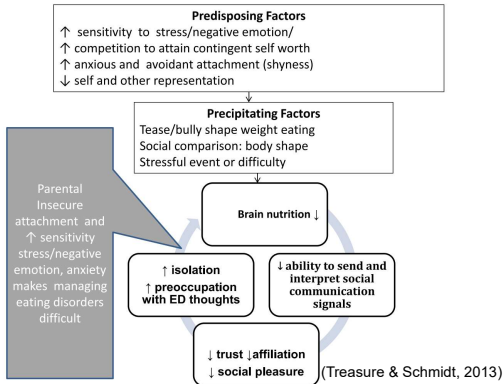
Biased and Inflexible Interpretations of Ambiguous Social Situations: Associations with Eating Disorder Symptoms and Socioemotional Functioning

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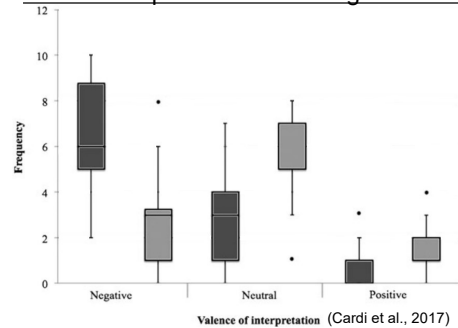
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Introduction

- Socioemotional functioning deficits are associated with, and may cause, eating disorder symptoms



- Biased interpretations of ambiguous social situations may impair socioemotional functioning



- Less attention has been paid to how inflexible interpretations might impact socioemotional functioning and eating disorder symptoms
- Past work: In the general population, inflexible interpretations of ambiguous social situations are associated with impaired emotion regulation (dampening of positive emotion) and depression/social anxiety (Everaert, Bronstein, et al., 2018, 2020)

Method

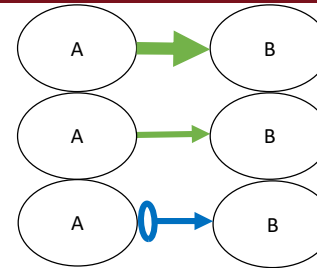
- Participants:** 310 nonclinical participants, selected to vary on eating disorder symptoms
- Measures:**
 - General eating disorder symptoms (EPSI)
 - Restrictive eating (DRS)
 - Socioemotional functioning (self-report)
 - Emotional BADE Task:
 - Plausibility ratings for explanations of evolving scenarios yield metrics of interpretation bias and inflexibility
- Analyses:**
 - Causal Discovery Analysis – yields graph at top-right
 - Algorithm:** GFCI
 - Stability:** 10,000 jackknifed re-samples
 - MANCOVA (covariates: age, sex, BMI)
 - Socioemotional functioning ~ restrictive eating

Example of Emotional BADE Task Scenario

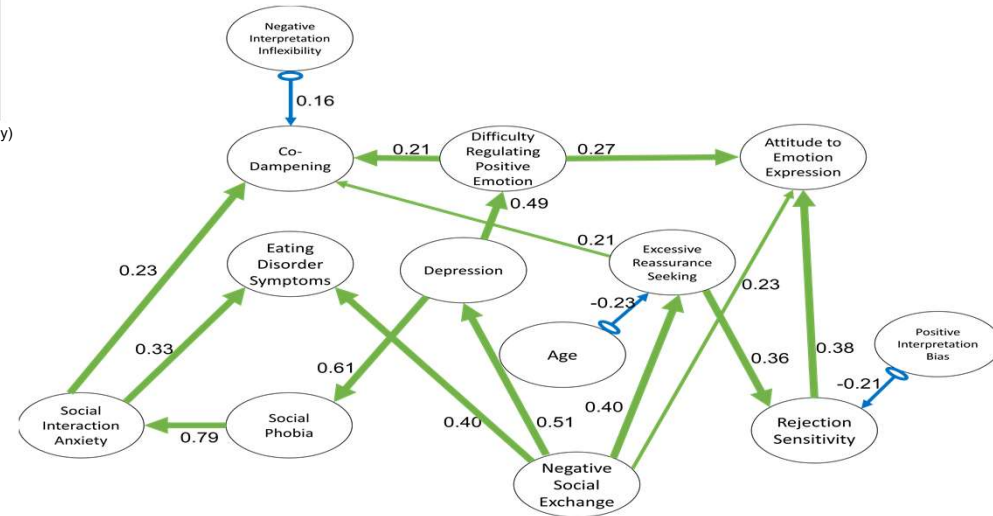
Statement 1	It's your birthday. You received few messages on Facebook
Statement 2	You look at your phone. You received one missed call and a voicemail
Statement 3	You listen to the voicemail and hear your friends all singing "Happy Birthday"
Lure Explanation	Very few of your friends remembered your birthday
Lure Explanation	Many people don't care that it's your birthday
Absurd Explanation	Your friends have never heard of Facebook
True Explanation	Your friends want to surprise you with a nice birthday message

Results

- Key:



- A most likely directly causes B, unmeasured confound unlikely
- A most likely directly or indirectly causes B, unmeasured confound unlikely
- A may directly or indirectly cause B, and/or unmeasured confound exists



Discussion

- Results Summary**
 - MANCOVA: People who endorse restrictive eating exhibit greater impairment in socioemotional functioning
 - Causal Graph: Socioemotional functioning deficits may directly (ex: greater negative social exchange, social anxiety) and indirectly (ex: depression) cause eating disorder symptoms
 - Interpretation inflexibility may cause co-dampening
 - Less positive interpretation bias is a (potentially confounded) cause of rejection sensitivity
- Implications:**
 - Interpretation bias and inflexibility may not be causes or consequences of mild eating disorder symptoms in the general population
 - However, more severe symptoms may have nutritional effects that increase inflexibility, which our study suggests would reduce social pleasure
 - Future research should continue to investigate whether positive interpretation bias causes rejection sensitivity, as this has implications for CBM-I treatment paradigms

Link to full manuscript: <https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3936928>