

Perceived Control Mediates the Relation Between Parental Rejection and Youth Depression

Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology

December 2006, Volume 34, Issue 6, pp 863-872

Perceived Control Mediates the Relation Between Parental Rejection and Youth Depression

Melissa M. Magaro, John R. Weisz

Abstract

Previous research suggests that both perceived parental control and rejection may be linked to youth depression. However, research has not definitively determined which dimension matters more, nor examined mediation within a clinical sample. We used a sample of clinically referred youth (aged 7–17) to determine (a) which parenting dimension is more closely associated with youth depression, and (b) whether youngsters' perceptions of control mediated the association. Perceived parental rejection was strongly linked to depressive symptoms (perceived parental control was not); youth perceived control did in fact mediate the association, and robustly so across gender and age groups. The findings suggest a developmental process in depression, plus potential foci for prevention and treatment programs.