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Author

Ebo, Regina N

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Peeking into family dynamics: The negative impacts of valuing emotion control

Regina Ebo

UC Berkeley, Berkeley, California, United States

Abstract

Parents' beliefs that emotions should be controlled (valuing emotion control) have been connected to worse parent-child relationship outcomes. The current work longitudinally investigated how the relationship between valuing emotion control and parent-child outcomes (relationship quality and well-being) is mediated by parents' unsupportive responses to their children's emotions. We found that parents' valuing emotion control predicted lower parent-child relationship quality ($\beta = -0.17$, $SE = 0.04$, $p < .001$) and poorer child well-being ($\beta = -0.18$, $SE = 0.04$, $p < .001$). This was mediated by parents' unsupportive responses such that parents' valuing emotion control predicted more unsupportive responses which in turn predicted lower relationship quality (indirect effect = -0.06 [-0.14 , -0.01]) and poorer child well-being (indirect effect = -0.05 [-0.11 , -0.01]). Overall, valuing emotion control may negatively impact responses to others' emotions and subsequently the perceived relationship quality as well as the other person's well-being.