

A Bodymind Perspective on Affiliation and Health

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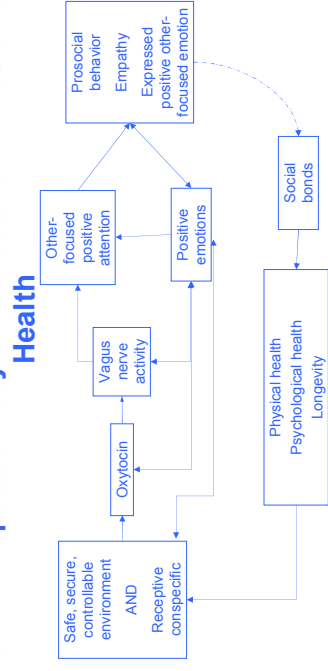


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Introduction

- "Other-focus" is defined as moments in which the individual looks outside of the self and attends to other humans in the environment.
- The vagus nerve, in concert with oxytocin, is hypothesized to initiate an other-focused state by directing attention to others and generating other-focused positive emotions, leading to other-focused behaviors.
- Over time, frequent experiences of other-focus result in enhanced relationship quality, psychological well-being and physical health.
- Respiratory sinus arrhythmia (RSA) is one index of vagal control, also known as cardiac vagal tone (see Box 2).
- These studies investigate physiological and psychological elements of the affiliation process as predicted by the **bodymind model of affiliation and health** (See Box 1).

Box 1: Proposed Bodymind Model of Affiliation and Health

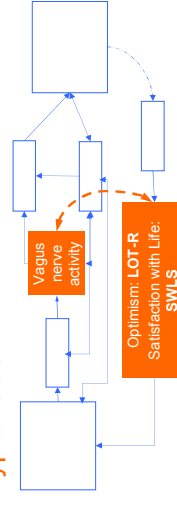


Not all relationships proposed by the bodymind model are explored in the data presented here.

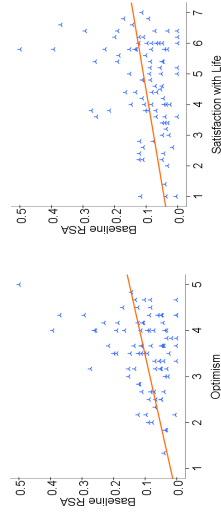
Study 1: Baseline Vagal Activity Predicts Psychological Health

- Adult community sample
- N=94, mean age = 26.4, 32% male

Hypothesis



Results



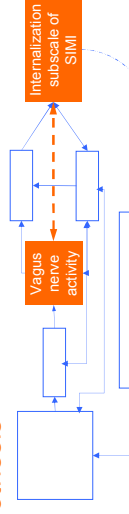
General Discussion

- Study 1: Baseline cardiac vagal tone predicts psychological health
- Study 2: Baseline cardiac vagal tone predicts interest in behaving prosocially.
- Study 3: More mentally healthy individuals are more vagally responsive to low-arousal states.
- The findings support the bodymind conceptualization of other-focus as a psychological process with specific physiological underpinnings that promotes well-being by increasing social resources.
- Over time, frequent other-focused moments could have a significant beneficial impact on the health and well-being of the individual and his or her group.

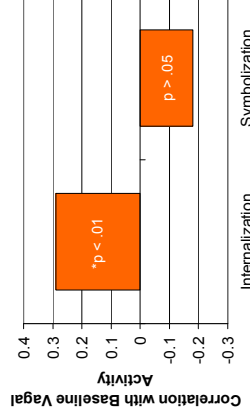
Study 2: Baseline Vagal Activity Predicts Tendency Toward Prosocial Behavior

- College student sample
- N=143, 30% male
- Self-importance of Moral Identity Subscales (SIMI; Reed & Aquino, 2002)
- Internalization: Importance of **behaving** prosocially
- Symbolization: Importance of **appearing** prosocial

Hypothesis



Results



Box 2: Respiratory Sinus Arrhythmia (RSA): Measure of Cardiac Vagal Tone

- Cardiac vagal control can be measured by respiratory sinus arrhythmia (RSA).
- $RSA = MAX \text{ expiration interbeat interval (BI)} - MIN \text{ in inspiration BI, measured in seconds}$ (Grassman, 1983)

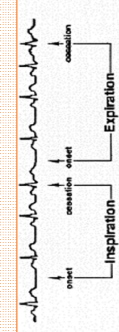


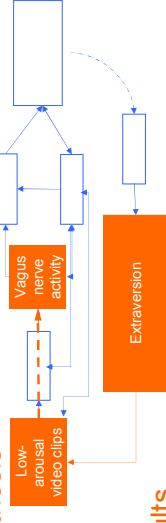
Figure from Collingham, Porges & Lyon, 1988

- Analyses were conducted using the mean of RSA values over a two minute baseline period.

Study 3: Extraversion Predicts Vagal Reactivity to Safety and Security Cues

- College student sample
- N=118, 34% male
- Participants viewed emotion-inducing clips that varied in level of arousal
- Vagal reactivity was recorded during each clip

Hypothesis



Results

