

How do children with and without ADHD talk about frustration?: Use of a novel emotion narrative recall task.

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Abstract

Children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) experience difficulties related to emotional reactivity and regulation. The current study examines differences in the emotional reactivity and regulation of children with and without ADHD in the context of their real-life experiences of negative emotion using a novel ecologically valid methodology. Eighty-three 8-12-year-old children (46 ADHD, 38 non-ADHD) participated in the study. Children completed the negative emotion narrative recall task, a novel task whereby children provided a narrative recall of a real-life event where they experienced negative emotion. ANCOVA indicated children with ADHD recalled significantly more overall frustration and intense frustration than children without ADHD. Children with ADHD exhibiting more negative emotional reactivity while recalling negative emotions than children without ADHD. The current study suggests that children with ADHD are uniquely impacted by negative emotional experiences and represents an important step in understanding the emotional reactivity and regulation of children with ADHD.