Attributions about Resilience in Cancer Survivor Outcomes from Scripted Emotional Tone

Lindsey B. Jones, Samuel C. Witt, Justin M. Hughes, & Aurora Torres
Psychology Department

Background
Conceptual Model of Resilience in Child Cancer Survivors (Wills & Bantum, 2012)
Family Environment: Support
   Emotional support, Conflict, Rejection, Demographics
Self Regulation: Self Control, Emotional Expression & Emotional Regulation
Outcome: Optimism/Positive Affect, Affiliations (Friends), Developed competencies (Maturity)

Attribution
Making judgments about other’s behavior
Appraisal processes for situations.
(Van Doorn et al., 2015)

HYPOTHESIS
The target character’s information about being a cancer survivor in a conversational script affects ratings of emotional regulation, social support, and outcome depending on the affective tone of script.

Method
DESIGN
3 X 3 (Script tone by Resilience Component) mixed design
   Script: Positive, Negative, Neutral
   Outcome, Support, Emotional Regulation
   3 questions in each component
   Repeated measures
Measured Disagreeableness Rating
   (1 = Strongly Agree; 7 = Strongly Disagree)

MATERIALS AND PROCEDURE
Participants (N = 86)
Qualtrics online survey system
Scripts: conversation between 2 teenaged cousins manipulated for affective tone
   Target cancer survivor and the Cousin
   6 statements/ character discussing school
   9 questions based resilience model

Key Findings

Attribution Theory (Van Doorn et al., 2015)
Emotional tone of script influenced context of social situation
Negative emotions → regret in rater
Negative emotional expression might be considered the norm for cancer survivors
Cancer attributed as source of negative emotion.
Future research: attributions with different cancers.