features relative to each other rather than to the viewer). Indeed, prior studies have linked better allocentric memory to fewer intrusive memories and lower levels of PTSD symptoms. To test the specific role of spatial memory formation during aversive experiences, we conducted a series of studies with a Virtual Reality (VR) scenario that provokes intrusive memories in healthy participants. Study 1 (N=92) demonstrates that spatial memory is better from the original encoding perspective compared to shifted viewpoint, which requires additional allocentric processing. Enhanced spatial memory was also evident for scene elements that caused higher levels of distress, and among individuals who had superior allocentric abilities. Replicating and extending these findings, we show that the VR scenario successfully elicits intrusive memories measured in a 3-day intrusion diary (Study 2; N=100) and with an intrusion provocation task (Study 3; N=96). Furthermore, Study 2 and 3 manipulated explicit spatial encoding strategies, but were largely unsuccessful in altering objective indices of spatial memory. However, correlational analyses suggest that a stronger subjective focus on spatial relationships may be associated with lower intrusion-related distress. Our poster will address implications for the role of hippocampus-based memory formation in PTSD and avenues for future research, including an allocentric memory training that we are currently developing.

Keywords: Affektive Störungen, (Experimentelle) Psychopathologie

Sounds bad: Emotion regulation of affective sounds is disturbed in depression

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Maladaptive emotion regulation plays a major role in the development and maintenance of depression. Whereas sustained negative affect as well as difficulties in experiencing positive affect accompany depression, existing experimental research mainly focused on emotion regulation in negative emotions. Thus, the aim of the present study is to investigate emotion regulation of positive and negative sounds in patients with depression. Therefore, 20 patients with diagnosed major depression (MD) and 33 healthy controls (HC) were instructed to increase, decrease, or not to regulate their emotional reactions to positive and negative sounds by reappraisal. We assessed self-report as well as the skin conductance in response to the affective sounds.

Without regulation, MD patients rated positive sounds as less positive and negative sounds as less negative than HC. During the instruction to decrease their emotional reaction, the MD group rate all sounds as more negative than HC. Most interestingly, MD patients were less effective in increasing the emotional reaction that was shown by less positive ratings of positive sounds in comparison to HC. Furthermore, depression was associated with reduced skin conductance amplitudes in response to all affective sounds.

In sum, depression is associated with weakened emotional responses to positive and negative sounds and specifically with reduced efficiency in increasing positive emotions. This maladaptive emotion regulation of positive emotions may contribute to the development and maintenance of depression and can be specifically addressed in psychotherapeutic interventions – e.g. by supporting positive activities.