

# Can briefly reflecting upon unconditional regard buffer adolescents selves? A field experiment

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		<input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Registration date</b> 13/03/2014	<b>Overall study status</b> Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b> 13/02/2015	<b>Condition category</b> Mental and Behavioural Disorders	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data

## Plain English summary of protocol

### Background and study aims

Unconditional regard refers to the feeling that one is accepted and valued by others without conditions. Psychological theory holds that when people experience unconditional regard from others, they feel valuable without conditions. Thus, unconditional regard might reduce negative self-feelings in the face of setbacks (e.g., I am a valuable person, even if I get low grades in school). However, evidence for this concept is lacking. This study tests whether reflecting on unconditional regard can reduce adolescents negative self-feelings (i.e., negative feelings about oneself) in the face of a common setback low grades in school. This study focuses on 11-15 year olds, because this is an age during which negative self-feelings peak.

### Who can participate?

Adolescents aged 11-15 years old.

### What does the study involve?

Participants are randomly allocated to reflect for 15 minutes on experiences of unconditional regard (experimental condition), conditional regard (first control group), or other social experiences (second control group). Three weeks later, after receiving their course grades, participants report their negative self-feelings and negative other-feelings. Course grades are obtained from school records.

### What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

We do not foresee any risks.

### Where is the study run from?

A public secondary school in the Netherlands.

### When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

The study started in November 2011 and ran until January 2012.

Who is funding the study?  
The Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research.

Who is the main contact?  
Eddie Brummelman, MSc  
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## Contact information

**Type(s)**  
Scientific

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## Additional identifiers

**EudraCT/CTIS number**

**IRAS number**

**ClinicalTrials.gov number**

**Secondary identifying numbers**  
N/A

## Study information

**Scientific Title**  
Can briefly reflecting upon unconditional regard buffer adolescents negative self-feelings following low school grades? A randomized single-blind field experiment

**Study objectives**  
We hypothesize that reflecting upon unconditional regard, compared to two active control groups,  
1. will buffer participants negative self-feelings following low school grades  
2. but will not buffer participants negative other-feelings following low school grades.

**Ethics approval required**  
Old ethics approval format

**Ethics approval(s)**

**Study design**

Single-blind randomized controlled field experiment. Experimenters and teachers are blind to condition assignment.

**Primary study design**

Interventional

**Secondary study design**

Randomised controlled trial

**Study setting(s)**

Other

**Study type(s)**

Quality of life

**Participant information sheet**

Not available in web format, please use the contact details below to request a patient information sheet

**Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Negative self-feelings (i.e., negative feelings about oneself)

**Interventions**

Participants are randomly assigned to the unconditional-regard condition or one of two active control conditions.

1. In the unconditional-regard condition, participants are told to think of peers who always accept and value you, no matter how you behave or how good you are at something. Next, they visualize and write about a situation in which one of these peers still accepted and valued you even though you made a mistake or did something stupid.
2. In the first control condition, participants are told to think of peers who accept and value you, but only if you do or say the kind of things these peers like, approve of, or look up to. Next, they visualize and write about a situation in which one of these peers accepted and valued you less because you made a mistake or did something stupid.
3. In the second control condition, participants are told to think of peers who do not really know you. Next, they visualize and write about a situation in which one of these peers was present while you made a mistake or did something stupid.

In all conditions, the exercise takes about 15 minutes.

**Intervention Type**

Other

**Phase**

Not Applicable

**Primary outcome measure**

1. Negative self-feelings (i.e., negative feelings about oneself) measured by questionnaire at 3 weeks post-manipulation
2. School grades measured by report card received at 3 weeks post-manipulation

**Secondary outcome measures**

Negative other-feelings (i.e., negative feelings about others) measured by questionnaire at 3 weeks post-manipulation

**Overall study start date**

28/11/2011

**Completion date**

16/01/2012

## Eligibility

**Key inclusion criteria**

1. Adequate Dutch language ability
2. Attending Dutch secondary school
3. Between 11-15 years old

**Participant type(s)**

Patient

**Age group**

Child

**Lower age limit**

11 Years

**Upper age limit**

15 Years

**Sex**

Both

**Target number of participants**

247

**Key exclusion criteria**

Does not meet inclusion criteria

**Date of first enrolment**

28/11/2011

**Date of final enrolment**

16/01/2012

## Locations

**Countries of recruitment**

Netherlands

**Study participating centre**

Heidelberglaan 1

Utrecht

Netherlands

3584 CS

## **Sponsor information**

**Organisation**

Utrecht University (Netherlands)

**Sponsor details**

c/o Prof. Dr. Bram Orobio de Castro

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**Sponsor type**

University/education

**ROR**

<https://ror.org/04pp8hn57>

## **Funder(s)**

**Funder type**

Research organisation

**Funder Name**

The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (Netherlands) Ref. 431-09-022

## **Results and Publications**

**Publication and dissemination plan**

Not provided at time of registration

**Intention to publish date**

**Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan**

**IPD sharing plan summary**

Not provided at time of registration

**Study outputs**

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">Results article</a>	results	01/12/2014		Yes	No