**Problem:** Trouble with relationships and social interactions can lead to poor physical and mental health outcomes (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2017; Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010)

**Explanation:** Some may have trouble maintaining relationships due to an inability to manage, or “regulate” their emotions

**Preliminary Study:** Ran online study through Amazon Mechanical Turk (n = 501) to examine how current emotional state and difficulties regulating emotions affect ability to perceive other’s emotions.

Found individuals perceive other’s emotions less accurately when they feel more intense negative emotions themselves, F(1, 499)= 20.33, p<.001, Difficulties regulating emotional experiences also predicted lower emotion perception accuracy, F(1, 498)= 11.69, p = .001.

**Current Question:** Can an intervention that helps people regulate emotions through mindful breathing and phone-based reminders improves their ability to perceive other people’s emotions?

**Aim 1:** Determine whether people who learn a mindful breathing skill in a lab setting to regulate their emotions perceive other people’s emotions more accurately than people who do not learn this skill.

**Aim 2:** Find out whether phone-based reminders to practice this skill improves emotion perception over time.

**METHOD**

**Sample:** 72 adult psychiatric outpatients

**Intake session:** Participants are assessed for psychiatric diagnoses and complete emotion perception tasks

**Training Session:** Randomized allocation to Mindfulness condition, Habituation condition, or Control condition. All participants complete a stressor task, with specific instructions according to condition

**Testing phase:** Participants receive mobile phone prompts for one week

**Online Survey:** Complete self-report measures of psychological functioning and emotion perception tasks

**THE STUDY**

**Current Question:** Can an intervention that helps people regulate emotions through mindful breathing and phone-based reminders improves their ability to perceive other people’s emotions?

**Aim 1:** Determine whether people who learn a mindful breathing skill in a lab setting to regulate their emotions perceive other people’s emotions more accurately than people who do not learn this skill.

**Aim 2:** Find out whether phone-based reminders to practice this skill improves emotion perception over time.

**FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

**Mission:** Apply findings from this research to develop an accessible, online resource where people can learn social and emotional skills.

**Tools:** Developed a website for people to test their ability to perceive other’s emotions and receive suggestions about how to improve their social skills, based on empirical findings.

**Features:***

- Game-like quiz in which the user guesses the emotion portrayed by faces shown for only 1 sec.

- Quiz results that reveal how accurate the user was and whether they have a bias to perceive faces as happy or angry

- Guidance for how to develop mindfulness skills to improve accuracy of and ameliorate bias in emotion perception