

From Dysregulated Emotions to Social Dysfunction: Mediating Effects of Emotion Regulation Problems on Social Functioning in Schizotypy

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ABSTRACT

- Emotion regulation is a self-regulatory process that may be a novel treatment target for improving social functioning in schizophrenia spectrum disorders (SSD, Strauman, 2017).
- Schizotypy is a construct thought to represent biological and social vulnerability to SSD (Claridge & Beach, 1997).
- This investigation characterized the role of emotion regulation in mediating the relationship between schizotypy and three core features of social functioning in college students.
- This study also considered whether these relationships operated differently across males and females.

METHOD

Measures

- **Schizotypal Traits** via Schizotypal Personality Questionnaire-Brief Revised Updated (SPQ-BRU; Davidson, Hoffman, Spaulding, 2016): Social Anxiety, Interpersonal, Cognitive-Perceptual, & Disorganized.
- **Emotion regulation problems** via Difficulties with Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS; Gratz & Roemer, 2004).
- **Social Functioning** via the (1) Interpersonal Communication, (2) Social Engagement, and (3) Prosocial Behavior subscales of the Social Functioning Scale (SFS; Birchwood, 1990)
- **Participants** 409 college students (female, 71.9%)
 - Age 19.49 years old (SD = 3.10)
 - Race 83.4% Caucasian, 7.3% Asian, 2.9% African American, 0.7% Native American, & 2.9% Multiracial

RESULTS

Bivariate Correlations

- All of the SPQ-BRU subscales positively correlated with the DERS and negatively with the SFS.
- The DERS was negatively associated with the SFS.

Multiple group analyses (MGA)

- Gender moderated the distinct pathways from the SPQ-BRU to the SFS, at varying degrees of strength.

Significant for SFS Interpersonal Communication

$[\chi^2_d(8) = 24.552, p < 0.001]$

Not significant for SFS Prosocial Behavior

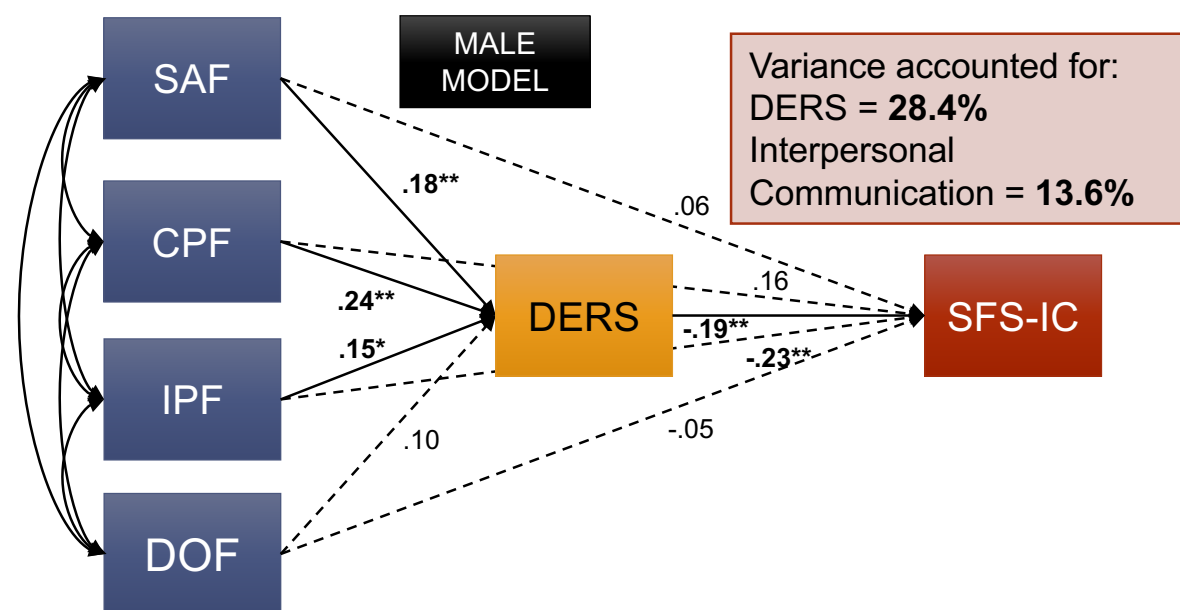
$[\chi^2_d(8) = 8.692, p = 0.184]$.

Significant for SFS Social Engagement

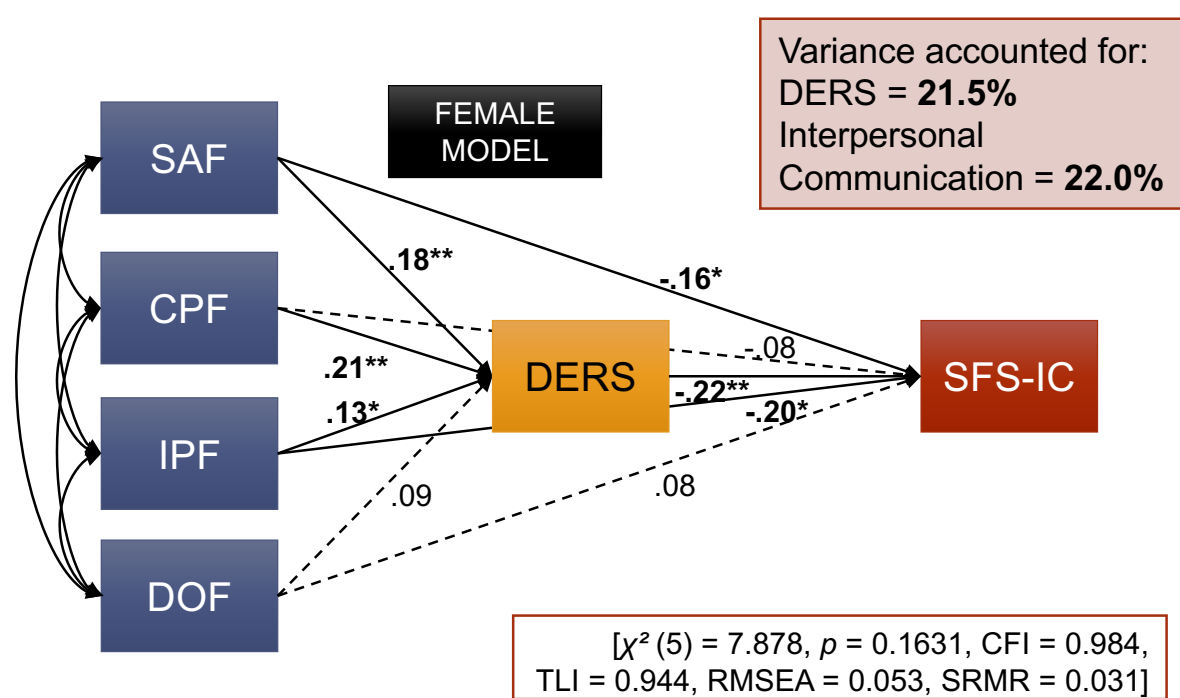
$[\chi^2_d(8) = 20.505, p < 0.001]$

RESULTS

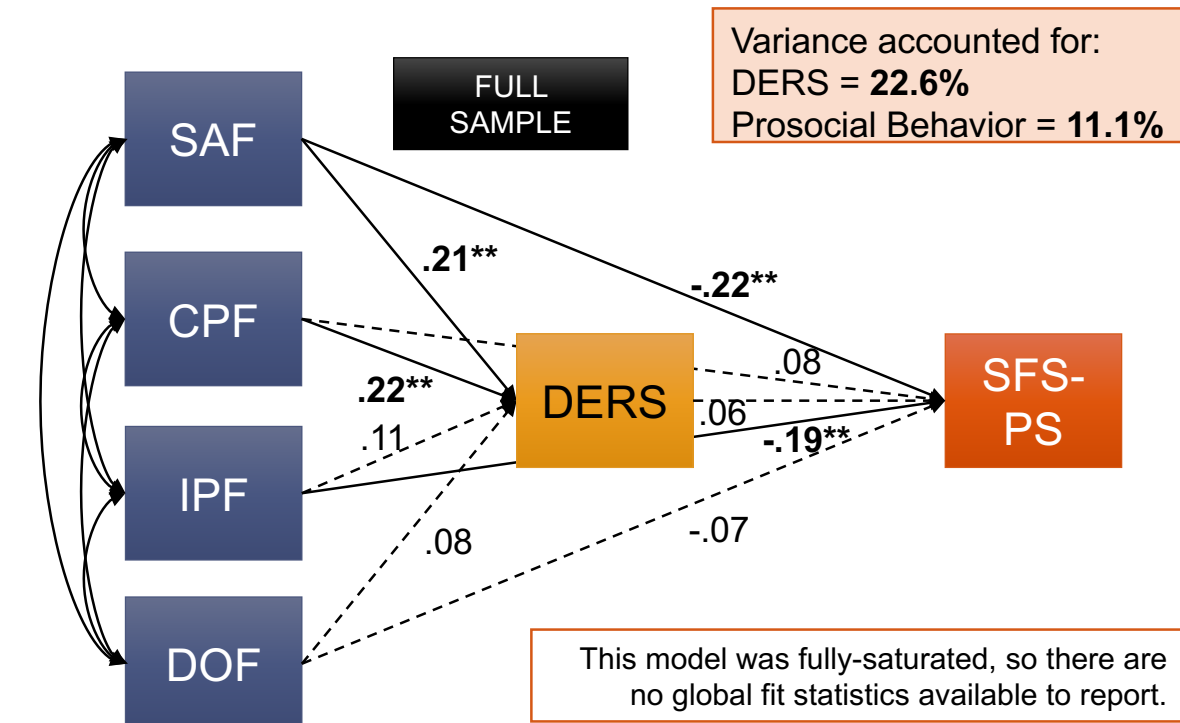
SFS INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION MODEL



The DERS significantly mediated the pathways between the SPQ-BRU and the SFS (1) Interpersonal Communication and (2) Social Engagement scales, but not the Prosocial Subscale.

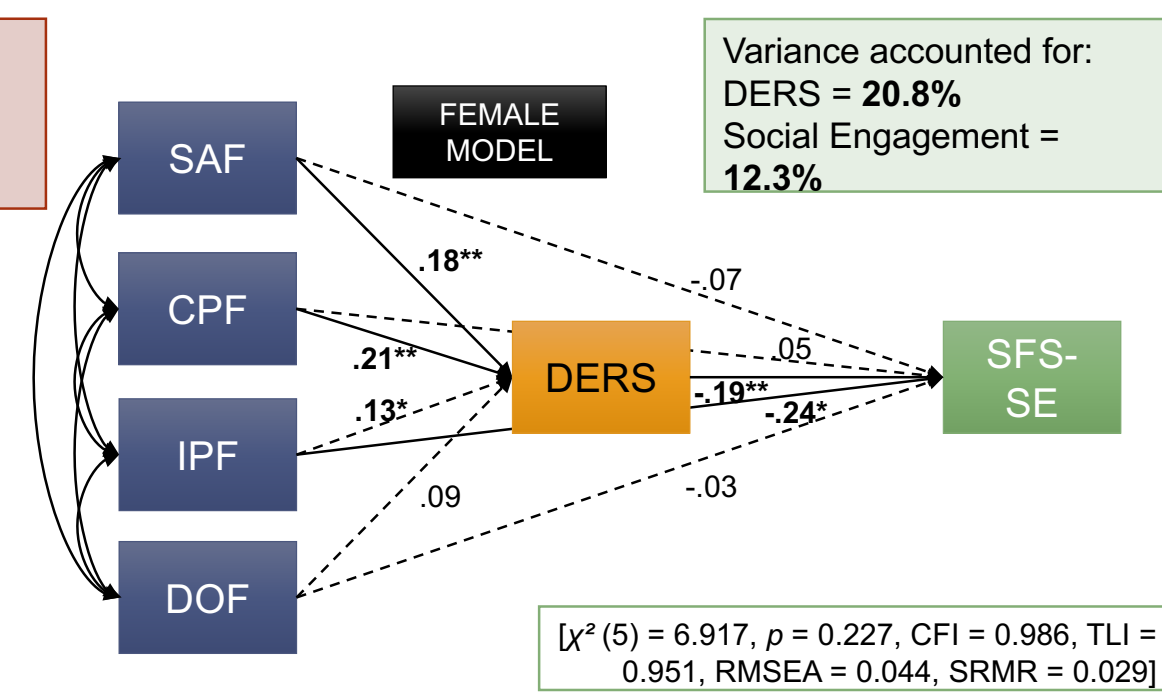
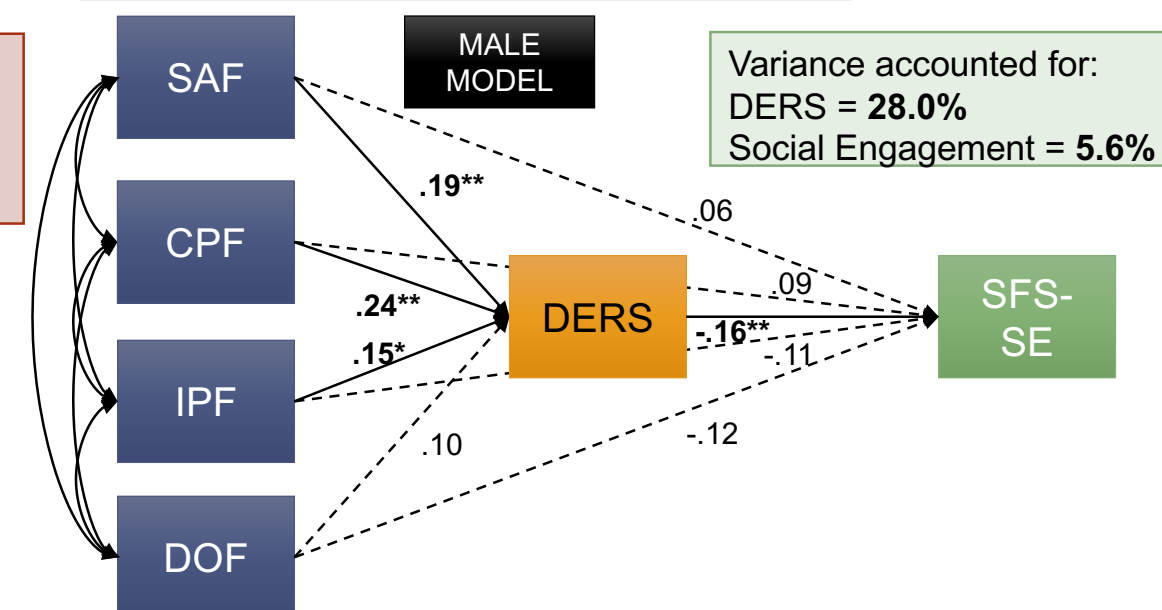


SFS PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR MODEL



RESULTS

SFS SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT MODEL



DISCUSSION

- Vulnerability for psychosis may operate indirectly through the mechanisms of emotion dysregulation to impact interpersonal communication and social engagement aspects of social functioning.
- MGA results reveal that emotion dysregulation accounts for two times more of the variance in social functioning for females than males.
- Difficulties with emotion regulation may be a viable treatment target for improving social functioning in psychosis, especially during early stages (Kimhy et al., 2016;).
- Novel technologies such as experience sampling methodology (ESM) may best capture the temporal dynamics between emotion dysregulation and social functioning in SSD (Brett et al., 2014).