

Cognitive Vulnerability to Depression in Children and Adolescents

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Although the *majority* of individuals suffering from depression report encountering at least one major negative event in the month prior to the onset of their symptoms, only the *minority* of individuals who experience major negative events develop clinically significant depression (e.g., 20-50%). Thus, while research implicates stressors as an important contributory cause of depression across age groups, it is clear that negative events are neither necessary nor sufficient to cause depression without some underlying vulnerability. The current talk will examine the role cognitive factors play in moderating the association between the occurrence of negative events and the onset of depressive symptoms in child and adolescent samples. Results will be presented from a series of multi-wave longitudinal studies testing the central tenets of cognitive models of vulnerability to depression in both community and high-risk samples of youth. Topics covered will include the age at which cognitive vulnerability to depression emerges, approaches towards conceptualizing the relationship among multiple cognitive vulnerability factors, approaches towards operationalizing high levels of stress (i.e., nomothetic versus idiographic), and the applicability of the cognitive models of depression to youth from diverse cultural contexts. Future directions in the study of cognitive vulnerability to depression in youth will be outlined.

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