

# Book of Abstract

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A cura di Filippo Gambarota, Massimo Grassi e Silvia Salcuni

## IS ATTACHMENT RELATED TO TEENAGERS' EMOTION REGULATION STRATEGIES AND ALEXITHYMIA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

*Wanda Morganti (Dipartimento di Scienze della Formazione, Università di Genova), Stefania Muzi (Dipartimento di Scienze della Formazione, Università di Genova), Cecilia Serena Pace (Dipartimento di Scienze della Formazione, Università di Genova)*

Literature on adults shows that attachment patterns, especially dismissing and preoccupied ones, are related to maladaptive emotion regulation strategies - e.g. expressive suppression - and greater alexithymia. Both emotion regulation and alexithymia influence teenagers' psychosocial adjustment, but little is known about their relationships with attachment during adolescence. Therefore, this study investigated the relationships among these three constructs in community adolescents during the COVID-19 pandemic. One-hundred-one teenagers ( $M_{age} = 14.94$ ,  $SD = 1.64$ , 47% boys) were assessed in attachment through the Friends and Family Interview, in cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression strategies with the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire for Children and Adolescents, and alexithymia through the Toronto Alexithymia Scale-20 items. Results show that dismissing and disorganized attachment patterns were related to higher use of the expressive suppression (all  $p < .046$ ), and attachment security was related and predicted 6% lower alexithymia ( $p = .012$ ). In conclusion, practitioners could support attachment security to improve teenagers' ability to identify and describe feelings, while more studies are needed to understand risk pathways connecting attachment to emotion regulation.