

REACT - Recognition of Emotions in Adolescents with Childhood Trauma

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Principal Investigator

Project Duration



Team members and host UI&D:

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Abstract:

This project presents an exploratory study focused on the development and preliminary evaluation of a secure, app-based digital platform designed to assess socio-emotional processing in adolescents exposed to early interpersonal trauma. The primary objective is to examine the feasibility, usability, and scalability of an integrated digital assessment tool that combines image-based and virtual scenario tasks with standardized psychological self-report measures, for use across diverse real-world settings.

The app incorporates performance-based tasks targeting facial emotion recognition and hostile attribution bias, alongside validated questionnaires assessing trauma exposure and trauma-related symptomatology. These components are embedded

within an age-appropriate, user-centered digital environment intended for deployment in schools, residential care, child protection, and juvenile justice contexts.

Adolescents aged 13–17 years will complete the app-based assessment protocol, enabling evaluation of key implementation outcomes, including user engagement, clarity of instructions, completion time, technical performance, and overall acceptability. Data generated through this process will inform iterative refinements of task design, interface features, and administration procedures, supporting optimization of the platform for broader application.

By establishing the feasibility and usability of this digital assessment approach, the project provides a methodological and technological foundation for subsequent large-scale research and intervention studies, supporting the future use of the platform in expanded, well-powered investigations of socio-emotional processes and trauma-informed digital tools for adolescent populations.

Partners:

No formal project partners. The project benefits from external scientific consultancy provided by Julian D. Ford (University of Connecticut School of Medicine).

Alignment with SDGs:

The REACT project aligns primarily with SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being by contributing to the development and preliminary evaluation of a digital assessment tool focused on adolescent mental health in the context of developmental trauma. Through an exploratory examination of the feasibility, usability, and acceptability of an app-based platform integrating socio-emotional tasks and psychological self-report measures, the project supports the advancement of trauma-informed digital screening and assessment approaches.

By establishing the viability of using image-based and virtual scenario methodologies with trauma-exposed adolescents across diverse settings, the project lays the groundwork for future research and innovation aimed at improving early identification, prevention, and support strategies for psychological well-being among at-risk youth.