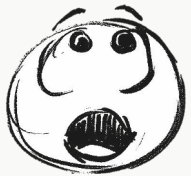


Can Awe Promote Affective Empathy?

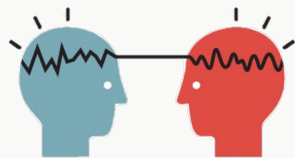
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INTRODUCTION



Awe is an emotion that occurs in response to an object or person with such extraordinary qualities as to feel incomprehensible (Stellar et al, 2021).

Empathy is as a state in which the observer imitates the emotional cues of another, thus resulting in the production of similar yet weaker sentiments (Davis, 2018)



Empathy is comprised of

1. Cognitive Empathy: Perspective taking
2. **Affective Empathy:** Understanding and sharing another person's emotions – our focus.

How might awe promote affective empathy?

1. Shift focus away from the self and towards others.
2. Promote cognitive flexibility
3. Generate a sense of interconnection with others



RESEARCH QUESTION

Does feeling awe increase affective empathy?

REFERENCES

Davis, M. H. (2018). Empathy: A social psychological approach. Routledge.
Stellar, J. E. (in press). Awe helps us remember why it is important to forget the self. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*.

METHODS

N=555 participants

Experimental Manipulation

Experimental Condition	Control Condition
Awe inducing video i.e., Video of zooming out into space.	Neutral video i.e., an instructional video
	

Measurement

Empathetic Accuracy Task

Measures one's ability to accurately recognize the emotions of other people

Phase 1: Target Phase – Collect stimuli

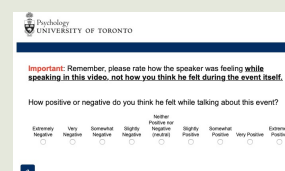
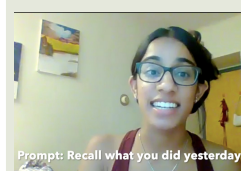
- Film "targets" as they recall a pos., neg., and neutral memory.
- After each recall, targets must rank how they felt while recalling the events on a 9-point Likert scale.

Phase 2.1: Pilot – Determine effectiveness of stimuli collected

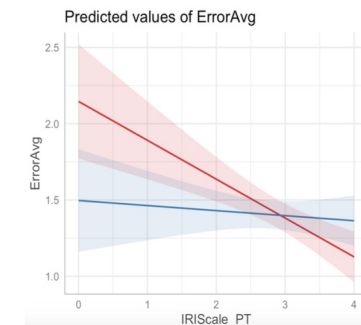
- (n=122) – participants were asked to watch 10 of the videos filmed, then rank what they believed the target felt while recalling the event, using the same scale..

Phase 2.2: Observer Phase – Experimental Trial

- (n=433) – Participants first watched one of the two conditions (Awe or Neutral)
- Afterwards, they watched 3 videos of the targets. Then ranked the targets on the same scale as before.



RESULTS

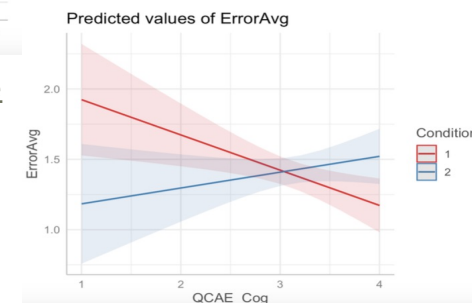


Perspective Taking vs. Awe

High Perspective taking in Awe condition
= less errors than in high PT in neutral condition

Cognitive Empathy vs. Awe

Low Cognitive Empathy in Awe condition
= more errors than in Low PT in neutral condition



DISCUSSION

Future directions

Summer 2: Interaction Studies



Implications

- Translate our findings to large-scale awe interventions outside the lab
- Studying affective empathy in situations involving intergroup conflict.

