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# **Better late than never? On the dynamics of online regulation of sadness using distraction and cognitive reappraisal.**

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## **Source**

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## **Abstract**

Real-life emotion regulation often occurs at some point after an emotion-triggering event (ETE) has been introduced, but most previous research has involved regulation before or after the ETE. In a series of experiments, the authors examined online regulation via distraction and cognitive reappraisal by manipulating the strategy initiation point in sadness-evoking films. Distraction was effective even when initiated late, presumably because it involves diluting the ETE contents by mixing them with a nonsad input. By contrast, reappraisal was less effective when initiated late, suggesting a possible point of no return for this strategy: Adopting a detached view late in the ETE may be difficult because it involves continued focus on the ETE and hence requires overcoming a previously formed tendency of identifying with the emotional content.

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