

A Video-Based Single-Session Intervention for Emerging Adults Coping with a Breakup

Romantic relationship breakups are the most common trigger of a first episode of major depressive disorder and are one of the largest risk factors for medically serious suicide attempts in young adults. Poor adjustment to breakups can result in grief, anxiety, posttraumatic stress, and depression symptoms, as well as poor academic performance. Breakups can be extremely distressing experiences, yet are very common in emerging adults. Therefore, developing accessible evidence-based interventions to help people effectively cope is critical. There are significant barriers to accessing psychotherapy services for emerging adults to learn skills to cope with a breakup in a healthy way, and long wait times for those who want to receive and able to afford services. Single-session interventions (SSIs) are an effective tool to improve short-term risk factors for adverse mental-health outcomes and well-being. However, there are no known SSIs for coping with a breakup. Therefore, the current project aims to create, and pilot test a web-based video SSI including cognitive-behavioral, mindfulness, and acceptance-based approaches to teach emerging adults how to effectively cope with a breakup. To test the efficacy of the breakup SSI, we will conduct a randomized control trial comparing the breakup SSI to popular YouTube videos that focus on dealing with a breakup (i.e., active control group). Participants will complete measures of breakup distress, depressive and anxiety symptoms, acceptance of the breakup, and strategy usage to deal with the breakup at baseline (T1), immediately following watching the intervention or control video (T2), and one month later (T3). We expect that compared to the active control group, participants assigned to the brief intervention group will benefit from better short- and long-term adjustment to the breakup.

Keywords: romantic relationship, breakup, single-session intervention, randomized control trial, emerging adults