



## Mitigation for those appearance sensitive

BUFFALO, N.Y., Jan. 25 (UPI) -- Self-affirmation or having close relationships helps people cope with insecurities regarding their appearance, found a University of Buffalo study.

In a series of studies, Lora Park, an assistant professor in the department of psychology, found people anxiously expect that they will be rejected by others because of their physical appearance, and that this sensitivity, if not mitigated, has serious implications for their mental and physical health.

In one study, all participants were asked to write an essay about a negative aspect of their appearance. Next, they were randomly assigned to one of three intervention conditions: a Self-Affirmation Condition, in which they listed their greatest personal strength; a Secure Attachment Prime Condition, in which they listed the initials of a close, caring relationship partner; or a Neutral Condition, in which they listed an object they saw in the room.

Those who were sensitive to appearance-based rejection experienced lower self-esteem and more negative mood, but only when asked to think of an object in the room.

"Being reminded of an object in the room did nothing to improve people's self-esteem or mood following the appearance threat," Park said. "However, a reminder of one's strengths or close relationships was enough to reduce the damaging effects of thinking about negative aspects of one's appearance."

The studies are scheduled to be published in the Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin.

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