Measuring Ability to Enhance and Suppress Emotional Expression:

The Flexible Expression Regulation Ability Scale

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ABSTRACT

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Flexibility in self-regulatory behaviors has proved to be essential for adjusting to stressful life events, and requires individuals to have a diverse repertoire of emotion regulation abilities. However, the most commonly used emotion regulation questionnaires assess frequency of behavior rather than ability, with little evidence linking these measures to observable capacity to enact a behavior. A laboratory paradigm has been developed to assess individual difference in expressive enhancement and suppression ability, but such lab-based measures are impractical or impossible to employ in the field research setting. The aim of the current investigation is to develop and validate a Flexible Expression Regulation Ability Scale (FERAS) that measures a person's ability to enhance and suppress displayed emotion across an array of hypothetical contexts. In Study 1, I investigate the factor structure of the FERAS in addition to convergent and discriminant validity. In Study 2, I compare the FERAS with a composite of traditional frequency-based indices of expressive regulation to predict performance in a previously validated experimental paradigm.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving and infinitely supportive parents and grandparents, who first taught me the importance of expressive regulation through concealing my utter disappointment in receiving chocolate cherry cordials as an annual Christmas present from Aunt Tiny. It is also dedicated to my wonderful and patient husband, who no doubt has extensively used his own expressive regulation abilities ever since I first told him, “I’m thinking of going to graduate school.”

INTRODUCTION

Flexibility in coping and emotion regulation, or regulatory flexibility, is increasingly implicated as an essential component of psychological health and adjustment (Bonanno & Burton, 2013). Cross-sectional studies have consistently shown greater levels of regulatory flexibility in healthy controls when compared to individuals with psychopathology (Burton, Yan, Pat-Horenczyk, Chan, Ho, & Bonanno; 2012; Bylsma, Morris, & Rottenberg, 2008; Gupta & Bonanno, 2011). More importantly, longitudinal studies suggest regulatory flexibility serves as a buffer against life stress (Bonanno, Pat-Horenczyk, & Noll, 2011; Westphal, Seivert, & Bonanno, 2010). One of the most well-researched forms of regulatory flexibility, known as expressive flexibility, uses a behavior-based experimental paradigm to investigate individual differences in the ability to both enhance and suppress displayed emotion. Several studies using this paradigm have associated expressive flexibility with important clinical and social outcomes following stressful life events (Bonanno et al., 2004; Gupta & Bonanno, 2011; Westphal et al., 2010).

Although the laboratory measurement of expressive flexibility allows for experimental control and maximizes internal validity, the possibly artificial nature of the laboratory task may limit ecological validity. Perhaps even more importantly, laboratory measures are difficult to employ in large-scale longitudinal or prospective field studies of aversive life events. Motivated by these limitations in the research on expressive regulation, in the current studies I report on the development and validation of a relatively simple self-report scale to measure expressive flexibility, the Flexible Expression Regulation Ability Scale (FERAS). In the first study I attempted to establish

the factor structure of the FERAS and its relationship to other important measures in emotion regulation and adjustment, and in the second I tested its incremental validity through comparing it to another emotion questionnaire's ability to predict participants' behavior during the laboratory expressive flexibility task.

Laboratory Assessment of Expressive Flexibility

Experimental studies of emotion regulation have demonstrated that it is possible to capture participants' ability to up- and down-regulate their emotion experience (e.g., Jackson et al., 2000; Deveney & Pizzagalli, 2008; Urry, 2010). Neuroscience data have indicated that these tasks tend to recruit common brain regions, suggestive of at least some similar underlying processes. These studies have also suggested, however, that up-regulation and down-regulation of emotion are separable, and that each task associated with unique areas of activation (Kim & Hamann, 2007; Ochsner et al., 2004).

Extending this research, Bonanno and colleagues (2004) developed a within-subjects experimental paradigm to measure individual differences in the ability to enhance and suppress emotional *expression*. In this task, participants were repeatedly exposed to blocks of pleasant or unpleasant visual stimuli, each prefaced with one of three instructions requiring participants to enhance emotional expression, to suppress emotional expression, or to behave normally. Participants' subjective experience of emotion did not vary across conditions. However, their visible expressions of emotion, rated from videotape by coders blind to condition, varied significantly and in the expected direction across conditions. Importantly, because a within-subjects design was used, it was possible to calculate enhancement and suppression ability scores for each

participant. Specifically, enhancement ability was measured as the difference between the enhancement and behave normal conditions, while suppression ability was measured as the difference between the suppression and behave normal conditions.

The expressive flexibility paradigm was first tested among New York students after the 9/11 attack (Bonanno et al., 2004). The students reported on their level of distress soon after the attack, and then 1 to 3 months later participated in the flexibility experiment. Distress was measured again 2 years after the attack. Both enhancement and suppression ability independently predicted reduced distress at the 2-year point, net of initial distress. Moreover, a flexibility score, calculated from combining the two ability scores in such as way as to capture the ability to use both strategies, predicted an even stronger inverse relationship with distress. By contrast, participants with high scores on only one form of regulation did not evidence improved adjustment.

A follow-up study measuring expressive flexibility across a three-year period demonstrated stability (i.e., test-retest scores in the moderate to high range) in both expressive and suppressive ability, as well as the overall expressive flexibility score (Westphal et al., 2010). Expressive flexibility was again linked to better adjustment, in this case peer-ratings of adjustment. Additionally, consistent with the conceptualization of flexibility as a buffer against stress, the association between expressive flexibility and adjustment was comparatively stronger in participants with greater levels of recent stressful life events and among participants that had demonstrated flexibility in the context of a subliminal threat prime. Another study comparing older and younger adults on this task found that expression and suppression ability is consistent across age (Emery & Hess, 2011). Gupta and Bonanno (2011) compared expressive flexibility among

bereaved adults who met diagnostic criteria for Complicated Grief Disorder, bereaved adults who were asymptomatic, and married (i.e., non-bereaved) adults. Married and asymptomatic bereaved participants demonstrated equal suppression and enhancement ability, whereas participants with Complicated Grief had significantly lower scores for both kinds of expression regulation and thus less overall flexibility than their counterparts. Finally, a another recent study by Côté and colleagues (2010) measured enhancement and suppression ability across diverse stimuli types, including auditory and visual, and observed that persons who could suppress their reaction to an acoustic startle sound and enhance their reaction to a disgust-inducing video clip reported greater life satisfaction.

Although the experimental paradigms employed in studies of expressive flexibility, reviewed above, provide a rigorous and valid means of measuring this construct, the methods on which these studies rely are significantly limited in their potential for application to longitudinal or prospective field research. Reliance on laboratory equipment limits the mobility of procedures, for example, while the coding of expressive behavior becomes prohibitive in large samples. Such procedures also require a considerable amount of time from participants, and the emotionally evocative quality of the stimuli can be psychologically taxing and potentially inappropriate for use in sensitive populations. The limitations of the experimental flexibility paradigm are especially problematic for stress research, which often relies on field studies including large sample sizes. An obvious potential solution to these issues would be the creation of a comparable questionnaire measure of expressive flexibility. However use of such a measure would be

predicated on both demonstrable statistical overlap with the experimental measure, as well as convergent and discriminate validity in relation to other measures.

The Flexible Expression Regulation Ability Scale (FERAS)

Questionnaires have proved to be a valuable supplement to experimental procedures in emotion regulation research, and are ideal to implement within variable time frames or large samples (Gross & John, 2003). However, such a tool for measuring self-regulatory *ability* is notably absent. Studies employing self-reports of emotion regulation have almost exclusively sought to capture individual differences in the *frequency* with which respondents recall using a specific strategy (e.g., Garnefski, Karaaij, & Spinhoven, 2001; Gratz & Roemer, 2004; Gross & John, 2003; Treynor, Gonzalez, & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2003). In contrast, the theory underlying regulatory flexibility emphasizes that frequency of specific strategy use is less important than the ability of its user and the specific context in which it is used (Bonanno & Burton, 2013). In other words, the more skill an individual possesses in executing a functionally diverse set of self-regulatory behaviors (i.e., the greater that person's *repertoire* of strategies), the better prepared they will be to address the variety of demands inherent in stressful life events. As the majority of research on expressive flexibility has focused on individual differences in ability, a questionnaire of this construct would need to do the same.

One notable exception to the frequency based tradition of measuring emotion regulation is The Emotion Amplification and Reduction Scale (TEARS), a measure of self-reported ability to modulate emotional *experience* (Hamilton, Karoly, Gallagher, Stevens, Karlson, & McCurdy, 2007). The TEARS's ability-based measurement approach is an important divergence from its predecessors. However, it is limited by its

lack of specificity as to what specific regulatory strategy its respondents are using to achieve the desired effect. Furthermore, there is no validity evidence at present linking the TEARS with actual ability to manipulate affective response.

In the current investigation, I attempt to address the need for a flexibility based survey method by developing a brief questionnaire to measure self-perceived ability to modulate emotional expressions upward or downwards. I considered a number of important issues that might increase the validity of this measure as described in Study 1. I also explore the factor structure and reliability of the FERAS, and attempt to demonstrate its convergent and discriminant validity. In Study 2, I attempt to validate the FERAS against actual expressive flexibility behavior. Specifically, I compare self-reported emotional expression and suppression ability from the FERAS against performance in the experimental measures of these constructs.

CHAPTER ONE:

Study One

Section 1.1: Introduction

In constructing the FERAS, I attempted to address a number of methodological limitations that often threaten self-report design. First, to reduce bias associated with retrospective measures of self-regulation (Schwartz, Neale, Marco, Shiffman, & Stone, 1999), the FERAS was constructed to ask respondents to identify their hypothetical ability, rather than their remembered history. Next, to ensure participants were referencing identical contextual information for establishing their behavioral standards (Higgins & Lurie, 1983), I anchored items across an array of hypothetical scenarios similar to other widely used and validated questionnaires (e.g., Downey & Feldman, 1996). This second element improves upon pre-existing ability-based questionnaires that provide no contextual information and are consequently subject to error inherent in idiographic design. Finally, the hypothetical contexts of this questionnaire were designed to include both positively and negatively valenced emotions. Most emotion regulation questionnaires ignore valence of emotion and are thus unable to test hypotheses where the type of experiences being regulated are central to the question at hand.

The FERAS was designed to produce a multi-factor structure consisting of enhancement ability and suppression ability in positively and negatively valenced emotions. Because the FERAS was designed using these pre-defined theoretical factors, I conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to compare fit indices across competing models that differed in their regulation ability type and emotion type factor structures. I then explored the FERAS's relationships with pre-existing measures, comparing it to several

relevant scales relating to emotion regulation and flexibility. I anticipated that the enhance and suppression subscales would be mildly positively correlated to frequency-based measures of emotional expression regulation and moderately positively correlated with conceptually similar affect-regulation ability. The theoretical model from which the idea of expressive flexibility is derived separates the ability to read the demands of specific contexts, known as context sensitivity, from the ability to employ varied regulatory strategies, known as repertoire (Bonanno & Burton, 2013). The FERAS was designed to assess repertoire, but was not designed to measure context sensitivity. Therefore, I did not anticipate that the FERAS would be associated with traditional measures of psychological rigidity, such as rumination or related personality scales such neuroticism. This reasoning is based on the assumption that flexibility's relationship to psychological adjustment is assumed to depend on situational factors. Specifically, regulatory flexibility is thought to relate to adjustment most clearly under conditions of adversity. For example, expressive flexibility in experimental studies was most clearly associated with improved adjustment among individuals with greatest exposure to stressful life events (Bonanno et al, 2004; Westphal et al., 2010). Because this sample was not adjusting to any known stressors where expressive regulation may be salient, I hypothesized that expression and suppression ability on the FERAS would at best only mildly correlate with measures of social adjustment and depressive symptoms. Finally, as previous studies have linked participants' moral valuation of concealing their emotion with their actual ability to do so (Mauss, Butler, Roberts, & Chu, 2010), I anticipated there would be a moderately positive association between suppression ability with

participants' attitudes about the importance of concealing their emotions, whereas enhancement ability would be inversely related to these attitudes.

Section 1.2: Methods

Participants

Two-hundred English-speaking US participants were recruited using SocialSci, an online survey tool that provides allows researchers to upload surveys to be completed by a pre-existing national pool of participants to complete from their personal computers. The majority of the participants were Caucasian (73.5%) and female (61%), and the sample's ages ranged from 18 to 40 (M = 26.52, SD = 5.09). All participants provided informed consent prior to beginning the survey, as reviewed by the Teachers College Institutional Review Board.

Measures

Expressive Regulation Ability. The FERAS was designed to provide standardized hypothetical scenarios to assess participants perceived ability to modulate their emotion expressions (see Appendix). Each item asks participants' to what extent they would able to modulate their expression compared to how they were actually feeling in a given scenario on a six point scale, ranging from 1 (*Not at all*) to 6 (*Very much*). The scenarios were organized into clusters based on the ability they would require, with each cluster consisting of four scenarios each. The instructions prior to each cluster explicitly state the required ability in order to disambiguate participants' perceived ability from preference or appropriateness to carry-out the specific self-regulatory strategy. Four expressive

abilities are assessed: enhancing positive emotion, enhancing negative emotion, suppressing positive emotion, and suppressing negative emotion.

Emotion Regulation Frequency. Frequency of expressive suppression (α = .79) and cognitive reappraisal (α = .87) were measured with the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (Gross & John, 2003). Participants are asked to respond to descriptions such as "When I am feeling negative emotions, I make sure not to express them" and rate the extent that they apply on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Emotion Regulation Difficulty: Affect. Participants' self-reported difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS, Perez, Venta, Garnaat, & Sharp, 2012) were used to measure participants' ability to regulate their experience, rather than expression, of emotions. The DERS consists of a 6 subscales including Awareness (α = .94), Clarity (α = .87), Impulse (α = .92), Goals (α = .90), Nonacceptance (α = .95), and Strategies (α = .93) that combined consists of 36 items including, "When I'm upset, my emotions feel overwhelming." Participants list to what extent each phrase applies to them on a 5-point scale (1 = *Almost never*, 5 = *Almost always*).

Emotional Control Values. Participants' attitude regarding the importance of controlling emotions was measured by the Emotional Control Values scale (ECV; Mauss et al., 2010; α = .78). This six-item scale asks participants to rate their agreement on a scale of 1

(*Strongly* agree) to 6 (*Strongly* disagree) to a number of statements regarding emotions, including "People should not express their emotions openly."

Rumination. Participants' habitual use of rumination was measured with the Response Styles Questionnaire (Nolen-Hoeksema & Morrow, 1991; $\alpha = .94$), a 22-item self-report that asks participants to rate how frequently they engage in a list of cognitively oriented behaviors on a 4-point scale (1 = *Almost Never*, 4 = *Almost Always*).

Social Functioning. Participants' impairments in social functioning were measured using the Life Functioning Questionnaire (LFQ; Altshuler, Mintz, & Leight, 2002; $\alpha = .90$). This 14-item measure assesses participants' self-reported difficulties in professional, domestic, and leisure social contexts using a scale that ranging from 0 (*No problems*) to 3 (*Severe problems*).

Social Desirability. Participants' tendency to portray themselves in a favorable manner to others was measured with the short-form Social Desirability Scale (SDS; Reynolds, 1982; $\alpha = .74$). This 11-item scale asks participants to indicate whether certain statements apply to them in a *True/False* format.

Trait rigidity: Personality. Participants' personality was assessed with the Ten Item Personality Inventory (TIPI, Gosling, Rentfrow, & Swann, 2003) which consists of five factors: Extraversion (talkative, assertive, energetic), Agreeableness (good-natured, cooperative, trustful), Conscientiousness (orderly, responsible, dependable), Emotional Stability (calm, not easily upset), and Opennness (intellectual, imaginative, independent-

minded). The scale consists of ten items asking participants to what extent certain qualities apply to them, using a scale ranging from 1 (*Disagree strongly*) to 7 (*Agree strongly*). This measure's scales have shown convergent validity with respective personality scales measured in longer personality inventories (r = .56 - .76).

Ego Resilience. Participants' ability to adapt one's level of control temporarily up or down as circumstance dictates was measured by the Ego Resiliency Scale (Block & Kremen, 1996). Items are rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (*Does not apply at all*) to 4 (*applies very strongly*) in response to 14 descriptions such as "I quickly get over and recover from being startled." Internal consistency is acceptable (α = .83).

Lifetime Trauma Exposure. Exposure to trauma exposure was measured with the Life Events Checklist (LEC), a widely used self-report that provides subjects with a list of potentially traumatic events and asks participants to indicate their experience of that event on a 5-point scale (1 = *happened to me*, 2 = *witnessed it*, 3 = *learned about it*, 4 = *not sure*, 5 = *does not apply*). The LEC has been shown to be comparable with other measures of trauma exposure as well as measures of PTSD symptoms.

Section 1.3: Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the FERAS

Confirmatory factor analyses were conducted within AMOS (Arbuckle, 2006) in order to compare alternative factor structures of the FERAS. I considered five structural models of increasing complexity; the first and least complex was a single "expressive

regulation" factor where all items loaded onto a single latent factor. Second, I examined fit for two competing dual-latent factors: one an emotion-based model (positive - negative) and the other a regulation-type model (enhance – suppress). The fourth model I tested consisted of 4 latent factors composed of four items each, resulting from the two regulation types crossed with the two emotional valence types. The final model I considered was hierarchical: the first included the 4 latent factors from the fourth model, but with each of these loading onto one of two higher order factors divided by regulation type.

Testing fit for single-factor.

I began by assessing the goodness of fit of the simplest model with one factor of expressive regulation consisting of all 16 of the scale's items. Indices of fit suggested that this model did not adequately fit the data. All of the examined indices, consisting of the model chi-square (χ^2 =280.13; $p < .001$), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA; .094), Goodness-of-fit Index (GFI; .845), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI; .758), fell into the unacceptable range. These results suggest that the FERAS does not capture a simple single dimension of expressive regulation.

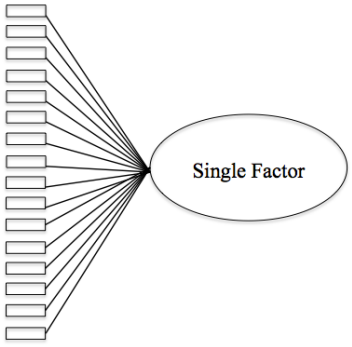

Figure 1. Factor structure of the single-factor model.

Testing fit for dual factors.

I next tested two models each consisting of two factors. The first was an emotion-based model with the two factors distinguished by emotional valence types. In this model, the first factor was comprised of the scale's 8 positive emotionally valenced items, and the second factor comprised of the 8 negative emotionally valenced items. The resulting fit for this model was poor, with the (χ^2 =260.88, $p < .001$), RMSEA (.085), GFI (.853), and CFI (.783) all in the unacceptable range. I next tested a dual factor model that was distinguished by expressive regulation type where the first factor consisted of the 8 suppression items and the second factor consisted of the 8 enhancement items. This model evidenced improved fit; the RMSEA was within acceptable limits (.072), although the GFI was marginally unacceptable (.889) and the CFI and chi-square fell outside the acceptable limits (.861; χ^2 =203.02, $p < .001$).

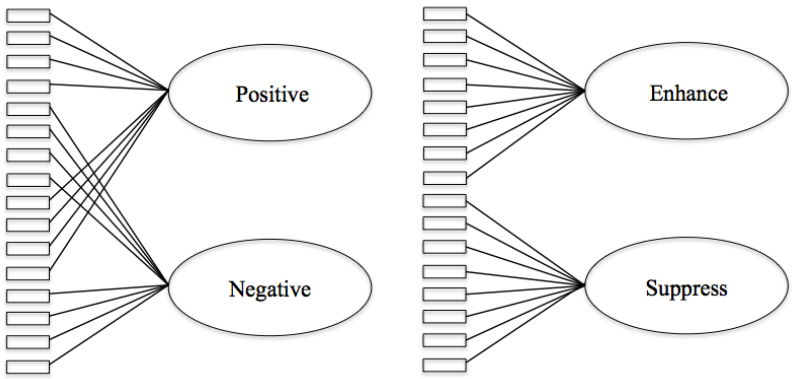

Figure 2. Factor structures of the emotion-based (left) and regulation-based (right) models.

Testing fit for four factors.

The next model I tested consisted of four factors each comprised of four items: a suppression of positive emotion factor, suppression of negative emotion factor, a enhancement of positive emotion factor, and an enhancement of negative emotion factor. In contrast to the previously tested models, this model was acceptable across all fit indices ($\chi^2 = 157.49$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .057; GFI = .924; CFI = .917).

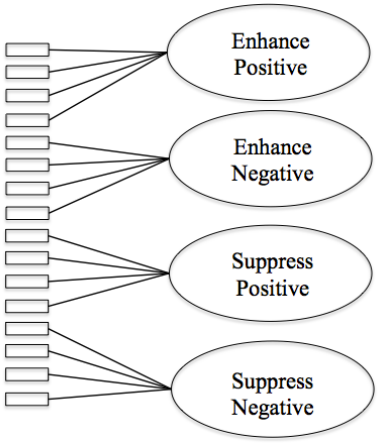

Figure 3. Factor structure of the four-factor model.

Testing fit for a hierarchical model.

The final confirmatory factor analysis I conducted examined fit of a hierarchical model with a first level that consisted of four first-order factors (the same tested in the four-factor model just described) while adding two second-order factors. Specifically, the model was constructed using expressive regulation type as the second-order factors, such that the suppression of positive emotion and enhancement of positive emotion factors loaded onto one overarching factor and suppression of negative emotion and enhancement of positive emotion loaded onto the other overarching factor. The fit indices indicated that this model also evidenced acceptable fit ($\chi^2 = 158.07$, $p < .001$; RMSEA =

.055; GFI = .913; CFI = .919). Although the tests of model chi square in this and the previous models might suggest differences in the predicted and observed covariances, this statistic is sensitive to sample size and nearly always rejects models when larger samples, like the one used in this study, are employed (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). Thus, both the four independent factor model and hierarchical model with enhancement ability and suppression ability evidenced similarly good fit of the data. Internal consistency reliability was acceptable for the 8-item composite enhancement (α = .807) and suppression scales (α = .696), but was comparatively lower for the enhance-positive (α = .772), enhance negative (α = .648), suppress-positive (α = .677), and suppress-negative (α = .657) subscales.

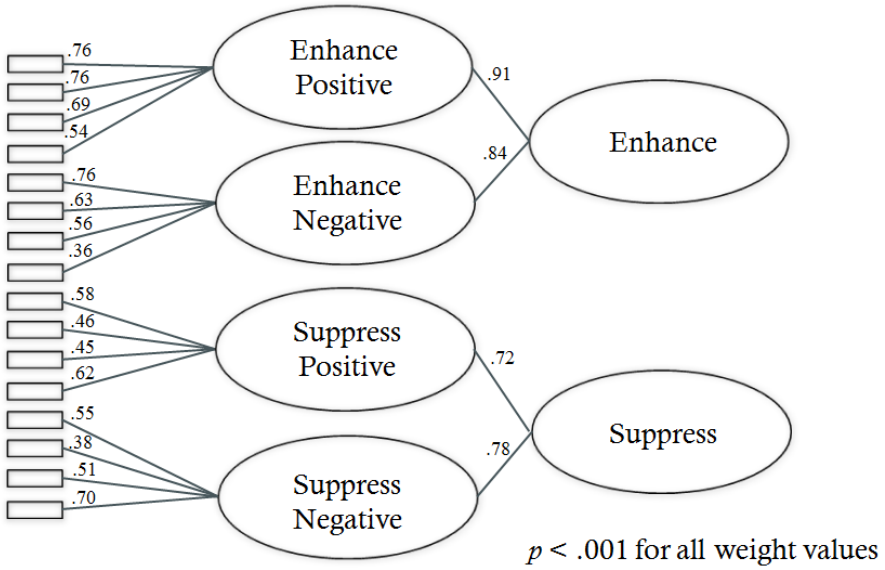

Figure 4. Factor structure of the hierarchical model with factor loadings.

Comparing the FERAS with other measures of Emotion Regulation, Personality, and Adjustment

In the section that follows, I review the relationship of the FERAS's expressive enhancement and suppression subscales with other studied measures. Correlations of the FERAS's second- and first-order factors, calculated by summing the respective items within each of the subscales, are presented with various measures of emotion regulation, personality, and adjustment in Table 1.

Expressive Enhancement

Consistent with my expectations, participants' self-reported ability to enhance their emotional expressions showed significant but small patterns of correlations with emotion regulation strategy frequencies of use. Specifically, enhancement ability was positively correlated with reappraisal frequency and negatively correlated with suppression frequency. Rumination, which is also considered an emotion regulation strategy, evidenced a non-significant association with self-reported enhancement ability. However, enhancement ability was typically more strongly correlated with emotion regulation ability deficits measured by the DERS, such that greater enhancement ability was associated with greater ability to maintain goal-directed behavior while emotionally aroused, greater ability to access strategies to regulate emotions, and greater ability to both acknowledge and identify experienced emotions. Relatedly, enhancement ability was positively correlated with Ego Resiliency, as well as Emotional Stability and Openness. Individuals reporting greater enhancement ability also reported placing less value in regulating their emotional expression. Although I anticipated there would be no relationship between the FERAS and valuation of display of emotional states, it is

Table 1. Zero-order correlations of first- and second-order factors of the FERAS with measures of emotion regulation, personality, and functioning

	FERAS Second-Order Factors		FERAS First-Order Factors			
	Enhance Ability	**Suppress Ability**	Enhance-Positive	Enhance-Negative	Suppress-Positive	Suppress-Negative
ERQ						
Reappraisal	**.162***	**.207****	.235**	.052	.176*	.154*
Frequency						
Suppression	**-.185****	**.129**	-.175*	-.154*	.020	.188
Frequency						
DERS						
Non-acceptance	**-.128**	**-.172***	-.219**	-.008	-.176	-.098
Goals	**-.219****	**-.266****	-.252**	-.183	-.257**	-.168*
Impulse	**-.137**	**-.246****	-.237**	-.005	-.183**	-.210**
Awareness	**-.175***	**-.036**	-.152*	-.161*	-.131	.075
Strategies	**-.224****	**-.254****	-.312**	-.085	-.213**	-.193**
Clarity	**-.260****	**-.155***	-.286**	-.177*	-.209**	-.037
TIPI						
Extraversion	**.172***	**.114**	.192**	.114	.079	.103
Agree	**.315****	**.147***	.293**	.268**	.135	.101
Conscientiousness	**.039**	**.162***	.082	-.013	.260**	-.003
Emotional Stability	**.140***	**.301****	.231**	.016	.199**	.282**
Openness	**.261****	**.202****	.286**	.172*	.172*	.151*
Emotional Control	**-.251****	**-.120**	-.257**	-.190**	-.131	-.045
Values						
Social Desirability	**.220****	**.258****	.229**	.162*	.178*	.235**
Social Functioning[1]	**-.180***	**-.139***	-.237**	-.083	-.175*	-.046
Rumination	**-.074**	**-.158***	-.135	.003	-.100	-.154*
Depression	**-.134**	**-.210****	-.203**	-.035	-.159*	-.177*
Trauma Exposure	**.021**	**-.001**	.024	.014	-.007	.005
Ego Resilience	**.265****	**.338****	.297**	.175*	.216**	.326**

[1]Higher scores indicate worse functioning

*$p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

reasonable that persons who report greater ability to increase emotional expressions to meet social demands would not consider public displays of emotion as intrinsically inappropriate. Of the social measures, enhancement ability was positively correlated with extraversion and agreeableness as well as social desirability. Enhancement ability was negatively correlated with social functioning deficits, such that higher ability scores were associated with higher quality of relationships.

Expressive Suppression

The most interesting distinction between the enhancement and suppression abilities' relationship with other measures was that suppression ability did not correlate with suppression frequency (although suppression ability was positively correlated with reappraisal frequency). Suppression ability also evidenced a modest negative correlation with both rumination frequency and number of depressive symptoms but did not correlate with value of emotional control. Suppression ability demonstrated a similar profile to enhancement ability in its relationship to most measures of emotion regulation deficits, personality dimensions, and social functioning. Specifically, suppression ability was negatively correlated to deficits in accepting emotional state, maintaining goal-directed behavior while emotionally aroused, impulse control, having access to strategies for regulation emotion, and the ability to identify their experienced emotions. Suppression ability was also positively correlated with agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness, as well as ego resilience and social desirability. Finally, suppression ability was negatively correlated with deficits in social functioning, meaning persons who had greater suppression ability reported higher quality social relationships.

For the purpose of comparison, I also examined suppression frequency's correlation with these same measures. Most notably, suppression frequency evidenced several correlations that were in the opposite direction than those observed for suppression ability; suppression frequency was associated with worse social functioning ($r = .228$, $p = .001$), higher depressive symptoms ($r = .263$, $p < .001$), and lower ego resilience ($r = -.241$, $p = .001$). Suppression frequency, unlike suppression ability, was also positively correlated with participants' values on emotional control, such that participants who reported more frequent suppression also tended to rank higher the importance of concealing emotion ($r = .374$, $p < .001$).

Section 1.4: Discussion

The results of this study suggest that the factor structure of the FERAS is appropriate for its intended goal: to measure enhancement and suppression ability of positive and negative emotional expressions. Although the data indicated similarity of fit between the four-factor model and the hierarchical model, in practice the previous studies of expressive regulation ability have emphasized the importance of ability types rather than the valence of the emotion being regulated (Bonanno et al., 2004; Westphal et al., 2010). The primacy of ability type over valence is most consistent with the hierarchical model, and thus I focus my analyses using this model's second-order factors. The item loadings on their respective factors were generally good to acceptable, although the loading score for one item within both the Enhance Negative and Enhance Positive factors were comparatively low.

Correlations of enhancement and suppression abilities with other questionnaires suggest that the FERAS is a conceptually distinct measure of emotion regulation. Moreover, these findings suggest that enhancement and suppression ability have similar profiles in their relationship to several personality and emotion regulation measures. Although this is an important step in the validation of the FERAS, a number of questions remain. First, it remains unknown whether an individual's responses on the FERAS correspond with expressive behavior- regulated or otherwise. Second, when developing a measure of flexibility, it is crucial that the measure have adequate specificity in measuring the targeted facets of an individual's emotion regulation repertoire to permit an adequate assessment of overarching flexibility. To accomplish this, both of the self-reported abilities on the FERAS must be able to predict its corresponding expressive behavior, but should not be associated with the alternative behavior. Finally, it remains possible that other measures of emotional expressivity are equally capable, if not superior, to the FERAS in the ability to predict regulatory success. I attempted to address these remaining concerns in the subsequent study.

CHAPTER TWO:

Study Two

Section 2.1: Introduction

In this study, I used ability scores drawn from the FERAS to test if they could predict self-regulatory performance in a laboratory paradigm: the expressive flexibility task. Because it is unclear to what extent frequency based surveys measure individual differences in self-regulatory ability, I aimed to test the FERAS's incremental validity in relation to such measures by also collecting participants' self-reported frequency of emotional expression and concealment as to compare them with the FERAS and experiment-based assessments of expressive enhancement and suppression ability. The hypothesized relationships between these measures are as follows:

1. *Individuals are capable of assessing their own ability to enhance and suppress emotional expression.*

There is some empirical evidence in past research on emotional enhancement and suppression to support this hypothesis. In their measurement of the behavioral expressive flexibility across a three-year period, Westphal et al (2010) report moderate to high stability of enhancement and suppression behavioral ability across this time. Complimentarily, Emory and Hess (2011) found that the similarly assessed components of expressive flexibility did not appear to vary across the life span. The enduring and trait-like nature of expressive and suppressive ability suggest that people might become increasingly aware of their regulatory abilities over time and therefore these abilities should be amenable to accurate self-report.

A second line of evidence supporting this hypothesis rests with the nature of expressive enhancement and expressive suppression, as they are forms of self-regulation that occur late in the development of an emotional reaction (Goldin, McRae, Ramel, & Gross, 2008) and requires a greater amount of conscious effort than regulatory processes occurring at earlier stages (Richards & Gross, 1999). These qualities of expressive regulation suggest that an individual is more aware of when they are engaging in these behaviors and are consequently more likely to be aware of the success of failure of their regulation attempts. Accordingly, I hypothesized that the processes of expressive suppression and enhancement can indeed be accurately captured by self-report, and as such will positively correlate with behavioral measures.

2. *Self-reported ability of emotional expression and suppression is a better predictor of behavioral ability than self-reported frequency of emotional expression and concealment.*

This hypothesis is chiefly based on the face-validity of the two self-report measures. If expressive and suppressive abilities are indeed capable of being measured by self-report, then the methodological benefits of an ability-based questionnaire should allow it to better predict behavioral measures of ability than frequency if the two constructs are different.

Section 2.2: Method

Participants

Participants were recruited from the larger Columbia University community. The resulting sample (N = 61) was predominantly female (68.9%) and was on average 22.6

years of age (SD =3.74). All participants provided informed consent prior to initiating study procedures.

Measures

Ability of Emotional Enhancement and Suppression. Participants' ability to enhance and suppress their emotional expressions was measured with the FERAS, described in detail in Study 1.

Frequency of Emotional Expression and Suppression. Measures of individual differences in habitual emotional expression and concealment were derived from a previously-conducted factor analysis of seven commonly used measures in emotional-expression research (Barr, Kahn, & Schneider, 2008). The results of the factor analysis yielded 7 first-order factors that together comprised two overarching factors: "Emotional Constraint" and "Emotional Expression." In the current study, I omitted items from the "Disclosure of Lack of Affect" questionnaire because this measure asks respondents to rate behavior during non-emotional experiences. Participant responses were standardized within each first order factor, and then averaged to produce the overall *Constraint* and *Expression* scores.

Expressive Flexibility Task. Following the completion of the questionnaires, a graduate student experimenter guided participants to sit in front of a desktop computer with a small web camera affixed to the top of the monitor. Participants then completed practice trials consisting of one block of either five positive or five negative images drawn from

the International Affective Picture System (IAPS: Lang, Bradley, & Cuthbert, 1995). After each block, participants were instructed to rate the extent they felt negative emotion by typing a number on a scale of 1 (*no negative emotion*) and 7 *(extreme negative emotion*). Participants next indicated the extent they experienced positive emotion on a similar scale. After these practice trials, the experimenter then informed the participant there was another participant in the adjacent room whom they would not see, but could see them at certain parts of the experiment. The actual participant was also informed that this (fictional) second participant would sometime see them on a video monitor in order to guess the actual participant's emotions as they viewed pictures. However, the actual participant would always be informed when the monitor in the other room was on or off, and the observer would not be able to hear them or know what pictures the actual participant was viewing. The participant was further informed that prior to each picture block, the computer would instruct them a) to enhance their expression of emotions so that the observer could easily guess what they were feeling, b) to suppress their emotional expressions so that the observer could not easily guess what they were feeling, or c) the monitor in the other room was turned off, and thus they could behave normally (for a further detailed description of the task instructions and procedures, see Gupta & Bonanno, 2011). Digital recordings of the participants' emotional expressions were then rated by two graduate psychology students. The raters, blind to condition and stimulus type, used the same positive and negative emotion scales that were used by the participant during the task itself. Agreement among the raters on participant emotion across all trials was adequate (ICC(2.2) = .70)

Section 2.3: Results

Manipulation Check for the Expressive Flexibility Task

To ensure that ratings of participants' facial expressions varied across the three within-subject conditions of the expressive flexibility task, an initial manipulation check using paired t-tests was performed. Results indicated that levels of expressiveness indeed differed between conditions in the intended directions, such that participants were rated as being more expressive in the "Enhance" condition than they were in both the "Monitor Off" ($t(60) = 10.81$, $p < .001$) and the "Suppress" ($t(60) = 18.14$, $p < .001$) conditions. Participants were similarly rated as being more expressive in the "Monitor Off" condition than the "Suppress" condition ($t(60) = 6.866$, $p < .001$).

Predicting Expressive Flexibility Task Performance with the FERAS

I first performed zero-order correlations to allow basic comparisons of self-reported enhancement and suppression ability scores from the FERAS with objective ratings of emotion from the three conditions of the expressive flexibility task (Table 2). As expected, self-reported enhancement ability from the FERAS correlated positively with degree of emotion displayed in the "Enhance" condition of the behavioral task, but not the "Suppress" condition. Self-reported suppression ability from the FERAS correlated with the expressive flexibility task's conditions as expected; self-reported suppression did not correlate with ratings of emotion in the "Enhance" or "Monitor Off" conditions, but did correlate inversely with ratings of emotion expressed in the "Suppress" condition, indicating that individuals who reported greater ability to suppress on the FERAS were rated by judges as showing less emotion in the suppression condition

of the expressive flexibility task. There was also a marginal but non-significant positive association between self-reported enhancement ability and the "Monitor Off" condition.

Finally, a flexibility score was calculated for both the FERAS and the expressive flexibility task following standard procedures (Bonanno et al., 2004). These flexibility scores were calculated by first summing each participants overall ability scores as well as calculating a polarity score by subtracting each participants' smaller ability score from their larger ability score. The final flexibility score is calculated by subtracting the polarity score from the sum score, such that higher scores in this variable indicate greater flexibility. Results indicated that there was a positive correlation between the FERAS calculated flexibility score and the expressive flexibility task's calculated flexibility score.

Table 2. Zero-order of the FERAS with objective ratings of emotions in the expressive flexibility task

	Enhance Condition	Monitor Off (Control) Condition	Suppress Condition	EF Task Flexibility Score
FERAS Enhance Ability	**.411****	.249†	-.031	.222†
FERAS Suppress Ability	.023	-.114	**.282***	.179
FERAS Flexibility Score	.217†	.035	-.224†	**.284***

† $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Establishing correlations of the FERAS with corresponding expressive flexibility task conditions further establishes its convergent and discriminant validity. However, a more accurate test of predicting participants' regulatory abilities requires accounting for their baseline expressiveness ("Monitor Off" condition). Accordingly, I next performed a regression analysis using self-reported enhancement ability to predict emotion ratings in the "Enhance" condition while controlling for emotion ratings in the "Monitor Off" condition. Self-reported enhancement scores from the FERAS scale significantly predicted emotion in the "Enhance" condition after controlling for "Monitor Off" condition emotion levels, $\beta = .324$, $p = .008$. In a similar analysis, self-reported suppression ability was used to predict emotion ratings in the "Suppress" condition while controlling for emotion ratings in the "Monitor Off" condition. The results indicated that self-reported suppression ability scores also significantly predicted emotion in the "Suppress" condition after controlling for "Monitor Off" condition emotion ratings, $\beta = -.324$, $p = .039$.

Predicting Expressive Flexibility Task Performance with the Frequency-Based Measures

The next series of analyses tested whether measures of the self-reported frequency of emotional expression and concealment might better account for participants ability to regulate their emotional responses in the expressive flexibility task. Index scores[1] of "Emotional Constraint" and "Emotional Expression" were calculated from the scales outlined by Barr et al. (2008) as measures of participants' self-reported frequency of

[1] I also conducted sensitivity analyses by repeating all analyses below, replacing the index scores used by Barr et al. (2008) with scores derived from the original scales that comprised them. Using these scores did not significantly predict emotions in the target condition or alter the magnitude of direction of relationship the FERAS when included in the same analysis.

concealment or expression of emotion. For these analyses, I repeated the regressions reported above but substituted the "Emotional Constraint" and "Emotional Expression" scales for the respective FERAS scales. In the first analysis, self-reported habitual "Emotional Expression" failed to predict emotion ratings in the "Enhancement" condition ($\beta = .178$, $p = .215$). Similarly, in the second analysis, self-reported habitual "Emotional Constraint" failed to predict emotion ratings in the "Suppress" condition ($\beta = -.071$, $p = .596$). Finally, I tested both Barr et al. (2008) scales each with its corresponding FERAS scale in the same analyses. For the first analysis, self-reported enhancement ability from the FERAS continued to predict emotion ratings in the "Enhance" condition ($\beta = .320$, $p = .018$) while controlling for emotion ratings in the "Monitor Off" condition. The "Emotional Expression" scale from Barr et al. (2008) was again non-significant ($\beta = .011$, $p = .945$). In the second analysis, self-reported suppression ability from the FERAS continued to predict emotion ratings in the "Suppress" condition ($\beta = -.263$, $p = .042$) while controlling for emotion ratings in the "Monitor Off" condition. The "Emotional Constraint" scale from Barr et al. (2008) was again non-significant ($\beta = -.064$, $p = .309$).

Section 2.4: Discussion

In this study, I attempted to establish the convergent, discriminant, and incremental validity of the FERAS by using it to predict behavioral performance on an expressive regulation task. Each of the overarching ability scores of the FERAS was found to predict emotional display in its respective condition but not in its opposing condition (Table 2). Moreover, the calculated flexibility scores from the FERAS and the expressive flexibility task were also found to positively correlate with one another. These

findings indicate that individuals are capable of assessing their ability to regulate their emotional expressions, and that these two abilities are not identical but comprise a larger repertoire of expressive regulatory behaviors. There was an unexpected positive non-significant trend between self-reported enhancement ability and emotional expression in the control condition, suggesting a possible association between self-perceived enhancement ability and "baseline" (i.e., non-regulated) expressiveness. There were also observed trends between the calculated flexibility scores and the individual ability/performance scores across the FERAS and expressive flexibility task. However, the more relevant result was that the two assessment methods' flexibility scores were most strongly correlated with each other.

When controlling for expressiveness in the control condition of the expressive flexibility task, each of the ability scores measured by the FERAS continued to predict performance in the respective conditions in which participants were instructed to either enhance or suppress their emotions. This analysis was important because it indicates that the FERAS is not simply predicting gross level of emotion in a particular task, but that it also predicts differences in participants regulated behavior with respect to their "natural," unregulated expressive reactions. In other words, the FERAS predicted both between-subject *and* within-subject differences in the regulation task.

Finally, the FERAS continued to predict emotionally expressive behavior in the expressive flexibility task even when including a corresponding measure of habitual emotional expression or suppression. Moreover, these measures of habitual emotional expression or suppression failed to predict behavioral expressive regulatory ability when included in a separate analysis or when combined with the expressive or suppressive

ability scores from the FERAS. These data suggest that the FERAS is better suited for the measurement of expressive regulatory ability.

CHAPTER THREE:

General Discussion

Section 3.1: Review of the Observed Results

As research in emotion regulation continues to advance, our understanding of the field moves increasingly toward a person-by-situation interactionist approach. The flexibility model in particular emphasizes the importance of considering both the context of an emotion regulation behavior as well as the skill of the individual using that behavior, when attempting to predict successful adjustment to a given stressor (Bonanno & Burton, 2014). Very few means of measurement are available for assessing emotion regulation ability, particularly for those that fall within the expressive regulation category. The expressive flexibility task designed by Bonanno et al. (2004) is the only existing means for the measurement of expressive regulation ability, but this measure is significantly limited in its research applicability due to its intrusive and resource-intensive design as well as its ecological validity. I attempted to address this gap by developing a context-based and user-friendly self-report measure that assesses individual differences in the abilities to enhance and suppress expressions of emotion.

Our first step of achieving this goal was by performing a series of confirmatory factor analyses to establish the distinction between the enhance ability and suppress ability subscales (Study 1). These analyses suggested equally good fit between two similar models of the data, but a hierarchical model organized by the overarching factors of enhancement and suppression ability was the most supported by preexisting empirical evidence. I then compared participants' ability scores, as well as their constituent sub-factor scores divided by emotional valence, with their responses on several pre-existing

emotion regulation, personality, and functioning questionnaires. The observed correlations of the FERAS with other measures were typically in the hypothesized direction and were at most modest in their effect size, providing evidence that enhancement ability and suppression ability are novel and distinct constructs. Most notable of these was enhancement and suppression ability's inverse association with depression and social functioning; this contrasts with most literature on suppression frequency, which has previously linked this behavior with deficits in the interpersonal and mental health domains.

The next step for developing the FERAS required us to establish the convergent, discriminant, and incremental validity by using the FERAS to predict behavioral performance on an expressive regulation task. Each of the overarching ability scores of the FERAS was found to predict emotional display in its respective condition but not in its opposing condition, thereby indicating that individuals are capable of assessing their ability to regulate their emotional expressions, and that these two abilities are not identical but compose a larger repertoire of expressive regulatory behaviors. Moreover, self-reported ability on the FERAS was a better predictor of emotionally expressive behavior on this task than measures of habitual emotional expression or suppression.

Section 3.2: Limitations in the Current Designs

A number of limitations should be considered in the current measure. The measurement of expressive flexibility by controlled experiment is well established, and my explicit goal was to create an easy-to-use self-report scale that might also capture the phenomenon. Although I met that goal through the careful design of the scale to

minimize respondent bias and connecting participant scores with performance on the behavioral expressive regulation task, the limits of self-report data should still be considered. For example, there was a significant, albeit modest, relationship between self-reported ability scores on the FERAS and social desirability, suggesting it may be susceptible to demand biases in certain research designs in which the researcher is perceived as having an evaluative role, such as within a corporate organization. It is also worth considering that the relationship between the FERAS and participants' actual behaviors in the expressive flexibility experiment were in the moderate range. Thus, a considerable portion of participants' actual expressive regulation ability was not captured by the FERAS. One potential cause for this may be the discrepancy in the social nature of the contexts in the FERAS and the asocial nature of the expressive regulation task, in which the participant never sees, hears, nor communicates in any way with the person for whom they are regulating their emotions. Regardless of cause, researchers investigating emotion regulation ability, frequency, or any other dimension of the construct should endeavor to use behavior and outcome-based measures whenever such designs are feasible.

A related limitation of the current investigation is its reliance on a cross-sectional design. Although the reported data provide a strong foundation for the validity of the FERAS, future research is required to determine if perceptions of ability change across time and context. One previous study reported consistency across time within expressive regulation ability scores measured by the expressive regulation task (Westphal et al., 2010), but situational stress such as recent interpersonal rejection may activate certain cognitive-affective processing dispositions that influence perceptions of the self and

others, leading to changes in self-regulatory behaviors (Downey & Feldman, 1996). However, preliminary evidence suggests self-ratings of regulation ability are not influenced by cumulative life stress, based upon the absence of an observed relationship between trauma exposure and FERAS scores in Study 1.

A final point of consideration is that the items in the FERAS consist solely of hypothetical social contexts. The majority of emotion regulation research to date, however, has focused on its intrapersonal rather than interpersonal functions (Hofmann, 2014). The FERAS may be less appropriate for researchers who are interested in measuring the relationship between expressive regulation ability and modulating emotions within *one's self* than the relationship between expressive regulation ability and modulating the emotions *of others*. Relatedly, although the FERAS was designed to give a rough assessment of an individual's expressive regulation, their ability to enhance or suppress may change according to certain features of the situation in which the given regulation strategy is being used, including the regulator's goals, severity of the stressor, and the regulator's relationship to other persons present.

Section 3.3: Directions for Future Research

The significant association between the FERAS and performance in the Expressive Flexibility task makes the FERAS one of the few self-reports of emotion regulation that has been empirically linked to the observable behavior that it was designed to measure. However, as previously discussed, the relationship between the FERAS and the flexibility task in the present study was modest in its effect size. It is anticipated that ability scores from the FERAS will be more strongly correlated with

regulatory efforts in actual social contexts. To this end, an important and scientifically lucrative next step in research with the FERAS – and in emotion regulation ability research in general – is to investigate the predictive utility of individual differences in enhancement and suppression ability in naturalistic social environments.

The inclusion of the FERAS in daily diary studies or ecological momentary assessment designs would provide informative data on how expressive regulatory ability can influence social and emotional outcomes in different social contexts. For example, expression of anger in social conflicts has been shown to be beneficial or harmful dependent upon the power of the person perceiving the anger and the appropriateness of the expression (Van Kleef & Côté, 2007). A study measuring these dimensions should observe that individuals with greater expressive regulation ability yield greater social capital in situations in which the individual's naturalistic reaction is proscribed (e.g., anger towards an authority figure).

The potential research I have just described would also require adequate context sensitivity, or the ability to assess environmental demands to inform which regulation strategy is most beneficial, on the part of the regulator in order to maximize the use of his or her expressive regulatory abilities (Bonanno & Burton, 2013). In other words, a person must be able to accurately determine what regulation behavior is best suited for a specific situation instead of relying on their brute regulation skills alone. Future studies of expressive enhancement and suppression ability, particularly those taking place in naturalistic contexts, should take care to consider individual differences in context sensitivity and regulation ability, as both are likely essential in navigating the myriad of stressors inherent in professional and personal interactions.

Future studies should also investigate the interrelationship between expressive regulation abilities and their frequency of use, an important point that was only briefly considered in the current studies. Although the data presented here provides strong evidence that they are distinct constructs, there are a number of avenues by which frequency of a particular behavior may influence the perceived ability to complete that behavior, and vice versa. For example, individuals often define ability in a self-serving and biased way, such that people base their self-assessments on a particular trait definition in which they may indeed excel, but is a very different from another person's definition of what particular qualities comprise that ability (Dunning & Cohen, 1992). Thus, persons who regularly engage in expressive enhancement or suppression might employ regularity of use as a key determinant when assessing their own ability, just as someone who studies for long periods of time might describe themselves as "good" at studying. The link between reappraisal skill and self-reported reappraisal frequency also suggests a parallel relationship for the two constructs in suppression and expression ability and frequency (McRae, Jacobs, Ray, John, & Gross, 2012; Troy, Shallcross, Davis, & Mauss, 2012). Although suppression ability and suppression frequency were discrepant in their relationship to depressive symptoms in Study 1, this may be due to lack of context sensitivity on the part of habitual suppressors. Future studies on expressive regulation ability and frequency should seek to determine if habitual suppressors are simply not good at suppression, or simply use it in situations where it is not adaptive.

CONCLUSION

Considered together, the results from these studies suggest that individuals are capable of assessing their ability to regulate their emotional expressiveness, and that assessments of both expression and suppression ability are conceptually distinct from these regulation strategies' self-reported frequency of use. Further research is required to determine which contexts expressive regulation ability is most and least important, and to what extent these regulatory abilities alters the benefits and costs traditionally associated with expressive suppression as well as expressive enhancement. As the field of emotion regulation moves toward a more nuanced approach considering both individual and situational factors, it is my hope that the FERAS will provide a useful and efficient means of measuring a construct of emerging importance- emotion regulation ability.

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APPENDIX

FERAS

Displaying emotion is a regular part of our daily lives. For social reasons, sometimes we have to express more emotion than we are feeling, and sometimes we have to display less emotion than we are feeling.

The following scenarios involve POSITIVE emotion. For each scenario, indicate how well would you be <u>able</u> to be even MORE EXPRESSIVE than usual of how you were feeling:

	Unable					**Very able**
1) A friend wins an award for a sport that doesn't interest you.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2) A coworker gets a promotion and wants to talk about it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3) A friend is talking about a great date she had the other night.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4) You receive a gift from a family member but it's a shirt you dislike.	1	2	3	4	5	6

The following scenarios involve NEGATIVE emotion. For each scenario, indicate how well would you be <u>able</u> to be even MORE EXPRESSIVE than usual of how you were feeling:

	Unable					**Very able**
5) Your friend is telling you about what a terrible day they had.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6) Your boss is complaining about a project you know little about and have no involvement with.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7) A friend is talking about a break-up that you secretly think is a good thing.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8) You're attending the funeral of someone you don't know.	1	2	3	4	5	6

The following scenarios involve POSITIVE emotion. For each scenario, indicate how well would you be <u>able</u> to CONCEAL how you were feeling:

	Unable					**Very able**
9) While having dinner with a friend who has just recently lost their job, you receive a phone call from your boss stating you will get a raise.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10) You are in a training session and you see an accidentally funny typo in the presenter's slideshow.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11) You're a guest at a solemn religious ceremony and the person sitting next to you just whispered a funny joke.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12) During a meeting with a supervisor, his/her phone unexpectedly begins to play an embarrassing ringtone.	1	2	3	4	5	6

The following scenarios involve NEGATIVE emotion. For each scenario, indicate how well would you be able to CONCEAL how you were feeling:

	Unable					**Very able**
13) You are at a social event and the person you're talking to frequently spits while they speak.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14) You have just heard about the death of a close relative right before an important work meeting.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15) You are on a first date at a restaurant having dinner, and a stranger spills their drink on you.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16) After you have a very irritating and stressful day, a sometimes-annoying neighbor stops by to say hello.	1	2	3	4	5	6