UAP Coalitie Nederland

The Adverse Effects of Suppressing Emotions and Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena

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The importance of sharing experiences and emotions, including after major or traumatic events, is underlined by scientific research. The general consensus is that not sharing such experiences can have adverse consequences for the individual. Recognizing the impact of traumatic events and expressing emotions is seen as a crucial step for the well-being of individuals confronted with such situations. It underlines the importance of psychosocial support and creating a safe environment in which emotions can be shared and processed after such events.

It is quite possible that experiences with phenomena that we cannot explain, such as Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP), can have emotional and psychological consequences for individuals. It confronts people with the unknown, which can turn their entire perception of reality and the known laws of nature upside down. In addition, there are people who claim to have developed physical complaints after direct experiences with UAP, such as alleged radiation-related symptoms (Watters et al., 2023). This can cause feelings of confusion and fear, giving the impression that it is crucial that people who have experienced such experiences are given the space to express themselves. Through open communication, they can not only process these experiences, but also contribute to greater awareness of these phenomena.

Facilitating conversations and providing a supportive environment is essential to the well-being of those who have undergone UAP experiences. Sharing stories in a safe space can create a sense of community and connection, which is important when dealing with the complexity of these experiences. Furthermore, it can contribute to greater acceptance and understanding within society, and thus break the existing stigma, for those who have gone through these types of experiences.

It is important to note that scientific research on the emotional, psychological and physical consequences of UAP is scarce (De La Torre, 2023). What is described above is therefore based on anecdotal material and limited data. There is currently little or no empirical data available to support these statements. That is why in this document I mainly base myself on general scientific articles that deal with the consequences of not sharing experiences and emotions, and then tentatively relate this to experiences with UAP in the general conclusion.

Search terms used: emotional inhibition, memory suppression, trauma, PTSD, post-traumatic psychological adjustment, aviation, UAP, unidentified anomalous phenomena, radiation.

Cameron & Overall (2018):

- When individuals suppressed their emotions (not specifically mentioned which emotions), they experienced more adverse intrapersonal consequences, such as greater depressed mood, more fatigue, lower self-esteem, and lower life satisfaction. Interpersonally, they also felt less acceptance from others, more distance from others, and less satisfaction in relationships. Greater emotional suppression in daily life also predicted increases in depressive symptoms and decreases in relationship satisfaction after 3 months.
- When individuals were more emotionally expressive during daily interactions, they experienced interpersonal benefits, such as increased acceptance of others, greater closeness and satisfaction within relationships, and less detachment from others. Greater emotional expression in daily life also predicted increases in self-esteem and relationship satisfaction.

Chapman, Fiscella, Kawachi, Duberstein & Muennig (2013):

- This study shows that higher scores on the emotion suppression scale were associated with a higher risk of death. This mainly concerns suppressing fear and anger, but also not expressing emotions per se.
- The conclusion suggests that emotion suppression may be a risk factor for premature death, including death from cancer.

Dunn, Billotti, Murphy & Dalgleish (2009):

- This study goes against the general consensus and suggests, contrary to prevailing views in the clinical context, that emotion suppression may lead to successful ongoing regulation of emotions and memory, while acceptance may enhance longer-term emotional responses.

Giese-Davis, Conrad, Nouriani & Spiegel (2008):

- Higher emotional repression was significantly associated with higher diastolic blood pressure, while higher control of hostile feelings was significantly associated with higher systolic blood pressure. This shows that there is a link between emotion regulation and physical health, suggesting that the way people manage their emotions affects blood pressure.
- The findings suggest that a repressive emotion regulation style may be a risk factor for higher sympathetic activation, possibly resulting in an increased allostatic load. On the other hand, control of hostility appears to be a protective factor for women with metastatic breast cancer.

Gold & Wegner (1995)

- This study on thought suppression suggests that suppressing unwanted thoughts may actually increase the emotions and thoughts one is trying to avoid. In this context, the article speaks of suppressing traumatic memories, unrealized goals and personal secrets and taboo subjects. Thought suppression can create a state where we not only think more about unwanted thoughts, but also potentially increase our emotional response to those thoughts.

Khan, O'Donovan, Neylan, Gross & Cohen (2020):

- Suppressing emotions, as opposed to reinterpreting them, shows a significant association with increased levels of inflammation in veterans with trauma, independent of the presence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). A tendency to overuse less adaptive emotional regulation strategies appears to be related to an increased systemic inflammatory response within this population. Once again, it is not specifically mentioned which emotions are central to this study. This concerns the results of the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ).

Kwon & Kim (2018):

- Both American and Chinese participants reported lower life satisfaction in the high emotional suppression condition (i.e., depression and anger) compared to the low suppression condition.
- The negative effect was mediated by positive affect and moderated by self-esteem. In other words, high levels of emotion suppression negatively affected positive affect, which in turn led to lower well-being. This effect was specifically observed in participants with low self-esteem.
- Despite cultural differences, the patterns and mechanisms were consistent across both cultural groups (both American and Chinese participants).

Ruan, Reis, Zareba & Lane (2019):

- In this study, with a total of 468 participants, real-time sampling was used to investigate the effect of suppression of negative emotions (specifically anxiety, general negative affect and neuroticism).
- The results show that suppression of negative emotions leads to subsequent increases in both strongly activating and weakly activating negative emotions, even above and beyond the level of the suppressed negative emotions.
- The findings add to growing evidence that emotional suppression is not only an ineffective strategy for emotion regulation, but also a highly detrimental strategy.

Wermuth, Ülsmann, Borngräber, Gallinat, Schulte-Herbrüggen & Kühn (2021):

- This research suggests that certain structural changes in the brain, particularly in the white matter near the rIFG (right inferior frontal gyrus), are associated with expressive suppression. This may serve to compensate for impaired executive functions in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

General conclusion

The importance of sharing experiences and emotions after major or traumatic events is underlined by scientific research. Recognizing and expressing emotions, i.e. emotional expression, plays an essential role in this process.

It is likely that this also applies to experiences with Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP), where open communication about emotions can help understand and alleviate feelings of confusion and anxiety that can accompany these experiences.

Openly displaying emotions during trauma and life-changing events is crucial as it helps individuals process the impact of the event, connect with others and break the stigma surrounding traumatic experiences on the one hand and UAP on the other, which is essential for recovery and well-being .

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