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CHILDREN’S EMOTION REGULATION INVENTORY (CHERI):
MEASURE DEVELOPMENT, ITEM DOMAINS AND SUMMARY PROFILES

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Clinical Psychology
at Massey University, Palmerston North
New Zealand

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In loving memory of Grandad and Uncle Max –
Expert joy-makers
ABSTRACT

Skilful emotion regulation in childhood plays a vital role in a raft of developmental accomplishments, including social competence, academic success and mental well-being. However, researchers and clinicians currently have no unified framework for examining children’s emotion regulation and few straightforward yet detailed assessment measures. Here, a series of studies was undertaken which identified a collection of observable children’s emotion regulation strategies, then organised and grouped the strategies into cohesive domains and profiles. First, a goal-directed model of emotion regulation was outlined. Next, current research measures, clinical measures and focus group data were used to construct a 103-item inventory of behavioural emotion regulation strategies. Multidimensional scaling was then used to calculate and display inter-item relationships after they had been objectively sorted by lay-people and experts. This step also enabled item refinement and inventory reduction. One hundred and fifty one parents of 6-12 year old children then ranked the resulting 85-item Children’s Emotion Regulation Inventory (ChERI) in relation to their child using a three-phase Q-sort procedure. Multidimensional scaling, factor analysis and cluster analyses were applied to the responses. Nine fundamental domains of children’s emotion regulation were found, interpreted as Outward Engagement, Inward or Somatic Focus, Disengagement, Disruptive, Impulsive/Labile, Social Connectedness/Compliance, Generating Closeness/Intimacy, Establishing Order and Generating Disorder. Individual scores across these nine domains were clustered to generate five summary Profiles of children’s emotion regulation. Results are compared and contrasted with current literature and discussed in terms of potential usefulness of the ChERI for research or clinical applications.
Without a doubt, social sciences research leans heavily on the good nature and willingness of human participants. First and foremost I am incredibly grateful to the psychologists, child clinicians, lay-people, fellow researchers and mums and dads who volunteered to take part in these studies, and who gave up precious time to do so.

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permissions freely offered. One day I aspire to being able to support future research endeavours with equal generosity.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACC – Anterior Cingulate Cortex
ANCOVA – Analysis of Covariance
ANOVA – Analysis of Variance
BERS – Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale
CBCL – Child Behavior Checklist
CCQ – California Child Q-Set
ChERI – Children’s Emotion Regulation Inventory
EEG – Electroencephalograph
ERC – Emotion Regulation Checklist
ERICA – Emotion Regulation Index for Children and Adolescents
ERP – Event-Related Potentials
ERQ-CA – Emotion Regulation Questionnaire for Children and Adolescents
fMRI – Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging
GOPA – Grouping, Opposites, Partitioning and Addition (Sorting Method)
GPA – Generalised Procrustes Analysis
Hotspot Labels
ENG – Outward Engagement
SOM – Inward or Somatic Focus
DNG – Disengagement
DRT – Disruptive
IMP – Impulsive/Labile
SOC – Social Connectedness/Compliance
INT – Generating Closeness/Intimacy
ORD – Establishing Order/Control
DRD – Generating Disorder
MDS – Multidimensional Scaling
MoSS – Method of Successive Sorts
PCA – Principal Component Analysis
PFC – Prefrontal Cortex
PSDQ – Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire – Short Version (adapted)
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