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Regulating belongingness needs: Regulatory focus and responses to social exclusion

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Regulating Belongingness Needs: Regulatory Focus and Responses to Social Exclusion

For the degree of Master of Science

Is approved by the final examining committee:

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Approved by Major Professor(s): James M. Tyler

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REGULATING BELONGINGNESS NEEDS: REGULATORY FOCUS AND
RESPONSES TO SOCIAL EXCLUSION

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of

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by

Katherine E. Adams

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of

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ABSTRACT

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The current project examined the effect of social exclusion on regulatory focus motivations (promotion and prevention focus). Building on previous work, I posited that whether exclusion activates a more promotion or prevention focus depends on the person's initial standing with the group (i.e., initial member vs. *non*-member). Additionally, I hypothesized that regulatory focus motivations should influence excluded individuals' subsequent social reconnection efforts. In two studies, participants were socially excluded after either being included or not as an initial member of the excluding group; in a first study, participants also had the opportunity to reconnect with a new social partner. Results were generally supportive of hypotheses: social exclusion activated a more promotion (vs. prevention) focus when participants were initial *non*-members (vs. members) of the excluding group. In Study 1, participants' regulatory focus also influenced the extent to which they wanted to work with a new social partner. Implications for social exclusion and regulatory focus work are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Social exclusion is an aversive and painful experience that threatens people's fundamental need to belong, provoking a wide range of emotional and behavioral responses (Williams, 2007; Williams, 2009). For example, being excluded results in lower self-esteem, less perceived control, a reduced sense of meaningful existence, an increased preference to work with others (vs. alone) and, somewhat paradoxically, increased aggression (Williams, 2007; Williams & Wesselmann, 2011). Although there are some interpretive differences, researchers generally agree that social exclusion also influences people's state regulatory focus (i.e., prevention vs. promotion focus) (Molden, Lucas, Gardner, Dean, & Knowles, 2009; Park & Baumeister, 2015). Specifically, Park and Baumeister (2015) argue that social exclusion experiences uniformly activate a prevention focus. Molden et al. (2009), on the other hand, argue that social exclusion experiences can involve either an explicit or ignoring process, activating respectively, a prevention focus framed as avoiding *social losses* or a promotion focus framed as avoiding *social non-gains*. Although I broadly agree with Molden et al.'s interpretation of the social exclusion-regulatory focus relationship, I propose to offer a more nuanced conceptualization. In brief, I examine whether the influence of exclusion type (i.e., explicit or ignoring) on regulatory focus (i.e.,

prevention vs. promotion) is influenced by an individual's initial membership status in the excluding group (details will be outlined in later sections).

In addition, I plan to examine the degree to which regulatory focus may differentially influence excluded individuals' social reconnection efforts. Recent work suggests that excluded individuals have to balance competing desires to foster social reconnection and avoid further social pain (Hess & Pickett, 2010; Powers & Heatherton, 2013; Sommer & Bernieri, 2014). An inherent tension underlies these two motivations, in that the same behaviors supporting a reconnection goal (e.g., approaching others) can simultaneously involve continued risk for further interpersonal rejection (e.g., Sommer & Bernieri, 2014). This dialectical tension suggests that there may be an upper threshold for the interpersonal risk (i.e., the perceived likelihood of rejection from a social partner) that an excluded individual is willing to tolerate in pursuit of his/her social reconnection goals.

Given that prevention- and promotion-focused individuals are differentially sensitive to social losses and gains (Crowe & Higgins, 1997), I propose that they may also have different interpersonal risk thresholds concerning their willingness to engage in social reconnection following an exclusion experience. In other words, the *safeness* of a reconnection opportunity, in terms of its potential for continued rejection, may influence the effects of regulatory focus on excluded individuals' reconnection efforts. In general, I expect prevention-focused individuals, who are concerned with maintaining security, to be sensitive to the *safeness* of a reconnection opportunity, in that they will be less likely to approach others as the perceived likelihood of further rejection increases. In contrast, promotion-focused individuals, who are concerned with

promoting positive outcomes, should be less sensitive to reconnection *safeness*, and as a result should continue to approach others regardless of the potential for continued rejection.

I expect exclusion type to influence regulatory focus differently as a function of participant's initial membership status in the excluding group. Second, I posit that social reconnection *safeness* will moderate the effect of regulatory focus on participant's reconnection efforts. In what follows, I outline the rationale for these positions; however, I first provide a brief overview of regulatory focus theory.

Regulatory Focus Systems

Regulatory focus theory posits the existence of two orthogonal motivational systems: the promotion focus system and the prevention focus system (Higgins, 1997; Scholer & Higgins, 2011, 2013). The promotion focus system is concerned with advancement, growth, and the presence or absence of gains. Promotion-focused individuals use *eager approach* strategies to pursue positive outcomes and make little distinction between negative and neutral states. Conversely, the prevention focus system is concerned with security, responsibility, and the presence or absence of losses. Prevention-focused individuals seek to maintain the status quo and use *vigilant avoidance* strategies to minimize potential losses (Scholer & Higgins, 2011, 2013).

It is important to note, however, that the overall promotion-prevention distinction is not synonymous with approach and avoidance motivation per se. In other words, "both prevention- and promotion-focused individuals approach desired end-states and avoid undesired end-states, but the end-states that they care about are qualitatively different" (Scholer & Higgins, 2013, p. 256). Promotion-focused

individuals primarily care about avoiding errors of omission; they seek to maximize gains and are motivated to avoid missed opportunities, even at the expense of incurring some losses. Prevention-focused individuals, in contrast, primarily care about avoiding errors of commission and are motivated to minimize losses, even at the expense of forgoing potentially positive, but risky opportunities. Put differently, promotion-focused individuals strive to avoid *non-gains* (i.e., the absence of a positive outcome), whereas prevention-focused individuals strive to avoid *losses* (i.e., the presence of a negative outcome).

Regulatory Focus and Social Exclusion

Researchers propose that social exclusion experiences can be construed as a *social loss* or *social non-gain*, activating respectively, a prevention or promotion focus (Molden et al., 2009). Molden et al. (2009) argued that exclusion experiences in which an individual is the recipient of overtly negative social attention (i.e., being explicitly and directly rejected) can be interpreted as a *social loss*, resulting in the individual adopting a prevention-oriented focus. By comparison, exclusion experiences in which an individual is more indirectly excluded or ignored via an absence of positive social attention (e.g., being left out of a social activity) can be interpreted as a *social non-gain*; here the individual is thought to adopt a promotion-oriented focus.

In support, Molden et al. (2009) instructed participants to recall a time when they were explicitly rejected and to describe the behaviors they engaged in as a result. Consistent with a prevention motivation (i.e., desire to avoid further losses), participants reported that after the exclusion experience they withdrew from any further social interaction. Participants also conveyed that the experience caused them to feel

agitated and to regret the actions they had taken. These latter findings are consistent with work showing that a prevention focus is associated with an agitated mood state and counterfactual thoughts about actions taken (Camacho, Higgins & Luger, 2003; Shah & Higgins, 2001). By comparison, participants instructed to recall a time when they were indirectly excluded (i.e. ignored) indicated that they actively approached others following the experience. Such behavior is consistent with a promotion motivation to avoid missed social opportunities. These participants also reported that the experience led them to feel more depressed and to regret the actions they had *not* taken. From this evidence, Molden et al. (2009) argued that social exclusion involving either explicit or indirect experiences activate, respectively, a prevention or promotion focus, grounded from a social loss or social non-gain perspective.

Park and Baumeister (2015), however, argue that social exclusion primarily activates a prevention focus, regardless of whether the experience is construed as explicit or indirect. That is, even if the experience involves indirect exclusion it should activate a prevention focus. In support, they found that participants exhibited a prevention-oriented focus when they were ostracized during a game of Cyberball (study 3) or when they wrote about a time when they were simply *left out* (study 2). Both cases are consistent with Molden et al.'s (2009) definition of an ignoring experience involving indirect exclusion via the absence of positive social attention (e.g., being left out of a social activity), which according to Molden should have led to a promotion focus. However, as I noted, the results from Park and Baumeister (2015) showed that rather than promotion, participants adopted a prevention focus. In all, their

data suggest that social exclusion experiences involving indirect ignoring can at times activate a prevention focus.

With the current research, I build on prior work to examine the relationship between social exclusion and regulatory focus. Consistent with Molden et al. (2009), I start with the broad perspective that social exclusion experiences can be characterized as a *social non-gain* or a *social loss*, activating respectively, a promotion or prevention focus. I further posit that people's initial membership status may be a factor underscoring the *social non-gain* and *loss* perspective. In other words, whether people are excluded from a group in which they were or were not initially a member may underlie the degree to which they perceive the situation as a *non-gain* or *loss* state. As a result, an explicit or ignoring exclusion experience may lead to either a promotion or prevention focus depending on the excluded individual's initial membership status. In the following sections, I outline the rationale for this proposition.

Social Exclusion and Membership Status

According to regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997), a person's initial state is a key determinant of whether a particular outcome is perceived as either a *loss* or *non-gain*. An outcome is perceived as a *loss* if it represents a negative *change* in an individual's initial state (i.e., the person loses an outcome that he or she initially possessed). For example, losing money on an initial stock investment is considered a *loss* because the individual has experienced a negative outcome relative to his/her initial starting point (Scholer, Zou, Fujita, Stroessner, & Higgins, 2010). By comparison, an outcome is perceived as a *non-gain* if a person fails to obtain a novel positive outcome, but otherwise experiences no change in his/her initial state. For

example, a person may fail to make a return on an investment, but he/she incurs no losses and remains *stuck* at his/her initial monetary level (Zou, Scholer & Higgins, 2014).

Following this logic, I reasoned that an individual's initial standing with a group (i.e., whether or not he/she was an initial member) may influence whether an exclusion experience is perceived as a *social loss* or a *social non-gain*. Recall, Molden et al. (2009) argued that explicit exclusion experiences involve a loss state, leading to the activation of a prevention focus, whereas ignoring exclusion experiences involve a non-gain state, leading to the activation of a promotion focus. I posit, however, that the degree to which these exclusion types are perceived as a non-gain or loss state will differ depending on the target individual's initial membership status in the excluding group. In some cases, an individual can be rejected from a group in which he/she was never initially a member (e.g., failing to make a team). Because the excluded individual was never actually a member of the group, the person's standing with respect to the group has *not changed*; he/she has not experienced a loss relative to his/her initial state. Of course, the individual may have failed to create new social connections, but he/she has not lost previously established ones. Rejection in this instance should therefore be perceived as a *social non-gain*, activating a promotion-oriented focus, regardless of whether the exclusion experience was explicit or indirect. Alternatively, an individual can be rejected from a group in which he/she was originally considered to be a member (e.g., being cut from a team). In this case, because the individual was originally

included as a member of the excluding group¹, his/her standing with respect to the group has *changed*; he/she has experienced a loss relative to his/her initial state. Rejection in this case should be perceived as a *social loss*, activating a prevention-oriented focus, again regardless of whether the exclusion experience was explicit or indirect.

In all, the degree to which different exclusion types activate a promotion or prevention focus may depend on the target individual's initial membership standing in the excluding group. Being either explicitly or indirectly excluded from a group in which one was never originally a member can be construed as a *social non-gain*, activating a promotion focus, whereas explicit or indirect exclusion from a group in which one was initially considered a member can be construed as a *social loss*, activating a prevention focus. More simply, depending on the target individual's original membership standing, an explicit or passive exclusion experience can be differentially construed as either a *social loss* or *non-gain*, leading to a respective promotion- or prevention-oriented focus.

In what follows, I outline in greater detail Molden et al.'s (2009) findings in relation to *social losses and non-gains*, with a particular focus on how initial membership status may have played a role. I also highlight findings from Park and Baumeister (2015) where appropriate.

¹ It is important to note that my framing of social losses need not involve a long-standing prior relationship with the excluding group. Social loss can also be experienced in more temporary group settings in which an individual is initially included as a member of the excluding group.

Social Exclusion: Social Losses and Non-Gains

Before discussing the role of initial membership status, it is necessary to briefly outline Molden et al.'s (2009) four studies. In their first study, they examined the simple association between participant's chronic regulatory focus (i.e., trait) and the types of exclusion experiences that they freely recalled (i.e., coded as explicit or ignoring). With two follow-up experiments, social exclusion was manipulated; participants were instructed to recall and write about an explicit or ignoring exclusion experience, after which they completed regulatory focus measures. Although these studies increase our knowledge concerning the potential relationship between regulatory focus systems and social exclusion experiences, participant's initial membership status was not coded, and as such its influence regarding *social losses* and *non-gains* cannot be readily determined.

However, in their fourth study it is possible to conceptually infer participant's initial membership status. In this case, participants were led to believe that they were part of an online discussion group; the responses from the other ostensible group members were scripted. During the course of the supposed discussion, target participants in an explicit exclusion condition were openly disparaged, whereas target participants in an indirect ignoring condition were simply not acknowledged (there was also a social acceptance condition).

Of key value to the current research, I reasoned that participants were positioned as initial members of the discussion group; the other members included them during the preliminary introductory rounds of discussion. That is, I posit that participants in the explicit and ignoring conditions were initial members of the

excluding group, and would therefore perceive social exclusion as a *social loss*, activating a prevention focus. Indeed, participants in the explicit condition did exhibit a prevention focus, however, those in the ignoring condition did not; rather, as Molden et al. (2009) predicted, they exhibited a more promotion-oriented focus.

Although this latter result is inconsistent with my rationale concerning membership status, there are aspects of the findings that make it difficult to draw straightforward conclusions. The key concern is that Molden et al. (2009) also reported that promotion focus did not differ between the ignoring and acceptance conditions. They posited that a ceiling effect might explain this lack of difference, in that people, on average have a greater tendency to think about what they should have done (i.e., promotion focus). I acknowledge that this is a plausible explanation. However, an alternative explanation exists; it is also possible that participants in the ignoring condition simply did not perceive the exclusion episode as social exclusion. Indeed, there was no evidence to indicate that participants in the ignoring and explicit condition similarly perceived the episode as a social exclusion experience. Recall, my ideas concerning the degree to which membership status influences the construal of exclusion as *social loss* rests on the assumption that those in the ignoring condition experience the exclusion episode in a manner similar to those in the explicit condition. In all, it is unclear if Molden et al.'s ignoring manipulation successfully activated an exclusion experience, and as such it is difficult to proffer speculation concerning the relationship between membership status and regulatory focus.

However, we can draw some insight about membership status from Park and Baumeister's (2015) work. With two of their studies, it is plausible to consider

participants as being initial members of the excluding group. Specifically, participants were positioned as one of three players in a computerized game of ball toss (i.e., Cyberball); they were initially included at the start of the game in that they were thrown the ball once before being ostracized by the other group members (study 3). In another study, participants visualized being rejected by their colleagues at work (study 4); I posit that this too corresponds to being an established member of the excluding group. The results from both studies showed that participants adopted a prevention focus. This finding is consistent with my earlier rationale that being an established member of the excluding group can lead people to perceive exclusion as a *social loss*, activating a prevention focus, even when the exclusion experience involved indirect ignoring.

Regulatory Focus and Social Reconnection

In addition to membership status, I will also examine how excluded people's regulatory focus motivations influence their social reconnection efforts. I posit that when an exclusion experience prompts a prevention (vs. promotion) focus, those excluded should exhibit greater sensitivity to the perceived *safeness* (i.e., potential for further social loss) of a reconnection opportunity. In what follows, I outline the rationale for this proposition.

Recall that Molden et al.'s (2009, study 2) results suggest that individuals who adopt a prevention focus are likely to withdraw from social contact following an explicit exclusion experience. This is consistent with work showing that a prevention-focus orientation motivates people to avoid negative states, in general. However, prevention-focus is also known to make people hypersensitive to situations that hold

the potential to incur losses (Scholer & Higgins, 2011, 2013). I reasoned that whether prevention-focused individuals withdraw from social contact following exclusion might depend on the extent to which they perceive the available situation as more or less safe from continued social loss. In other words, adopting a prevention-focus as a result of exclusion may not just uniformly lead people to withdraw from social contact. Rather, people may be willing to engage in social interaction if the available opportunity is deemed to be reasonably safe from continued exclusion (e.g., social acceptance is overtly conveyed). On the other hand, if the available social opportunity is perceived as having the potential for continued exclusion, people may exhibit avoidance behavior, withdrawing from further social contact; this latter point is consistent with Molden et al.'s (2009) findings.

By comparison, Molden et al.'s (2009, study 2) findings also suggest that individuals who adopt a promotion focus may be likely to approach available social interactions/opportunities following an exclusion experience. Promotion-focused individuals are also more sensitive to gains and their social behavior is shaped by a general desire to approach positive states, rather than avoid negative outcomes; in fact, they view neutral states as equally aversive as negative ones (Scholer & Higgins, 2011). Following an exclusion experience, I posit that promotion-focused individuals' willingness to approach available social interactions will not differ depending on whether they perceive the opportunity as more or less safe from continued social loss. Put differently, I expect promotion-focused individuals to approach available social interactions, regardless of the perceived potential for further exclusion.

My rationale is consistent with regulatory focus research, which shows that promotion and prevention focus are not simply tantamount to approach and avoidance tactics. Rather, the behavior of prevention- compared to promotion-focused individuals is influenced by the degree to which a relevant situation holds the potential for losses (vs. gains). For example, evidence from research using investment paradigms demonstrate that prevention-focused individuals discriminate between investment tactics based on the tactic's potential to incur losses, whereas promotion-focused individuals exhibit greater sensitivity to opportunities that offer potential gains (Scholer et al., 2010; Zou et al., 2014). In their study, Scholer et al., (2010) led all participants to believe they lost money on an initial investment. As a result, prevention-focused participants tried to minimize any further loss; they preferred a conservative investment tactic, which coupled a low probability of losing more money with a very small potential for gain. Conversely, they displayed less interest in choosing a riskier tactic in which a high probability of losing money was coupled with a large potential for gain. Promotion-focused individuals, by comparison, showed no differential preference for the risky or the conservative tactic, illustrating that they were less sensitive to the potential for further loss and did not use this rubric as a basis for selecting one tactic over the other. Rather, promotion-focused individuals appear to be more sensitive to potential gains. For example, in a separate study, participants believed that their initial investment gained only a very small return (Zou et al., 2014). In this case, promotion- compared to prevention-focused participants chose a riskier investment tactic, which coupled a significant likelihood to make additional gains with a high probability to incur more loss. They also avoided a more conservative tactic,

which entailed no opportunity to make additional gains, but ensured that their original/current monetary position would remain intact. In all, the evidence suggests that promotion-focused individuals are more willing to undertake elevated risks in pursuit of potential gains, whereas prevention-focused individuals are more reluctant to take such risks; rather they are more sensitive to and engage in efforts to minimize the potential for further losses.

STUDY 1 OVERVIEW

The primary goal of Study 1 is to examine the relationship between social exclusion and regulatory focus. Earlier, I posited that being explicitly or indirectly excluded from a group in which one was never originally a member can be construed as a *social non-gain*, activating a promotion focus, whereas if a person is initially considered a member, the exclusion can be construed as a *social loss*, activating a prevention focus. Recall, for a number of studies (Park & Baumeister, studies 3 and 4) it was possible to infer membership status, in that participants could be considered initial members of the excluding group; indeed, in these cases the results showed that participants adopted a prevention focus.

For Study 1, membership status is kept constant in that participants are not included as an *initial member* of the ostensible group of interest. For the exclusion condition, participants are either explicitly excluded or indirectly ignored by the relevant group². Following the rationale outlined in the introduction, I expect promotion, overall, to be greater than prevention, within respectively, the ignore and explicit conditions. However, I do not expect promotion-prevention levels (created by subtracting prevention focus from promotion focus³) to produce a significant difference

² There was also an acceptance condition that was not directly applicable to the current hypotheses.

³ Following previous work (e.g., Park & Baumeister, 2015; Bohns et al., 2013; Scholer, Ozaki & Higgins, 2014) I created the promotion-prevention difference by subtracting prevention focus from promotion focus; greater positive numbers indicate a stronger promotion focus.

between the two exclusion conditions. That is, I expect more promotion (vs. prevention) in both exclusion conditions, but I do not expect the level of promotion (promotion - prevention) to be significantly greater in one exclusion condition or the other.

A secondary goal of Study 1 focuses on examining the degree to which excluded participants social reconnection efforts are influenced by regulatory focus and the perceived *safeness* of the available reconnection opportunity. In all, I expect participants who are higher on prevention focus to exhibit a greater preference for working with the partner in a safe compared to unsafe reconnection condition. By comparison, reconnection *safeness* should have no effect on the working preferences for those higher on promotion focus.

Method

Participants

Participants were 155 undergraduates (90 women). Except where noted, no significant gender differences emerged. The average age of the sample was 19.68 ($SD = 2.03$). The sample consisted of 56.1% Caucasian, 28.4% Asian, 6.5% African American and 5.2% Hispanic/Latino students, and 3.8% other.

Procedures

Upon arrival, participants were seated at separate computer terminals and filled out an informed consent. All aspects of the experiment were conducted using MediaLab software.

The initial instructions noted that the researcher was interested in examining how people communicate online. Participants were told that they would communicate

with three other participants who were set up remotely in a separate experimental lab; in reality, there were no other participants, and their ostensible responses were scripted. As the first task, the target participant wrote a short essay on “what it means to be me” and “the kind of person I would like to be.” They were led to believe that their responses would be shared with the other participants, and that they would likewise read the other participants’ responses to the same questions. Target participants wrote for 1 minute, after which they “submitted” their essay to the other ostensible participants. After a brief delay, the target participant read three other essays allegedly written by the other participants; in actuality, these were scripted responses (see Appendix D). To maintain the semblance of anonymity, the target and the other participants were identified only with a letter (e.g., participant A).

At this point, participants were informed that the researchers “needed to form groups where the members like and respect one another” (adapted from Leary et al., 1995; Maner et al., 2007; Twenge et al., 2007). To do so, the target participant was told that they needed to choose two of the three participants who they would most like to work with on an upcoming task; they were instructed to use the participants’ essays as the basis for nomination. Target participants also wrote a brief open-ended statement in which they explained their reasoning for *not* nominating the third participant. They were led to believe that these explanations would be given to the other participants, and that they would also read the other participants’ explanations.

After a short delay, the target participant received the other participants’ explanations. All participants were told that none of the other participants chose him/her as someone they wanted to work with, and therefore they would *not* be

included in the upcoming group task. Participants were also given the other participants' explanations for why they did not nominate him/her, which constituted the key independent variable (adapted from Molden et al., 2009). In the explicit exclusion condition, the other participants' open-ended explanation directly evaluated/discussed the target participant; for example, the explanation stated, *I don't want to work with Person A because I really didn't like their essay*. By comparison those in the ignoring exclusion condition received more ambiguous types of comments, for example, the explanation stated, *Guess I just wanted to work with the others more*.

After reading the explanations, participants completed a regulatory focus scale developed by van Kleef, van Trijp, and Luning (2005); the scale is a shortened version of a regulatory focus measure originally developed by Lockwood, Jordan, and Kunda (2002). The scale consists of six promotion items ($\alpha = .78$) and six prevention items, ($\alpha = .48$) anchored at 1 (*not at all true of me*) and 9 (*very true of me*). Participants also completed an adapted version of the Need Satisfaction scale (i.e., absent references to the specific Cyberall manipulation; 19 items, $\alpha = .94$) (Bernstein & Claypool, 2012; Williams, 2009), comprising four need subscales: Belonging ($\alpha = .83$), Self-Esteem ($\alpha = .86$), Control ($\alpha = .70$), and Meaningful Existence ($\alpha = .87$), anchored at 1 (*not at all*) and 7 (*extremely*).

Upon finishing, participants were told that because they were not selected to participate in the group task, they would complete a second task with a new partner; it was made clear to participants that they would not work with any of the participants from the previous task. Before meeting with the new partner, participants were told they would first exchange some information with him/her. This required participants to

write a brief description of their personality and to note some demographic items. Participants believed their written descriptions would be shared with their new partner, and that they would likewise view their partner's description.

Once participants supposedly "sent" their information, they received their partner's responses; in reality, these were scripted responses. The partner's information constituted the *social connection opportunity* manipulation in which the partner's information suggested either likely (*safer opportunity*) or unlikely acceptance (*unsafe opportunity*) (adapted from Schlenker, Weigold, & Hallam, 1990). In the *safe opportunity*, the partner's information stated: *I guess you could say I'm a pretty trusting person. If someone tells me something, I usually take it to be true.* In the *unsafe opportunity*, the partner's information stated: *I guess you could say I'm not a very trusting person. I'm skeptical about what others say until I see proof that it's true.* The partner was identified only with letters and all reference to gender or race was omitted; demographic information was neutral and held constant.

Participants were then told that the researcher needed some participants to complete the upcoming task with a partner and some to complete it alone, and that the participant's preference to work alone or with a partner would be taken into account. At this point, participants rated the degree to which they wanted to complete the task alone or with a partner, anchored at 1 (*work alone*) and 11 (*work with partner*) (adapted from Maner et al., 2007). After answering this item, participants completed manipulation checks for the safeness conditions (two items; e.g., *would you feel safe interacting with the task partner*, anchored at 1, *not at all* to 7, *definitely*) and the

degree to which the exclusion conditions were perceived as more or less direct exclusion (three items, $\alpha = .80^4$) after which they were debriefed and dismissed.

Results

Social Exclusion and Regulatory Focus

Manipulation check. First, the analysis indicated that the exclusion manipulation was effective in that participants reported feeling more directly excluded in the explicit condition ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 1.51$) compared to the ignore condition ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.37$), $t(153) = 5.00$, $p < .001$, $d = .81$. However, importantly the average Need Satisfaction score and all subscales did not significantly differ across exclusion conditions ($M_{exp} = 4.72$, $SD = 1.14$; $M_{ign} = 4.88$, $SD = 1.10$), $t(153) = -.88$, $p = .38$, $d = .14^5$; all subscales $ps < 1.00$ (see Table 1 for means and standard deviations). The Need Satisfaction findings suggests that participants in the ignore condition experienced exclusion in much the same manner as those in the explicit condition.

Primary analysis. From Molden et al.'s (2009) work one would expect more prevention in the explicit condition and more promotion in the ignore condition, however, the current findings suggest a somewhat different perspective. Specifically, the results from Study 1 show that when participants were positioned as initial *non-*members, they exhibited more promotion focus (vs. prevention) within both the explicit ($M_{promo} = 7.26$, $SD = .99$; $M_{prev} = 5.98$, $SD = .96$), $t(80) = 10.69$, $p < .001$ and

⁴ The 3 items were anchored at 1, *passively ignored* to 7, *actively rejected*; or 1, *directly rejected* to 7, *indirectly ignored*; or 1, *subtly ignored* to 7, *explicitly rejected*.

⁵ Men ($M = 5.08$, $SD = 1.01$) reported significantly greater need satisfaction compared to women ($M = 4.60$, $SD = 1.17$), $F(149) = 6.56$, $p = .011$, but there was no significant interaction between gender and exclusion type, $F(149) = .00$, $p = .999$.

the ignore condition ($M_{promo} = 6.86, SD = 1.27; M_{prev} = 5.74, SD = .92$) $t(73) = 7.65, p < .001, dz = .90$. Moreover, as expected, the degree of promotion (promotion-prevention difference) within the explicit condition ($M_{promo-prev} = 1.28, SD = 1.08$) did not significantly vary from the difference within the ignore condition ($M_{promo-prev} = 1.12, SD = 1.25$), $t(153) = .89, p = .373, d = .14$, suggesting that in both exclusion conditions participants exhibited similar levels of promotion focus.

Regulatory Focus and Social Connection Opportunity

Manipulation check. Initial analysis of the *social connection opportunity* showed that participants in the *safe* condition anticipated greater safety ($M = 5.32, SD = 1.47$) than those in the *unsafe* condition ($M = 4.86, SD = 1.39$), $t(153) = 1.98, p = .05, d = .14$. Likewise, compared to participants in the *unsafe* condition ($M = 3.57, SD = 1.21$), those in the *safe* condition also expected less rejection ($M = 3.09, SD = 1.66$), $t(153) = 2.06, p = .04, d = .33$.

Primary analysis. To examine the effect of regulatory focus and social connection opportunity on work-partner choice rating, I regressed the work-partner rating on regulatory focus (promotion-prevention difference), the social connection opportunity (safe vs. unsafe), and the regulatory focus X social connection interaction. As recommended by Aiken and West (1991), the regulatory focus measure was mean centered and the interaction term comprised the cross-product of the mean centered measure with the social connection condition.

The results indicated a significant effect for social connection opportunity, $B = .86, t(151) = 2.66, p = .009, R^2 = .22, 95\% CI [.22, 1.50]$, such that participants reported greater willingness to work with a partner in the *safe* ($M = 5.70, SD = 2.19$), compared

to unsafe ($M = 4.84$, $SD = 1.91$) condition. There was also a significant effect for regulatory focus, $B = .40$, $t(151) = 2.17$, $p = .031$, $R^2 = .17$, 95% CI [.04, .76]; as promotion focus increased, participants' willingness to work with the partner also increased. As expected, these effects were qualified by a significant regulatory focus X social connection interaction, $B = -.80$, $t(151) = -2.81$, $p = .006$, $R^2 = .22$, 95% CI [-1.36, -.24]. Simple slope analyses were conducted to decompose the interaction (e.g., regulatory focus was recalculated at one standard deviation above and below the mean; see Figure 1). The analyses revealed that the effect of social connection opportunity was significant for more prevention-focused participants, $B = 1.79$, $t(151) = 3.88$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.88, 2.70], but not for more promotion-focused participants, $B = -.06$, $t(151) = -.14$, $p = .889$, 95% CI [-.98, .85]. Prevention-focused participants were more willing to work with a partner in the safe (vs. unsafe) condition, whereas promotion-focused participants' willingness to work with the partner did not significantly differ across the safe and unsafe conditions. No other significant effects emerged.

Discussion

The aim of the current study was to examine the effect of membership status on regulatory focus motivations (promotion or prevention). In this first, initial study, membership status was held constant; all participants were initial *non*-members and expected to adopt a more promotion focus. Consistent with expectations, it was found that excluded participants were more promotion-focused (vs. prevention-), both when they were more explicitly excluded and indirectly ignored. Additionally, regulatory focus motivations (promotion-prevention focus) influenced participants' social reconnection efforts in a manner consistent with hypotheses. More *prevention*-focused

participants discriminated between relatively safe and unsafe reconnection partners, such that they were more willing to work with the partner in the safe (vs. unsafe) condition. By comparison, more *promotion*-focused participants were equally willing to work with the partner in both the safe and unsafe conditions, suggesting that they were relatively less sensitive to partner safeness and did not use it as a basis for selecting social reconnection partners.

In all, the current results provide preliminary support for the hypothesis that a person's initial standing with an excluding group (member vs. *non*-member) influences whether the person adopts a more promotion or prevention focus. However, a limitation of the current study is that membership status was held constant; that is, all participants were *not* included as initial members of the excluding group. Although the current findings were consistent with my hypotheses for *non*-members (i.e., participants were more promotion than prevention focused), a direct comparison between both members and *non*-members is needed to strengthen conclusions regarding the effect of membership status. With Study 2, I address this limitation and manipulate both participants' membership status (member vs. *non*-member), along with exclusion type (explicit vs. ignore). Additionally, given that the hypotheses regarding participants' social reconnection efforts received general support in Study 1, with Study 2 I shift emphasis and focus primarily on providing a more direct test of the effect of membership status on regulatory focus motivations.

STUDY 2 OVERVIEW

The aim of Study 2 is to more fully examine the relationship between membership status, regulatory focus, and social exclusion. Whereas participants in Study 1 were *not* members of the excluding group, in Study 2 membership status will be manipulated (i.e., initial member vs. *non-* member); participants will also be randomly assigned to an explicit or ignore exclusion condition.

Overall, I expect promotion to be greater than prevention within the explicit and ignore conditions in the *non*-member condition. By comparison, I expect prevention to be greater than promotion within the explicit and ignore conditions in the member condition. However, within each membership condition, I do not expect regulatory focus levels (promotion-prevention, calculated in same fashion as Study 1) to differ between the explicit and ignore conditions. Rather, I expect participants within the explicit condition to show greater promotion levels (promotion-prevention) in the *non*-member condition compared to the member condition. Likewise, I expect promotion levels (promotion-prevention) to be greater in the *non*-member versus member condition for ignored participants.

Method

Participants

Participants were 195 undergraduate students (86 women, and 1 student who identified as transgender) who completed the study for course credit. Except where noted, no significant gender differences emerged. The mean age of the sample was 19.21 ($SD = 1.41$). The sample consisted of 73% Caucasian, 15.8% Asian, 5.1% African American, 3.1 % Hispanic/Latino, and 2.5% other.

Procedure

Upon arrival, participants were seated at separate computer terminals and filled out an informed consent. All aspects of the experiment were conducted on the computer using Qualtrics software. The initial instructions noted that the researcher was interested in whether online work environments affect creativity. Participants were told that they would complete a series of creativity tasks, and that for some of these tasks, they would communicate via the computer with three other participants who were set up in a separate lab. In actuality, there were no other participants.

To create the membership conditions, participants were told to generate four creative uses for four different objects (e.g., newspaper, brick), (e.g., Harkins & Petty, 1982). In the *initial member* condition, participants were led to believe that they would complete this task with the three ostensible participants. Participants were told that for each object, each group member would generate responses one at a time in a pre-determined order. The target participant was always assigned to respond last. All responses from the ostensible participants were pre-scripted computer responses, which

were held constant (see Appendix E). In the *non-member* condition, target participants worked alone to generate four creative uses for the same four objects.

After the *creative uses* task, participants were told that the researchers needed to form working groups in which members like and respect one another (adopted from Leary et al., 1995; Maner et al., 2007; Twenge et al., 2007), ostensibly because this facilitates the group's creativity level. To create the groups, participants were instructed to write a short essay about themselves; they were also told that the three ostensible participants were doing the same. Participants were further told that all of the essays would be shared among the group, and that each person would use the essays to determine which two of the others they wanted to work with on the upcoming task. For participants in the initial membership condition, it was made clear that they were communicating with the same three participants from the *creative uses* task.

Participants were given 2 minutes to write their essays based on the same prompts as Study 1 (i.e., *who I am* and *what kind of person I would like to be*), after which they "sent" their essay to the ostensible group members. After a brief delay, participants read three essays allegedly written by the three other participants; in actuality these comprised pre-programmed responses. Once they finished reading the essays, participants identified which two of the three participants they wanted to work with on the next task. As in Study 1, target participants also wrote a brief open-ended statement in which they explained their reasoning for *not* nominating the third participant. They were led to believe that these explanations would be given to the other participants, and that they would also read the other participants' explanations.

Following a short delay, the target participant received the other participants' explanations. All participants were told that none of the other participants chose him/her as someone they wanted to work with, and therefore they would *not* be included in the upcoming group task. Participants were also given the other participants' explanations for why they did not nominate him/her, which constituted the key independent variable (identical to those used in Study 1). After reading the explanations, participants also completed the same regulatory focus measure as in Study 1⁶ ($\alpha_{\text{prom}} = .833$; $\alpha_{\text{prev}} = .714$).

Participants then completed the same three items from Study 1 assessing the extent to which they felt explicitly excluded (vs. indirectly ignored) ($\alpha = .737$). Participants also completed two items assessing the extent to which they felt like part of a group with the other three ostensible participants: "I felt close with the other three participants; I felt like part of the group with the other three participants," anchored on a 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*) scale.⁷ Participants also completed demographic items, after which they were thanked and fully debriefed.

⁶ As a secondary measure of regulatory focus, participants also completed the goals inventory (Higgins, Friedman, Harlow, Idson, Ayduk & Taylor, 2001), in which they listed up to 7 goals they are pursuing and up to 7 activities they could do to accomplish each goal. Participants are expected to list more activities to the extent that they are more promotion- (less prevention-) focused. In the current sample, however, the number of activities listed per goal ($M = 2.85$, $SD = 1.15$) did not significantly correlate with regulatory focus (promotion – prevention), $r = .08$, $p = .287$. Moreover, the number of means listed per goal did not differ as a function of membership status, $F(191) = .01$, $p = .945$, exclusion type, $F(191) = 1.05$, $p = .306$ or their interaction, $F(191) = .58$, $p = .448$.

⁷ Neither participants' closeness with the other group members, $t(193) = -.45$, $p = .652$, nor the extent to which they felt part of a group, $t(193) = -.88$, $p = .382$, was significantly influenced by membership status. However, participants' endorsement of these items may have been influenced by the fact that they completed them at the conclusion of the study, after being socially excluded by the other group members. Indeed, on a composite measure of both items, both the member ($M = 1.99$, $SD = 1.57$) and non-member ($M = 1.86$, $SD = 1.28$) condition means were relatively low, suggesting that participants' responses on these items were affected by the earlier social exclusion manipulation.

Results

Social Exclusion and Regulatory Focus

Manipulation check. As in Study 1, the analysis revealed a significant effect of exclusion type, $F(1, 191) = 22.85, p < .001, \eta^2 = .107$, in that participants felt more directly rejected in the explicit condition ($M = 4.87, SD = 1.40$) compared to the ignore condition ($M = 3.89, SD = 1.42$)⁸. No other significant effects emerged ($ps > .60$). Also in line with Study 1, the data revealed that the average Need Satisfaction score did not significantly differ across the exclusion conditions, $F(1, 191) = 2.75, p = .10, \eta^2 = .014$; there was a marginal effect of exclusion type on the Control subscale, $F(1, 191) = 3.26, p = .072, \eta^2 = .017$, but no other subscales emerged as significant (all $ps > .137$). Overall, this suggests that participants experienced the exclusion manipulation in much the same manner across the explicit and ignore conditions. No other significant effects emerged ($ps > .20$). Means and standard deviations for need satisfaction are presented in Table 2.

Primary analysis. As expected, in the *non-member* condition, promotion ($M = 7.02; SD = 1.01$) was greater than prevention ($M = 5.36; SD = 1.12$) for the explicit condition, $t(54) = 8.06, p < .001, dz = 1.09$; likewise, promotion ($M = 6.84; SD = 1.39$) was also greater than prevention ($M = 5.54; SD = 1.45$) for the ignore condition, $t(41) = 4.27, p < .001, dz = .52$. Although for the member condition I expected prevention to be greater than promotion within both the explicit and ignore conditions, this pattern

⁸ There was also a main effect of gender, such that women ($M = 4.71, SD = 1.57$) reported being more directly rejected than men ($M = 4.16, SD = 1.34$), $F(1, 190) = 7.46, p = .007$; gender did not significantly interact with exclusion type, $F(1, 190) = .437, p = .509$.

failed to emerge. In fact, like the *non-member* condition, promotion ($M = 7.05$; $SD = 1.19$) was also greater than prevention ($M = 6.03$; $SD = 1.27$) for the explicit condition, $t(49) = 4.61, p < .001, dz = .65$, and for the ignore condition ($M_{\text{promotion}} = 6.93$; $SD = 1.07$) ($M = 5.63_{\text{prevention}}$; $SD = 1.02$), $t(47) = 7.45, p < .000, dz = 1.08$.

Importantly, however, explicitly excluded participants still exhibited significantly greater promotion levels (promotion-prevention) when they were *non-members* ($M = 1.66$; $SD = 1.53$) compared to when they were initial members ($M = 1.02$; $SD = 1.56$), $t(103) = -2.13, p = .035, d = .42$, consistent with hypotheses. I also expected participants in the ignore condition to exhibit greater promotion levels in the *non-member* (vs. member) condition. However, this latter expectation was not met; rather, promotion levels in the *non-member* ($M = 1.30$; $SD = 1.98$) compared to the member condition ($M = 1.30$; $SD = 1.21$) did not differ for ignored participants, $t(88) = -.01, p = .993, d = .00$.

Finally, as expected, regulatory focus levels (promotion-prevention) did not significantly differ between the explicit ($M = 1.66$; $SD = 1.53$) and ignore ($M = 1.30$; $SD = 1.98$) conditions within the *non-member* condition, $t(95) = 1.01, p = .315, d = .20$, and likewise, regulatory focus did not differ between explicit ($M = 1.02$; $SD = 1.56$) and ignore ($M = 1.30$; $SD = 1.21$) within the member condition, $t(96) = -1.0, p = .321, d = .20$.

Discussion

The aim of the current study was to extend findings from Study 1 and more directly examine the effect of membership status (member vs. *non-member*) and exclusion type (explicit vs. ignore) on regulatory focus motivations. It was

hypothesized that social exclusion (both explicit and ignore) would lead to a more promotion (vs. prevention) focus when participants were initial *non*-members (vs. members). Consistent with these hypotheses, it was found when participants were explicitly excluded, promotion levels (promotion-prevention) were greater in the *non*-member (vs. member) condition. Although I expected a similar pattern of results for participants in the ignore condition, this was not found; rather, promotion levels were similar across both membership conditions (to be discussed in more detail in the General Discussion). This latter result notwithstanding, the findings from this study lend general support to the hypothesis that membership status (member vs. *non*-member) is a key factor influencing whether social exclusion activates a more promotion or prevention focus.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Although there is a general consensus that social exclusion can influence people's state regulatory focus, there is less agreement concerning whether such experiences lead to the activation of a prevention or a promotion oriented focus. In part, the primary aim of the current research was to examine whether the relationship between the specific exclusion experience and regulatory focus is influenced by a person's initial membership status in the excluding group. Drawing from regulatory focus theory, I posited that being an initial member of the excluding group may lead to a more prevention focus, whereas being a *non*-member may lead to a more promotion focus. The results from across the two studies were in general agreement and provided partial support for the hypotheses.

Recall that all participants in Study 1 held a *non*-member status, and as such, I expected them to adopt a more promotion oriented focus. Consistent with expectations, participants exhibited a greater promotion oriented focus across both the explicit and ignore conditions. Likewise, the degree of promotion (promotion – prevention difference) focus in the explicit condition did not significantly vary from the difference in the ignore condition. With Study 2, I manipulated participant's membership status (i.e., *non*-member vs. member) and their exclusion experience (i.e., explicit vs. ignore). As predicted, promotion was greater than prevention in the *non*-member status

condition for both the explicit and ignore participants, although unexpectedly, those in the member condition also exhibited greater promotion across the exclusion conditions. However, importantly, as hypothesized, explicitly excluded participants displayed greater levels of promotion (promotion – prevention difference) in the *non*-member compared to member condition. Although I also expected ignored participants to show the same pattern as the explicit participants, this promotion – prevention difference failed to emerge. Rather, ignored participants displayed the same level of promotion across the *non*-member and member conditions (this will be discussed in more detail at a later point).

A secondary goal of Study 1 focused on the effect of regulatory focus on excluded individuals' social reconnection efforts. Although excluded individuals are typically motivated to socially reconnect (e.g., Maner et al., 2007), they must also balance competing concerns for reconnection with the desire to avoid further social pain (e.g., Maner et al., 2007; Sommer & Bernieri, 2014). Because promotion- and prevention-focused individuals are differentially sensitive to *gains* versus *losses*, I reasoned that they might have different thresholds for the level of social risk they are willing to tolerate in pursuit of their reconnection goals. Specifically, I hypothesized that prevention-focused individuals, who are concerned with maintaining security, should be sensitive to the *safeness* of a reconnection partner, such that they are more willing to approach a safe versus unsafe partner. By comparison, promotion-focused individuals should be less sensitive to partner *safeness* and I would expect them to approach a reconnection partner regardless of his/her safeness level. Consistent with hypotheses, participants who were more prevention focused reported greater

willingness to work with partner in the safe (vs. unsafe) condition. By comparison, when participants were more promotion focused their willingness to work with the partner did not differ as a function of the partner's safeness level. These findings suggest that prevention-focused individuals may be less tolerant of further social losses, and may only approach a reconnection opportunity if the likelihood for rejection is relatively low. Promotion-focused individuals, on the other hand, may be more willing to accept greater risks of social rejection in pursuit of their reconnection goals.

Although the findings generally supported the hypotheses, the results from the ignore condition in Study 2 were inconsistent with the expectations concerning membership status. Recall, I expected participants in the ignore condition to exhibit more promotion focus when they were *non*-members (vs. members). This difference failed to emerge; rather, ignored participants exhibited equal levels of promotion-focus across both the member and *non*-member conditions.

At first glance, one may wonder if the effect of membership status failed simply because participants in the ignore condition did not experience the social exclusion episode in the same fashion as those in the explicit condition. However, the data suggest that this was not the case; the need threat levels for those in the explicit condition were not significantly greater than those in the ignore condition. In other words, *ignore* and *explicit* participants reported similar levels of felt exclusion. However, participants in the ignore (vs. explicit) condition reported the exclusion experience as more passive, subtle, and indirect. It is possible that the more subtle and indirect nature of the *ignore* exclusion experience affected whether initial members perceived the ignoring episode as a *social loss*, which in turn may have influenced the

degree to which they adopted a prevention- or promotion-oriented focus. In what follows, I outline the reasoning for this proposition.

Recall that I expected exclusion to activate a more prevention-oriented focus when participants were included as initial members of the excluding group. As outlined in the introduction, I reasoned that being an initial member would lead participants to perceive the exclusion experience as a *social loss*, in the sense that they lost a social connection that was previously held. However, for *ignored* participants in the initial member (vs. non-member) condition, the simple absence of positive acceptance cues from the excluding group may not have necessarily signaled to the participant that they actually *lost* a social connection. In other words, although ignored members may have felt momentarily left out by the group, the ambiguous nature of the ignoring manipulation may not have been sufficient to communicate that the participant was *removed* by from the group. I am not suggesting that an *ignore* experience is socially painless, only that such episodes may not unequivocally result in perceptions of social loss. In fact, coming from a somewhat opposite perspective, people can even be overtly included, yet still feel subjectively rejected if their *relational value* is not at a desired level (Smart-Richman & Leary, 2009). In sum, when initial members of a group receive ambiguous exclusion feedback (i.e., indirectly ignored), they may report momentary rejection, without necessarily experiencing the excluding situation as a *social loss*. If this were the case, it may help to explain why participants who were ignored in the initial member (vs. non-member) condition failed to engage in a more prevention-oriented focused. Although speculative, the logic is consistent with some of Molden et al.'s findings (2009, study 4). In their study, it was also difficult to draw a

straightforward conclusion from the ignore condition, primarily because the ignored and accepted participants did not differ in terms of regulatory focus. Specifically, participants in Molden et al.'s study were initially included as members of an online discussion group. Those in the ignore condition then received ambiguous social feedback regarding their standing with the group. As I posited for the current study, the subtlety of the ignore condition may have failed to sufficiently communicate rejection from the group, leading to no difference in regulatory focus when compared to those in the acceptance condition (i.e., a *social loss*).

Future studies could test this hypothesis more directly by measuring the extent to which participants perceive social exclusion experiences as either a *social loss* or *non-gain*. Although this process is inferred in the current studies, as it is in much of the regulatory focus literature, future work would benefit by examining whether participants perceive the exclusion episode as more of a *social loss* if they are explicitly excluded versus indirectly ignored. In addition, future work could manipulate the ambiguity of the ignoring episode. Although ignoring exclusion is typically more subtle and ambiguous, it is also true that when individuals are repeatedly and consistently ignored over an extended duration of time (e.g., Cyberball), his/her loss of social standing with the group may gradually become more apparent. It is possible that a less ambiguous form of ignoring exclusion may be necessary to communicate an actual *social loss*, ultimately leading to the adoption of a prevention-oriented focus. In fact, such a finding would be consistent with Park and Baumeister's (2015) finding, in which exclusion during a game of Cyberball lead participants to adopt a more prevention-oriented focus.

The current findings provide overall support for the novel hypothesis that a person's initial standing with a group (member vs. *non*-member) has consequences for whether the person adopts a more promotion or prevention focus following social exclusion. Regulatory focus motivations, in turn, appear to influence the extent to which people are willing to risk further social pain in their pursuit of social reconnection goals. In all, these findings extend prior work and contribute to our understanding of the relationship between social exclusion and regulatory focus motivations.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Need Satisfaction Scores in Study 1

Variable	<u>Explicit Exclusion</u>		<u>Ignoring Exclusion</u>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Belonging	4.78	1.37	4.98	1.42
Self-Esteem	4.48	1.31	4.68	1.22
Control	4.56	1.03	4.68	1.13
Meaningful Existence	5.05	1.30	5.16	1.17

Note. All means across rows were not significantly different according to an independent samples *t*-test (all *ps* > .318)

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for Need Satisfaction Scores in Study 2

Variable	Member		Non-Member	
	Explicit	Ignore	Explicit	Ignore
Belonging	4.72 (1.12)	5.30 (1.26)	5.17 (1.31)	5.20 (1.30)
Self-Esteem	4.45 (1.13)	4.80 (1.17)	4.72 (1.12)	4.87 (1.25)
Control	4.52 (0.93)	4.93 (1.06)	4.72 (0.84)	4.82 (1.10)
Meaningful Existence	5.05 (1.12)	5.41 (1.13)	5.31 (1.13)	5.04 (1.11)
Need Satisfaction	4.68 (0.91)	5.10 (1.05)	4.98 (0.95)	5.04 (1.11)

Note. Means are presented first; standard deviations are in parentheses. *Need*

Satisfaction represents the composite of the four need satisfaction subscales: belonging, self-esteem, control, and meaningful existence.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for Regulatory Focus in Study 2

Variable	Member		Non-Member	
	Explicit	Ignore	Explicit	Ignore
Promotion	7.05 (1.19)	6.93 (1.07)	7.02 (1.01)	6.84 (1.39)
Prevention	6.03 (1.27)	5.63 (1.02)	5.36 (1.12)	5.54 (1.45)

Note. Means are presented first; standard deviations are in parentheses. All items were on a 1 (*not at all true of me*) – 9 (*very true of me*) scale.

Appendix B

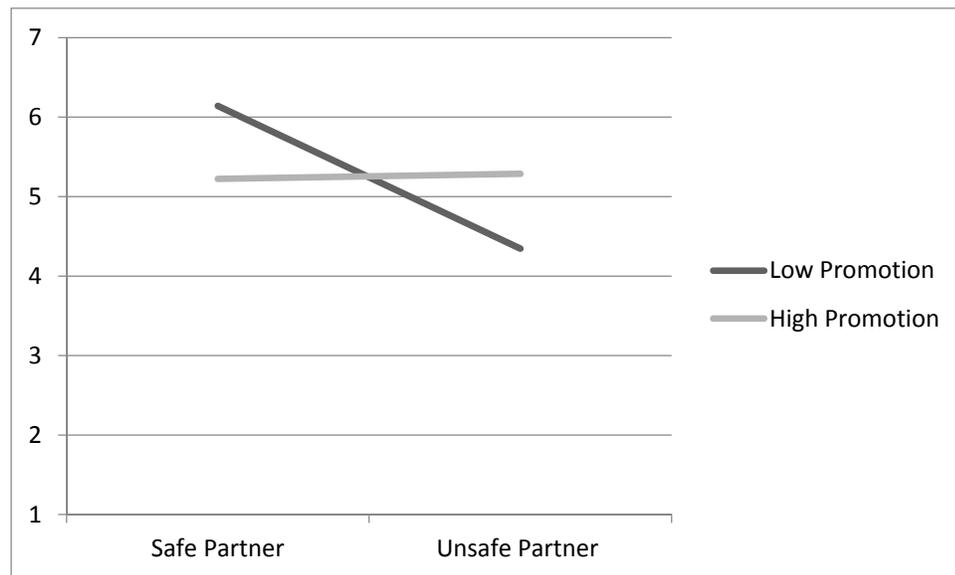


Figure 1. Willingness to work with the partner as a function of regulatory focus and social connection opportunity. Higher numbers indicate greater preference for working with the partner (vs. alone).

Appendix C

Regulatory Focus Measure

Promotion Items

1. I frequently imagine how I will achieve my hopes and aspirations
2. I typically focus on the success that I hope to achieve in the future
3. I see myself as someone who is primarily striving to reach my ‘ideal self’ – to fulfill my hopes, wishes and aspirations
4. In general I am focused on achieving positive outcomes in my life
5. I often imagine myself experiencing good things that I hope will happen to me
6. Overall, I am more oriented toward achieving success than preventing failure

Prevention Items

1. In general, I am focused on preventing negative events in my life
2. I am anxious that I will fall short of my responsibilities and obligations
3. I see myself as someone who is primarily striving to become the self I ‘ought’ to be – fulfill my duties, responsibilities and obligations
4. I frequently think about how I can prevent failures in my life
5. I often imagine myself experiencing bad things that I fear might happen to me
6. I am more oriented toward preventing losses than I am toward achieving gains.

Appendix D

Group Essays for Studies 1 and 2

During the personal essay sharing task, participants in both studies 1 and 2 viewed the following personal essays, which were ostensibly composed by the other three people in the study:

Person A's Essay:

I grew up in a small town named Union City in Indiana. My favorite color is pink, and my favorite food is pizza (cheese or pepperoni only). In my spare time I like to read, sing, and spend time with friends. My favorite hobby outside of school is playing the guitar. My favorite kind of music to listen to is alternative/psychedelic rock, however when I play guitar I will play any genre.

Person B's Essay:

I guess I think of myself as a hardworking and outgoing person. I try to do my best in school and manage my time as best as possible. I also enjoy joining other clubs on campus such as PUDM. Staying busy is sometimes the best way for me to stay on top of things. I am constantly looking at my planner to see what is in store for me next

Person C's Essay:

Well, I am originally from Pennsylvania but my family moved to Indiana when I was 16. I am huge boilermaker fan and love football and basketball. My hobbies include hanging out with my friends, listening/playing music, as well as hiking and going to the CoRec to work out. My friends and I have done rock climbing a few times and that can definitely be a workout in itself

Appendix E

Creative Uses Task

Participants in the *initial member* condition were asked to generate uses for the following 4 items. The creative uses provided by the other ostensible group members (i.e., Persons A, B and C) are provided. For each object, the true participant was asked to generate a different 4th creative use.

Item #1: Newspaper

1. Person A's use: gift wrapper
2. Person B's use: table cloth
3. Person C's use: cleaning towels

Item #2: Cardboard box

1. Person A's use: pet bed
2. Person B's use: bobsled
3. Person C's use: fort/shelter

Item #3: Paper clip

1. Person A's use: guitar pick
2. Person B's use: a ring
3. Person C's use: pick a lock

Item #4: Light Bulb

1. Person A's use: ornament
2. Person B's use: salt and pepper bottles
3. Person C's use: flower pot