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Executive Functioning as a Determinant of the Stress Experience: Investigating the Role of Cognitive and Behavioral Mediators in Younger, Middle-aged, and Older Adults

Although the majority of studies have extensively examined the effect of stress upon executive functioning (EF), emerging evidence indicates that EF itself may be a resilience factor for both mental and physical health, including stress. This project will investigate the protective role of the EF subdomains (updating, flexibility, inhibition, planning, working memory, attention, and fluency) on several acute stress processes (anticipation, reactivity, recovery, and habituation), seeking to overcome current limits by:

1. Investigating the effects of individual EF facets
2. Manipulating each facet to establish causality in the relationship of interest
3. Combining both physiological and subjective measures of stress
4. Varying contextual designs and referring to both controlled and ecological paradigms
5. Examining mediating factors such as stress appraisal, repetitive thinking, and coping
6. Applying a lifespan approach through the inclusion of samples of younger, middle-aged and older adults.

Overall, the project seeks to identify modifiable cognitive factors involved in stress regulation, which are relevant to mental and physical health across the lifespan.