The association of parents’ emotion philosophy with adolescents’ mindful approach to affect. Joseph Reese, Mary Blanton, Ashley Ball, & Kory Phelps, Department of Psychology, Morehead State University, Morehead, KY 40351

According to Gottman, Katz and Hooven (1997), children develop emotion regulation skills through interaction with their caregivers, particularly coaching during emotional moments. Coaching includes both being supportive and teaching the value of accepting all feelings as valid and valuable. The present study aims to expand the literature by examining the association of caregivers’ coaching to teens’ mindfulness of their feelings. Participants were part of a longitudinal study examining parent-child relationships in rural Appalachia. Sixteen families were part of this data collection. Adolescents averaged 12 years of age. Parents’ and adolescents’ approach to negative emotions were assessed using a semi-structured interview that was based on Gottman et al.’s Meta-Emotion Interview for parents (1997). This included questions pertaining to the parents’ own experience with sadness and anger, as well as their children’s emotional experiences. Both coaching and emotion awareness were measured, with up to 5 points possible for each question and points summed. Adolescents were given an analogous interview, and their behaviors and verbal responses were rated on a 4-point scale for mindful (healthy self-regulation, acceptance of emotions, awareness, and observation of internal states) vs. non-mindful behaviors (distraction as coping, experiential avoidance, and impulsivity). Ratings were summed. Analyses revealed that parents who were more aware of their teen’s anger and engaged in greater emotion-coaching had teens who displayed greater mindfulness of their own feelings. These results extend the literature, suggesting that discussions about negative emotions may lead to greater acceptance of emotions and increased adaptive emotion regulation in adolescents.