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**The effectiveness of reappraisal as an emotional regulation technique for minimizing negative emotional contagion during angry complaint interactions.**

This paper expands the research on emotional labor, emotional regulation, and emotional contagion, by investigating the effectiveness of reappraisal or deep acting in reducing the negative impact of emotional contagion on frontline service providers (FSP) during angry compliant interactions.

All service providers are emotional laborers, who are required to read customers emotions and decide on appropriate responses. Consequently, everyday in service sectors such as retail, FSP are required to regulate their emotions during their interactions with customers, as well as ensuring that their emotional expressions match the required display rules. During periods of emotional labor, emotional regulation techniques commonly practiced by FSP are suppression or surface acting, and reappraisal or deep acting. Reappraisal, however, is recognized as the best technique for emotional regulation when dealing with difficult or angry customers. Importantly, during such service interactions both customers and FSP are susceptible to either positive or negative emotional contagion. That is they can “catch” each others emotions. Therefore, FSP can experience an increase in the negative emotions experienced when dealing with an angry customer.

Participants in the study undertook three training sessions in either reappraisal methods or basic customer service (control group) before laboratory sessions, where they were then exposed to a video recording of an angry customer complaining. After exposure to the angry complaint a series of questions were asked, and a mixed ANOVA revealed significant differences in the negative affective states of participants who had undertaken the reappraisal training in comparison to the control group. The results demonstrate that even minimal training in reappraisal can have considerable impact on the level of negative emotions experienced by FSP who deal with angry customers. This is extremely important for service organizations, given the potential to reduce absenteeism, increase moral, and job satisfaction, all while possibly improving customer satisfaction, service quality and profitability.