

# Targeted brain stimulation dulls social pain

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Pairing DLPFC stimulation with the distraction strategy and VLPFC stimulation with the reappraisal strategy decreased [negative emotions](#) even more. This suggests combining targeted brain stimulation with the appropriate regulation strategy could improve emotional responses in psychiatric disorders.

**More information:** The VLPFC vs. the DLPFC in Down-Regulating Social Pain Using Reappraisal and Distraction Strategies, *JNeurosci* (2020). [DOI: 10.1523/JNEUROSCI.1906-20.2020](https://doi.org/10.1523/JNEUROSCI.1906-20.2020)

Targeted brain stimulation dulls social pain. Credit: Zhao et al., *JNeurosci* 2020

Provided by Society for Neuroscience

Pairing brain stimulation with an emotion management technique blunts negative emotions, according to research recently published in *JNeurosci*. The combination may improve emotional regulation in people with psychiatric disorders.

Managing your emotions is a key component to navigating difficult situations. People with [psychiatric disorders](#) like PTSD and depression struggle to do this. The brain regulates emotions through the dorsolateral (DLPFC) and [ventrolateral prefrontal cortex](#) (VLPFC). The two regions work by shifting attention and reinterpreting situations, respectively. Harnessing the independent, separate roles of these regions may offer a novel treatment for the emotional symptoms of psychiatric disorders.

Zhao et al. enhanced the brain activity of healthy adults using [transcranial magnetic stimulation](#) while they viewed images of social pain. The participants rated their negative emotions just after viewing the image, after distracting themselves, or after coming up with a positive interpretation of the image (reappraisal). Stimulating either area of the prefrontal cortex decreased negative emotions, with effects lasting up to an hour.

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