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It's not you, it's me: Relationship conflict, self-criticism and emotion regulation

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Emotion regulation strategy selection is affected by situational (i.e., relationship type) and individual contexts (i.e., emotion-relevant traits) and that may be particularly evident for emotions following relationship conflict. We hypothesized that self-criticism would predict maladaptive emotion regulation strategies (etc., catastrophizing, avoidance) and that these associations would be greater for romantic relationships than friendships. In the current study, 177 US adults completed a self-criticism measure and were randomly assigned to describe a conflict in either a romantic relationship or friendship. They rated their emotions during the conflict and the regulation strategies used following the conflict. Results revealed that high self-criticism predicted the use of maladaptive emotion regulation strategies, but there were no effects of relationship type. Nevertheless, perceived relationship importance predicted strategy use. Study 2 will examine the effects of relationship interdependence and perceived closeness on emotion regulation strategies used following relationship conflict and will attempt to replicate the findings on self-criticism influencing regulation efforts.

Keyword: Positive mental health, resilience, working and non-working womens.