

Using Metacognitions to Identify Emotionally Vulnerable College Students

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Objective: To examine the association between negative metacognitions and indices of mental health in order to help identify individuals at risk for future psychopathology. **Method:** A randomly selected sample of 378 undergraduates responded to the General Health Questionnaire and the Metacognitions Questionnaire. **Results:** A curvilinear relationship emerged between negative metacognitive beliefs and social dysfunction. Beliefs about uncontrollability and danger accounted for about 29% of the vari-

ance and beliefs about cognitive competence accounted for an additional 1%. Worry correlated with mental health scores in both sexes. Beliefs about uncontrollability and danger, beliefs about cognitive competence and general negative beliefs discriminated nonclinical subjects high in both anxiety and depression. **Conclusions:** Modification of metacognitive beliefs can help prevent psychopathology.

Key words: metacognitive beliefs, cognitive competence, cognitive self-consciousness, mental health

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