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Introduction

• The pandemic introduced new public health practices such as social distancing & masking
• For adults, framing these practices as prosocial is more persuasive and effective than framing them as selfish
• Prosocial framing of these practices is associated with moral reasoning in adults
• These framing effects have not yet been explored in children
• Research question: Will framing novel public health measures as other-directed be more effective & induce moral reasoning in children?

Method

• N = 108 (2 samples)
• 5-10 years old, 50% girls
• Zoom interview
• Within-subjects
• Hypothetical alien vignettes
• Behavior protects self or other but is uncomfortable

Manipulations

• Other-directed vs. Self-directed
• High severity (poke) vs. low severity (brush against)

Measures

• Should alien do the behavior?
• Evaluate Follower & Violator alien action & friendship quality

Results

Endorsement

Main effect of Severity only (p < .001)

Follower/Violator Ratings

Main effect of Severity (p < .001) and Framing (p < .001)

Discussion

• Framing does not impact children’s endorsement of novel prevention measures
• Children evaluate Followers more positively and Violators more negatively on social-moral variables when prevention measures framed as other-directed
• Based on these differential evaluations, other-directed framing seems to induce moral reasoning

References