

Introduction

- Adolescence is a period of rapid development marked by increased impulsiveness, sensation- and reward-seeking.
- Substance abuse is known to affect approximately 25% of adolescents and is associated with a variety of negative outcomes.
- One aspect of development that is known to influence substance use is emotional maturity, which is linked to increased self-control and response inhibition, a positive sense of self and identity, perspective taking and empathy.
- These abilities are extremely important as adolescent's transition into adulthood and may prove useful to our understanding of treatment for individuals with substance abuse disorders.
- For instance, in adult populations, emotional maturity training has been effective in reducing substance use, however this is less well studied in adolescents.
- In the current study, we partnered with Pine River Institute, a youth addiction facility in Toronto, ON with a specific focus on increasing adolescents social and emotional maturity.
- We examined how emotional maturity changed across treatment and whether increases in emotional maturity were associated with treatment success.

Participants

- 15 youth, aged 13-19 years ($M = 17.53$, $SD = 1.46$) who had completed a stay at Pine River Institute in Toronto, Ontario
- Gender distribution was approximately equal (53% male)
- All reported using alcohol and/or marijuana and spent an average of 1.5 years in treatment at Pine River Institute

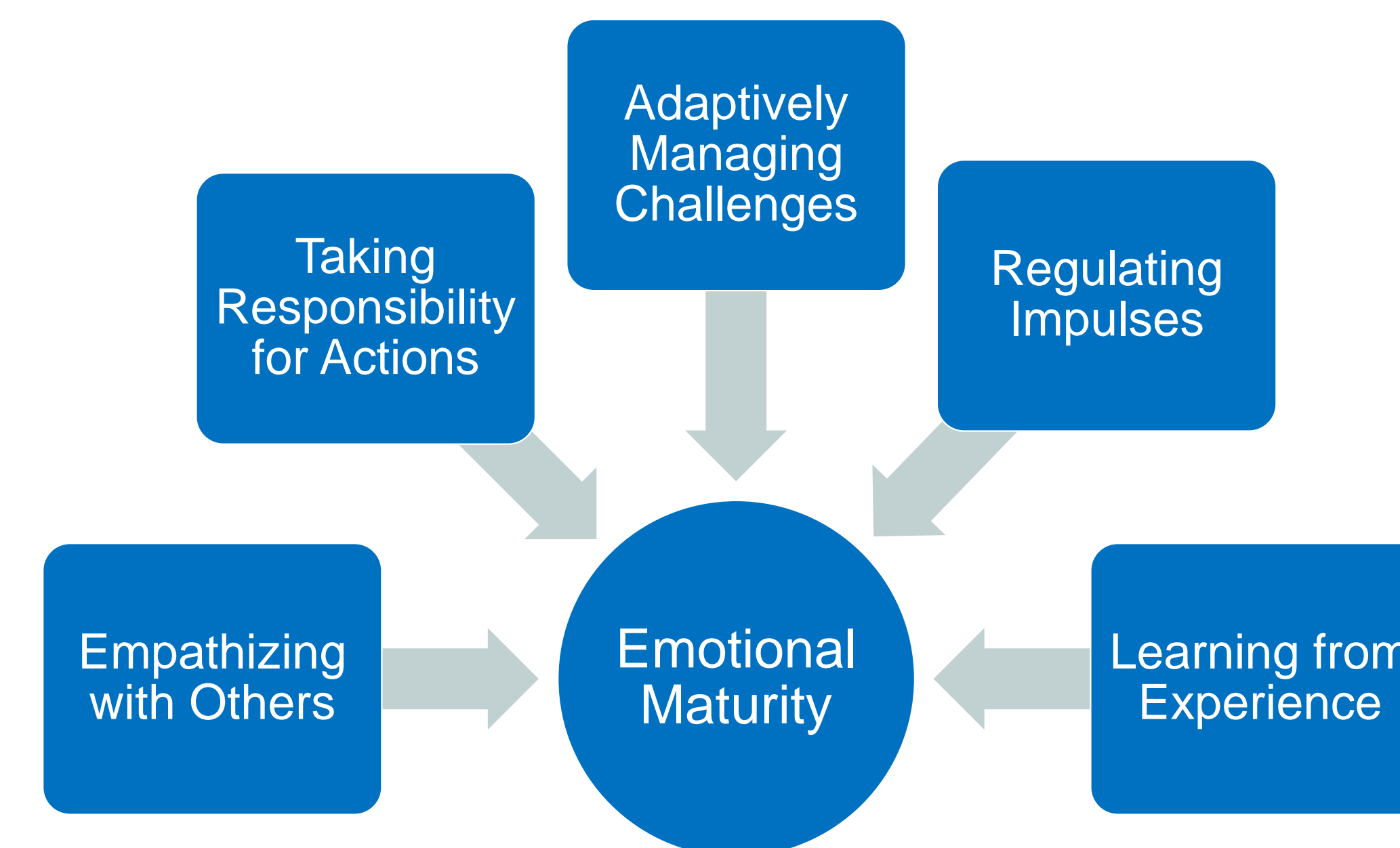
References

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- Petrides, K.V. (2009). Technical manual for the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaires (TEIQue) (1st edition, 4th printing). London: London Psychometric Laboratory.
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Measures

Emotional Maturity

The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQ; Petrides, 2009) was used to measure overall emotional maturity. Example items include "I often find it difficult to see things from others' perspectives" and "I often find it difficult to adjust my life according to the circumstances".



Substance use

The Drug History Questionnaire (DHQ; Sobell & Sobell, 2007) was used to examine the frequency of alcohol and marijuana use in the last 90 days.



Behavioural and emotional problems

The Youth Self-Report Questionnaire (YSR; Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001) was used to assess mental health difficulties in adolescents. For this study we used the total score (internalizing + externalizing + other problems).

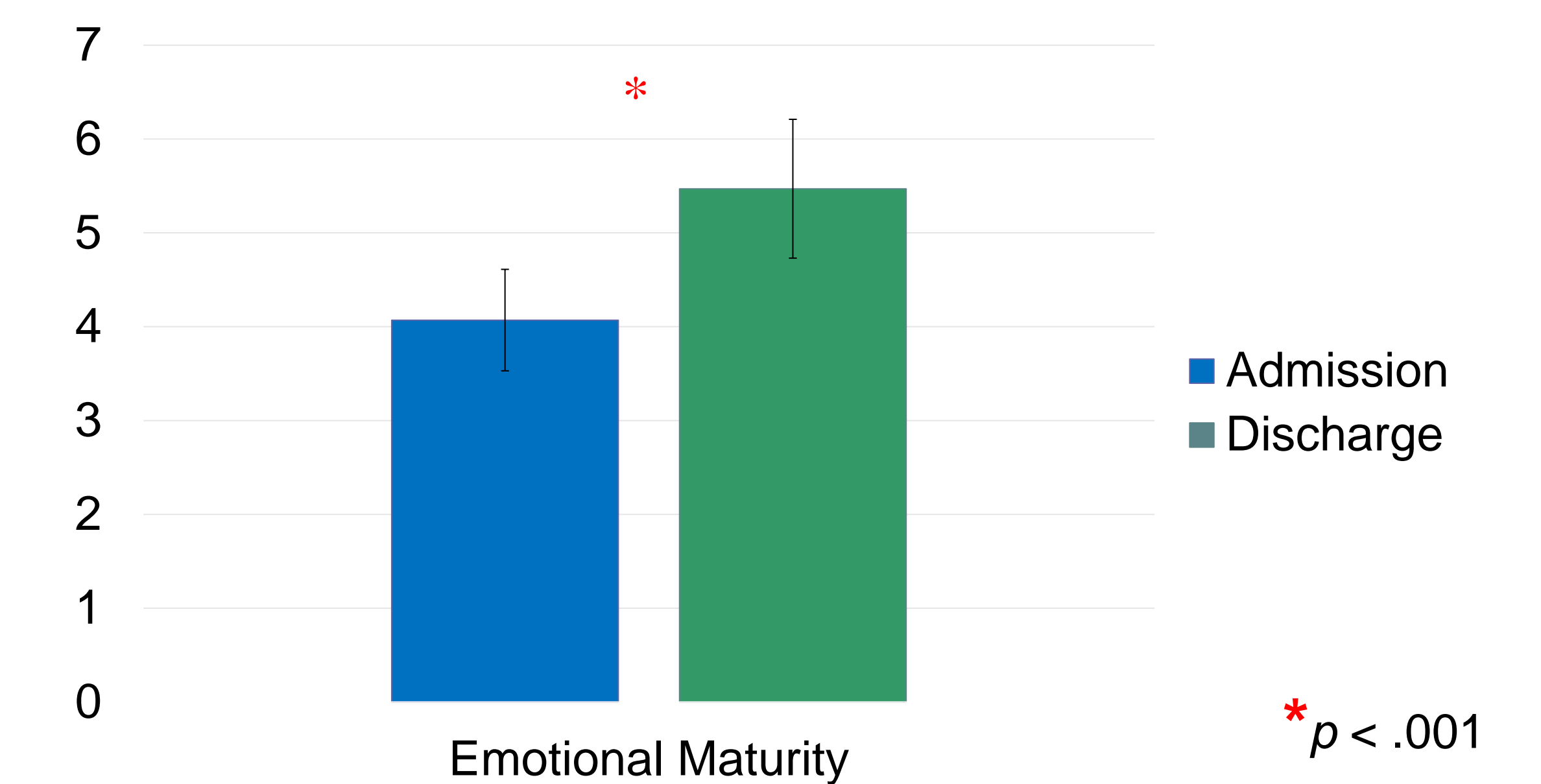
Acknowledgments

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Results

Pine River Institute's program significantly improved the emotional maturity of their clients with adolescents demonstrating higher scores on their post-treatment assessment compared to their pre-treatment assessment.



Improvement in emotional maturity across treatment was significantly negatively correlated with both alcohol consumption and marijuana use at 3-months post treatment, however, did not reach statistical significance for adolescents behavioral and emotional problems.

Treatment Success Outcome Variables	Change in Emotional Maturity
Alcohol consumption (DHQ)	-.89*
Marijuana consumption (DHQ)	-.89*
Total mental health problems (YSR)	-.49

Note: * $p < .05$.

Discussion

Results suggest that emotional maturity plays an important role in adolescent development and in reducing vulnerability to substance use and abuse. These results also help to establish that Pine River Institute's focus on developing emotional maturity is beneficial in the treatment of their adolescent clients. Other youth addiction facilities may consider incorporating emotional maturity development into their programs in order to enhance client benefits.