B64 Utilizing socioemotional processing to alter older adults' memory: implications for individual differences in cognition

Rachel Van Boxtel, Boston College; Jaclyn Ford, Boston College; Elizabeth Kensinger, Boston College

Healthy aging is associated with a characteristic decline in working memory and ability to learn new information. This could be due to age-related degradation of the prefrontal cortex (PFC)(Raz et al., 1997), and that engagement of the lateral PFC- which is typically associated with successful memory and recall in younger adults- becomes less efficacious with age (Grady, 2008). Recently, it has been argued that the degraded lateral regions may be bypassed by engaging the mPFC in older adults (MacPherson, Phillips, & Della Sala, 2002). Prior work indicates that the mPFC can be strategically activated to better encode and retrieve memories of socioemotional relevance (Gutchess & Kensinger, 2018), and may be involved in an association between memory and music (Janata, 2009). Based on this evidence, an online memory study (n=750, with 525 participants age 55+) was conducted which incorporated a behavioral manipulation, either prior to encoding or retrieval, to test the effects of priming