

**Be CAREful:  
primary emotional traits predict  
preferences to social stimuli**

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# Two pillars form evolutionary psychology

## 1. Emotions are adaptive.

Positive and negative primary emotional traits: CARE, JOY, PLAYFULNESS, SADNESS, ANGER, FEAR. (Panksepp, 1998)

## 2. Two motivational systems:

Threatening, unpleasant stimulus → avoidance

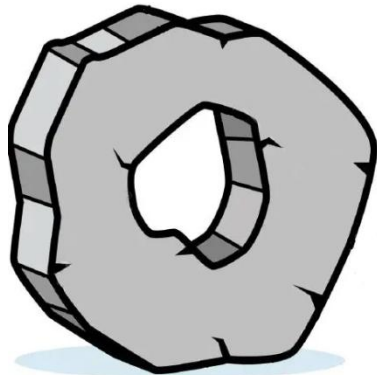
Pleasant stimulus → approach

(Lang et al., 2005; Gray, 2004)



# Emotional information processing

PERCEPTION



APPRAISAL

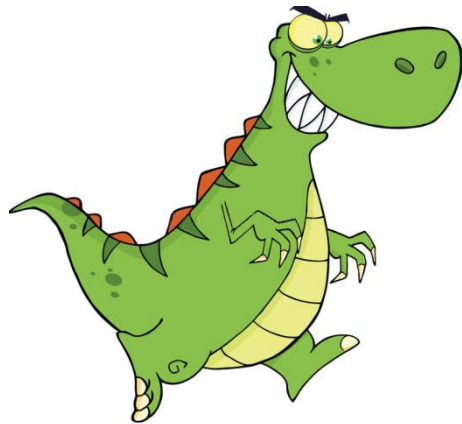
Useful!  
Interesting!

BEHAVIOR



# Emotional information processing: negative stimuli

PERCEPTION



APPRAISAL



BEHAVIOR

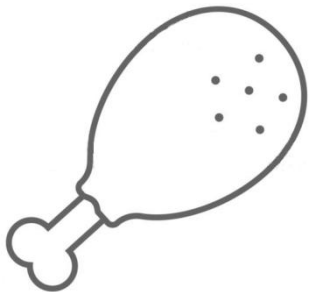


# Emotional information processing: positive stimuli

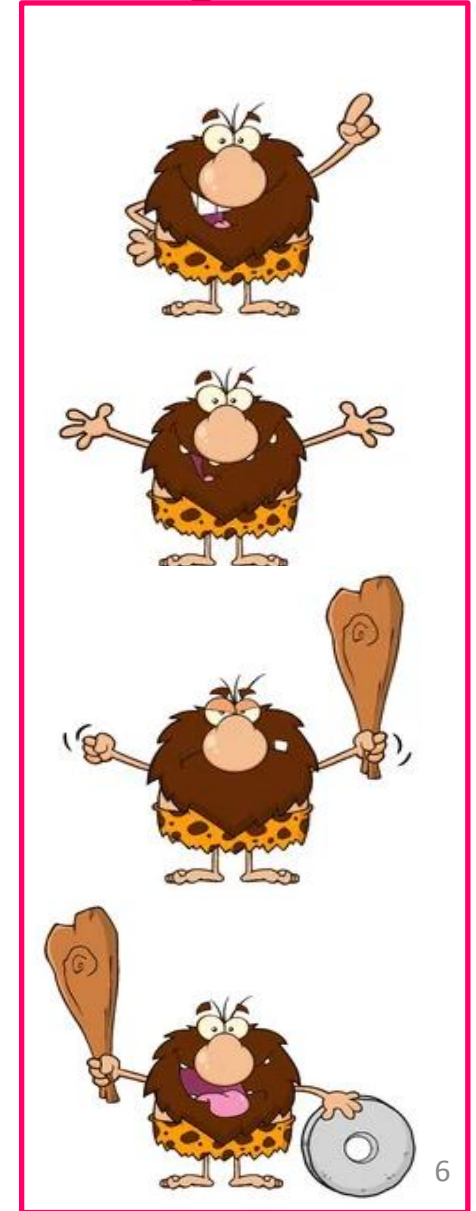
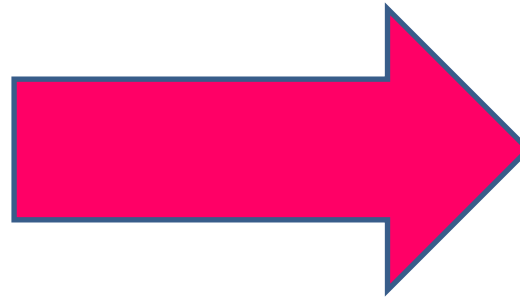
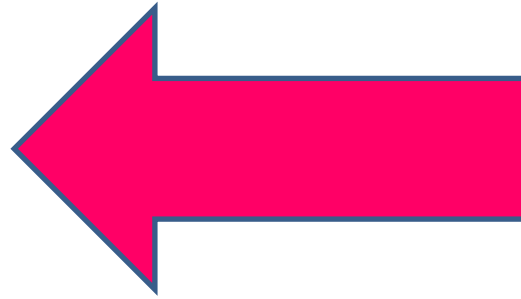
PERCEPTION

APPRAISAL

BEHAVIOR



# Individual differences in emotional information processing



# Research question and objectives

Emotional pictures depicting:

Fear

Anger

Sadness

Exploration

Joy

Attachment

Preferences to see again (or not):

Yes/No

What is the correspondance between personality traits and stimulus preferences?

To investigate the effect of primary emotional traits on affective stimulus preference

Primary Emotional Traits

FEAR

ANGER

SADNESS

SEEK

PLAY

CARE

# Methods

## Participants:

218 adults (158 women, 60 men); mean age: 28.34 years (SD: 12.1)

## Measures:

- 106 pictures from the IAPS and OASIS databases (Lang et al., 2005; Kurdi et al., 2017);
- Hungarian version of the 112- item Affective Neuroscience Personality Scales (ANPS 2.4) (Deak et al., 2022; Davis & Panksepp, 2011)

## Procedure:

Online data collection with Gorilla Experiment Builder (Anwyl-Irvine et al., 2019)



# Results

Linear regression analysis:

Dependent variable: number of selected pictures („Yes” answers)

Predictors: 6 primary emotional traits and Gender

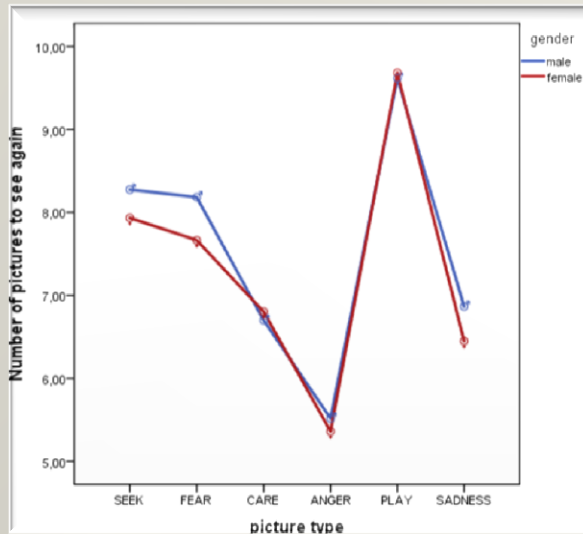
Stimulus  
preference

$F=2.45, \beta=.21$   
 $p < 0.05$

Trait

Women choose less

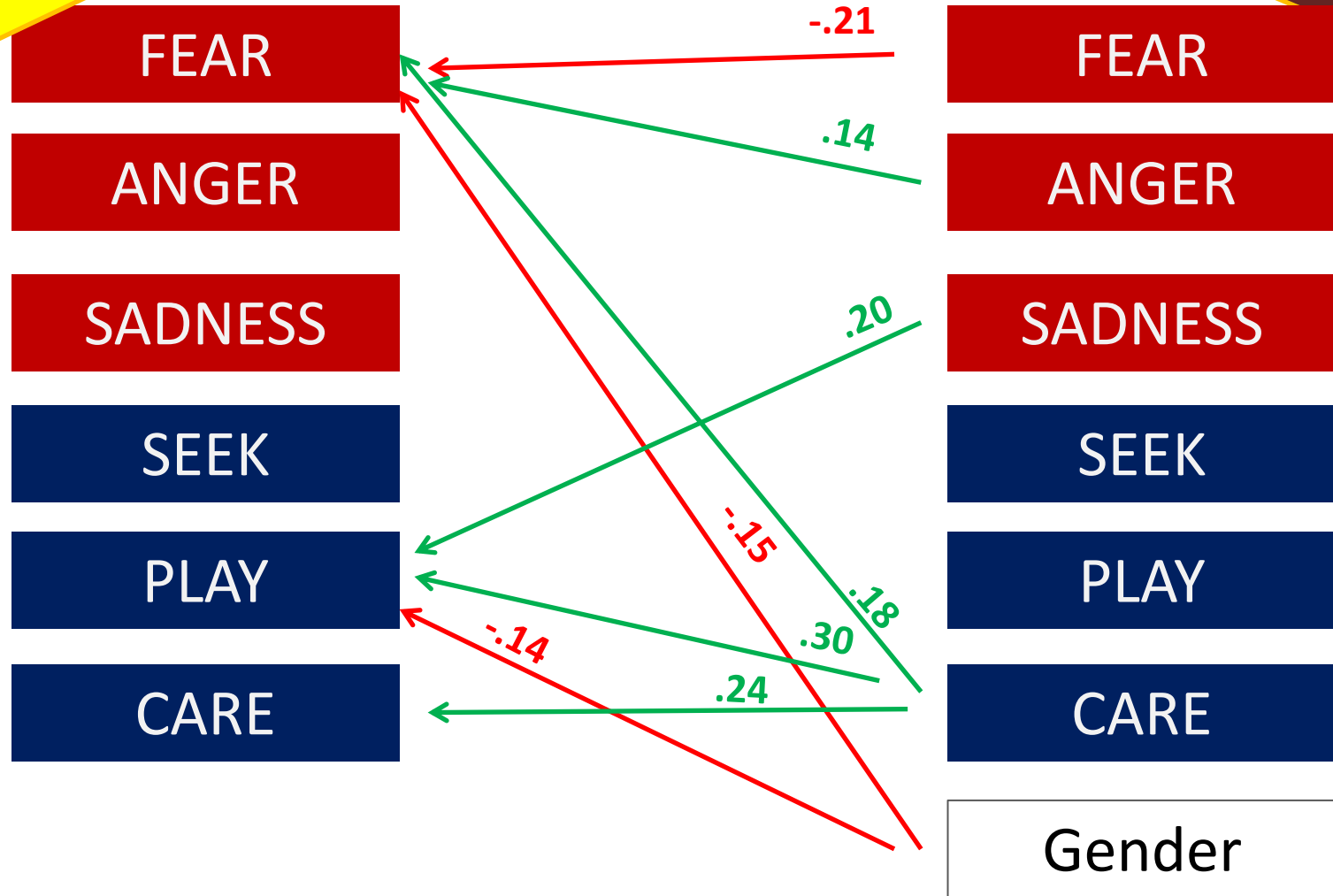
Gender



# Results

Stimulus type

Trait



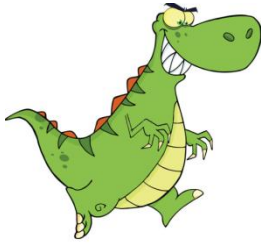
# Discussion

Negative primary emotional traits (FEAR, ANGER, SADNESS) are predictors of both pleasant and unpleasant stimulus preferences (fear, play).



# Discussion

CARE as a primary emotional trait has a key role (as an interpersonal component) to predict stimulus preferences (fear, play, care).



# Conclusions

- Primary emotional traits are predictors of both pleasant and unpleasant stimulus preferences.
- Negative emotional traits have multiple functions
  - SADNESS promotes adaptive emotion regulation strategies to increase well-being (through playful activities)
  - ANGER may activate fight-reactions to fearful stimuli
  - FEAR withdraws from overwhelming fearful stimuli
- CARE system may provide interpersonal reactions
  - both to fearful stimuli to promote empathy, and to social stimuli to indicate the rewarding value of social bonds (e.g., caring, attachment, social interactions)

Thank you for your attention!

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### *Acknowledgements*

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