Previous research provides a strong argument for the hypothesis that cardiac measures are related to empathy, with empathic sadness related to a heart rate (HR) decrease and empathic happiness related to a HR increase, even compared to other physiological variables. However, few studies have examined physiological dyadic empathy relationships, and no known studies have incorporated a psychopathic sample in a dyadic empathy-inducing task. This study will incorporate both positive and negative moods, specifically happiness and sadness. The current study will contribute to the literature by using a dyadic empathy-inducing task to serve as a way to assess empathy matching, both physiologically and cognitively. Further, the current study will incorporate psychopathy as a potential moderator in physiologic matching, and examine different components of psychopathy. Further, by measuring empathy in a dyadic way, this study could help distinguish if empathy is related to true empathy versus simply a lack of emotionality.

Participants: Jonathan Waldron (College of Science);
While primarily this is being conducted through Psychology, several members of the research team have experiences working with other departments, including the Virginia Tech CRC, Virginia Tech Department of Biological Sciences, and Virginia Tech Transportation Institute. These individuals were specifically recruited to be on the research team due to their unique experiences in each of these areas and what they bring to the team.

Type: Health, Psychology

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