Brief strategy training enhances targeted memory and beliefs and promotes near transfer

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Aim 1: Test effectiveness of abbreviated name strategy training program
- Pre-post gains for trainees, not waitlist group, expected for name recall performance and self-regulatory factors (memory self-efficacy, strategy use)

Aim 2: Test near transfer to verbal associative memory performance
- Greater pre-post gains expected for trainees than waitlist group

Aim 3: Test mediation of training on memory by Δ self-regulatory factors
- Full mediation expected through indirect paths of both self-regulatory factors

Study Design: RCT, 2 time (within: pre, post) × 2 condition (btwn: train, waitlist)

Training: 2-hr group training session plus ~2-3 hrs. self-study workbook
- Enactive mastery, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, affective states

Participants (N = 122): 51 to 93 yrs. old (M = 73.24, SD = 8.31 yrs.)
- Healthy, English-speaking, community-dwelling, no cognitive impairment
- 78.7% female, 91.9% white, highly educated (M = 17.33, SD = 2.84 yrs.)

Measures:
- Name recall: 24 face-name pairs, % names correct at immediate recall
- Memory self-efficacy: Mean % confidence ability to do specific everyday memory tasks, increasing difficulty (MSEQ-4)
- Strategy use: Checklist of 16 strategies, e.g., I tried to think of a meaningful association for the name, self-reported % used
- Occupation-name verbal association: 30 occupation-name pairs, % names correct at immediate recall, delayed recall, delayed recognition

Results

Aim 1: Evidence that the brief training was effective.
Trainees improved in (a) name recall, (b) memory self-efficacy, and (c) strategy use; waitlist no change

Aim 2: Evidence for near transfer. Trainees improved in name-occupation memory performance; waitlist no change

Aim 3: Evidence for full mediation of training effect on name recall through Δ memory self-efficacy and Δ strategy use.

Discussion

Brief training effective beyond target task and enhanced self-regulation important
- Enhanced self-regulatory factors, near transfer effects, mediation of training effects
- Self-regulation key to maximizing training impact and possible translation of benefits
- Ease of broad dissemination
- Limitations: Sample selectivity & recruitment and compensation procedures (random assignment); no active control tested