**SPSP 2022 Symposium Submission**

**400-Character Program Description:**

This symposium demonstrates how differing contexts influence affective expressions and experiences. Behavioral and neural data are leveraged to demonstrate the effect of situational factors, social settings, and developmental stages on neural representations, neural mechanisms, cognitive constructions and conceptions, and interpretations of emotions and affectively valenced information.

**1200-Character Symposium Abstract:**

Context is important to the interpretation of affective phenomena. The same facial expression could convey elation after a big win, sadness after a heartbreak, or anger after a fight. Likewise, immediate physical threat, potential financial loss, and abstract moral failing can all elicit similar feelings of fear. Despite all affective information necessarily being enveloped in some sort of context, its contributions to the experience and interpretation of emotions are often overlooked. This symposium will present novel research exploring the utility that social and developmental contexts provide in pursuing a comprehensive, ecologically valid understanding of affective phenomena. We leverage multimodal approaches (e.g., behavior and neuroimaging) to explore topics such as how situational details can impact the neural mechanisms associated with emotional experiences, the influence of developmental stages on neural representations of affective experiences and how affective experiences are constructed into emotional concepts and expressions across developmental stages. Lastly, we will explore how social contexts influence the comprehension of affective moral judgements.

**400-Character Presentation Description:**

How might development dictate how we represent affective information? This talk will review pattern differences in the neural representations of affect between adults and children. Using representational similarity analysis, our research finds prefrontal, but not subcortical, regional development to be a potential driving force in affective maturation that may influence downstream processes.

**1200-Character Presentation Abstract:**

Appraisal theorists acknowledge that circumstance is an influential factor in the formation of affective representations, but which contexts meaningfully impact affective information is unclear. Differences in the neuroanatomy and behavior of adults and children suggest that developmental stage should be a context which informs neural representations of affective phenomena, but this supposition has yet to be thoroughly explored in key brain regions. My talk will review recent work examining pattern differences in child and adult neural representations while they passively viewed valenced social stimuli sets (i.e., film clips). Using representational similarity analysis to examine responses in the vmPFC, amygdala, and NAcc, our research supports past work implicating prefrontal regional development as a driving force in cognitive and behavioral affective maturation. This interpretation will be positioned within rational constructivist theories of emotion, suggesting developmental context may dictate affective experience, as children mature from protoconceptual primitives of emotion to more nuanced, less valence-dependent processing. Implications and future research will be reviewed.

**Symposium Abstract - First Draft:**

Filmmaker Lev Kuleshov famously demonstrated that the emotional interpretation of film clips are shaped by the context that adjacent shots provide. Similarly, context helps us to understand and interpret affective information in our own lives. Behavior, cognition, and physiology are all commonly accepted as necessary components in any exhaustive understanding of affective phenomena. The influence of context on the experience and interpretation of emotions in research is still largely underappreciated, though. Recent multimodal advances in social affective research have granted researchers a greater capacity to demonstrate the degree to which "who", "when", and "why" details determine the quality of subjective emotional experiences. This symposium will present novel research exploring the utility that social and developmental contexts provide in pursuing a comprehensive, ecologically valid understanding of affective experiences. We will leverage a multimodal approach (e.g., behavioral and neuroimaging data) to demonstrate the influence of different contexts on the representation, classification, and experience of affective information (e.g., emotions, moral judgements).