

Amygdala Activation and Psychological Well-being: A U-shaped Hypothesis

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The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the relationship between levels of amygdala activation and each factor of Carol Ryff's (1989) Six-Factor Model of Psychological Well-being. The amygdala is a region in the limbic system and is involved in emotional regulation, memory, and survival instincts. The six factors of psychological well-being are self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. This paper reviews relevant studies on amygdala activation and psychological well-being and applies those outcomes to evaluate the hypothesis that a U-shaped relation can describe the levels of amygdala activation relative to each factor of Ryff's six factors of psychological well-being. Each section of this paper dedicates an evaluation of this hypothesis to each of Ryff's six factors. This information may impact how clinicians perceive anxiety and phobia disorders and expand on the knowledge of amygdala functioning.

Keywords: amygdala, psychological well-being, emotional regulation, anxiety, phobia