

# What's in it for Me? Callous-Unemotional Traits and Prosocial Behavior

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## Background

- Callous-unemotional (CU) traits (i.e., low empathy, guilt, & prosociality) predict severe conduct problems (CP)
- Prosocial behavior includes different subtypes (instrumental helping, comforting)
- Prosocial motivations can be self-oriented (social or non-social) or other-oriented
- Not known whether CU traits are related to different prosocial subtypes or motivations

## Study Aims

1. Validate a task assessing children's prosocial behavior and motivations
2. Assess prosocial behavior and motivations in association with CU traits

## Methods

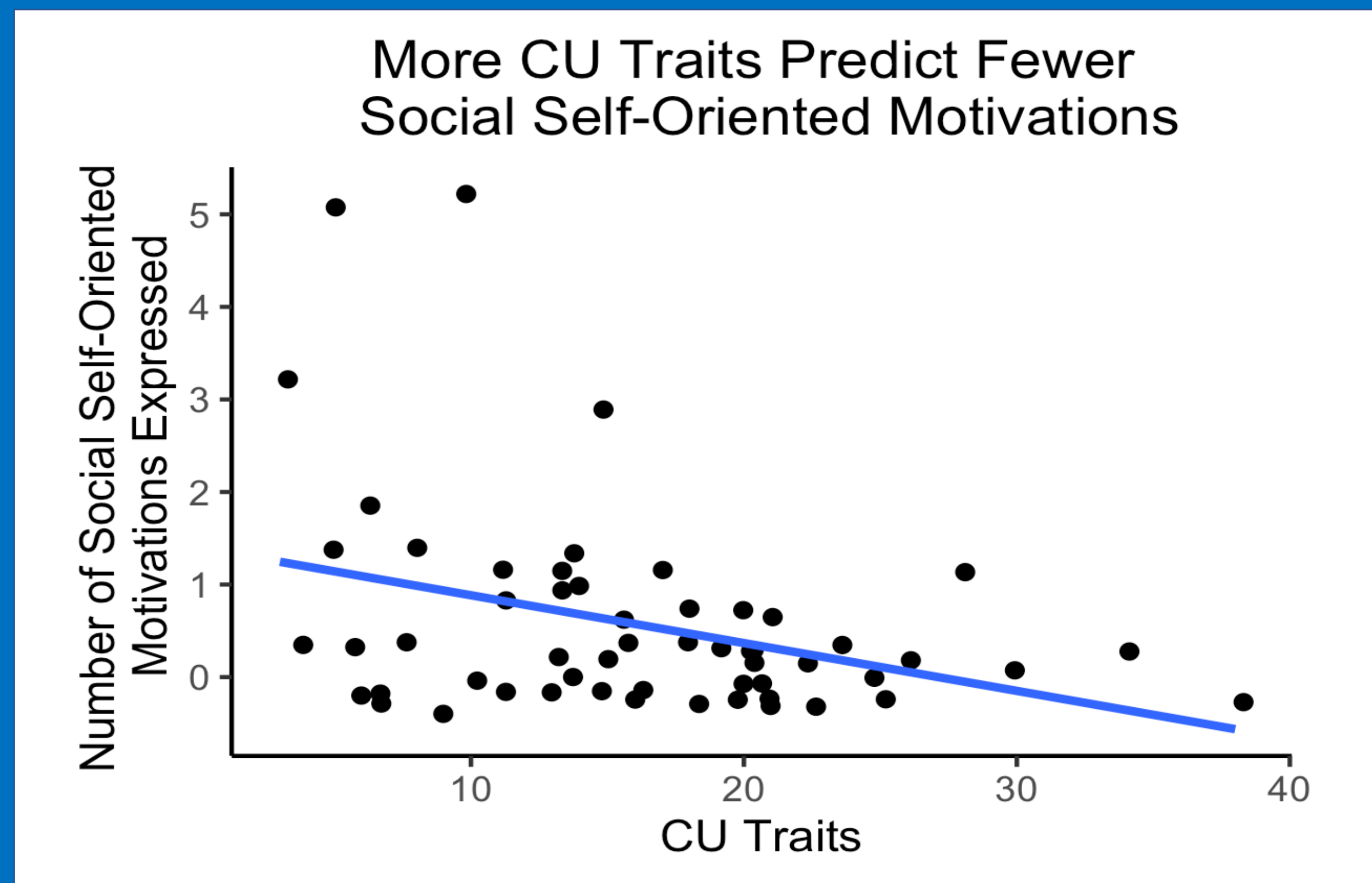
Newly-developed **ECHO** task:

1. What is happening in the picture?
2. What would you do if you were with them?
3. What would happen after that?



- ECHO responses coded for recognition of need, helping offers, subtype, and motivation
- CU traits, CP, prosocial behavior, and empathy assessed via parent report
- $N=58$  ( $M_{age} = 71.95$  months,  $SD_{age} = 6.08$ ; 67.2 % female)

# Callous-unemotional traits predict fewer social motivations for prosocial behavior in children



## Results

### Aim 1:

- Validated task: ECHO scores correlate with parent-report prosocial behavior & empathy

Table 1: Correlations

	Recognition	Help Offers	Prosociality	Empathy
1. Recognition				
2. Help Offers	.69**			
3. Prosociality	.28*	.32*		
4. Empathy	.25	.32*	.42**	

### Aim 2:

- CU traits unrelated to number of instrumental or comforting offers of help
- Higher levels of CU traits uniquely predicted fewer social self-oriented motivations

Table 2: Linear Regression for Social Self-Oriented Motivations

Variable	B	SE B	$\beta$
CU Traits	-.046	.020	-.317*
CP	.038	.090	.056
Gender	-.807	.300	-.348**
Age	.062	.023	.343*

Note.  $R^2 = .308$ ; Gender (-.5 = female, .5 = male)  
\* indicates  $p < .05$ .

## Conclusion

- Diminished prosocial behavior in children with CU traits may be a result of reduced social affiliation, providing a key target for future research and intervention development

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