

## ABSTRACT

Adults' Perceptions of Children with Mental Illness Labels Who Tell Truths and Lies

by

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This study examined whether children's truth- and lie-telling is perceived differently by adults when the children have mental illness labels (MIL). Participants ( $N = 432$ ) read a vignette and watched a video from each of four veracity/motivation (i.e., prosocial truth, antisocial truth, prosocial lie, antisocial lie) and child label (i.e., control, ADHD, depression, asthma) conditions. After each video/vignette combination, participants rated their impressions of and responses towards the child. Participants also completed measures of their implicit and explicit attitudes towards mental illness. The results indicated participants had more negative perceptions of children they rated higher on dangerousness and lower on control. Children without mental illness labels were rated as more in control than children with mental illness labels. However, while diagnoses did impact perceptions of the children, they did not predict perceptions of their lie-telling, with one exception. Children labeled with depression who made antisocial statements were rated more negatively than children labeled with ADHD. Overall, participants rated children who made antisocial statements, told lies, and older children more negatively than children who made prosocial statements, told truths, and younger children. They rated antisocial lies worst and prosocial truths most positively, with antisocial truths and prosocial lies

equivalent. Participants with high implicit and explicit biases rated children with mental illness labels more negatively than participants with high implicit and low implicit biases and low explicit and implicit biases. However, participants with low implicit and explicit biases were unique in rating males more positively than females. Implications of these findings for future research on the socialization of truth– and lie-telling in children with mental illness labels are explored.