

The Relationship Between Parent Variables and College Student Coping

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Abstract

Thirty college students and fourteen parents completed surveys of coping use and autonomy. Parent positive reframing negatively predicted college student active coping, while college student positive reframing positively predicted their own active coping. While no parent coping variables predicted college student behavioral disengagement, college students' self-blame positively predicted their own use of behavioral disengagement. Further, parent autonomy negatively predicted college student behavioral disengagement. The current study shows the role of parents in predicting coping strategies.

Introduction

- Coping styles are important to study, given their relationship with psychological outcomes. For example, Kraaij et al. (2003) found that adolescents who are vulnerable to stress used negative coping strategies (self-blame), whereas those who are more resistant to stress used more positive cognitive coping strategies (positive reappraisal).
- Further, parental variables are associated with child psychological outcomes and coping. For example, Wolfradt et al. (2003) examined the relationship between perceived parenting styles, anxiety and coping. Perceived parental pressure was positively associated with anxiety among the adolescents. Perceived parental warmth was positively associated with active coping and negatively associated with anxiety in the adolescents.
- Previous studies have examined the role of parents and their child's development of coping with stress. Our study is unique because we examined the relationships between a parent's coping style and his/her college student's coping style.

Method

- Thirty college students completed the college student survey. College student participants filled out several questionnaires including eight subscales of the Brief COPE (Carver, 1997).
- Fourteen parents completed the parent survey, which included the same subscales of the Brief COPE, as well as the Psychological Well-Being Autonomy Scale (Ryff, 1989).
- The average age of college student participants was $M=20.67$ years old, and the average age of the parent participants was $M=49.86$ years old.
- The majority of college students (76.7%) and parents (78.6%) were female.
- One third of college student participants were seniors and 40% were first generation college students.

Table 1. Betas for Models Predicting College Student Active Coping

Outcome: College Student Active Coping	Results
Model 1 Predictor: Parent Positive Reframing	$\beta=-.562, p=.036$
Model 2 Predictor: Parent Positive Reframing Predictor: College Student Positive Reframing	$\beta=-.185, p=.377$ $\beta=.711, p=.005$

Table 2. Betas for Models Predicting College Student Behavioral Disengagement

Outcome: College Student Behavioral Disengagement	Results
Model 1 Predictor: Parent Autonomy	$\beta=-.579, p=.030$
Model 2 Predictor: College Student Self-Blame	$\beta=.480, p=.001$

Results

- A model examining parent positive reframing as a predictor of college student active coping found that parent positive reframing was a significant negative predictor of college student active coping.
- When the model predicting college student active coping included parent positive reframing and college student positive reframing, parent positive reframing was no longer a significant predictor, but college student positive reframing was a significant positive predictor.
- A model examining parent autonomy as a predictor of college student behavioral disengagement found parent autonomy was a significant negative predictor of college student behavioral disengagement.
- A model examining college student self-blame as a predictor of college student behavioral disengagement found college student self-blame was a significant positive predictor.

Discussion

Active Coping

- The results for the effect of positive reframing on college student active coping were unexpected. Parents' positive reframing was related to less active coping, while college students' own positive reframing was related to more active coping.
- One possibility is that if parents positively reframe the situation, college students may interpret that as indication that active coping (or doing something about the situation) is not needed.
- However, when the students themselves positively reframe, that positive outlook may help them take the needed action.

Behavioral Disengagement

- The results regarding the predictors of behavioral disengagement coping were more consistent with expectations.
- College students own self-blame would likely lead them to behaviorally disengage (or give up attempts to cope).
- Further, parents with a higher sense of autonomy would likely influence their children to take a more engaged role in coping with a stressor. Therefore, college students who see their parents as autonomous might be influenced to take control of the situation and to not give up attempts to cope (or not behaviorally disengage).

References

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