

The Resilience, Adaptation and Well-Being Project



Young Adult Coping Orientation for Problem Experience

YA-COPE

YA-COPE: Young Adult Coping Orientation for Problem Experiences

Overview

The Young Adult Coping Orientation for Problem Experiences (YA-COPE), developed by Joan Patterson, Hamilton McCubbin, and Janet Grochowski (1983), represents a modification of Adolescent Coping Orientation for Problem Experiences (A-COPE) to identify the behaviors that adolescents found helpful in managing problems or difficult situations. This instrument is available in English and Spanish.

Development of YA-COPE

Modifications of A-COPE to form YA-COPE were made in order to identify the coping behaviors of college freshmen. The modifications included: (a) changed wording from a high school to a college connotation in YA-COPE numbers 6 and 36, and (b) the addition of two items-numbers 34 and 56. These additions were based upon the interviews conducted.

Conceptual Organization

There is a similarity between A-COPE and YA-COPE, with the modifications noted above.

Consequently, the conceptual organization is also similar.

For YA-COPE, 56 items were generated and grouped conceptually into the following patterns, reported along with their alpha reliabilities, an index of internal consistency.

- I. **Ventilation.** Includes eight coping behaviors focused upon the adolescent's expression of frustrations and tensions such as yelling, blaming others, and complaining to others. Items: 14, 19, 22, 26, 28, 39, 50, 52 (Cronbach's alpha = .71).
- II. **Low Activity Level.** Includes eight coping behaviors focused upon adolescent efforts to escape from or forget about the sources of tension and stress such as sleeping, watching TV or reading. Items: 2, 9, 11, 33, 38, 44, 49, 54 (Cronbach's alpha = .58).
- III. **Self-reliance and Positive Appraisal.** Includes five coping behaviors focused upon direct efforts by the adolescent to be more organized and in charge of the situation, as well as to think positively about what is happening to him or her. Items: 15, 25, 32, 46, 48 (Cronbach's alpha = .72).
- IV. **Emotional Connections.** Includes six coping behaviors directed at efforts to stay emotionally connected with other people through reciprocal problem solving and expression of affect (e.g., helping others solve their problems, apologizing to others). Items: 4, 16, 29, 30, 36, 53 (Cronbach's alpha = .66).
- V. **Family Problem Solving.** Includes six coping behaviors which focus on direct efforts by the adolescent to work out difficult issues with family members and to reduce tension at home, such as talking to parents about problems, doing things with family, etc. Items: 1, 12, 31, 40, 42, 51 (Cronbach's alpha = .58).
- VI. **Avoidance.** Includes three coping behaviors which involve the use of substances as a way to escape. Items: 24, 43, 47 (Cronbach's alpha = .51).
- VII. **Spiritual Support.** Includes five items focused on religious behaviors (e.g., praying, going to church) or talking to clergy. Items: 6, 21, 23, 35, 45 (Cronbach's alpha = .61).

- VIII. **High Activity Level.** Includes six coping behaviors each of which poses a challenge for the adolescent to excel at something or achieve a goal such as strenuous physical activity, improving oneself, or working hard on schoolwork. Items: 10, 13, 27, 34, 41, 55 (Cronbach's alpha = .69).
- IX. **Humor.** Includes three items focused on not taking the situation too seriously by joking or making light of it. Items: 3, 18, 20 (Cronbach's alpha = .77).

Reliability

YA-COPE emerged as a 56-item self-report instrument designed to identify the behaviors freshmen found helpful in managing problems or difficult situations. The overall internal consistency reliability of YA-COPE was .82 (Cronbach's alpha) and the test-retest reliability was .83.

Validity

A factor analysis of the 56 items using a principal components matrix and a varimax rotation resulted in the formation of the nine factors (subscales) identified above. The findings of the pilot investigation supported the construct validity of YA-COPE since the factor structure was consistent with the initial conceptualization and development of the instrument (Grochowski, 1986).

Test-Retest Reliability

No additional studies to report at this time.

Additional Validity Checks

In addition to factor analyses, the validity for this instrument is limited to data from the original investigation of a prospective research design involving 111 students at a private college. The study examined the question of whether coping behaviors at college entry were predictive of Midyear GPA and Year End GPA. The findings confirm the general utility of YA-COPE with Avoidance and Humor being predictive of Midyear GPA and Family Problem Solving being predictive of Year End GPA after Midyear GPA is controlled for (see Tables 19.1 and 19.2).

Scoring Procedures

A sum score can be obtained from the total scale by simply summing the respondent's score (number circled) for each of the items (i.e., Never = 1, Hardly Ever = 2, Sometimes = 3, Often = 4, and Most of the Time = 5). However, for eight items (7, 8, 24, 26, 28, 43, 47, and 50) the scores must be reversed (i.e., Never = 5, Hardly Ever = 4, Sometimes = 3, Often = 2 and Most of the Time = 1). This will ensure that all items are weighted in the same positive direction for both the analysis and the interpretation of the results.

Table 19.1
Discriminant Analysis for YA-COPE Recorded at the Time of Freshman's Entry into College.
Groups Defined By Mid-Academic Year GPA (N = 93)**

Factors	Wilks' Lambda	Significance	Standardized Canonical Discriminant Coefficients*
Avoidance	.92856	.0096	.49082
Humor	.91117	.0162	.71626

*Eigenvalue = .09254 Canonical Correlation = .2980448 $\chi^2 = 8.8724$ Significance = .0162

** List-wise deletion was used to decrease the chance that predictors would emerge because of sample size.

Table 19.2
Discriminant Analysis for YA-COPE Recorded at the Time of Freshman's Entry into College.
Groups Defined By End of Academic Year GPA. (N = 93)**

Factors	Wilks' Lambda	Significance	Standardized Canonical Discriminant Coefficients*
Mid-Academic Year GPA	.67403	.0000	.98931
Family Problem Solving	.66198	.0000	-.21939

*Eigenvalue = .77943 Canonical Correlation = .6618322 $\chi^2 = 51.866$ Significance = .0000

** List-wise deletion was used to decrease the chance that predictors would emerge because of sample size.

Subscale scores may be obtained by summing the numbers circled by the respondent for each of the items in a subscale. It should be noted that six of the items dropped out in factor analysis and were not included in the subscales, though they are part of the total score mentioned above. These were items 5, 7, 8, 17, 37 and 56. Before summing the items in each subscale certain items must be reversed so that all items are weighted in a positive direction. These items are marked with an asterisk in the list below.

Subscale 1: Ventilation:	14, 19, 22, 26*, 28*, 39, 50*, 52
Subscale 2: Low Activity Level:	2, 9, 11, 33, 38, 44, 49, 54
Subscale 3: Self Reliance and Positive Appraisal:	15, 25, 32, 46, 48
Subscale 4: Emotional Connections:	4, 16, 29, 30, 36, 53
Subscale 5: Family Problem Solving:	1, 12, 31, 40, 42, 51
Subscale 6: Avoidance:	24*, 43*, 47*
Subscale 7: Spiritual Support:	6, 21, 23, 35, 45
Subscale 8: High Activity Level:	10, 13, 27, 34, 41, 55
Subscale 9: Humor:	3, 18, 20

Norms and/or Comparative Data

The means and standard deviations of all subscales and the total instrument are reported in Table 19.3.

Instrument Utilization for Research

The YA-COPE instrument is currently being tested within the Family Stress, Coping and Health Project and by other investigators. The few studies that have included this instrument have already been cited in the validity section of this chapter and are included in the references. Therefore, a summary table of related publications is not available at this time.

Notes

1. The earlier writings on this instrument included a comprehensive description of the instrument's development. For the sake of brevity we limited the chapter to the basic information that users have requested and needed. If you desire a copy and are unable to find our earlier publications, either the 1987 or the 1991 edition, please write to us at the Center for Excellence in Family Studies, Family Stress, Coping and Health Project, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1300 [Linden Drive, Madison, WI 53706](#) or send [email to manual@macc.wisc.edu](mailto:manual@macc.wisc.edu). There will be a charge for these additional materials.
2. When referencing this instrument, the proper citation is: Patterson, J., McCubbin, H.I., & Grochowski, J. (1983). Young Adult-Coping Orientation for Problem Experiences (YA-COPE). In H.I. McCubbin, A.I. Thompson, & M.A. McCubbin (1996). *Family assessment: Resiliency, coping and adaptation Inventories for research and practice*. (pp. 613-624). Madison: University of Wisconsin System.
3. A Spanish language version of YA-COPE is available but was not typeset for this publication. Please write or email if you wish to obtain a copy. There will be a charge for this additional material.

Table 19.3
Means and Standard Deviations for YA-COPE

Total		Mean	SD	Cases
(Instrument)	Entire Population	162.96	17.56	138
	Female	167.89	14.11	71
	Male	157.73	19.36	67
Factors				
Family Problem Solving	Entire Population	3.28	.72	149
	Female	3.49	.67	77
	Male	3.06	.71	72
Ventilation	Entire Population	2.82	.62	151
	Female	3.03	.55	78
	Male	2.60	.61	73
Self-Reliance and Positive Appraisal	Entire Population	3.56	.54	152
	Female	3.58	.50	78
	Male	3.54	.58	74
High Activity Level	Entire Population	3.03	.58	149
	Female	3.05	.55	77
	Male	3.01	.62	72
Humor	Entire Population	3.24	.73	154
	Female	3.17	.64	79
	Male	3.31	.81	75
Emotional Connections	Entire Population	3.54	.60	150
	Female	3.69	.58	78
	Male	3.37	.58	72
Spiritual	Entire Population	2.11	.61	152
	Female	2.18	.60	79
	Male	2.03	.62	73
Low Activity Level	Entire Population	2.45	.46	148
	Female	2.50	.40	76
	Male	2.39	.51	72
Avoidance	Entire Population	1.64	.71	151
	Female	1.55	.64	77
	Male	1.72	.78	74

YA-COPE

YOUNG ADULT COPING ORIENTATION FOR
PROBLEM EXPERIENCES

English Version



YA-COPE

YOUNG ADULT COPING ORIENTATION FOR PROBLEM EXPERIENCES[®]

Joan M. Patterson Hamilton I. McCubbin Janet H. Grochowski

Purpose
 YA-COPE is designed to record the behaviors young adults find helpful to them in managing problems or difficult situations which happen to them or members of their families.

Directions
 Read each of the statements below which describes a behavior for coping with problems. Decide how often you do each of the described behaviors when you face difficulties or feel tense. Even though you may do some of these things just for fun, please indicate only how often you do each behavior as a way to cope with problems

Circle one of the following responses for each statement:
 1 – NEVER 2 – HARDLY EVER 3 – SOMETIMES 4 – OFTEN 5 – MOST OF THE TIME

Please be sure and circle a response for each statement.

NOTE: Anytime the words parent, mother, father, brother or sister are used, they also mean step parent, step-mother, foster parent, etc.

<i>When you face problems or difficulties or feel tense, how often do you:</i>	Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Most of the Time
1. Go along with parents' requests and rules	1	2	3	4	5
2. Read	1	2	3	4	5
3. Try to be funny and make light of it all	1	2	3	4	5
4. Apologize to people	1	2	3	4	5
5. Listen to music – stereo, radio, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Talk to instructor, advisor or counselor about what bothers you	1	2	3	4	5
7. Eat food	1	2	3	4	5
8. Try to stay away from home as much as possible	1	2	3	4	5
9. Use drugs prescribed by a doctor	1	2	3	4	5
10. Get more involved in activities at college	1	2	3	4	5

<i>When you face problems or difficulties or feel tense, how often do you:</i>	Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Most of the Time
11. Go shopping: buy things you like	1	2	3	4	5
12. Try to reason with parents and talk things out; compromise	1	2	3	4	5
13. Try to improve yourself (get body in shape, get better grades, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
14. Cry	1	2	3	4	5
15. Try to think of the good things in your life	1	2	3	4	5
16. Be with a boyfriend or girlfriend	1	2	3	4	5
17. Ride around in the car	1	2	3	4	5
18. Say nice things to others	1	2	3	4	5
19. Get angry and yell at people	1	2	3	4	5
20. Joke and keep a sense of humor	1	2	3	4	5
21. Talk to a minister/priest/rabbi	1	2	3	4	5
22. Let off steam by complaining to family members	1	2	3	4	5
23. Go to church	1	2	3	4	5
24. Use drugs (not prescribed by a doctor)	1	2	3	4	5
25. Organize your life and do what you have to do	1	2	3	4	5
26. Swear or act rowdy	1	2	3	4	5
27. Work hard on schoolwork or other school projects	1	2	3	4	5
28. Blame others for what's going wrong	1	2	3	4	5
29. Be close with someone your care about	1	2	3	4	5
30. Try to help other people solve their problems	1	2	3	4	5
31. Talk to you mother about what bothers you	1	2	3	4	5
32. Try, on your own, to figure out how to deal with your problems or tension	1	2	3	4	5
33. Work on a hobby you have (sewing, model building, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5

<i>When you face problems or difficulties or feel tense, how often do you:</i>	Never	Hardly Ever	Sometimes	Often	Most of the Time
34. Try to make new friends at college	1	2	3	4	5
35. Get professional counseling (not from a college instructor or advisor)	1	2	3	4	5
36. Try to keep up high school friendships	1	2	3	4	5
37. Tell yourself the problem is not important	1	2	3	4	5
38. Go to a movie	1	2	3	4	5
39. Daydream about how you would like things to be	1	2	3	4	5
40. Talk to a brother or sister about how you feel	1	2	3	4	5
41. Get a job or work harder at one	1	2	3	4	5
42. Do things with your family	1	2	3	4	5
43. Smoke	1	2	3	4	5
44. Watch T.V.	1	2	3	4	5
45. Pray	1	2	3	4	5
46. Try to see the good things in a difficult situation	1	2	3	4	5
47. Drink beer, wine, liquor	1	2	3	4	5
48. Try to make your own decisions	1	2	3	4	5
49. Sleep	1	2	3	4	5
50. Say mean things to people; be sarcastic	1	2	3	4	5
51. Talk to your father about what bothers you	1	2	3	4	5
52. Let off steam by complaining to your friends	1	2	3	4	5
53. Talk to a friend about how you feel	1	2	3	4	5
54. Play video games (Pac-Man), pool, pinball, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
55. Do a strenuous physical activity (jogging, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
56. Try to be alone	1	2	3	4	5