

Perspectives and experiences of stress and coping in Aotearoa New Zealand secondary school students

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Biography

Victoria is a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Canterbury. Her background in educational psychology and her passion for philosophies surrounding mental health and well-being have informed her current doctoral research. Her research explores the contributing factors to the perspectives and experiences of happiness amongst adolescents in Aotearoa New Zealand and how these are shaped by aspects of social media consumption and related behaviours.

ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a critical period of intensity and change across physical, emotional, and cognitive domains. During this time, adolescents are expected to perform academically, consider their futures, navigate personal and social relationships, and develop their sense of self. It is well-documented that overall mental health and wellbeing can have unique impacts in each of these areas of development. Many of the determinants of mental health and wellbeing stem from various psychosocial factors such as stress and coping experiences. Previous research has highlighted mechanisms such as coping strategies, stress management strategies, and relationships with others as determining outcomes of mental health and overall wellbeing. Moreover, the nature of these chosen strategies and the extent to which they may improve, or hinder wellbeing outcomes requires further investigation. The current research seeks to gain a clearer understanding of the connections between chosen coping and help-seeking strategies, the perceived efficacy of these strategies, and overall wellbeing measures. The sample comprises approximately 110 secondary school students in Aotearoa New Zealand aged 12 to 18 years of age who were contacted and invited through their secondary schools to complete an online survey. Preliminary analyses regarding the stress experiences, subjective wellbeing, and relationships with others will be presented. The data analysis will be conducted using descriptive statistics to identify coping strategies, as well as bivariate correlations and multiple regression procedures to determine predictors of wellbeing. The results of this research could provide important perspectives and guidance for policy, intervention, and further research, as well as create a clearer comprehension as to the stress experiences of secondary school students in Aotearoa New Zealand.