THE STRUCTURE OF COPING

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Coping refers to behavior that protects people from being psychologically harmed by problematic social experience, a behavior that importantly mediates the impact that societies have on their members. The protective function of coping behavior can be exercised in three ways: by eliminating or modifying conditions giving rise to problems; by perceptually controlling the meaning of experience in a manner that neutralizes its problematic character; and by keeping the emotional consequences of problems within manageable bounds. The efficacy of a number of concrete coping behaviors representing these three functions was evaluated. Results indicate that individuals' coping interventions are most effective when dealing with problems within the close interpersonal role areas of marriage and child-rearing and least effective when dealing with the more impersonal problems found in occupation. The effective coping modes are unequally distributed in society, with men, the educated, and the affluent making greater use of the efficacious mechanisms.

By coping we refer to the things that people do to avoid being harmed by life-strains. At the very heart of this concept is the fundamental assumption that people are actively responsive to forces that impinge upon them. Since many of these impinging forces are social in their origins, the understanding of coping is a prerequisite for understanding the impact that societies come to exert on their members. Yet we know relatively little of the nature and substance of people's coping repertoires and even less of the relative effectiveness of different ways of coping. This paper deals with these issues first by specifying some of the life-circumstances that people find problematic, next by identifying an array of coping mechanisms people use in attempting to deal with these problems, and then, by assessing the efficacy of the coping mechanisms so identified. Finally, we shall examine some of the linkages between the social characteristics of people and their coping behavior.

The limited attention social science has given to coping stands in striking contrast to its long and abundant interest in circumstances that are potentially deleterious to the well-being of people. Classic examples include such circumstances as the discontinuities between early socialization and the demands confronted later in life (Benedict, 1938), the contradictions among the norms that define situations and actions (Stouffer,1949), the disparities between different dimensions of status (Lenski, 1954; Jackson, 1962), and the motivations toward culturally prized goals that are frustrated by limited opportunity structures (Merton, 1957). By confining its attention largely to conditions that are possibly harmful and by ignoring ways of avoiding harm, social science has left knowledge about coping primarily to clinical workers. This has understandably resulted in a distinct tendency to regard coping as a highly individualized defense against threats aroused in highly individualized situations. Since its focus is primarily on intra-psychic phenomena, a clinical approach to coping tends to overlook the presence of institutionalized solutions to common life-tasks (Mechanic, 1974). By contrast, the present analysis emphasizes enduring and widely experienced life-strains that emerge from social roles and, moreover, it is exclusively concerned with coping modes that are shared by people who also share key social characteristics. Our interests, therefore, lie with normative coping responses to normative life-problems.

Over the years, coping has acquired a variety of conceptual meanings, being commonly used interchangeably with such kindred concepts as mastery, defense, and adaptation (White, 1974). Because of its multiple meanings, it is necessary that we specify our own working definition. Es-

sentially the concept is being used here to refer to any response to external life-strains that serves to prevent, avoid, or control emotional distress. Thus, we regard coping as inseparable both from the life-strains experienced by people and from the state of their inner emotional life. In order to understand coping and to evaluate its effectiveness, it is, therefore, necessary to examine it in the context of the problems with which people have to contend and the potential emotional impact of those problems. Following a brief description of the background of this inquiry, we shall specify in greater detail the strains and stresses to which coping is linked.

BACKGROUND AND METHODS

The data presented here are part of a larger investigation into the social origins of personal stress. A cluster sample of households was drawn, using techniques and procedures that are described in detail elsewhere (Pearlin, 1975; Pearlin and Radabaugh, 1976). The information was gathered through scheduled interviews with a sample of 2300 people representative of the population in the Census-defined urbanized area of Chicago. Only people between ages 18–65 were interviewed, for it was desired to have a sample weighted in favor of those actively engaged in occupational life. Where more than one person in a household satisfied these age criteria, the older candidate was systematically chosen. The sex of the person to be interviewed in each household was predesignated so that the final sample would have as equal a number of males and females as possible. This restriction was ignored only in households where all age-qualified respondents were of the same sex. Because females typically head such households, the final sample contained more women than men.

The interview schedule was designed to yield several distinct types of information. First, it asks people about potential life-strains—that is, conflicts, frustrations, and threats—that earlier exploratory interviews had revealed to be commonly experienced in major social role areas.

Second, the interview includes a number of questions about the coping repertoires people employ in dealing with the strains they experience in these roles. And third, it inquires into the emotional stresses that people feel and the extent to which they experience symptoms of depression and anxiety.

THE CONTEXT OF COPING: LIFE-STRAINS AND EMOTIONAL STRESS

From a sociological perspective many of the difficult problems with which people cope are not unusual problems impinging on exceptional people in rare situations, but are persistent hardships experienced by those engaged in mainstream activities within major institutions. Whereas many studies of stress have examined people faced with extreme and somewhat unusual threats and trials, such as impending surgery (Janis, 1958) or the grim competition experienced by students seeking a PhD. (Mechanic, 1962), this study focuses on people engaged in very ordinary—indeed, required—pursuits. Thus, we are fundamentally oriented to aspects of structured social experiences that adversely penetrate people's emotional lives.

There is a vast array of such experiences arising within the boundaries of the multiple roles that people typically play. However, we shall confine our attentions to the persistent life-strains that people encounter as they act as parents, job holders and breadwinners, husbands and wives. By strains we mean those enduring problems that have the potential for arousing threat, a meaning that establishes *strain* and *stressor* as interchangeable concepts. The strains that are included for study here were identified from themes that surfaced repeatedly during relatively unstructured interviews with over 100 subjects. Standardized questions about these strains were gradually developed, tested, and included in the final interview schedule. The role areas around which our questions center do not by any means exhaust the sources of social strain, nor are we capturing all strains that exist within each of the roles. Those life-strains

that we have succeeded in identifying, however, do represent problems that are frequently outstanding in the experiences of people in their roles as marriage partners, economic managers, parents, and workers.

Because our structured questions about life-strains were so closely developed from the progressively focused exploratory interviews, we were reasonably optimistic that our items were conceptually meaningful at the outset. Some further refinement was achieved, however, by subjecting the questions about life-strains to factor analysis, the items within each of the four role areas constituting separate pools of information. Eleven factors were delineated, three in marriage, three in the parental area, one in household economics, and four in occupation. Because of the number of factors involved and the relatively large number of items that comprise most of the factors, they are not reproduced in their entirety. Instead the first three items in each factor, together with their loadings, are presented in Appendix 1. This sample of items should provide some sense of the tone and substance of the dimensions of strain being measured in the different roles.[1]

The second conceptual domain to which coping behavior is inseparably bound involves stress. Because stress is a phenomenon studied by representatives of several disciplines, and because it can be manifested at different levels of organismic functioning, it is understandable that there is confusion about its "real" meaning. Our treatment of the concept is constrained by the fact that it is being assessed through a household survey of a normal population, requiring that its physiological and biochemical manifestations be bypassed. Instead we rely on the reported experience of emotional upset as our indicator of stress, looking exclusively at the unpleasant feelings of distress of which people are aware.

Not all such unpleasant feelings necessarily represent what we regard as stress. Emotional stress, as we conceive of it, is primarily distinguished from other negative states by its specificity. It is specific in two related respects: by being determined by particular strainful and threatening circumstances in the environment, and by being a condition that has clear boundaries rather than an enveloping, total state of the organism. By contrast, extreme anxiety and depression, which may very well develop from intense and enduring stress, are more global and diffuse. These disturbances may cling even in the absence of specific threats; they do not vary as their hosts move from one situation to another, and they often dominate one's entire affective life. But as we are treating it, stress is primarily linked to areas of life that are problematic, with the result that one area of life may be insulated from the stresses being experienced in another.

Consistent with this view, we developed several measures of stress, one for each of the role areas in which strains are being assessed. The measures themselves are based on adjective check-lists. These lists were presented to respondents as the last series of questions asked about a particular role. For example, following all other questions about occupation, respondents were told: "I want to know now the kinds of feelings you get when you think of your day-to-day job—your daily working conditions, your pay, and other benefits, and the people you work with. Adding up all the good and bad points about your job, how _____ do you feel?" The interviewer would repeat the last part of the question, using a different adjective each time—bothered, worried, tense, and so on. There were four intensity categories from which subjects chose their response to each adjective and the responses were then factor analyzed. The same format was employed to construct separate stress measures in each of the role areas. The factor items are presented in Appendix 2.

DIMENSIONS OF COPING

Coping needs more detailed specification than either strains or stresses, both because it is pivotal to our analysis and because of the bewildering richness of behavior relevant to it. We shall outline some of the broad dimensions of the concept and at the same time describe the more concrete aspects of coping that have

been selected for study here. Following this the issue of coping efficacy will be taken up.

At the outset a fundamental distinction needs to be made between *social resources, psychological resources*, and *specific coping responses*. Resources refer not to what people do, but to what is available to them in developing their coping repertoires. Social resources are represented in the interpersonal networks of which people are a part and which are a potential source of crucial supports: family, friends, fellow workers, neighbors, and voluntary associations. The configurations of these networks in the lives of people, the conditions under which they can be drawn upon, and the obligations and costs their use incur are all somewhat complex issues and are outside the scope of this paper.

The general psychological resources of people, on the other hand, are very much in the purview of the present analysis. Psychological resources are the personality characteristics that people draw upon to help them withstand threats posed by events and objects in their environment. These resources, residing within the self, can be formidable barriers to the stressful consequences of social strain. Three have been incorporated into this analysis: self-esteem, self-denigration, and mastery. Self-esteem refers to the positiveness of one's attitude toward oneself and is a factor formed from items in the Rosenberg (1965) scale. Self-denigration, an independent factor derived from the same original pool of items, indicates that extent to which one holds negative attitudes toward oneself. Mastery, finally, is assessed by a measure constructed for this study and concerns the extent to which one regards one's life-chances as being under one's own control in contrast to being fatalistically ruled. Other aspects of personality that represent potential psychological resources for coping were also examined. These include measures of denial, general tendencies toward escapism, and dispositions to move toward or away from people when troubled. They will not figure into our analysis of efficacy because, as measured here, they were found to have no coping functions. The three we shall be examining, each of which concerns a distinct self-attitude, have been factor analyzed and the items making up the factors appear in Appendix 3.

In distinction to general psychological resources are the specific coping responses: the behaviors, cognitions, and perceptions in which people engage when actually contending with their life-problems. The psychological resources represent some of the things people *are*, independent of the particular roles they play. Coping responses represent some of the things that people *do*, their concrete efforts to deal with the life-strains they encounter in their different roles. Such responses may indeed be influenced by the psychological resources of individuals, but they are conceptually and empirically independent.

Questions concerning coping responses were developed in the same manner as those dealing with role strains. That is, in the open-ended exploratory interviews people were asked not only to identify the problems they face, but also to describe how they attempt to deal with them. Thematic examination of these interview materials suggested a number of coping patterns, and questions tapping these patterns were gradually developed, tested, and standardized. Responses to these questions, thus, yielded a body of information about coping within each role area; they were then factor analyzed and scored to provide the measures of coping that we shall be using. There is a total of 17 such factors, some of the factors containing many items. Because of their number, only three items from each factor are presented in Appendix 4.[1] Although this sampling of items should provide a sense of the substance of the measures, further explication of their conceptualization is required.

It needs to be recognized that the 17 coping responses captured by this single study constitute but a portion of the full range of responses people undoubtedly call upon in dealing with life-exigencies. But although the specific coping responses under consideration here are by no means exhaustive, they can be viewed as a sampling of three major types of coping that are distinguished from one an-

other by the nature of their functions. These are: (1) responses that change the situation out of which strainful experience arises; (2) responses that control the meaning of the strainful experience after it occurs but before the emergence of stress; and (3) responses that function more for the control of stress itself after it has emerged. We shall describe each of these coping functions in greater deatil below, suggesting at the same time where among these each of our 17 coping factors falls.

It would seem that *responses that modify the situation* represent the most direct way to cope with life-strains, for they are aimed at altering or eliminating the very source of strains. In fact, however, such responses were not among the types of response frequently mentioned by people in the exploratory open-ended interviews. Thus, on prima facie ground only three out of the 17 factors have this as a primary function (see Appendix 4): *negotiation in marriage*, the use of *punitive discipline* in parenting, and the *optimistic action* factor in occupation, while two other responses, the *seeking of advice* in both the marital and parental roles, may be seen as responses potentially preparatory to acting on the situation.

Given the many conceivable ways that people may act to modify or eliminate situations productive of strain, it is surprising that it is not a more commonly used type of coping than it apparently is. There are several possible reasons for this. First, people must recognize the situation as the source of their problem before they can mobilize action toward modifying it, and such recognition is not always easy. Next, even when the sources are recognized, people may lack the knowledge or experience necessary to eliminate or modify them. Third, actions directed at the modification of one situation may create another unwanted situation, resulting in an inhibition of the coping action. Finally, some of the most persistent strains originate in conditions impervious to coping interventions, thus discouraging individual ameliorative coping efforts. Clearly, then, there are several conditions that can deflect people from directing their efforts toward the modification of a problematic situation, regardless of how

reasonable this kind of coping action might appear on the surface.

In circumstances where coping does not succeed in changing the situation, and thereby fails to eliminate the problem, the stressful impact of the problem may nevertheless be buffered by *responses that function to control the meaning* of the problem. The way an experience is recognized and the meaning that is attached to it determine to a large extent the threat posed by that experience. Thus, the same experience may be highly threatening to some people and innocuous to others, depending on how they perceptually and cognitively appraise the experience (Lazarus, 1966). By cognitively neutralizing the threats that we experience in life-situations, it is possible to avoid stresses that might otherwise result.

There are many devices that function in this way. Indeed, it is by far the most common type of individual coping, encompassing most of the responses identified by this study. One such frequently used coping mechanism involves the making of *positive comparisons*, a device captured in such idioms as "count your blessings," "we're all in the same boat," and so on. Thus conditions appearing to an outside observer as very difficult may be experienced by people as relatively benign when they judge the conditions to be less severe—or no more severe—than those faced by their significant others. Misery truly loves company. Comparisons may entail a temporal frame of reference as well as one formed by significant others. Thus, if hardship is evaluated either as being an improvement over the past or as a forerunner of an easier future, its effects will be tempered. Measures of the use of comparative frames of reference can be found in each of the four role areas in Appendix 4.

Another perceptual device that functions to control meaning, also measured in each of the role areas, is *selective ignoring*. Selective ignoring is typically attained by casting about for some positive attribute or circumstance within a troublesome situation. Once found, the person is aided in ignoring that which is noxious by anchoring his attention to what he considers the more worthwhile and rewarding as-

pects of experience. One's ability to ignore selectively is helped to trivializing the importance of that which is noxious and magnifying the importance of that which is gratifying. There are other devices similar to selective ignoring, these involving the hierarchical ordering of life-priorities. The *substitution of rewards* in occupation and the *devaluation of money* in the area of household economics are instances of this. In both cases people are attaching a differential importance to different areas of their lives. They may succeed in avoiding stress to the extent that they are able to keep the most strainful experiences within the least valued areas of life. When confined to life-areas defined as of secondary importance, strains are less likely to result in stress because they are less likely to threaten the self. The hierarchical ordering can, thus, function to shrink the significance of problems and, in this way, minimize the resultant stresses.

The third type of coping functions neither to alter the situation generating the stress-provoking strains nor to create congenial perceptions of problematic experiences within the situation. This type of coping functions more for the management of stress than for its vitiation. Such coping mechanisms essentially help people to accommodate to existing stress without being overwhelmed by it. The open-ended exploratory interviews revealed a variety of sentiments, some of them quite familiar, that potentially function in this manner: try not to worry because time itself solves problems; accept hardship because it is meant to be; avoid confrontation; those who are good-naturedly forebearing will be rewarded; take the bad with the good; just relax and difficulties become less important; everything works out for the best. These kinds of themes suggest that out of the beliefs and values in the culture people are able to create a strategy for manageable suffering, a strategy that can convert the endurance of unavoidable hardships into a moral virtue.

Clearly, this strategy brings together a number of orientations to life-problems: denial, passive acceptance, withdrawal, an element of magical thinking, a hopeful-

ness bordering on blind faith, and belief that the avoidance of worry and tension is the same as problem solving. The actual identification of concrete coping responses having stress management functions is somewhat difficult, however, for there is often nothing intrinsic to behavior that signals that this function is being served. Thus, we know that some people watch television (Pearlin, 1959) or use alcohol (Pearlin and Radabaugh, 1976) for this purpose, but we know, too, that others engage in the same behaviors for very different reasons. Consequently, there is a vast array of responses that have the potentiality of being pressed into service for the management of stress but that may have other meanings as well.

Despite the variety, coping mechanisms of this type have in common their attempt to minimize the discomforts engendered by problems, but are not directed to the problems themselves. Of the 17 responses delineated in this study, four can be seen as functioning primarily for stress management. Two of them are in marriage: *emotional discharge vs. controlled reflectiveness*, where the former refers to the expressive ventilation of feelings as a way of handling marital problems; the other is *passive forebearance vs. self assertion*, the first pertaining to the containment of feelings and the avoidance of conflict, the second to a more open recognition of problems in moving toward conflict resolution. A third response of this type is represented in the parental *potency vs. helplessness resignation* factor, where resignation in effect proclaims the child as being beyond influence, thus possibly exempting the parent from a sense of failure and guilt. Finally, in the economic domain is *optimistic faith* in one's financial future, a rose-colored view of one's economic fate that perhaps helps to keep financial stress within manageable bounds. There are undoubtedly many more responses that stand side by side with these in people's repertoires, but the four included here touch on some of the principal themes and orientations underlying the management of stress.

Coping, in sum, is certainly not a unidimensional behavior. It functions at a number of levels and is attained by a

plethora of behaviors, cognitions, and perceptions. It is useful, moreover, that coping responses be distinguished from what we have identified as psychological resources for coping, those personality characteristics that minimize threat to self. As important as psychological resources may be in confronting life-strains, we cannot completely understand coping without looking beyond the personality attributes of individuals to the specific responses to problems in different social roles. This will become evident in the evaluation of coping efficacy.

COPING EFFICACY

The fanciful ultimate in coping is where people deal so effectively with life-strains that they are permanently and completely eliminated, thus obviating the necessity of coping repertoires. Under these unlikely circumstances one would find neither problems nor coping responses to them. But, of course, people do not eliminate completely or permanently the conflicts, frustrations, and other life-strains engendered by societies. There may be periods of time when there are no active demands to cope, but even during these interludes coping patterns are ready to be mobilized when the need arises. The effectiveness of a coping behavior, therefore, cannot be judged solely on how well it purges problems and hardships from our lives. Instead, it must be judged on how well it prevents these hardships from resulting in emotional stress. Indeed, our criterion for weighting efficacy is simply the extent to which a coping response attenuates the relationship between the life-strains people experience and the emotional stress they feel. It is because of variations in coping efficacy that people exposed to similar life-strains may harbor quite different levels of stress.

Our criterion for evaluating coping efficacy rests on the examination of a full array of variables: the life-strains people experience in each of the four role areas; their psychological resources; the coping responses they call upon in dealing with the strains; and emotional stresses they feel. For the most part we shall rely on

regression analyses, a technique appropriate to the multivariate nature of the issues with which we are concerned, and well-suited also to confirming the conceptual distinctions and independent effects of life-strains and the coping responses to them. The analyses will be organized around several queries concerning coping efficacy: (1) Are there some coping responses and coping resources that are appreciably more effective than others? (2) How does the effectiveness of specific coping responses compare with that of psychological resources? (3) Does the sheer scope and variety of a coping repertoire have any bearing on its effectiveness? Following the consideration of each of these issues, we shall be in a position to deal with a final question: What kinds of people employ what kinds of responses with what kinds of advantages?

What Coping Mechanisms Work Best?

The most fundamental question to which we can address ourselves is whether coping merely creates within people the illusion that they are doing something of consequence or if, indeed, coping does help to avoid or manage stress. And if it does help, can we identify a particular mechanism or set of mechanisms that is especially efficacious. We shall observe first the efficacy of coping responses and then turn our attention to the coping resources.

Because coping is examined separately in each role, it is necessary to create four regression equations. Included among the independent variables are the strains within a particular role together with the different coping responses used in that role. The measures of strain are constructed by summing the scores that respondents have on the various strain factors within the role (see Appendix 1). This measure essentially represents the overall level of intensity with which people experience problems in the role area. Measures of coping are simply derived from respondents' scores on each of the various coping factors (Appendixes 3 & 4). The dependent variables in the equations, role stresses, are measured by the scores of respondents on the factors presented in

Appendix 2. It needs to be noted that in Table 1, which presents the results of these analyses, the coping variables are labeled so as to indicate that an increase in the named response is associated with the minimization of stress. The more one employs a particular response the more stress decreases, except in cases of selective ignoring, which in the marital and parental areas, is preceded by the word "low." This labeling is used to indicate that in these two areas the exercise of selective ignoring exacerbates stress, while in the economic and occupational domains "low" is not used, for in these areas the same response helps to contain stress.

To understand the presentation and meaning of the findings in Table 1, attention should first be directed at the vertical column showing the regressions of stress on strain. In marriage, for example, the standardized bivariate regression coefficient of stress on strain before taking account of coping is .62. One can then assess the effect that each of the six coping re-

TABLE 1. STEPWISE REGRESSIONS OF STRESSES ON LIFE-STRAINS AND ON COPING RESPONSES IN DIFFERENT ROLE AREAS (STANDARDIZED)*

| | Regression Coefficients of Stresses on: | | | | | | | |
| | | Coping Responses | | | | | | |
Role Area	Strains	X_1	X_2	X_3	X_4	X_5	X_6	R^2
Marriage								
Low Strain	.62							.38
Self-Reliance vs. Advice Seeking (X_1)	.58	.22						.43
Controlled Reflectiveness vs. Emotional Discharge (X_2)	.54	.23	.20					.47
Positive Comparisons (X_3)	.48	.24	.21	.12				.48
Negotiation (X_4)	.42	.25	.22	.14	.13			.50
Self-Assertion vs. Passive Forbearance (X_5)	.35	.27	.24	.17	.16	.15		.52
Low Selective Ignoring (X_6)	.30	.27	.25	.19	.17	.17	.14	.54
Parenting								
Low Strain	.48							.23
Positive Comparisons (X_1)	.40	.23						.28
Self-Reliance vs. Advice Seeking (X_2)	.37	.23	.14					.28
Low Selective Ignoring (X_3)	.36	.25	.15	.12				.31
Non-punitiveness vs. Reliance on Discipline (X_4)	.34	.25	.16	.13	.09			.31
Exercise of Potency vs. Helpless Resignation (X_5)	.33	.24	.16	.13	.09	.05†		.32
Household Economics								
Low Strain	.65							.43
Devaluation of Money (X_1)	.59	.17						.45
Selective Ignoring (X_2)	.58	.20	.15					.47
Positive Comparisons (X_3)	.54	.22	.15	.11				.48
Optimistic Faith (X_4)	.51	.25	.12	.12	.10			.49
Occupation								
Low Strain	.47							.22
Substitution of Rewards (X_1)	.47	.09						.23
Positive Comparisons (X_2)	.47	.09	.06					.23
Optimistic Actions (X_3)	.47	.09	.06	.05				.24
Selective Ignoring (X_4)	.47	.09	.06	.05†	.01†			.24

* All coefficients significant at the .05 level or better unless indicated by (†).

sponses (X_1 to X_6) has by observing the reduction in the regression of stress on the role strain as the coping responses are added to the equation. It can be seen that at each step the relationship between marital strain and marital stress is reduced, the final coefficient being .30. These results indicate that whether or not the strains experienced by people in their marriages lead to emotional distress depends to a substantial extent on their coping responses to the strains. Coping has corresponding though smaller effects on the relationships between strain and emotional stress in parental and economic roles, but it makes no difference to this relationship in the occupational area. This resistance to coping efforts in occupation will appear throughout the analysis, suggesting that coping is least effective in areas of life, such as job, that are impersonally organized and in which the forces affecting people are beyond the kinds of personal coping controls that we have been examining. But within the three other roles, it is apparent that the things people do can make a difference in avoiding or minimizing the stressful impact of life-strains.

Are there specific responses that are especially outstanding in this regard? The answer to this question can best be found by examining the bottom horizontal line of coefficients in each role, for it is here that direct comparisons of the relative independent efficacy of the different responses can be made. These coefficients are arranged, from left to right, in the order of the magnitude of their importance to stress. The first coefficient on the bottom row, in each of the four areas, shows the regression of stress on strain with the coping completely taken into account. The remainder of the coefficients along the bottom row reflect the independent relationships of each of the coping responses (X_1 through X_n) to stress after all the other responses are entered into the equation.

In the first three areas it is possible to discern that some responses are more effective than others, although differences among adjoining responses tend to be quite small. Again taking the marriage area as an illustration, and looking across the bottom line, .27 units of stress are dependent on one unit of the first coping variable (X_1, self-reliance vs. advice seeking), and .14 units of stress depend on the extent to which people eschew selective ignoring, the last and least important coping variable in the marital area (X_6). With regard to occupation, the comparison of the coefficients reveals that the amount of stress alleviated by any of the responses is considerably more limited than in the other areas. This, of course, is consistent with what we earlier observed of the general resistance of occupational problems to coping interventions.

Except in occupation, then, there are appreciable differences between the most effective and least effective responses. At the same time, the effect of any single coping mechanism is rather modest. Beyond these general observations, however, are some more specific patterns that should be pointed out. A somewhat surprising result is that self-reliance is more effective in reducing stress than the seeking of help and advice from others in the two areas in which it is possible to observe its effects, marriage and parenthood. This unexpected finding reminds us that help-seekers are not necessarily the same people as help-receivers, for the most effective copers may be those who have the capacity to gather support from others without having to solicit it. At any rate, it is evident that we do not yet know the conditions under which help from others can be effective.

Two additional observations can be made, one pertaining to the occupational and economic areas, the other to marriage and parenthood. It is interesting that in economic and, to a modest extent, occupational roles, the most effective types of coping involve the manipulation of goals and values. In economics this entails the demeaning of the importance of monetary success, the devaluation of money. In limiting the importance of money, the deprivations that might ordinarily be felt as a result of having limited resources are buffered. In occupation, the corresponding response is the substitution of rewards, involving the devaluation of the intrinsic rewards of work and a valuation of extrinsic rewards, such as pay and fringe benefits. People seek to control stress in occu-

pation, though without much success, by keeping work itself in a place secondary in importance.

But the manipulation of broad values and goals is far less psychologically wieldy in the close interpersonal relations of marriage and parenthood than it is in the household economics and occupational spheres. One cannot as easily demean the importance of a spouse or of a child as he can devalue his work or an unattainable life-style. On the contrary, the most effective responses in marriage and parenthood are those that involve the eschewal of avoidance and withdrawal. In marriage it is a reflective probing of problems, rather than the eruptive discharge of feelings created by the problems, that is among the more effective responses. Similarly, the most effective type of response to parental strains is not resigned helplessness, but the conviction that one can exert a potent influence over one's children. It appears that problems arising in the close interpersonal relations of fam-

ily are least likely to result in stress when people remain committed to and involved in those relationships. The opposite is true in matters of money and work; here stress is less likely to result when people disengage themselves from involvement. It is important to understand that the observed stress-reducing efficacy of the various coping mechanisms is independent of the intensity of the role-strains. This independence is rooted in regression analysis itself, for the Beta weights reflect the changes produced by one variable after the effects of the others are controlled (Blalock, 1960).

Using the same procedures we employed in Table 1, we turn now from specific coping responses to a consideration of the relative effectiveness of the general psychological resources. For our present purpose we enter separately the three variables—self-denigration, self-esteem, and mastery—into a regression analysis, just as we did with the specific coping responses. Looking first in Table 2

TABLE 2. STEPWISE REGRESSIONS OF STRESSES ON LIFE-STRAINS AND ON PSYCHOLOGICAL COPING RESOURCES (STANDARDIZED)*

| | Regression Coefficents of Stresses on: | | | | |
| | | Psychological Resources | | | |
Role Area	Strains	X_1	X_2	X_3	R^2
Marriage					
Low Strain	.62				.39
Low Self-denigration (X_1)	.57	.18			.42
Mastery (X_2)	.53	.20	.13		.43
Self-esteem (X_3)	.52	.20	.14	.07	.44
Parenting					
Low Strain	.47				.22
Low Self-denigration (X_1)	.43	.20			.26
Mastery (X_2)	.41	.20	.18		.29
Self-esteem (X_3)	.40	.20	.18	.09	.30
Household Economics					
Low Strain	.65				.43
Low Self-denigration (X_1)	.63	.19			.46
Mastery (X_2)	.57	.20	.17		.49
Self-esteem (X_3)	.55	.20	.19	.14	.51
Occupation					
Low Strain	.47				.22
Low Self-denigration (X_1)	.43	.22			.27
Self-esteem (X_2)	.43	.22	.10		.28
Mastery (X_3)	.42	.22	.11	.08	.29

* All coefficients significant at the .05 level or better.

at the vertical columns showing the regressions of stress on role strains, it can be seen that these characteristics do help to reduce the relationships between strain and stress. In what is now a familiar pattern, the reduction is smallest in the occupational realm, but even there it is evident that the psychological resources embodied in self-attitudes can help blunt the emotional impact of persistent problems.

With regard to the relative importance of the three resources, there is a clearer order than could be discerned among the responses in Table 1. In part this is because there are fewer variables involved, partly because the effects of the same dispositions are simply being re-observed in the different role areas, but mainly because there is considerable stability in the relative efficacy of the different resources from one role area to another. Thus, in all four role areas, stress depends more on self-denigration than on the other personality dimensions. And, with the exception of occupation, mastery is a close second in importance, positive self-esteem a third. There is, then, a fairly clear order in the efficacy of people's psychological resources in vitiating stress: freedom from negative attitudes toward self, the possession of a sense that one is in control of the forces impinging on one, and the presence of favorable attitudes toward one's self.

Which is More Efficacious: What People Do or What People Are?

According to Lazarus et al. (1974), much of the research on coping has given greater emphasis to psychological dispositions than to situational specific responses to situational conditions. Traditionally, coping ability has been judged solely on the possession of personality characteristics that help people defend against external threats; having the "right" personality characteristics enables one to deal with life-problems effectively, whatever the nature of the problems or wherever they might spring up. According to this perspective, people develop modal styles of dealing with life-strains, styles that transcend role or situational boundaries. By contrast, we have been underscoring specificity, attempting to identify

particular responses to life-strains in particular role areas. We need not debate which is more effective—the general psychological resources or the specific responses—for, within the limits of our data, we are in a position to observe the relative contributions of the two coping mechanisms.

To judge which is the more efficacious—personality characteristics indicative of the possession of psychological resources (self-denigration, mastery, and self-esteem) or specific responses to specific role strains—summary scores of the two types of coping were created. In the case of the specific responses, these scores were computed simply by adding respondents' scores on the separate coping factors within each role area. The same procedure was followed in forming a summary score for the three psychological resources; in this instance, however, there is but one measure that is being re-observed in the different role areas. The relative efficacy of coping responses and psychological resources could then be judged by placing the two summary measures in the same regression analysis, together with the role strain scores. This enables us to determine whether it is the responses or the resources that is more important in controlling the relationship between strains and stress. In Table 3 strain is entered first in each of the equations, the other variables appearing in a stepwise fashion. Again the vertical columns show the changes in the relationship of stress and strain as the other variables are added to the equation. With the exception of occupation, where there is again little reduction in this relationship, it is clearly better to be armed both with a repertoire of responses and a reservoir of resources than to have either alone.

More to the point of the present question, however, are the regression coefficients along the rows, for these show more directly the relative importance to stress of coping responses and psychological resources. In marriage, coping responses are considerably more important in blocking stress than are resources, this difference being reflected by the coefficients of .47 and .15, respectively. In the parental area, the advantage of coping re-

TABLE 3. REGRESSIONS OF STRESSES ON ROLE STRAINS, COPING RESPONSES AND
COPING RESOURCES (STANDARDIZED)*

Role Areas	Regression Coefficients of Stresses on:			
	Strains	Responses	Resources	R²
Marriage				
Strains	.62			.39
Coping Responses	.29	.50		.53
Coping Resources	.26	.46	.15	.54
Parenting				
Strains	.47			.22
Coping Responses	.36	.27		.29
Coping Resources	.32	.22	.21	.33
Household Economics				
Strains	.65			.22
Coping Resources	.55		.30	.36
Coping Responses	.46	.21	.26	.41
Occupation				
Strains	.46			.21
Coping Resources	.42		.22	.26
Coping Responses	.42	.05	.21	.26

* All coefficients significant at the .01 level or better.

sponses almost disappears (.21 vs. .20). In dealing with problems of household finances, there is a turnabout, the regression of stress on resources now being somewhat greater (.26) than it is on responses (.21). In occupation, finally, stress hinges much more closely on psychological resources than on specific responses, although, as we earlier noted, neither has an appreciable part in buffering the stressful effects of job strains.

From these results it is again evident that the problems arising in the relatively impersonal milieu of occupation are less amenable to coping—either by the weight of one's personality or by the weight of his response patterns—than are problems occurring elsewhere. In the close interpersonal context of marriage, and to a lesser extent in parenting, it is the specific things that people do in dealing with life-strains that determine most closely whether or not they will experience emotional stress, while possessing the "right" personality characteristics is somewhat more effective in dealing with economic and job problems. In the light of these differences, it would be better to rephrase our question to ask not which is the more effective, response or resource, but where

is one or the other likely to be the more effective. The evidence indicates that it is the psychological characteristics that are the more helpful in sustaining people facing strains arising out of conditions over which they may have little direct control—finances and job. But where one is dealing with problems residing in close interpersonal relations, it is the things one does that make the most difference.

Does a Varied Repertoire Help?

It is apparent from the foregoing analyses that the kinds of responses and resources people are able to bring to bear in coping with life-strains make a difference to their emotional well-being. And it is equally apparent that there is no single coping mechanism so outstandingly effective that its possession alone would insure our ability to fend off the stressful consequences of strains. The magical wand does not appear in our results, and this suggests that having a particular weapon in one's arsenal is less important than having a variety of weapons. The single coping response, regardless of its efficacy, may be less effective than bringing to bear a range of responses to life-strains.

Perhaps, effective coping depends not only on what we do, but also on how much we do.

Probably the most direct way to assess the variety of one's coping repertoire is by simply counting the number of responses that one actively invokes among those being measured in the four role areas. We have done this by, on each of the seventeen coping factors, identifying respondents whose scores are above the mean or, in the case of coping responses that exacerbate stress, respondents whose scores are below the mean. We then assigned scores to each respondent based on the number of coping responses within a role on which the respondent fell into the active half. Because the number of responses being observed differs among the four roles, so does the maximum score. Thus, in marriage it ranges from 0 to 6, in parenting to 5, and in the economic and occupational areas the maximum score is 4. The important feature of this index to be kept in mind is that it disregards the substance of the responses and encompasses only the number of responses on which people actively call in coping with role strains.

To ascertain whether the variety of one's repertoire by itself is related to coping effectiveness, we have computed a series of zero-order correlations. Taking marriage to describe the meaning of these correlations, it can be seen in Table 4 that the correlation between strain and emotional stress in this role is .78 among people who actively use none of the coping responses being observed in this area. As the number of responses that people employ increases, stress becomes decreasingly likely to be associated with marital strains. Indeed, stress as a consequence of strain is virtually eliminated when people use as many as five or six of these responses. (Only four respondents are active users of all six responses, and they are combined with those using five.) In the parental area there is also a substantial difference between those with the most limited repertoire and those with the most varied, but between these extremes there is no clear linear relationship. Economic strains, however, like those in marriage, are decreasingly apt to result in stress as the number of coping responses people actively employ increases. And, consistent with what has now been observed with unbroken regularity, the variety of one's repertoire in dealing with occupational problems has no clear or consistent part in preventing stress from arising.

It can be noted in passing that the same kind of analysis of the psychological resources reveals a similar set of findings. In each of the four roles the relationship between strain and stress is greatest among respondents having scores that exceed the mean on none of the three resources and least among those who are above the mean on all of them. This decrease is not completely linear in the marital area, nor is it either linear or sizeable in occupation. Overall, however, these results, together with what we observed above, indicate that the sheer richness and variety of responses and resources that one can bring to bear in coping with life-strains may be more important in shielding one's self

TABLE 4. CORRELATIONS OF ROLE STRAINS AND STRESSES AMONG PEOPLE WHOSE COPING REPERTOIRES DIFFER IN SCOPE AND VARIETY

	Number of Coping Responses Actively Invoked					
	(Limited Repertoire)				(Extended Repertoire)	
Role Areas	0	1	2	3	4	5 and 6
Marriage	.78 (63)	.63 (207)	.49 (466)	.43 (514)	.33 (222)	.01 (24)
Parenting	.59 (40)	.29 (52)	.36 (126)	.47 (148)	.36 (102)	.15 (33)
Household Economics	.79 (112)	.71 (263)	.64 (817)	.51 (637)	.37 (332)	
Occupation	.60 (131)	.49 (309)	.44 (411)	.46 (277)	.51 (71)	

Note: The parenthetical N's represent the number of people on which each of the correlations is based.

from emotional stress than the nature and content of any single coping element. Of one thing we can be quite certain: except in occupation, using fewer coping responses and possessing fewer resources maximizes the probability that role strains will result in emotional stress, and being able to call on more of these mechanisms minimizes the chances.

Who Uses What Mechanisms With What Advantage?

As we emphasized at the outset, we are more interested in identifying coping responses and resources that are shared by collectivities than in clinical portraits of individuals' psychological defenses. Some idea of this sharing can be obtained by simply observing whether coping practices vary among people possessing different social characteristics. These kinds of variations would indicate whether different types of coping, like other behavior, are normative for different groups in the society. But perhaps more importantly, with what we have learned of coping efficacy it is now possible to ascertain if coping differences among groups may also signal coping inequalities. Variations in the use of coping mechanisms, in other words, may be inextricably intertwined with a corresponding inequality of coping efficacy. As we consider the question of "who uses what mechanisms?", we shall consequently be drawing upon the answers we now have to a kindred question: "with what efficacy?"

To look at all the coping measures in relationship to all the social background characteristics about which there is information would produce a vast web of data. Instead, we shall confine ourselves to the more outstanding of these relationships by considering only those characteristics most frequently having close statistical associations with coping. There are four of these, two ascribed and two achieved: sex and age, education and income. In order to understand the direction and meaning of the correlations in Table 5, it needs to be recognized that, with regard to the coping variables, a high score always represents more of the named quality, while the scoring of the social characteristics is indicated in the column headings.

We begin our overview of the relationships in Table 5 with sex, where it is evident that there is a rather compelling pattern of differences. This pattern can be identified by pointing out, first, that there are 11 correlations of a magnitude greater than .05 associated with sex. Second, of the 11 correlations of this magnitude, three involve coping mechanisms found most commonly among women, the remainder being used more by men (a positive correlation indicates the mechanism is associated with women). Finally, of the three responses more often found in the repertoires of women, each entails selective ignoring, a response which in marriage and parenting, it will be recalled, actually exacerbates stress. Thus, there is a pronounced imbalance between the sexes in their possession and use of effective mechanisms. Men more often possess psychological attributes or employ responses that inhibit stressful outcomes of life-problems; and in two of the three instances where women more often employ a response it is likely to result not in less stress, but in more. Although these results cannot provide a complete picture of sex differences, they are sufficient to stimulate the question of whether the greater inclination of women to psychological disturbance, repeatedly established in research (Gove and Tudor, 1973; Pearlin, 1974; Radloff, 1975), is a consequence not only of their having to bear more severe hardships, but also of their being socialized in a way that less adequately equips them with effective coping patterns.

The imbalance that exists between the sexes in the distribution of efficacious coping is completely absent with regard to age. Thus, the younger are more likely than the older to be self-denigrating, but they are also more apt than the older to entertain a sense of mastery. In coping with marital problems, the older are more disposed to self-reliance (less often seeking advice) and more likely also to engage in a controlled reflection of marital problems, both of which help to limit stress; but the older, too, more often practice selective ignoring, which is counter-

TABLE 5. CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS OF BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS WITH COPING RESOURCES AND COPING RESPONSES*

Coping Resources and Responses	Sex [a]	Age [b]	Education [c]	Income [d]
Psychological Resources				
Self-denigration	−.05	−.23	.06	−.05
Mastery	−.11	−.17	.28	.27
Self-esteem	−.05	.01†	.21	.15
Marriage Coping Responses				
Self-reliance vs. Advice Seeking	−.08	.17	−.08	.00†
Controlled reflectiveness vs.				
Emotional Discharge	−.16	.23	−.11	−.09
Positive Comparisons	.01†	.07	−.06	−.13
Negotiations	.04	−.06	.11	.05
Self-assertion vs. Passive				
Forbearance	.04	−.01†	.05	−.01†
Selective Ignoring	.12	.15	−.14	−.09
Parental Coping Responses				
Exercise of parental potency	−.05	−.19	.16	.12
Self-reliance vs. Advice Seeking	−.23	−.20	−.12	−.04†
Non-punitiveness vs. Reliance				
on Discipline	−.10	.09†	.05†	.03†
Positive Comparisons	.02†	.05†	.06	.03†
Selective Ignoring	.13	.03†	−.08	−.01†
Household Economic Coping Responses				
Devaluation of Money	.05	.29	.13	.21
Optimistic Faith	−.07	−.34	.18	.10
Positive Comparisons	−.11	−.05	.18	.53
Selective Ignoring	.05	−.24	.02†	−.03†
Occupational Coping Responses				
Substitution of rewards	−.01†	.15	−.36	−.22
Positive Comparisons	−.03†	−.24	.10	.05†
Optimistic Action	−.07	−.02†	.07	.11
Selective Ignoring	.22	.05	−.20	−.14

  * All correlations significant at the .05 level or higher except where indicated by (†).
  [a] Female=high score.
  [b] Older=high score.
  [c] More extensive=high score.
  [d] Greater=high score.

productive in the marital and parental areas. As parents, breadwinners, and job-holders, the young and the old are each likely to employ mechanisms that support emotional well-being. Unlike the sharp differences observed between men and women, then, there seems to be a balance in the coping efficacy of younger and older people, each being about equally well-equipped with effective elements. These results certainly do not support views of aging as a process in which people inexorably become increasingly vulnerable, unable to cope effectively with life-strains. Although there are substantial relationships between age and coping, neither the younger nor the older appear to have any overall advantage in coping effectiveness.

Education and income are both indicators of socioeconomic status, of course, and for this reason there are similarities in their relationships to coping, with education having the closer overall association. Whereas sex and age represent ascribed statuses, these are achieved, and it is in the framework of this conceptual difference that some of the relationships are

most interesting. Thus, we find that the self-attitudes of mastery and self-esteem are both closely associated with the achieved statuses. There are some substantial correlations in the marital and parental areas as well, but the most impressive associations are in economic and occupational roles. Understandably, for example, the better educated and the more affluent are able to rely on positive comparisons in dealing with money and job problems; they are able to maintain optimistic outlooks; and on the job they do not have to foresake intrinsic rewards. They have the further luxury of being able to attribute less value to monetary success. Some of these relationships raise the question of whether people have better access to the more effective coping techniques because of their privileged positions, as we have been implying, or if they were able to achieve the privileged positions because of their coping effectiveness. There is some indication that it is the former, for when we substitute the occupational status of respondents' fathers for their own educational and economic achievements, essentially the same set of relationships appears.

The patterns of coping usage, then, suggest some concomitant patterns of differential coping advantage. Only with regard to age do the findings indicate a general equality. Between the sexes, men clearly appear to have an advantage, for the personality characteristics and response repertoires shown to have some potency in controlling stress are predominantly found among men. There is similarly no question where the coping advantages lie among people of different socioeconomic status. There is some mix in the marital and parental areas, but elsewhere a resource or response that has been demonstrated to have some efficacy is likely to be in possession of the better placed. The less educated and the poorer are more exposed to hardships and, at the same time, less likely to have the means to fend off the stresses resulting from the hardships. Not only are life-problems distributed unequally among social groups and collectivities, but it is apparent that the ability to deal with the problems is similarly unequal.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

In order to highlight what this paper may have succeeded in accomplishing, it is necessary to recognize what it could not do. Foremost in this regard is the abbreviated range of coping responses and psychological resources with which we deal, limitations imposed both by the state of our present knowledge and the constraining boundaries of a single study. A similar limitation concerns the range of sources of stress with which we deal. Our interests purposely centered on continuous and often undramatic strains built into daily roles. There are other sources of stress not included within this focus, such as the role and status transitions that occur in the normal life-cycle and the problems presented by unusual and unexpected crises. These kinds of events not only present people with problems different from those we considered, but they may also evoke different types of responses and produce a different outline of coping effectiveness. Our analysis, therefore, could only encompass a sample of coping responses and resources used in dealing with some commonly experienced life-strains; it is not an exhaustive treatment of either coping or stress-provoking conditions.

Another limiting problem concerns the criterion used to judge coping efficacy. Our evaluation of efficacy is based on the extent to which coping mechanisms reduce the relationship between role-strains and emotional stresses. By this criterion the effective coper is one who is under severe strains but feels no stress. The more efficient the coping, the more tenuous the statistical associations of strain and stress. As we noted in our discussion of coping functions, however, some successful coping may reduce stress by first diminishing the role-strain itself, a mode of coping we were not able to capture. Such coping, curiously, would lead to a statistical underestimation of efficacy. If coping diminishes the strains, and this then leads to diminished stress, the net effect of the coping would be to create a closer rather than a weaker statistical relationship between role-strains and emotional stress. Within the framework we

employed, therefore, such coping would appear to be ineffective. Thus, some of the coping mechanisms we have identified may provide a more formidable barrier to emotional stress than we were able to demonstrate.

The final caveat, related to the foregoing issue, concerns causation and the direction of influence. Throughout we have talked only of the impact of life-strains on emotional stress, and the ameliorating effects of coping elements. However, it is likely that emotional stress, once established, can in turn influence people's exposure to life-strains and the selective use of coping responses. A network of reciprocal effects undoubtedly exists, one whose exact nature would be best revealed in longitudinal studies.

However, although limited to cross-sectional data, we believe that we have been able to demonstrate that the style and content of coping do make a difference to the emotional well-being of people. Furthermore, the greater the scope and variety of the individual's coping repertoire, the more protection coping affords. But the complete story of coping efficacy must include not only an account of what people do, but where they do it as well, for the same kinds of coping mechanisms are not equally effective in different role areas. With relatively impersonal strains, such as those stemming from economic or occupational experiences, the most effective forms of coping involve the manipulation of goals and values in a way which psychologically increases the distance of the individual from the problem. On the other hand, problems arising from the relatively close interpersonal relations of parental and marital roles are best handled by coping mechanisms in which the individual remains committed to and engaged with the relevant others.

Not only may the same individual have unequal coping success in different role areas, but different individuals have unequal success when dealing with the same life-problems. These differences make it imperative to know which groups and collectivities are most likely to utilize the more efficacious techniques and which less. We find in this regard that social structural conditions not only discriminate

in placing more strain on some groups of people than on others, but they seem as well to cause the very segments of society that are under the greatest strain to have less effective coping repertoires. The striking fact that groups most exposed to hardship are also least equipped to deal with it gives some urgency to understanding better the processes by which people are led toward or away from various coping responses and resources.

On the basis of the evidence brought together here we can assert that what people do or fail to do in dealing with their problems can make a difference to their well-being. At the same time, there are important human problems, such as those that we have seen in occupation, that are not responsive to individual coping responses. Coping with these may require interventions by collectivities rather than by individuals. Many of the problems stemming from arrangements deeply rooted in social and economic organization may exert a powerful effect on personal life but be impervious to personal efforts to change them. This perhaps is the reason that much of our coping functions only to help us endure that which we cannot avoid. Such coping at best provides but a thin cushion to absorb the impact of imperfect social organization. Coping failures, therefore, do not necessarily reflect the shortcomings of individuals; in a real sense they may represent the failure of social systems in which the individuals are enmeshed.

NOTE

1. A completely documented copy of the factors can be obtained by writing to the authors.

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APPENDIX 1

A PARTIAL LISTING OF FACTOR ITEMS MEASURING ROLE STRAINS IN MARRIAGE, PARENTING, HOUSEHOLD ECONOMICS AND OCCUPATION (Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation; Item Loadings Shown in Brackets)

I. MARITAL STRAIN ITEMS

A. *Non-acceptance by spouse.* How strongly do you agree or disagree that: (1) I cannot completely be myself around my spouse [−76]; (2) My marriage doesn't give me enough opportunity to become the sort of person I'd like to be [−.72]; My spouse appreciates me just as I am [.67].

B. *Non-reciprocity in give and take.* How strongly do you agree or disagree that: (1) Generally I give in more to my spouse's wishes than (he/she) gives in to mine [.79]; (2) My spouse insists on having (his/her) own way [.78]; (3) My spouse usually expects more from me than (he/she) is willing to give back [.72].

C. *Frustration of role expectations.* How strongly do you agree or disagree that: (1) My spouse is someone who is a good (wage earner/housekeeper) [.74]; (2) My spouse is someone who spends money wisely [.68]; (3) My spouse is someone who is a good sexual partner [.62].

II. PARENTAL STRAIN ITEMS WITH CHILDREN AGES 16 TO 21

A. *Deviations from parental standards of behavior.* How often do you have to give attention to the correction of: (1) Your child(ren) failing to get along with others the same age [.82]; (2) Poor school work [.78]; (3) Poor use of time [.75].

B. *Non-conformity to parental aspirations and values.* How often do you wonder if your (child is/children are): (1) Trying hard enough to prepare for the life ahead of them [.75]; (2) Practicing the moral beliefs that are important [.70]; (3) Headed for the success you want for them [.67].

C. *Disregard for parental status.* How often does it happen that: (1) Your advice and guidance are ignored [.73]; (2) You are treated without proper respect [.72]; (3) You are helped with household chores without asking [−.44].

III. HOUSEHOLD ECONOMICS STRAIN ITEMS

A. *Standard of living brinkmanship.* How often does it happen that you do not have enough money to afford: (1) The kind of clothing (you/your family) should have [.82]; (2) The kind of food (you/your family) should have [.75]. (3) How much difficulty do you have in meeting the monthly payments on bills [.74].

IV. OCCUPATIONAL STRAIN ITEMS

A. *Inadequacy of rewards.* How strongly do you agree or disagree that: (1) My work has good fringe benefits such as sick pay and retirement [.69]; (2) I can count on a steady income [.66]; (3) My chances for increased earnings in the next year or so are good [.64].

B. *Noxiousness of work environment.* On the job, how much of the time: (1) Do you work in a lot of dirt or dust [.83]; (2) Are you in danger of illness or injury [.77]; (3) Do you have a lot of noise [.77].

C. *Depersonalization in the work environment.* On the job, how often: (1) Do people treat you in an unfriendly way [.80]; (2) Do people act toward you as if you are a person without real feelings [.76]; (3) Are you treated unfairly by another person [.75].

D. *Role overload.* How much of the time: (1) Do you have more work than you can handle [.70]; (2) Are you under pressure to keep up with new ways of doing things [.69]; (3) Do you work too many hours [.65].

APPENDIX 2

FACTOR ITEMS MEASURING STRESS IN MARRIAGE, PARENTING, HOUSEHOLD ECONOMICS AND OCCUPATION (Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation; Item Loadings Shown in Brackets)

I. MARITAL STRESS ITEMS

When you think of the pleasures and problems of your daily life with your (spouse), how———do you feel? (1) Unhappy [.83]; (2) Bothered or upset [.81]; (3) Frustrated [.80]; (4) Tense [.80]; (5) Worried [.76]; (6) Neglected [.72]; (7) Relaxed [−.70]; (8) Bored [.68]; (9) Contented [−.66].

II. PARENTAL STRESS ITEMS

When you think of your experiences as a parent, how———do you feel? (1) Frustrated [.84]; (2) Tense [.82]; (3) Worried [.77]; (4) Bothered or upset [.76]; (5) Unhappy [.71]; (6) Emotionally worn out [.69]; (7) Unsure of yourself [.69].

III. HOUSEHOLD ECONOMIC STRESS ITEMS

When you think of your financial situation, how ——— do you feel? (1) Worried [.85]; (2) Bothered or upset [.85]; (3) Unhappy [.84]; (4) Tense [.84]; (5) Frustrated [.84]; (6) Insecure [.81]; (7) Relaxed [−.70]; (8) Contented [−.69].

IV. OCCUPATIONAL STRESS ITEMS

When you think of your day-to-day job, how———do you feel? (1) Bothered or upset [.81]; (2) Unhappy [.77]; (3) Worried [.76]; (4) Frustrated [.75]; (5) Tense [.72]; (6) Contented [−.63]; (7) Relaxed [−.65].

APPENDIX 3

FACTOR ITEMS MEASURING PSYCHOLOGICAL COPING RESOURCES (Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation; Item Loadings Shown in Brackets)

I. SELF-DENIGRATION

How strongly do you agree or disagree that : (1) I certainly feel useless at times [.64]; (2) At times I think I am no good at all [.63]; (3) I wish I could have more respect for myself [.59]; (4) All in all, I am inclined to feel that I'm a failure [.45].

II. MASTERY

How strongly do you agree or disagree that: (1) I have little control over the things that happen to me [.76]; (2) There is really no way I can solve some of the problems I have [.71]; (3) There is little I can do to change many of the important things in my life [.70]; (4) I often feel helpless in dealing with the problems of life [.65]; (5) Sometimes I feel that I'm being pushed around in life [.56]; (6) What happens to me in the future mostly depends on me [−.47]; (7) I can do just about anything I really set my mind to do [−.47].

III. SELF-ESTEEM

How strongly do you agree or disagree that: (1) I feel that I have a number of good qualities [.79]; (2) I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others [.79]; (3) I am able to do things as well as most other people [.68]; (4) I take a positive attitude toward myself [.65]; (5) On the whole, I am satisfied with myself [.56]; (6) All in all, I am inclined to feel that I'm a failure [−.46].

APPENDIX 4

A PARTIAL LISTING OF FACTOR ITEMS MEASURING COPING RESPONSES IN MARRIAGE, PARENTING, HOUSEHOLD ECONOMICS AND OCCUPATION (Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation; Item Loadings Shown in Brackets)

I. MARITAL COPING RESPONSE ITEMS

A. *Self-Reliance vs. advice seeking.* In the past year or so have you: (1) Asked the advice of relatives about getting along in marriage [.73]; (2) Asked for the advice of a friend or neighbor . . . [.72]; (3) Gone to a doctor, counselor, or other professional person for marriage advice [.70].

B. *Controlled reflectiveness vs. emotional discharge.* How often do you: (1) Yell or shout to let off steam [.76]; (2) Find yourself thinking over marital problems [−.54]; (3) Have you read any books or magazines recently about getting along in marriage [−.44].

C. *Positive comparisons.* (1) How would you compare your marriage to that of most other people like yourself: better? the same? or less good? [.76]. (2) With time, does your marriage get better? stay the same? or get less good? [.74]. (3) How often do you appreciate your own marriage more after seeing what other marriages are like [.47].

D. *Negotiation.* How often do you: (1) Try to find a fair compromise in marriage problems [.78]; (2) Sit down and talk things out [.68].

E. *Self-assertion vs. passive forebearance.* When you have differences with your spouse, how often do you: (1) Keep out of (his/her) way for a while [.67]; (2) Give in more than half way [.67]; (3) Just keep hurt feelings to yourself [.51].

F. *Selective ignoring.* How often do you: (1) Tell yourself that marital difficulties are not important [.77]; (2) Try to overlook your spouse's faults and pay attention only to good points [.63]; (3) Try to ignore difficulties by looking only at good things [.63].

II. PARENTAL COPING RESPONSE ITEMS WITH CHILDREN AGES 16 TO 21

A. *Selective ignoring.* How often do you: (1) Remind yourself that things could be worse [.66]; (2) Tell yourself that something in your children's behavior is not really important [.56]; (3) Try to notice only the good things [.56].

B. *Non-punitiveness vs. reliance on discipline.* When your children's behavior is troublesome, how often do you: (1) Take away a privilege [.85]; (2) Scold them [.83]; (3) Threaten some kind of punishment [.83].

C. *Self-reliance vs. advice seeking.* In the past year or so, have you: (1) Asked for the advice of friends or neighbors concerning difficulties in your children's behavior [.77]; (2) Asked for the advice of a relative [.77]; (3) Asked for the advice of a doctor, teacher, or other professional person [.58].

D. *Positive comparisons.* As time goes by has being a parent generally become easier, more difficult, or stayed the same [.80]; (2) Would you guess that in the next year or so being a parent will become easier, more difficult, or stay the same [.70]; (3) When you compare yourself with other parents having children about the same ages as yours, would you guess you have fewer problems, about the same, or more problems [.54].

E. *Exercise of potency vs. helpless resignation.* How strongly do you agree or disagree that: (1) The way my children are turning out depends on their inner nature and there is little I can do about it [.77]; (2) There is only so much I can do as a parent and after that I just accept my children as they are [.72]. (3) How often do you decide there's really nothing you can do to change things? [.44].

III. HOUSEHOLD ECONOMIC COPING RESPONSE ITEMS

A. *Devaluation of money.* (1) During a typical week, about how often are money problems on your mind? [.57]. How strongly do you agree or disagree that: (2) My money never seems to be enough for my wants? [.57]; (3) Financial success does not interest me? [−.52].

B. *Selective ignoring.* When you are short of money how often do you: (1) Concentrate on more important things in life [.69]; (2) Notice people around who are worse off than you [.67]; (3) Tell yourself that money isn't worth getting upset about [.64].

C. *Positive comparisons.* Would you say your family income is higher, lower, or about the same as: (1) People with the same education as yours [.74]; (2) Most of your friends [.69]; (3) Most of your relatives [.68].

D. *Optimistic faith.* (1) How do you think your standard of living will compare in a year or two to the one you have now: much better? about the same? or much worse? [.71]. When you are short of money, how often do you (2) Just sit back and wait for things to work out? [.58]; (3) Just accept the money pinch because there's little you can do about it [.48].

IV. OCCUPATIONAL COPING RESPONSE ITEMS

A. *Substitution of rewards.* How strongly do you agree or disagree that: (1) The most important thing about my job is that it provides me the things I need in life [.69]; (2) I can put up with a lot on my job as long as the pay is good [.68]; (3) Time solves most problems on my job [.58].

B. *Positive comparisons.* Would you say that your work life is better, the same, or worse than: (1) It was about a year ago [.80]; (2) It will be a year or so from now [.78]; (3) The jobs of most other people you know [.58].

C. *Optimistic action.* When you have difficulties in your work situation, how often do you: (1) Take some action to get rid of them [.79]; (2) Talk to others to find a solution [.73]; (3) Notice people who have more difficulties than you do [.50].

D. *Selective ignoring.* When you have difficulties in your work situation, how often do you: (1) Tell yourself that they are unimportant [.72]; (2) Try to pay attention only to your duties and overlook them [.52]; (3) Remind yourself that for everything bad there is also something good [.46].