

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

An Exploration of the Stressors and Coping Responses of Year 9 Students
in the Wellington Region of New Zealand

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Masters of Arts
in
Psychology
at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand

Nanette Larkin

2018

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to explore the stressors and coping responses of Year 9 students in the Wellington region of New Zealand. Thirty participants (aged 13-14 years) were recruited from two secondary schools (which were geographically and socioeconomically diverse). Five focus groups were conducted, with 5–7 students in each group, and open-ended questions were used to facilitate discussion. Data was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and it was found that the stressors most relevant to the students were associated with school, peers, family, technology, and school/leisure conflict and extracurricular activities, and that the main coping responses used by the students were problem-solving, support-seeking, distraction, avoidance, and emotion-regulation. Patterns of difference according to gender, school decile and/or culture were found for some stressors and coping responses reported by the students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the two schools that took part in my research. To the principals who agreed to their school's involvement, the school staff who assisted me, and the students who were willing to share their thoughts and experiences.

I am truly grateful to my supervisors, Dr Ruth Tarrant, for her invaluable advice, encouragement, and support throughout my research, and Dr Keith Tuffin, for his guidance and assistance during the latter stages of the research process.

I would also like to thank my family for always being there to help me through the challenges, and my friends for their ongoing support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
List of Tables	viii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Chapter Two: Literature Review	3
Adolescence	3
Definitions in the Present Study.....	3
Adolescent Stressors	4
School-Related Stressors.....	5
Transition to Secondary School	6
Academic Demands	6
Teachers	6
Peer-related stress	7
Family-related stress	8
Technology.....	8
School/Leisure Conflict and Extracurricular Activities	9
Emerging Adult Responsibilities	9
Finances	9
Future concerns.....	10
Multiple and Cumulative Stressors	10
Gender Differences in Adolescent Stressors.....	11
Cultural Differences in Adolescent Stressors.....	12
Effects of SES on Adolescent Stressors.....	14
Adolescent Coping.....	14
Styles of Coping.....	15
Engagement Versus Disengagement Coping	15
Problem-Focused Versus Emotion-Focused Coping	16
Adaptive Versus Maladaptive Coping	16
Main Adolescent Coping Styles.....	18
Problem-Solving	18
Support-Seeking.....	18
Distraction.....	19
Avoidance	19

Emotion-Regulation	20
Gender Differences in Coping	20
Cultural Differences in Coping	21
Effects of SES on Coping	21
Study Rationale	22
The Present Study	22
Aim of study.....	23
Chapter Three: Methodology.....	24
Qualitative Approach	24
Focus groups	24
Focus Groups Versus Individual Interviews	24
Homogenous Groups.....	25
Age and Gender of Participants	26
Number and Size of Groups.....	26
Ethical Considerations	27
Cultural Considerations.....	27
Consent.....	27
Confidentiality Agreement.....	27
Emotional Safety.....	28
Participants.....	28
Procedure	30
Recruitment.....	30
Data Collection	31
Data Analysis	32
Transcriptions.....	32
Thematic Analysis.....	32
Phase 1: Familiarisation with Data	32
Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes	33
Phase 3: Searching for Themes	33
Phase 4: Reviewing Themes	33
Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes.....	34
Phase 6: Producing the Report	34
Reflexivity.....	35
Chapter Four: Findings And Discussion.....	36
Adolescent Stressors	36
Students' Definitions of Stress.....	36

School-Related Stressors.....	37
Transition to Secondary School	37
School Environment and Processes	37
Adjustment to New Peers and Larger Peer Groups.....	39
Academic Demands	40
Differences between Primary/Intermediate School and Secondary School	40
Homework.....	41
Tests and Exams.....	42
School Curriculum	43
Teachers	43
Negative Interactions	44
Multiple Teachers.....	45
Teachers' Expectations	46
Racial Discrimination.....	47
Summary	47
Peer-Related Stressors.....	49
Classmates.....	49
Classmate Stressors Reported by Girls	49
Classmate Stressors Reported by Boys	52
Peer Friendships.....	53
Arguments with Friends.....	53
Mixed-Gender Friendships.....	55
Breaches of Confidentiality.....	56
Bullying.....	56
Students' Experiences of Bullying.....	56
Prevalence of Bullying	57
Disclosure of Bullying at School	58
Peer Pressure	59
Fashions and Body Image	59
Sexual Experiences	61
Substance Use	61
Romantic Relationships	62
Summary	64
Family-Related Stressors	66
Family Structure.....	66
Two-Parent Households.....	66

Single-Parent Households	66
Separated Parents	67
Stepfamilies.....	68
Siblings.....	68
Only-Children	69
Arguments.....	70
Arguments with parents	70
Arguments with siblings	72
Demands and expectations.....	72
Nondisclosure to Parents.....	74
Grandparents	75
Summary	75
Technology.....	77
Facebook.....	77
Mobile Phones.....	79
Summary	80
School/Leisure Conflict and Extracurricular Activities	80
Summary	82
Future concerns.....	82
Future Finances	82
Summary	83
Adolescent Coping.....	83
Problem-Solving	83
Summary	84
Support-seeking	84
Seeking Support from Friends	84
Seeking Support from Family	85
Seeking Support from School Staff.....	86
Summary	86
Distraction.....	88
Summary	89
Avoidance	89
Summary	90
Emotion-Regulation.....	91
Summary	92

Chapter Five: Conclusions	93
Summary of Findings.....	93
Stressors	93
Coping Responses	94
Implications.....	95
Limitations	96
Future Research.....	96
References.....	98
Appendices.....	107
Appendix A: Discussion Group Prompt Sheet	107
Appendix B: Confirmation of Cultural Advice	109
Appendix C: Postgraduate Student Confidentiality Agreement	110
Appendix D: Community Support Services List	111
Appendix E: Invitation Letter to School Principals	112
Appendix F: Principal Consent to Participate in Research	113
Appendix G: Information Sheet for School Principals	114
Appendix H: Proposed Questions for Discussion Group	1117
Appendix I: Information Sheet for Students	118
Appendix J: Information Sheet for Parents and Caregivers	120
Appendix K: Parent/Caregiver Consent for Child to Participate in Research	123
Appendix L: Student Consent Form.....	125
Appendix M: Student Form.....	126
Appendix N: Student Additional Comments Form - Optional	127
Appendix O: Timeline – Discussion Group One.....	128
Appendix P: Discussion Group Ground Rules.....	130
Appendix Q: Summary of Students’ Written Additional Comments	131

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Summary of Schools and Participants	28
Table 2: Participants' Details	29
Table 3: Summary of School-Related Stressors	48
Table 4: Summary of Peer-Related Stressors	66
Table 5: Summary of Family-Related Stressors	76
Table 6: Summary of Problem-Solving Responses	84
Table 7: Summary of Support Sought from Friends	87
Table 8: Summary of Support Sought from Family	87
Table 9: Summary of Distraction Responses	89
Table 10: Summary of Avoidant Responses	91
Table 11: Summary of Emotion-Regulation Responses	92

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Stress is experienced by individuals throughout their lives, and the number of stressors increases linearly with age (Kardum, Krapić, & Hudek-Knežević, 2008). Adolescence is a developmental phase that includes stages of biological, cognitive, psychological, and social development, and is a time of rapid change where individuals experience a myriad of new challenges and stressors (Byrne, Davenport, & Mazanov, 2007). Puberty, increased academic expectations, and changes in interpersonal relationships with family and peers are among the potential stressors associated with adolescence (Moksnes, Espnes, & Haugan, 2014; Suldo, Shaunessy, Thalji, Michalowski, & Shaffer, 2009). Adolescents may become overwhelmed when they do not have the skills to cope with additional stressors associated with adolescence, and the number and intensity of simultaneous and uncontrollable events can lead to stress (Byrne et al., 2007; Murray, Byrne, & Rieger, 2011).

Adolescents may be psychologically and physiologically vulnerable to stress, and adolescent stress may be associated with mental health disorders (e.g., depression) and disorders of the endocrine, metabolic and autoimmune systems (De Vriendt et al., 2011; Murray et al., 2011). For example, the brain responds to stressors by activating the release of stress hormones (such as cortisol) (Rew, Principe, & Hannah, 2012), and altered cortisol levels in the brain have been found for adolescent victims of bullying (deLara, 2012). The adolescent brain may be more susceptible than the adult brain to stress-related hormones, because of significant ongoing structural and functional changes that take place during adolescence (Eiland & Romeo, 2013). For instance, it is proposed that the maturation of the prefrontal cortex during adolescence is associated with a critical window of vulnerability for addictive behaviour (Andersen & Teicher, 2009). Also, the interaction of brain restructuring and exposure to social stressors during adolescence may be associated with the increase of mental health disorders during this life stage (Herpertz-Dahlmann, Bühren, & Remschmidt, 2013).

Exposure to challenges and stressors is a normal part of life (Moksnes et al., 2014). However, major life events and ongoing hassles can generate stress (Hickle & Anthony, 2013), and psychological problems experienced during adolescence may continue into adulthood (Waters, Lester, Wenden, & Cross, 2012). Therefore, learning to cope is an integral part of adolescent development (Rutter, 2013), and adolescents need to acquire a wide range of effective coping

responses to deal with the different types of stressors they encounter (Thomsen & Greve, 2013). As adolescent coping practices may persist into adulthood (Balantekin & Roemmich, 2012), it is important to understand the types of stressors experienced by adolescents and the ways that adolescents respond to stressors so they can be helped to deal with stressors effectively. It is expected that the findings of the present study may contribute to the later development of effective interventions to assist adolescents to cope with stress. In particular, early adolescence is a critical stage of physiological and psychosocial development (Byrne et al., 2007), and effective interventions during this life stage are likely to benefit individuals throughout their lifetime.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature on adolescent stress, stressors, and coping. First, adolescence is defined and the stages of adolescence are outlined. The definitions of ‘stress’, ‘stressor’, and ‘coping’ used in the present study are then presented. This is followed by discussion on adolescent stressors, the effects of multiple and cumulative stressors, and differences in adolescent stressors according to gender, culture, and socioeconomic status (SES). Adolescent coping is then discussed, and includes discussion on styles of coping, main types of adolescent coping, and differences according to gender, culture and SES.

Adolescence

‘Adolescence’ is “the period in life when most of a person’s biological, cognitive, psychological, and social characteristics are changing in an interrelated manner from what is considered childlike to what is considered adultlike” (Lerner, Boyd, & Du, 2010, p. 1). The stages of adolescence are: early adolescence (ages 11–14 years), middle adolescence (ages 15–17 years) and late adolescence (ages 18–21 years) (Herpertz-Dahlmann et al., 2013). Contrastingly, ‘teenagers’ refers to individuals aged 13–19 years (Walrond, 2012, November 9), and ‘youth’ refers to individuals aged 15–24 years (United Nations, n.d.). While these categories overlap, and studies on stress, stressors and coping variously refer to adolescents, teenagers and youth, the present study refers to adolescents, rather than teenagers and youth.

Definitions in the Present Study

Stress is defined as cognitive, behavioral, psychological and physiological reactions to environmental situations that are appraised by an individual as threatening or placing demands that exceed his/her ability to cope (Li & Wang, 2016).

A stressor (which causes stress) is defined as “an internal or external event or stimulus that induces stress” (American Psychological Association, 2018).

Coping is defined as “the process of dealing with internal or external demands that are perceived to be threatening or overwhelming” (American Psychological Association, 2018).

Adolescent Stressors

Many studies have explored adolescent stressors. However, the literature often does not report findings for individual age groups within these studies, and the present study will add to the understanding of stressors experienced by adolescents aged 13–14 years.

Studies on adolescent stressors include Suldo et al.'s (2009) research with North American students (aged 13–20 years) who participated in focus groups (71 students) and completed self-report measures (319 students). The seven sources of adolescent stress identified (ordered from most to least stressful) were associated with managing academic requirements, parent-child relations, adolescent transitions/events, peer relations, problems with family, extracurricular activities, and academic struggles. Similarly, in the development of the Adolescent Stress Questionnaire (ASQ), Australian adolescents (aged 13–18 years) participated in focus groups (32 students) and completed self-report measures (1,039 students), and the ten dimensions of adolescent stress identified (ordered from most to least stressful) were associated with home life, school performance, school attendance, romantic relationships, peer pressure, teacher interaction, future uncertainty, school/leisure conflict, financial pressure, and emerging adult responsibility (Byrne et al., 2007). The stressors identified in these studies relate to similar domains (i.e., school, home/family, peers, extracurricular/leisure activities, and transition events/emerging responsibility), except future and financial concerns which were only identified by Byrne et al. (2007). These stressors were subsequently used by the researchers to develop questionnaires.

Other studies have used existing self-report measures to explore types, levels, and/or frequency of adolescent stressors. For instance, a translated version of the ASQ was completed by 1,121 adolescents (aged 12.5 to 17.5 years) from six European cities (i.e., Ghent, Stockholm, Vienna, Pecs, Athens, and Zaragoza), and stressors associated with school, school/leisure conflict, and future uncertainty were rated the highest, and stressors associated with romantic relationships, peer pressure, finances, and emerging adult responsibility were rated lowest (De Vriendt et al., 2011). Also, 152 students (aged 11–15 years) from the USA completed an 8-item measure to identify levels of adolescent stress, and academic stressors were rated the highest source of stress, followed by parents fighting, relationships with parents, and getting along with friends (Hutchinson, Baldwin, & Oh, 2006). The students also completed an open-ended question about other sources of adolescent stress, and sports and peer relationships were reported most frequently. Furthermore, in a study by de Anda et al. (2000), questionnaires were completed by 333 students (aged 15–18 years) from Los Angeles to explore levels of stress and frequency of stressors. The stressors (listed from most to least frequent) were own expectations about career, future life plans, tests, grades, homework, own expectations about school, pressure from

parents/responsibilities, not letting feelings out, pressure from parents/social life, and not having enough time. Importantly, a quarter of the students reported high levels of daily stress, and a third reported high levels of weekly stress.

While similar adolescent stressors were assessed in the above studies, the main sources of stress were not consistent. For instance, school and homelife were the two main sources of stress identified in all studies except those conducted by de Anda et al. (2000) and De Vriendt et al. (2011). Instead, expectations about career and future life plans were the two main stressors identified by de Anda et al. (2000) in their American study, and school performance and school-leisure conflict were the two main stressors identified by De Vriendt et al. (2011) in their European study. Cultural differences, the year of data collection (i.e., publication dates range from 2000 to 2011), and/or age may account for these differences. For instance, the age range of participants varies from four to eight years (i.e., participants were aged 15-18 years in de Anda et al.'s (2000) study, and aged 13–20 years in Suldo et al.'s (2009) study), and sources of stress may differ according to age.

Other researchers (e.g., Flack, Salmivalli, & Idsoe, 2011) have noted that some of the main stressors experienced by adolescents relate to relationships. For instance, interpersonal relationships (e.g., arguments with parents, friends, and romantic partners) have accounted for 46–82 percent of stressful daily events experienced by adolescents (Seiffge-Krenke, Aunola, & Nurmi, 2009), and interpersonal conflict was the main source of stress for Spanish adolescents (aged 15–16 years) (Camara, Bacigalupe, & Padilla, 2014). Importantly, interpersonal stress is a stronger predictor of depression in young people than other forms of stress (e.g., academic problems) (Abaied & Rudolph, 2010). Also, chronic stressors are associated with enduring changes in psychological wellbeing (Bonanno & Diminich, 2013), and the negative psychological effects of relationship stress may be substantial.

In summary, some of the main adolescent stressors relate to school, peers, family, technology, school/leisure conflict and extracurricular activities, emerging adult responsibilities, finances, and future concerns. These stressors and the way they affect adolescents are discussed below.

School-Related Stressors

School is an integral part of adolescents' lives, and academic and social stressors at school are high, ongoing, and uncontrollable (e.g., Byrne et al., 2007; Murray et al., 2011). Also, parents' direct involvement in schools progressively decreases as students advance through school, and some students may experience stress when they are encouraged to become more independent

while being exposed to new challenges and stressors (Hornby & Witte, 2010). School-related stress is often associated with transition to secondary school, academic demands, and teachers.

Transition to Secondary School

Transition to secondary school can pose a considerable challenge (Suldo et al., 2009). Stressors may include adjustment to a new school environment, multiple teachers, new and larger peer groups, and increased academic demands and expectations (Lester, Waters, & Cross, 2013; B. M. Newman, Lohman, Newman, Myers, & Smith, 2000; Suldo et al., 2009). For instance, 31 percent of 1,500 Australian students reported that transition to secondary school was ‘difficult’ or ‘somewhat difficult’, and some of their concerns related to changed classes and teachers throughout the school day (Waters et al., 2012). Nevertheless, the types of stressors and level of stress associated with transition are likely to differ among adolescents. For instance, New Zealand students transition from full primary schools (Years 1–8) or intermediate schools (Years 7–8) to secondary school (Years 9–13) (Ministry of Education, 2017a, 2017b), and students from full primary schools may find it more difficult to adjust to secondary school than students from intermediate schools who have previously experienced transition. For instance, students who have not previously experienced transition may have difficulty adjusting to multiple classrooms and teachers.

Academic Demands

Some adolescents have rated academic demands as the most stressful aspect of school (e.g., Suldo et al., 2009). High academic expectations imposed on adolescents by themselves and others may lead to feelings of inadequacy (Moksnes et al., 2014), and, importantly, academic stress has been identified as a main contributor in the development of anxiety, depression, and academic burnout (Auerbach, Abela, Zhu, & Yao, 2010; Persike & Seiffge-Krenke, 2012). High levels of academic achievement are promoted in many industrialised countries, and academic and career-related stress has become more common among adolescents from industrialised countries because of the competitive employment market (Persike & Seiffge-Krenke, 2012). Consequently, early adolescents may begin to experience more academic pressure when they start secondary school.

Teachers

Some interactions with school staff may be stressful for adolescents. For instance, stress associated with teachers’ high expectations and lack of support from teachers have been reported by some adolescents (De Vriendt et al., 2011; B. M. Newman et al., 2000). Also, adolescence is a developmental period when individuals challenge authority in attempts to establish autonomy, and (as adolescents have limited control at school) some interactions with teachers may be stressful (Byrne et al., 2007; deLara, 2012).

Peer-related stress

Relationships can be volatile, and negative interactions with peers and friends tend to increase during adolescence (Ngai, Cheung, To, Liu, & Song, 2013; Sontag & Graber, 2010). For instance, the prevalence of bullying increases when students transition to new schools, and bullying is associated with low self-esteem, depression, self-harm, and suicide (Coggan, Bennett, Hooper, & Dickinson, 2003; Kljakovic, Hunt, & Jose, 2015). Focus groups (97 students) and individual interviews (51 students) revealed that approximately 33 percent of adolescents (aged 14–18 years) from New York had been bullied or felt unsafe at school (deLara, 2012), and questionnaires revealed that 6 percent of 596 New Zealand secondary school students (aged 12–18 years) were bullied at school at least once a week (Clark et al., 2013). Also, self-reports completed by 2,174 students (aged 10–14) in New Zealand revealed that 35% of students has been bullied in the previous month (Kljakovic et al., 2015).

Peer approval becomes important during adolescence (Norris, Aroian, Warren, & Wirth, 2012), and peer pressure is reported by some adolescents. For instance, some adolescents experience peer pressure to be romantically involved and/or to have romantic partners who are acceptable to peers (B. M. Newman et al., 2000). Also, interviews with 22 students (aged 11–14 years) in midwestern USA revealed that adolescents were pressured to have sex (but also stigmatised if they had sex), and girls were portrayed as a ‘nobody’ or teased if they were not sexually active (Ott & Pfeiffer, 2009). Also, in 2014, it was reported that 6 percent of New Zealand adolescents (aged 14–15 years) smoked regularly (Marsh, Iosua, McGee, & White, 2017). Adolescent smoking may be the catalyst for future abuse of alcohol and illicit drugs (Hayes & Plowfield, 2007; Herpertz-Dahlmann et al., 2013), and surveys completed by 100 college students (aged 18–23 years) in the USA revealed that peer pressure was the main reason why 38 percent of students began smoking (Hayes & Plowfield, 2007).

Additionally, stress associated with wearing acceptable clothing was reported by Spanish adolescents aged 15–16 years (particularly girls) in Camara et al.’s (2014) study, and high percentages of students (aged 15–18 years) from Los Angeles reported concern about ‘the way you look’ (45.9%), ‘your body’ (43.0%), and ‘clothes (39.2%)’ (de Anda et al., 2000). Correspondingly, Murray et al. (2011) argue that concerns about body image tend to be highest during early adolescence. For adolescent girls, attractiveness is associated with peer acceptance, and adolescent girls in westernised cultures may experience body image dissatisfaction if they believe their body does not conform to the slim female body type promoted by teen culture and the media (Friedrich, Mendez, & Mihalas, 2010; Murray et al., 2011). Contrastingly, males in westernised cultures are more likely to strive for a masculine body, and when teased or pressured by male peers, adolescent boys may feel that their masculinity is threatened and adopt a negative

body image (Murray et al., 2011). Nevertheless, adolescents' views of their bodies may differ between cultures, and body image dissatisfaction may be more prevalent in some adolescent populations.

Family-related stress

Home life is a significant source of stress for some adolescents (e.g., Byrne et al., 2007). For instance, relationships with parents may become more conflicted when adolescents strive to have more egalitarian relationships (e.g., input in decision-making), and arguments with parents may be particularly stressful (Seiffge-Krenke et al., 2013). Also, pressure from parents to achieve at school is associated with high levels of adolescent stress (Seiffge-Krenke et al., 2009). However, some family-related stressors are context specific (Seiffge-Krenke et al., 2009). For instance, adolescents with separated parents may experience stress associated with limited access to non-custodial parents, conflict between separated parents, changed financial circumstances, and increased family responsibilities (Beausang, Farrell, & Walsh, 2012; Koerner, Korn, Dennison, & Witthoft, 2011).

Technology

Globally, technology is an important means of communication and entertainment (Vacaru, Shepherd, & Sheridan, 2014), and some adolescents spend a substantial amount of time using technology. For instance, surveys in Australia revealed that 76 percent of participants (aged 9–16 years) went online daily or almost every day, and 65 percent of participants used social networking sites (Poblet, Teodoro, González-Conejero, Varela, & Casanovas, 2017).

Risks associated with adolescent use of technology include cyberbullying, harassment, stalking, sexual predation, and exposure to pornography (Berson & Berson, 2005; Poblet et al., 2017). For instance, questionnaires completed by 1,530 New Zealand students (aged 11–18 years) revealed that text-message bullying was experienced once by 43 percent of students, and three or more times by 23 percent of students in the previous 5–6 months (Raskauskas, 2010). Also, longitudinal research with New Zealand secondary school students found that text-message bullying was the form of bullying used most often by the students (Kljakovic et al., 2015). Also, questionnaires completed by 606 high school students in the USA revealed that approximately 20 percent of students had forwarded sexts (i.e., sexually explicit images sent by mobile phone) of themselves to others (Strassberg, McKinnon, Sustaíta, & Rullo, 2013). It was also reported that images were sometimes taken and/or sent to other people without the subjects' knowledge, and stress associated with widespread distribution of images has resulted in the suicide of some adolescents in the USA (Strassberg et al., 2013).

School/Leisure Conflict and Extracurricular Activities

Adolescent stress associated with school/leisure conflict has been identified in some studies. For instance, stress associated with limited time for fun and leisure activities outside school hours was reported by Australian students (aged 13–18 years) (Byrne et al., 2007). Also, ‘not having enough time’ was one of the ten most frequent stressors reported by students (aged 15–18 years) from Los Angeles (de Anda et al., 2000).

Some adolescents experience high levels of stress associated with extracurricular activities. For example, sports-related stress was one of the two most frequent stressors reported in an open-ended question by students (aged 11–15 years) from the USA (Hutchinson et al., 2006). Competitive sports are performance-based activities, and may cause stress if individuals feel that they are being evaluated and compared with others (Hutchinson, Bland, & Kleiber, 2008). Peer acceptance is important to adolescents (Sancho & Cline, 2012), and adolescents may find it particularly stressful when they feel they are being judged negatively by their peers.

Emerging Adult Responsibilities

Stress associated with emerging adult responsibility has been identified in some studies. For instance, stress associated with increased family responsibilities, employers’ expectations, and work interfering with school and social activities were reported by students (aged 13–18 years) in Byrne et al.’s (2007) Australian study. Also, ‘pressure from parents about responsibility’ was reported by 50 percent of adolescents (aged 15–18 years) from Los Angeles in de Anda et al.’s (2000) study. Similarly, stress may be experienced by adolescents who have increased responsibilities (e.g., household duties) following parental separation (Beausang et al., 2012). Nevertheless, early adolescents may experience less stress associated with emerging adult responsibilities than older adolescents, because responsibilities are likely to progressively increase with age.

Finances

Some adolescents experience stress associated with financial pressure. For instance, larger families, low SES families, and single-parent households may experience more financial pressure than smaller families, higher SES families, and two-parent households, and concern about their family’s financial problems may be stressful for some adolescents (Benzies & Mychasiuk, 2009; Hickie & Anthony, 2013; Koerner et al., 2011). For instance, approximately 63 percent of 255 adolescents (aged 11–18 years) in the USA whose parents had divorced in the previous two years were worried about being poor and struggling financially (Koerner et al., 2011). Also, some New

Zealand families have insufficient money to buy food (Clark et al., 2013), which may detrimentally affect family relationships and cause adolescents stress.

Future concerns

Future concerns have been associated with high levels of adolescent stress. For instance, concerns about careers and future life plans were the two stressors reported most frequently by adolescents (aged 15–18 years) from Los Angeles (de Anda et al., 2000), and stress associated with future uncertainty was rated the third highest by 1,121 adolescents (aged 12.5–17.5 years) from six European cities (De Vriendt et al., 2011). Nevertheless, findings on future-related adolescent stress are inconsistent. For example, students (aged 13–20 years) in the USA were generally unconcerned about their future (Suldo et al., 2009), which may reflect the inclusion of younger participants in the study. As argued by Seiffge-Krenke et al. (2009), future-related stress tends to increase as adolescents mature and decisions about the future become more urgent. Correspondingly, these stressors may not be as relevant to early adolescents.

Multiple and Cumulative Stressors

Stressors experienced by adolescents are numerous and cumulative (de Anda et al., 2000), and mental health problems increase linearly with the number of stressors experienced by young people (Flouri, Buchanan, Tan, Griggs, & Attar-Schwartz, 2010). Poor psychological outcomes are associated with ongoing daily hassles such as arguments with parents (Suldo et al., 2009), and low self-esteem and mental health problems are associated with ongoing stress related to social interactions and academic expectations (Murray et al., 2011). Compared to isolated stressors, chronic and uncontrollable stressors are associated with more persistent changes in psychological wellbeing (Bonanno & Diminich, 2013). Also, research with adults indicates that ongoing minor hassles (particularly multiple hassles) may adversely affect psychological and physical wellbeing equally or more than major life events (Kardum et al., 2008). Likewise, the damaging effects of cumulative minor hassles to psychological and physical wellbeing will have a negative impact on adolescents.

It is important to gain a holistic view of adolescent stressors because of spillover, where experiences in one domain affect experiences in other domains (Flook & Fuligni, 2008). For example, stress experienced in one relationship may influence the way that experiences in other relationships are perceived (Seiffge-Krenke, 2011). Spillover was explored in a longitudinal study with 503 students from Mexican, Chinese, and European backgrounds who lived in Los Angeles (Flook & Fuligni, 2008). The students completed diary checklists in the 9th and 12th grades of senior high school, and higher levels of family stress experienced in the 9th grade was associated

with more school problems in the 12th grade, and more school problems in the 9th grade was associated with higher levels of family stress in the 12th grade. The pattern of spillover between problems at school and family life was similar for girls and boys and all ethnicities. However, Flook and Fuligni (2008) caution that stressors do not occur in isolation and other factors are likely to have influenced the spillover process (e.g., individual, family, and community characteristics). For example, the students may have experienced problems associated with puberty, desire for more independence, and conflicting expectations of family and peers. Flook and Fuligni (2008) also emphasise that the order of events suggests that one event affected another, but it cannot be inferred that one event caused another.

Gender Differences in Adolescent Stressors

Gender differences in levels of stress and frequencies at which adolescents experience particular stressors have been consistently reported in the literature. For instance, body image dissatisfaction has been reported by adolescent girls at twice the level of adolescent boys (Murray et al., 2011). Also, a questionnaire used to explore gender and age differences in the frequency and intensity of everyday stressors experienced by 2,505 New Zealand adolescents (aged 10–20 years) found that (compared to boys of the same ages) more stressors and higher levels of stress were reported by girls after ages 12 years and 13 years respectively (Jose & Ratcliffe, 2004).

During the development of the ASQ, Byrne et al.'s (2007) study with Australian adolescents (aged 13–18 years) found that girls reported higher levels for all ten stress domains, with significantly higher levels of stress associated with home life, school performance, romantic relationships, peer pressure, future uncertainty, school/leisure conflict, and emerging adult responsibility. Similarly, revised versions of the ASQ were used in De Vriendt et al.'s (2011) research with adolescents (aged 12.5–17.5 years) from six European countries, and girls reported higher levels for all stress domains except teacher interaction and emerging adult responsibility (which were similar), with significantly higher levels for home life, school performance, peer pressure, future uncertainty, and school/leisure conflict.

Additionally, there appears to be gender differences in the types of stressors that cause the most stress for adolescents. For instance, boys tend to report more self-related, achievement-related, external, or non-interpersonal stressors, while girls tend to report more stressors associated with family, friends, peers, and romantic partners (Hankin, Mermelstein, & Roesch, 2007; Moljord, Moksnes, Eriksen, & Espnes, 2011; Murray et al., 2011). Moljord et al. (2011) suggest that girls may experience more interpersonal stress because they have more developed interpersonal relationships than boys. This may be particularly relevant to early adolescents because, as argued by Rew et al. (2012), girls' advanced physical development coincides with more advanced

emotional and psychosocial behaviour. Puberty generally begins earlier for girls than boys, and girls normally reach puberty one to two years before boys (Rew et al., 2012; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2005). In contrast, Seiffge-Krenke et al. (2009) propose that gender differences in levels of peer-related stress may be due to gender differences in types of friendships. Boys (who are generally more reluctant to share personal information) tend to have friendships that are more active and based on companionship, whereas girls' friendships tend to be intimate, emotional, and involve self-disclosure, wherein they experience more conflict and jealousy (Hickle & Anthony, 2013; Huan, See, Ang, & Har, 2008; Seiffge-Krenke et al., 2009).

It has also been proposed that adolescents' perceptions of situations may be influenced by gender role stereotyping and socialisation, where boys may be encouraged to be more independent and girls to have close interpersonal relationships (Jose & Ratcliffe, 2004). Consequently, when girls experience interpersonal problems they may feel that their relationships are compromised, and experience higher levels of stress than boys in similar circumstances (Kardum et al., 2008). Alternatively, anxiety has been associated with individuals' beliefs that they have little or no control (Scott & Weems, 2010), and girls may feel they have less control than boys in similar circumstances.

While some studies have found that adolescent girls experience higher levels of stress, gender differences in adolescent stressors are inconsistent. For instance, longitudinal research conducted in Germany with 200 adolescents (aged 12–16 years) investigated gender differences and found differences in only two domains (i.e., higher levels of peer-related stress was found for girls, and higher levels of stress associated with romantic relationships was found for boys) (Seiffge-Krenke et al., 2009). Also, Persike and Seiffge-Krenke's (2012) study with 10,941 adolescents (aged 11–19 years) from 20 cities (described as Western, Eastern Asian, and Southern world regions) found no gender differences in reported stressors, and the researchers suggest that this may reflect globalisation, more education opportunities for girls, and less gendered social roles.

Cultural Differences in Adolescent Stressors

Experiences that are perceived to be stressful in one culture may be viewed differently in other cultures (Theron et al., 2011). For instance, autonomy is encouraged in individualistic cultures, while interdependency and family commitment are promoted in collectivist cultures, and adolescents from individualistic and collectivistic cultures may experience different levels of stress (Persike & Seiffge-Krenke, 2012). For example, adolescents from westernised cultures tend to experience more stress associated with romantic relationships than adolescents from some other cultures (Seiffge-Krenke, 2011). It is proposed that adolescents from westernised cultures may

feel pressured to initiate romantic relationships themselves, whereas in some other cultures parents help their children find romantic partners (Seiffge-Krenke, 2011).

Nevertheless, links between cultures have been enhanced through globalisation and multiculturalism, and adolescents may need to choose between tradition and more westernised lifestyles (Persike & Seiffge-Krenke, 2012). Also, adolescents may be exposed to different cultural values and practices in different domains of their lives, and conflicting cultural expectations may cause stress (Persike & Seiffge-Krenke, 2012). For instance, acculturation may change immigrants' attitudes toward their ethnic identities (Webber, McKinley, & Hattie, 2013), and adolescents may experience bicultural stress (i.e., stress associated with intercultural conflict) when acculturation differs between themselves and their parents (Sirikantraporn, 2013). For example, adolescents from ethnic minority groups may be expected to conform to westernised norms and values in mainstream schools that differ from norms and values promoted in their homes, and the subsequent struggle with conflicting views may adversely affect relationships between adolescents and their parents.

Furthermore, racial prejudice and stereotyping is experienced by some adolescents (Webber et al., 2013). For instance, self-reports completed by 3,127 New Zealand students in Years 9–13 revealed that 8 percent of students (of unknown ethnicity) had experienced racist comments during the previous six months (Coggan et al., 2003). Also, Harris et al. (2006) report that racial discrimination is experienced more by ethnic minority groups, as evidenced by interviews with 12,500 individuals aged 15 years or older in New Zealand which revealed that those who identified as Māori (the indigenous people of New Zealand), Pacific, or Asian experienced more discrimination than those who identified as New Zealand European/Other. Nevertheless, self-reports completed by New Zealand adolescents (aged 13–14 years) who identified as New Zealand European, Māori, Samoan, or Chinese revealed that adolescents from all ethnic groups reported racial discrimination or negative stereotypes associated with their ethnicity (Webber et al., 2013). For instance, some New Zealand European students reported that New Zealand Europeans were stereotyped as racist or “weaker because they were White”, whereas some Māori students reported that Māori stereotyping was linked to “gangs”, “violence”, “crime”, and underachievement (Webber et al., 2013).

Some cultural differences in the frequency that adolescents experience various stressors have been identified. For example, de Anda et al.'s (2000) study with white, Latino, and African American adolescents (aged 15–18 years) revealed that: overall, stressors were experienced more often by white students than African American students; white students experienced the highest rates and African American students the lowest rates of personal and school-related stressors; and Latino

students experienced higher rates of family stressors than white students. Therefore, although stressors reported by adolescents may be consistent (e.g., Byrne et al., 2007; de Anda et al., 2000; Suldo et al., 2009), the frequency and effect of stressors may differ according to culture.

Effects of SES on Adolescent Stressors

Levels of stress and types of stressors experienced by adolescents may be influenced by SES. For instance, adolescents from low income families may experience more family stress, have more problems at school, and be at greater risk of developing anxiety and depression than adolescents from higher SES families (Hickle & Anthony, 2013; Hopson & Lee, 2011; Seiffge-Krenke, 2011). Lower SES families may have fewer available resources (e.g., less time and money) and may experience stressors that are more difficult and more severe than higher SES families (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997). For instance, neighbourhood disadvantage is associated with poverty, racial discrimination, and violence (Suldo et al., 2009), and adolescents from low SES families may experience frequent exposure to antisocial peers, crime, and violence that is not experienced by higher SES families (Hopson & Lee, 2011; Ngai et al., 2013). Correspondingly, financial constraints may limit the educational opportunities available to adolescents from low SES families, and unsafe neighbourhoods may restrict adolescents' ability to socialise.

Adolescent Coping

The types of stressors, the perceived importance of stressors, and the resources that individuals have (or believe they have) available to deal with stressors determine how individuals cope (Markovic, Rose-Krasnor, & Coplan, 2013; Moksnes et al., 2014). These factors also affect the impact that stressors have on outcomes such as psychological wellbeing, somatic health, and behaviour (Kardum et al., 2008; Moksnes et al., 2014). For instance, the levels of individuals' cognitive, emotional, and physical development constrain available coping resources (Hutchinson et al., 2006).

Nevertheless, adolescents tend to use different coping responses for different stressors, as evidenced in Seiffge-Krenke et al.'s (2009) longitudinal research conducted over four years with 200 students from Germany (aged 12–16 years at initial assessment). Cognitive processes (e.g., considering solutions and willingness to compromise) and support seeking were used more for school- and some peer-related stressors, but rarely for stressors related to self, parents, romantic relationships, or leisure, whereas withdrawal was used more for future- and self-related stressors, and rarely for stressors related to parents, peers, and romantic partners. Contrastingly, Sontag and Graber's (2010) study explored peer-related stress with 295 students (aged 11–13 years) in the

USA, and revealed that disengagement coping was used more than engagement coping in response to peer stress. As responses are determined by available resources (e.g., cognitive and social ability) and environmental limitations (e.g., reliance on adults) (Eschenbeck, Kohlmann, & Lohaus, 2007), the participants' ages may account for different reporting in the two studies.

Styles of Coping

Many different coping frameworks have been used to investigate the ways that individuals respond to stress. For instance, researchers have variously explored engagement versus disengagement coping, problem- versus emotion-focused coping, adaptive versus maladaptive coping, primary- versus secondary-control coping, accommodative versus assimilative coping, proactive coping, and involuntary versus voluntary responses (e.g., Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010; Eschenbeck et al., 2007; Hampel & Petermann, 2006; Sontag & Graber, 2010; Thomsen & Greve, 2013; Valiente, Lemery-Chalfant, & Swanson, 2009). Nevertheless, engagement versus disengagement coping, problem- versus emotion-focused coping, and adaptive versus maladaptive coping essentially incorporate the main coping styles reported in the literature. These are the coping responses explored in the present study, and are discussed below.

Engagement Versus Disengagement Coping

Engagement coping (also known as approach and active coping) is where individuals take direct actions to address stressors (e.g., problem solving, emotion-regulation, and emotion expression) (M. L. Newman, Holden, & Delville, 2011; Valiente et al., 2009). Contrastingly, disengagement coping (also known as avoidance coping) is where individuals purposefully distance themselves from stressful situations or negative emotions generated by stressful situations (e.g., denial, avoidance) (M. L. Newman et al., 2011; Valiente et al., 2009). Engagement coping tends to be used when individuals have high levels of perceived control in stressful situations (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997), whereas disengagement coping tends to be used when individuals perceive they have no control in stressful situations (Doron, Stephan, Boiche, & Le Scanff, 2009).

Research with adolescents has found that engagement coping is associated with better psychological outcomes, while disengagement coping is associated with poor psychological outcomes (Hutchinson et al., 2006). Nevertheless, Sontag and Graber's (2010) study with North American students (aged 11–13 years) found that disengagement coping was not a strong mediator between peer-related stress and measures of anxiety and depression. Perhaps disengagement coping had a less detrimental effect on psychological outcomes for the students in this study, because they were less reliant on peers for support and did not dwell on peer-related stressors to the same extent as older adolescents.

Problem-Focused Versus Emotion-Focused Coping

Problem-focused coping is a form of engagement coping where individuals take direct action to change or eliminate stressors (Alisic, Boeije, Jongmans, & Kleber, 2011). Problem-focused coping includes behavioural strategies (e.g., seeking information and support, negotiation, confrontation) and cognitive strategies (e.g., planning, self-instruction) (Bowker, Bukowski, Hymel, & Sippola, 2000; Frydenberg & Lewis, 2009; Matud, 2004).

Contrastingly, emotion-focused coping refers to direct actions taken to manage emotional responses evoked by stressors without eliminating the actual stressors (Kammeyer-Mueller, Judge, & Scott, 2009). Emotion-focused coping includes distraction, avoidance, emotion expression (e.g., anger and sadness), and receiving emotional support (Hampel & Petermann, 2006; Hickle & Anthony, 2013; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2009).

Adolescents are more likely to use problem-focused coping when they believe they have greater control over stressors (Doron et al., 2009), and emotion-focused coping when they perceive they have limited control over stressors (Hickle & Anthony, 2013).

Adaptive Versus Maladaptive Coping

The effectiveness of coping responses depends on the types of stressors being experienced (Marsac, Donlon, Winston, & Kassam-Adams, 2013), and coping responses may be adaptive (i.e., productive) in some situations and maladaptive (i.e., non-productive) in others (Frydenberg & Lewis, 2009). Also, stressors may become more stressful when adolescents use ineffective coping responses (Bowker et al., 2000), and coping responses should be used flexibly in ways that best match stressful situations (Bonanno & Diminich, 2013). For instance, engagement coping (e.g., problem-focused coping) is appropriate for more enduring controllable stressors, but may be less suitable than disengagement coping (e.g., avoidance) when stressors are temporary and uncontrollable (M. L. Newman et al., 2011). Also, emotion-focused coping can be effective when stressful situations cannot be altered, or when change is inappropriate (Devonport, Lane, & Biscomb, 2013). Correspondingly, the actual control that adolescents have in stressful situations needs to be considered because, for example, adolescents who have high perceived control but do not have the social competence to control stressful interpersonal situations may become aggressive (Scott & Weems, 2010). Nevertheless, disengagement coping (an emotion-focused response) may be detrimental in the long term, because this coping style may carry over to other stressors (M. L. Newman et al., 2011), and maladaptive responses learned during childhood and adolescence may continue into adulthood (Balantekin & Roemmich, 2012). Furthermore, importantly, psychological adjustment is related more to the way that individuals respond to stressors than the stressor itself (Hampel & Petermann, 2006), and ineffective coping is a major

contributing factor in the development of adolescent psychopathology (Persike & Seiffge-Krenke, 2012).

The motivational theory of coping proposes that coping consists of six challenge coping responses (i.e., self-reliance, support seeking, problem-solving, information seeking, accommodation, and negotiation) which are deemed adaptive when stressors are controllable, and six threat coping responses (i.e., delegation, social isolation, helplessness, escape, submission, and opposition) which are deemed maladaptive when stressors are uncontrollable (Zimmer-Gembeck, Lees, & Skinner, 2011). Zimmer-Gembeck et al. (2011) argue that challenge coping responses tend to be used when individuals believe they can competently manage stressors and/or perceive that support is available, while threat coping responses (which are generally associated with anger and fear) tend to be used when individuals believe that their choices, support, or ability is limited.

Similarly, de Anda et al.'s (2000) study with students (aged 15–18 years) from Los Angeles deemed coping responses to be adaptive (i.e., relaxation, distraction, cognitive control, help seeking, and affective release) or maladaptive (i.e., denial, withdrawal, confrontation, aggressive behaviour, and substance use). Although no differentiation was made between controllable and uncontrollable stressors, de Anda et al. (2000) report that all students (including those with high levels of stress) used adaptive coping more frequently than maladaptive coping. However, the number of students who used maladaptive coping responses 'often to very often' was substantial, for example, leave and try to forget (46.5%), daydream (44.1%), argue (42.9%), deny feelings (34.8%), yell (33.6%), sleep excessively (21.6%), and break or destroy things (19.2%). Also, higher mean scores for the frequency that maladaptive coping responses were used was found for students who experienced high stress ($M=2.71$) compared to moderate/low stress ($M=2.66$), and a wider range of maladaptive coping responses were used by students who experienced higher levels of stress.

Although responses deemed adaptive and maladaptive in the above studies differ to some extent, with the exception of support-seeking (which can be problem-focused and/or emotion-focused, discussed later) the adaptive coping responses are problem-focused responses, and the maladaptive responses are emotion-focused responses. However, other studies have defined both problem-focused and emotion-focused responses as adaptive responses. For example, Hampel and Petermann (2006) investigated adolescent responses to interpersonal stressors with Austrian students (aged 10–14 years), and problem-focused coping (i.e., situation control, positive self-instruction, and social support) and emotion-focused coping (i.e., minimisation, and distraction/recreation) were deemed adaptive responses, while passive avoidance, rumination,

resignation, and aggression were deemed maladaptive responses. Correspondingly, researchers' definitions of adaptive and maladaptive responses depend on the constructs being investigated.

Main Adolescent Coping Styles

According to the literature (e.g., Eschenbeck et al., 2007), the main adolescent coping responses are problem-solving, support seeking, distraction, avoidance, and emotion-regulation, and these are discussed below.

Problem-Solving

Problem-solving (which is associated with positive health outcomes for children and adults) refers to planning strategies and engaging in activities that reduce stress and resolve problems (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2009). Taking control of situations, taking direct action, confrontation, and seeking support (discussed below) are forms of problem-solving (Bowker et al., 2000; Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2009). Examples include 'taking matters into your own hands', 'tackling the problem', 'trying extra hard', and 'telling someone off' (Bowker et al., 2000; Vierhaus & Lohaus, 2009).

As adolescents become less reliant on their parents, they tend to engage in more problem-solving and make more of their own decisions (Nicolai, Laney, & Mezulis, 2013). Frydenberg and Lewis (2009) argue that adolescents are more likely to use problem-solving when they believe they have more control over stressors (e.g., academic stressors), but less for interpersonal stressors or when they believe they have limited control. However, Eschenbeck et al. (2007) found that adolescents used problem-solving more for social than academic stressors, and argue that this may be because they placed more importance on maintaining positive relationships with peers.

Support-Seeking

Support-seeking can be emotion-focused and/or problem-focused (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2009). For instance, social support can be sought for emotional assistance (i.e., emotion-focused) and/or to access information about stressors, get help to effectively assess situations, and receive concrete assistance (i.e., problem-focused) (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997).

Adolescents tend to seek support from individuals who are friendly, familiar, mature, and trustworthy (Camara et al., 2014), and friends, parents, siblings, and teachers are common sources of support sought by adolescents (B. M. Newman et al., 2000). In particular, adolescents become more psychologically and emotionally reliant on peers, and depend more on friends for social support (Flack et al., 2011). However, stressors may be misinterpreted when individuals are

supported by others who are similar to themselves (because they may share the same biases) (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997). Also, peers who have limited experience dealing with some stressors may provide inappropriate advice, and stress experienced by the adolescents they support may not change or may increase.

Distraction

Distraction (which includes relaxation, exercise, distracting attention, and entertainment) is deemed a protective factor when individuals experience stress (Nicolotti, El-Sheikh, & Whitson, 2003). For instance, leisure activities may provide temporary relief from stressors, physical activity can release endorphins and relieve sadness, and social interaction can provide distraction from distressing thoughts (Hutchinson et al., 2008; Nicolotti et al., 2003). Adolescents frequently use distraction in response to stressors. For instance, distraction (i.e., reading a book, watching television, listening to music) was the most frequent response to stressors reported by adolescents (aged 15–18 years) from Los Angeles (de Anda et al., 2000).

Avoidance

Avoidance can be behavioural (where individuals physically distance themselves from stressors) or cognitive (where individuals avoid thinking about stressors) (Nicolotti et al., 2003). Although inappropriate for most stress, avoidance may be effective for some temporary stressors, and when stressors are perceived as high and uncontrollable (M. L. Newman et al., 2011; Persike & Seiffge-Krenke, 2012). For instance, avoidance would be adaptive to escape potential harm from physical bullying (i.e., an uncontrollable stressor) (M. L. Newman et al., 2011). However, long-term use of avoidance may prolong stress and result in psychological distress (Persike & Seiffge-Krenke, 2012). For instance, adolescents who withdraw from stressors may become too passive, and be at increased risk of developing depression and low self-esteem (Bowker et al., 2000).

Examples of avoidance are substance use, social withdrawal, and self-harm (Besevegis & Galanaki, 2010; Dimmock, Grieves, & Place, 2008; Hickle & Anthony, 2013). Using substances to avoid stressors may have serious long-term consequences. For instance, the risk for alcoholism is 40 percent higher if individuals begin drinking before age 15, and the risk of continued abuse of tobacco, marijuana, and inhalants is increased if these drugs are used during adolescence (Andersen & Teicher, 2009). Social withdrawal has been linked to parent-related stressors, and is the coping response used most often by adolescents when dealing with problems that relate to themselves (e.g., loneliness) (Besevegis & Galanaki, 2010; Persike & Seiffge-Krenke, 2012). Self-harm (which has been associated with bullying, and family and school problems) generally begins between 11–13 years of age, and (particularly cutting) increases during adolescence (Dimmock et al., 2008; Herpertz-Dahlmann et al., 2013; McAndrew & Warne, 2014).

Disturbingly, 24 percent of 1,315 students aged 15 years and younger, and 23 percent of 696 students aged 15 years and older reported self-harm behaviour in anonymous surveys completed by New Zealand secondary school students (Fleming et al., 2014).

Emotion-Regulation

Emotion-regulation refers to palliative emotion-regulation (e.g., relaxation, talking about feelings, trying to calm down or stay calm), and anger-related emotion-regulation (e.g., aggression) (Eschenbeck et al., 2007; Kliewer et al., 2006). Eschenbeck et al.'s (2007) study revealed that adolescents used emotion-regulation more for social stressors than academic stressors, and Persike and Seiffge-Krenke (2012) found that adolescents used emotion-regulation more during negative interactions with parents than with peers and romantic partners. Also, aggression tends to be used in response to fear and anger, or when adolescents experience overt aggression (Seiffge-Krenke, 2011; Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011), and may become a response to stressors that becomes a habit over time (Rew et al., 2012).

Gender Differences in Coping

Research findings on gender differences in adolescent coping are inconsistent, and it is proposed that this is because of differences in stressors under investigation, the measurements used to assess coping responses, the age range in studies, and participants' ages (Eschenbeck et al., 2007). For instance, it has been argued that boys are more likely to use distraction, avoidance, and humour to cope with stressors (Herpertz-Dahlmann et al., 2013; Moljord et al., 2011; Sontag & Graber, 2010), and that girls (who generally have more intimate friendships) tend to use engagement coping more than boys, and place more importance on preserving relationships and resolving problems with peers (Abaied & Rudolph, 2010; Sontag & Graber, 2010). Contrastingly, Frydenberg and Lewis (2009) argue that adolescent boys tend to view hassles as challenges and use problem-focused coping, while girls tend to consider hassles as threats and use emotion-focused strategies. It is also argued that girls use more emotion-regulation (including aggression), withdrawal, rumination, self-blame, and wishful thinking than boys when they face similar stressful situations (Frydenberg & Lewis, 2009; Persike & Seiffge-Krenke, 2012).

Nevertheless, girls (who generally rely more on friends for emotional support) tend to be more comfortable talking about their feelings and are more proficient at finding social support and resolving difficulties through negotiation (Herpertz-Dahlmann et al., 2013; Persike & Seiffge-Krenke, 2012; Sontag & Graber, 2010). Boys may be reluctant to share their feelings and seek support (particularly from male friends) because they believe they are expected to fix their own problems and do not want to appear vulnerable (Friedrich et al., 2010; Sears, Graham, & Campbell, 2009). Many researchers (e.g., Kardum et al., 2008) argue that girls tend to use a

greater range of coping styles to respond to different stressors. However, it is proposed that gender differences in coping may be narrowing because of changes in gendered social roles and constraints (Matud, 2004).

Cultural Differences in Coping

Coping behaviours may serve different functions and have different meanings in different cultures, and coping behaviours may be adaptive in some cultural contexts and maladaptive in others (Persike & Seiffge-Krenke, 2012). Therefore, behaviour that is deemed culturally appropriate may influence the coping styles used to deal with stressors (Persike & Seiffge-Krenke, 2012). For example, independence, negotiation, and emotional expression are encouraged in individualistic cultures, while collectivistic cultures tend to promote interdependence and harmony within the family (Persike & Seiffge-Krenke, 2012). Accordingly, arguments between parents and their children may be more acceptable in westernised cultures, but, as argued by Seiffge-Krenke (2011), it may be more appropriate for individuals in collectivistic cultures to avoid conflict.

Cultural differences in adolescent coping have been found in some studies. For instance, de Anda et al.'s (2000) study with students (aged 15–18 years) from Los Angeles found that help-seeking was used most often by white students and least often by Latino students. Also, Jose and Schurer's (2010) study with 566 New Zealand students (aged 10–18 years) found that all ethnicities (i.e., New Zealand European, Māori and Asian) reported comparable levels of social support, but Asian students reported lower levels of externalising (e.g., fights and arguments) than Māori and New Zealand European students (who had similar ratings), and Asian and Māori students reported higher levels of rumination and problem solving than New Zealand European students. Nevertheless, cultural differences in coping may be narrowing because of globalisation (Persike & Seiffge-Krenke, 2012), and bicultural individuals may feel more able to negotiate different cultural demands and have the flexibility to draw on coping strategies from both cultures (Sirikantraporn, 2013).

Effects of SES on Coping

Differences in adolescent coping may be affected by SES. For instance, there may be fewer positive role models in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and adolescents may find it harder to find social support (Hopson & Lee, 2011). Also, challenges experienced by lower SES families (e.g., financial pressure) may trickle down and affect adolescent stress and coping (Hickle & Anthony, 2013). For example, stressors experienced by adolescents from financially disadvantaged families have been associated with adolescents' increased vulnerability to health problems, and increased

likelihood that adolescents become involved in undesirable behaviours, such as substance abuse (Hickle & Anthony, 2013). It is likely that financial constraints may limit access to health services for adolescents from financially disadvantaged families, and peers may engage in undesirable behaviours when they have limited access to positive role models.

Study Rationale

The age range in many studies on adolescent stressors and coping is extensive (e.g., Suldo et al., 2009), and studies that simultaneously explore the stressors and/or coping responses of multiple age groups may not accurately represent the experiences of adolescents of different ages. For example, early adolescents (aged 11–14 years) may experience and respond to stressors differently than middle adolescents (aged 15–17 years) and late adolescents (aged 18–21 years). For instance, middle and late adolescents may have experienced stressors that are novel for early adolescents (e.g., stressors associated with romantic partners), and coping responses may differ between these populations.

The Present Study

To eliminate potential age-related differences in stressors and associated responses, one secondary school year group (i.e., Year 9 where students are usually aged 13 years at the start of the school year) has been chosen for the present study. Unlike de Anda et al.'s (2000) research that excluded students in their first or last year of high school (to eliminate stressors associated with transition into and out of school), Year 9 students have been chosen for the present study because Year 9 *is* the transition into secondary school in New Zealand, which is an integral part of the secondary school experience. Also, stressors experienced during the first year of secondary school may influence students' experiences in subsequent secondary school years (Flook & Fuligni, 2008).

Based on previous studies, it is expected that New Zealand adolescents experience similar stressors to adolescents in other countries (e.g., Byrne et al., 2007; de Anda et al., 2000; Suldo et al., 2009). However, it is necessary to investigate the nature of all stressors experienced by New Zealand adolescents because of the constantly evolving nature of society, and the negative psychological effects of cumulative stressors and spillover (see Byrne et al., 2007; de Anda et al., 2000; Flook & Fuligni, 2008). Also, New Zealand is a multicultural society, and cultural values and practices may influence the way that adolescents view and respond to stressors.

Furthermore, ineffective coping is a main factor in the development of adolescent psychopathology (Persike & Seiffge-Krenke, 2012), and the effectiveness of coping responses depends on the nature of stressors (Marsac et al., 2013). Therefore, it is important to determine the ways that adolescents cope with particular stressors so that effective interventions may ultimately be implemented. For instance, the identification of school-related stressors would indicate where school environments could be changed to minimise stressors in ways that support learning and enhance student wellbeing (de Anda et al., 2000), and stress reduction in one setting may benefit adolescents in the other settings (Flook & Fuligni, 2008). Furthermore, future interventions may need to be tailored to specific populations (i.e., according to gender, culture, and/or SES). For instance, adolescents from ethnic minority groups who live in disadvantaged families and communities may experience additional stressors to those experienced by adolescents from majority groups who live in similar SES circumstances.

While designing an intervention is outside the scope of this research, the present study is expected to contribute to the understanding of stressors and coping responses of Year 9 students in New Zealand, and this may ultimately inform the design of interventions that will help adolescents understand and manage stress.

Aim of study

The aim of the present study was to explore the types of stressors experienced by a sample of Year 9 students (aged 13–14 years) in the Wellington region of New Zealand, together with the types of coping strategies that the students used to deal with these stressors.

Research Questions

1. What situations at school cause students aged 13–14 years to feel stressed?
2. What situations at home cause students aged 13–14 years to feel stressed?
3. What interactions with peers cause students aged 13–14 years to feel stressed?
4. What things about the future cause students aged 13–14 years to feel stressed?
5. How do students aged 13–14 years cope with stress at school?
6. How do students aged 13–14 years cope with stress at home?
7. How do students aged 13–14 years cope with peer-related stress?
8. How do students aged 13–14 years cope with future-related stress?

A comprehensive list of the questions posed to the students is presented in the Discussion Group Prompt Sheet (see Appendix A).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Approach

According to Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, young people have the right to express their views on matters that concern them, and qualitative research provides this opportunity (Alisic et al., 2011; Powell & Smith, 2009). Qualitative methods enable in-depth exploration of views and understandings, and generate data that is not accessible using quantitative methods (Tekola, Griffin, & Camfield, 2009; Yilmaz, 2013). For instance, quantitative researchers generally use standardised instruments (e.g., questionnaires) that require participants to choose the most appropriate answers from a selection of options, which limits the information that can be disclosed (Yilmaz, 2013).

Some studies (e.g., Byrne et al., 2007; deLara, 2012) have used qualitative or mixed methods to explore adolescent stressors and/or adolescent coping, but many studies (e.g., de Anda et al., 2000; Hutchinson et al., 2006) have used quantitative methods to investigate these concepts. Notwithstanding the importance of quantitative research, further insight into stressors and coping of New Zealand adolescents may be gained using a qualitative approach.

Focus groups

Focus groups were used in the present study because they are an effective way for adolescents to share their views and experiences (Peek & Fothergill, 2009). Focus groups can generate detailed and rich qualitative information on personal opinions, shared experiences, and group meaning, and provide a context for individuals' experiences in relation to selected topics (Kumar, 2011; Ryan, Gandha, Culbertson, & Carlson, 2013).

Focus Groups Versus Individual Interviews

Focus groups generate a different level of qualitative data from individual interviews, because individual interviews are used for in-depth exploration of topics, while focus groups are used to obtain a diverse range of views in a social context (Brod, Tesler, & Christensen, 2009; Massey, 2011; Peek & Fothergill, 2009). Also, data that is not as easily accessible using individual interviews may be generated in the informal and interactional environment of focus groups (Peek & Fothergill, 2009). For instance, disclosures in a group may remind other participants of previous

experiences that they would like to share (Brod et al., 2009). Nevertheless, the views of some participants may be suppressed by dominant voices in group discussions (Kendal, Keeley, & Callery, 2011).

Although some adolescents prefer to disclose personal information and discuss sensitive or embarrassing experiences during private individual interviews, peer groups are important to adolescents, and focus groups provide a familiar social environment where adolescents may feel willing to share their experiences (Brod et al., 2009; Heary & Hennessy, 2002; Peek & Fothergill, 2009). For instance, most Scottish adolescents (aged 13–14 years) who participated in focus groups and individual interviews preferred group participation because they felt less shy and more supported when they were with peers (Punch, 2002).

Furthermore, adolescents may feel less intimidated by unfamiliar adult researchers in group settings, because the researcher-participant/adult-adolescent power hierarchy is reduced due to the presence of other participants (Bagnoli & Clark, 2010; Peek & Fothergill, 2009). As part of a collective, participants can be empowered and feel supported because they can discuss experiences from a shared social position and develop a connection with others who have similar experiences (Bagnoli & Clark, 2010; Peek & Fothergill, 2009). Also, (compared to individual interviews) focus groups may provide a more relaxed environment where participants do not feel pressured to respond to researchers' questions that are outside their experience (Heary & Hennessy, 2002).

Homogenous Groups

It is important that participants feel comfortable and confident in focus groups, and adolescents may feel socially linked and more comfortable disclosing personal information and sharing experiences in homogenous groups (i.e., when participants are matched to characteristics such as age, gender, or ethnicity, or share similar experiences) or when they know the other people in the group (Brod et al., 2009; Heary & Hennessy, 2002; Peek & Fothergill, 2009). Correspondingly, focus groups may be more successful when participants are friends or acquaintances and/or share similar characteristics (Bagnoli & Clark, 2010). For instance, disclosures may be more accurate in friendship groups because of shared knowledge or experiences (Heary & Hennessy, 2002). However, peer pressure and concern about repercussions associated with disclosures may be less in adolescent groups when participants are strangers, and homogenous groups may restrict the exploration of diverse perspectives (Brod et al., 2009; Heary & Hennessy, 2002; Peek & Fothergill, 2009).

For the present study, the students in each group were from the same school and generally knew each other well. They shared classes and many of them had been friends since primary school.

Age and Gender of Participants

People of different ages generally have different styles, sensitivities, and social and cognitive abilities, and it is recommended that the age range of young people in focus groups should be restricted to a 1–2 year age difference, so that appropriate research questions can be composed and the group sessions can be conducted sensitively (Gibson, 2007; Heary & Hennessy, 2002). Also, mixed-gender groups are deemed appropriate for children aged 10 years and younger, but gender is considered to be significant for groups of older children (Peek & Fothergill, 2009). It is recommended that adolescent focus groups consist of either boys or girls, because interest in the opposite sex and conflicting attitudes and interests of adolescent boys and girls can be detrimental to productive focus group discussions (Heary & Hennessy, 2002). Furthermore, adolescents may feel less embarrassed in same-gender groups when certain topics are discussed (Horowitz et al., 2003).

For the present study, all students were aged 13–14 years, and each group was of the same gender.

Number and Size of Groups

Generally, three to five focus groups are sufficient to gather data on a topic of interest, because more groups usually do not generate any new insights (Peek & Fothergill, 2009). However, the number of focus groups needs to reflect the aims of the research, and more groups may be necessary if homogenous groups are used (Peek & Fothergill, 2009).

It is recommended that focus groups with adolescents have 4–6 participants, because (instead of lively group interaction) groups with less participants may result in discussions that resemble individual interviews, and groups with more participants can be harder for researchers to control (Heary & Hennessy, 2002; Peek & Fothergill, 2009). Also, (compared to larger groups) adolescents in smaller groups may have more opportunities to contribute to discussions, may feel more relaxed and supported, less embarrassed, and place less importance on making socially desirable responses (Peek & Fothergill, 2009).

The present study involved conducting five focus groups, with 5–7 students in each group.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this research was granted by Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 14/39, 23 July 2014.

The focus group discussions took place in a staffroom (at School A) and a classroom (at School B). They were both safe environments where participants were encouraged to participate and their contributions were respected.

Cultural Considerations

The cultural advisor for the present study (see Appendix B) suggested that Māori students may feel more comfortable and willing to share their thoughts and experiences in a discussion group when the other students were also Māori. Therefore, to provide an appropriate environment for Māori students (and to ensure that Māori students had the opportunity to be represented in the study) one group consisted exclusively of Māori students. The participants in the other groups were of mixed ethnicities.

Ethnicity data was collected so that the cultural advisor could be referred to if any issues arose concerning the understanding of cultural beliefs, norms and behaviours. Also, any patterns of difference across participants' responses could be identified, so that ethnic differences may be followed up in future research.

Consent

The principal of each participating school provided written consent on behalf of his or her school. Written consent was also obtained from the parents/caregivers of participating students (because the students were younger than 16 years of age), and from the participating students themselves.

Confidentiality Agreement

A postgraduate student in psychology was present throughout all group discussions to assist with the emotional safety of the participants (see below). She signed a confidentiality agreement that stated she would not disclose, retain or copy any information involving the study (see Appendix C).

Emotional Safety

It was important to have emotional support available for students during each group discussion if required. The assisting postgraduate student was seated in the room where she could clearly see (but not distract) the students, and if a student became distressed, he or she was to be taken to another location and supported without delay. The impact on other students in the group would be minimised, and the discussion would continue with the remaining students.

At School A, the school counsellor was available in a nearby classroom throughout the group discussions and requested that students be taken directly to her if they became distressed. At School B, any distressed students were to be initially supported by the assisting postgraduate student, and the Assistant Principal would later determine whether follow-up support with the school counsellor was required. No students became upset during any of the group discussions.

A list of support services in the community (see Appendix D) was given to each student at the end of each group discussion, in case he or she wanted to talk with a trained counsellor or support person outside the school environment.

Participants

The participants were 30 Year 9 students from two schools in the Wellington region of New Zealand. The students (12 boys and 18 girls) were all aged 13–14 years, and a total of five focus groups were conducted. Two groups of girls and two groups of boys were of diverse ethnicities, and one group of girls identified as Māori. Participants chose their own pseudonyms. A summary of the schools and participants is shown in Table 1. Details of the participants are shown in Table 2.

Table 1

Summary of Schools and Participants

School ID	Decile	Groups	Students	Boys	Girls	Age 13	Age 14
A	7	2	13	6	7	6	7
B	3	3	17	6	11	12	5
		Total	5	30	12	18	12

Table 2

Participants' Details

<u>Group</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Age</u>		<u>Ethnicity</u>
			<u>Yrs</u>	<u>Mths</u>	
1	Boys	Nick	14	2	NZ European
		Matt	14	0	NZ European
		Cheng Lee	14	0	Dutch
		Hunter	13	11	NZ European, Māori, Samoan, Dutch
		Sheniqwa-Lee	13	6	NZ European
		W.B.	13	4	NZ European
2	Girls	Botswana	14	3	NZ European
		Kakabera	14	3	NZ European, Scottish
		Sarah	14	1	Māori
		Safushia Strawberry	14	1	NZ European
		Danni	13	8	NZ European
		Sora	13	6	Māori
		Fulishia Frangipani	13	3	NZ European
3	Girls	Violet	14	1	NZ European
		Clair	14	0	NZ European
		Rose	13	10	Chinese
		Cleo	13	7	Samoan
		Scarlet	13	6	NZ European
		Niomi	13	5	NZ European
4	Boys	Trevor P.	14	2	Filipino
		Steven	14	1	NZ European
		Colonel Sanders	13	10	NZ European, Samoan
		Jonah	13	6	Tongan
		Jarryd H.	13	6	Tongan
		C. Ronaldo	13	4	NZ European. Māori, Spanish
5	Girls	Patricia	14	1	Māori, Cook Island Māori
		Elmonster	13	6	Māori
		Bubbles	13	4	Māori
		Cookie Monster	13	3	NZ European, Māori, Samoan
		Sprinkles	13	3	Māori

Procedure

Recruitment

The make-up of the community needs to be considered when recruiting participants for research (Brod et al., 2009). For instance, a representative community sample could enable exploration of similarities and differences according to SES (Brod et al., 2009). Accordingly, possible response differences of students from differing SES communities in New Zealand could be explored when schools involved in research come from a variety of school deciles. A school's decile rating (which range from decile 1–10) is based on the percentage of students who are from low SES communities (Ministry of Education, 2017c). For instance, the 10 percent of schools with the highest percentage of students from low SES communities are rated decile 1, and the 10 percent of schools with the lowest percentage of students from low SES communities are rated decile 10 (Ministry of Education, 2017c). However, decile ratings are only an indication of the SES of students' families, and schools may have students from families of differing SES (Ministry of Education, 2017c).

The principals of 11 secondary schools in the Wellington region (ranging from decile 2-10) were sent an invitation letter, and information sheets and supporting documentation for school principals, students, and parents/caregivers (see Appendices D–N). Two principals agreed to their school's involvement in the study and returned the signed consent form (see Appendix F). The two participating schools were rated decile 7 (School A) and decile 3 (School B), but the researcher had no knowledge of the SES of the particular families of the students in the study.

Due to time constraints and ease of management, both participating schools requested that they select the students for the study. School A selected a classroom of Year 9 students and asked for volunteers. Fourteen students volunteered. School B selected 18 Year 9 students (including 6 girls who identified as Māori for the focus group that consisted exclusively of Māori students) and asked them directly whether they would like to be involved in the study.

Interested students were given an information sheet about the study together with information and supporting documentation for their parents/caregivers (see Appendices D, I-N) so that students and parents/caregivers had the required information about the study. On the advice of the cultural advisor, the researcher offered to hold an information meeting for parents/caregivers at the schools. However, both schools requested that the meeting not be held due to time constraints, and the students were asked by the schools to inform their parents/caregivers accordingly. Parents/caregivers were invited to contact the researcher or her supervisor if they had questions about their child's involvement in study. Written parent/caregiver consent (see Appendix K) was

provided for all 14 students who volunteered at School A, and for 17 of the 18 students who were approached by School B. However, one student at School A was unavailable on the day of the focus groups.

The researcher telephoned the nominated contact person at each participating school to arrange the venue, date, and times to conduct the focus groups, and this information was subsequently passed on to the participating students by the schools. The telephone calls helped establish rapport and provided the opportunity to discuss any aspects of the study that needed clarification. Follow-up emails between the researcher and the school contacts ensured that arrangements were documented.

Data Collection

Five focus groups were held during September 2014, and all groups were moderated by the researcher. Each focus group (which lasted between 50–55 minutes) was held in a quiet room within the school at a time that was convenient for the school. To manage time effectively, the researcher followed the discussion group timeline (see Appendix O for example).

Before each focus group began, the researcher introduced herself and the assisting postgraduate student, and thanked the students for their participation. The students were offered snacks and a drink to consume during the session, because a friendly welcoming environment may be created when food is provided for discussion groups (Horowitz et al., 2003). The students were given another copy of the *Information Sheet for Students* (see Appendix I) to remind them about the purpose of the study, and the researcher read out the *Discussion Group Ground Rules* (see Appendix P), which outlined what was required of the students in the group, why the discussion was being recorded (discussed further below), who would receive a summary report about the study, and emphasised the importance of maintaining confidentiality about what was discussed in the group. The researcher then answered any questions that the students had about the study. All students signed the *Student Consent Form* (see Appendix L), completed the *Student Form* (see Appendix M), chose a pseudonym (to ensure student anonymity throughout the study), and wrote the pseudonym on a name tag.

The focus groups were semi-structured and guided by prompts (see Appendix A) that were informed by previous research on adolescent stressors and coping. The prompts ensured that the researcher's questions were consistent in each group and enabled the researcher to compare group responses. Each group discussion was recorded by a digital camcorder and two digital voice recorders. The camcorder was positioned where it was least conspicuous and at a distance where the images of all participants were recordable. The voice recorders were placed in different

locations on the participants' table to attempt capture of the entire conversation. The multiple recordings also provided a backup in case of equipment failure. The students were advised that the group discussion would be transcribed by the researcher and that the voice and image recordings (which would be downloaded and stored on the researcher's password-protected computer and destroyed on completion of the study) would be used to ensure that the comments were matched with the correct student.

At the end of the group discussion, the students were given the *Student Additional Comments Form – Optional* (see Appendix N) and asked if they would like to write down anything that they did not want to talk about in the group. Alternatively, they could write down the things that caused them the most stress. Twenty-five of the 30 students wrote comments on the form (see Appendix Q for summary of comments). The students were then thanked for taking part in the study, given a \$20 Warehouse voucher in appreciation for their time and contribution to the study, and given the *Community Support Services List* (see Appendix D) in case they became distressed about something that was discussed in the group and wanted to talk to a trained counsellor or support person outside the school environment.

Data Analysis

Transcriptions

The researcher transcribed verbatim the audio recording of each focus group discussion and then compared the transcript with the image recording to ensure that the comments were matched to the correct students. The transcripts were typed into Microsoft Word tables, and progressively modified as outlined below.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a flexible analytic method that can be used for “identifying themes and patterns of meaning across a dataset in relation to a research question” (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 175). The finalised themes in the present study were derived from the semantic meaning of participants' accounts (i.e., data-driven), and were generated using the following six phases of thematic analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006):

Phase 1: Familiarisation with Data

Analysts must be extremely familiar with the data when coding in thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The researcher transcribed the audio recordings and checked the transcripts against

the audio and image recordings multiple times to ensure accurate transcription, and she became very familiar with the data.

Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes

Each potentially relevant extract in the dataset needs to be given an initial code that is concise, distinct, and can ‘stand alone’ if separated from the dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013). Consistent with Braun and Clarke’s (2006) method of data-driven analysis, the researcher systematically worked through the entire dataset and devised codes that reflected the semantic meaning of each potentially relevant extract. Irrelevant extracts were not coded, but potentially relevant extracts were coded once or multiple times according to how many aspects of the research aims they represented. Initially, 237 codes were generated, and were added to the Microsoft Word tables in a column adjacent to the associated extracts. The data was then ‘sorted’ to arrange the codes alphabetically for review and refinement.

Related concepts are easier to identify when codes accurately reflect the data (Massey, 2011), and (as analysts achieve a better understanding of the structure of the data through the coding process) codes need to be modified, merged, divided, or deleted to better reflect the meaning of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Kendal et al., 2011). Accordingly, the researcher revised the initial codes where necessary. For instance, some codes were refined because they were too broad, while others were broadened to incorporate similar concepts and renamed to better represent the meaning of the data.

Phase 3: Searching for Themes

A theme, which “has a central organising concept, but will contain lots of different ideas or aspects related to the central organising concept”, needs to reflect something meaningful in the data that addresses the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 224). Consequently, coded extracts (i.e., initial codes and associated extracts identified in phase 2) need to be assigned to potential themes and subthemes, and compiled accordingly (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, the researcher added two further columns to the Microsoft Word tables, and assigned potential themes and subthemes to the coded extracts. The tables were then ‘sorted’ according to ‘theme’ and ‘subtheme’ in preparation for further review and refinement in phase 4. Fourteen themes and 76 subthemes were generated in this phase.

Phase 4: Reviewing Themes

This phase involves two steps and addresses the refinement of potential themes identified in phase 3 (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The first step involves the combination or separation of potential themes (where relevant) to ensure that themes are meaningful and distinct (Braun & Clarke,

2006). Accordingly, extracts of data need to be checked to ensure that the data and themes are well-matched (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes need to capture the meaning in the data, and if extracts of data do not fit existing themes, themes need to be modified or new themes created (Braun & Clarke, 2006). On reviewing the fit of data extracts with proposed themes, the researcher ascertained that some data extracts were better aligned to alternative themes and were modified accordingly. This reduced the number of themes from 14 (identified in phase 3) to 11.

The second step of this phase involves consideration of themes and subthemes in relation to the entire dataset, and the development of a thematic map that accurately represents the meanings observed in the entire dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This involved reviewing all the themes and subthemes to ensure that they accurately reflected the data, and to ascertain if further coding was required. On checking the fit of the data extracts to the proposed themes and subthemes, the researcher merged a number of subthemes because she felt they were more closely connected than she had first envisaged. This reduced the number of subthemes from 76 (identified in phase 3) to 19.

Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes

This phase involves undertaking a detailed analysis of each theme and its connection to the research questions, and ensuring that the core meaning of each theme is determined and clearly defined (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes need to be considered on an individual level and in relation to the other themes, and subthemes may be identified to establish structure and display hierarchy of meaning within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Ultimately, when no further modification to themes and subthemes is required, names for themes and subthemes are developed for the final analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), the researcher analysed each theme and subtheme for core meaning, checked that they were independent of the other themes and subthemes, confirmed that each theme and subtheme was relevant to the research question, and then created names for use in the final analysis.

Phase 6: Producing the Report

This phase involves final analysis and writing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To ensure that the report accurately reflected the content of the data, the researcher chose extracts that best capture the meaning of the data. For instance, as well as isolated statements, some extracts represent conversations, to better reflect the consensus (or otherwise) of the students' statements.

Reflexivity

I am a middle-aged woman of New Zealand European descent and was a stranger to all the students in the present study. I am aware that these characteristics may have influenced the students' responses, because, for instance, the students may have been reluctant to discuss certain topics, or may have made socially desirable comments because of my stranger-status, age and/or ethnicity.

However, positive comments about the group discussions were made by students from three of the focus groups. For example, one boy at School A and one girl at School B commented that it was "fun", and one girl at School A said "even though it's kind of weird that we ... talk about all of our problems and stuff to probably like you're our stranger, but like it was good". Nevertheless, discussions often waned in the boys' group at School B, and I felt the boys were unwilling to disclose personal information. This may have been due to power dynamics within the group, because the image recording showed that two boys in the group often glanced uncertainly at, and appeared to be intimidated by, another boy in the group. Also, this was the only group that hid their written comments on the *Student Additional Comments Form – Optional* (see Appendix N) from the other students in the group. However, the seating arrangement at School B was not ideal, and this may have contributed to the boys' lack of disclosure. Unlike the circular table used at School A (where we all sat), the table at School B was arc-shaped and (to capture the images of all the students by the digital camcorder) the table where I sat needed to be placed to the side of the students' table. This distanced me from some of the students, and resulted in a less intimate atmosphere than that created at School A.

Also, some opportunities for relevant discussion may have been missed. Group discussions are affected by the composition of participants, and, for instance, apart from the group that consisted exclusively of Māori girls (where no student dominated and all students appeared to contribute freely), students who were older and/or of New Zealand European ethnicity tended to be the more dominant speakers in the groups. Also, when transcribing the voice recordings, I heard faint discussions about relevant topics that I was not aware of at the time. Additionally, there was limited time for the group discussions, and four of the groups appeared disappointed when the group discussions ended, and they may have had more to contribute.

Furthermore, the research questions used in the present study were based on the literature and findings in previous studies, and additional research questions may have generated further data that addressed the research topic.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter comprises two sections (i.e., ‘Stressors’ and ‘Coping’). The ‘Stressors’ section begins with the students’ descriptions of stress. Then, stressors that were relevant to the students are presented and discussed in themes (in the same order that they were presented in the literature review). To easily compare stressors and corresponding coping responses, the students’ responses to specific stressors are also presented and discussed in the ‘Stressors’ section, then summarised and discussed further in the ‘Coping’ section.

The ‘Coping’ section presents and discusses the students’ coping responses in themes that mirror the order that adolescent coping styles are presented in the literature review. The students’ coping responses to specific stressors discussed in the ‘Stressors’ section are summarised, and then discussed in conjunction with coping responses that were not associated with specific stressors.

The number of students who discussed specific stressors and coping responses is included, because this may indicate what caused the students the most stress, what stressors and coping responses were relevant to the students, and what they were willing to discuss. Also, differences according to gender, school decile, and culture may be identified (taking into account the higher number of girls and students at School B in the study). Nonetheless, this may not accurately represent the number of students who experienced specific stressors or used specific coping responses, because some stressors and coping responses were not discussed in every group or by all students in each group. However, the *Student Additional Comments Form – Optional* (see Appendix N) provided an opportunity for students to disclose stressors that they did not want to discuss in the groups.

Adolescent Stressors

Students’ Definitions of Stress

When the students were asked what they thought stress was, their responses included “a build-up of emotions”, when people “express their feelings”, getting “worked up about something”, and when “something ticks you off”. The majority of students referred to psychological effects of stress (i.e., “panic”, “frustration”, “anger”, feeling “irritated”, “worried”, “sad” “uptight”, “pressured”, “confused when something bad has happened”, and when things “annoy you”). Four students referred to physiological effects of stress (i.e., feeling “tired”, “getting overheated”,

- C. Ronaldo: It's easy cos at the start of the year it's just Year 9s, and that's what helps you. Like you get to know the school.
- Steven: I thought that was actually really good aye.
- Jonah: Yeah, it helps you meet other people.

As advised by the schools, only Year 9 students were present for their first two days at School A, and only Year 9 students were present for their first three days at School B.

The students' reports that adjustment was "actually quite easy" is inconsistent with Waters et al.'s (2012) findings that transition to secondary school was 'difficult' or 'somewhat difficult' for 31 percent of students in their Australian study. However, the number of students in the present study was small, and other students at the schools may have experienced more difficulty adjusting to the new school environment and processes. For instance, some of the students in the present study had transitioned from intermediate rather than primary school and had already experienced a school transition. Also, there was approximately eight months between the students starting secondary school and the group discussions, and school processes and routines that worried the students when they began secondary school may have diminished with time. Many concerns that adolescents have when they first begin secondary school tend to lessen by the end of the first school term (Zeedyk et al., 2003), and the students' responses may have been subject to recall bias. Furthermore, the students in the present study either volunteered or were selected by their school (because the school's representative thought they would contribute freely to the group discussions), and the students may have been more confident and adjusted more easily than some of the other students at the schools. Alternatively, school transition was one of the first topics discussed with most of the groups, and the students may have felt less comfortable sharing their experiences early in the discussions.

Nevertheless, Jonah, Trevor P., and Cookie Monster expressed disappointment that there were "no playgrounds" at secondary school. The boys did not elaborate on whether this was a stressor, but Cookie Monster's comment (below) confirms that this caused her to feel stressed.

- Researcher: So does anything stress you out? Things that you can't do, like you might be too young to do something or ...
- Cookie Monster: Too old. To play on the playground.

The researcher expected that students may have discussed stress associated with being too young to participate in certain activities, and Cookie Monster's response was unanticipated. Perhaps Cookie Monster did not want to forego the physical activities that she enjoyed at her previous

school, and would have preferred to be more active during her free time at secondary school. Also, having no playground may indicate to students that they are no longer children and need to assume more mature behaviour. Cookie Monster was one of the youngest students (aged 13 years, 3 months) at the time of data collection, and may not have been ready for this life stage. This would be aligned with Cleo's comment "I'm a kid so I like to, you know, just play" and Violet's comment "Have fun while you can ... we're still growing up". Nevertheless, one boy wrote on the *Student Additional Comments Form – Optional* (see Appendix Q for list of comments) that "not being able to do things because I'm too young" caused him stress, and this suggests that he may have been ready to assume more mature roles.

Adjustment to New Peers and Larger Peer Groups

Cheng Lee at School A, and four boys and five girls at School B talked about the need to make friends when they began secondary school. Clair who said "I'm not like a popular person" was proactive and re-kindled a friendship before secondary school began so that she had "at least a couple of friends to talk to". Other students made friends in various ways. For example:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Cheng Lee: | For me it was personally like let's just stick with my class. Like be friends with them instead of trying to expand them all. |
| Cleo: | It was really difficult, but my sister, she knew most people so she just introduced me to them. |
| Scarlet: | You just become closer with people that you've already met ... and then you kind of get different friends. |

Cheng Lee's comment implies that he took responsibility to make friends. Contrastingly, Cleo and Scarlet's reports suggest that other people helped them to make friends, which is consistent with Ngai et al.'s (2013) argument that adolescents are helped by their friends to make friends outside their peer network.

Some students moved to secondary school with a lot of students that they knew from their previous school. Others did not know many students because they were from small schools or their friends moved to different secondary schools. Clair and Cleo (who only knew a few people) reported that it was "difficult" to make new friends. Nevertheless, with the exception of Clair who disclosed that "eventually, like after the first term ... I got more friends", the students reported that it was easy or did not take long to make friends. The boys at School B acknowledged that it was easier when they knew one or two people when they started secondary school. As argued by

B. M. Newman et al. (2000), support from peers can reduce the effects of stress, and students who are socially accepted and supported by peers experience a smoother transition than students who feel alienated.

Nevertheless, girls rely more on friends for social support at school, and may experience more stress than boys when their friendship networks are disrupted during transition to secondary school (Lester et al., 2013). Correspondingly, the girls who discussed the need to make friends at secondary school may have placed more importance than the boys on the need to establish friendship networks, and subsequently experienced more stress associated with making friends.

Also, aside from peer friendships, the students' overall experiences at their previous school may have affected their adjustment to secondary school. For example, Cleo disclosed that "intermediate ... was like a family school where everyone knew each other and looked out for each other", and positive relationships at intermediate may have helped induce feelings of belonging at her new school and helped Cleo's transition. School connectedness refers to "the extent to which a student feels like he/she belongs at school and feels cared for by the school community", and school connectedness at primary school is associated with school connectedness at secondary school (Lester et al., 2013, p. 158).

Academic Demands

Stress associated with academic workload and high expectations for academic achievement at secondary school was a common theme in all group discussions. The students variously discussed differences between primary/intermediate school and secondary school, homework, tests and exams, and the school curriculum.

Differences between Primary/Intermediate School and Secondary School

Bubbles, Patricia, and Sprinkles complained about having "no free time" at secondary school, and all the boys at School A, and seven girls at School B reported that there was "harder work" and "higher expectations" at secondary school. For instance:

Niomi:	At intermediate you don't really get as pressured.
Scarlet:	I did Year 9 stuff at intermediate. But then I came here and it was still hard.

The students' comments are consistent with Newman et al.'s (2000) study in the USA, where students reported that homework was harder and academic demands were greater in the 9th grade than in the 8th grade (comparable to New Zealand Years 9 and 8 respectively).

Tests and Exams

Two boys and four girls at School A, and four boys and seven girls at School B talked about stress associated with tests and exams. For instance:

Cheng Lee: Because of all the different teachers ... that is quite a lot if you combine them.

Kakabera: If we fail our test he makes us come back at lunch time.

Safushia Strawberry: And he doesn't change the grade even when you have to do it again.

Botswana: And you have to re-sit it until you get it right.

Patricia: I worry that I'm not going to pass exams so I can't get a good job.

Four boys at School B disclosed that "tests" caused them the most stress at school, and the same boys and seven girls at School B variously talked about stress associated with "getting ready for a test", feeling unprepared for tests, and multiples tests. For instance:

Cleo: Like we've had four different tests in one day aye.

Clair: Yeah, that was actually really stressful.

Test-related stress experienced by the students may have been exacerbated by concerns about junior exams that were to be held in the next school term. The students may have experienced pressure from teachers and parents to succeed in these exams, because academic performance largely determines students' classroom placements in the following academic year. Classroom placement (which determines the difficulty level of school subjects) may ultimately affect students' futures, because students who achieve at more difficult levels may have better employment prospects when they leave secondary school.

Nevertheless, stress associated with tests may have had positive outcomes. For instance:

Sprinkles: I always worry, but then I always get a good mark. ... I got an A.

Concern about upcoming tests may have motivated Sprinkles to study hard. As argued by Suldo et al. (2009), students may succeed academically when academic stress prompts them to take action.

School Curriculum

Stress associated with the school curriculum was discussed by three boys at School A, and two girls at School B. However, Bubbles was the only student who reported considerable stress related to compulsory school subjects:

Bubbles: I hate maths. It stresses me out. ... I try to do it as hard as I can but I can't cos I'm not very good at it.

Bubbles may have experienced stress solely because she struggled with mathematics. However, Bubbles had previously said “my parents just tell me to do my best”, but also commented that “it’s funny how they say you’ve got to owe me back”. Therefore, the stress she experienced may have been exacerbated because she did not want to disappoint her parents.

The other students complained about the content of the school curriculum. For instance:

Sheniqwa-Lee: Learning about useless stuff you're pretty much never gonna use in your life and -
W.B.: Like something that happened 100 years ago. Oh, that's really useful.
Matt: That's like science and the periodic table. When are you going to need that in everyday life? ... What's the point in us learning it?

The students' comments and tone hinted exasperation at having no control over the school curriculum. Irwin (2013) argues that boys tend to be more engaged when they believe schoolwork is relevant to them, and the students who complained about the school curriculum may have been similarly disinterested.

Teachers

Students from both schools discussed stress associated with teachers. The students discussed negative interactions with teachers, multiple teachers, teachers' expectations, and racial discrimination.

Negative Interactions

All the boys and five girls at School A, and one boy and seven girls at School B talked about stress associated with negative interactions they or other students had experienced with teachers. For instance, Steven disclosed that it was “definitely” stressful when teachers “yell” at other students, and students at both schools discussed teachers’ changed attitudes. For instance:

Cheng Lee: The teachers want to know you for the first week, and then after that they just want to throw you away.

Sprinkles: [some teachers] get real grouchy and mean. ... In the start they were like real nice. Now they are —

Elmonster: Unravelling.

Although the students reported that some teachers changed during the academic year, the perceived changes in teachers may be partly due to changes in the students. As Year 9 students become familiar with the school, gain acceptance by peers, and assume more age-related responsibilities at school and home, they may push boundaries and consequently receive negative feedback from teachers.

Four boys at School A, and two girls at School B complained about the disciplinary actions of some teachers. For instance, Patricia expressed annoyance that some teachers “don’t really do anything” when boys misbehaved in their classes, and the boys at School A said that one of their teachers was unfair. For example:

Matt: Even if there’s one person talking he stops the whole class and holds us in.

Cheng Lee: The whole class, and he holds us in for an hour.

Five girls at School A discussed stress associated with the way that they were taught by teachers. For instance:

Kakabera: [Teacher] changed my whole essay ... and then she’ll complain about how she changed ours, so it doesn’t really count. ... She will mark us low and be like “well you didn’t actually write most of this”.

Fulishia Frangipani: We've been asking him for ages to teach us how to make bread because you have to learn about the chemical process or something. ... It's in our homework book and he wouldn't teach us it, and I showed by Dad and he's like "oh I'm gonna email him about it" ...

Botswana and Safushia Strawberry discussed how negative experiences with teachers had affected the courses they wanted to take at secondary school. For example:

Safushia Strawberry: I was really looking forward to science this year, but [teacher] kind of ruined that for me because he's not a very good teacher. ... Now I don't want to do science anymore.

Students have little control at school and (as individuals relate differently to different people) it is likely that students will be taught by some teachers with whom they have negative interactions. However, negative interactions with teachers may have long-term consequences. As indicated above, teachers could potentially influence students in ways that affect their future careers. Nevertheless, three girls and one boy at School A, and six girls and three boys at School B spoke positively about some of their teachers. For instance, Violet said that she got on with "most" of her teachers and Clair said one teacher was "nice and jokes around".

Multiple Teachers

The boys at School A talked about stress associated with multiple teachers. For instance, the boys disclosed that some teachers do not know the students very well, and this negatively affected some students:

W.B.: She'll think I'm another person and she'll give them x's which is 'not achieved' but then I have to explain it to her for ages that I'm not that person.

Sheniqwa-Lee: Some teachers know you really well because you get along with them. Other teachers if you clash with them they tend to assume or infer things about you.

However, the boys also discussed advantages of having multiple teachers. For example:

Sheniqwa-Lee: You only have to stand them for an hour.

The boys' preference to spend limited time with some teachers may have been because they did not have a good rapport with those teachers. Also, some of the boys at School A disclosed that they occasionally skipped classes, and they may have preferred multiple teachers because they would have been monitored more closely if they had the same teacher throughout the day. Nevertheless, regardless of their reasons, the boys' preference to have multiple teachers counters Newman et al.'s (2000) findings that less time spent with teachers was viewed negatively by some students.

Teachers' Expectations

Five boys and three girls at School A, and three girls at School B talked about stress associated with teachers' expectations, and/or lack of support from teachers to meet those expectations. For instance:

Safushia Strawberry: She expects so much from us. She expects a bit like Year 10 level.

Clair: We had one [test] yesterday and then our teacher expects us to know everything tomorrow for another test that we have to do.

Sheniqwa-Lee: You ask them for help, but they ... sort of say no. ... "You're smart enough to do it yourself. It's just a challenge. Get over the challenge."

Hunter: Or when you're asking for help but they don't answer you and then they tell you off later on.

Botswana: He wouldn't explain anything ... and then when you ask what that means, he gets all ranty and goes off at you because you weren't listening. But it's just that he didn't teach you it.

The students' perceptions that some of their teachers expected too much is consistent with some studies (e.g., B. M. Newman et al., 2000). It is likely that students may become overwhelmed when they perceive that schoolwork is too difficult, and may become disillusioned and lose

the school environment and processes. However, the students at School B reported more stressors associated with adjustment to new peers and larger peer groups. Also, there were gender differences in the students' reports on transition, as the girls generally discussed interpersonal stressors, while the boys talked more about non-interpersonal stressors.

Students from all groups talked about stress associated with academic demands. However, only boys at School A and girls at School B discussed increased pressure associated with secondary school, and stress associated with the school curriculum. Nevertheless, overall, there were no patterns of difference in respect of gender or school decile in the students' reports.

Stress associated with teachers was discussed in all groups. However, only one boy at School B talked about teacher-related stress. Contrastingly, the boys at School A disclosed more teacher-related stressors than girls, and students at School A disclosed more teacher-related stressors than students at School B. This may indicate differences according to gender and school decile.

There were no patterns of cultural difference in the students' reports of transition- and academic-related stressors. However, cultural differences were identified in the reports of students at School B who discussed racial discrimination.

A summary of school-related stressors is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Summary of School-Related Stressors

<u>Stressor</u>	<u>School A</u>		<u>School B</u>		<u>Total</u>
	Boys <i>n=6</i>	Girls <i>n=7</i>	Boys <i>n=6</i>	Girls <i>n=11</i>	
Transition					
• Environment/Processes	4	0	4	5	13
• Adjustment to Peers	1	0	4	5	10
Academic demands					
• Different School Type	6	0	0	10	16
• Homework	3	3	3	4	13
• Tests and Exams	2	4	4	7	17
• School Curriculum	3	0	0	2	5
Teachers					
• Negative Interactions	6	5	1	7	19
• Multiple Teachers	6	0	0	0	6
• Teachers' Expectation	5	3	0	3	11
• Racial Discrimination	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	36	15	16	45	112

Peer-Related Stressors

Peer-related stressors were discussed in all groups. The students variously discussed stress associated with classmates, peer friendships, bullying, peer pressure, and romantic relationships. These stressors overlap to some degree (i.e., students may be bullied by classmates, and friends may exert peer pressure), but they are distinct stressors and are discussed separately below.

Classmates

All the boys and one girl at School A, and four boys and 11 girls at School B reported that some classmates were “irritating”, “annoying” or caused them stress. Also, aside from students of both genders at School B who reported that “girls have a lot of drama”, there were gender differences in reported stressors.

Classmate Stressors Reported by Girls

Fulishia Frangipani (who disclosed that classmates can be a “disruption”) was the only girl at School A who commented negatively about classmates’ behaviour. Contrastingly, all the girls at School B discussed stress associated with classmates, and most of the comments related to boys. For instance:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Violet: | They throw stuff around the class and — |
| Clair: | They act like 5-year-olds, and it’s most of the time. |
| Bubbles: | They think they’re cool and they play rap music when we are trying to learn and it’s so annoying. |

Also, Rose said that boys “make trouble”, and Patricia said that boys caused “a lot of stress” and were more annoying and irritating than girls in their classes. Girls normally reach puberty before boys (Rew et al., 2012), and the suggestion that boys are “immature” may reflect developmental gender differences. Also, individuals become more attracted to the opposite sex during early adolescence (Heary & Hennessy, 2002), and the boys’ classroom behaviour may reflect an attempt to gain the girls’ attention, as suggested by Cleo’s comment that boys “won’t leave you alone”. However, if the boys were trying to gain the girls’ attention, their behaviour may not have always had the intended effect. For example:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Patricia: | They do everything to get under your skin. |
| Sprinkles: | I just want to punch him in the face. |

Bubbles: They'll follow you to annoy you.

Bubbles said that she “walked away” when boys annoyed her, whereas five girls at School B disclosed that they sometimes argued with or confronted boys who annoyed them. For example:

Elmonster: When you get to the point where you yell back at them, they are like “whoa, calm down”.

Scarlet: He has pushed me up the stairs, which I don't get, so I turn around and push him down the stairs. ... He doesn't hit me anymore.

Furthermore, the boys at School B may have been unaware of what was acceptable to girls, as indicated by the girls' discussion about boys who “talk about yuk stuff”.

Cleo: There's this guy who talks about Anime in our classroom.

Clair: Oh that Anime. That sort of Anime.

Researcher: Anime?

Cleo: You should ask him. [Laughter]. Ask him.

Violet: Eww ... That's horrific. Oh my gosh.

Bubbles: I know, his phone —

Elmonster: Did you see that vid last year? That lady.

Patricia: Yeah, last year. I saw it.

Bubbles: [Boy's name] said it's still on there.

Sprinkles: He likes animated things. Bad animated things.

The girls were reluctant to elaborate on the “sort of Anime”, and did not disclose the content of the video clip. However, their disclosures suggest that the topic in both instances was sexual, and such exposure may influence the way that adolescents perceive sexual roles of women and men. As argued by Owens, Behun, Manning, and Reid (2012), the likelihood that adolescents view women as sex objects increases when adolescents are exposed to sexually explicit material.

The girls at School B also discussed the behaviour of some girls in their classes. For instance:

Clair: I've not really been friends with most girls ... they're really bitchy and everything, you know. And I can't get along with them.

Violet: Not most girls. A few girls can be. On rare occasions.

Clair and Violet's varying comments may reflect how well they were accepted by their peers. Clair may have experienced more negative interactions with "bitchy" girls than some other students, because (as discussed later) Clair disclosed that she had been bullied by students at the school, and this may have influenced the behaviour of others girls in her classes.

The girls also discussed a girl in their classes who they described as "crazy" and "the worst". For instance:

Bubbles: She'll try to attack you and stuff.

Patricia: And if you try to ignore her ... she'll keep calling your name until you look. And then she'll walk up to you —

Sprinkles: She'll get in your face.

The girls did not elaborate on the type of "attack", but their comments imply that the "crazy" girl was intimidating. Nevertheless, the girls acknowledged that the "crazy" girl had "family problems", and the link they made between the "crazy" girl's home life and her behaviour at school provides an example of spillover (where experiences in one setting affect experiences in another setting) (Flook & Fuligni, 2008).

The girls also discussed girls in their classes who "don't mind their own business". For instance:

Bubbles: Sometimes she'll be listening to something private and she'd tell.

Patricia: She always eavesdrops ... it's annoying.

Their classmate may have been trying to cause problems for the girls, or may have wanted to be included in their friendship group. However, girls tend to prefer close intimate relationships (Hickle & Anthony, 2013), and the girls who expressed annoyance about interference from other girls may have wanted to keep their friendship group small and exclusive.

Classmate Stressors Reported by Boys

Cheng Lee commented about “annoying” classmates (but did not indicate whether this related to girls or boys), and all the boys at School A discussed students who cut themselves. For instance:

- Cheng Lee: They cut their collar bones and their legs ... it’s horrible.
- Sheniqwa-Lee: Like one chick I saw they unscrewed the blade out of the pencil sharpener ... and there’s major veins in there. Look, if you cut one of those veins it’s going to bleed out like crazy.
- Matt: That’s what they try and do.
- Cheng Lee: What if they don’t?
- Hunter: They cut around here where their veins aren’t cos they’re attention-seeking.
- Cheng Lee: But they’re actually real deep.
- Sheniqwa-Lee: They just do surface cutting.
-
- Hunter: My friend comes out and showed my whole class.
- Cheng Lee: He came up and he was pulling off his bandage ...

Although Cheng Lee and Sheniqwa-Lee disagreed about the nature of the injuries (i.e., deep versus surface cuts), all the boys in the group expressed disapproval of peers who cut themselves. Nevertheless, some students who cut themselves did not hide their behaviour. This may be because some adolescents make superficial cuts to fit in with peers, or are influenced by friends to use self-harm to cope with stressful situations (Dimmock et al., 2008; McAndrew & Warne, 2014). The boys also disclosed that a lot of Year 9 students cut themselves, which may parallel the high prevalence of adolescent self-harm reported in some New Zealand studies (e.g., Fleming et al., 2014).

Aligned with Hunter’s disclosure above, when questioned about why they thought students cut themselves, all the boys responded that the students were “attention-seeking”. Also:

- Matt: They don’t do it because they are depressed or they don’t do it because they want it because it feels nice, they do it just because they want more friends.

Some adolescents (particularly boys) use self-harm to gain attention, but adolescents may cut to punish themselves or to let others know they are distressed (Dimmock et al., 2008).

Clair: We used to get into huge arguments that would last for three months.

Although both instances involved female friends, the girls' disclosures that some arguments lasted for extended periods is consistent with comments made by the boys at School B that arguments with female friends were different to arguments with male friends. For example:

Trevor P.: If we [boys] argue it's like only one hour and then we're all good.

Jonah: Girls take longer.

C. Ronaldo: They will still hate you for ages.

Trevor P.: Yeah until you say sorry or something like that. They're just like "get away from me". You just don't want to talk to them cos —

Colonel Sanders: Cos they take it to heart.

Girls' friendships are more intimate than boys' friendships (Sontag & Graber, 2010), and girls place more importance on maintaining positive relationships with peers than boys (Abaied & Rudolph, 2010). Consequently, girls may take arguments with friends more seriously, and experience more distress than boys following arguments with friends. Also, Cleo said "if I know if I say one thing and he will get upset about it, I wouldn't say it", and concern about compromising friendships may have also been why she avoided arguments with friends who were boys.

Two girls at School A said that they preferred to deal directly with problems they had with friends "unless it was really bad" "so that we don't have a massive disagreement for like a month until we sort it out". Five boys at School A also disclosed that they "sorted" arguments with friends most of the time. However, no girls at School B said they sorted arguments or problems with friends, and Sheniqwa-Lee, Scarlet, and four boys at School B said that they would rather leave an argument with a friend than discuss the problem. For example:

Scarlet: We just kinda go our separate ways and then half an hour later I would probably ring up and be "so do you want to hang out or something?"

Trevor P.: Sometimes we walk away and then we come back laughing.

Breaches of Confidentiality

Three girls at School A and four girls at School B talked about stress associated with friends who breached confidentiality, and all instances related to female friends. For example:

Safushia Strawberry: When the friend makes it everybody else's problem ... that just makes it bigger and a bigger problem.

Sprinkles: Some, they tell. They say that they won't tell anyone —

Patricia: But they do.

Sprinkles: Like the person you think you trust the most —

The girls indicated that they felt betrayed by friends who breached confidentiality. However, adolescents tend to increasingly seek support from peers (Waters et al., 2012), and the friends who breached confidentiality may have been seeking support from their friends. Alternatively, adolescent relationships may be volatile (Ngai et al., 2013), and the girls who breached confidentiality may have been trying to cause problems for their friends or form alliances with others.

None of the boys broached this topic, perhaps because they did not share personal information with their friends. Alternatively, personal information disclosed by boys to male friends may have remained confidential. As found in a New Zealand study with boys (aged 12–18 years), trust and loyalty were the most valued qualities in adolescent boys' friendships (Irwin, 2013).

Bullying

Bullying was discussed in all groups. The students variously discussed being bullied, types and prevalence of bullying, and whether students disclosed to others that they had been bullied.

Students' Experiences of Bullying

Four students disclosed that they had been bullied. Violet and Cheng Lee said that they had been bullied at intermediate school, while Sora and Clair disclosed that they had been bullied at secondary school. Violet did not elaborate, but Cheng Lee and Sora said that they had been bullied online (discussed in the 'Technology' theme later), and Clair said that she had experienced face-to-face verbal bullying. However, other students may have been bullied. For instance, Sprinkles said "sometimes you end up friends with that person", and may have been bullied but did not want to share her experience with the group. Also, adolescents may make socially desirable responses when sensitive subjects are discussed in groups (Norris et al., 2012), and boys may be unwilling to talk about their weaknesses (Huan et al., 2008).

studies (e.g., Kljakovic et al., 2015), where New Zealand secondary schools had high rates of bullying.

Nevertheless, bullying may have occurred more frequently than the students reported, because two girls wrote on the *Student Additional Comments Form – Optional* (see Appendix Q for summary of comments) that “bullying” and “when friends get bullied” were among the things that caused them the most stress. Furthermore, both groups of girls at School B discussed bullying at length, which suggests that bullying may have been more prevalent at their school than they disclosed.

Disclosure of Bullying at School

The students at School A did not discuss who students sought or received support from when they were bullied. At School B, Colonel Sanders and C. Ronaldo said that students could go to the school counsellor, and Bubbles said that teachers deal with bullying “if we tell them”. Contrastingly, Patricia said “most people don’t tell” the teachers, and Elmonster said “you get told off for dealing with it yourselves sometimes”. The reasons why students did not tell teachers about bullying were:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Cookie Monster: | Too afraid, or something. |
| Bubbles: | You think that you can deal with it yourself. |
| Researcher: | Would it make it worse for you if you went to your teachers? |
| Sprinkles: | Yes it does. |
| Bubbles: | Cos they make a big deal out of something small, I think. |
| Sprinkles: | If it’s getting called a name and you go tell, they make a big deal out of it at assembly and stuff. |
| Patricia: | And then that person would just want to bully you more. So that’s why we deal with it ourselves. |

The girls’ disclosures that teachers overreact to bullying is consistent with de Lara’s (2012) argument that students may not disclose incidents for fear of excessive adult intervention. Also, Patricia’s comment is consistent with Frisén et al.’s (2012) argument that the frequency of bullying may remain the same or worsen when staff intervene. Alternatively, students may not want to disclose bullying to adults, because they may feel that adults will not take them seriously, or they do not want to be viewed weak or needy by peers (deLara, 2012). Nonetheless, Frisén et al. (2012) found that intervention from staff was the most effective way to stop bullying. Bubbles and Sprinkles also indicated that students would not seek support from friends when they were

bullied, and this may be because they feel ashamed, or, again, because they do not want to appear weak (deLara, 2012).

Nevertheless, the students' disclosures about the ways students at School B deal with bullying contradict Frisé et al.'s (2012) findings that most boys dealt with bullying themselves, and that most girls sought help from friends or adults. However, students are more likely to seek support from adults when bullying is physical (deLara, 2012), and boys may experience more physical bullying than girls.

Peer Pressure

Four boys and 13 girls discussed stress associated with peer pressure. They variously discussed pressure associated with fashions and body image, sexual experiences, substance use, and romantic relationships (discussed in the 'Romantic Relationships' subtheme later).

Fashions and Body Image

Danni at School A said that she worried about wearing the right "styles", and all the girls at School B acknowledged that there was pressure for girls to wear the latest fashions. For instance:

Scarlet: When someone else walks in wearing what they want, everyone judges them because they are not wearing the same styles as everyone else.

Girls at School B also reported that girls "get judged too much", and are judged differently by boys and girls. For instance:

Clair: Whatever you look like, you are always going to be judged. If you ... usually wear shorts and crop top ... guys are gonna think that you are the most beautiful girl in the world but then girls are going to think that you are a total slut. ... But then when you've covered yourself completely guys will say "Oh that girl, she's ugly".

Cleo: Too modest.

Scarlet and Violet disclosed that they "hate" the new styles. Similar comments were made by other girls in the group. For example:

- Clair: I don't want the newest clothing coming in - it's like the shortest stuff that you've ever seen in your life.
- Niomi: Like shorts that are like undies.
- Clair: There's crop tops that are smaller than bras and everything. Yeah, and I'm just like whoa.

The girls may have chosen not to wear certain styles because they did not want to be labelled "slutty". Alternatively, the girls may have felt awkward or embarrassed about their developing bodies. For example:

Clair: I don't want to wear shorty shorts for everyone to see.

Violet: There are lots of girls who are very self-conscious.

Puberty typically occurs earlier for girls (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2005), and some adolescent girls may feel self-conscious about their maturing bodies (deLara, 2012). Correspondingly, the girls who were self-conscious may have been adjusting psychologically to the physiological changes that take place during adolescence.

Rose (who identified as Chinese) talked about differences in cultural norms:

Rose: Sometimes I'm not allowed to do stuff because it's the tradition. ... I'm not allowed to wear white stuff in my hair. Like white clips or white hair ties. It means someone passed away or died. Yeah, it's kind of weird.

Although Rose did not express distress about this Chinese tradition, and some girls reported that they "hate" or "don't want" the latest fashions, peer approval is important during adolescence (Norris et al., 2012), and some adolescent girls may want to gain or maintain peer approval by wearing the "right styles". Girls are generally more concerned than boys that peers approve of their appearance (Camara et al., 2014), and adolescent girls may experience considerable stress if they want to wear styles that are considered fashionable to their peers but are unacceptable to their parents. Nevertheless, regardless of pressure to wear the latest fashions, five girls at School B disclosed that they "don't even care" about styles and wore clothes they felt "comfortable in".

When asked specifically whether there was anything about themselves that worried them, Sarah, Fulishia Frangipani, and Safushia Strawberry talked about “pimples” and the need to “wear make-up” to “hide” blemishes, Scarlet and Rose said that they were self-conscious about their height, Niomi said that she worried about her weight, and Violet said that she was self-conscious about her height, weight, and the whiteness of her skin. However, the girls acknowledged that they were not overly concerned about their bodies.

Nevertheless, body image dissatisfaction was indicated by Clair’s comments:

Clair: My sister ... she’s blond hair and she’s skinny and thin and athletic you know, and then I’m opposite.

Clair: I can’t wear them [clothing styles] because they make me look even fatter.

Stress associated with fashions was not discussed by boys. Similarly, no boys reported body image dissatisfaction, which is aligned with previous studies (e.g., Murray et al., 2011), where girls reported more body image dissatisfaction than boys.

Sexual Experiences

Peer pressure related to sexual experiences was discussed by the boys at School A. For instance:

Sheniqwa-Lee: Apparently now it isn’t normal to have your virginity when you are 14. ... most chicks at 14 have lost their virginity and I was amazed at that, and then they judge you.

The boys did not elaborate on the judgments made by peers. However, they sounded disapproving when they talked about adolescent girls who were sexually active, and the “Year 10 at this school who is pregnant”. The boys’ discussion suggests that adolescents were judged negatively if they were not sexually experienced, but also indicated that girls who were sexually active were stigmatised. This would be aligned with Ott and Pfeiffer’s (2009) findings that boys achieved higher social status when they were sexually active, whereas girls were pressured to have sex, but also stigmatised if they were sexually active.

Substance Use

Two boys and one girl at School A talked about stress associated with peer pressure to smoke. For instance:

- Cheng Lee: There's this bunch of groups ... [and they're] like "hey bro, want a puff". And then you're like "nuh".
- Sheniqwa-Lee: Heaps of people at our school ... it's just stupid because they think it's cool to smoke and do drugs and stuff like that.
- Kakabera: Like my friends, some of them smoke and they kind of pressure me into it.

The different responses to peer pressure to smoke may reflect the type of relationship that the students had with the peers who pressured them to smoke. For instance, Cheng Lee may have countered pressure because the peers were not his friends, while Kakabera may have succumbed to pressure because the peers were her friends. Adolescent friends can gain power over each other, because of the importance they attach to friendships (Ngai et al., 2013), and strong peer friendships can sometimes have a negative effect on behaviour (Viner et al., 2012). Social networks strongly influence whether adolescents begin smoking, and there is a higher chance that adolescents will smoke if their close friends smoke (Huisman & Bruggeman, 2012; Kelly et al., 2011). Nevertheless, adolescent boys from secondary schools in New Zealand have reported that close male friends did not pressure them to do things that they did not wish to do (Irwin, 2013), and adolescent girls may experience more peer pressure from close female friends. Also, Kakabera's friends who smoked may have been girls, and adolescent girls who feel discontented with their bodies may smoke to control their weight (Friedrich et al., 2010).

The above extracts reveal that students were pressured in various ways to begin smoking, and these pressures are similar to those reported by students (aged 18–23 years) in the USA (Hayes & Plowfield, 2007). Although older than the students in the present study, three of the four most frequent reasons to begin smoking reported in Hayes and Plowfield's (2007) study were raised in the present study (i.e., "friends, peer pressure, ... and the 'need to be cool'") (p. 114). This indicates that similar pressures to begin smoking may be experienced throughout adolescence and early adulthood.

Romantic Relationships

Sprinkles and Danni were the only students who disclosed that they were romantically involved. Sprinkles did not elaborate, but Danni said that it was "kind of" stressful having a boyfriend because "you argue a lot". This is aligned with de Anda et al.'s (2000) findings that 33 percent of students (aged 15–18 years) from Los Angeles disagreed or argued with their romantic partners.

Two boys and four girls at School B disclosed why they did not have a romantic partner:

- Cleo: My religion won't allow. ... Too young.
- Violet: I don't have time for boyfriends. Like I'm too busy.
- Clair: I would not have enough time ... because of family.
- Niomi: School.
- Clair: School, homework, cooking dinner for my sister. ... I've just got way too much on my hand.
-
- Jonah: School first.
- Trevor P.: Yeah school first before. I don't want to get one till I finish university.

Although Niomi and Clair disclosed that school factored into why they were not romantically involved, the overall gender differences in responses (i.e., time constraints versus education) may reflect gender role stereotyping, which begins to emerge in adolescence (Viner et al., 2012). For instance, girls may be expected to undertake more family roles (as indicated by Clair), while boys may be expected to succeed vocationally, so they can financially support their future families.

No students at School B reported that they experienced pressure to have a romantic partner. However, Cheng Lee said that he was "sort of" pressured to get a girlfriend, all the girls at School A acknowledged that there was pressure, and Botswana disclosed that "there's pressure that you go for the right boyfriend". For instance:

- Botswana: My friends would be like "no you shouldn't like him, he's not good enough" and it's like arrgh. But I like him —

When asked whether they would go out with a boy who their friends did not like, the girls' responded:

- Sora: Usually it kind of ends out that you say yes and then your friends tell you to say no. So you end up breaking up —
- Safushia Strawberry: Yeah, normally friends know best.

Peer acceptance is important (Sancho & Cline, 2012) and pressure to be involved with someone acceptable to friends is consistent with previous research (e.g., B. M. Newman et al., 2000).

Correspondingly, the girls may have succumbed to pressure from their friends because they were afraid that they would lose peer acceptance and support.

Kakabera also disclosed that it was difficult when “all your friends have boyfriends and then you don’t”. Safushia Strawberry agreed, and said “you feel left out”. Relationships with close friends can be compromised when adolescents are involved in romantic relationships, because of the time that individuals devote to their romantic partners (Persike & Seiffge-Krenke, 2012). Contrastingly, when Elmonster talked about a friend’s new romantic relationship, she said “I want to mock him so bad” and “the next day we start calling him boy hot”. It is likely that this would have been stressful and embarrassing for their friend and her new boyfriend, and potential ridicule may be why four girls at School B said that they did not tell their friends, or only told their closest friends, if they liked someone. Adolescents may be jealous of their friends’ romantic relationships (Seiffge-Krenke, 2011), and perhaps the girls ridiculed their friend and new romantic partner to block the relationship, to prevent time lost with their friend and preserve their own relationship.

Summary

Another of the three main sources of stress discussed by the students related to peers. Also, on the *Student Additional Comments Form – Optional* (see Appendix N), peer-related stressors were some of the main sources of stress reported by girls (see Appendix Q for summary of comments).

Students in all groups talked about stress associated with classmates. One girl at School A talked about disruptive classmates, and the boys at School A talked about classmates who cut themselves. Contrastingly, students at School B talked about immature, interfering, nasty, and aggressive classmates. This may indicate differences according to school decile. Also, at School B, girls reported classmate stressors associated with boys and girls, while boys only reported stressors associated with girls. This may indicate a difference according to gender. There were no patterns of cultural difference in the students’ reports of classmate-related stressors.

Students from all groups discussed stress associated with arguments with friends. Overall, there were no patterns of difference in respect of school decile or culture in the students’ reports. However, the girls’ disclosures indicated that they experienced more stress associated with arguments with friends than boys.

Two girls at School B talked about stress associated with mixed-gender friendships. As discussion was limited to two girls, it is not possible to identify differences according to gender, school decile, or culture.

Girls from both schools talked about friends' breaches of confidentiality, and this may indicate a difference according to gender. However, there were no patterns of difference according to school decile or culture in the girls' disclosures.

Bullying was discussed in all groups except the girls' group at School A. However, only four students disclosed that they had been bullied, and only one student elaborated on her experience at secondary school. Therefore, it is not possible to identify patterns of difference according to gender, school decile, or culture for bullying-related stress.

Peer pressure was discussed by the boys at School A and girls at both schools. Pressure to be sexually active, and pressure to smoke were only discussed by a few students, and it is not possible to identify patterns of difference according to gender, school decile, or culture for these stressors. However, the girls' discussions on fashions and body image may have identified stressors that were not relevant to the boys in the study. Nevertheless, only one girl at School A talked about fashion and three girls at School A talked about body image, and it is not possible to identify patterns of difference according to school decile for these stressors. However, cultural norms associated with fashion have been identified as a potential source of stress for some adolescent girls.

Romantic relationships were discussed in all groups, but stress associated with romantic relationships was only reported by one boy and the girls at School A, which may indicate differences according to gender and school decile. However, there were no patterns of difference in respect of culture in the students' disclosures.

A summary of peer-related stressors is shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Summary of Peer-Related Stressors

Stressor	School A		School B		Total
	Boys n=6	Girls n=7	Boys n=6	Girls n=11	
Classmate stressors	6	1	4	11	22
Peer Friendships					
• Arguments with Friends	5	2	4	8	19
• Mixed-Gender Friendships	0	0	0	2	2
• Breaches of Confidentiality	0	3	0	4	7
Bullying	1	1	0	2	4
Peer Pressure					
• Fashions and body image	0	4	0	17	21
• Sexual Experiences	1	0	0	0	1
• Substance Use	2	1	0	0	3
Romantic Relationships	<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>8</u>
Total	16	19	8	44	87

Family-Related Stressors

Family-related stressors were discussed by all groups. The students variously talked about stress associated with family structure, arguments with family members, family demands and expectations, nondisclosure to parents, and grandparents.

Family Structure

Some students lived with both biological parents, while others lived in single-parent households, with stepfamilies, or shared their time equally between separated parents. Students lived with siblings and/or step-siblings, or were only-children. Also, some students had regular contact with their grandparents, while others rarely or never saw them. Correspondingly, some students reported challenges that were unique to their family structure.

Two-Parent Households

Nine boys and seven girls indicated that they lived in two-parent households. The only stressor reported by the students that was specific to two-parent households was:

C. Ronaldo: They win, but it's their house.

Jonah: Yeah, two against one.

Single-Parent Households

Three girls indicated that they lived in a single-parent household, but Clair was the only student who talked specifically about this. She spent half of her time with each parent, and was

responsible for some roles in each household. Clair prioritised her family responsibilities over other commitments (e.g., homework), and this may have generated additional pressure. As argued by Beausang et al. (2012), some adolescents who live in single-parent households need to undertake more household roles and assume more responsibilities than adolescents who live in households with more than one adult, especially when sole parents are employed.

Separated Parents

Ten girls and three boys disclosed that their parents were separated or divorced. Seven girls and two boys lived with their mothers, one girl and one boy lived with their fathers, and two girls spent “50/50” of their time with each parent.

Seven students said that they regularly saw their noncustodial parent, whereas four students said they never or rarely saw their noncustodial parent. Matt disclosed that it was “quite hard kinda”, because his father lived in another country. Contrastingly, Sora disclosed that her father was “not even allowed near us” but said that she saw him regardless. Consequently, Sora may have experienced stress associated with possible repercussions of contacting him. Less access to noncustodial parents (usually fathers) is common when parents separate (Wolchik, Schenck, & Sandler, 2009), and it may be stressful for young people when they lose daily contact with their noncustodial parent (Beausang et al., 2012).

Botswana talked about the inconvenience of moving between households:

Botswana: It’s really stressful when you have ... half your clothes at Mum’s and half your clothes at Dad’s. ... Sometimes you forget stuff and Mum doesn’t want to drive back to Dad’s.

Adolescent stress associated with transferring belongings between households has been identified in previous studies (e.g., Beausang et al., 2012). Also, adolescents who frequently spend time with each parent need to regularly transition between households, which may involve ongoing adjustment to different family types, and can be a source of stress for some adolescents (Beausang et al., 2012). Although this was not discussed in the present study, perhaps this was an additional source of stress for some of the students.

Three girls talked about conflict between their separated parents. For example, Kakabera talked about financial contention between her parents, and Clair said that “it is sort of hard for me to try and make them communicate properly”. Conflict between separated parents is one of the most harmful aspects of parental separation experienced by children (Wolchik et al., 2009), and perhaps

conflict between separated parents has a greater impact on adolescents when they have regular contact with each parent. Correspondingly, this may have factored into Clair's efforts to improve the relationship between her parents.

Most of the girls at School A with separated parents talked about why their parents were no longer together. It seemed important to them to understand why, but this may have contributed to negative views of their noncustodial parents, as indicated by Safushia Strawberry who said "my Dad isn't really a nice person". However, not knowing why their parents had separated may have also contributed to negative views of noncustodial parents. For instance:

Kakabera: I was like to her "you care more about your boyfriend than you care about me" and then I just started saying "why would you move away with your boyfriend when you have children in Wellington".

Perhaps parents do not tell adolescents why they separated because they do not want to upset them. However, not knowing may be equally stressful. As revealed in Beausang et al.'s (2012) study with young people aged 10 and 11 years in Britain, most of the participants were not fully aware of the details of their parents' separation, and this may be similar for adolescents in New Zealand.

Stepfamilies

Three students indicated that they had step-families and talked about stress associated with their family structure. Kakabera said her stepfather and brother "don't get along at all". Sarah said that she did not like the people that her father lived with (assumed to be her stepfamily), and Matt said that he did not like his stepfamily "in general" because "they don't know how to think properly". Stepfamilies and blended families can be complex (Beausang et al., 2012), and perhaps the negativity expressed by Sarah and Matt was because they had not adjusted to their family situations. Alternatively, they may have wanted their biological parents to be together, and this may have contributed to negative thoughts and interactions with their stepfamilies.

Siblings

All of the students disclosed that they had siblings or step-siblings, but some siblings did not live in the same household as the students.

Aside from stress associated with arguments with siblings, and siblings' demands and expectations (discussed below), Danni at School A and five girls at School B talked about stressors associated with their brothers and/or sisters:

Danni: I never really used to spend time with my Dad ... because my [older] sister would be there and lots of dramas would happen.

Scarlet: It was Halloween. I couldn't go with them [friends] because I had to go with my [younger] sister and they didn't want to go with my sister. So I got really grumpy and I swore a few times.

Niomi: And she called me a bitch and all that.

Patricia: They [younger brothers] like to get cheeky.

Bubbles: And then you get told off for telling them off. ... Cos they're little kids and you should know better.

Danni and Scarlet's disclosures demonstrate how adolescents can experience stress when siblings interfere and cause conflict in relationships with family and friends. Contrastingly, Patricia and Bubbles's disclosures suggest impatience with their younger siblings' immaturity. As argued by Waite, Shanahan, Calkins, Keane, and O'Brien (2011), the degree of closeness between siblings may decline during adolescence.

Also, Cleo reported that it can be stressful being in a big family. Cleo was the youngest girl in her family and may have had less control than her older siblings.

Only-Children

Fulishia Frangipani and Safushia Strawberry talked about stressors associated with being only-children:

Fulishia Frangipani: You have to do all the chores by yourself.

Safushia Strawberry: A lot of people ... think that I'm spoilt. ... You're anything but spoilt.

- Fulishia Frangipani: I don't like being an only-child. It's lonely.
- Safushia Strawberry: You go to text a friend or something that has got some siblings and stuff and then they won't answer because they've got other stuff to do, and it's like, well I don't have anything to do.

Fulishia Frangipani's disclosure about "chores" illustrates how only-children may have more responsibilities and different stressors than adolescents who lived with siblings. Contrastingly, adolescents want to be viewed positively by others (Seiffge-Krenke, 2011), and stress experienced by Safushia Strawberry when peers said that she was "spoilt" may have been because they made negative assumptions about her. Furthermore, Safushia Strawberry's disclosure about loneliness is consistent with Besevegis and Galanaki's (2010) argument that individuals may experience stress when they are alone, because they may feel isolated from others. Loneliness may be experienced more often by adolescents and young adults than other age groups (Salimi & Bozorgpour, 2012), and perhaps adolescents' reliance on friendship networks contributes to feelings of loneliness when adolescents are isolated from their friends.

Arguments

Eight boys and 15 girls reported that they argued with their family. Some students talked about arguments with parents and/or siblings, while other students did not disclose which family members they argued with.

Girls at School B acknowledged that it was harder when they argued with family than when they argued with friends. For instance:

- Cleo: You're much more tighter than friends ... and you depend on them more.

This is consistent with Teitelman et al.'s (2010) argument that conflicts with family may be particularly stressful for adolescents because they often rely on family for support. Also, negative interactions with family can be particularly stressful for girls (Flook & Fuligni, 2008), perhaps because of the importance that girls place on interpersonal relationships.

Arguments with parents

Two boys and five girls at School A, and two boys and five girls at School B disclosed that they argued with their parents. For instance:

- Kakabera: I have a massive rage at my Mum when we fight.

Safushia Strawberry: I normally just kind of back-chat and then I'll sit in my room for a while and then I'll go and apologise.

Two students said that they sought family support when they argued with their parents. For example:

Colonel Sanders: I just go to my other parent's house.

Botswana: I was crying and real upset [after an argument with her mother] and I just rang my Dad and he came and picked me up.

Botswana's disclosure is consistent with Seiffge-Krenke et al.'s (2009) findings that arguments with parents are associated with high level of adolescent stress.

Four boys at School B said that they would "let it slide" if they had an argument or problem with their parents, and this may be aligned with C. Ronaldo's comment "they win, but it's their house". Similarly, Botswana disclosed that she did not prolong arguments with her mother:

Botswana: I agree with my Mum ... because then she shuts up. ... Sometimes I get real defensive and then Mum goes on ... and then I'll just sit down and it's like "OK, OK"

Five boys and three girls at School B said that they were not able to negotiate with their parents and/or that parents "always win". These disclosures reflect the unbalanced relationship between parents and their children, where parents have more power (Seiffge-Krenke, 2011). However, Safushia Strawberry and five boys at School A said that they sorted out arguments with their parents "most of the time", and Safushia Strawberry and Colonel Sanders indicated that they were sometimes able to negotiate with one or both of their parents. Safushia Strawberry was an only child who lived in a single-parent household, and she may have had a more egalitarian parent/child relationship with her mother than some of the other students, because individuals from smaller families may rely on each other more than individuals from larger families.

Hunter said that he argued with his parents to "have my own word", which is consistent with Seiffge-Krenke et al.'s (2013) argument that adolescents try to create more egalitarian relationships with parents. However, adolescents' desire for more balanced relationships with parents counters their reliance on parents for some of their needs (e.g., financial support) and this

may be stressful for some adolescents. For instance, most of the boys at School B expressed frustration associated with reliance on their parents. For example:

C. Ronaldo: They're taking too long and I'm trying to tell my Dad to hurry up. ... It's just annoying.

Cheng Lee and Cookie Monster disclosed that they did not argue with their parents. Cookie Monster did not disclose why, but Cheng Lee elaborated :

Cheng Lee: Where I was born and raised [South Africa] you can't show any disrespect at all.

Cheng Lee's disclosure illustrates how behaviour that is deemed culturally appropriate may influence the coping styles used to deal with stressful situations (Persike & Seiffge-Krenke, 2012).

Arguments with siblings

Three boys and three girls at School B disclosed that they argued with their siblings. For instance:

Cleo: Me and my sister fight a lot. ... I'm not allowed to hit her either because she's older than us. I just go to my room and I just play music or I just watch TV.

Steven: If I bought a bag of lollies at the dairy and my [older] brother wants some I just say "no - like I bought this with my own money, not yours".

The students who elaborated on arguments that they had with their siblings generally referred to arguments with older siblings or siblings of a similar age. Again, this may reflect the students' attempts to have more egalitarian relationships with family members.

Demands and expectations

Students from both schools reported stress associated with family demands and expectations.

All the boys at School A, and four girls at School B acknowledged that their parents often wanted them to do things that they did not want to do. For instance:

Sheniqwa-Lee: Maybe you want to go out and hang with your friends but your dad's like "nah, you've got to do chores before you do that" ... and you're late or you can't even do what you wanted to do.

Elmonster: They're like "you do it now happy or you'll do it now angry".

Patricia: They have the last say.

When questioned about how they responded when they could not do what they wanted Sheniqwa-Lee said "you get angry and then you give them the silent treatment". The other boys at School A agreed that they generally get angry, and their response may reflect frustration with the unbalanced relationship between adolescents and their parents.

All the boys at School A, and six boys and eight girls at School B said that they experienced pressure from their parents to achieve at school. For instance:

Sheniqwa-Lee: My Dad ... he gets real angry at me when I muck around.

Elmonster: They over-estimate me because of my brother and sister. Like I'm not that smart.

Scarlet: My Dad expects me ... to achieve and I have to stay in the top class the whole five years I'm here. ... I know that I'm not going to be able to do that.

Clair: He [father] doesn't want me to end up like him because ... he didn't go to college so he didn't get more of an opportunity to go do any other job like he wanted to do.

The students' disclosures that they experienced pressure from their parents to achieve at secondary school is consistent with other studies (e.g., Seiffge-Krenke et al., 2009). Nevertheless, Ngai et al. (2013) report that adolescent academic success is associated with parents' high academic expectations.

Elmonster, Sprinkles, and Cleo also talked about stress associated with their family's expectations. For instance:

Elmonster: They're like "you're an adult — you should know how to do it and be independent". But when you do it, they're like "what are you doing, you're a little kid". Duh, let me do it.

Cleo: My sister's, she's turning 16. ... She always tells me to do her chores and stuff like that. She bosses me around.

Again, their disclosures may reflect desire for autonomy and a more egalitarian relationship with older members of their family. However, in contrast to some of the parental demands and expectations disclosed by the students (e.g., long-term academic demands), the demands and expectations of siblings appear to be related more to short-term stressors (e.g., being bossed around).

Nondisclosure to Parents

Botswana and Bubbles said that they avoided potential stress by not telling their mothers who they liked, because of previous experiences that had caused them stress. For example:

Botswana: She would keep going on about him.

Bubbles: Once I told my Mum and she started messaging him and I'm like "what are you doing".

Similarly, Kakabera did not want her father to know about some aspects of her life:

Kakabera: Sometimes I ... go on Facebook because ... I'm the only girl in the house and ... he [Dad] will be like "why are you upset" and stuff like that. I do tell him stuff, but some of it is kinda personal and just like boys. ... Like going to places to meet your boyfriends and stuff, and my Dad will be like "where are you going" and I have to lie to him because I don't want him to know.

Although adolescents tend to talk about family problems with family (rather than friends), some adolescents may prefer not to discuss personal matters with family (Waite et al., 2011).

Grandparents

Eight students disclosed that they had regular contact with their grandparent/s, while four students said they rarely or never saw their grandparents. Stress associated with these scenarios were reported by three girls at School B. For instance:

- Elmonster: They get to the point where they are continuously nagging. ... I came here to have peace.
- Patricia: Yeah. And they know everything. It's annoying.
-
- Clair: Like granddad hasn't actually been a part of our family for quite a while ... because of his wife.

Again, Elmonster and Patricia's disclosures may reflect a desire for more autonomy and more egalitarian relationships with older members of their family. Contrastingly, Clair's disclosure illustrates how relationships with extended family may create ill-feeling in families, and potentially generate stress for adolescents who are exposed to these family dynamics.

Rose and Cookie Monster disclosed that their grandparents were not proficient in English, and neither student was able to speak their grandparents' native language (i.e., Chinese and Samoan respectively). Rose said that it is "kind of hard to talk to them". Although the girls did not elaborate on the difficulty they had communicating with their grandparents, these conversations would be less spontaneous, and the students may have felt judged when conversations needed to be translated by others. Also, grandparents are a valued form of support for some adolescents (Flouri et al., 2010), and Rose and Cookie Monster's grandparents may have been less able to support their grandchildren, because they were unable to communicate directly with them.

Summary

Family-related stress was the other of the three main sources of stress reported by the students. Also, on the *Student Additional Comments Form – Optional* (see Appendix N), family-related stressors were reported the most by students, with girls reporting more stressors than boys (see Appendix Q for summary of comments).

Some reported stressors were unique to the students' family structures. However, only a few students talked about stressors associated with each family structure, and it is not possible to identify patterns of difference in respect of gender, school decile, or culture.

All groups discussed stress associated with arguments with family members (particularly parents). Overall, there were no patterns of difference in respect of gender, school decile, or culture in the students' reports.

Also, all groups (except the girls' group at School A) discussed family members' demands and expectations. Considering the ratio of boys to girls in the study, the boys' group at School A reported the most stressors, which may indicate a difference according to school decile. However, there were no patterns of difference in respect of gender or culture in the students' reports.

Only three girls discussed stress associated with nondisclosure to parents, and it is not possible to investigate patterns of difference according to gender, school decile, or culture. Similarly, only three girls discussed grandparent-related stress, and it is not possible to investigate patterns of difference according to gender or school decile for this stressor. However, difficulty speaking with grandparents because of language differences has identified a potential source of stress according to culture for some adolescents.

A summary of family-related stressors is shown in Table 5.

Table 5
Summary of Family-Related Stressors

<u>Stressor</u>	<u>School A</u>		<u>School B</u>		<u>Total</u>
	Boys <i>n=6</i>	Girls <i>n=7</i>	Boys <i>n=6</i>	Girls <i>n=11</i>	
Family Structure					
• Two-Parent Households	0	0	2	0	2
• Single-Parent Households	0	0	0	1	1
• Separated Parents	1	4	0	1	6
• Stepfamilies	1	2	0	0	3
• Siblings	0	1	0	5	6
• Only-Children	0	2	0	0	2
Arguments with Family					
• Parents	2	5	2	5	14
• Siblings	0	0	3	3	6
Demands and Expectations	12	0	6	15	33
Nondisclosure to Parents	0	2	0	1	3
Grandparents	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
Total	16	16	13	34	79

Technology

All groups discussed technology-related stress, and variously talked about stress associated with Facebook and mobile phones.

Facebook

Cheng Lee talked about online bullying that he experienced while at intermediate school:

Cheng Lee: They called me names and they said stuff about my family.
 That's one thing that will set me on fire. ... I just wanna — if
 someone says something about my family...

Although this occurred when Cheng Lee was at intermediate school, his experience has provided an example of verbal teasing. The extract also illustrates that Cheng Lee responded with anger, which is reported to be a leading emotional response to bullying (Campbell, Spears, Slee, Butler, & Kift, 2012).

Two boys and two girls at School A, and four boys and nine girls at School B said that they used Facebook, while Colonel Sanders said he had a Facebook account “but I don't go on it”, and Steven and Cookie Monster said they did not use Facebook. Cookie Monster did not elaborate, but Steven said “It's my choice ... you get hassled”. Similarly, Bubbles said “Facebook's bad I think ... like bullying and weirdos”, and other girls at School B acknowledged that bullying on Facebook was a big problem. Other students reported that spam and paedophiles were problems for them on Facebook. These problems are consistent with problems reported in other studies (e.g., Berson & Berson, 2005).

Two boys and two girls at School A talked about stress associated with undesirable online messages and postings they had received on Facebook. For instance:

Sora: I got told on Facebook I'm dying next year.
Kakabera: That's why I don't do that stuff.

W.B.: What really stresses me out is social networks. How they
 always put just useless stuff on it, like they're being bullied and
 they cut.

Cheng Lee: There's another girl who gets bullied and she's like "Oh guys I'm getting bullied so now I cut and then she'd post pictures on it.

The above extracts suggest that girls and boys may react differently to online messages, or that adolescents react differently to disturbing personal messages compared to postings sent to multiple recipients. Kakabera's comment suggests that she takes personal messages seriously, whereas (although reported as stressful) the boys' tone and comments suggest that they found some postings pointless and inconvenient. However, the same boys disclosed that cutting they witnessed in real life was "horrible", and real-life exposure to cutting behaviour and injuries of their classmates may have affected them more than online images.

Five boys and six girls at School B said that they blocked some people from Facebook to avoid upsetting messages and postings. They blocked bullies, people they did not like, and "pedos" (i.e., paedophiles). For instance, Clair blocked teachers who told her that they had looked at her Facebook. Sprinkles said that she did not add any older people to Facebook unless they were her family, because a man had sent her inappropriate messages:

Sprinkles: He goes, "how old are you" and I'll say "I'm 13" and I go "how old are you" and he goes "35", and I was like "eww you sicko". He started off real gross and ... I was "I'll tell my dad on you". ... They all message you for pics and stuff and you are just like "no".

Facebook users need to add 'friends' to give them access to Facebook, and adolescents who want to appear popular by having many Facebook friends may add people who later send inappropriate or upsetting messages. Unless people are subsequently blocked, Facebook users have little control over the messages they receive. Nevertheless, it is not possible to screen for all potential sources of stress on social media, and upsetting messages and postings are likely to be ongoing for adolescents who use this form of communication. For instance, adolescent friendships may be volatile (Ngai et al., 2013), and adolescents may receive upsetting messages when friendships deteriorate. Also, adolescents may not want to block peers from Facebook, because internet use is associated with peer approval and acceptance (Owens et al., 2012), and feeling they belong is important to individuals (Sancho & Cline, 2012).

Facebook was used as a distraction by Kakabera and Bubbles when they were upset, and Bubbles, Sprinkles, and Patricia talked about using Facebook to talk to friends about problems. For instance:

Bubbles: And then when we're in real person you can talk about it but don't say it. ... Like "you know that thing". It's easier because it's embarrassing to say sometimes.

Bubbles's disclosure is similar to Jonah's disclosure that "it's kinda awkward" to talk to friends about arguments. However, adolescents who prefer to use Facebook rather than deal with problems in person may not learn how to interact effectively with their peers face-to-face. For instance, tone, facial expressions, and body language provide valuable cues during face-to-face interaction (Vacaru et al., 2014), and these cues are absent during online communication. Consequently, online messages may be misinterpreted, and subsequently generate more stress for some adolescents. Also, continued use of social media for support instead of face-to-face social interaction may prolong social anxiety (Indian & Grieve, 2014). Nevertheless, socially anxious individuals who use social media to interact with others about matters they find difficult to discuss face-to-face may learn social skills that they may not otherwise develop (Indian & Grieve, 2014).

Mobile Phones

Three boys at School A, and four girls at School B talked about stressors associated with mobile phones.

The boys reported getting into trouble with their parents when they were sent sexually explicit images (i.e., sexts) through Snapchat. For instance:

Cheng Lee: Like nudes. ... you are looking at it and you're like yo this person is naked and your dad is like "arggh". ... I'm telling him it's not my friend, just somebody sent it to you.

The students had no control over the images that were sent to them. Equally, students have no control over images of themselves that are forwarded to others. Adolescents may believe that there is no risk associated with sexting. However, some recipients threaten to forward sexts to others if more explicit images are not sent, and widespread distribution of sexts has been associated with distress and suicide (Strassberg et al., 2013).

The girls disclosed that they got extremely stressed when they lost their mobile phones. They did not elaborate, but this may have been due to their reliance on mobile phones for communication. Mobile phones are important in adolescents' social lives, and the private nature of mobile phones allows adolescents to easily communicate with others without being monitored by their parents (Vacaru et al., 2014). The loss of mobile phones would inhibit this activity. Furthermore, parents' negative reactions to the loss of mobile phones, the inability to afford replacements, or the loss of stored information may contribute to stress experienced by adolescents who lose their mobile phones.

Although not specifically queried by the researcher, none of the students discussed text bullying. This is surprising because some studies (e.g., Raskauskas, 2010) have reported high rates of text bullying in New Zealand schools. However, text bullying may be a particularly vicious form of personal attack, and students may not want to discuss this in groups. As reported by Vacaru et al. (2014), some adolescents have reported that it is "easier to 'be mean'" when victims are not present (p. 578).

Summary

Students in all groups talked about stress associated with technology. In particular, they talked about online bullying and online postings that affected themselves or others. There were patterns of difference according to gender in the students' disclosures. The boys discussed visually disturbing postings and spam, whereas girls talked about threats to personal safety and paedophiles. There were no patterns of difference according to school decile or culture.

Boys at School A, and girls at School B discussed stress associated with mobile phones. However, discussion was limited to a few students, and it is not possible to identify patterns of difference according to gender, school decile, or culture.

School/Leisure Conflict and Extracurricular Activities

Cheng Lee, Jonah, and five girls at School A talked about stress associated with the need to complete homework when they had other commitments. For instance, Jonah acknowledged that he had "a lot" of sports practices during the week, and that he would "get home at 6 sometimes and then just do my homework". Similarly:

Cheng Lee: I have to try and fit it in, or else.

Fulishia Frangipani: A lot of homework in a short amount of time [causes stress] ... especially when you have other stuff to do.

Botswana: A Saturday game and then like church on Sunday or something and people don't have enough time.

Danni: On Saturdays I'd be at my Dad's house and all my homework's at my Mum's house. ... I'm spending time with my Dad and not doing homework.

Also, Clair (whose parents were divorced and spent "50/50" of her time with each parent) disclosed that family responsibilities impacted on the completion of her homework:

Clair: I would usually put my family first before homework. ... My Mum sort of needs me to be there all the time sometimes ... My Dad relies on me to cook now ... cos he works quite late.

Nevertheless, Clair was the only student who said that her parent helped her with homework, and Clair's family responsibilities may have been countered by support she received from her parents.

Botswana talked about conflict between her and her mother that related to a sports competition:

Botswana: I didn't want to go to school because I was really really tired ... and we had a real big argument about it and I was crying and real upset.

School/leisure conflict has been associated with high levels of adolescent stress (De Vriendt et al., 2011), and Botswana's disclosure illustrates how the combined demands of extracurricular and academic expectations may negatively affect adolescent wellbeing.

Furthermore, Danni disclosed that "it's stressful when you have to try to be up there" with other competitors. Similarly, three girls at School B talked about pressure they experienced because of competitive sport:

Sprinkles: When you lose ... I get real stressed.

Patricia: Yeah, when you're in a team.
Bubbles: And it's the winning conversion or something and you miss it.
Yeah. That sucks. That's pressure on you.

These disclosures are consistent with Hutchinson et al.'s (2008) argument that competitive sports can be a source of distress for some adolescents.

None of the boys talked about stress associated with competitive sport. However, Jonah said that he experienced stress when he slept in and it was "a rush to get to school". Jonah played multiple sports and this would have lessened the time that he had available for other commitments and may have contributed to his tiredness. Alternatively, Jonah may have stayed up too late at night or had insufficient sleep because of other stressors in his life (Yan, Lin, & Su, 2018).

Summary

No patterns of difference were identified according to school decile or culture. However, nine of the 11 students who discussed these stressors were girls, and this may indicate a difference according to gender.

Future concerns

Six girls talked about stress associated with future financial uncertainty. Contrastingly, no boys expressed concern, and seven girls disclosed that they were not very concerned about their future.

Future Finances

Kakabera at School A and four girls at School B disclosed that they worried about their financial future. They variously discussed being worried about not having a job, a house, and enough money to provide for their children, being adults and still living with their parents, living on the street, and being in debt. Kakabera's concern about her future financial security may have stemmed from the financial contention between her separated parents. Household incomes may drop dramatically following parental separation, and some adolescents become concerned about their own financial security (Koerner et al., 2011). Also, although it cannot be assumed that all students who attend low decile schools are socioeconomically disadvantaged, School B was rated decile 3, and the girls at School B who expressed concern about their financial future may have been from lower SES families.

Nevertheless, the students said that they were not very stressed about the future. The age of the students may factor into their general lack of concern about the future, because future-related

stress escalates as adolescents mature, and future decisions become more urgent (Koerner et al., 2011). However, some concerns have started to emerge for some of the girls, and earlier maturation of girls may explain some of the gender differences in reporting.

Summary

Only six students talked about future-related stress. Therefore, it is not possible to identify patterns of difference according to school decile or culture. However, all of the students were girls, which may indicate a difference according to gender.

Adolescent Coping

The main styles of coping reported by the students were problem-solving, support-seeking, distraction, avoidance, and emotion-regulation. Within each theme, the coping styles used to deal with specific stressors discussed in the ‘Stressor’ section are summarised and discussed in conjunction with coping responses for non-specific stressors. Most of the students who used a specific coping response, used that response for more than one type of stressor.

Problem-Solving

Problem-solving is deemed to be an adaptive coping response (Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011), and 25 students used problem-solving to cope with stressors or to avoid potential stressors. Problem-solving was used to cope with stress associated with academic demands, peers, friends, family, and technology. Also, three girls disclosed that they used problem-solving when someone expected a lot from them. For instance:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Patricia: | I try hard anyways. |
| Bubbles: | Depending on what it is. I would do priorities. Like the most important thing first. And if I don’t finish it, then, too bad. |
| Elmonster: | If it’s someone who’s done something for me then I’ll be like “I’ll pay you back”. But if it’s someone who just gave me all this then I’m like “aye?” I do a bit of it. I go “here”. |

Most of the students’ disclosures related to coping with potential or existing interpersonal stressors, which is aligned with previous studies that report adolescents used problem-solving more for social than academic stressors (e.g., Eschenbeck et al., 2007).

Summary

Overall, the girls used problem-solving more than boys, which indicates a difference according to gender. Students at School A used problem-solving for interpersonal stressors, whereas students at School B used problem-solving for interpersonal and academic stressors. Correspondingly, this may indicate a difference according to school decile. Also, 11 of the 14 students who used problem-solving for family- and/or friend-related stressors identified as NZ European, and this may indicate a difference according to culture.

A summary of problem-solving responses to stressors reported by the students is shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Summary of Problem-Solving Responses

<u>Stressor</u>	<u>School A</u>		<u>School B</u>		<u>Total</u>
	Boys <i>n=6</i>	Girls <i>n=7</i>	Boys <i>n=6</i>	Girls <i>n=11</i>	
Academic	0	0	1	7	8
Peers	2	1	4	9	16
Friends	2	4	0	2	8
Family	5	3	1	2	11
Technology	0	1	5	6	12
Unspecified	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
Total	9	9	11	29	58

Support-seeking

Support-seeking is deemed to be an adaptive coping response (Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011), and 19 students reported that they sought support from friends, family, and/or school staff when they were stressed.

Seeking Support from Friends

Twelve students disclosed that they sought support from friends. Some students said that they sought support for school-, friend-, and/or family-related stressors. Other students did not disclose why they sought support from friends. For instance:

Botswana: I probably tell [friend] more stuff than I tell my Mum. ... She understands. ... She's with me all day so she knows how I feel sometimes.

Kakabera: My friends make me really happy [when stressed]. ... I just mail them and then they make me laugh.

Similarly, C. Ronaldo said that friends “are your second family” and Steven said “it’s good to have friends” because friends knew what they were going through. Steven also disclosed that he went to his friends when he had problems with his family.

The importance of friendships was also demonstrated by Kakabera’s comment about her mother’s relocation to another region in New Zealand:

Kakabera: When she told me that she wanted to move I got the choice but to be honest I’d rather stay here and be with my friends.

Most of the students did not elaborate on the type of support they received from friends. However, the boys generally discussed companionship (i.e., spending time with friends) and problem-focused support (e.g., discussing homework), whereas the girls generally discussed emotional support. Individuals who are similar may share the same biases, and problems may be misinterpreted or become exaggerated when adolescents confide in, and are supported by those similar to themselves (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997). This may be particularly relevant to the girls in the study who sought emotional support from their friends.

Seeking Support from Family

Fourteen students disclosed that they sought support from family (usually parents). Some students sought support for school-, friend-, and/or family-related stressors. For instance: Fulishia Frangipani, Clair, Cleo, Scarlet, and Violet said that they would seek support from family when they had problems at school, and Colonel Sanders said that he went to his family when he had problems with his friends. Also, Violet and Scarlet said that they would seek support from family when they had problems with other family members. For example:

Scarlet: I’ll often ring my granddad and say “can you come and help me because Dad’s getting grumpy at me and I don’t know what to do”.

In contrast, Matt (who disclosed that he didn’t really like his stepfamily “in general”) said that he did not seek support from his stepfamily, and Sora said “no one goes to their parents”. Also, Sprinkles disclosed that she does not go to her parents because “they take everything serious”,

Table 7

Summary of Support Sought from Friends

<u>Stressor</u>	<u>School A</u>		<u>School B</u>		<u>Total</u>
	Boys <i>n=6</i>	Girls <i>n=7</i>	Boys <i>n=6</i>	Girls <i>n=11</i>	
School	0	0	1	2	3
Friends	0	1	0	0	1
Family	0	1	3	1	5
Unspecified	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>
Total	0	4	6	5	15

Only girls sought support from family at School A, and most students at School B who sought support were girls. This may indicate a difference according to gender. Also, students at School B sought support from family more than students at School A, and this may indicate a difference according to school decile. Additionally, 13 of the 14 students identified as NZ European, which may indicate a difference according to culture.

A summary of responses to stressors where students sought support from family is shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Summary of Support Sought from Family

<u>Stressor</u>	<u>School A</u>		<u>School B</u>		<u>Total</u>
	Boys <i>n=6</i>	Girls <i>n=7</i>	Boys <i>n=6</i>	Girls <i>n=11</i>	
School	0	1	0	4	5
Friends	0	0	1	0	1
Family	0	1	1	2	4
Unspecified	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>11</u>
Total	0	5	2	14	21

Due to the small number of students who talked about seeking support from school staff, it is not possible to identify patterns of difference according to gender, school decile, or culture.

Six of the students sought support from both friends and family, and three students who sought support from school staff also sought support from friends and/or family. Overall, the students' disclosures indicate that emotional support was sought more than problem-focused support, and that girls sought emotional support more than boys.

Distraction

Distraction is deemed to be an adaptive coping response (de Anda et al., 2000), and 19 students used distraction to cope with stressors. Some students used distraction in response to school- and/or family-related stressors. For instance:

Sheniqwa-Lee: Normally I just go down into the bush and lose myself on an awesome adventure.

Cheng Lee: When times are going tough and with my family, I ran and ran and ran ... just so that I could leave them [the problems] — just throw my headphones on and run for ages.

Researcher: Just so that you didn't have to think about it?

Cheng Lee: Pretty much. Just get out and go for it.

Danni: I run with my friends.

W.B., Sheniqwa-Lee, and Cheng Lee said that they would spend time with friends (and sometimes skip classes with friends) when they had problems at school:

W.B.: Because it sort of helps you relax when you've got the nice atmosphere around you and things.

Sheniqwa-Lee: And friends just having a good time —

When questioned, the boys agreed that they tried to distract themselves by doing enjoyable activities when they were stressed. Social interaction may distract individuals from negative thoughts (Nicolotti et al., 2003), and adolescents may feel more positive and rejuvenated following leisure activities (Hutchinson et al., 2008). However, the boys' decision to skip classes could potentially generate other sources of stress, such as getting behind in schoolwork and getting into trouble with teachers and parents if they got caught.

The majority of students talked about what they did to distract themselves but did not disclose why they wanted to be distracted. For instance:

Sheniqwa-Lee and five boys at School B disclosed that they sometimes went to their room and played computer games or listened to music to distract themselves from problems. C. Ronaldo

Safushia Strawberry: I go real quiet. I block everyone out and I just won't talk. ... I can't get out of the space where I am. ... I sit in the bathroom in a little corner in the bath.

Fulishia Frangipani: Close myself off so that I can just relax. ... I just go to bed and think about stuff.

Steven: I hide away from life, from all the stuff.

Withdrawal (which peaks during middle adolescence) has been identified as the coping strategy used most often by adolescents when dealing with problems that relate to themselves (Besevegis & Galanaki, 2010).

Although deemed inappropriate for most stress, avoidance is adaptive when stressors are perceived as high and uncontrollable (M. L. Newman et al., 2011). As adolescents have limited power at home, it may be adaptive to use avoidance for some family-related stressors. However, it may be less adaptive when adolescents use avoidance for friend-related stressors, because adolescent relationships are more egalitarian and friend-related stressors may be more controllable. Nevertheless, individuals strive to control their emotions so that relationships are not compromised (Persike & Seiffge-Krenke, 2012), and avoidance provides an opportunity for adolescents to regulate their emotions and engage in less aggressive behaviour (Sontag & Graber, 2010).

Summary

Avoidance-coping was used by some students in all groups. Overall, there were no differences according to gender or culture. However, boys at School B used avoidance more than boys at School A, and this may indicate a difference according to school decile.

A summary of avoidant responses to stressors reported by the students is shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Summary of Avoidant Responses

<u>Stressor</u>	<u>School A</u>		<u>School B</u>		<u>Total</u>
	Boys <i>n=6</i>	Girls <i>n=7</i>	Boys <i>n=6</i>	Girls <i>n=11</i>	
Family	1	3	5	3	12
Friend	1	0	3	5	9
Unspecified	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	2	5	8	8	23

Emotion-Regulation

Fifteen students disclosed that they used emotion-regulation to cope with stressors. All of these students disclosed that they got angry in response to stress associated with peers and/or family, and some students expressed anger when they were unable to do what they wanted to do. Some students elaborated on their behaviour when they were angry. For example:

Clair: I have a little bit of anger issues. ... Once I got really bad and I punched a hole in the wall.

Sheniqwa-Lee: I smashed 10 holes by my wardrobe. ... I get into a bit of a tanty, like when my Mum tells me off. ... I get angry, not crazy angry —

Anger is deemed to be a maladaptive response to stress when stressors are controllable (Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011). Seven students disclosed that they responded to home-related stressors with anger, and they may have had limited or no control over these stressful situations. Nevertheless, 10 students disclosed that they responded to peer-related stressors with anger, and they may have been able to exert some control in these situations. Sheniqwa-Lee disclosed that his father “gets real stressed over little things” and “just has a massive tanty” when he was stressed. Correspondingly, some of the students may have been modelling their parents’ coping styles, because parental modelling is one way that children learn how to cope in stressful situations (Kliewer et al., 2006).

Some students disclosed that they also used different forms of emotion-regulation. Danni and Kakabera said they sometimes cried when they get stressed, and this is a coping response reported in previous studies (e.g., de Anda et al., 2000). Colonel Sanders said that he would “just go to the

dog” when he was feeling stressed, which is aligned with Bryan et al.’s (2014) argument that dogs can provide comfort when individuals feel distressed. Furthermore, Matt disclosed that he would “just stay home and just calm down myself ... express my feelings with myself”, and this is a coping response reported in some studies (e.g., Kliewer et al., 2006).

The students’ disclosures are consistent with Eschenbeck et al.’s (2007) argument that adolescents use emotion-regulation more for social stressors than academic stressors.

Summary

Overall, there were no patterns of difference according to gender or culture. However, students at School B used emotion-regulation more than students at School A for peer-related stressors, and this may indicate a difference according to school decile.

A summary of responses to stressors where students used emotion-regulation is shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Summary of Emotion-Regulation Responses

<u>Stressor</u>	<u>School A</u>		<u>School B</u>		<u>Total</u>
	Boys <i>n=6</i>	Girls <i>n=7</i>	Boys <i>n=6</i>	Girls <i>n=11</i>	
Peer	1	0	3	5	9
Family	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>12</u>
Total	3	4	6	8	21

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Findings

The present study furthered the understanding of stressors and coping responses of Year 9 students (aged 13–14 years) in the Wellington region of New Zealand. The stressors and coping responses relevant to the students are discussed below.

Stressors

The main stressors disclosed by the students related to school, peers, family, technology, school/leisure conflict and extracurricular activities, and future concerns (with school-, peer-, and family-related stressors reported the most). These stressors are consistent with stressors identified in previous studies (e.g., Byrne et al., 2007; de Anda et al., 2000; De Vriendt et al., 2011; Suldo et al., 2009). However, financial pressure and/or emerging adult responsibility were stressors identified in the above studies, but were not relevant to the students in the present study. Also, future uncertainty was one of the highest sources of stress reported by de Anda et al. (2000) and De Vriendt et al. (2011), whereas the students in the present study were not overly concerned about the future.

Differences in reporting may be due to the inclusion of older adolescents in the studies. The students in the present study were aged 13–14 years, whereas the students in De Vriendt et al.'s (2011) European study were aged 12.5 to 17.5 years, the students in Byrne et al.'s (2007) Australian study were aged 13–18 years, and the students in de Anda et al.'s (2000) study in Los Angeles were aged 15-18 years. Unlike older adolescents, who are nearer to leaving secondary school and becoming more self-reliant, early adolescents are largely reliant on their parents or other adults to provide for their financial needs. Similarly, early adolescents may experience less stress associated with emerging adult responsibilities and future concerns than older adolescents because responsibilities progressively increase with age. Nevertheless, most of the stressors identified in the present study are consistent with those identified in the above studies, which suggests that New Zealand adolescents generally experience the same types of stressors as adolescents from other westernised countries.

Overall, girls reported more stressors than boys, and differences according to gender, school decile, and culture were found for some stressors.

Gender differences were found for school transition, where girls discussed more interpersonal stressors. Girls' arguments were more enduring, girls reported more same-gender peer stressors, and girls reported stress associated with mixed-gender friendships, friends' breaches of confidentiality, pressure to wear the latest fashions, and romantic relationships. The girls indicated that they experienced more stress associated with arguments with friends, and (with regard to technology) girls discussed personal safety and paedophiles whereas boys discussed annoying online postings and spam. Most of the students who discussed stress associated with school/leisure conflict and extracurricular activities were girls, and only girls discussed future concerns (i.e., future finances). Contrasting, boys at School A disclosed more teacher-related stressors than girls.

Differences according to school decile were found for some stressors. Students at School B reported more stressors associated with adjustment to new peers and larger peer groups during transition. Classmate stressors differed according to school decile. Students at School A disclosed more teacher-related stressors than students at School B, and boys at School A reported the most stressors associated with family members' demands and expectations.

Some stressors were unique to students from minority groups. Differences in the interpretation of racial discrimination was identified at School B. Restrictions on clothing due to cultural norms, and language differences between students and their grandparents have been identified as potential sources of adolescent stress.

Coping Responses

The main coping styles reported by the students were problem-solving, support-seeking, distraction, avoidance, and emotion-regulation. Problem-solving and support seeking (forms of engagement coping), and distraction (a form of disengagement coping) are deemed to be adaptive coping responses (de Anda et al., 2000; Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2011). Avoidance (a form of disengagement coping) may be adaptive or maladaptive (dependant on whether stressors are controllable) (M. L. Newman et al., 2011). Similarly, emotion-regulation (a form of engagement coping) may be an adaptive or maladaptive coping response (e.g., relaxation and aggression) (Eschenbeck et al., 2007; Kliewer et al., 2006).

Problem-solving, support-seeking, distraction, avoidance, and emotion-regulation were used by students in all groups, with the exception of the boys at School A who did not use support-seeking. Individually, most students used a variety of coping responses, and, individually, girls tended to use a greater range of responses than boys. This is consistent with some previous research (e.g.,

Kardum et al., 2008). Patterns of difference according to gender, school decile, and culture were identified for some coping responses.

Girls used problem-solving and sought emotional support from friends and family more than boys. This is consistent with some previous research (e.g., Herpertz-Dahlmann et al., 2013; Sontag & Graber, 2010). However, gender differences were not found for distraction, avoidance, or emotion-regulation, and this contradicts some previous studies. For instance, boys have been reported to use distraction and avoidance more than girls (e.g., Herpertz-Dahlmann et al., 2013; Sontag & Graber, 2010). However, gender differences in coping may be narrowing because of changes in gendered social roles and constraints (Matud, 2004), and this may factor into the gender similarities observed for the students' use of avoidance, distraction, and emotion-regulation in the present study.

Differences according to school decile were identified for four coping responses. Students at School A used problem-solving for interpersonal stressors, whereas students at School B used problem-solving for interpersonal and academic stressors. Students at School B sought support from family more than students at School A. Boys at School B used avoidance more than boys at School A, and students at School B used emotion-regulation more than students at School A for peer-related stressors.

Differences according to culture were found for problem-solving and seeking support from family and/or friends. The majority of students who used these coping responses identified as NZ European.

Implications

The present study has found some differences according to gender, school decile, and culture for the types of stressors experienced by early adolescents and the coping responses they use. Consequently, some adolescent populations in New Zealand may experience more stress or different types of stress than others. For instance, girls reported more stressors (particularly interpersonal stressors), adolescents from School B used avoidance and emotion-regulation more than students at School A (perhaps because they experienced more severe or uncontrollable stressors than students from School B), and students from minority groups indicated that some stressors were unique to their culture. Nevertheless, most students in the present study used adaptive coping (particularly problem-solving) more than maladaptive coping, which is consistent with previous studies (e.g., de Anda et al., 2000).

Adolescents who use inappropriate coping responses may experience more stress than adolescents who manage their stressors effectively, and interventions may need to be tailored to specific adolescent populations to minimise the effect of stressors. For instance, students in the present study from ethnic minority groups may benefit from using more problem-solving and support-seeking to cope with stressors.

Limitations

The sample size in the present study was small (i.e., 30 students), and limited to mainstream schools in one geographical region of New Zealand. Therefore, findings may not be generalisable to other adolescent populations in New Zealand. Also, there were more girls in the study.

Discussions on some topics were limited to one or two groups, or one or two students within groups, and girls generally disclosed more personal information than boys. Correspondingly, contributions from different students may have resulted in different findings. Also, individuals may make socially desirable responses in group discussions, and data is generated using self-reports (which may be subject to bias).

Furthermore, at each school, the group discussions were conducted one after the other, and the researcher did not have the opportunity to review the previous session/s. Had there been more time to prepare, the researcher could have re-visited topics introduced by students in previous sessions, which would have allowed for more comparisons to be made according to gender, school decile, and culture. Time constraints also limited the opportunity for the students to discuss some topics in more detail.

Future Research

It is expected that the present study will contribute to the understanding of stressors and coping of early adolescents in New Zealand, and may be utilised in the design of interventions that will help early adolescents in New Zealand cope effectively with stressors.

The present study enabled the exploration of stressors and coping responses of adolescents aged 13–14 years from two mainstream schools in an urban setting in New Zealand. It would be of further value to explore the stressors and coping responses of adolescents who live in rural areas, and those who do not attend mainstream schools (e.g., Kura Kaupapa Māori schools, private schools). It would also be of value to explore the stressors and coping responses of adolescents of different ages, or conduct a longitudinal study that would identify changes in types of stressors

and coping responses relevant to adolescents over, for example, their entire secondary school experience.

Furthermore, designing a study where focus groups are followed by interviews with participants would allow researchers to pose additional questions that are relevant to participants' original disclosures, and give participants the opportunity to expand on their narratives. This would provide a more in-depth understanding of the types of stressors they have experienced and the coping responses they have used.

REFERENCES

- Abaied, J. L., & Rudolph, K. D. (2010). Mothers as a resource in times of stress: Interactive contributions of socialization of coping and stress to youth psychopathology. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 38(2), 273-289. doi: 10.1007/s10802-009-9364-7
- Alisic, E., Boeije, H. R., Jongmans, M. J., & Kleber, R. J. (2011). Children's perspectives on dealing with traumatic events. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 16(6), 477-496. doi: 10.1080/15325024.2011.576979
- American Psychological Association. (2018). *Glossary of psychological terms*. Retrieved February 10, 2018, from <http://www.apa.org/research/action/glossary.aspx>
- Andersen, S. L., & Teicher, M. H. (2009). Desperately driven and no brakes: Developmental stress exposure and subsequent risk for substance abuse. *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*, 33(4), 516-524. doi: 10.1016/j.neubiorev.2008.09.009
- Aspinwall, L. G., & Taylor, S. E. (1997). A stitch in time: Self-regulation and proactive coping. *Psychological Bulletin*, 121(3), 417-436. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.121.3.417
- Auerbach, R. P., Abela, J. R. Z., Zhu, X., & Yao, S. (2010). Understanding the role of coping in the development of depressive symptoms: Symptom specificity, gender differences, and cross-cultural applicability. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 49(4), 547-561. doi: 10.1348/014466509X479681
- Bagnoli, A., & Clark, A. (2010). Focus groups with young people: A participatory approach to research planning. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 13(1), 101-119. doi: 10.1080/13676260903173504
- Balantekin, K. N., & Roemmich, J. N. (2012). Children's coping after psychological stress: Choices among food, physical activity, and television. *Appetite*, 59(2), 298-304. doi: 10.1016/j.appet.2012.05.016
- Beausang, J., Farrell, A., & Walsh, K. (2012). Young people whose parents are separated or divorced: A case for researching their experiences at the intersection of home and school. *Educational Research*, 54(3), 343-356. doi: 10.1080/00131881.2012.710092
- Benzies, K., & Mychasiuk, R. (2009). Fostering family resiliency: A review of the key protective factors. *Child & Family Social Work*, 14(1), 103-114. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2206.2008.00586.x
- Berson, I. R., & Berson, M. J. (2005). Challenging online behaviors of youth: Findings from a comparative analysis of young people in the United States and New Zealand. *Social Science Computer Review*, 23(1), 29-38. doi: 10.1177/0894439304271532
- Besevegis, E., & Galanaki, E. P. (2010). Coping with loneliness in childhood. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 7(6), 653-673. doi: 10.1080/17405620903113306
- Bonanno, G. A., & Diminich, E. D. (2013). Annual research review: Positive adjustment to adversity - trajectories of minimal-impact resilience and emergent resilience. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 54(4), 378-401. doi: 10.1111/jcpp.12021
- Bowker, A., Bukowski, W. M., Hymel, S., & Sippola, L. K. (2000). Coping with daily hassles in the peer group during early adolescence: Variations as a function of peer experience. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 10(2), 211-243. doi: 10.1207/SJRA1002_5
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. doi: 10.1191/1478088706qp063oa
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. London, England: Sage Publications Ltd.

- Brod, M., Tesler, L. E., & Christensen, T. L. (2009). Qualitative research and content validity: Developing best practices based on science and experience. *Quality of Life Research* 18(9), 1263-1278. doi: 10.1007/s11136-009-9540-9
- Brooks, J. E. (2006). Strengthening resilience in children and youths: Maximizing opportunities through the schools. *Children & Schools*, 28(2), 69-76. doi: 10.1093/cs/28.2.69
- Bryan, J. L., Quist, M. C., Young, C. M., Steers, M.-L., Foster, D. W., & Lu, Q. (2014). Canine comfort: Pet affinity buffers the negative impact of ambivalence over emotional expression on perceived social support. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 68, 23-27. doi: 10.1016/j.paid.2014.04.003
- Byrne, D. G., Davenport, S. C., & Mazanov, J. (2007). Profiles of adolescent stress: The development of the adolescent stress questionnaire (ASQ). *Journal of Adolescence*, 30(3), 393-416. doi: 10.1016/j.adolescence.2006.04.004
- Camara, M., Bacigalupe, G., & Padilla, P. (2014). The role of social support in adolescents: Are you helping me or stressing me out? *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 22(2), 123-136. doi: 10.1080/02673843.2013.875480
- Campbell, M., Spears, B., Slee, P., Butler, D., & Kift, S. (2012). Victims' perceptions of traditional and cyberbullying, and the psychosocial correlates of their victimisation. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, 17(3-4), 389-401. doi: 10.1080/13632752.2012.704316
- Carver, C. S., & Connor-Smith, J. (2010). Personality and coping. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 61, 679-704. doi: 10.1146/annurev.psych.093008.100352
- Clark, T., Fleming, T., Bullen, P., Crengle, S., Denny, S., Dyson, B., . . . Lewycka, S. (2013). Health and well-being of secondary school students in New Zealand: Trends between 2001, 2007 and 2012. *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health*, 49(11), 925-934. doi: 10.1111/jpc.12427
- Coggan, C., Bennett, S., Hooper, R., & Dickinson, P. (2003). Association between bullying and mental health status in New Zealand adolescents. *International Journal of Mental Health Promotion*, 5(1), 16-22. doi: 10.1080/14623730.2003.9721892
- de Anda, D., Baroni, S., Boskin, L., Buchwald, L., Morgan, J., Ow, J., . . . Weiss, R. (2000). Stress, stressors and coping among high school students. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 22(6), 441-463. doi: 10.1016/S0190-7409(00)00096-7 .
- De Vriendt, T., Clays, E., Huybrechts, I., De Bourdeaudhuij, I., Moreno, L. A., Patterson, E., . . . De Henauw, S. (2012). European adolescents' level of perceived stress is inversely related to their diet quality: The healthy lifestyle in Europe by nutrition in adolescence study. *British Journal of Nutrition*, 108(2), 371-380. doi: 10.1017/S0007114511005708
- De Vriendt, T., Clays, E., Maes, L., De Bourdeaudhuij, I., Vicente-Rodriguez, G., Moreno, L. A., . . . De Henauw, S. (2011). European adolescents' level of perceived stress and its relationship with body adiposity - The HELENA Study. *European Journal of Public Health*, 22(4), 519-524. doi: 10.1093/eurpub/ckr134
- deLara, E. W. (2012). Why adolescents don't disclose incidents of bullying and harassment. *Journal of School Violence*, 11(4), 288-305. doi: 10.1080/15388220.2012.705931
- Devonport, T. J., Lane, A. M., & Biscomb, K. (2013). Exploring coping strategies used by national adolescent netball players across domains. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology*, 7(2), 161-177.
- Dimmock, M., Grieves, S., & Place, M. (2008). Young people who cut themselves: A growing challenge for educational settings. *British Journal of Special Education*, 35(1), 42-48. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8578.2008.00368.x

- Doron, J., Stephan, Y., Boiche, J., & Le Scanff, C. (2009). Coping with examinations: Exploring relationships between students' coping strategies, implicit theories of ability, and perceived control. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *79*(3), 515-528. doi: 10.1348/978185409X402580
- Eiland, L., & Romeo, R. D. (2013). Stress and the developing adolescent brain. *Neuroscience*, *249*, 162-171. doi: 10.1016/j.neuroscience.2012.10.048
- Eschenbeck, H., Kohlmann, C.-W., & Lohaus, A. (2007). Gender differences in coping strategies in children and adolescents. *Journal of Individual Differences*, *28*(1), 18-26. doi: 10.1027/1614-0001.28.1.18
- Flack, T., Salmivalli, C., & Idsoe, T. (2011). Peer relations as a source of stress? Assessing affiliation- and status-related stress among adolescents. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, *8*(4), 473-489. doi: 10.1080/17405629.2011.558312
- Fleming, T. M., Clark, T., Denny, S., Bullen, P., Crengle, S., Peiris-John, R., . . . Lucassen, M. (2014). Stability and change in the mental health of New Zealand secondary school students 2007-2012: Results from the national adolescent health surveys. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, *48*(5), 472-480. doi: 10.1177/0004867413514489
- Flook, L., & Fuligni, A. J. (2008). Family and school spillover in adolescents' daily lives. *Child Development*, *79*(3), 776-787. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2008.01157.x
- Flouri, E., Buchanan, A., Tan, J.-P., Griggs, J., & Attar-Schwartz, S. (2010). Adverse life events, area socio-economic disadvantage, and adolescent psychopathology: The role of closeness to grandparents in moderating the effect of contextual stress. *Stress*, *13*(5), 402-412. doi: 10.3109/10253891003671690
- Friedrich, A. A., Mendez, L. M. R., & Mihalas, S. T. (2010). Gender as a factor in school-based mental health service delivery. *School Psychology Review*, *39*(1), 122-136.
- Frisén, A., Hasselblad, T., & Holmqvist, K. (2012). What actually makes bullying stop? Reports from former victims. *Journal of Adolescence*, *35*(4), 981-990. doi: 10.1016/j.adolescence.2012.02.001
- Frydenberg, E., & Lewis, R. (2009). The relationship between problem-solving efficacy and coping amongst Australian adolescents. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, *37*(1), 51-64. doi: 10.1080/03069880802534054
- Gibson, F. (2007). Conducting focus groups with children and young people: Strategies for success. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, *12*(5), 473-483. doi: 10.1177/1744987107079791
- Hampel, P., & Petermann, F. (2006). Perceived stress, coping, and adjustment in adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, *38*(4), 409-415. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2005.02.014
- Hankin, B. L., Mermelstein, R., & Roesch, L. (2007). Sex differences in adolescent depression: Stress exposure and reactivity models. *Child Development*, *78*(1), 279-295. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2007.00997.x
- Harris, R., Tobias, M., Jeffreys, M., Waldegrave, K., Karlsen, S., & Nazroo, J. (2006). Racism and health: The relationship between experience of racial discrimination and health in New Zealand. *Social Science & Medicine*, *63*(6), 1428-1441. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2006.04.009
- Hayes, E. R., & Plowfield, L. A. (2007). Smoking too young: Students' decisions about tobacco use. *MCN: The American Journal of Maternal/Child Nursing*, *32*(2), 112-116. doi: 10.1097/01.NMC.0000264292.72221.ef
- Heary, C. M., & Hennessy, E. (2002). The use of focus group interviews in pediatric health care research. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, *27*(1), 47-57. doi: 10.1093/jpepsy/27.1.47

- Herpertz-Dahlmann, B., Bühren, K., & Remschmidt, H. (2013). Growing up is hard: Mental disorders in adolescence. *Deutsches Ärzteblatt International*, *110*(25), 432-440. doi: 10.3238/arztebl.2013.0432
- Hickle, K. E., & Anthony, E. K. (2013). Transactional stress and anxiety control beliefs among low-income early adolescents. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *35*(2), 353-357. doi: 10.1016/j.chilyouth.2012.11.010
- Hollander, J. A. (2004). The social contexts of focus groups. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *33*(5), 602-637. doi: 10.1177/0891241604266988
- Hopson, L. M., & Lee, E. (2011). Mitigating the effect of family poverty on academic and behavioral outcomes: The role of school climate in middle and high school. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *33*(11), 2221-2229. doi: 10.1016/j.chilyouth.2011.07.006
- Hornby, G., & Witte, C. (2010). Parental involvement in secondary schools in New Zealand: Implications for school psychologists. *School Psychology International*, *31*(5), 495-508. doi: 10.1177/0143034310382611
- Horowitz, J. A., Vessey, J. A., Carlson, K. L., Bradley, J. F., Montoya, C., & McCullough, B. (2003). Conducting school-based focus groups: Lessons learned from the CATS Project. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*, *18*(5), 321-331. doi: 10.1053/S0882-5963(03)00104-0
- Huan, V. S., See, Y. L., Ang, R. P., & Har, C. W. (2008). The impact of adolescent concerns on their academic stress. *Educational Review*, *60*(2), 169-178. doi: 10.1080/00131910801934045
- Huisman, C., & Bruggeman, J. (2012). The social network, socioeconomic background, and school type of adolescent smokers. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *36*(5), 329-337. doi: 10.1177/0165025412444078
- Hutchinson, S. L., Baldwin, C. K., & Oh, S.-S. (2006). Adolescent coping: Exploring adolescents' leisure-based responses to stress. *Leisure Sciences*, *28*(2), 115-131. doi: 10.1080/01490400500483984
- Hutchinson, S. L., Bland, A. D., & Kleiber, D. A. (2008). Leisure and stress-coping: Implications for therapeutic recreation practice. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, *42*(1), 9-23.
- Indian, M., & Grieve, R. (2014). When Facebook is easier than face-to-face: Social support derived from Facebook in socially anxious individuals. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *59*, 102-106. doi: 10.1016/j.paid.2013.11.016
- Irwin, M. (2013). 'Hanging out with mates': Friendship quality and its effect on academic endeavours and social behaviours. *Australian Journal of Education*, *57*(2), 141-156. doi: 10.1177/0004944113485839
- Jose, P. E., & Ratcliffe, V. (2004). Stressor frequency and perceived intensity as predictors of internalizing symptoms: Gender and age differences in adolescence. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, *33*(3), 145-154.
- Jose, P. E., & Schurer, K. (2010). Cultural differences in coping among New Zealand adolescents. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *41*(1), 3-18. doi: 10.1177/0022022109348783
- Kammeyer-Mueller, J. D., Judge, T. A., & Scott, B. A. (2009). The role of core self-evaluations in the coping process. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *94*(1), 177-195. doi: 10.1037/a0013214
- Kardum, I., Krapić, N., & Hudek-Knežević, J. (2008). Antecedents and consequences of agentic and communal stressful life events in adolescence. *Psihologijske Teme*, *17*(1), 133-153.

- Kelly, A. B., O'Flaherty, M., Connor, J. P., Homel, R., Toumbourou, J. W., Patton, G. C., & Williams, J. (2011). The influence of parents, siblings and peers on pre- and early-teen smoking: A multilevel model. *Drug and Alcohol Review, 30*(4), 381-387. doi: 10.1111/j.1465-3362.2010.00231.x
- Kendal, S., Keeley, P., & Callery, P. (2011). Young people's preferences for emotional well-being support in high school: A focus group study. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing, 24*(4), 245-253. doi: 10.1111/j.1744-6171.2011.00303.x
- Kliewer, W., Parrish, K. A., Taylor, K. W., Jackson, K., Walker, J. M., & Shivy, V. A. (2006). Socialization of coping with community violence: Influences of caregiver coaching, modeling, and family context. *Child Development, 77*(3), 605-623. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2006.00893.x
- Kljakovic, M., Hunt, C., & Jose, P. E. (2015). Incidence of bullying and victimisation among adolescents in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology, 44*(2), 57-67.
- Koerner, S. S., Korn, M., Dennison, R. P., & Witthoft, S. (2011). Future money-related worries among adolescents after divorce. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 26*(3), 299-317. doi: 10.1177/0743558410391256
- Kumar, R. (2011). *Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners* (3rd ed.). London, England: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Lerner, R. M., Boyd, M. J., & Du, D. (2010). Adolescent development. In *Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology* (pp. 1-2). Retrieved September 29, 2014 from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/doi/10.1002/9780470479216.corpsy0019/pdf>.
- Lester, L., Waters, S., & Cross, D. (2013). The relationship between school connectedness and mental health during the transition to secondary school: A path analysis. *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling, 23*(2), 157-171. doi: 10.1017/jgc.2013.20
- Li, M., & Wang, L. (2016). The associations of psychological stress with depressive and anxiety symptoms among Chinese bladder and renal cancer patients: The mediating role of resilience. *Plos ONE, 11*(4), 1-13. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0154729
- Markovic, A., Rose-Krasnor, L., & Coplan, R. J. (2013). Shy children's coping with a social conflict: The role of personality self-theories. *Personality and Individual Differences, 54*(1), 64-69. doi: 10.1016/j.paid.2012.08.002
- Marsac, M. L., Donlon, K. A., Winston, F. K., & Kassam-Adams, N. (2013). Child coping, parent coping assistance, and post-traumatic stress following paediatric physical injury. *Child: Care, Health and Development, 39*(2), 171-177. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2214.2011.01328.x
- Marsh, L., Iosua, E., McGee, R., & White, J. (2017). New Zealand adolescents' discouragement of smoking among their peer. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, 41*(5), 497-501. doi: 10.1111/1753-6405.12698
- Massey, O. T. (2011). A proposed model for the analysis and interpretation of focus groups in evaluation research. *Evaluation and Program Planning, 34*(1), 21-28. doi: 10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2010.06.003
- Matud, M. P. (2004). Gender differences in stress and coping styles. *Personality and Individual Differences, 37*(7), 1401-1415. doi: 10.1016/j.paid.2004.01.010
- McAndrew, S., & Warne, T. (2014). Hearing the voices of young people who self-harm: Implications for service providers. *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing, 23*(6), 570-579. doi: 10.1111/inm.12093

- Ministry of Education. (2017a). *Different types of primary and intermediate schools*. Retrieved February 18, 2018, from <https://parents.education.govt.nz/primary-school/schooling-in-nz/different-types-of-primary-and-intermediate-schools/>
- Ministry of Education. (2017b). *Different types of secondary schools*. Retrieved February 18, 2018, from <https://parents.education.govt.nz/secondary-school/secondary-schooling-in-nz/different-types-of-secondary-schools/>
- Ministry of Education. (2017c). *School Deciles*. Retrieved February 18, 2018, from <https://www.education.govt.nz/school/running-a-school/resourcing/operational-funding/school-decile-ratings/>
- Moksnes, U. K., Espnes, G. A., & Haugan, G. (2014). Stress, sense of coherence and emotional symptoms in adolescents. *Psychology & Health, 29*(1), 32-49. doi: 10.1080/08870446.2013.822868
- Moljord, I. E. O., Moksnes, U. K., Eriksen, L., & Espnes, G. A. (2011). Stress and happiness among adolescents with varying frequency of physical activity. *Perceptual and Motor Skills, 113*(2), 631-646. doi: 10.2466/02.06.10.13.PMS.113.5.631-646
- Murray, K. M., Byrne, D. G., & Rieger, E. (2011). Investigating adolescent stress and body image. *Journal of Adolescence, 34*(2), 269-278. doi: 10.1016/j.adolescence.2010.05.004
- Newman, B. M., Lohman, B. J., Newman, P. R., Myers, M. C., & Smith, V. L. (2000). Experiences of urban youth navigating the transition to ninth grade. *Youth & Society, 31*(4), 387-416. doi: 10.1177/0044118X00031004001
- Newman, M. L., Holden, G. W., & Delville, Y. (2011). Coping with the stress of being bullied: Consequences of coping strategies among college students. *Social Psychological and Personality Science, 2*(2), 205-211. doi: 10.1177/1948550610386388
- Ngai, S. S., Cheung, C., To, S., Liu, Y., & Song, H. (2013). Parent-child relationships, friendship networks, and developmental outcomes of economically disadvantaged youth in Hong Kong. *Children and Youth Services Review, 35*(1), 91-101. doi: 10.1016/j.childyouth.2012.09.025
- Nicolai, K. A., Laney, T., & Mezulis, A. H. (2013). Different stressors, different strategies, different outcomes: How domain-specific stress responses differentially predict depressive symptoms among adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 42*(8), 1183-1193. doi: 10.1007/s10964-012-9866-4
- Nicolotti, L., El-Sheikh, M., & Whitson, S. M. (2003). Children's coping with marital conflict and their adjustment and physical health: Vulnerability and protective functions. *Journal of Family Psychology, 17*(3), 315-326. doi: 10.1037/0893-3200.17.3.315
- Norris, A. E., Aroian, K. J., Warren, S., & Wirth, J. (2012). Interactive performance and focus groups with adolescents: The power of play. *Research in Nursing & Health, 35*(6), 671-679. doi: 10.1002/nur.21509
- Ott, M. A., & Pfeiffer, E. J. (2009). "That's nasty" to curiosity: Early adolescent cognitions about sexual abstinence. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 44*(6), 575-581. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2008.10.139
- Owens, E. W., Behun, R. J., Manning, J. C., & Reid, R. C. (2012). The impact of internet pornography on adolescents: A review of the research. *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity, 19*(1-2), 99-122. doi: 10.1080/10720162.2012.660431
- Peek, L., & Fothergill, A. (2009). Using focus groups: Lessons from studying daycare centers, 9/11, and Hurricane Katrina. *Qualitative Research, 9*(1), 31-59. doi: 10.1177/1468794108098029

- Persike, M., & Seiffge-Krenke, I. (2012). Competence in coping with stress in adolescents from three regions of the world. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 41(7), 863-879. doi: 10.1007/s10964-011-9719-6
- Poblet, M., Teodoro, E., González-Conejero, J., Varela, R., & Casanovas, P. (2017). A co-regulatory approach to stay safe online: Reporting inappropriate content with the MediaKids mobile app. *Journal of Family Studies*, 23(2), 180-197. doi: 10.1080/13229400.2015.1106337
- Powell, M. A., & Smith, A. B. (2009). Children's participation rights in research. *Childhood*, 16(1), 124-142. doi: 10.1177/0907568208101694
- Punch, S. (2002). Interviewing strategies with young people: The 'secret box', stimulus material and task-based activities. *Children and Society*, 16(1), 45-56. doi: 10.1002/CHI.685.
- Raskauskas, J. (2010). Text-bullying: Associations with traditional bullying and depression among New Zealand adolescents. *Journal of School Violence*, 9(1), 74-97. doi: 10.1080/15388220903185605
- Rew, L., Principe, C., & Hannah, D. (2012). Changes in stress and coping during late childhood and preadolescence. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing*, 25(3), 130-140. doi: 10.1111/j.1744-6171.2012.00336.x
- Rutter, M. (2013). Annual Research Review: Resilience – clinical implications. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 54(4), 474-487. doi: 10.1111/j.1469-7610.2012.02615.x
- Ryan, K. E., Gandha, T., Culbertson, M. J., & Carlson, C. (2013). Focus group evidence: Implications for design and analysis. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 00(0), 1-18. doi: 10.1177/1098214013508300
- Salimi, A., & Bozorgpour, F. (2012). Perceived social support and social-emotional loneliness. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 69, 2009-2013. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.12.158
- Sancho, M., & Cline, T. (2012). Fostering a sense of belonging and community as children start a new school. *Educational & Child Psychology*, 29(1), 64-74.
- Scott, B. G., & Weems, C. F. (2010). Patterns of actual and perceived control: Are control profiles differentially related to internalizing and externalizing problems in youth? *Anxiety, Stress, & Coping*, 23(5), 515-528. doi: 10.1080/10615801003611479
- Sears, H. A., Graham, J., & Campbell, A. (2009). Adolescent boys' intentions of seeking help from male friends and female friends. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 30(6), 738-748. doi: 10.1016/j.appdev.2009.02.004
- Seiffge-Krenke, I. (2011). Coping with relationship stressors: A decade review. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 21(1), 196-210. doi: 10.1111/j.1532-7795.2010.00723.x
- Seiffge-Krenke, I., Aunola, K., & Nurmi, J.-E. (2009). Changes in stress perception and coping during adolescence: The role of situational and personal factors. *Child Development*, 80(1), 259-279. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2008.01258.x
- Seiffge-Krenke, I., Persike, M., Karaman, N. G., Cok, F., Herrera, D., Rohail, I., . . . Hyeyoun, H. (2013). Stress with parents and peers: How adolescents from six nations cope with relationship stress. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 23(1), 103-117. doi: 10.1111/j.1532-7795.2012.00813.x
- Sirikantraporn, S. (2013). Biculturalism as a protective factor: An exploratory study on resilience and bicultural level of acculturation among Southeast Asian American youth who have witnessed domestic violence. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, 4(2), 109-115. doi: 10.1037/a0030433

- Sontag, L. M., & Graber, J. A. (2010). Coping with perceived peer stress: Gender-specific and common pathways to symptoms of psychopathology. *Developmental Psychology, 46*(6), 1605-1620. doi: 10.1037/a0020617
- Strassberg, D. S., McKinnon, R. K., Sustaíta, M. A., & Rullo, J. (2013). Sexting by high school students: An exploratory and descriptive study. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 42*(1), 15-21. doi: 10.1007/s10508-012-9969-8
- Suldo, S. M., Shaunessy, E., Thalji, A., Michalowski, J., & Shaffer, E. (2009). Sources of stress for students in high school college preparatory and general education programs: Group differences and associations with adjustment. *Adolescence, 44*(176), 925-948.
- Teitelman, A., McDonald, C. C., Wiebe, D. J., Thomas, N., Guerra, T., Kassam-Adams, N., & Richmond, T. S. (2010). Youth's strategies for staying safe and coping with the stress of living in violent communities. *Journal of Community Psychology, 38*(7), 874-885. doi: 10.1002/jcop.20402
- Tekola, B., Griffin, C., & Camfield, L. (2009). Using qualitative methods with poor children in urban Ethiopia: Opportunities and challenges. *Social Indicators Research, 90*(1), 73-87. doi: 10.1007/s11205-008-9313-9
- Theron, L., Cameron, C. A., Didkowsky, N., Lau, C., Liebenberg, L., & Ungar, M. (2011). A "day in the lives" of four resilient youths: Cultural roots of resilience. *Youth & Society, 43*(3), 799-818. doi: 10.1177/0044118X11402853
- Thomsen, T., & Greve, W. (2013). Accommodative coping in early adolescence: An investigation of possible developmental components. *Journal of Adolescence, 36*(5), 971-981. doi: 10.1016/j.adolescence.2013.08.003
- United Nations. (n.d.). What do we mean by "youth"? Retrieved September 29, 2014 from <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/youth/youth-definition/>
- Vacaru, M. A., Shepherd, R. M., & Sheridan, J. (2014). New Zealand youth and their relationship with mobile phone technology. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction 12*(5), 572-584. doi: 10.1007/s11469-014-9488-z
- Valiente, C., Lemery-Chalfant, K., & Swanson, J. (2009). Children's responses to daily social stressors: Relations with parenting, children's effortful control, and adjustment. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 50*(6), 707-717. doi: 10.1111/j.1469-7610.2008.02019.x
- Vierhaus, M., & Lohaus, A. (2009). Children's perception of relations between anger or anxiety and coping: Continuity and discontinuity of relational structures. *Social Development, 18*(3), 747-763. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9507.2008.00504.x
- Viner, R. M., Ozer, E. M., Denny, S., Marmot, M., Resnick, M., Fatusi, A., & Currie, C. (2012). Adolescence and the social determinants of health. *The Lancet, 379*(9826), 1641-1652. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(12)60149-4
- Waite, E. B., Shanahan, L., Calkins, S. D., Keane, S. P., & O'Brien, M. (2011). Life events, sibling warmth, and youths' adjustment. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 73*(5), 902-912. doi: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2011.00857.x
- Walrond, C. (2012, November 9). Teenagers and youth: Defining teenagers as a group. In *Te Ara, The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*.
- Waters, S. K., Lester, L., Wenden, E., & Cross, D. (2012). A theoretically grounded exploration of the social and emotional outcomes of transition to secondary school. *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling, 22*(2), 190-205. doi: 10.1017/jgc.2012.26

- Webber, M., McKinley, E., & Hattie, J. (2013). The importance of race and ethnicity: An exploration of New Zealand Pākehā, Māori, Samoan and Chinese adolescent identity. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology, 42*(2), 17-28.
- Wolchik, S. A., Schenck, C. E., & Sandler, I. N. (2009). Promoting resilience in youth from divorced families: Lessons learned from experimental trials of the new beginnings program. *Journal of Personality, 77*(6), 1833-1868. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6494.2009.00602.x
- Yan, Y.-W., Lin, R.-M., & Su, Y.-K. (2018). The relationship between adolescent academic stress and sleep quality: A multiple mediation model. *Social Behavior and Personality, 46*(1), 63-78. doi: org/10.2224/sbp.6530
- Ybarra, M. L., & Mitchell, K. J. (2005). Exposure to internet pornography among children and adolescents: A national survey. *CyberPsychology & Behavior, 8*(5), 473-486. doi: 10.1089/cpb.2005.8.473
- Yilmaz, K. (2013). Comparison of quantitative and qualitative research traditions: Epistemological, theoretical, and methodological differences. *European Journal of Education, 48*(2), 311-325. doi: 10.1111/ejed.12014
- Zeedyk, M. S., Gallacher, J., Henderson, M., Hope, G., Husband, B., & Lindsay, K. (2003). Negotiating the transition from primary to secondary school: Perceptions of pupils, parents and teachers. *School Psychology International, 24*(1), 67-79. doi: 10.1177/0143034303024001010
- Zimmer-Gembeck, M. J., Lees, D., & Skinner, E. A. (2011). Children's emotions and coping with interpersonal stress as correlates of social competence. *Australian Journal of Psychology, 63*(3), 131-141. doi: 10.1111/j.1742-9536.2011.00019.x

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Discussion Group Prompt Sheet

DISCUSSION GROUP PROMPT SHEET

Proposed questions about stressors:

- What do you think feeling stressed means?
- What sorts of things cause you to feel stressed?

School:

- Adjustment to new school
- Homework, tests, grades
- Teacher-related stress, e.g., lack of respect from teachers, teacher expectations
- Bullying (traditional and cyber bullying)
- School performance, e.g., keeping up with schoolwork
- Expected to do well at school

Home:

- Financial stress, e.g., not having enough money

Relationships with others:

- Family-related stress
- Pressure from parents/social life
- Peer-related stress, e.g., arguments with peers/friends, peer pressure
- Stress of romantic relationships, e.g., arguments; getting along

Other people's expectations:

- Homework (may overlap with school-related stress)
- Work and responsibilities (e.g., after-school jobs and household chores)
- Sports and other extra-curricular commitments
- Stress of school/leisure conflict, e.g., having too much homework
- Different expectations (school/family different)

Yourself:

- Body image, personal characteristics
- Own expectations about school

- Future:
 - Emerging adult responsibility, e.g., work interfering with school and social activities
 - Uncertainty about future, e.g., having to make decisions about future work or education
 - Future employment
 - Future health (particularly relevant to Māori)
- What sorts of things stop you from doing what you want to do
 - Curfews
 - Age-related restrictions (i.e., need to be accompanied by an adult)
 - Not having enough time
 - Leisure time
- What other sorts of things stress you out?

Proposed questions about coping:

- What do you do when you feel stressed about:
 - Things at school?
 - Things at home?
 - Things in your relationships? i.e., parents, siblings, friends, boyfriends/girlfriends
 - Other people's expectations?
 - Things that stop you doing what you want to do, e.g., keep trying/change goal/give up
 - The future
 - Something that you think you can control
 - Something that you don't think you can control
- Do you ever try to forget about something by doing other things? What sort of problems? What do you do? e.g. television, computer games
- Who helps you? How do they help you?

Appendix B

Confirmation of Cultural Advice

Saturday 17th May 2014

Chairperson
Human Research Ethics Committee
Massey University
WELLINGTON

Trish Young
P O Box 2069
Central
ROTORUA 3040

Tena koe

Re: Nanette Larkin – Ethics Application: An exploration of the stressors and coping strategies of Year 9 students in the Wellington region

I wish to verify that I have had ongoing email communications with Nanette about her research project that is the subject of this ethics application.

Our discussions about this research project have included: processes for recruitment of Māori student participants; approaches for gaining parental consent, in particular for Māori parents; potential issues as stressors for Māori students; seeking additional support from Māori staff within the schools and/or local community with regard to including Māori student participants; and helping Nanette gain a better understanding of her skills developed in her previous work with Māori.

If you have any queries regarding my role or input to this application please do not hesitate to contact me.

Heoi ano
Na



Trish Young
Research Advisor – Maori
Mob: 021 265 7481
Email: tewairereahiahi@vodafone.net.nz

Appendix C

Postgraduate Student Confidentiality Agreement



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

AN EXPLORATION OF THE STRESSORS AND COPING STRATEGIES OF YEAR 9 STUDENTS IN THE WELLINGTON REGION

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I _____ (Full Name - printed)
agree to keep confidential all information concerning the project “An Exploration of the Stressors and Coping Strategies of Year 9 Students in the Wellington Region”.

I will not disclose, retain or copy any information involving the project.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix D

Community Support Services List



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES LIST

If you are worried or upset about anything, your School Counsellor will be able to help you. Your school counsellor's name is [name].

If you would rather talk with someone outside school, here are the contact details for some services that will be able to help you.

Evolve (Wellington Youth Service)

Evolve offers a range of free services, activities and events in one location to make it as easy as possible for young people to get what they need. The Evolve team includes Nurses, Doctors, Counsellors, Social Workers and Youth Workers.

Phone: (04) 473 6204
Email: reception@evolveyouth.org.nz
Visit: Level 2 James Smith Building, Corner Cuba & Manners Streets, Wellington
Website: www.evolveyouth.org.nz

Skylight

Skylight supports people of all ages who are facing a tough life situation of change, loss, trauma or grief - whatever the cause.

Phone: 0800 299 100 or (04) 939 6767
Website: www.skylight.org.nz

Vibe (Hutt Valley)

If you are between 10-24 years old and living in the Hutt Valley, Vibe offers free confidential health & support services.

Email: info@vibe.org.nz
Website: www.vibe.org.nz

Lower Hutt

Visit: 4 Daly Street, Lower Hutt
Phone: (04) 566 0525

Upper Hutt

Visit: 2 Sinclair Street, Upper Hutt
Phone: (04) 528 6261

What's Up

You can call What's Up and talk about whatever's on your mind - no problem is too big or too small. If it's someone else's problem, you can talk about that too.

Phone: 0800 942 8787
Website: www.whatsup.co.nz

Youthline

Youthline is a service that supports young people in all sorts of situations. You can phone and talk to a trained Youthline counsellor, send an email, or free text.

Phone: 0800 376 633 (for 24/7 support)
Email: talk@youthline.co.nz
Free text: 234 (between 8am and midnight)
Website: www.youthline.co.nz

Appendix E

Invitation Letter to School Principals



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

[Date to be inserted]

[Address of School]

Dear [Name of principal]

AN EXPLORATION OF THE STRESSORS AND COPING STRATEGIES OF YEAR 9 STUDENTS IN THE WELLINGTON REGION

My name is Nanette Larkin and I am a student at Massey University. I will be conducting a research project as part of the requirement for a Master of Arts degree majoring in Psychology. The research project will investigate the kinds of stressors experienced by Year 9 students, and the sorts of strategies the students use for coping. I'm inviting your school to take part in the research. My research is being supervised by Dr Ruth Tarrant (Senior Lecturer at the School of Psychology, Massey University, Wellington, and Research Associate with the Joint Centre for Disaster Research).

I have enclosed an information sheet for you that outlines the research so you have the necessary information to decide whether you would like your school to participate in the study. For your information, I also enclose copies of information sheets and supporting documents that would be distributed to students and their parents/caregivers should you decide to participate in the research.

Please also find enclosed the *Principal Consent to Participate in Research* form. Would you please complete this form, saying whether or not you wish to take part, and return it to me in the reply paid envelope by [insert date] if possible.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor (Dr Ruth Tarrant) if you require any further information. I am happy to meet with you or a nominated contact person at your school if you would like to discuss the study further before you decide whether your school will participate in the research.

Thank you for considering my invitation. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Nanette Larkin

Project Contacts:

Nanette Larkin
Masters Student
Massey University
email: [REDACTED]
phone: [REDACTED]

Dr Ruth Tarrant (Supervisor)
Senior Lecturer, School of Psychology
Research Associate, Joint Centre for Disaster Research
Massey University, Wellington
email: R.A.Tarrant@massey.ac.nz
phone: (04) 801 5799, extension 63411

Appendix F

Principal Consent to Participate in Research



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

AN EXPLORATION OF THE STRESSORS AND COPING STRATEGIES OF YEAR 9 STUDENTS IN THE WELLINGTON REGION

PRINCIPAL CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

I, _____ (Name of Principal),
the Principal of _____ (Name of School)
accept / decline the invitation to participate in the above research project.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

If you agree to your school's participation in this research, please nominate below a school contact person who I can talk with about the distribution of information sheets and arrangements for the discussion group(s):

Name: _____ (telephone extension if applicable)

Email: _____

Please indicate whether you would like me to contact your nominated contact person. Yes / No

If you wish to distribute hard copies of the information sheets, please indicate how many copies you would like _____

Thank you for considering my invitation. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor (Dr Ruth Tarrant) as noted below.

Please complete this form and return in the reply paid envelope by [date] if possible to:

*Nanette Larkin,
c/- Dr Ruth Tarrant
School of Psychology
Massey University
P.O. Box 756
Wellington 6140*

Project Contacts

Nanette Larkin
Masters Student
Massey University
email: _____
phone: _____

Dr Ruth Tarrant (Supervisor)
Senior Lecturer, School of Psychology
Research Associate, Joint Centre for Disaster Research
Massey University, Wellington
email: R.A.Tarrant@massey.ac.nz
phone: (04) 801 5799, extension 63411

Appendix G

Information Sheet for School Principals



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

AN EXPLORATION OF THE STRESSORS AND COPING STRATEGIES OF YEAR 9 STUDENTS IN THE WELLINGTON REGION

INFORMATION SHEET FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

My name is Nanette Larkin and I am a student at Massey University. I will be conducting a study as part of my Master of Arts degree majoring in Psychology. The study will investigate the kinds of stressors experienced by Year 9 students in the Wellington region and the strategies they use for coping. My study is being supervised by Dr Ruth Tarrant (Senior Lecturer at the School of Psychology, Massey University, Wellington, and Research Associate with the Joint Centre for Disaster Research).

What is this research about and what is involved?

I will be talking about stress and coping strategies with groups of six Year 9 students from different schools, and I invite your school to participate in this study. Six Year 9 students from your school who would like to be in the study would be invited to take part in a discussion group. If more than six students are interested, you may agree to two groups of students being involved.

During the discussion groups I would ask questions about things that cause the students to feel stressed and how they deal with stress (see *Proposed Questions for Discussion Group* attached).

The discussion groups will be made up of either boys or girls if enough students would like to be in the study, because students may feel more comfortable in groups of the same gender. Also, Māori students may feel more comfortable talking in a group with other Māori students, and to provide an appropriate environment for Māori students, one group will have only Māori students if enough Māori students would like to be in the study.

It is anticipated that being part of a discussion group may benefit students because they may feel less alone with their problems if they share stressful experiences and may learn of different ways to deal with stressful situations. Some of the stressors discussed in the group may relate to family and school, and this information may be useful to parents/caregivers and schools to inform changes in the family and school environments that may help to reduce students' stress.

What would I require from your school?

If you agree to take part in the study I would require:

1. A school contact person with whom I can discuss arrangements for the study.
2. Distribution of the *Information Sheet for Students* to Year 9 students so they can consider taking part in the study, followed by the *Information Sheet for Parents and Caregivers* and *Parent/Caregiver Consent for Child to Participate in Research* form sent to parents/caregivers of interested students. Alternatively, rather than inviting the students directly, you may prefer that the documents are initially sent to parents/caregivers.
3. A room for a meeting with parents/caregivers who would like to talk to me about the study.
4. Signed *Parent/Caregiver Consent for Child to Participate in Research* forms returned to the form teacher.
5. Students in the discussion group(s) to be informed of the date, time, and venue.

6. A small quiet room for the discussion group(s). The group discussion should take 30 to 60 minutes.
7. The option to refer students to the school counsellor should they become upset.
8. Distribution of the summary of findings to participating students and to parents/caregivers who choose not to have a copy forwarded directly to them.

Distribution of the information sheets and consent form (copies attached) would be in accordance with your school's preference (e.g., school intranet, email, hard copies given to the students).

Participant selection

In total, 25-30 Year 9 students from four or five schools in the Wellington region will be involved in the study. Year 9 students have been chosen because they experience unique challenges associated with the transition from primary or intermediate school to secondary school, as well as the personal, social and academic challenges experienced by all secondary school students.

If you consider that taking part in a discussion group is unsuitable for any particular student, you may exclude that student from the study.

Summary of procedures

- Distribution of the *Information Sheet for Students* to Year 9 students, and the *Information Sheet for Parents and Caregivers* and *Parent/Caregiver Consent for Child to Participate in Research* form sent to parents/caregivers of interested students. Alternatively, information sheets and supporting documents sent directly to parents/caregivers.
- A meeting at the school for parents/caregivers who would like to talk to me about the study.
- Signed *Parent/Caregiver Consent for Child to Participate in Research* forms returned to the form teacher.
- Selected students informed of the date, time, and venue for the discussion group(s). Students will be selected at random by me if more than six students have permission from their parents/caregivers to be in the study.
- The *Information Sheet for Students* will be given to students before the discussion group begins to remind them about the study. I will explain the students' involvement in the group, answer any questions, and emphasise that they are free to leave the group at any time.
- Students will sign the *Student Consent Form* (copy attached) where they agree to be in the group, that they will not talk about what is discussed in the group with others, and that what they say in the group can be written in a report and they cannot ask for these comments to be taken out.
- Students will complete a *Student Form* (copy attached). The pseudonym chosen for use throughout the study is to be written on this form.
- The discussion groups will be digitally recorded by audio and video. I will transcribe the voice recordings and use the video recordings to make sure that comments are matched with the right student. This will be explained to the students.
- After the discussion group, students will be given a *Student Additional Comments Form – Optional* (copy attached) in case they would like to write down anything else that they would have liked to talk about in the group.

The students will be offered snacks and a drink during the discussion group. Afterwards they will be given a \$20 Warehouse voucher to thank them for their time and contribution to the study.

The group discussions would take place in a private setting within your school at a time that does not disrupt the students' learning and is convenient for the school and students. It is expected that each discussion group will take 30 to 60 minutes.

What support processes will be in place for the students?

It is not expected that the students will become upset during or after the discussion group. However, my supervisor or someone else will be in the room (but not part of the discussion group) to help any upset students. Students may be referred to the school counsellor if more support is required. If a student talks about anything that concerns me about their safety or someone else's safety, I will talk with the student about this and may need to arrange for someone to help them. A *Community Support Services List* (copy attached) will be given to all the students after the discussion group has ended.

Data management

After the discussion groups I will transcribe the voice recordings, and then analyse the data to look for themes and similarities and differences in the students' comments. Only my supervisor and I will listen to the recordings and read the transcriptions, which will be stored on my password-protected computer until the end of the study. The recordings will then be destroyed. The transcriptions, consent forms, and any forms that identify the students and schools will be stored in secure locations at Massey University for five (5) years and then destroyed.

The information gathered during the discussion groups will only be used for this study. The findings will be written in my Master's thesis, and may be submitted to a psychology or education journal for adolescent research or shared in a forum with other students at Massey University. The students' real names and names of schools will not be used in any reports or presentations so that students and schools cannot be identified.

A summary of the study findings will be sent to participating schools, and I would be grateful if the schools would forward copies to school staff, students in the study, and the students' parents and caregivers who choose not to have the summary forwarded directly to them.

Project Contacts

Please contact me or my supervisor (Dr Ruth Tarrant) if you have any questions about this study. I am happy to meet with you or a nominated contact person at your school to discuss the study further before you decide whether your school will participate in the research.

Nanette Larkin
Masters Student
Massey University
email: [REDACTED]
phone: [REDACTED]

Dr Ruth Tarrant (Supervisor)
Senior Lecturer, School of Psychology
Research Associate, Joint Centre for Disaster Research
Massey University, Wellington
email: R.A.Tarrant@massey.ac.nz
phone: (04) 801 5799, extension 63411

Committee Approval Statement

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 14/39. If you have any concerns about the conduct of the research, please contact Prof John O'Neill, Acting Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 81090, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz

Appendix H

Proposed Questions for Discussion Group



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

AN EXPLORATION OF THE STRESSORS AND COPING STRATEGIES OF YEAR 9 STUDENTS IN THE WELLINGTON REGION

PROPOSED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION GROUP

Proposed questions about stressors:

- What do you think feeling stressed means?
- What sorts of things cause you to feel stressed?
- What sorts of things about home cause you to feel stressed?
- What sorts of things about school cause you to feel stressed?
- What sorts of things about social activities cause you to feel stressed?
- What sorts of things do other people expect you to do that cause you to feel stressed?
- What sorts of things stop you from doing what you want to do and cause you to feel stressed?
- What sorts of things about your future cause you to feel stressed?
- What other sorts of things stress you out?

Proposed questions about coping strategies:

- What do you do about coping with some of these stresses?
- What are some examples of the ways that you deal with stress?
- What do you do when you feel stressed about things at home?
- What do you do when you feel stressed about things at school?
- What do you do when you feel stressed about social activities?
- What do you do when you feel stressed because other people expect you to do things?
- What do you do when you feel stressed because things stop you from doing what you want to do?
- What do you do when you feel stressed about your future?
- Can you tell me any other ways to cope with particular stresses?

Appendix I

Information Sheet for Students



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

AN EXPLORATION OF THE STRESSORS AND COPING STRATEGIES OF YEAR 9 STUDENTS IN THE WELLINGTON REGION

INFORMATION SHEET FOR STUDENTS

Who am I and what is this all about?

My name is Nanette Larkin and I am a student at Massey University. I am doing a study as part of my Master of Arts degree majoring in Psychology. I will be talking with groups of Year 9 students from different schools to find out about the sorts of things that make them feel stressed and what they do when they feel stressed. One or two of the groups will be from your school. All together there will be 25-30 students in my study.

I am inviting you to be in a discussion group with five other Year 9 students from your school. If enough students want to be in my study, there will be either boys or girls in the groups because you might find it easier to talk about things. There might also be one group of only Māori students.

What will we be doing in the discussion group?

There will be some forms to fill in and then I will ask the group some questions. You would talk about the things that stress you and what you do when you feel this way. For example, I will ask what sorts of things about school make you feel stressed. You don't have to talk about anything that you don't want to. The discussion should take 30-60 minutes.

Will other people find out what I have said?

Everyone in the group will need to agree that they will not talk to anyone outside the group about what you or anyone else says, and I will get you to choose a fake name that will be used in anything I write about the study.

Why will the discussion be recorded?

I will record what we talk about so that I can listen to it afterwards and type up what is said. I will also video the group discussion so that I can match what you say to your fake name. The recordings will be destroyed when the study is finished.

What happens if I get upset?

My supervisor or someone else will be coming with me and will be able to help if you get upset. I will give you a list of people you can talk to just in case we talk about something that upsets you and you would like to talk to someone else about it. If anything that is said in the group worries me about your safety I will talk to you about it and I might need to get someone to help you.

What happens after the discussion groups?

I will write some reports about the things that make Year 9 students feel stressed and how they deal with stress. Some of the things you say might be in the reports, but I will use your fake name so no one knows who you are and I won't write anything that can identify you or your school. A report will be sent to your school and I have asked the school to give you a copy. A copy will also be sent to your parents or caregivers.

Would you like to be in the study?

If you would like to be in a discussion group to talk about stress, your parents or caregivers will need to read the *Information Sheet for Parents and Caregivers* and then sign the *Parent/Caregiver Consent for Child to Participate in Research form*. The signed form will then need to be returned to your form teacher.

If there are too many Year 9 students at your school who want to be in the study, I will need to pick the students who will be in the discussion group.

Participant's Rights

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study at any time (including taking part in the discussion group);
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used in any reports;
- be given access to a summary of the study findings when it is concluded.

Do you have any questions?

If you have any questions about the study, please contact me or my supervisor.

Nanette Larkin
Masters Student
Massey University
email: [REDACTED]
phone: [REDACTED]

Dr Ruth Tarrant (Supervisor)
Senior Lecturer, School of Psychology
Research Associate, Joint Centre for Disaster Research
Massey University, Wellington
email: R.A.Tarrant@massey.ac.nz
phone: (04) 801 5799, extension 63411

Committee Approval Statement

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 14/39. If you have any concerns about the conduct of the research, please contact Prof John O'Neill, Acting Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 81090, email humanethicssouthb@massey.ac.nz

Appendix J

Information Sheet for Parents and Caregivers



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

AN EXPLORATION OF THE STRESSORS AND COPING STRATEGIES OF YEAR 9 STUDENTS IN THE WELLINGTON REGION

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

My name is Nanette Larkin and I am a student at Massey University. I will be conducting a study as part of my Master of Arts degree majoring in Psychology. The study will investigate the kinds of stressors experienced by Year 9 students in the Wellington region, and the ways that they deal with these stressors. My study is being supervised by Dr Ruth Tarrant (Senior Lecturer at the School of Psychology, Massey University, Wellington, and Research Associate with the Joint Centre for Disaster Research).

What does this study involve?

I will be talking about stress with one or two groups of six Year 9 students from your child's school, and I invite your child in Year 9 to be in a discussion group with five other Year 9 students to talk about what causes them stress and how they deal with these problems.

The discussion group will be made up of either boys or girls if enough students would like to be in the study, because students may feel more comfortable in groups of the same gender. Also, one group will have only Māori students if enough Māori students would like to be in the study, because Māori students may feel more comfortable talking in a group with other Māori students.

It is expected that being part of a discussion group may benefit students because they may feel less alone with their problems if they share stressful experiences, and may learn of different ways to deal with stressful situations. Also, it is expected that some of the stressors discussed in the group may relate to school, and schools may use this information to make changes in schools that may help reduce students' stress.

Participant selection

In total, 25-30 Year 9 students from various schools in the Wellington region will be involved in the study. Year 9 students have been chosen because of the challenges associated with the move from primary or intermediate school to secondary school, as well as the personal, social and academic challenges experienced by all secondary school students.

Project procedures

- Distribution of the *Information Sheet for Students* (copy attached), *Information Sheet for Parents and Caregivers*, and the *Parent/Caregiver Consent for Child to Participate in Research* form to Year 9 students and their parents and caregivers.
- The *Parent/Caregiver Consent for Child to Participate in Research* form to be signed and returned to students' form teachers if parents/caregivers agree to their child being in the study.
- If more than six students have permission from their parents/caregivers to be in the study, students will be selected at random by me to form one or two discussion groups of six students.

- Before the discussion group begins:
 - The students will be reminded that it is their choice whether they join the group and that they can leave the group at any time.
 - The students will be given the *Information Sheet for Students* to remind them about the study and I will answer any questions they have.
 - The students will sign the *Student Consent Form* (copy attached) where they agree to be in the group, that they will not talk about what is discussed in the group with others, and that what they say in the group can be written in a report and they cannot ask for these comments to be taken out.
 - The students will complete a *Student Form* (copy attached). The fake name chosen for use throughout the study is to be written on this form.
- The discussion group will be sound and image recorded. I will transcribe the voice recordings and use the video recordings to make sure that comments are matched with the right student. This will be explained to the students.
- After the discussion group, students will be given a *Student Additional Comments Form – Optional* (copy attached) in case they would like to write down anything else that they would have liked to talk about in the group.

The students will be offered snacks and a drink during the discussion group. Afterwards they will be given a \$20 Warehouse voucher to thank them for their time and contribution to the study.

The discussion groups will take place at your child's school at a time that suits the students and the school. The discussion group should take 30 to 60 minutes.

What support processes will be in place for the students?

It is not expected that any students will become upset during or after the discussion group. However, my supervisor or someone else will be in the room (but not part of the discussion group) to help any upset students. Students may be referred to the school counsellor if more help is required. Also, if a student talks about anything that concerns me about their safety or someone else's safety, I will talk with the student about this and may need to arrange for someone to help them. A *Community Support Services List* (copy attached) will be given to all the students after the discussion group has ended.

Data management

After the discussion groups I will transcribe the voice recordings, and then go through the transcriptions to look for things that are similar and different in the students' comments. Only my supervisor and I will listen to the recordings and read the transcriptions, which will be stored on my password-protected computer until the end of the study. The recordings will then be destroyed. The transcriptions, consent forms, and any forms that identify the students and schools will be stored in secure locations at Massey University for five (5) years and then destroyed.

The information gathered during the discussion groups will only be used for this study. The findings will be written in my Master's thesis, and may be submitted to a psychology or education journal for adolescent research or shared in a meeting with other students at Massey University. The students' real names and their schools will not be used in any reports or presentations so that students and schools cannot be identified.

A summary of the study findings will be sent to your child's school, and I have requested that copies be forwarded to school staff, students who are involved in the study, and the students' parents and caregivers who choose not to have the summary forwarded directly to them (an option included on the *Parent/Caregiver Consent for Child to Participate in Research* form).

Would you like more information about the study?

Please contact me or my supervisor (Dr Ruth Tarrant) if you have any questions about this study using the contact details below. Please note that a meeting has been arranged at your child's school in [room number] on [date] at [time] for parents and caregivers of Year 9 students if you would like to talk to me before deciding whether you would like your child to be involved in the study.

If you consent to your child's involvement and your child would like to be in the study, please sign the attached *Parent/Caregiver Consent for Child to Participate in Research* form and ask your child to return the form to his or her form teacher.

Participant's rights

You and your child are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If your child decides to participate, your child has the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study at any time (including taking part in the discussion group);
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your child's name will not be used in any reports or presentations;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

Project Contacts

Nanette Larkin
Masters Student
Massey University
email: [REDACTED]
phone: [REDACTED]

Dr Ruth Tarrant (Supervisor)
Senior Lecturer, School of Psychology
Research Associate, Joint Centre for Disaster Research
Massey University, Wellington
email: R.A.Tarrant@massey.ac.nz
phone: (04) 801 5799, extension 63411

Committee Approval Statement

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 14/39. If you have any concerns about the conduct of the research, please contact Prof John O'Neill, Acting Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 5799 x 81090, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz

Appendix K

Parent/Caregiver Consent for Child to Participate in Research



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

AN EXPLORATION OF THE STRESSORS AND COPING STRATEGIES OF YEAR 9 STUDENTS IN THE WELLINGTON REGION

PARENT/CAREGIVER CONSENT FOR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

I have read the *Information Sheet for Parents and Caregivers* where the details of the study have been explained to me. I understand that I may ask questions at any time.

I have discussed this study with my child and my child is happy to be available if randomly selected for the study. My child understands that he or she can withdraw at any time.

I agree to allow my child to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the *Information Sheet for Parents and Caregivers*.

I agree to the discussion group being sound and image recorded.

I agree that my child's comments in the discussion group can be written anonymously in reports about the study and that my child and I cannot ask for them to be taken out. My child's name and the school's name will not be used in any reports or presentations.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Full name (printed) _____

I am the parent/legal guardian/caregiver of:

Child's name: _____

Child's age: _____ (years) _____ (months)

Child's school: _____

Child's class/room: _____

(continued on page 2)

My child belongs to the following ethnic group(s):
(Please mark the space or spaces which apply)

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> New Zealand European | <input type="radio"/> Tongan |
| <input type="radio"/> Māori | <input type="radio"/> Niuean |
| <input type="radio"/> Samoan | <input type="radio"/> Chinese |
| <input type="radio"/> Cook Island Maori | <input type="radio"/> Indian |
| <input type="radio"/> other (such as <i>DUTCH, JAPANESE, TOKELAUAN</i>). Please state: | |

My child has lived in New Zealand for _____ years.

A summary of the study's findings will be sent to your child's school, and the school will forward a copy to you. However, if you prefer to have the summary forwarded directly to you, please complete your details below:

Email address: _____

or

Postal address: _____

Please return this form to your child's form teacher at school by [date].

Thank you for agreeing to your child's involvement in this study.

Appendix L

Student Consent Form



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

AN EXPLORATION OF THE STRESSORS AND COPING STRATEGIES OF YEAR 9 STUDENTS IN THE WELLINGTON REGION

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

I have read the *Information Sheet for Students* and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree not to disclose anything discussed in the group.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the *Information Sheet for Students*.

I agree that some comments I make during the discussion group can be written in reports about the study and I cannot ask for them to be taken out. My own name will not be used anywhere. My school's name will not be used either.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Full Name - printed _____

Appendix M

Student Form



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

AN EXPLORATION OF THE STRESSORS AND COPING STRATEGIES OF YEAR 9 STUDENTS IN THE WELLINGTON REGION

STUDENT FORM

School: _____

Your name: _____

Name you have chosen for the group discussion: _____

Your gender (please circle) Girl Boy

Your age: _____

Appendix N

Student Additional Comments Form - Optional



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

AN EXPLORATION OF THE STRESSORS AND COPING STRATEGIES OF YEAR 9 STUDENTS IN THE WELLINGTON REGION

STUDENT ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FORM - OPTIONAL

Please write the name you have chosen for the discussion group _____

Is there anything else that you would like to say before you leave? You might like to write it here.

If you want to, you could say why you didn't talk about it in the group. Maybe we started talking about something else, or maybe you didn't want to talk about it in the group, or we might have run out of time.

Appendix O

Timeline - Discussion Group One

Time	Duration	Activity
1.00pm		<p>Before students arrive</p> <p>Check signed forms completed correctly (i.e., parental consent forms, including ethnicity data)</p> <p>Set up seating</p> <p>Set up camcorder</p> <p>Set up voice-recorder(s) and watch</p> <p>Set up food and drinks on separate table</p> <p>Organise forms for distribution</p> <p>Place pens and name tags on table for students</p> <p>Confidentiality Agreement signed</p>
1.25pm	2 minutes	<p>Students arrive</p> <p>Introduce self and postgraduate student</p> <p>Thank students for coming</p> <p>Offer snacks and drink</p>
1.27pm	4 minutes	<p>Distribute <i>Information Sheet for Student</i></p> <p>Read <i>Focus Group Introduction and Ground Rules</i></p> <p>Answer any questions.</p> <p>Ask if everyone happy to stay?</p>
1.31pm	2 minutes	<p>Students to complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Student Consent Form</i> • <i>Student Form</i> • Write pseudonym on name tag
1.33pm	1 minute	<p>Start group discussion</p> <p>Ask students if they know each other</p> <p>Ask what activities they do together</p>

Time	Duration	Activity
1.34pm	17 minutes	<p>Stress:</p> <p>What do you think feeling stressed means?</p> <p>What sorts of things cause you to feel stressed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School • Home • Relationships (family, peers, boyfriend/girlfriend) • Expectations of others • Things that stop you doing what you want to do • Things about yourself • Future
1.51pm	17 minutes	<p>Coping:</p> <p>What do you do when you feel stressed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School • Home • Relationships (family, peers, boyfriend/girlfriend) • Expectations of others • Things that stop you doing what you want to do • Things about yourself • Future <p>How do you cope with something that you think you can control?</p> <p>How do you cope with something that you think you can't control?</p> <p>Who do you get to help you?</p> <p>What do you do to try to forget about things?</p> <p>Start winding up</p>
2.09pm	3 minutes	Ask students if there is anything else they want to talk about
2.12pm	2 minutes	<p>Distribute <i>Student Additional Comments Form – Optional</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In case want to write anything private • Would you like to write down things that cause you the most stress?
2.14pm	1 minute	<p>Thank students for their time and contribution to the study</p> <p>Give students \$20 Warehouse voucher</p> <p>Distribute <i>Community Support Services List</i></p>
2.15pm		Students leave

Appendix P

Discussion Group Ground Rules

FOCUS GROUP INTRODUCTION AND GROUND RULES

Here is a copy of the information sheet to take with you to remind you about the study.

There are a few forms to fill in and I will get you to choose a fake name. Then I will ask some questions about the things that cause you to feel stressed and what you do when you feel stressed. We will finish at around [time].

I will record what we talk about so that I can listen to it afterwards and type up what is said. The video will be used so that I can match what you say to your fake name. I will destroy the recordings when the study is finished and the conversation that is typed up will be kept in a safe place where no one apart from me and my supervisor can read it.

I will write some reports about what is discussed in the groups. Some of the things that you say might be written in the reports and I will use your fake name so that no one knows who you are and I won't write anything that can identify your school. A brief report will be sent to your school, and I have asked the school to give you a copy and to send a copy to your parents.

I would just like to check that you understand what you have agreed to by signing the consent form. [Go through form]

Here are a few things more things that you need to know before we start:

- You don't need to talk about anything that you don't want to.
- There are no right or wrong answers.
- You may not all agree with each other, but we need to respect each other's opinions.
- It is important that what is discussed in the group is not discussed outside the group. You can tell other people that we talked about stress and what people do when they feel stressed, but please do not talk about what anyone has said.
- You can ask me questions any time, and you are free to leave the discussion group at any time.

Appendix Q

Summary of Students' Written Additional Comments

Stressor	Girls	Boys
Family-related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Mum and Dad, cause they fight a lot • My Mum (3 students) • Family not getting along • Family issues (2 students) • My old step-siblings mother causes problems • When my parents tell me to do something or a sport, but I don't want to do it • When my parents set expectations that I can't reach then get angry at me • Getting into trouble and fighting • My Dad is really strict and judgey and makes me REALLY STRESSED AND ANGRY. Honestly I don't like him, but I love him • Having a lot of brothers and sisters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mother and brother arguing all the time • My step family • Anything with siblings - I getting blamed for stuff • Asking my Mum if I could live with my Dad • Frustrated - This morning my Mum took ages to fill out the Massey sheet and it was annoying me (subject changed)
Peer-related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people at school • Boys (7 students) • Friends • When friends are mad and they don't tell you why • When friends get bullied • Bullying 	
Other relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People (2 students) • Annoying people • Having to socialise a lot 	
School-related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tests all together • Usually upcoming test like homework, studying • Homework (2 students) • Tests, homework (2 students) • Extra work or homework • Failing a test • Failing academically • School stress 	
Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Others' expectations: • Relied on too much • Expectations 	
Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports (2 students) • Not being able to play for the whole season, and sport is my fav thing to do 	
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failing in work • Life itself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes when I don't get that much sleep • Not being able to do things because I'm too young