

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG LIFE STRESS, PROBLEM SOLVING, SELF-ESTEEM, AND DYSPHORIA IN HONG KONG ADOLESCENTS: TEST OF A MODEL

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The present research sought to examine (a) the moderating role of problem solving in the relationship between life stress and dysphoria among Chinese adolescents in Hong Kong, and (b) a multi-factorial model in the development of depressive symptoms in adolescents. Two hundred and eighty-six secondary school students with a mean age of 15.79 ($SD = 0.74$) participated in a three-month prospective study. Problem solving was found to moderate the association between dysphoria and both life events and hassles, providing evidence that the problem solving model of depression was applicable to Chinese adolescents. Results from the path analyses indicated that life events affected depressive symptoms via the mediators of problem solving and self-esteem, whereas hassles did so only through a direct pathway. Mechanisms in the development of dysphoria and limitations of the study were discussed.

In recent decades a number of researchers have examined the roles of psychosocial variables in the relationship between life stress and dysphoria. Problem solving has been hypothesized and documented as a moderator in the relationship between negative life events and depressive symptoms (Nezu, 1987). Problem solving refers to the cognitive-behavioral process by which individuals identify or discover effective strategies of coping with difficult situations in daily living (D'Zurilla & Nezu, 1982).

Nezu and his colleagues conducted a series of studies which provided

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