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Appraisal, emotion and coping in victims of peer-aggression and victimization

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Peer-aggression and victimization

Aggression:
- Within-species attacks or hostility

Peer-victimization:
- Repeated aggression

Prevalence (Hunter, Boyle & Warden, 2004):
- Peer-victimization: 12%-28%
- Peer-aggression: a further 16%-39%
The coping process (Lazarus & Colleagues)

Person Variables

Situation Variables
The coping process (Lazarus & Colleagues)

Person Variables  →  Appraisals  ←  Situation Variables
The coping process (Lazarus & Colleagues)

Person Variables \[\rightarrow\] Appraisals \[\rightarrow\] Situation Variables

Coping Strategy Use
The coping process (Lazarus & Colleagues)

Person Variables

Situation Variables

Appraisals

Emotional Reaction

Coping Strategy Use
Aims

1. How well does the transactional model account for the coping processes of children experiencing peer-aggression and peer-victimization?

2. What are the effects of appraisals and emotions upon use of coping strategies?

3. Are developmental differences evident between late-childhood and early-adolescence?
Methodology

• N = 830 pupils in P6, S2, or S3 (9 to 14 years old).
• Self-report questionnaire, with items on:
  → peer-aggression/ victimisation (Hunter, Boyle & Warden, 2004)
  → coping strategy use (individual coping strategies)
  → control and threat appraisals (Hunter & Boyle & Warden, 2004)
  → emotions (anger, sadness, fear: individual emotion items)
Analysis - Structural equation model for each coping strategy:

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Individual Coping Strategy

Threat

Angry  Scared  Sad

Control
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The diagram shows a network of connections between various emotional states and coping strategies. The emotional states include Angry, Scared, and Sad, and the coping strategies are divided into Threat and Control. The arrows indicate the flow of influence between these states and strategies.
Common to each SEM was the core appraisal / emotion aspect of the process, and across the coping strategies the pattern of covariances was as follows:
Direct standardised regression weights from appraisals and emotions to individual coping strategies were as follows:

- Threat to Angry: 0.21**
- Threat to Scared: 0.15**
- Threat to Sad: -0.13**
- Control to Angry: -0.08
- Control to Scared: 0.26***

NB. correlations between appraisals and emotions not shown here for clarity of presentation.
Direct standardised regression weights from appraisals and emotions to individual coping strategies were as follows:

Stood up to them,
told them to stop

NB. correlations between appraisals and emotions not shown here for clarity of presentation
Direct standardised regression weights from appraisals and emotions to individual coping strategies were as follows:

NB. correlations between appraisals and emotions not shown here for clarity of presentation.

Stayed away from places they might be
Summary

• Distinct relationships between appraisals and emotional reactions

• Also, certain patterns of appraisal and emotion are linked to use of certain strategies

• Potential for new/improved interventions by focusing on appraisals and emotion regulation

• New ways of influencing strategy choice, but still unclear what the best strategies actually are

• No developmental differences evident

• Only one gender difference (*Threat* predicted *Crying* for girls but not boys)