

Perceived Social Support and Coping Mechanisms Facilitating Mental-Health Help Seeking among Adult Aged Men

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ABSTRACT

Mental health a common problem for all but why does its seeking assistance change when it comes to men. This research delves into the critical role of perceived social support & coping mechanism which facilitates into mental health help seeking among adult men. Mental health services are not being fully used by males, even after having higher rate of developing them. There are many other factors which comprehends in affecting men's mental health help seeking but these two factors "Social Support" "Coping Mechanisms" have been considered the primarily factor for affecting help seeking behavior. It mainly focuses on the fact that strong social support will allow men to be confident about expressing their struggles, emotions and feelings and decrease their fear of getting judged. Negative coping styles such as denial, alcohol or substance use are often seen as way of tolerating stress among men. Nevertheless, these actions worsen issues and raise the death risk for men. The main focus of this research paper is understanding these perspectives better and focusing on breaking stigma about men's mental health and promote increased social support and healthy coping mechanisms among men, in order to promote their help seeking nature.

Keywords: Coping Styles, Social Support, Adult Aged Men, Help Seeking Behavior

Mental health concerns should be same for all irrespective of their gender but when it comes to men's mental health, a traditional masculinity comes among them. A stigma related to men's help seeking behavior is something which worsen situation. "MEN DOESNOT CRY" "MEN HAS TO BE STRONG" phrases like these make them resistant to express their emotions fully and ask for support or help if required. The stigma around us, the fixed norms in some cultures of how a men should be often shapes their way of thinking, expressing their emotions, embodying men to be strong and resilient. These stigmas acted as barriers and discouraged men from expressing things and being vulnerable.

Emotional suppression leads to severe problems and sometimes leading to major disorders. Some researchers have shown that suicidal rates among men is higher as comparative to other genders, men's have higher tendency to suffer from mental health disorders but the

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resistant behavior make them away from seeking help and overcome their problems. This research is done to understand those factors and find effective solutions for the same.

Social Support, making one believe that yes, they have someone to rely upon, they go to person. Someone they can go to when hard times occur but is often seen then when it comes to men, they may find people around themselves but couldn't be expressive to them, in fear of being mocked or seen as someone who is not strong enough to deal with situations. There is lack of supportiveness or guidance among them.

Coping mechanisms, may be positive or negative. But in most men, it is seen as adaptation of negative coping style inclusion of drugs and alcohols. Alcohol usage among men is usually seen as something very masculine and peer influenced, but no one really tried to understand what could be the reason to drink it for the very first time. In some cases, it can be because of societal influence but on other side it is also because of too much emotional suppression, loneliness, stress, making them use negative coping style. Excess usage of alcohol, drugs have increased the rates of deaths. Some studies have shown that higher level of social support, positive coping mechanism can lead to positive way of solving problems and increase the rate of help seeking nature. Moreover, cultural and societal norms play a crucial role.

This research focuses on how these factors mainly coping mechanisms and social support influences help seeking behavior among men.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. Vickey (2022) conducted a research and stated that men suffering from issues can really be benefited socially from being a part of support groups. This paper highlighted that how do men cope up with their situations when they are around the social group or being getting support from that social group. Moreover, it also highlights that how it creates an opportunity for reconstructing the societal norms set for men's mental health. It states that Support provided from the societal groups, offers a comfortable space for men to express themselves and make them feel that there are other people around them who are also feeling the similar problems and it is valid to suffer from it and express about it. The major findings of the research were that men experiencing social support Have better understanding of emotional regulation, which includes understanding of other people's emotion, increased respect for each other, reconstructing the societal norms set for men, and moreover reciprocating the mental health support which is being given to them by the other people.

C. Mackenzie, W. Gekoski, V. Knox (2006) conducted research that stated that men may not take advantage of mental health treatments to the fullest extent possible due to negative beliefs on openness towards psychology. The research studied that how age and gender differences can lead to change of attitudes towards taking professional Mental help. As an outcome of research, it was seen that old age, people and female are likely having higher chance of seeking help attitude and woman seem to have more intention towards seeking mental health help rather than men. In addition to this it was also seen that the older adults have the higher chance of seeking physical help, than the younger adults. The research also included that not being to open to Psychology might also contribute to less level of seeking professional help behaviour among men.

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Hannah Erdem, G. Wilson, Helen Limbrick, K. Swainston (2020) conducted research and stated that facilitation involved, redefining masculine entity in order to value help seeking behaviour. He said that the obstacle, intermediaries and the benefits which are being associated with men's mental health help seeking are very badly interpreted in the context of gender. Men uses different kind of coping mechanisms in which avoidance is seen at the higher level, which means that the denial act regarding the problems occurred act as an obstacle for help seeking behaviour. Instead, normalising mental illness and disorders and redefining masculine identity can be proved as beneficial facilitators that offers a sense of purpose in life and a connection.

Leonard C. Orji Gboyega E. Abikoye (2019) conducted research, in his research he stated that the nature of asking for help should be taught to children through educational system. It should be inbuilt in curriculum so that they have a better understanding for it. This Paper states that there is a directive relationship between perceived social support and the kind of attitude and individual develop towards the help seeking behaviour while the stress shows no significant relationship. Which means that if an individual is getting higher social support, then their ability to ask for help will also be higher and if an individual is receiving low social support or no amount of social support, then the help seeking behaviour would also be less. He recommended that the help seeking behaviour should be taught in the educational system to reduce myths and stigma about the mental health and make it more appealing.

S. Rice, N. Telford, D. Rickwood, A. Parker (2007) conducted research on young men and people involved in providing mental health support, in order to identify or understand obstacles facilitating mental health support. This research was done on 25 young men and 4 service providers through qualitative method. In other words, it studied that how the decreased rate of provisional support can result into low level of help seeking inclusive of obstacles occurred in between, resulting into four obstacles which have occurred more times indicating the urgent need of research and clinical implementation.

METHODOLOGY

Aim: This study aims to understand the relationship between perceived social support, coping mechanisms and help-seeking behavior for mental health problems among adult men.

Objective:

- To understand the social support provided among adult men.
- To understand the kind of coping mechanism initially used by adult men.
- To study the relationship between perceived social support, coping styles and help seeking behavior among adult aged men.

Hypotheses:

The hypothesis for this research is as mentioned below:

- There will be a significant relationship between social support and positive coping style among adult men.
- There will be a significant relationship between coping mechanisms and negative coping style among adult men.

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Variables:

Independent Variables:

- Perceived social support
- Coping mechanisms

Dependent variable:

- Help-seeking behavior for mental health problems

Research Design

This study will use a quantitative method as data is to be collected through standardised tools. A correlational research design is used in this research to study the relationship between perceived social support, coping mechanisms and help seeking behavior among adult aged men.

Sample Design

This study involves 100 adult aged men (22-35) with inclusion criteria of men able to provide informed consent and participate in the research procedures, excluding men below age 22 years and above 35.

Tools:

- Multidimensional Scale of perceived social support (MPSS)
- Brief COPE

RESULT

Table 1: Correlation between social support and avoidant coping mechanisms.

Correlations

		Social support	AVOIDANT
Social support	Pearson Correlation	1	-.063
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.536
	N	100	100
AVOIDANT	Pearson Correlation	-.063	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.536	
	N	100	100

Table 2: Correlation between Social Support and positive approach.

Correlations

		Social support	APPROACH
Social support	Pearson Correlation	1	.384**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
APPROACH	Pearson Correlation	.384**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

DISCUSSION

This correlational analysis table examine the relationship between: Social Support, Approach Coping style and Avoidant Coping style. The Table 1 showed a negative relationship ($r = -.063$, $p = .001$) between social support and avoidant coping stating that if there is an increase in social support the negative coping pattern will decrease and if there is decrease in social support there is a higher chance of men opting avoidant coping style (denial, substance abuse and more) and the correlation is statistically significant to the level of significance [0.01 and 0.05]. The table 2 showed a positive correlation ($r = .384$, $p = .000$) between social support and approach coping (positive coping style), referring to if social support increases there will be an increase of men adapting positive coping mechanism and the correlation is statistically significant to the level of significance [0.01 and 0.05]. Both coping styles shows a significant relationship with social support stating its impact on mental health help seeking nature among adult aged men. In other words, the positive relationship between social support and approach coping style shows that whatever occurs the person having approach coping style will directly face it and challenges it directly. In addition to this there are many other factors also which influence their capability of seeking help. It was also seen that cultural norms, rules and regulations also play a crucial role in shaping ones personality. The negative coping style such as substance use, denial and more may future lead to development of mental health disorders. Men have higher suicidal rate yet lack of mental health support provided because of stigmas formed around them. The study also revealed relationship between avoidant and approach coping style. More intriguing is the positive association between Avoidant and Approach. It is plausible that these characteristics embody facets of a more comprehensive concept, such embracing difficulties. Because they actively engage with and make an effort to avoid various situations, people who score highly on Approach may also score highly on Avoidant. On the other hand, the outcomes can be attributable to the particular measurement instruments employed.

CONCLUSION

The study emphasizes the importance of increased social support and healthy coping mechanisms for adult aged men to improve their help-seeking behavior and better mental health. It suggests that social support should be provided to men and they should be allowed to express themselves in order to decrease mental health disorder among them teach positive coping strategies.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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