

## CONSTRUCTION AND VALIDATION OF A SCALE ON COPING STRATEGIES FOR AGED

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### ABSTRACT

The study's aim was to construct and validate a coping strategies scale for aged widows and widowers. The scale consisted of 50 questions related to various coping strategies utilized by individuals. A Pilot Study was conducted and forty aged citizens (20 widows and 20 widowers), between the age range of 60 to 80 were selected from Udaipur City (Rajasthan). The content of structured scale was validated by panel members. The reliability and validity of tool computed. In view of high validity and reliability scores this tool was found to be an acceptable instrument to assess various coping strategies of widows and widowers.

### INTRODUCTION

Series of challenges in life ups and downs calls for adjustment across varying dimensions like physical, social, emotional etc. amongst which psychological adjustment seems to find a significance place. Coping with stress is an important dimension and strategies utilized decides whether an individual remain in comfort or discomfort. During the entire life span an individual may select the coping styles most suitable to their stage of life cycle. The elderly people face series of challenges during the phase of ageing process and try to cope up and manage their stress via different mechanisms. The ultimate function of the coping is to get relief from the pressure of the feeling of stress. Further situational demands for eg. widowhood may also have an impact on coping mechanisms. Coping is basically a process of managing external or internal demands which are facing and exceeding the resources of the person (Lazarous and Folkman, 1984). Thus coping is a process which involves appraisal and management of the situation resulting in relief from the pressure of stress. More broadly, coping encompasses cognitive and behavioural strategies used to manage stressful situations (problem focused coping) or/ and to attend negative emotions (emotion -focused coping). What is required is to understand various coping strategies used by widowed elderly in present context to cope up with situational stress. Thus, the present research was planned to develop and vali-

date a coping strategies scale applicable to both aged widows and widowers. This has been undertaken in view of lack of availability of suitable tool for studying coping styles of widowed elderly. Two approaches of coping were identified for developing the scale viz: Active coping and Avoidance coping

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Construction of coping scale

A thorough review of literature was carried out to develop an insight for the construction of Coping Scale. The selected aspects which were identified for development of tool are depicted in Table 1. The tool was developed in Hindi language. In totality 50 questions were incorporated in tool. Five response options have been provided for each question viz. fully never / rarely / sometimes / often / always, which never assigned 5,4,3,2,1 marks, respectively. The sum of marks obtained for the entire scale, reflect various level of coping in such a way, that the higher the scores higher is the coping and so on.

#### Sample of research

Forty aged individuals (20 widows and 20 widowers) were selected randomly from Udaipur City (Rajasthan) between the age range of 60-80 years. The subjects were personally contacted for administering the tool. Interview method was utilized to fill up the scale, the scale was filled by the researcher as per response of aged widows and widowers.

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**Table 1: Major aspects and sub aspects of coping scale**

S.N.	Approaches	Strategies of Coping	No. of Questions
1.	Active coping (problem focused):	1.1 Behavioral approach (Confronting, Negotiating, Confiding & adapting):	18
		1.2 Cognitive approach (positive thinking, accommodating, & Hired help)	8
		Total	26
2.	Avoidance coping (emotion focused):	2.1 Behavioral approach (avoiding, reaction formation & spiritualizing):	17
		2.2 Cognitive approach (Displacement/Projecting/ Denial/ Rationalizing)	7
		Total	24
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>50</b>

**Content validation of CSS**

To establish the content validity, the tool was given to specialists from various disciplines ( Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Food Science and Nutrition, Family Resource Management, Psychology and Statistics) for their judicious and critical evaluation. The tool was evaluated in terms of content coverage, language, format, suitability, sequence, length of sentences, and clarity of scale on a four point rating scale –very good/good/average/ poor.

**Assessment of Reliability**

Split half method was used to calculate the reliability of the tool.

**Table 2: Mean content validation scores given by the experts: n= 5**

S. no.	Content validation indicators	Mean scores
1.	Content coverage	4
2.	Language	3
3.	Format	3
4.	Suitability	4
5.	Length of sentences	3
6.	Clarity	4
<b>Total scores</b>		<b>21</b>
<b>Mean of total scores</b>		<b>3.5</b>

\*Range of rating: 1- 1.75 = poor ; 1.76- 2.5= average ; 2.51- 3.25= good ; 3.26- 4= very good

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION****Content validation of Coping Scale**

The results of content validation are presented in Table 2. The table clearly indicates that the calculated mean scores of the complete scale was obtained as 3.5 which shows that the scale was good indicator of Coping strategies.

**Reliability coefficient of the tool**

Table 3 depicts the reliability index of the tool. Table clearly shows that the tool was found to be reliable at 0.05 per cent level of significance for widows and widowers both as also for total sample.

**Table 3: Reliability Index**

Reliability Index		
Widows	Widowers	Total Sample
96**	85**	92**

**CONCLUSION**

The reliability and validity index of CSS suggest that CSS is an acceptable instrument to assess the various coping strategies of aged widows and widowers. It is hoped that this scale will open new vistas for understanding the coping strategies of aged widows and widowers regarding their present life in rapidly changing scenario. This scale will prove to be useful for specialists, scholars of Human Development and Family Studies and allied fields. With

slight modification this scale can be used for older couples who are living together and for unmarried singles.

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