

2022 Doctoral Dissertation (Abstract)

Examining the Effectiveness of Group Stress Management Based on  
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for High School Students

Chikaze SUGIYAMA

Ph.D.

Graduate School of International Studies

J. F. Oberlin University

## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

Stress management is support aimed at prevention based on the stress model (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). However, the criteria based on which preventive effect can be evaluated have not been adequately discussed. Therefore, if the mediating factors that lead to mental health problems are clarified in advance through surveys and other forms of research and are positioned as process variables and if functional change is confirmed, this may lead to improvements in the demonstrability and reproducibility of preventive effects. Variables that can be manipulated by interventions, which correspond to the cognitive evaluation and coping behavior of high school students, can also be used as process variables. Meanwhile, functional change can be confirmed to demonstrate the preventive effect.

This doctoral dissertation aims to examine the depression-preventive effects of stress management for high school students by positioning psychological variables that influence depression in high school students as process variables and confirming their functional changes.

## **Chapter 2 Study 1**

Study 1 aimed to extract process variables through a review of intervention studies on stress management based on cognitive-behavioral therapy for high school students.

Searches were conducted using the article data services CiNii and Google Scholar. In addition, we collected papers and authors cited in the extracted articles.

Seventeen papers were selected. Cognitive variables were classified into cognitive and behavioral variables. The cognitive variable “helping orientation” and the behavioral variable “activation/avoidance” were extracted.

## **Chapter 3 Study 2**

Study 2 aimed to clarify the influence of the variables of frequency of stressor experiences, helping orientation, activation/avoidance, and depression on high school students' depression.

The study included 253 students (high school sophomores). Covariance structure analysis was conducted.

The results suggest that stress management aimed at preventing depression in high school students may be effective in preventing depression if these variables are positioned as process variables.

## **Chapter 4 Study 3**

Study 3 examined the preventive effect on depression through functional change, such as an increase in positive attitude toward helping orientation and a decrease in concern and resistance toward helping, by conducting psychoeducation on helping requests and positioning helping orientation as a process variable.

The study included 268 students from eight high school sophomore classes.

The results showed that psychoeducation on help-seeking was associated with a functional change in concern and resistance to help in the low-depression group, suggesting a preventive effect against depression. However, the lack of functional change in concern and resistance to help and the increase in depression in the low-depression group before and after the intervention revealed problems with the intervention content. These issues should be addressed in future research.

#### **Chapter 5 Study 4**

In Study 4, we conducted problem-solving training and positioned activation/avoidance as a process variable. This study aimed to examine functional change as a preventive effect against depression.

A total of 253 first-year high school students from seven classes were targeted.

This study showed no statistically significant difference in functional change in activation/avoidance, while a small negative effect size was demonstrated in avoidance for all subjects and for the high depression group. This finding suggests that the problem-solving training in this study may have a preventive effect on depression via producing a functional change in avoidance.

#### **Chapter 6 Study 5**

In Study 5, a combined psychoeducational intervention on helping orientation and problem-solving training was implemented to examine the preventive effects of functional changes in helping orientation and activation/avoidance.

The program targeted 197 students in grades 1–4 attending part-time high school.

This study demonstrated a decrease in concern and resistance to assistance, with the main effect of timing. In addition, a decreasing trend of avoidance was observed in the group with high depression. This suggests that the intervention program conducted in this study brought about a functional change in concern and resistance to help in all subjects and a functional change in avoidance in the group with high depression.

#### **Chapter 7 General Discussion**

This doctoral dissertation focused on the cognitive variable “helping-orientation” and the behavioral variables “activation/avoidance” as process variables. Notably, the survey study clarified the influence of helping orientation and activation/avoidance on depression. Furthermore, the one-time intervention resulted in preventive effect, something that could be easily implemented in schools.