

Experiences and Coping Mechanisms to Deal with Difficult Emotions among Women in Early Adulthood: A Qualitative StudySahrish Fatima Ali¹, Muhammad Umar Khan^{2*}, Qasir Abbas²**Abstract**

Difficult emotions are defined as the emotions that are considered to have negative connotations. Researches showed that there are some significant differences in the way difficult emotions are dealt with among genders. This study explored these emotions in women and also focused on finding out strategies that women use to effectively deal with these emotions. A qualitative exploratory research design was used in this study. The sampling technique used in this research study was convenient sampling. The participants included seven female early adults in their 20's (Age range 21-29; $M=25$, $SD=1.3$). Semi-structured, in-depth interviews of almost 60 minutes long were conducted. The collected data was then analyzed through thematic analysis method. Codes, themes, super-themes and clusters were generated after conducting thematic analysis. The results of the study include 5 clusters i.e. "the difficult emotion of sadness", "the difficult emotion of anger", "the difficult emotion of fear", "the difficult emotion of guilt" and "the difficult emotion of grief". Along with this, after analysis 10 super themes were generated i.e. "causes of sadness", "coping strategies for sadness", "causes of anger", "coping strategies for anger", "causes of fear", "coping strategies of fear", "causes of guilt", "coping strategies of guilt", "causes of grief" and "coping strategies of grief". Two of the themes among all the themes generated in the current study i.e. "challenging thoughts" and "using religious strategies" were found to be common coping strategies among women to deal with all the difficult emotions explored in the current study. Quantitative studies should be conducted and experimental studies should also be done to further provide pieces of evidence for the level of effectiveness of each coping technique, to get more objective results and how much of a long-term effect these strategies have on the individual. Similar studies should also be done with men.

Keywords: Adulthood, Anger, Coping, Difficult Emotions, Fear, Grief, Guilt, Interviews, Qualitative Research, Sadness, Thematic Analysis, Women

Received: 27 March 2023; Revised
Received: 20 June 2023; Accepted: 22 June
2023

¹BS (Hons) Scholar, Department of Applied Psychology, Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Psychology, Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan.

***Corresponding Author Email:**

umarkhan@gcuf.edu.pk

Introduction

Difficult emotions are defined as the emotions that are considered to have negative connotations. These emotions are

the ones that are believed to be hard to understand and handle. These emotions are now usually referred to as the difficult emotions rather than the negative emotions because they are said to be some of the basic emotions that are inevitable to experience. The difficult emotions include anger, fear, guilt, grief, disgust, etc. These emotions are not really negative. They are actually informative of any underlying problem area (Ekman & Davidson, 1994; Lazarus, 1991).

Some people suppress their difficult emotions as a way to cope with them while others express the difficult emotions as a mechanism of coping. Usually, when people suppress their difficult emotions,

This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercial 4.0 International License (<https://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>) which permits non-Commercial use, reproduction and distribution of the work without further permission provided the original work is attributed as specified.

© Copyright: The Authors (2023)

they avoid the outward signs of their inner feelings and when they express, they usually express it in inappropriate ways, for example, when someone feels anger, they might express it by lashing out. Suppressing the difficult emotions have been found to be having a bad effect on the health and well-being of the individual (Cullen, 2020). Thus, there are different adaptive and maladaptive ways of coping with difficult emotions. Some of the harmful coping strategies to deal with difficult emotions include denial, withdrawal, bullying, self-harm and substance use. These techniques or strategies are said to be causing more damage than good because the underlying issues never get resolved and instead start accumulating inside being just bottled up (Brown et al., 2005).

Usually, people use negative or harmful coping mechanisms to deal with negative emotions and the reason behind this is that even though the negative coping mechanisms do not provide long-term benefits but still they do provide immediate effects i.e. relieving stress for a short-term period (Schaffner, 2019). Negative coping strategies are used by people who grow up in dysfunctional families and are denied expression of feelings, and thus they start expressing them through harmful and unhealthy ways (McLafferty et al., 2019). There are various negative consequences of using negative coping strategies in life. When underlying emotions or feelings are not shared or expressed then these have a toll on the physical health of the person as they start creating tension within the body. Using harmful ways of coping with difficult emotions also causes unhealthy relationships and affects the self-worth and self-esteem of the individual (Wiest, 2018). Researches show that there are some significant differences in the way difficult emotions are dealt with among genders. Women are found to be expressing the positive emotions to a greater level than men while expressing the difficult emotions of anger to a lesser level than men as

women usually are found to be internalizing emotions of anger while men are more likely to express anger through aggression, frustration and violence (Chaplin, 2015). Other studies have shown that the emotion of sadness is experienced more intensely in men but is expressed by women to a greater degree (Deng et al., 2016). Researches have shown that the most commonly expressed difficult emotions in women include anger, frustration, regret, guilt, confusion and anxiety, and with these emotions there is a feeling of being uncomfortable and not at ease after expressing it (deMarris & Tisdale, 2002).

A helpful coping strategy to deal with difficult emotions is a positive psychology technique called TEARS HOPE technique which is an acronym where T stands for Teach and learn, E stands for Express and Enable, A stands for Accept and befriend, R stands for Reappraise and reframe, S stands for Social support, H stands for Hedonic well-being, O stands for Observe and attend to, P stands for Physiology and behavioral changes, E stands for Eudaimonia this technique is based on the idea that experiencing positive emotions can help in dealing with difficult or negative emotions or the 'good' can help deal with 'bad' (Sims, 2017).

Some other helpful coping strategies proved through various research studies to be effective include mindfulness techniques (Altinyelken, 2018) self-exercise, gratitude letter, journaling, sharing feelings, and taking a mental health day. (Scott, 2021). A study also established the positive impact of self-management training on coping with difficult emotions. This self-management training includes social support, self-care and family relationships. The benefits of this training program is that the participants are able to manage their difficult emotions, provide emotional support to each other, understand a lot about each other and about the relationships through this training program (Sanders et al., 2011).

Researches have been conducted to determine the effective coping strategies to

deal with the difficult emotions but there is no specific study conducted in Pakistan to explore the ways difficult emotions are experienced within our culture and what are the strategies used by Pakistani people that are found to be effective. As studies have shown huge gender differences in terms of how difficult emotions are experienced and dealt with, in this study women are selected as participants. Research studies have shown that women in Pakistan are highly likely to be objected to violence and have to deal with greater emotional burdens (Andersson et al., 2009). As women are a vulnerable population in Pakistani society, their experiences are studied in depth.

The purpose of this study is to determine how women in early adulthood experience difficult emotions and what events might lead to these emotions. It will also help to indicate the different ways or mechanisms women use to deal or cope with the difficult emotions that have effectively worked for them. A lot of researches have been conducted on the difficult emotion of anger, guilt, grief, fear, etc. in other cultures but no specific in-depth study is conducted in Pakistan to explore the experiences of difficult emotions in young adult women.

Objectives

1. To find out the experiences of difficult emotions of sadness, anger, fear, guilt and grief in young adult women.
2. To investigate ways in which young adult women deal with the difficult emotions
3. To determine the coping strategies that the young adult women have found to be effective.

Research Questions

The current research will investigate the following areas:

1. What are the emotional experiences of young adult women in regard to difficult emotions of sadness, anger, guilt, grief and fear?
2. What are the different ways women use to deal or cope with these difficult emotions?
3. What are the most effective coping strategies used by young adult women to deal with these difficult emotions?

Method

Research Design and Epistemological Position

The research design used in this study is qualitative exploratory research design and the epistemological position of this qualitative research study is Realist. One-on-one interviews were conducted to collect data from the participants from April 2021 to July 2021. Later on, thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. A descriptive inquiry of the data was done.

Interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis to provide enough space for each participant to share even their uncomfortable experiences with difficult emotions of fear, guilt, grief, etc. The researcher tried to provide a space or environment that was comfortable for the participants and was cathartic as well so that the interviews don't cause any emotional or psychological harm to the participants as they were remembering some of their distressing experiences. Researches have found interviews to be therapeutic in nature (Rossetto, 2014). Thus, considering the nature of the study interview method was selected to collect data.

Researcher Description

The researcher is a young-adult Pakistani female herself. Thus, the study was inspired by her own experiences along with the experiences of her peers and friends. The descriptive approach to inquiry was used in this study to try to minimize the influence of the researcher's personal experiences on the finding of the study.

Sample

The sampling technique used in this research study is convenient sampling. The participants of the current research included early adults in their 20's (Age =21-29; $M=25$, $SD=1.3$). All the participants were female. The sample size was seven. The sample size required for interviews in a qualitative study varies widely but most of the recommendations and guidance points out that an appropriate sample size in this regard could be anywhere between 5 and 50

(Dworkin, 2012). The young adult women recruited for this research study were selected based on convenience i.e. their availability and readiness to be part of the research study.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

All the participants with age ranging from 21-29 were included. Individuals below the age of 21 and above the age of 29 were excluded. Women were included in the research study while males are excluded as this study only explored the emotional experiences of women because firstly there are huge gender differences (McRae et al.,

2008) in which emotions are experienced and dealt with and secondly because women are a vulnerable population in our society with the greater emotional burden (Andersson et al., 2009), thus their emotional experiences with difficult emotions were specifically explored.

Recruitment Process

The information regarding the research study was disseminated among the peers. Participants reached out to the researcher themselves to share their experiences with difficult emotions as they wanted a cathartic outlet.

Participants

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Sample (n = 7)

Sr No.	Participant	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Education	Occupation
1	P1	Female	24	Single	MS	Student
2	P2	Female	25	Married	BS	Calligraphy Artist
3	P3	Female	27	Single	MBBS	Student
4	P4	Female	25	Single	MS	Student
5	P5	Female	25	Married	BS	Housewife
6	P6	Female	23	Single	BEMS	Student
7	P7	Female	26	Single	BS	Teacher

Table 1 – illustrated the demographic characteristics of the sample. It includes all the necessary demographic information of

the participants such as gender, age, marital status, and education.

Data Collection

The method of data collection used in this study was semi-structured interviews of almost 60 minutes long which included questions about how and when women experienced the difficult emotions of sadness, anger, guilt, fear and grief, and how they dealt with these difficult emotions. These interviews were conducted online on zoom.

Interview Agenda

During the interviews, the participants were asked about their personal experiences of difficult emotions i.e. sadness, anger, guilt, fear and grief. After the participant shared their personal experiences, they were asked about ways they coped with that emotion in

that particular situation and what strategies they found to be effective. The interview protocol is attached in the appendix section.

Procedure

The sample was selected non-randomly through the technique of convenient sampling. Informed consent was taken of the participants as they were provided with all the necessary information regarding the research topic, they were informed about confidentiality and how the experiences and data provided by them would be used. Then, almost 60-minute interviews were conducted with each participant in which the participants were asked about their experiences regarding the emotions of sadness, anger, fear, guilt and grief along

with asking them ways they use to cope with these emotions whenever they encounter them and what do they believe to be best ways to deal with these emotions. In the end, the participants were thanked for giving their time and sharing their experiences for the research being conducted. The participants gave a positive feedback about the interview as they felt good after sharing their emotions and were curious to find out ways that other people use to cope with these emotions.

Data Recording and Transformation

The audio recordings of the interviews were done after taking consent from the participants. This was done to help with the transcription process as it became easy and ensured accuracy. The transcription of the data present in audio form was done manually.

Data Analysis Process

After obtaining the information from the participants, the data was transcribed into a word document and the content was labeled with discourse units. To analyze the data or content obtained from the semi-structured interviews, thematic analysis was used. Thematic analysis is a data analysis technique used to analyze qualitative data to make sense of it and then reporting it in the form of categorization i.e. codes and themes (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). The six-step framework for carrying out thematic analysis given by Braun & Clarke (2006) was used.

The transcribed data were coded on Qualitative Data Analysis Miner Lite software. After the coding, the codes were categorized and sub-categorized in X-mind. Then these categories were labeled as codes, themes, super-themes and clusters. This labeling made the data meaningful and helped have a clear understanding of the obtained data. The analytic strategy and descriptive inquiry approach helped to answer the research questions appropriately and to coherently come up with the findings of the study.

Reflexivity

This topic was chosen due to my own experience of trying to deal with the difficult emotion of grief. I was also curious to know how others deal with the difficult emotions in general i.e. what is their main strategy to cope with these emotions. I tried to keep the research process and its outcomes as unbiased and impartial as possible. The questions asked from the participants during the interviews were open-ended. The thoughts and assumptions of the interviewer are also believed to affect the interview process and even though I was having thoughts about my own experiences with the difficult emotions, coping strategies that I use and events where I do get stuck but I took the different insights, opinions and views of the participants regarding their experiences and the coping strategies they use as a new way of looking at things and I accepted it rather than counter questioning their ideas and views. Instead of comparing their views with mine or asking questions from my point of view, I tried to stay away from 'The God's Trick' and remained curious and open to new views to keep the process impartial and un-bias and to get to see the different ways of dealing with difficult emotions.

Rigor

There is a four-dimensional criterion to ensure rigor in qualitative research i.e. credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Gaba, 1985). In the present study, all four-dimension criteria were fulfilled.

Firstly, credibility which refers to the accuracy and truthfulness of the findings, was ensured by discussing findings with the participants.

Secondly, transferability which refers to the ability to apply the findings to a novel context can be ensured when responses are present in-depth i.e. detailed description of context and time should be present. In the current study, the responses were very detailed and the experiences shared were

with thick descriptions of time, context and other details.

Lastly, dependability and confirmability can be ensured by the researcher's reflections and by keeping an audit trail. An audit trail was kept as computer software was used to transcribe and analyze the data. Reflections were also made by the researcher. Thus, it was made sure that the four-dimensional criteria of rigor are ensured.

Ethical Considerations

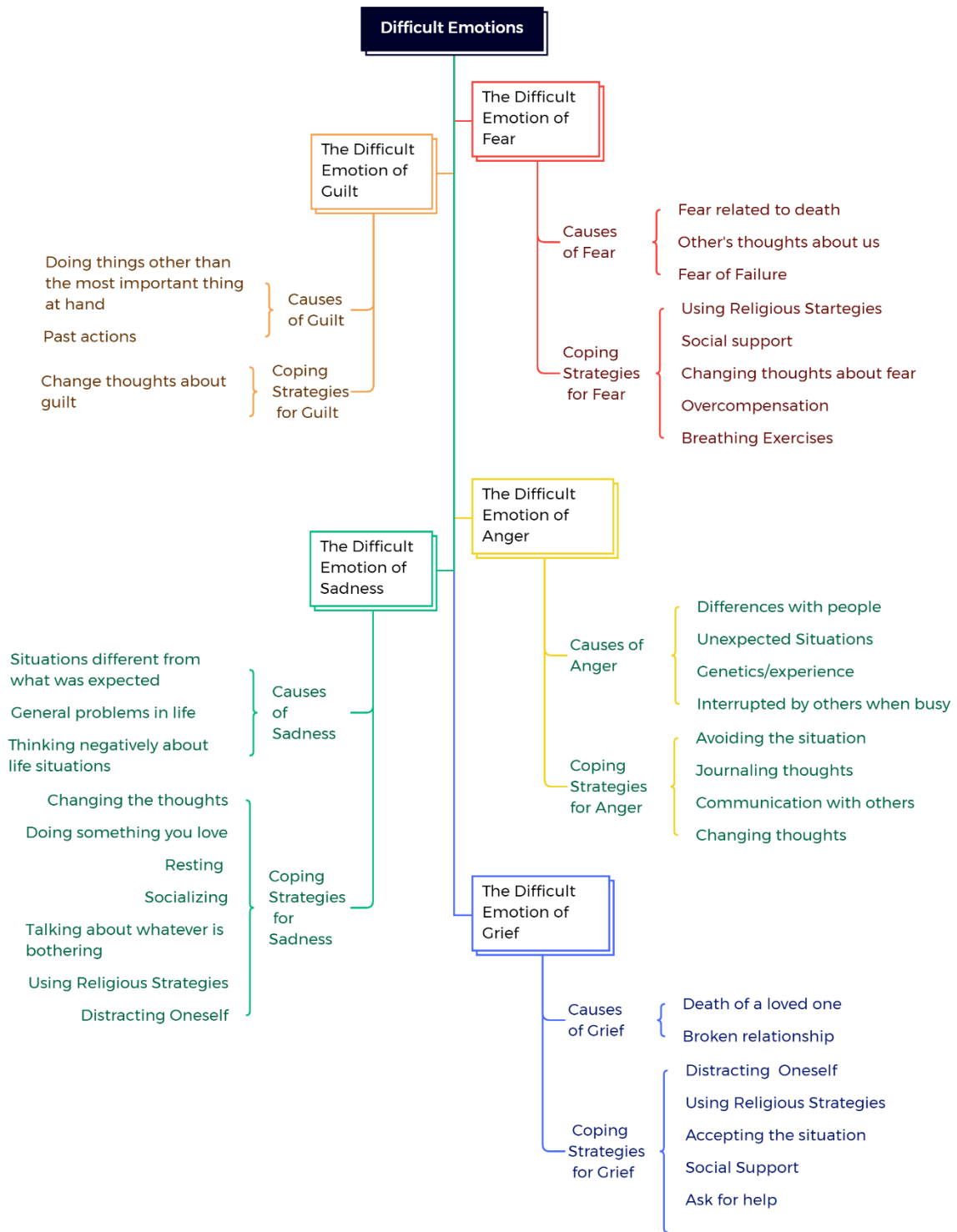
In the current study, the ethical guidelines for research given by American Psychological Association (2017) were followed which included informed consent, and maintenance of confidentiality.

Results

Discourse Unit in qualitative research is a segment of spoken language that is spoken by an individual. It is basically used to do segmentation of the complete transcribed interview (Taboada & Zabala, 2008). Code in qualitative research is basically a word or a maximum 3 word phrase that

meaningfully summarizes and captures the essence of the portion of language written in a verbal form. It is used to summarize or condense the data. Coding is considered to be an important part of analysis in qualitative research (Saldana, 2008). The codes are further categorized into themes, super-themes and clusters. Meaningful codes are grouped together into themes, for example, 'reading Quran', 'Praying Salah', 'Doing Tasbeeh', 'Making Dua', 'Remembering Allah', etc. all these codes come under the theme of 'Using Religious Strategies'. Meaningful themes are then grouped together into super themes, for example, 'using religious strategies', 'changing thoughts', 'doing something you love' are themes that come under the super-theme of Coping with Sadness. Then, the meaningful super themes are categories together into clusters as 'Experiences regarding Sadness' and 'Coping with Sadness' are Super-themes that come under the Cluster of 'The Difficult Emotion of Sadness'.

Figure 1
The Clusters, Super-themes and Themes Generated in the Current Study



Presented with xmind

1. The Difficult Emotion of Sadness (Cluster)

When exploring about sadness, one of the difficult emotions, the participants provided three types of information i.e. causes of their sadness i.e. reasons behind their sadness and the coping strategies i.e. what they did to cope with the sadness they experienced due to various reasons.

1.1 Causes of Sadness (Super-theme)

Causes of Sadness included all the experiences and reasons that lead them to feel sad. There were different reasons for sadness reported by the participants.

1.1.1- Situations different from what was expected (Theme)

In this, the participants put forth that whenever they have high expectations from reality or whenever their expectations do not get fulfilled, they experience the difficult emotions of sadness. Thus, one of the reasons behind experiencing sadness is having very high expectations or not having one's expectations fulfilled. For example, as said by the Participant 1:

"When I took admission in this university, my expectations were really high from this university, I do not know why ... but then I could not cope and decide to quit, I do not know why even now when I think of the university I feel sad. Usually, people get excited..., I am just filled with sadness..." (Participant 1, DU10).

Another example of this is what was reported by participant 2;

"...almost 2 days ago I checked my weight because I was trying to lose it by following a specific diet plan, so I basically checked after a very long time but I didn't see any change so I felt so sad about that. All that day went really bad, I felt a lot of sadness that day..." (Participant 2, DU11)

1.1.2- General Problems in Life (Theme)

In this, the participants reported that the general problems of life or stress in daily life that they face also lead to sadness. These problems can be of any sort anything related to home, friends, family or any other aspect of their life. An example of this is what Participant 1 said i.e.,:

"...all of a sudden one of my closest friends decided to quit her studies, she quit, firstly she told me that she was going to quit but then she actually left. I used to think she was just joking, but that state it was an extreme state of sadness that I faced..." (Participant 1, DU10).

Another example of this is what was put forth by Participant 3:

"I usually get sad whenever I am far away from my home..." (Participant 3, DU10).

1.1.3- Thinking negatively about life situations (Theme)

In this, the participants told about the different kinds of thoughts that they have about their life situations that makes them sad. These thoughts are negative in nature i.e. thinking negatively about situations an individual faces leads to the experience of the difficult emotion of sadness. For example, Participant 1 said:

"...you feel like every worst thing is going in your life, may Allah forgive me but a few people in your life help you realize that you are not the only one in the world facing problems..." (Participant 1, DU36).

1.2. Coping Strategies for Sadness (Super-theme)

In the super-theme of coping strategies of sadness, the participants put forth all the various coping strategies that they use to deal or cope with the difficult emotions of sadness. The coping strategies reported by the clients are as follows:

1.2.1- Changing the thoughts (Theme)

In this the participants reported that by changing the thoughts that are negative about the life situations and the world in general would help to cope or deal with the sadness and we might be able to get out of the difficult emotion of sadness. For example, Participant 1 said:

"...you can say that I have coped in a way that I have actually tried to find goodness in the situations I faced..." (Participant 1, DU16).

1.2.2- Doing something you love (Theme)

In this the participants proposed that doing things that we love doing decreases the difficult emotion of sadness as they have

used this strategy to deal or cope with sadness whenever they experienced it. For example, participant 6 said:

“I listen to music, whenever I feel like I am sad, or I do makeup to get rid of my sadness. I mean we can do anything that we like to get out of the sad state.” (Participant 6, DU11).

1.2.3- Resting (Theme)

In this the participants put forth that sleeping or resting in general also helps to deal with sadness. So, sometimes this strategy can also be used to stop over thinking that might be leading to sadness. For example, the Participant 7 said:

“when I feel like I am sad, I sleep sometimes, because after sleeping I feel like my mind gets fresh and whatever was making me sad no longer make me feel that way.” (Participant 7, DU11).

1.2.4- Socializing (Theme)

In this, the participants proposed that spending quality time with people and socializing with them also helps reduce the difficult emotion of sadness like going out with others, eating with others or doing other stuff with others. For example, participant 3 said:

“We can talk to our family members, we can go out for a walk with them, in a park, just like I go out with my friends for a walk, socializing, gout with family, going close to nature, all of this is helpful...” (Participant 3, DU18).

1.2.5- Talking about whatever is bothering (Theme)

In this the participants put forth that talking to someone or with oneself about whatever is bothering helps sort out sad emotions and is a great strategy to cope or deal with difficult emotions of sadness. For example, participant 2 said:

“We can talk to Allah, this actually varies from person to person, you can also talk to someone that you have a great bonding with whenever you have the feeling of helplessness and sadness...” (Participant 2, DU21).

1.2.6- Using Religious Strategies (Theme)

In this the participants reported that talking to Allah, remembering Allah, making dua, doing tasbeeh, praying, making Salah and overall the connection with Allah helps us to deal with sad emotions. For example, participant 2 said:

“Whomsoever feels helpless can make dua or ask for Allah’s help that Oh Allah! Please, help me in sorting out these emotions of helplessness. So, basically it is about the connection with Allah if you want to give a proper name to it in words.” (Participant 2, DU21).

Another example of this is what participant 6 said i.e.:

“Pray Salah because even by praying Salah the sadness goes away i.e. by remembering Allah” (Participant 6, DU11).

1.2.7- Distracting Oneself (Theme)

In this, the participants put forth that by distracting oneself from thoughts and feelings of sadness, one can cope or deal with the difficult emotions of sadness. For example Participant 7 said:

“I try to distract myself, and by this I mean that I actually scroll on social media, or watch a TV show or do anything to help my mind focus on something else other than what is making me sad.” (Participant 7, DU11).

Another example of this is what participant 5 said i.e.:

“Whatever is making you sad just do not think about that. Try to distract yourself and apart from this try to be optimistic. The more we think positive, the less we will feel sad.” (Participant 5, DU12).

2. The Difficult Emotions of Anger (Cluster)

When anger which is one of the difficult emotions was explored two types of information was provided by the participants i.e. firstly the causes or reasons that lead them to become angry and the coping strategies they used to cope with their emotions of anger.

2.1. Causes of Anger (Super-theme)

The super-theme “causes of anger” includes the themes representing the

experiences, reasons and causes that lead to people to become angry which is characterized by being frustrated, restless and burst-out.

2.1.1- Differences with People (Theme)

In this, the participants put forth that whenever we have difference with people in terms of our opinions, view, ideas and perspectives along with personalities it leads to some sort of heated arguments, the experience of the difficult emotion of anger and sometimes fights. For example, participant 1 said:

“...I have personality clash with my mother, we have different perspectives, we have different ways to see at things, so I think that if I get angry at something in my life, or someone in my life then it is very sad that it is my mother, as recently I got into a fight with her due to some personal issue at home, our views were very different so I got very angry...” (Participant 1, DU40).

2.1.2- Genetics/Experience (Theme)

In this the participants reported that sometimes they feel that their anger or aggression in the extended form is because of the way their parents are i.e. they have inherited it from their father or mother and their emotion of anger is also strengthened by the way their family is and what they have experienced. By seeing everyone getting angry at a lot of things they have normalized it and does the same themselves. For example, as participant 1 reported:

“in terms of my family I would say that I have got this thing from my family that is to shout, scream, holding grudges, screaming harder in an attempt to take revenge...” (Participant 1, DU51).

2.1.3- Interrupted by others when busy (Theme)

In this the participants said that whenever they are disturbed or interrupted by others when they are doing something important or there are busy then they get really angry. Thus, this is also one of the reasons that develop the difficult emotion of anger in people. For example, participant 4 said:

“I am the most angry when I get home and there is nothing to eat or when I am doing my work and there is a lot of disturbance...” (Participant 4, DU17).

Another example of this is what participant 2 said i.e.,:

“I also get angry at things like when I am doing my work, for example some assignment or something related to studies and then someone causes disturbance then I actually get frustrated or get really angry.” (Participant 2, DU26).

2.2.Coping Strategies for Anger (Super-theme)

The super-theme coping strategies of anger includes all the coping strategies of techniques to cope or deal with the difficult emotion of anger that has been reported by the participants to be effective to cope with the emotion of anger. These strategies reported by the participants are as follows:

2.2.1- Avoiding the situation (Theme)

In this the participants put forth that, one of the ways to deal with the emotion of anger without bursting out, getting into a fight or argument is to avoid the situation by distracting oneself from that situation, or get out of the situation altogether by changing one's place. For example, participant 3 said:

“Whenever I get a bit of angry then I control that anger, do not say a word and leave the place where sitting longer will cause me to get more anger, then I'll get normal after sometime i.e. free from the emotion of anger.” (Participant 3, DU20).

2.2.2- Journaling thoughts (Theme)

In this the participants put forth that one of the strategies that will help deal with anger is journaling one's thoughts as it will act as a channel to let out of our thoughts and feelings without getting into a fight and argument and it will also help us in self-evaluation of our thoughts and feelings expressed on a piece of paper. For example, participant 2 said:

“Writing can help as whenever there is something that I didn't like or is unbearable or causes me to be angry for a longer period of time then I write down whatever goes in

my mind and when it all comes out on a paper, firstly it causes the let out of thoughts and feelings as I feel very light afterwards, secondly when you read whatever is written once again it gives you a sense of clarity about one's own role in it and what I can do in it and how can this be sorted out and thus in this way it get sorted out." (Participant 2, DU34).

2.2.3- Communication with Others (Theme)

In this the participants reported that by communicating about the problems, the emotion of anger can be dealt with along with this relationship can be mended that were affected due to the difficult emotion of anger, fights and arguments. For example, Participant 2 said:

"If we have been into a fight with someone, then convey to them what you think was hurtful on their part, you should communicate so that you do not get angry over and over again and so that your relationship is not affected." (Participant 2, DU38)

2.2.4- Changing thoughts (Theme)

In this the participants put forth that by changing our own thoughts about the situations that are making us feel the emotion of anger would help us to calm down, will reduce our anger and thus would be a good strategy to cope or deal with the difficult emotion of anger. For example, participant 4 said:

"A health way to cope would be that whenever you get angry then look at things in a different way, like if the food is not ready then think that it is okay, it is just a matter of 5 to 10 minutes, let us just be patient, even if it gets delayed, it is okay. We must think of any alternative option to our thoughts..." (Participant 4, DU19).

3. The Difficult Emotion of Fear (Cluster)

In the cluster of 'Fear', the participants were asked about their experiences with the emotion of fear and how do they cope with this difficult emotion in their lives. The participants reported the causes behind their emotion of fear and the coping

strategies that they find effective to deal with fear.

3.1. Causes of Fear (Super-theme)

In the super-theme 'causes of fear' the participants put forth the various reasons behind the emotion of fear. It included fear regarding death of loved one, fear of failure and fear regarding other people's view about oneself. These themes are as follows:

3.1.1- Fear related-to Death (Theme)

In this the participants put forth fear of death as one of the reasons behind feeling the emotion of fear and feeling anxious. Most of the participants reported the fear of losing their parents or the idea that they will die causes a lot of fear. For example, participant 2 said:

"It is almost 4-5 months back that my father was not feeling well and I felt this extreme sense of fear,... I mean like felt like this fear of death of my father, that something might happen to him, I mean this thought continues to be on the back of the mind that what will happen and if something happens to him then what will we do and how we will face things... it was just the fear of what will happen in the future." (Participant 2, DU42).

3.1.2- Others' thoughts about You (Theme)

In this the participants put forth that the thought or idea that what will other's think of you also causes fear and anxiety. So, we get scared of what we are doing and how we are being perceived and we actually become extra conscious of our impressions on others. For example, participant 1 said:

"Based on what my maternal grandmother said.... I decided to give GAT and when I gave that I was in so much fear that what if I am not able to pass that, what will my grandmother think of me that I am not even able to pass a single test." (Participant 1, DU55).

3.1.3- Fear of Failure (Theme)

The fear of what other's will think of you actually leads to another cause of fear that is the fear of failure, we start feeling fearful of failing sometimes for various other reasons but sometimes for what might

others think of us or how will they start viewing us after the failure. For example, participant 4 said:

“I try to do whatever work I am supposed to do so that I can get out of the state of fear. I fear that I will do it wrong in the end because of the fear itself or what if the internet stops working or what if something else bad happens, so I try to do work early.” (Participant 4, DU23).

3.2. Coping Strategies for Fear (Super-theme)

The super-theme of ‘Coping strategies for fear’ includes all the strategies that participants reported to be effective for coping or dealing with the difficult emotion of fear. These techniques or strategies include the following:

3.2.1- Using Religious Strategies (Theme)

In this the participants put forth that taking help from the religion or our faith is effective to deal with the different types of fear that we face specifically the fears that are uncontrollable. For example, participant 6 said:

“First of all we all pray that we never lose our parents but whenever this thought comes into my mind I pray for them because we can’t do anything else for them in this case. We can only pray and ask from Allah.” (Participant 6, DU19).

3.2.2- Social Support (Theme)

In this the participants reported the importance of social support in dealing with the difficult emotion of fear. The participants put forth the fear decrease when someone motivates us or calm us down along with helping us see the situation positively. For example participant 3 said:

“I share and it helps my stress levels to decrease because others help me understand that nothing bad will happen and even if something happens there will some goodness in it too. So, I share and in return I get help from others.” (Participant 3, DU32).

3.2.3- Changing thoughts about Fear (Theme)

In this the participants put forth that by changing our views about fear helps us to deal with it effectively and be affected by it less negatively as we do not see it a negative emotion rather an emotion which does not make us feel good or comfortable but is helpful in its own ways. For example, participant 5 said:

“Fear pushes to achieve your goals like in your career and studies as whenever you feel the emotion of fear that is when you really work hard.” (Participant 5, DU20).

3.2.4- Over-compensation (Theme)

In this the participants put forth that another way to deal with fear is to try to overcompensate for whatever fear is being faced to help reduce the fear and get relaxed. For example, participant 6 said:

“I fear that I could not complete my degree ...I try to work harder towards my goal meaning whatever is being taught by the teachers I study extra because I feel that when I will study harder and extra I will be able to complete my degree. So I study more and more, search more and more. I try harder and then that kind-of reduces my fear.” (Participant 6, DU19).

3.2.5- Deep Breathing (Theme)

In this the participants put forth that deep breathing can be used as a coping strategy to deal or cope with the difficult emotion of fear as deep breathing helps to get relaxed and it calms the body and mind. For example, participant 4 said:

“For coping with fear, sometimes I do deep breathing as well” (Participant 4, DU25).

4. The Difficult Emotion of Guilt (Cluster)

In this cluster the participants talk about the different reasons behind the difficult emotion of guilt along with the different strategies they think are effective to be used to cope or deal with this difficult emotion of guilt.

4.1. Causes of Guilt (Super-theme)

In this super-theme the participants put forth the various reason or causes behind the feeling of the difficult emotion that is guilt. The various reasons that lead to the

feeling of guilt as per the reports of the clients are as follows:

4.1.1- Past Actions (Themes)

In this the participants reported that the actions that someone has done in the past leads to the feelings of guilt. Every past action that has been a source of disappointment or embarrassment or we wish we should not have done becomes the source of the feelings of the difficult emotion of guilt as well. For example, participant 1 said:

“I had to give up on him ... So I lost 2.5 years of my life... it was precious years. He put me in a lot of stress and as I said earlier, because we were friends so I used to u know okay, I think okay, it’s okay, it happens, it’s okay...I was wrong totally, I think.... So, yeah, that was a huge guilt... that I wasted my time...” (Participant 1, DU65).

4.1.2- Doing things other than the most important thing at hand (Theme)

In this the participants put forth that doing things other than the most important things at hand also causes guilt even if it is something like eating food or taking breaks during exams, even this causes a sense of guilt in people. For example, participant 3 said:

“Sometimes I would go to sleep and then when I would wake up I will think that the there is only a small period of time left to study. So, I would feel a sense of guilt that I should not have slept. Even when I go out somewhere I have this sense of guilt in my mind that I should not have gone or should not go and I should study, so these things actually cause a lot of guilt in me.” (Participant 3, DU36).

4.2. Coping Strategies for Guilt (Super-Theme)

In this super-theme, the participants reported the different coping strategies that on the basis of their experience they have found to be effective in dealing with the sense of guilt or feeling of guilt. These coping strategies or techniques reported to be the effective or useful one to deal with guilt is as follows:

4.2.1- Changing thoughts about Guilt (Theme)

In this the participants have reported that by changing one’s thoughts about the situations and the emotion of guilt will help to deal or cope with guilt like seeing guilt as a helpful emotion that prevents us to do something wrong in the future, or believing that time will help heal things and that situations are only a matter of lessons that are learn. For example, participant 3 said: “Guilt is basically when something has happened in the past and we feel bad about that. Then we must realize that it has already happened and is part of the past now we cannot change that. The only thing we can do is not let that happen in the future...” (Participant 3, DU40).

5. The Difficult Emotion of Grief (Cluster)

In this cluster, the participants talked about the difficult emotion of grief. They shared their experiences where they experienced guilt and also share the coping strategies that they have found to be effective to be used to deal or cope with the difficult emotions of grief.

5.1. Causes of Grief (Super-theme)

In this super theme, the participants put forth the causes that might lead someone to grieve. So, there were basically two such causes reported by the participants i.e. death of a loved one that led an individual to grieve over the deceased loved one and the second cause is broken relationships where people grieve the loss of a love one who has left them after the relationship is broken.

5.1.1- Death of a loved one (Theme)

In this the participants put forth that the death of a loved one causes an individual to feel pain and feel the difficult emotion of grief because of losing someone they dearly loved or someone who they were bonded with or attached to closely. For example, participant 5 said:

“My maternal uncle died and his death was really painful, so now we do not talk about it and change the topic because we know that it is really painful for all of us.” (Participant 5, DU26).

5.1.2- Broken Relationship (Theme)

In this the participants reported that sometimes when relationships break up, we tend to grieve over the one we no longer are with. This also happens due to a sense of loss of the person who is no longer with us in a relationship. For example, participant 1 said:

“when he used to leave me for a couple of months, I used to grieve a lot I used to think that I have lost one of the precious persons in my life. It always felt like it was a great loss” (Participant 1, DU82).

5.2. Coping Strategies for Grief (Super-theme)

In this super theme, the different strategies to cope with the difficult emotion of grief have been reported by the client. The participants talked about the various ways that can help people continue living their life along with the sense of grief because usually it is reported that it does not go away rather stays with us because we have lost someone who mattered to us and the pain we feel by losing them would be in proportion to how much we loved them and how much they mattered to us, thus we need to cope with grief and the situations we faced and continue to live our lives. The coping strategies that are effective to cope or deal with grief as reported by the clients are as follows:

5.2.1- Distracting Oneself (Theme)

In this the participants put forth that distraction or distracting oneself from the memories or grief in general is one of the coping strategies to deal with grief for example, participant 5 said:

“Grief does not go away. It stays with you. Whenever you will remember the loss, you will feel grief. It stays inside of you. It fades with time but stays within you so whenever you will ignore you won't feel it but whenever you will remember you will feel grief. Like my maternal uncle died and his death was really painful so now we do not really talk about it. It is not like we have decided or it is pre-planned that we are not going to talk about it but we just avoid it

because we know that it is painful for all of us.” (Participant 5, DU26)

5.2.2- Using Religious Strategies (Theme)

In this the participants put forth the importance of religion and faith to cope with any kind of loss be it the death of a loved one or breaking of a relationship. Making duas, salah and doing tasbeehs help people cope with the loss they have been through and this calms them. For example, participant 7 said:

“The only thing we can do is to make prayers for the departed soul or the deceased one.” (Participant 7, DU27).

5.2.3- Accepting the Situation (Theme)

In this the participants talked about the importance of accepting the situations and destiny rather than questioning it. The acceptance of the loss is reported by the participants as one of the coping strategies to cope or deal with the difficult emotion of grief. For example, a participant said:

“It took time to help one's own self understand that this is from Allah and the one who has come in this world has to go.” (Participant 4, DU31).

5.2.4- Social Support (Theme)

In this, the participants put forth the importance of social support to deal with the difficult emotions of grief. Social support in the time of hard times plays a very crucial role as it helps people to get out of the grief and difficult times and helps them to continue their lives after the trauma that they have faced. For example, participant 4 said,

“I think social support is also important ... social support, family friends are all very important. In my life, my family and friends have played a very crucial role. If they would not have supported me then I think I would have never been able to cope with the painful events of my life.” (Participant 4, DU33).

5.2.5- Asking for help (Theme)

In this, the participants put forth that whenever someone has gone through some kind of trauma, they are facing grief in their lives and they cannot cope with it on their own, then the best way to cope with it

would be to ask for help from the people around you and if things are not getting under control then therapy should be taken. For example, participant 2 said:

“if your emotion is causing a lot of disturbance in your life then ask for someone’s help...going to therapy should help.” (Participant 2, DU66).

5.2.6- With time it gets better (Theme)

In this the participants put forth that with time things do get better and to some extent, pain does fade away. For example, participant 4 said:

“I felt a huge amount of grief when my grandmother and grandfather passed away suddenly. I was in so much pain. From the time we were very young, we lived with them and thus we were very attached with them. Even today it is a source of pain for me. I didn’t get out of it suddenly. It took me some time but with time things have gotten better. (Participant 4, DU31).

Discussion

The current study shows the experiences of women in adulthood of difficult emotions i.e. sadness, anger, fear, guilt and grief. The reason that causes women to experience these difficult emotions and the strategies that effectively help women to cope with these difficult emotions were explored in this study.

Firstly, this study showed that sadness can be caused by failed expectations, different problems faced in life and due to consistent negative thoughts about one’s life. Previous researches have also shown that disappointments in life like losing a loved one, or breaking up from a relationship or failing at exam lead to the emotional experience of sadness. Other general problems like just being away from home might also lead to sadness (Fivush & Buckner, 2000). Being pessimistic or consistently finding flaws in one’s life or focusing more on the negative aspects and not being able to see the brighter side is also associated with the experience of sadness (TenHouten, 2022).

The current study found changing negative thoughts, doing something you love, resting, socializing, talking to someone and using religious strategies to be the various coping strategies effective to deal with the difficult emotion of sadness. Previous studies also found that emotional regulation strategies like changing thoughts, telling the story, socializing, resting i.e. relieving the physical symptoms and doing what we love as it will induce positive emotions are extremely effective in dealing with sadness (Schindler & Querengässer, 2019). Researches have also found the importance of religious strategies as religion is said to be associated with a lesser incidence of sadness or depression and it also tends to decrease the risk of depression i.e. severe and persistent form of sadness (Gupta et al., 2011).

This study also explored the various causes of anger experiences. The results showed that genetics i.e. some people are more prone to the experience of anger because it runs in families, interruptions or disturbances by others, having differences with people and some unexpected situations leads to the experiences of the difficult emotion of anger. Previous studies have also shown that physiology, social stressors and autonomic responses to social situations produce anger (Berkowitz & Harmon-Jones, 2004). The coping strategies found to be effective in the current study include; journaling, changing negative thoughts and assertively communicating. Previous researches also prove these strategies to be extremely effective in coping with difficult emotions of anger (Gelbrich, 2010).

The current study showed that the difficult emotion of fear in adult women in their 20s is associated with the fear of the death of a loved one as now parents and family members have gotten older, fear of what others might think of them and how they are perceived by others and the fear of failure in academic, occupation and social relationships. Previous studies have also shown that the fear of losing a loved one

known as thanatophobia exists wherever there is a belief in mortality and this fear has increased specifically during the time of COVID-19, where people have either lost some of their loved ones or seen others around them losing their loved ones (Mortazavi et al., 2020). Fear of failure also known as atychiphobia is also commonly present in adults as during this time of their life academic results, starting occupations and getting into new relationships is common which triggers this fear (Hjeltnes et al., 2015). Self-esteem issues and fear of negative evaluation is also common in adults because of how many changes occur during this period of life i.e. intimacy vs isolation stage (Cheng et al., 2015).

The strategies found to be effective in the current study in dealing with fear include breathing exercises, changing thoughts, religious strategies and the presence of social support. Previous studies also provide evidence regarding how beneficial these strategies e.g. breathing exercises are to deal with the difficult emotion of fear (Vishkin & Tamir, 2020).

The current study also indicated the causes behind the difficult emotion of guilt. The past actions and not doing what you are supposed to do in the present i.e. procrastinating stimulate the emotion of guilt. Previous researches also show these links i.e. how past experiences continue to haunt an individual by making them experience a sense of guilt (Kaftan & Freund, 2019).

The strategy found to be effective in dealing with the emotions of guilt in the current study is changing thoughts regarding guilt. Previous studies and researches have also shown the importance of this technique (Young et al., 2021). Changing thoughts is a cognitive strategy also referred to as an evidence-based strategy when providing services to deal with distress in life (Nixon & Singer, 1993). The current study also determined the causes leading to the experiences of grief. These causes include a breakup and the death of a loved one. Previous researches

also show that grief is caused whenever there is a sense of loss either by death or by break up or any other reason (Toth et al., 2021). The participants also shared experiences of grief caused by the sense of loss.

The coping strategies found to be effective in dealing with grief include social support, religious strategies, accepting the situation, distraction and asking for help. Previous studies also provide evidence regarding how effective these strategies are in dealing with the difficult emotion of grief (Smythe, 2012). Researches have proven social support to be one of the predictors that lead to positive outcomes after someone experiences traumatic grief (Cacciatore et al., 2021). A study also showed how religion changes grief from a source of suffering to becoming a gift for the griever (Park, 2021).

Coping Strategies to Deal with Difficult Emotions

The following strategies were found to be commonly effective when dealing with any sort of difficult emotion:

1. Changing negative thoughts regarding the situations/ event.
2. The presence of social support helps.
3. Communicating, reaching out or talking to someone.
4. Seeking help through Religion (Guidance from the Quran, finding Peace through listening and Recitations, Duas, Remembrance of Allah and prayers).

Conclusion

The current study provided with the opportunity to explore the experiences of difficult emotions in women in their adulthood. This study also provided insights regarding the effective strategies that adult women in their 20s use to deal or cope with the difficult emotions. Further experimental studies or quantitative studies can be to further establish the external validity of the effectiveness of these strategies among adult women and the difficult emotions and strategies to cope with them should also be explored in other

genders which will also help to design counseling and therapeutic sessions.

Limitations and Recommendations

The limitations of this research included the short period of time in which the research was conducted and because of this, the current study is not a large-scale research study, thus a larger scale research can be designed and conducted for better validity and further exploration of other varieties of effective coping styles. For the purposes of external validity Quantitative studies should be conducted and experimental studies should also be done to further provide evidences for the level of effectiveness of each coping technique, to get more objective results and how long term effect it has on the individual. Another limitation of the current research study was the Covid-19 situation due to which in-person contact or interview was not possible with participants. Thus, the technological devices and apps were used to conduct the interviews.

Contribution of Authors

Sahrish Fatima Ali: Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft

Muhammad Umar Khan: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing - Reviewing & Editing, Supervision

Qasir Abbas: Methodology, Writing – Original Draft, Writing - Reviewing & Editing

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest declared by the authors.

Source of Funding

The authors declared no source of funding.

Data Availability Statement

The datasets of the current study are not available publicly due to ethical reasons but are available from the corresponding author [M.U.K.] upon the reasonable request.

References

Altinyelken, H. K. (2018). Promoting the psycho-social well-being of

international students through mindfulness: A focus on regulating difficult emotions. *Contemporary Buddhism*, 19(2), 185-202.

American Psychological Association (2017). Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct. Washington DC: American Psychological Association. <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>

Andersson, N., Cockcroft, A., Ansari, N., Omer, K., Chaudhry, U. U., Khan, A., & Pearson, L. (2009). Collecting reliable information about violence against women safely in household interviews: experience from a large-scale national survey in South Asia. *Violence Against Women*, 15(4), 482-496.

Berkowitz, L., & Harmon-Jones, E. (2004). Toward an understanding of the determinants of anger. *Emotion*, 4(2), 107.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Brown, S. P., Westbrook, R. A., & Challagalla, G. (2005). Good Cope, Bad Cope: Adaptive and Maladaptive Coping Strategies Following a Critical Negative Work Event. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(4), 792–798. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.90.4.792>

Cacciatore, J., Thieleman, K., Fretts, R., & Jackson, L. B. (2021). What is good grief support? Exploring the actors and actions in social support after traumatic grief. *PLoS One*, 16(5), e0252324.

Chaplin, T. M. (2015). Gender and Emotion Expression: A Developmental Contextual Perspective. *Emotion Review*, 7(1), 14-21. doi: 10.1177/1754073914544408

- Cheng, G., Zhang, D., & Ding, F. (2015). Self-esteem and Fear of Negative Evaluation as Mediators between Family Socioeconomic Status and Social Anxiety in Chinese Emerging Adults. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, *61*(6), 569-576.
doi:10.1177/0020764014565405
- Cullen, M. (2020). How to Regulate Your Emotions Without Suppressing Them. Greater Good. https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_regulate_your_emotions_without_suppressing_them
- DeMarrais, K., & Tisdale, K. (2002). What happens when researchers inquire into difficult emotions?: Reflections on studying women's anger through qualitative interviews. *Educational Psychologist*, *37*(2), 115-123.
- Deng, Y., Chang, L., Yang, M., Huo, M. & Zhou R. (2016). Gender Differences in Emotional Response: Inconsistency between Experience and Expressivity. *PLOS ONE* *11*(6), e0158666. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0158666>
- Dworkin, S. L. (2012). Sample Size Policy for Qualitative Studies Using In-Depth Interviews. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *41*, 1319–1320 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-012-0016-6>
- Ekman, P. E., & Davidson, R. J. (1994). *The Nature of Emotion: Fundamental Questions*. Oxford University Press.
- Fivush, R., & Buckner, J. (2000). Gender, sadness, and depression: The development of emotional focus through gendered discourse. In A. Fischer (Ed.), *Gender and Emotion: Social Psychological Perspectives* (Studies in Emotion and Social Interaction, pp. 232-253). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- doi:10.1017/CBO9780511628191.012
- Gelbrich, K. (2010). Anger, frustration, and helplessness after service failure: coping strategies and effective informational support. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *38*, 567-585.
- Gupta, S., Avasthi, A. & Kumar, S. (2011). Relationship between Religiosity and Psychopathology in Patients with Depression. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, *4*, 330-5. doi: 10.4103/0019-5545.91907
- Hjeltnes, A., Binder, P. E., Moltu, C., & Dundas, I. (2015). Facing the Fear of Failure: An Explorative Qualitative Study of Client Experiences in a Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction Program for University Students with Academic Evaluation Anxiety. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, *10*(1), 27990.
- Kaftan, O. J., & Freund, A. M. (2019). A Motivational Perspective on Academic Procrastination: Goal Focus Affects How Students Perceive Activities while Procrastinating. *Motivation Science*, *5*(2), 135.
- Kiger, M. E. & Varpio, L. (2020): Thematic analysis of qualitative data: AMEE Guide No. 131, Medical Teacher, DOI: 10.1080/0142159X.2020.1755030
- Lazarus, R. S. (1991). Cognition and motivation in emotion. *American Psychologist*, *46*(4), 352.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Sage.
- McLafferty, M., Armour, C., Bunting, B., Ennis, E., Lapsley, C., Murray, E., & O'Neill, S. (2019). Coping, Stress, and Negative Childhood Experiences: The link to psychopathology, self-harm, and suicidal behavior. *PsyCh Journal*, *8*(3), 293-306.

- McRae, K., Ochsner, K.N., Mauss, I.B., Gabrieli, J.J.D. & Gross, J.J. (2008). Gender Differences in Emotion Regulation: An fMRI Study of Cognitive Reappraisal. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, 11(2), 143-162. doi: 10.1177/1368430207088035
- Mortazavi, S. S., Assari, S., Alimohamadi, A., Rafiee, M., & Shati, M. (2020). Fear, Loss, Social Isolation, and Incomplete Grief due to COVID-19: A Recipe for a Psychiatric Pandemic. *Basic and Clinical Neuroscience*, 11(2), 225.
- Nixon, C. D., & Singer, G. H. (1993). Group cognitive behavioral treatment for excessive parental self-blame and guilt. *American Journal on Mental Retardation*, 97(6), 665–672.
- Park, C. L. (2021). Religion and spirituality in adjusting to bereavement: Grief as burden, grief as gift. Grief and bereavement in contemporary society. pp. 355-363.
- Rossetto, K. R. (2014). Qualitative research interviews: Assessing the therapeutic value and challenges. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 31(4), 482–489. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407514522892>
- Saldana, J. (2008). Analyzing longitudinal qualitative observational data. Handbook of longitudinal research: Design, measurement, and analysis. pp. 297-311.
- Sanders, C., Rogers, A., Gardner, C., & Kennedy, A. (2011). Managing ‘difficult emotions’ and family life: exploring insights and social support within online self-management training. *Chronic Illness*, 7(2), 134-146.
- Schaffner, A., K. (2019, December 27) What an Unhealthy Coping Mechanism Looks Like. The Meadow Glade. <https://themedowglade.com/what-an-unhealthy-coping-mechanism-looks-like>
- Schindler, S. & Querengässer, J. (2019). Coping with sadness - How personality and emotion regulation strategies differentially predict the experience of induced emotions. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 136, 90-95. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2018.01.050>
- Scott, E. (2021). How Negative Emotions Affect Us. Very Well Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/embrace-negative-emotions-4158317>
- Sims, C. M. (2017). Second wave positive psychology coaching difficult emotions: Introducing the mnemonic of 'TEARS HOPE'. *The Coaching Psychologist*, 13(2), 66-79.
- Smythe, A. (2012). Coping with Grief and Loss. *Early Years Educator*, 14(8), 28-30.
- Taboada, M., & Zabala, L. H. (2008). Deciding on units of analysis within Centering Theory. https://www.sfu.ca/~mtaboada/docs/research/Taboada_Hadic-Zabala_CLLT.pdf
- TenHouten, W. (2022). The Emotions of Hope: From Optimism to Sanguinity, from Pessimism to Despair. *The American Sociologist*, 54, 76-100. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12108-022-09544-1>
- Toth, P. L., Stockton, R., & Browne, F. (2021). College Student Grief and Loss. In Loss and Trauma (pp. 237-248). Routledge.
- Vishkin, A., & Tamir, M. (2020). Fear Not: Religion and Emotion Regulation in Coping with Existential Concerns. In The Science of Religion, Spirituality, and Existentialism (pp. 325-338). Academic Press.
- Wiest, B. (2018). 7 Unhealthy Coping Mechanisms That Are Secretly Wreaking Havoc On Your Psyche.

- Forbes.
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/brianawiest/2018/11/13/7-unhealthy-coping-mechanisms-that-are-secretly-wreaking-havoc-on-your-psyche>
- Young, K., Chessell, Z., Chisholm, A., Brady, F., Akbar, S., Vann, M., Rouf, K. & Dixon, L. (2021). A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) Approach for Working with Strong Feelings of Guilt after Traumatic Events. *The Cognitive Behaviour Therapist*, 14, E26. doi:10.1017/S1754470X21000192