

Abstract

This study used path analysis to examine the mediational role of coping and distress in the relation between attachment (anxiety and avoidance) and help-seeking intentions. Coping was measured through five distinct sets of coping behaviors, including primary control coping, secondary control coping, involuntary engaged coping, voluntary disengaged coping, and involuntary disengaged coping. The participants were 342 high school age adolescents from six schools in Central and Western New York. Results indicated that the relation between attachment anxiety and help seeking was mediated through the combined path of involuntary disengaged coping (emotional numbing and inaction) then distress, and additionally through the single mediator of distress alone. Attachment avoidance was not directly related to help-seeking intentions, but was indirectly related through involuntary disengaged coping and distress. Both attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance were positively related to distress. Distress was also positively associated with intentions to seek counseling. Additionally, attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance were both positively related to maladaptive forms of coping. Finally, attachment avoidance, attachment anxiety, primary control coping, secondary control coping, involuntary engaged coping, voluntary disengaged coping, involuntary disengaged coping and distress accounted for approximately 14% of the variance in intentions to seek counseling.