



# Strategies for Coping With a Depressed Mood in Low-Income and Ethnic Minority

## Mothers At-Risk

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### Background/Significance

- 15% to 75% of multi-ethnic mothers experience high levels of depressive symptoms, but few seek treatment.
- Ways of coping impact the levels and onset of depressive symptoms
- Coping styles, including treatment seeking for depression vary among mothers based on socioeconomic status, age and ethnicity.
- Few studies have examined strategies for coping with depressed mood and coping's relation to age, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity among these mothers at-risk

### Purpose

To identify the most commonly used strategies for coping with a depressed mood and examine the relationship between coping styles, age, race/ethnicity and income levels among low-income and ethnic minority mothers at risk.

### Question

**“State two things you do to help you feel better when you have a depressed or down mood”**

### Methods

**Design:** Descriptive, Cross-sectional design

**Sample:** Convenience, (N = 117)

**Ages:** 21-45 years

**Setting:** Urban Community Sites

### Racial Distribution

Black/African American	= 74.4%
Hispanic	= 11.1%
White/Caucasian	= 6.0%
Biracial/Mixed	= 7.7%
Other	= .9%

**Income:** At least

78.6% < 200% US poverty line

**Education:** 52.6% ≤ High School

### Samples of Responses

“listen to music” “sleep” “talking” “playing with kids” “Praying” “family” “exercising” “eating” “shop” “dance” “read” “my mind off of it” vent” “cry” “come up with solution”

### Results: Coping Strategies

- Escape-Avoidance (N=108, 62.8%)
- 2. Seeking Social Support (N=31, 18.0%)
- 3. Positive Reappraisal (N = 18; 10.5%)
- 4. Planful Problem Solving (N = 7, 4.1%)
- 5. Distancing (N = 3; 1.7%)
- 6. Self-Controlling (N = 3; 1%)
- 7. Confronting (N = 2; .5%)

- Use of emotion-focused coping strategies only were reported by 59.1% of mothers
- Coping styles were not related to income levels, age, nor race (p < .05).

***No Responses Indicated Accepting Responsibility or Seeking Professional Help***

### Implications/Conclusions

Emotion-focused strategies are the most commonly used strategies for coping with a depressed mood.

Explore explanations/barriers for lack of professional help-seeking

Examine the effectiveness of current strategies for managing depressed mood

Build on adaptive coping mechanisms as assets for depression prevention

### Theoretical Basis of Analysis”

Ways of Coping Questionnaire”  
(Folkman & Lazarus, 1988)

