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## Coping with the Pandemic in College

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Coping with the Pandemic in College

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## INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

The Coronavirus has had a tremendous impact on the world. Covid is responsible for more than 610,000 deaths and more than 30,000,000 cases in the United States alone (Albert et al., 2021). In addition to the lethality and physical symptoms of Covid, the negative psychological impact of the pandemic is powerful as well. At the beginning of the pandemic, texts to federal mental health hotlines rose 1,000% (Cunningham, 2020). Covid fears accumulate through a variety of different sources; some must endure a battle with the virus itself, which has taken a much higher toll on elderly and immunocompromised populations (Banerjee, 2020). Some must endure the uncertainty and fear of a vulnerable loved one catching the virus. Some struggle to adjust to the possibility of catching the virus themselves (Glowacz & Schmits, 2020). Many people struggled from the effects of social isolation (Ramírez-Ortiz, 2020) and the uncertainty brought about through job loss. These examples manifest throughout the entirety of our country, but some groups have had stronger responses than others.

College students, for instance, experienced a multitude of additional stressors from the pandemic and were already particularly prone to mental health concerns. Prior to Covid, one fifth of college students met the diagnostic criteria for a mental illness (Auerbach et al., 2016). In 2014, the American College Health Association reported that nationwide, 37.4% of college students reported feeling overwhelming anxiety within the past 12 months, approximately one-third reported feeling so depressed that it was difficult to function; and 9% reported having attempted suicide at some point in their lifetime (Prince, 2015). The center for collegiate mental health (2021) found that since they began tracking prevalence of mental health concerns among college

students in 2012, reports of these mental health concerns - along with experiences of trauma - have increased every year.

The changes Covid brought about in the lifestyle of college students have been experienced as largely negative. Lack of motivation and increases in anxiety, stress, and feelings of isolation were some of the most common perceived changes college students reported a month into the pandemic (Browning et al., 2021). These feelings accompany the increased uncertainty brought about through changes such as campus closures, disruption to research and internship placements, the transition to online learning, and unpredictable changes in course delivery (Hamza et al., 2020). The uncertainty surrounding college students is reflected in their assessments of their future, with 13% delaying graduation and 29% now expecting to earn less at 35 than they previously predicted (Aucejo et al., 2020).

To function in this stressful college environment students must utilize coping strategies. In general, “coping has been defined as ongoing cognitive and behavioral processes to manage external or internal demands exceeding the resources of the individual” (Dubow & Rubinlicht, 2011). One framework for conceptualizing coping in a more granular manner is Bruce Compas’ ‘Responses to Stress’ model (Connor-Smith et al., 2000), which analyzes coping along three dimensions: voluntary vs involuntary, engagement vs disengagement, and primary vs secondary control strategies. Voluntary coping involves responses that are consciously and intentionally executed, while involuntary responses occur unconsciously. Engagement responses feature focusing one’s attention on the stressor in some form, while disengagement redirects one attention away from a stressor. Lastly, primary control - aiming to alter present conditions, and secondary control - aiming to adapt to present conditions, are both subcategories of voluntary responses to stress.

In this project, we will examine college students' Covid stress and coping strategies during the spring 2021 semester and fall 2021 semester. This research will be conducted within the discipline of psychology through the usage of well validated, quantitative, psychometric tests that measure the latent psychological constructs of stress, coping, social support, anxiety, and depression.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

Does social support and engagement coping moderate the relationship between Covid related stress experienced, and levels of depression and anxiety reported?

## METHODS

Participants for the survey will be recruited from the undergraduate student body at Bowling Green State University. This survey will be conducted in two parts. The first survey will be distributed at the beginning of the semester and will be advertised in the weekly campus update, as well as in the student union and through the Department of Psychology's SONA research scheduler. Eligibility criteria include being 18 years of age or older and being enrolled at BGSU in the both the spring 2021 and fall 2021 semesters. The first survey will ask students to report their Covid-related stressors, their coping responses to these stressors, their social supports, and their emotional symptoms such as anxiety and depression during the spring 2021 semester. After finishing the survey, participants may then enter a raffle to win a \$25 Amazon gift card.

Participants for the second survey will be students who completed the first survey. The second survey will be identical to the first except that the timeframe participants will reflect on will be the fall 2021 semester instead of the spring 2021 semester. Participants will be contacted through the email they provided in the first survey. After finishing the survey, participants may then enter

a second raffle to win a \$25 Amazon gift card. Participants who are enrolled in Psychology courses will be awarded 1.0 SONA credits for each survey.

The survey will be completed online via Qualtrics. Responses will be confidential but identifiable, as we will be comparing the second survey to the first of the same participant to record their change across time.

## MEASURES

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support is a twelve-item questionnaire assessing perceived social support along three subscales: family, friends, and significant-other (Zimet, 1988).

The Beck Depression Inventory-II is a 21-item questionnaire that assesses the level of depression in the respondent (Beck, 1996).

The Responses to Stress Questionnaire assesses levels of stress in children and adolescents using a conceptual model that includes volitional coping efforts and involuntary responses to stressful events, engaging or disengaging with stressful thoughts, and primary and secondary control (Connor Smith et al., 2000). We used an adapted version of the RSQ tailored specifically to assessing Covid related distress, and academic related stressors.

The GAD-7 is a seven-item questionnaire assessing generalized anxiety disorder in the respondent (Spitzer et al., 2006).

The Perceived Stress Questionnaire is a 30-item questionnaire assessing the perceived stress of the respondent along the following factors: harassment, overload, irritability, lack of joy, fatigue, worries, and tension (Levenstein et al., 1993).

## OUTCOMES and IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

We hope to collect completed pairs of surveys from at least 100 students throughout the semester. We will then use the data to compose an academic paper with the goal of publication and advancing the breadth of psychological research on Covid stress and coping.

We predict the following results:

- 1) Students who report having experienced more Covid-related stressors in the spring will also report having used more disengagement coping strategies and higher levels of anxiety and depression in the spring. Similar relations are expected in the fall.
- 2) Covid-related stressors, anxiety and depression, and disengagement coping strategies will decrease into the fall semester, while engagement coping will increase.
- 3) Social support experienced during the fall semester, as well as engagement coping during the fall semester will moderate the effects of Covid-related stressors on students' adjustment (anxiety and depression). Specifically, for students who report higher levels of social support and more engagement coping, the relation between Covid-related adjustment and anxiety/depression should be lower than for those students with lower levels of social support and engagement coping.

Data collection will continue into December, with data analysis occurring shortly thereafter.

Because of this timeline, we are currently unable to produce results. Results will be presented at the CURS Undergraduate Symposium for Research and Scholarship next semester.

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**APPENDIX**

QUESTIONNAIRE #1

Demographics

1) What is your race or ethnicity?

- a) Black/African-American
- b) Hispanic/Latino/a
- c) Asian or Pacific Islander
- d) White/European American
- e) Mixed-racial, please describe \_\_\_\_\_
- f) Other, please describe \_\_\_\_\_

2) How old are you?

- a) 18
- b) 19
- c) 20
- d) 21
- e) 22
- f) Older (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

3) What gender do you identify as?

- a) Male
- b) Female
- c) Transgender Female

- d) Transgender Male
- e) Gender Nonconforming
- f) Not listed: \_\_\_\_\_
- g) Prefer not to specify

4) What year of college are you in?

- a) Freshman
- b) Sophomore
- c) Junior
- d) Senior
- e) 5+

5) Will you be taking this survey for SONA Credit?

- a) yes
- b) no

6) Where were you living last semester (spring 2021)?

- a) On-campus
- b) Off-campus in BG (not with family).
- c) With family at home.
- d) other: \_\_\_\_\_

7) How often were you in-person for class last semester (spring 2021)?

- a) all my classes were in person.
- b) most of my classes were in person.
- c) a few of my classes were in person.
- d) I had no in-person classes.

#### Self-Generated Identification Code.

To match this survey with your second survey while preserving your anonymity, we're going to have you create an identification code. Your code will be unique enough for us to match your responses, but not unique enough that we will be able to discern your identity.

- 1) Month you were born in.
  - a. [1-12]
- 2) Sex you were assigned at birth.
  - a. M
  - b. F
- 3) First initial of your first middle name.
  - a. [A-Z]
- 4) First initial of you mother's first name.
  - a. [A-Z]
- 5) Number of older siblings.
  - a. [ $\geq 0$ ]

## Responses to Stress Questionnaire

This is a list of things about COVID-19 that people may find stressful or a problem to deal with. PLEASE ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS REGARDING HOW STRESSFUL THE FOLLOWING THINGS WERE FOR YOU LAST SEMESTER -- DURING THE SPRING 2021 SEMESTER, using the response scale from 1 (not at all) to 4 (very).

DURING THE LAST SEMESTER (SPRING 2021 SEMESTER) HOW MUCH STRESS DID YOU FEEL ABOUT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:

- a. Financial problems because of COVID-19 (e.g., reduced income, job loss, difficulty paying monthly expenses).
- b. Unable to spend time in person with close friends or family because of COVID-19.
- c. Unable to participate in normal routines and activities because of COVID-19 (e.g., spiritual services, shopping, dining at restaurants, going to the gym).
- d. Having to change, postpone, or cancel important plans or events because of COVID-19 (e.g., family events, travel or vacation, work related events).
- e. Challenges at home or with others because of COVID-19 (e.g., conflicts, lack of privacy, lack of personal space).
- f. Trouble obtaining groceries or other needed supplies because of COVID-19 (e.g., food, medicine, household goods).
- g. Watching or hearing distressing news reports about COVID-19.
- h. Uncertainty about myself or someone close to me getting COVID-19, including being unable to access testing.
- i. Myself or someone close to me experiencing symptoms or being diagnosed with COVID-19.

- j. Trouble getting medical care or mental health services because of COVID-19.
- k. Uncertainty about when COVID-19 will end or what will happen in the future.
- l. Difficulty completing my work responsibilities remotely because of COVID-19.
- m. Unable to complete educational or work requirements because of COVID-19.
- n. Needing to take on greater family and/or work responsibilities because of COVID-19.
- o. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- p. Select the number that shows how much control you generally think you have over these problems.

Below is a list of things that people sometimes do, think, or feel when they are dealing with COVID-19. Everyone deals with problems in their own way –some people do a lot of the things on this list or have many feelings, other people just do or think a few of these things.

THINK OF ALL THE STRESSFUL PARTS OF COVID-19 DURING THE LAST SEMESTER (SPRING 2021 SEMESTER) THAT YOU INDICATED ABOVE. FOR EACH ITEM BELOW, SELECT ONE RESPONSE FROM 1 (NOT AT ALL) TO 4 (A LOT) THAT SHOWS HOW MUCH YOU DID OR FELT THESE THINGS WHEN YOU HAD PROBLEMS WITH COVID-19 DURING THE LAST SEMESTER (SPRING 2021 SEMESTER), LIKE THE ONES YOU INDICATED ABOVE. Please let us know about everything you did, thought, and felt, even if you don't think it helped make things better.

HOW MUCH DID YOU DO THESE THINGS DURING THE LAST SEMESTER (SPRING 2021 SEMESTER) TO DEAL WITH COVID-RELATED STRESS?

- 1. I tried not to feel anything.
- 2. When dealing with the stress of COVID-19, I felt sick to my stomach or got headaches.

3. I tried to think of different ways to change or fix the situation. Write one plan you thought of:\_\_\_\_\_.
4. When faced with the stress COVID-19, I didn't feel anything at all, it's like I had no feelings.
5. I wish that I were stronger and less sensitive so that things would be different.
6. I kept remembering what had happened with COVID-19 or couldn't stop thinking about what might happen.
7. I let someone or something know how I felt. Check all you talked to.
  - i. Spouse/partner
  - ii. Friend
  - iii. Brother/Sister
  - iv. Therapist/Counselor
  - v. Clergy Member
  - vi. My children
  - vii. Parent
  - viii. Other Family Member
  - ix. God
  - x. None of these
8. I decided I was okay the way I am, even though I'm not perfect.
9. When I was around other people, I acted like COVID-19 never happened.
10. I just had to get away from everything when I was dealing with the stress of COVID-19.
11. I dealt with the stress of COVID-19 by wishing it would just go away, that everything would work itself out.

12. I got really jumpy when I was dealing with the stress of COVID-19.
13. I realized that I just had to live with things the way they were.
14. When I was dealing with the stress of COVID-19, I just couldn't be near anything that reminded me of what was happening.
15. I tried not to think about it, to forget all about it.
16. When I was dealing with the stress of COVID-19, I really didn't know what I felt.
17. I asked other people or things for help or for ideas about how to make things better.

Check all you talked to.

- a. Spouse/partner
  - b. Friend
  - c. Brother/Sister
  - d. Therapist/Counselor
  - e. Clergy Member
  - f. My children
  - g. Parent
  - h. Other Family Member
  - i. God
  - j. None of these
18. When I was trying to sleep, I couldn't stop thinking about the stressful aspects of COVID-19 or I had bad dreams about COVID-19.
  19. I told myself that I could get through this, or that I would be okay.
  20. I let my feelings out. I did this by:
    - a. Writing in my journal/diary

- b. Drawing/painting
- c. Complaining to let off steam
- d. Being sarcastic/making fun
- e. Listening to music
- f. Punching a pillow
- g. Exercising
- h. Yelling
- i. Crying
- j. None of these

21. I got help from other people or things when I was trying to figure out how to deal with my feelings. Check all that you went to:

- a. Spouse/Partner
- b. Friend
- c. Brother/Sister
- d. Therapist/Counselor
- e. Clergy Member
- f. My children
- g. Parent
- h. Other Family Member
- i. God
- j. None of these

22. I just couldn't get myself to face the stress of COVID-19.

23. I wished that someone would just come and take away the stressful aspects of COVID-19.
24. I did something to try to fix the stressful parts of COVID-19.
- a. Write one thing you did: \_\_\_\_\_
25. Thoughts about COVID-19 just popped into my head.
26. When I was dealing with the stress of COVID-19, I felt it in my body. Check all that happen:
- a. My heart races
- b. My breathing speeds up
- c. None of these
- d. I feel hot or sweaty
- e. My muscles get tight
27. I tried to stay away from people and things that made me feel upset or remind me of the stressful aspects of COVID-19.
28. I didn't feel like myself when I was dealing with the stress of COVID-19, it's like I was far away from everything.
29. I just took things as they were; I went with the flow.
30. I thought about happy things to take my mind off the stressful parts of COVID-19 or how I was feeling.
31. When something stressful happened related to COVID-19, I couldn't stop thinking about how I was feeling.
32. I got sympathy, understanding, or support from someone. Check all you went to:
- a. Spouse/Partner

- b. Friend
- c. Brother/Sister
- d. Therapist/Counselor
- e. Clergy Member
- f. My children
- g. Parent
- h. Other Family Member
- i. God
- j. None of these

33. When something stressful happened related to COVID-19, I couldn't always control what

I did. Check all that happen:

- a. I couldn't stop eating.
- b. I couldn't stop talking.
- c. I did dangerous things.
- d. I had to keep fixing/checking things.
- e. None of these.

34. I told myself that things could be worse.

35. My mind would just go blank when something stressful would happen related to COVID-19, I couldn't think at all.

36. I told myself that it didn't matter, that it isn't a big deal.

37. When I was faced with the stressful parts of COVID-19, right away I feel really \_\_\_\_\_

(Remember to select a response). Check all that you felt:

- a. Angry

- b. Sad
  - c. None of these
  - d. Worried/anxious
  - e. Scared
38. It was really hard for me to concentrate or pay attention when something stressful happened related to COVID-19.
39. I thought about the things I was learning from COVID-19, or about something good that would come from it.
40. After something stressful happened related to COVID-19, I couldn't stop thinking about what I did or said.
41. When stressful parts of COVID-19 happened, I said to myself, "This isn't real."
42. When I was dealing with the stressful parts of COVID-19, I ended up just lying around or sleeping a lot.
43. I kept my mind off stressful parts of COVID-19 by: (remember to select a response.)
- Check all that you did:
- a. Exercising
  - b. Seeing friends
  - c. Watching TV
  - d. Reading
  - e. Playing video games
  - f. Doing a hobby
  - g. Listening to music
  - h. None of these

44. When something stressful happened related to COVID-19, I got upset by things that don't usually bother me.

45. I did something to calm myself down when I was dealing with the stress of COVID-19.

(Remember to select a response.) Check all that you do:

- a. Take deep breaths
  - b. Pray
  - c. Walk
  - d. Listen to music
  - e. Take a break
  - f. Meditate
  - g. None of these
46. I would freeze when I was dealing with stressful parts of COVID-19, I couldn't do anything.
47. When stressful things happened related to COVID-19, I sometimes acted without thinking.
48. I kept my feelings under control when I had to, then let them out when they wouldn't make things worse.
49. When something stressful happened related to COVID-19, I couldn't seem to get around to doing things I was supposed to do.
50. I told myself that everything would be all right.
51. When something stressful happened related to COVID-19, I couldn't stop thinking about why this was happening.
52. I thought of ways to laugh about it so that it wouldn't seem so bad.

53. My thoughts started racing when I was faced with the stressful parts of COVID-19.

54. I imagined something really fun or exciting happening in my life.

55. When something stressful happened related to COVID-19, I could get so upset that I couldn't remember what happened or what I did.

56. I tried to believe that it never happened.

57. When I was dealing with the stress of COVID-19, sometimes I couldn't control what I did or said.

### Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support

The following twelve questions ask about your experiences with social support throughout the LAST SEMESTER (spring 2021 semester). Remember to focus on your experience during the last semester (spring 2021 semester), not how you feel currently. Response options in this format range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

- 1) There was a special person who was around when I was in need.
- 2) There was a special person with whom I could share my joys and sorrows.
- 3) My family really tried to help me.
- 4) I got the emotional help and support I needed from my family.
- 5) I had a special person who was a real source of comfort to me.
- 6) My friends really tried to help me.
- 7) I could count on my friends when things went wrong.
- 8) I could talk about my problems with my family.
- 9) I had friends with whom I could share my joys and sorrows.
- 10) There was a special person in my life who cared about my feelings.
- 11) My family was willing to help me make decisions.

12) I could talk about my problems with my friends.

## Beck Depression Inventory II

This section consists of 19 groups of statements. Please read each group of statements carefully, and then pick out the one statement in each group that best describes the way you felt throughout the spring 2021 semester. Click the box next to the statement you have picked.

During the previous semester, I...

### 1) Sadness

- a. ...did not feel sad.
- b. ...felt sad much of the time.
- c. ...was sad all the time.
- d. ...was so sad or unhappy that I couldn't stand it.

### 2) Pessimism

- a. ... was not discouraged about my future.
- b. ... felt more discouraged about my future than I used to be.
- c. ... did not expect things to work out for me.
- d. ... felt my future was hopeless and would only get worse.

### 3) Past Failure

- a. ... did not feel like a failure.
- b. ... felt I failed more than I should have.
- c. ... saw a lot of failures.
- d. ... felt I was a total failure as a person.

## 4) Loss of Pleasure

- a. ... got as much pleasure as I ever did from the things I enjoyed.
- b. ... didn't enjoy things as much as I used to.
- c. ... got very little pleasure from the things I used to enjoy.
- d. ... couldn't get any pleasure from the things I used to enjoy.

## 5) Guilty Feelings

- a. ... didn't feel particularly guilty.
- b. ... felt guilty over many things I had done or should have done.
- c. ... felt quite guilty most of the time.
- d. ... felt guilty all of the time.

## 6) Punishment Feelings

- a. ...didn't feel like I was being punished.
- b. ...felt I may be being punished.
- c. ...expected to be punished.
- d. ...felt I was being punished.

## 7) Self-Dislike

- a. ...felt the same about myself as ever.
- b. ...had lost confidence in myself.
- c. ...was disappointed in myself.
- d. ...disliked myself.

## 8) Self-Criticalness

- a. ...didn't criticize or blame myself more than usual.
- b. ...was more critical of myself than I was before.

- c. ...criticized myself for all of my faults.
- d. ...blamed myself for everything bad that happened.

9) Crying

- a. ...didn't cry any more than I used to.
- b. ...cried more than I used to.
- c. ...cried over every little thing.
- d. ...felt like crying, but I couldn't.

10) Agitation

- a. ...was no more restless or wound up than usual.
- b. ...felt more restless or wound up than usual.
- c. ...was so restless or agitated that it was hard to stay still.
- d. ...was so restless or agitated that I had to keep moving or doing something.

11) Loss of Interest

- a. ...had not lost interest in other people or activities.
- b. ...was less interested in other people or things than before.
- c. ...had lost most of my interest in other people or things.
- d. ...found it hard to get interested in anything.

12) Indecisiveness

- a. ...made decisions about as well as ever.
- b. ...found it more difficult to make decisions than usual.
- c. ...had much greater difficulty in making decisions than I used to.
- d. ...had trouble making any decisions.

13) Worthlessness

- a. ...did not feel that I was worthless.
- b. ...did not consider myself as worthwhile and useful as I used to.
- c. ...felt more worthless as compared to other people.
- d. ...felt utterly worthless.

#### 14) Loss of Energy

- a. ...had as much energy as ever.
- b. ...had less energy than I used to.
- c. ...did not have enough energy to do very much.
- d. ...did not have enough energy to do anything.

#### 15) Changes in Sleeping Pattern

- a. ...had not experienced any change in my sleeping pattern.
- b. ...slept somewhat more than usual OR somewhat less than usual.
- c. ...slept a lot more than usual OR a lot less than usual.
- d. ...slept most of the day OR woke up 1-2 hours early and couldn't get back to sleep.

#### 16) Irritability

- a. ...was no more irritable than usual.
- b. ...was more irritable than usual.
- c. ...was much more irritable than usual.
- d. ...was irritable all the time.

#### 17) Changes in Appetite

- a. I did not experience any change in my appetite.
- b. My appetite was somewhat less than usual OR somewhat greater than usual.

- c. My appetite was much less than usual OR much greater than usual.
- d. I had no appetite at all OR craved food all the time.

#### 18) Concentration Difficulty

- a. ...could concentrate as well as ever.
- b. ...could not concentrate as well as usual.
- c. ...found it hard to keep my mind on anything for very long.
- d. ...found I could not concentrate on anything.

#### 19) Tiredness or Fatigue

- a. ...was no more tired or fatigued than usual.
- b. ...got tired or fatigued more easily than usual.
- c. ...was too tired or fatigued to do a lot of the things I used to do.
- d. ...was too tired or fatigued to do most of the things I used to do.

### QUESTIONNAIRE #2

#### Demographics

3) What is your race or ethnicity?

- a) Black/African-American
- b) Hispanic/Latino/a
- c) Asian or Pacific Islander
- d) White/European American
- e) Mixed-racial, please describe \_\_\_\_\_
- f) Other, please describe \_\_\_\_\_

4) How old are you?

- g) 18
- h) 19
- i) 20
- j) 21
- k) 22
- l) Older (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

3) What gender do you identify as?

- h) Male
- i) Female
- j) Transgender Female
- k) Transgender Male
- l) Gender Nonconforming
- m) Not listed: \_\_\_\_\_
- n) Prefer not to specify

4) What year of college are you in?

- a) Freshman
- b) Sophomore
- c) Junior
- d) Senior
- e) 5+

5) Will you be taking this survey for SONA Credit?

a) yes

b) no

6) Where were you living this semester (fall 2021)?

a) On-campus

b) Off-campus in BG (not with family).

c) With family at home.

d) other:\_\_\_\_\_

7) How often were you in-person for class this semester (fall 2021)?

a) all my classes were in person.

b) most of my classes were in person.

c) a few of my classes were in person.

d) I had no in-person classes.

#### Self-Generated Identification Code.

To match this survey with your previous survey, please answer the following questions to create your identification code. Your code will be unique enough for us to match your responses, but not unique enough that we will be able to discern your identity.

6) Month you were born in.

a. [1-12]

- 7) Sex you were assigned at birth.
  - a. M
  - b. F
- 8) First initial of your first middle name.
  - a. [A-Z]
- 9) First initial of you mother's first name.
  - a. [A-Z]
- 10) Number of older siblings.
  - a.  $[\geq 0]$

#### Responses to Stress Questionnaire

This is a list of things about COVID-19 that people may find stressful or a problem to deal with. PLEASE ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS REGARDING HOW STRESSFUL THE FOLLOWING THINGS WERE FOR YOU THIS SEMESTER -- DURING THE FALL 2021 SEMESTER, using the response scale from 1 (not at all) to 4 (very).

DURING THIS SEMESTER (FALL 2021 SEMESTER) HOW MUCH STRESS DID YOU FEEL ABOUT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:

- q. Financial problems because of COVID-19 (e.g., reduced income, job loss, difficulty paying monthly expenses).
- r. Unable to spend time in person with close friends or family because of COVID-19.
- s. Unable to participate in normal routines and activities because of COVID-19 (e.g., spiritual services, shopping, dining at restaurants, going to the gym).

- t. Having to change, postpone, or cancel important plans or events because of COVID-19 (e.g., family events, travel or vacation, work related events).
- u. Challenges at home or with others because of COVID-19 (e.g., conflicts, lack of privacy, lack of personal space).
- v. Trouble obtaining groceries or other needed supplies because of COVID-19 (e.g., food, medicine, household goods).
- w. Watching or hearing distressing news reports about COVID-19.
- x. Uncertainty about myself or someone close to me getting COVID-19, including being unable to access testing.
- y. Myself or someone close to me experiencing symptoms or being diagnosed with COVID-19.
- z. Trouble getting medical care or mental health services because of COVID-19.
- aa. Uncertainty about when COVID-19 will end or what will happen in the future.
- bb. Difficulty completing my work responsibilities remotely because of COVID-19.
- cc. Unable to complete educational or work requirements because of COVID-19.
- dd. Needing to take on greater family and/or work responsibilities because of COVID-19.
- ee. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- ff. Select the number that shows how much control you generally think you have over these problems.

Below is a list of things that people sometimes do, think, or feel when they are dealing with COVID-19. Everyone deals with problems in their own way –some people do a lot of the things on this list or have many feelings, other people just do or think a few of these things.

**THINK OF ALL THE STRESSFUL PARTS OF COVID-19 DURING THIS SEMESTER**

(FALL 2021 SEMESTER) THAT YOU INDICATED ABOVE. FOR EACH ITEM BELOW, SELECT ONE RESPONSE FROM 1 (NOT AT ALL) TO 4 (A LOT) THAT SHOWS HOW MUCH YOU DID OR FELT THESE THINGS WHEN YOU HAD PROBLEMS WITH COVID-19 DURING THIS SEMESTER (FALL 2021 SEMESTER), LIKE THE ONES YOU INDICATED ABOVE. Please let us know about everything you did, thought, and felt, even if you don't think it helped make things better.

HOW MUCH DID YOU DO THESE THINGS THIS SEMESTER (FALL 2021 SEMESTER) TO DEAL WITH COVID-RELATED STRESS?

58. I tried not to feel anything.

59. When dealing with the stress of COVID-19, I felt sick to my stomach or got headaches.

60. I tried to think of different ways to change or fix the situation. Write one plan you thought of:\_\_\_\_\_.

61. When faced with the stress COVID-19, I didn't feel anything at all, it's like I had no feelings.

62. I wish that I were stronger and less sensitive so that things would be different.

63. I kept remembering what had happened with COVID-19 or couldn't stop thinking about what might happen.

64. I let someone or something know how I felt. Check all you talked to.

- i. Spouse/partner
- ii. Friend
- iii. Brother/Sister
- iv. Therapist/Counselor
- v. Clergy Member

- vi. My children
- vii. Parent
- viii. Other Family Member
- ix. God
- x. None of these

65. I decided I was okay the way I am, even though I'm not perfect.

66. When I was around other people, I acted like COVID-19 never happened.

67. I just had to get away from everything when I was dealing with the stress of COVID-19.

68. I dealt with the stress of COVID-19 by wishing it would just go away, that everything would work itself out.

69. I got really jumpy when I was dealing with the stress of COVID-19.

70. I realized that I just had to live with things the way they were.

71. When I was dealing with the stress of COVID-19, I just couldn't be near anything that reminded me of what was happening.

72. I tried not to think about it, to forget all about it.

73. When I was dealing with the stress of COVID-19, I really didn't know what I felt.

74. I asked other people or things for help or for ideas about how to make things better.

Check all you talked to.

- a. Spouse/partner
- b. Friend
- c. Brother/Sister
- d. Therapist/Counselor
- e. Clergy Member

- f. My children
- g. Parent
- h. Other Family Member
- i. God
- j. None of these

75. When I was trying to sleep, I couldn't stop thinking about the stressful aspects of COVID-19 or I had bad dreams about COVID-19.

76. I told myself that I could get through this, or that I would be okay.

77. I let my feelings out. I did this by:

- a. Writing in my journal/diary
- b. Drawing/painting
- c. Complaining to let off steam
- d. Being sarcastic/making fun
- e. Listening to music
- f. Punching a pillow
- g. Exercising
- h. Yelling
- i. Crying
- j. None of these

78. I got help from other people or things when I was trying to figure out how to deal with my feelings. Check all that you went to:

- a. Spouse/Partner
- b. Friend

- c. Brother/Sister
- d. Therapist/Counselor
- e. Clergy Member
- f. My children
- g. Parent
- h. Other Family Member
- i. God
- j. None of these

79. I just couldn't get myself to face the stress of COVID-19.

80. I wished that someone would just come and take away the stressful aspects of COVID-19.

81. I did something to try to fix the stressful parts of COVID-19.

- a. Write one thing you did: \_\_\_\_\_

82. Thoughts about COVID-19 just popped into my head.

83. When I was dealing with the stress of COVID-19, I felt it in my body. Check all that happen:

- a. My heart races
- b. My breathing speeds up
- c. None of these
- d. I feel hot or sweaty
- e. My muscles get tight

84. I tried to stay away from people and things that made me feel upset or remind me of the stressful aspects of COVID-19.

85. I didn't feel like myself when I was dealing with the stress of COVID-19, it's like I was far away from everything.

86. I just took things as they were; I went with the flow.

87. I thought about happy things to take my mind off the stressful parts of COVID-19 or how I was feeling.

88. When something stressful happened related to COVID-19, I couldn't stop thinking about how I was feeling.

89. I got sympathy, understanding, or support from someone. Check all you went to:

- a. Spouse/Partner
- b. Friend
- c. Brother/Sister
- d. Therapist/Counselor
- e. Clergy Member
- f. My children
- g. Parent
- h. Other Family Member
- i. God
- j. None of these

90. When something stressful happened related to COVID-19, I couldn't always control what

I did. Check all that happen:

- a. I couldn't stop eating.
- b. I couldn't stop talking.
- c. I did dangerous things.

- d. I had to keep fixing/checking things.
  - e. None of these.
91. I told myself that things could be worse.
92. My mind would just go blank when something stressful would happen related to COVID-19, I couldn't think at all.
93. I told myself that it didn't matter, that it isn't a big deal.
94. When I was faced with the stressful parts of COVID-19, right away I feel really \_\_\_\_\_
- (Remember to select a response). Check all that you felt:
- a. Angry
  - b. Sad
  - c. None of these
  - d. Worried/anxious
  - e. Scared
95. It was really hard for me to concentrate or pay attention when something stressful happened related to COVID-19.
96. I thought about the things I was learning from COVID-19, or about something good that would come from it.
97. After something stressful happened related to COVID-19, I couldn't stop thinking about what I did or said.
98. When stressful parts of COVID-19 happened, I said to myself, "This isn't real."
99. When I was dealing with the stressful parts of COVID-19, I ended up just lying around or sleeping a lot.

100. I kept my mind off stressful parts of COVID-19 by: (remember to select a response.) Check all that you did:
- a. Exercising
  - b. Seeing friends
  - c. Watching TV
  - d. Reading
  - e. Playing video games
  - f. Doing a hobby
  - g. Listening to music
  - h. None of these
101. When something stressful happened related to COVID-19, I got upset by things that don't usually bother me.
102. I did something to calm myself down when I was dealing with the stress of COVID-19. (Remember to select a response.) Check all that you do:
- a. Take deep breaths
  - b. Pray
  - c. Walk
  - d. Listen to music
  - e. Take a break
  - f. Meditate
  - g. None of these
103. I would freeze when I was dealing with stressful parts of COVID-19, I couldn't do anything.

104. When stressful things happened related to COVID-19, I sometimes acted without thinking.
105. I kept my feelings under control when I had to, then let them out when they wouldn't make things worse.
106. When something stressful happened related to COVID-19, I couldn't seem to get around to doing things I was supposed to do.
107. I told myself that everything would be all right.
108. When something stressful happened related to COVID-19, I couldn't stop thinking about why this was happening.
109. I thought of ways to laugh about it so that it wouldn't seem so bad.
110. My thoughts started racing when I was faced with the stressful parts of COVID-19.
111. I imagined something really fun or exciting happening in my life.
112. When something stressful happened related to COVID-19, I could get so upset that I couldn't remember what happened or what I did.
113. I tried to believe that it never happened.
114. When I was dealing with the stress of COVID-19, sometimes I couldn't control what I did or said.

#### Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support

The following twelve questions ask about your experiences with social support throughout THIS SEMESTER (fall 2021 semester). Remember to focus on your experience during the last semester (fall 2021 semester), not how you feel currently. Response options in this format range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

- 13) There was a special person who was around when I was in need.
- 14) There was a special person with whom I could share my joys and sorrows.
- 15) My family really tried to help me.
- 16) I got the emotional help and support I needed from my family.
- 17) I had a special person who was a real source of comfort to me.
- 18) My friends really tried to help me.
- 19) I could count on my friends when things went wrong.
- 20) I could talk about my problems with my family.
- 21) I had friends with whom I could share my joys and sorrows.
- 22) There was a special person in my life who cared about my feelings.
- 23) My family was willing to help me make decisions.
- 24) I could talk about my problems with my friends.

### Beck Depression Inventory II

This section consists of 19 groups of statements. Please read each group of statements carefully, and then pick out the one statement in each group that best describes the way you felt throughout the fall 2021 semester. Click the box next to the statement you have picked.

During the previous semester, I...

#### 20) Sadness

- a. ...did not feel sad.
- b. ...felt sad much of the time.
- c. ...was sad all the time.
- d. ...was so sad or unhappy that I couldn't stand it.

## 21) Pessimism

- a. ... was not discouraged about my future.
- b. ... felt more discouraged about my future than I used to be.
- c. ... did not expect things to work out for me.
- d. ... felt my future was hopeless and would only get worse.

## 22) Past Failure

- a. ... did not feel like a failure.
- b. ... felt I failed more than I should have.
- c. ... saw a lot of failures.
- d. ... felt I was a total failure as a person.

## 23) Loss of Pleasure

- a. ... got as much pleasure as I ever did from the things I enjoyed.
- b. ... didn't enjoy things as much as I used to.
- c. ... got very little pleasure from the things I used to enjoy.
- d. ... couldn't get any pleasure from the things I used to enjoy.

## 24) Guilty Feelings

- a. ... didn't feel particularly guilty.
- b. ... felt guilty over many things I had done or should have done.
- c. ... felt quite guilty most of the time.
- d. ... felt guilty all of the time.

## 25) Punishment Feelings

- a. ...didn't feel like I was being punished.
- b. ...felt I may be being punished.

- c. ...expected to be punished.
- d. ...felt I was being punished.

#### 26) Self-Dislike

- a. ...felt the same about myself as ever.
- b. ...had lost confidence in myself.
- c. ...was disappointed in myself.
- d. ...disliked myself.

#### 27) Self-Criticalness

- a. ...didn't criticize or blame myself more than usual.
- b. ...was more critical of myself than I was before.
- c. ...criticized myself for all of my faults.
- d. ...blamed myself for everything bad that happened.

#### 28) Crying

- a. ...didn't cry any more than I used to.
- b. ...cried more than I used to.
- c. ...cried over every little thing.
- d. ...felt like crying, but I couldn't.

#### 29) Agitation

- a. ...was no more restless or wound up than usual.
- b. ...felt more restless or wound up than usual.
- c. ...was so restless or agitated that it was hard to stay still.
- d. ...was so restless or agitated that I had to keep moving or doing something.

#### 30) Loss of Interest

- a. ...had not lost interest in other people or activities.
- b. ...was less interested in other people or things than before.
- c. ...had lost most of my interest in other people or things.
- d. ...found it hard to get interested in anything.

### 31) Indecisiveness

- a. ...made decisions about as well as ever.
- b. ...found it more difficult to make decisions than usual.
- c. ...had much greater difficulty in making decisions than I used to.
- d. ...had trouble making any decisions.

### 32) Worthlessness

- a. ...did not feel that I was worthless.
- b. ...did not consider myself as worthwhile and useful as I used to.
- c. ...felt more worthless as compared to other people.
- d. ...felt utterly worthless.

### 33) Loss of Energy

- a. ...had as much energy as ever.
- b. ...had less energy than I used to.
- c. ...did not have enough energy to do very much.
- d. ...did not have enough energy to do anything.

### 34) Changes in Sleeping Pattern

- a. ...had not experienced any change in my sleeping pattern.
- b. ...slept somewhat more than usual OR somewhat less than usual.
- c. ...slept a lot more than usual OR a lot less than usual.

- d. ...slept most of the day OR woke up 1-2 hours early and couldn't get back to sleep.

### 35) Irritability

- a. ...was no more irritable than usual.
- b. ...was more irritable than usual.
- c. ...was much more irritable than usual.
- d. ...was irritable all the time.

### 36) Changes in Appetite

- a. I did not experience any change in my appetite.
- b. My appetite was somewhat less than usual OR somewhat greater than usual.
- c. My appetite was much less than usual OR much greater than usual.
- d. I had no appetite at all OR craved food all the time.

### 37) Concentration Difficulty

- a. ...could concentrate as well as ever.
- b. ...could not concentrate as well as usual.
- c. ...found it hard to keep my mind on anything for very long.
- d. ...found I could not concentrate on anything.

### 38) Tiredness or Fatigue

- a. ...was no more tired or fatigued than usual.
- b. ...got tired or fatigued more easily than usual.
- c. ...was too tired or fatigued to do a lot of the things I used to do.
- d. ...was too tired or fatigued to do most of the things I used to do.

### Email Request

Please provide an email that we can use to send you the link to the second survey when it launches. This email will not be traceable to the survey you just completed.

- 1) Email: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) If you are NOT taking this survey for research credit and would like to be entered into the raffle to win a \$25 Amazon gift card, please select this box:

### SONA RECRUITMENT DESCRIPTION

Study Name: Coping with the Pandemic in College

Description: You will complete two online surveys – one at the beginning of the semester and a follow up towards the end. Your participation will involve answering questions about your stress related to COVID, social supports, emotional symptoms like anxiety and depression, and coping strategies.

Duration: 30 minutes

Locale: Online, via Qualtrics

Compensation: You will receive either 1.0 SONA credit for participation in each survey, or be entered into a raffle for a \$25 Amazon gift card for each survey.

Researchers: Sam Beery (Principal Investigator); Eric Dubow (Faculty Sponsor)

Phone: 614-403-0431

Email: beerys@bgsu.edu

This study has received clearance by the Bowling Green State University IRB.

## INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

### STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

**Purpose:** You are invited to participate in a research study that examines a wide range of experiences and behaviors related to how college students have coped with COVID-related stressors.

This project is being conducted by Sam Beery, an undergraduate student in the Department of Psychology at Bowling Green State University, as part of their honors project. Eric Dubow, PhD is the faculty supervisor on the project.

**Eligibility Requirements:** You are eligible to participate in the study if you are at least 18 years old and are currently a student at Bowling Green State University and were enrolled as a student at BGSU last semester (spring 2021 semester).

**Summary of Involvement:** You will complete two online surveys – one at the beginning of the semester and a follow up towards the end. Each survey should take about 30 minutes and will ask the same questions. Your participation will involve answering questions about your stress related to COVID, social supports, emotional symptoms like anxiety and depression, and coping strategies. For example, questions will ask about specific worries you might have had regarding

COVID. There are no right or wrong answers. Your responses will be confidential. Students taking this survey for research credit will be awarded 1.0 SONA credit for each survey completed, while other students will be entered into a raffle to win a \$25 Amazon gift card for each survey completed.

**Potential Risks:** Due to the sensitive nature of some of the topics, you may experience a negative emotional state while or after answering the questions. We anticipate the chance of risk to be low. If you become upset and would like to speak to a mental health professional, information will be provided at the end of the survey about on- and off-campus resources.

**Benefits:** You may benefit from the opportunity to reflect on your experiences. Also, you will receive a list of resources that can be helpful. The results of this study will help inform us about behaviors and experiences that will be instrumental in designing future programs to be better equipped for adjusting to a pandemic. Furthermore, students currently enrolled in a psychology class requiring participation in research will receive 1.0 SONA credit for each survey you participated in, while other students will be entered into a raffle to win a \$25 Amazon gift card for each survey participated in. The odds of winning the raffle will be approximately 5% for the first survey, and approximately 10% for the second.

**Confidentiality:** Please note that your questionnaire answers are confidential. Your surveys will be linked to each other through a self-generated identification code unique enough for us to match your surveys, but not unique enough that we will be able to discern your identity. No one other than the research team will ever see your responses. We will use email to contact you for the second survey when it launches, but the email you provide us with will not be linked to your survey. Your responses to the surveys will be downloaded from Qualtrics, the survey platform,



If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, Bowling Green State University, at (419) 372-7716 or at [irb@bgsu.edu](mailto:irb@bgsu.edu).

- I consent to participate in this research study.
- I do NOT consent to participate in this research study.

#### MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

#### **Mental Health Resources**

**Sometimes participating in surveys about personal experiences can bring up feelings of distress. We care about your health and safety.**

**Here is a list of on-campus and off-campus resources that can help.**

#### **On-Campus**

Psychological Services Center: 419-372-2540

BGSU on-call counsellor (8:00am-5:00pm, M-F): 419-372-2081

#### **Off-Campus**

Ohio Careline (24 hours): 1-800-720-9616

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (24 hours): 1-800-273-8255

Wood County Crisis Line (24 hours): 419-502-4673

Ohio United Way (24 hours): 2-1-1

Ohio Department of Health Coronavirus Information Line: 1-833-4-ASK-ODH

Text the keyword “4hope” to 741-741 to be connected to a trained Crisis Counselor within 5 minute

**Thank you again for your participation in our survey.**

**If you have questions or concerns about this study, please contact:**

Sam Beery, [beerys@bgsu.edu](mailto:beerys@bgsu.edu), 614-403-0431

Eric Dubow, PhD, [edubow@bgsu.edu](mailto:edubow@bgsu.edu), 419-372-2556

**If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, please contact:**

Institutional Review Board, Bowling Green State University, at (419) 372-7716 or at

[irb@bgsu.edu](mailto:irb@bgsu.edu)