An Investigation into the Relationships between Cyberbullying, Coping and Help Seeking in Young Adolescents

Larisa Tatjiana McLoughlin
Bachelor of Behavioural Science (Honours)
Masters of Arts by Research
University of South Australia, School of Education

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Supervisors:
Dr. Barbara Spears
Dr. Carmel Taddeo

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Glossary – Common Terms

Active Coping	Taking active steps to cope, such as thinking of step to take or seeking support.
Emotion-Focused Coping	Trying to reduce the negative emotions associated with the stressful situation through denial or self-blame.
Coping through Distraction	Using distraction techniques to cope, such as keep occupied or doing other things.
Coping through Humour	Making jokes about a situation to make light of it or accept it.
Coping through Substance Use	Using substances such as alcohol or drugs to cope.
Coping through Religion	Turning to religion to cope.
Coping through Denial	Denying or ignoring the situation in an effort to cope.
Cyberbullying	Incorporating a power differential, a deliberate intent to harm and repetition over time.
Cybervictimisation	Being a victim of cyberbullying.
Cyber Status	A term used when discussed all different status' involved in cyberbully: bully, victim, bully-victim, and non-involved.
Cyberbully-victim	Someone who has been both a cyberbully and a cybervictim.
Social Connectedness	One's ability to feel comfortable, confident and have a sense of belonging within a larger social context than family or friends.

Abstract

Cyberbullying has received considerable attention in both the media and in academia. Whilst there continues to be debate surrounding the definition of cyberbullying, there is broad agreement that it is the use of technology to bully an individual or group with the intent to hurt or harm them. Researchers have established that cyberbullying is a key area of concern, with serious mental health implications for young people in both Australia and abroad (Campbell, Spears, Slee, Butler, & Kift, 2012; Fahy et al, 2016; Kim, Georgiades, Comeau, Vitoroulis, & Boyle, 2016; Le et al., 2016; Spears, Taddeo, Daly, Stretton, & Karklins, 2015a; van Geel, Vedder, & Tanilon, 2014). Young people, however, are unlikely to seek help for cyberbullying (Marées & Petermann, 2012; Smith et al., 2008), with some research suggesting that if involved in cyberbullying, they may be more likely to cope through emotion-focused strategies (e.g. giving up, or self-blame), (Jacobs, Dehue, Völlink, & Lechner, 2014; Jacobs, Völlink, Dehue, & Lechner, 2015). Little is known about why, and how, these emotion-focused coping strategies might influence their help seeking attitudes and practices and subsequent mental health outcomes. Researchers further have suggested that engaging in ineffective coping styles, such as emotion-focused coping can prolong the cyberbullying (Craig, Pepler, & Blais, 2007; Kristensen & Smith, 2003; Mahady Wilton, Craig, & Pepler, 2000), and may exacerbate the negative mental health effects of cyberbullying, such as depression, anxiety and stress (Mahmoud, 2011).

An area that requires attention therefore, is *how victims of cyberbullying cope, why they adopt particular coping strategies, and the implications of various coping strategies for their mental health and help seeking intentions.*

This thesis has three overarching aims, to: (1) examine the main reasons young people *do or do not seek help in relation to cyberbullying experiences*; (2) explore *alternative coping strategies used by young people who do not seek help*; and (3) develop an understanding of *the relationship between help seeking, coping, and cyberbullying,* and if, and how, these behaviours differ between individuals or subpopulations.

The study employed a mixed methods approach, involving quantitative online surveys (N=229) and qualitative interviews (N=30) across eight South Australian high schools. The study investigated: Internet use; cyberbullying experiences; coping intentions; help seeking intentions; social connectedness; and mental health of young people aged 12 to 17 years. The results from these core areas are organised under three sections: sample descriptives and differences; structural equation modelling; and qualitative findings. Findings also are triangulated throughout the discussion of results, and considered in relation to the research questions and hypotheses.

Findings from this study suggested that whilst some young people do *intend* to cope actively in the instance of cyberbullying, through such strategies as seeking advice or thinking of an active solution to the problem, they *reported using alternative methods*, such as emotion-focused coping, e.g. self-blame or denial, or coping through distraction. This study further revealed that greater frequency of cybervictimisation may result in a greater likelihood of engaging in *emotion-focused* strategies, which have been found to negatively influence mental health outcomes.

Active coping, however, demonstrated a significant positive relationship with help- seeking intentions, and importantly, *social connectedness* was found to be a critical mediating factor to help seeking, coping strategies, and mental health outcomes. Social connectedness may act as a protective buffer against the effects of cyberbullying and negative coping strategies. Young people who were more socially connected, were more likely to cope *actively* in response to frequent cybervictimisation, and consequently more likely to seek help and have positive mental health.

This thesis, highlights the already known reluctance of young people to seek help for cyberbullying experiences. When paired with mental health concerns and dysfunctional coping methods, this reluctance becomes critically important for their wellbeing. The findings from this study indicate that encouraging social connectedness may be a positive strategy which in turn supports active coping, seeking help and positive mental health for those being cybervictimised. These insights into young people's lives can contribute to evidence-based responses to this issue and can inform current and future interventions to help empower young people to utilise *active* coping strategies, and seek help, for cyberbullying.

Declaration

I declare that:

This thesis presents work carried out by myself and does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; to the best of my knowledge it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; and all substantive contributions by others to the work presented, including jointly authored publications, is clearly acknowledged.

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Statement of Originality and Contribution

I certify that the data and content of this thesis are my own work carried out between February 2012, and November 2016 under the supervision of Dr. Barbara Spears and Dr. Carmel Taddeo. Further, the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all assistance and sources have been appropriately acknowledged

Dr. Barbara Spears and Dr. Carmel Taddeo in the School of Education, are my primary supervisors with whom I met regularly. They provided direction and comprehensive feedback on all aspects of the thesis, including initial research methodology, instrument design, and feedback on all drafts and components of this thesis.

1 Introduction

This dissertation addresses the complex relationships between: young peoples' experiences of cyberbullying; their approaches to coping; their help seeking intentions; and their mental health and feelings of social connectedness. Conducted in the Australian state of South Australia, this study is informed by existing research which has highlighted the negative impacts and consequences of cyberbullying and the reluctance of young people to seek help. The impact of young people's coping methods on help seeking intentions and mental health outcomes, has, however, received less attention to date. As such, this thesis seeks to contribute to the field by identifying positive and effective coping strategies for victims of cyberbullying, which ultimately lead to increased help seeking intentions in young people. This is with a view to improving mental health outcomes for those involved in cyberbullying and cybervictimisation.

1.1 Focus of the Study

Whilst this study has been informed by the extant research into bullying and cyberbullying (see Chapter 2, Review of Literature to follow), there is also a personal motivation for exploring this area of research (please see Appendix A). This personal motivation set a course of research which commenced with an Honours project exploring cyberbullying experiences of first year university students, as well as experiences of sexual predators online (Karklins & Dalton, 2012; Karklins, 2010), followed by a Masters' research project which examined the risks of social networking sites to South Australian high school students (Karklins, 2012a, 2012b).

This subsequent dissertation explores the relationship between cyberbullying experiences, help seeking intentions, coping styles, and mental health, as well as gaining insight into personal experiences of young people and *why* many do not seek help, and cope the way that they do.

The aim was to investigate *if, and to what extent,* young people seek help for cyberbullying experiences, and if they then engage in negative or positive coping strategies. Help seeking, for the purposes of this thesis, was conceptualised as independent from coping strategies. Help seeking is often considered to be part of the

repertoire of coping mechanisms, but for the purposes of this thesis, it was conceptualised as an active action of asking another for help, independent from other coping strategies, which can include *thinking* of ways to improve the situation, or *seeking information* about what to do. The reason for this is that help seeking is more likely to include an external source of support, whereas coping is more focused on the self and a decision to seek support. Furthermore, limited research to date examines help seeking as an independent act from coping strategies, and therefore, this thesis aimed to examine how help seeking can be conceptualised separately from coping strategies.

This study also examined mental health and social connectedness, so that an understanding could be developed around the relationship between these and how they relate to different coping styles and help seeking intentions. In summary, this research examined the relationships between *coping styles and mental health outcomes associated with cyberbullying*, and if coping *styles and social connectedness influenced help seeking intentions.*

1.2 Background of the Study

Given that social media is a popular avenue through which cyberbullying is enacted, this section will present research that contextualises cyberbullying and cybervictimisation. It is highlighted that cyberbullying can occur through a number of avenues, however this section provides context in relation to social media specifically. It provides insights into social media use by young people, together with the potential positive and negative impacts of social media use. Furthermore, this section will highlight the core areas of focus for this research: cyberbullying, help seeking intentions, coping styles, mental health and social connectedness.

1.2.1 The Online Context for Young People: Social Media Use

Young Australians are spending considerable time online. Research shows that this is increasing, with statistics reported in 2012 ranging from 90 percent of young Australians accessing the internet daily (Green, Brady, Ólafsson, Hartley, & Lumby, 2012), to 99 percent accessing the internet daily in 2013 (Burns et al., 2013), and that in 2015, one third of internet users are children under 18 years of age (Livingston, Carr, Byrne, 2015). Comparatively, international research reported in 2011 found that 60 percent of young Europeans access the internet daily, and 59 percent have a social networking profile

(Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig, & Ólafsson, 2011). Whilst there has been increasing use by older generations, young people are the most likely to use social media, with 90 percent of young adults aged between 18 and 29 using it, and 24 percent of teens going online generally 'almost constantly' (Pew Research Centre, 2015a, 2015b).

Social networking sites, which can be defined as "mediated online environments where people communicate with existing relationships, form new ones, cement ties with others, and re-establish old friendships" (Spears, Kofoed, Bartolo, Palermiti, & Costabile, 2012, p. 9), are immensely popular with young people. Facebook, one example of a social networking site, has grown in popularity, with just over 900 million subscribers in 2012 (Strom & Strom, 2012). Figures have since showed this number has increased: with 1.55 billion monthly active users, and 1.31 billion mobile monthly active users, and is considered the most popular social network worldwide (Statista, 2015). With this level of use, the potential influence of social media, including the positive and negative impacts on young people's social development and overall wellbeing needs ongoing consideration (Pea et al., 2012).

1.2.2 Potential Impacts of Social Media Use on Young People

In contrast to previous generations of adults whose social development during adolescence was limited predominately to face-to-face or telephone contact, young people today may possibly develop different sets of social skills due to largely communicating through an online environment.

Contrary to adults' perceptions, young people perceive that social networking sites have many positive aspects associated with them. Research by Spears et al. (2012) found that young people believe social networking sites enabled them to: exercise control; practice social skills; to think before speaking; to seek help without feeling ashamed; and to learn and share new experiences. Collin, Rahilly, Richardson, and Third, (2011) further suggested that social networking sites can: increase media literacy; create an ideal opportunity to develop one's skills; be easily used to communicate with others for educational purposes, for creativity, individual identity and self-expression; strengthen interpersonal relationships through developing new ones and strengthening existing ones; build a sense of belonging and collective identity; strengthen and build communities and assists in one's wellbeing overall. Also in support of this notion of positive social skill development, Green et al., (2012) have suggested that social

networking sites can: enhance one's creativity; promote engagement with others; provide information sources; expand one's connections; encourage a growth of ideas; and assist in the creation of identity. These skill sets introduce new ways of connecting with others and there may be therefore, opportunities to better utilise the online environment to service and support young people. In support of this, recent research suggests that even among those who have been cyberbullied, the online environment hosts a number of supportive communities which can serve as an escape or buffer against bullies (Davis, Randall, Ambrose, & Orand, 2015).

Whilst it is clear that there do exist numerous positive elements to engaging with social networking and social media, and that some research suggests the online environment can indeed be supportive, the negative aspects of social media use are significant, with cyberbullying, which often occurs on social media platforms, (Whittaker, & Kowalski, 2015) being recognised as a having a key negative effect on young people's wellbeing (Swist, Collin, & McCormack, 2015).

Cyberbullying, (See Chapter 2) is defined as an aggressive, repeated, intentional act carried out on an individual using electronic forms (Smith et al., 2009) and is concerning for young people and their parents on a global scale, particularly as the range of social media platforms and devices grows exponentially. Prevalence rates of cyberbullying are inconsistent, and may be attributable to variations in the way cyberbullying is defined (see Chapter 2), and measured, including differences in the timeframe (e.g. in the past term/month/year) used (Smith et al., 2008). Prevalence rates from around the world of cybervictimisation therefore vary from: 20 % (Cross, Epstein, Clark, & Lester, 2008; Katz et al., 2014); 25 % (Li, 2006); to 38 % (Tarapdar & Kellett, 2011); whilst other studies report figures between 10 and 40 % (Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder, & Lattanner, 2014), with some research suggesting that incidents of cyberbullying may be decreasing (Chester et al., 2015). In regards to traditional bullying, recent Australian research by Rigby and Johnson (2016, p. 10) indicated that the spreading of malicious rumours to "make other kids not like me", was one of the most commonly perceived forms of bullying, with 30.7 % indicating that this was happening quite often or very often at their school during the term.

Negative use of social media such as cyberbullying can lead to mental health concerns, including sleep loss, feelings of normalcy (feeling out of place/unusual),

anxiety, depression, lower levels of social connectedness, and suicidal ideation (Campbell et al., 2012; Haynie et al., 2001; Kowalski et al., 2014; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Pea et al., 2012; Spears et al., 2015a; van Geel et al., 2014). A combination of both traditional bullying and cyberbullying also is believed to have an increased negative impact on mental health than either form alone (Landstedt & Persson, 2014). Additionally, those classified as bully-victims, that is, individuals who engage in bullying both as victims and as bullies (Ball et al., 2008; Stein, Dukes, & Warren, 2007) experience the most severe problems, being more depressed and anxious than those who are explicitly victims only, bullies only, or not involved in bullying (Schwartz, 2000). Furthermore, Green et al. (2012) explain that because young people have a limited capacity for self-regulation and can be persuaded easily by peers to engage in deviant behaviours, young people may be at greater risk online when they experiment with social media, compared to a face-to-face context.

1.2.3 Coping and Help Seeking in Relation to Cyberbullying

In relation to risks that young people face online, is the concern that young people are reluctant to seek help for their problems in general, but particularly for issues related to cyberbullying, with research suggesting that victims of cyberbullying are less likely to seek help, than those who are traditionally bullied (Smith et al., 2008). With victims often feeling that nothing can be done about the cyberbullying and therefore, will not seek help (Marées & Petermann, 2012). Research also has found that young people often feel that they need to deal with their problems on their own, which can be positive in that it can reflect their increasing independence, however, they are reluctant to talk about their issues or to ask for help (Murray-Harvey, Skrzypiec, & Slee, 2012). Other factors that may influence help seeking behaviours include: the social stigma associated with asking for help; treatment fears; a fear of emotion; an anticipation of utility and risks; self-disclosure; and social norms (Vogel, Wester, & Larson, 2007) (see section 2.3 in Chapter 2).

Research has highlighted that young people engage in different coping behaviours to deal with cyberbullying. Coping strategies young people use can be categorised variously, but two common forms identified by Lazarus and Folkman (1987) are: p*roblem-focused coping,* which involves changing the actual terms of the troubled person-environment relationship, for example taking actions to improve or stop

the situation such as retaliating or seeking information; and *emotion-focused coping*, which is used to regulate emotional distress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Research by Riebel, Jäger, and Fischer (2009) suggests that young people more often use different forms of *emotion-focused coping* to deal with cyberbullying, such as venting emotions, or mental or behavioural disengagement. This could be due to the notion that young people often view cyberbullying as something they cannot change or control, (Völlink, Bolman, Eppingbroek, & Dehue, 2013) and feel that accepting the situation is the only way to cope with it.

What is not yet fully understood, however, is how, when, where and why young people seek help and support when using social media, or why they choose *not* to seek help, generally or specifically off or online. Further to this, how they subsequently cope in relation to seeking help or not for *cyberbullying* in particular, is also not widely understood. It is therefore of significance that the nature of coping and its relationship to cyberbullying and help seeking intentions be examined further.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The current research investigated the relationships between cyberbullying, help seeking intentions and coping strategies of South Australian high school students aged 12 to 17 , and followed a two-stage sequential process, comprising: quantitative online surveys; followed by qualitative semi-structured interviews (See Chapter 3). This study is associated with, but independent of, the national Safe and Well Online (SWO) Study of the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre (CRC), and findings from the current study will be triangulated with those of the Safe and Well Online study (see Section 3.2.4). For a full outline of the Young and Well CRC and existing projects, see Appendix B.

Research has shown that young people rarely seek help for cyberbullying (Cassidy, Faucher, & Jackson, 2013; Smith et al., 2008), and sometimes can engage in self-destructive strategies in an attempt to cope or deal with it (Olafsen & Viemerö, 2000). This is of concern given the many negative mental health outcomes associated with cyberbullying involvement (Campbell et al., 2012; Spears et al., 2015a). Whilst research has investigated the prevalence of cyberbullying, its impact on young people, and the reluctance of young people to seek help, further research is required to understand the relationship between these factors and the ways in which young people

seek help and/or cope. Whilst there are many coping methods young people use (Carver and Schier, 1989), further consideration is required to better understand why young people who are victims of cyberbullying, may choose these methods, in place of actively seeking help.

The relationships that exists between different coping styles and help seeking is complex and this thesis seeks to shed light on the decisions young people make in times of stress. This research will therefore build on existing knowledge related to the independent challenges of: cyberbullying, coping and help seeking; and will extend this understanding by examining the relationship between the three constructs, relevant to young South Australians in this study. It will contribute to the evidence-base to inform responses to cyberbullying including how young people can be supported to actively seek help and thereby, to cope more effectively.

1.3.1 Aims

This research aims to examine the help seeking intentions and coping strategies young people might intend to use if they were to experience both cyberbullying and/or cybervictimisation. More specifically, the purpose of this study is to:

1) Better understand the main reasons young people do or do not seek help in relation to cyberbullying;

2) Explore the coping strategies of young people who do not seek help;

3) Examine the relationship between help seeking intentions, coping styles, and experiences of cybervictimisation and cyberbullying, and how these intentions might differ between sub-samples;

4) Develop an understanding of the influence different coping styles may have on mental health outcomes associated with cyberbullying and cybervictimisation experiences;

5) Develop an understanding of the role of social connectedness and coping and help seeking intentions in response to cyberbullying and cybervictimisation experiences.

Overall, this research aims to develop an understanding of the relationships between cyberbullying, help seeking, and coping, and what role mental health and social connectedness contributes to these relationships.

1.4 Research Design Decisions

This study was designed to focus on young people's experiences of coping and help seeking in relation to cyberbullying, as well as to gain insight into reasons *why* particular methods of coping and sources of help are preferred and chosen over others. These decisions will now further be explained.

1.4.1 A Focus on Adolescents

A main focus of this research was to ensure that the voice of young people could be heard. As adolescents are primarily engaged with social media and cyberbullying, they are the target sample. Whilst there are numerous studies using self-report surveys, this study employed a mixed-methodology, incorporating both self-report surveys and semi-structured interviews. A comprehensive understanding of young people's decision making about whether they seek help or not and how they cope with cyberbullying, could thus be examined.

1.4.2 A Focus on Both Coping and Help Seeking

Little research to date has examined *both* the help seeking intentions and coping mechanisms of young people involved in cyberbullying. Therefore, a primary focus of this dissertation was to examine both young people's help seeking intentions and coping mechanisms in the context of cyberbullying, and *to investigate the nature of the relationships between these constructs.*

1.5 Organisation of the Thesis

This dissertation: reviews the literature (Chapter 2), outlines the methodology (Chapter 3), then presents three results chapters: sample differences across key variables (Chapter 4); structural equation models (Chapter 5); and qualitative findings (Chapter 6); the discussion (Chapter 7) and conclusion (Chapter 8). Each is briefly outlined below.

1.5.1 Literature Review

The second chapter of this thesis discusses existing literature around the main focus areas of cyberbullying, help seeking intentions and coping styles. Issues around defining cyberbullying, the roles involved with cyberbullying, and the many consequences associated with cyberbullying are discussed. Following this, the mental health of young people, including young people's perspectives related to suicide and self-harm; the role and impact of the internet on these concerning behaviours and on young people's social connectedness and resilience are examined. How adolescents cope generally with stressful situations, coping theory, forms of coping, coping with cyberbullying, and the role of support are explored next. Finally, the review examines: help seeking theory; factors that influence help seeking; help seeking and cyberbullying; and online help seeking. The chapter concludes with the research questions.

1.5.2 Methodology Chapter

Chapter Three explains the methodology employed in this study, and begins with a discussion of the philosophical and theoretical framework that underpins this research approach. The research design and analysis techniques employed are presented, followed by an explanation of data triangulation and method triangulation. It also details the participant recruitment and sampling processes, ethical and consent processes and considerations, and finally outlines the research process and sequence, including survey instruments and measures, and the protocols employed during the interview process.

1.5.3 Results Chapters

The results section of this thesis comprises three chapters. Chapter 4 reports descriptive statistics of the sample, followed by the psychometric properties of the scales employed and exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis of the *Brief Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced* (COPE) scale (Carver, 1997). This chapter then reports exploratory findings, specifically sample differences by age, gender, and cyberbully-victim status.

Chapter 5 details the structural equation modelling undertaken. The chapter examines initial mediation and relationships between the core constructs of cyberbullying and cybervictimisation, help seeking intentions, coping styles and social connectedness. It then examines initial mediation and relationships between

cyberbullying and cybervictimisation, help seeking intentions, coping styles and mental health (specifically, depression, anxiety and stress as measured by the *Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale* (DASS21), Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). Finally, full models with all variables (cyberbullying and cybervictimisation, social connectedness coping, help seeking, and mental health) are presented and examined for any differences between genders.

The final results chapter (Chapter 6) reports on the qualitative findings of this study. The qualitative results are presented last in order to add depth to the quantitative chapters. It outlines the qualitative coding procedures and analysis, discussing each of the main themes (a priori and emergent) identified during analyses.

1.5.4 Discussion Chapter

Chapter 7 provides a discussion of the results. It draws on triangulated findings from the quantitative and qualitative findings from this study, the SWO study, and with past research. This section addresses implications of each of the main findings. It examines findings about help seeking challenges, followed by approaches to coping with cyberbullying and cybervictimisation, the relationship between coping and help seeking, demographic differences, and finally any findings associated with social connectedness and mental health. This chapter also addresses all research questions and hypotheses, and addresses the strengths and limitations of this study.

1.5.5 Conclusion Chapter

The final chapter (Chapter 8) summarises the main findings, contribution of this thesis to the field, and some suggestions for future research.

1.6 Summary

Overall, this thesis aims to address some of the gaps in the literature concerning coping and help seeking in relation to cyberbullying. This thesis contributes to the body of knowledge by way of highlighting the intricate relationship of help seeking and approaches to coping when examining cyberbullying and cybervictimisation experiences, particularly in relation to feelings of social connectedness and mental health outcomes. Limited research exists that examines each of these factors and how they influence young people's decision to seek or not seek help. This thesis highlights

that whilst there is no one simple answer, there are a number of factors that must be considered when examining young people and their help seeking intentions in relation to their cyberbullying and cybervictimisation experiences. It aims to inform policy makers, parents, teachers, and young people themselves about the importance of seeking help and the coping strategies which are more relevant and effective.

2 Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature on young people and cyberbullying, mental health, coping and help seeking. To begin, a discussion of the issues surrounding the definition of cyberbullying and the roles and characteristics of those involved is presented; followed by a consideration of the issue of mental health in young people generally: examining topics such as depression, suicide and self-harm, social connectedness, loneliness, and resilience; concluding with a review of the consequences and mental health outcomes of those involved in cyberbullying. Following this, theoretical understandings of coping strategies, coping with cyberbullying specifically, and the importance of support in relation to coping behaviours will be explored. This chapter will then address help seeking in young people, the factors which influence help seeking intentions, help seeking and cyberbullying, and finally online help seeking. This chapter concludes with a brief summary, followed by the research questions.

2.1. Cyberbullying

Olweus (1978) defines bullying as negative behaviour that is directed towards one person by another with more power, repeatedly, and over time. Cyberbullying has been defined as "an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time, against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself" (Smith et al., 2008, p. 376). It has more recently been defined as "bullying and harassment of others by means of new electronic technologies, primarily mobile phones and the internet" (Smith, Steffgen, & Sittichai, 2013, p. 3). As with definitions of traditional bullying, where there is agreement in general, but not specifically in relation to the actual wording of definitions, cyberbullying definitions also have sparked much debate in the literature: particularly in relation to the notion of repetition and the online setting, and less so, in relation to power

2.1.1 Definition Issues

Whilst traditional bullying is generally agreed as incorporating a power differential, a deliberate intent to harm and repetition over time (Olweus, 1978) cyberbullying takes this definition and applies it to a technology-focused setting. As technology has shifted

rapidly, bullying using technology in the early 2000s focused on the sending of emails and texts. In recent years, with the move towards mobile digital technologies, there has been an explosion of image sharing, online communities, blogs and forums, and sharing of information. Whilst cyberbullying seems to be the latest iteration of traditional bullying, transferred across the digital line, research suggests that there is overlap between the two forms (Cross, et al., 2009; Li, 2007; Smith et al., 2008). Some researchers claim there are enough differences for it to be treated differently, and that a universal definition is needed (Langos, 2012), especially in terms of prevention and intervention strategies. This definition debate has led to various views. Langos (2012) explains that a universal definition of cyberbullying which addresses the main elements of bullying in the cyber context, namely: repetition, power imbalance, intention, and aggression, needs to be considered. This is relevant as the nature of bullying has changed to *include* the online environment, and with technology continuously advancing, there are many new opportunities for cyberbullying to evolve and take place, as seen by the shifts from text and emails to image sharing (Smith, 2015). Others, however, question the role of repetition and power (see Sections 2.1.1.1 to 2.1.1.4).

Research involving young people who have been victims of cyberbullying found that the extent to which the experiences impacted on the victims should also be a criterion for *determining* cyberbullying (Corby et al., 2014; Dredge, Gleeson, & de la Piedad Garcia, 2014; Menesini et al., 2012; Nocentini et al., 2010). These adolescents explained that their cyberbullying experiences impacted on them emotionally, socially and behaviourally. Given the potential extent of the harm and damage to a victim (Dredge et al., 2014), the impact of cyberbullying on victims, and a victim's ability to respond may also need to be considered in a definition of cyberbullying (Corby et al., 2014). Some researchers also have suggested reframing cyberbullying entirely to reflect the aggressive and harmful nature of it, rather than be concerned with trying to determine the repetition or power aspects unique to bullying: suggesting that all negative acts online should be referred to as 'cyberaggression' rather than cyberbullying per se (Bauman, Underwood, & Card, 2013; Corcoran, Guckin, & Prentice, 2015; Grigg, 2010). The current study has elected to focus on young people's experiences of cyberbullying, rather than cyberaggression, as the notions of power differential and repetition potentially impact on a young person's willingness or ability to reach out for help, or the ways in which they may choose to cope.

2.1.1.1 Differences and Overlap between Traditional Bullying and Contemporary Notions of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying has many aspects that can sometimes make it a more preferred method of bullying than traditional bullying for contemporary youth; mainly due to the anonymity the online environment can provide: in particular via social networking sites (Pujazon-Zazik & Park, 2010). Espelage, Rao and Craven (2013) explain that online interactions do not provide the same level of immediate feedback as offline actions, and therefore, the immediate response or reaction of a victim cannot be physically seen as with traditional bullying. Cyberbullying also may be considered 'easier' to enact than traditional bullying as it can occur without any face-to-face contact. Additionally, some young people who engage in cyberbullying behaviours believe they can remain anonymous and avoid repercussions.

However, an overlap between traditional and cyberbullying has been found to be relevant, where behaviours crossover from one domain to another (online and offline): with research suggesting that those who are perpetrators and victims of traditional bullying are also often those who cyberbully others and are cyberbullied and/or cybervictimised by others (Cross, et al., 2009; Li, 2007; Smith et al., 2008). Ang, Tan, and Mansor (2010) suggest that the characteristics of those who engage in traditional bullying are consistent with the behavioural characteristics of those who engage in cyberbullying. Research by Espelage, Rao and Craven (2013) in particular found that:

- Traditional bullying *perpetration* is predictive of cyberbullying *perpetration.*
- Traditional bullying *victimisation* can lead to cyberbullying *perpetration*.
- Cyber*victimisation* can lead to cyberbullying *perpetration.*

Therefore, a traditional bully can become a cyberbully, a traditional victim can become a cyberbully, and a cybervictim can become a cyberbully, suggesting that these roles both online and offline may be interchangeable and related. Jang, Song, and Kim (2014) support this, stating that *victims* of traditional bullying have a high tendency to engage in cyberbullying, thus suggesting that traditional victimisation is strongly associated with cyberbullying. As part of better understanding bullying in the online context, aspects of traditional bullying also will be examined in this thesis. Given this overlap

between traditional bullying and cyberbullying, there is a need to address the main elements of defining cyberbullying so as to inform this overlap.

2.1.1.2 Intent

If bullying is considered a subset of aggression, (Corcoran, Guckin, & Prentice, 2015; Grigg, 2010) and cyberbullying is a subset of cyberaggression, then a deliberate intent to harm is a fundamental construct separating these from harmless or joking behaviours. Kowalski, Limber, and Agatston (2012) suggest it is easy for a young person, to state that they did not mean for their behaviour to be interpreted as cyberbullying, or that it was intended as a joke. In some instances, however, statements may be interpreted by the target as harmful and threatening when this may not have been the original intent. Kowalski, Limber, and Agatston (2012) therefore suggest that a distinction can be made between cyberbullying and harmless behaviours by considering the aggressive *intent* behind it. However, it is important to note that bullying is a proactive form of aggression, and researchers suggest that it is the effect on the victim that determines if the behaviour constitutes bullying or not (Sokol, Bussey, & Rapee, 2015). This proactive aspect also needs to be considered in relation to cyberbullying, and it is noted that posting, uploading and sharing content when online are proactive, deliberate decisions which cannot happen accidentally. The complication occurs, however, due to the lack of cues as to the tone of any comments made online, and confusion around a power imbalance in the online context. Therefore, the notion of intent in the online context is complicated.

2.1.1.3 Imbalance of Power

A characteristic of both traditional bullying and cyberbullying, and which separates it from aggression, involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and victim. Traditional bullying research explains that this imbalance of power is present when one individual is weaker than the other, either due to physical strength, age, or stature (Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008, p. 499) or psychological differences between the victim and the bully (Smith et al., 2013). Menesini and Nocentini (2009) explain that it is difficult to determine an imbalance of power in a cybercommunity as this aspect of the definition was originally in relation to the physical or psychological differences between the victim and the bully, or that the victim was outnumbered by bullies and therefore in a weaker position, as described above. Menesini and Nocentini (2009, p. 230) posed questions related to this imbalance of power and how best to define it in the

cyber context: specifically, is the locus of power in the technological abilities of the bully or is it still related to the so-called 'ranking' or status of the bully in the online environment? Or is it related to other aspects associated with the online setting, such as anonymity, the power of the visual/written word, or the extent of the audience or the number of followers (Campbell, Cross, Spears, & Slee, 2010)? In other words, can a young person be labelled as being a 'weaker' individual based on online knowledge or behaviours alone?

Smith, del Barrio and Tokunaga (2013) explain that the criterion of an imbalance of power for cyberbullying may be different when discussed in relation to traditional bullying, but highlight there are still similarities such as the victim being weaker than the bully, either physically or mentally. Interestingly, research has found that young people often act anonymously when engaged in cyberbullying, but in reality know that their victims are perceived by their peers as being weaker in the offline environment (Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008). This suggests that the power imbalance does still exist in the cyberbullying context, as there is potential for the power imbalance to be transferred from the offline to the online world.

2.1.1.4 Repetition

Another aspect of the cyberbullying definition that requires consideration is that of repetition. Traditional definitions of bullying emphasise *repeated* negative acts by the primary offender (Grigg, 2010; Olweus, 1978; Smith et al., 2008). This suggests that for bullying or cyberbullying to exist, the action must occur more than once, and be repeated over time. A European study found that adolescents from three countries agreed that a repetition criterion can aid in understanding which behaviours are categorised as a 'joke' and which are more serious, intentional attacks, as they believed a one off incident could have not been intended to cause harm (Nocentini et al., 2010). In other words, young people felt that a one off incident may not have intended to cause harm and instead was intended as a joke or to make fun, and that this would not be classified as cyberbullying.

However, other recent research suggests that whilst cyberbullying occurs less frequently and more sporadically than other forms of bullying (Low & Espelage, 2013), a single act of digital aggression can conceivably constitute cyberbullying due to the manner of sharing and the content being available over time, and the behaviour of

bystanders (Vandebosch and Van Cleemput, 2008). Bystanders play a key role in the repetition of cyberbullying instances. The very nature of the online world is that it is easily manipulated and repetitious. It is argued that simply posting cyberbullying content online constitutes repetition (Nocentini et al., 2010). This is because posts online can be easily forwarded to others an infinite number of times and shared for years to come, thus turning a bystander into a co-bully, as they are inadvertently allowing the bullying to continue and be repeated (Grigg, 2010; Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012; Menesini & Nocentini, 2009).

Furthermore, bystanders may devalue a cyberbullying situation or ignore it, both of which may contribute to the repetition and prolonging the effects of the cyberbullying (Smith et al., 2008). Smith et al. (2013) explain however, that these forms of repetition can be present offline as well, by the means of rumours being spread or insulting messages written on school walls or desks. Thus, importantly, a bystander can contribute to the repetition aspects of traditional bullying and cyberbullying. The role of bystanders will be further discussed in section 2.1.2.

2.1.2 Prevalence, Roles and Characteristics: Bullies, Victims, and Bully-Victims

Estimates of the prevalence of cyberbullying are varied, and are largely linked with issues of definition, frequency and cut-offs, similar to the difficulties of establishing prevalence for traditional bullying. The High Wire Act (Joint Select Committee on Cyber-Safety, 2011) recommended that the Consultative Working Group, in consultation with the Youth Advisory Group, develop an agreed definition of cyberbullying to be used by all Australian Government departments and agencies. However, to the best of the author's knowledge, this has not been undertaken to date, but a standard conceptual definition of school bullying for Australian researchers has been established (Hemphill, Heerde & Gomo, 2014).

Research by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA, 2009; 2013) found that 17 percent of young people reported being bullied over the internet over the past year, with cyberbullying increasing to 21 percent between those aged eight to nine to those aged fourteen to fifteen. The AU Kids Online study (Green, et al., 2012) found that 29 percent of Australian children (19 percent across Europe) said they had been bullied, and 13 percent said this occurred on the internet. The

Australian Covert Cyberbullying Prevalence Study (Cross et al., 2009) found that 7-10 percent of students in years 4-9 had experienced cyberbullying over the past school term, and found that young people believed cyberbullying to be harsher and nastier than traditional bullying. This study (Cross et al., 2009) also found that cyberbullying increased with age, was more prevalent in non-government schools compared to government schools, and females were more likely to be involved in cyberbullying but males were more likely to admit to it (Cross et al., 2009). More recently, Spears et al. (2014, p. 37) determined that when all frequencies, timeframes, methodological approaches and definitions were considered, the general prevalence figure for Australian minors experiencing cyberbullying in a year, is approximately 20 percent. This is supported by Rigby and Johnson (2016, p. 10), who indicated that the spreading of malicious rumours was one of the most commonly perceived forms of bullying, with 30.7 percent indicating that this was happening quite often or very often at their school. This compares with similar issues established internationally, with prevalence rates ranging from 10 to 30 percent (Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder, & Lattanner, 2014; Navarro, Yubero, & Larrañaga, 2016).

Similar to traditional bullying, there are four main roles associated with cyberbullying: cyberbullies, cybervictims, cyberbully-victims and cyberbystanders. It is known in the traditional bullying literature that bullies and victims have very different characteristics. Traditional bullies can be described as impulsive, fueled by a desire to dominate weaker individuals, aggressive, lack empathy, generally experience a satisfaction in bullying others and think the victim deserves the bullying (Olweus, 1994). There is also the related category of bully-victims, who are defined as individuals who engage in bullying both as victims and as bullies (Ball et al., 2008). Research suggests that those who are characterised as bully-victims experience the most severe problems, being more depressed and anxious than those who are victims, bullies, or not involved in bullying (Campbell et al., 2012; Schwartz, 2000).

As explained by Olweus (1994) traditional victims can be categorised as either passive victims or provocative victims. Passive victims are often anxious, nervous and unable to defend themselves, whereas provocative victims are often restless and short tempered, and may retaliate to the bully (Olweus, 1994). Passive victims may be described as those who will suffer through the bullying and may experience negative mental health outcomes, whereas provocative victims are those who ‘fight back’ or

become a bully themselves, thereby shifting to the bully-victim category. These characteristics of victims may have implications for the types of coping young people may use to deal with and cyberbullying, and will provide a primary focus of this study.

The fourth role involved in bullying and cyberbullying is that of the bystanders, and research suggests that there are four main participant roles for bystanders (Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Österman, & Kaukiainen, 1998). These roles include: *assistants* who join in the bullying; *reinforcers* who give positive feedback to the bully; *outsiders* who do not get involved and stay away and; *defenders* who aim to support the victim and defend them (Salmivalli et al., 1998).

Bystanders online, however, are much more complicated than bystanders offline. With regard to cyberbullying, cyber-bystanders not only have the power to contribute to bullying others by forwarding cyberbullying posts to their friends, or others, an infinite number of times, but they could be with the cyberbully when the post is made or with the cybervictim when it is received, or witness the sharing and forwarding of bullying posts (Kowalski et al., 2012; Menesini & Nocentini, 2009; Smith, 2014). This behaviour of sharing cyberbullying posts implies that a single cyberbullying act can be more than an isolated incident, although the negative effects of it can be repeated through multiple means (Grigg, 2010). Furthermore, research by Smith et al. (2008) suggested that by ignoring cyberbullying behaviours, bystanders can prolong the effects of the cyberbullying. More recently, Sokol, Bussey, and Rapee (2015) suggested that the response of the victim can influence bystanders' attitudes towards that victim. Specifically, a victim's response to the cyberbully, whether angry, sad, or confident, could influence the bystander's perceived seriousness of the cyberbullying (Sokol et al., 2015).

Recent research has investigated the participant roles of bystanders and suggested a new form of bystander, this being a 'hybrid-bystander' (Price et al., 2014). A hybrid-bystander differs from an offline bystander and a cyber-bystander as it involves those who act as a bystander in both the offline and online environments. It This can start offline, then going online, or vice versa (Price et al., 2014), highlighting the fluidity and complexity of bystander behaviours in young people's social dynamic as it traverses between on and offline settings. Furthermore, a study by Bastiaensens, et al. (2014) found that bystanders have higher intention to intervene in a cyberbullying

incident if it is perceived to be serious. However, this is influenced by the bystander's identity and the potential impact of the response on the outcome. Findings suggest that bystanders are more likely to join in with the cyberbullying if other bystanders are good friends (Bastiaensens et al., 2014). This suggests that there is an interaction between the identities of the other bystanders and one's intention to either help the victim or become a bully themselves. This thesis examines these cyberbullying roles: cyber: bullies, victims, bully-victims and non-involved, in terms of their help seeking intentions, coping styles and mental health, thereby extending the knowledge-base in this field.

Another component which relates to bullying characteristics, intent and intervening relates to moral disengagement and a lack of empathy. Research suggests that moral disengagement is predictive of cyberbullying intent (Lazuras, Barkoukis, Ourda, & Tsorbatzoudis, 2013). More specifically, potential cyberbullies were found to perceive cyberbullying as more prevalent among their friends, viewed themselves as similar to other cyberbullies, and as a result, felt that they could not disapprove of cyberbullying acts and engaged in it themselves due to this situational pressure (Lazuras et al., 2013). Lazuras at al. (2013) explain that this suggests that moral disengagement is relevant to cyberbullying as it is suggests a misplacement of responsibility, attributing the blame to someone else, whilst justifying one's behaviour. Recently, Bussey, Fitzpatrick and Raman (2015) found that when students felt strongly about their cyberbullying capabilities, moral disengagement was related to higher levels of self-reported cyberbullying, suggesting that interventions may need to focus on a reduction of moral disengagement processes among those who have cyberbullying capabilities. In relation to this, research by Meter and Bauman (2016) highlighted that moral disengagement around both cyberbullying and parental monitoring affects cyberbullying involvement. Moral disengagement may also be linked to lower levels of empathy among bullies, to now be discussed.

A study by van Noorden, Haselager, Cillessen, and Bukowski (2015) adds to this, finding that traditional bullying perpetration was negatively associated with cognitive and affective empathy. *Cognitive* empathy refers to a person's ability to *understand* another person's feelings or emotions (Hogan, 1969), whereas *affective* empathy refers to a person's ability to *experience* another's emotions (Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972). The study found that traditional victimisation was negatively associated with cognitive empathy but *not* affective empathy, indicating that being victimised may

influence a young person's ability to understand the feelings of others but not their ability to experience another's emotions (van Noorden et al., 2015). The study also revealed that defending others being bullied was positively associated with both cognitive empathy and affective empathy, indicating that those who defend others have the ability to understand and experience another's feelings or emotions (van Noorden et al., 2015). Both moral disengagement and a lack of empathy are key characteristics of those who bully and may be pertinent to consider when defining cyberbullying in terms of intent.

In sum, the research highlights an imperative to develop a universal definition, complete with essential criteria for cyberbullying, so that prevalence can be more consistently established. Along with that, is the need for increased understanding of the roles young people play when engaging in cyberbullying and the mechanisms which both prevent and support continued cyberbullying behaviours. Spears, Slee, Owens and Johnson (2009, p. 190) note that given technology is continually advancing and new forms and sites are created all the time, the very nature of cyberbullying itself also is changing, suggesting that the debate concerning definition, roles and ways of preventing and intervening is ongoing, and indeed will need ongoing revision as technology shifts. This thesis contributes to this debate through exploration of the relationships between cyberbullying roles, help seeking intentions, coping strategies employed and mental health impacts.

2.1.3 Consequences of Traditional Bullying and Cyberbullying

There are many negative impacts on psychological/emotional health, physical health, and academic performance for victims, bullies and bully-victims as a result of traditional bullying and cyberbullying, including: depression, anxiety and stress; social and behavioural difficulties; and suicidal thoughts or behaviours (Campbell et al., 2012; Fahy et al, 2016; Le et al., 2016; Kim, Georgiades, Comeau, Vitoroulis, & Boyle, 2016; Kowalski & Limber, 2013; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Spears et al., 2015a; van Geel et al., 2014). These consequences, in particular cyberbullying consequences, are outlined and further discussed below.

2.1.3.1 Consequences of Cyberbullying for Cybervictims

The consequences of traditional bullying on the health of both bullies and victims are well documented, and include impacts such as low self-esteem, eating disorders,

depression, suicidal ideation and homicide (Haynie et al., 2001; Kowalski & Limber, 2013; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). However, research suggests that victims of cyberbullying report significantly more social difficulties, and higher levels of anxiety and depression than victims of traditional bullying (Campbell et al., 2012), and are more likely to suffer suicidal ideation (Kowalski et al., 2014; van Geel et al., 2014). Other researchers suggest that those experiencing social and emotional difficulties are more likely to experience both cyberbullying and traditional bullying not just traditional bullying alone (Cross, Lester, & Barnes, 2015).

Furthermore, research also has found that for young people, a combination of traditional bullying and cyberbullying has the most negative/severe impact on their mental health (Landstedt & Persson, 2014) when compared to traditional or cyber bullying independently. Young people who are victims of both types of bullying also stay away more often from school than those who are only bullied via traditional avenues (Cross et al., 2015). These negative mental health outcomes of both traditional bullying and cyberbullying are of concern and warrant further investigation, particularly in relation to different coping styles and how these may influence mental health. This study aims to develop an understanding of these negative mental health outcomes in relation to coping styles, but also how coping and mental health may influence help seeking intentions. This is especially relevant as research suggests that most victims of cyberbullying do not seek help because they believe that nothing can be done or that adults will not do anything to resolve the issue (Marées & Petermann, 2012; Cassidy, Faucher, & Jackson, 2013). The current study aims to explore why young people may or may not seek help, especially if they have experienced negative metal health outcomes.

2.1.3.2 Consequences of Cyberbullying for Cyberbullies and Cyberbully-victims

The consequences of both traditional bullying and cyberbullying also impact on bullies and bully-victims. Stein, Dukes, and Warren (2007) found that those characterised as traditional bully-victims reported more problem behaviours, poorer psychological health, more physical injuries, and a poorer attitude towards school than those characterised as victims, bullies, or neither. In terms of cyberbullying, research has found that engagement in cyberbullying leads to more maladaptive behaviours in bullies and increased social anxiety (Guan & Subrahmanyam, 2009). In support of this, Campbell et al. (2013) suggest that the lack of empathy evident in traditional bullying is magnified by technology, due to the anonymity it provides, as well as the lack of an

immediate visible response from the victim that is evident in traditional bullying. This lack of an immediate and visible reaction leads to the proposition that cyberbullies may experience even less empathy for their victims than traditional bullies. This may also be linked to moral disengagement as discussed previously, in the sense that cyberbullies may lack empathy and morally disengage from the consequences of their actions on the victim.

As previously discussed, research suggests that victims of cyberbullying often have low self-esteem, however, bullies can have high or low self-esteem, compared to those not involved in cyberbullying (Patchin & Hinduja, 2010). Patchin and Hinduja (2010) explain that self-esteem is a perception, that it is a belief one holds towards their personal value in the world which is affected by their participation in it. Patchin and Hinduja (2010) found that there was a statistically significant relationship between both cyberbullying, cybervictimisation and offending and self-esteem. Specifically, both the victim and offender of cyberbullying reported lower self-esteem than those who had little or no experience with cyberbullying.

Whereas it is recognised that cybervictims are negatively impacted upon by cyberbullying behaviours, it is evident that cyberbullies, cyberbully-victims, and bystanders are also at risk. It is imperative therefore, to increase the awareness and understanding of young people about the potential consequences of cyberbullying, and that in addition to causing harm to victims it also can be detrimental to a cyberbully's *own* development. However, whilst it is recognised that bystanders are also impacted by cyberbullying, as they are not a focus of this study, the consequences to them are not discussed in depth.

2.1.3.3 Reporting of Cyberbullying

Research has highlighted some of the issues evident in the reporting of cyberbullying behaviours, which reflect experiences in traditional bullying. Investigations into traditional bullying have found that young people often feel that even if they do report, nothing will be done about it, or that it will get worse (Murray-Harvey, Skrzypiec, & Slee, 2012). Research also suggests that young people may fear reporting an incident as it may 'backfire' (Murray, 2005), and that the bullying will either only get worse or they will become the victim themselves. A suggested reason for this is that young people fear that their parent, for example, may take over, make the situation worse, or that they

cannot do anything to help, which may prevent them from seeking help in the first place.

Given the overlap between traditional bullying and cyberbullying, these reasons to not report bullying also can apply to cyberbullying. Spears, Slee, Campbell, and Cross (2011) highlighted that parents are raising their children in a world different to their own due to technological advances, and in some cases, children may be more technologically savvy than their parents. Hannah (2010) found that 84 percent of parents do not know how to respond to cyberbullying. In this sense, and similar to traditional bullying, young people may fear that: the cyberbullying will get worse if they tell their parents; their parents will not respond in an appropriate manner; not understand what to do; or take their technology away. Other research supports this, with findings showing that young people are afraid that their parents may overreact if they report the cyberbullying, by either punishing them or taking away their internet privileges (Baas, de Jong, & Drossaert, 2013; Hinduja & Patchin, 2013). In contrast, more recent research by Mesch (2016) found that young people who had parents as friends on social media were less likely to be victimised by cyberbullying, and were also more likely to disclose information to their parents than those who did not have their parents as friends.

The reasons why young people may be reluctant to talk to teachers are similar to those of parents. Some researchers have found that if a teacher is viewed as being effective at intervening in traditional bullying situations, cyberbullying is more likely to occur (Elledge et al., 2013). Elledge et al. (2013) suggested that this could be due to the student's realising that traditional bullying is no longer an option, and so the form of bullying shifts to the online context. Furthermore, research suggests that young people are more likely to report cyberbullying if their friends were victimised by it, meaning that those without friends are potentially at greater risk of not getting help (Hinduja & Patchin, 2013).

Of concern, a study of high school teachers' perceptions of cyberbullying found that one quarter of teachers did not believe cyberbullying to have long lasting effects, and fewer than half of the teachers supported a cyberbullying intervention program (Stauffer, Heath, Coyne, & Ferrin, 2012). Instead, teachers agreed that increasing parental involvement, warning students about the consequences of cyberbullying, and

increasing the school's consequences for cyberbullying would be helpful strategies in addressing cyberbullying (Stauffer et al., 2012). Similarly, a study by Barnes et al. (2012) found that seventy percent of school staff agreed that more training was needed to address covert bullying, and only ten percent viewed their current school strategies as effective. In contrast, another study addressing teachers' views on cyberbullying identified that teachers viewed cyberbullying as a concern, and suggested that urgent attention be directed towards: policy development; enhancing awareness of the school staff; and coping strategies for parents (Eden, Heiman, & Olenik-Shemesh, 2013). More recent research also found a lack of information and understanding about cyberbullying policies, and it is suggested that this could affect the development, and distribution of school anti-bullying policies (Chalmers et al., 2016).

These different viewpoints highlight that further education in schools may be needed for teachers to develop: a greater understanding of cyberbullying and its consequences; and skills to deal with it. However, it is noted that these are not the most recent views by teachers in Australia, highlighting that views may have changed more recently with the appointment of the Children's e-Safety Commissioner, whose role it is to respond to severe cyberbullying. The Cyber Friendly Schools Program has already been found to reduce the odds of involvement in cyberbullying, however further training is needed to enhance school teachers understanding and self-efficacy in delivering the program (Cross et al., 2016).

Evidence discussed above indicates that some young people are significantly affected by cyberbullying, and can experience depression, thoughts of self-harm and suicide as a consequence (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Spears et al., 2015a; van Geel et al., 2014). It is pertinent at this point to discuss mental health generally amongst young people, with a view to understanding what leads to the realisation and or need to seek help when confronted with bullying and/or cyberbullying.

2.2 Mental Health in Young People

Given the links recognised between traditional bullying, cyberbullying, and mental health outcomes, it is important to discuss the issue of mental health in young people, including the risks of suicidal ideation and self-harm, and the role of social connectedness and resilience and the role these may play in cyberbullying.

2.2.1 Overview of Mental Health Status of Young People

Past research has suggested that approximately one in five adolescents will have a major depressive episode by the time they finish high school (Lewinsohn, Hops, Roberts, Seeley, & Andrews, 1993). Statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) seemingly support this, reporting some fifteen years later that one in five Australians will suffer from a mental disorder, with young people being at a greater risk (ABS, 2008). The most recent Australian Child and Adolescent Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing (Lawrence et al., 2015), however, reported that almost one in seven (13.9%) 4-17 year-olds were assessed as having mental disorders in the previous 12 months, and that one in thirteen (7.7%) adolescents aged 11-17 years met the DSM-IV diagnostic criteria for major depressive disorder in the previous 12 months. Regardless of the differences evident in the prevalence statistics noted above, it is clear that mental health in young people is an ongoing concern, and especially, in relation to cyberbullying and coping and help seeking intentions.

Research also suggested that rates of depression and anxiety increase as children enter adolescence, suggesting that this transition is a vulnerable time for young people's mental health (Hankin, Abramson, Moffitt, Silva, & McGee, 1998). Of related concern, and particularly relevant to this thesis, is that research suggests young people with depression are reluctant to seek help for it, and those with high levels of depressive symptoms are less likely to seek help from anyone compared with those who were found to have lower levels of depressive symptoms (Lawrence et al., 2015; Sawyer et al., 2012). Furthermore, young people are more likely to turn to friends or family members as sources of help, depending on their perception of social support, rather than more formal services (Sawyer et al, 2012). This area of help seeking and support will be discussed further in Sections 2.3 and 2.4, as will help seeking in relation to cyberbullying. The role of suicide, self-harm in relation to the Internet will now be briefly explored.

2.2.2 Suicide, Self-harm and the Role of the Internet

Suicide is the leading cause of death for all Australians between 15 and 34 years of age (ABS 2010), and around one in ten 12-17 year-olds (10.9%) report having self-harmed (Lawrence et al., 2015). Research suggests that those who are victims of cyberbullying are twice as likely to attempt suicide than those that have not been cyberbullied

(Hinduja & Patchin, 2010), and that cyberbullying can lead to feelings of isolation, hopelessness, and instability in those with pre-existing stressors, putting them at greater risk of suicide attempts (Luxton, June & Fairall 2012). Other researchers report that 38 percent of bully-victims experienced suicidal thinking or had attempted suicide in the previous year, and that this was due to a range of factors, including: a history of self-injury; a history of emotional distress; physical or sexual abuse; a mental health problem; and running away from home (Borowsky, Taliaferro, & McMorris, 2013). Allison, Roeger, Martin, and Keeves (2001), and Lawrence et al. (2015) suggest that suicidal ideation is more frequently reported in females than in males, and that females have higher scores of depression than males.

Furthermore, research suggests that internet addiction, defined as: "an individual's inability to control their Internet use, which in turn leads to feelings of distress and functional impairment of daily activities" (Morrison & Gore, 2010, p. 122); is associated with higher rates of depression (Young & Rogers, 1998), and that some online communities have the tendency to influence thoughts on suicidal behaviour (Morrison & Gore, 2010). Swannell et al. (2010) further explained that the internet can be used: to provide descriptions of suicide methods; to encourage others to follow through with their suicide plans; to discuss previous suicide attempts; and even to help others with their plans to commit suicide by providing needed materials or poisons, all of which serve to promote a pro-suicide culture online.

A study conducted by Ystgaard et al. (2009) of adolescents who deliberately self-harm, found that one third of the adolescents received help from their social network without any attention from the health services after their most deliberate self-harm act, and nearly half of the adolescents who engage in deliberate self-harm do not receive any help. Self-harm and suicidal ideation amongst adolescents is a considerable concern. Previous research shows that the numbers of adolescents presenting to hospitals following self-harm are on the increase, which is worrying, given that a majority of youth who self–harm do not go to a hospital or seek medical advice (Fortune, Sinclair, & Hawton, 2008).

Another concern in relation to youth mental health is that of 'digital self-harm', described by Boyd (2010) as those who self-harass by posting cyberbullying comments or questions *to themselves*, especially on anonymous question and answer sites such as

Formspring. Research by Englander (2012) found 10 percent of adolescents *self*-cyberbullied, and that participants were most likely to have self-cyberbullied to gain the attention of a peer, with girls more likely than boys to have been motivated by proving they could 'take it', encouraging others to worry, or to gain the attention of an adult. Boys, however, were more likely to have been motivated because they were angry and wanted to start a fight by blaming someone for the self-cyberbullying post (Englander, 2012).

It is clear that there are many factors, including cyberbullying and excessive internet use, which can have serious consequences for young people's mental health and wellbeing. Suicide and self-harm is a prominent issue surrounding young people, and it is important to understand the factors contributing to these behaviours. How young people feel in relation to those around them, and how connected or disconnected they feel (both in the online and offline contexts), are important considerations when examining the mental health and wellbeing of young people. One's social connectedness can play a vital role in how young people perceive not only the support around them, but how others may view them.

2.2.3 Social Connectedness

The notion of social connectedness refers to one's ability to feel comfortable, confident and have a sense of belonging within a larger social context than family or friends (Lee & Robbins, 1995). If a person is struggling to find a sense of connectedness, they may feel that they cannot relate to the people around them, they may struggle to develop relationships or to understand their role in the world, and feel isolated as a result (Lee & Robbins, 1995). These feelings of isolation can then lead to other consequences such as low self-esteem, distancing one's self from society, a lack of trust, and also the absence of a sense of belongingness and feelings of loneliness (Lee & Robbins, 1995). Being socially connected has been found to reduce levels of depression and emotional/behavioural difficulties (Fraser & Pakenham, 2009). However, young people may feel there are different levels and/or forms of social connectedness across online and offline settings.

With the widespread adoption of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn for business (Noguti, Singh, & Waller, 2016) opportunities exist for individuals to connect with each other on a variety of online platforms. Research has

found that having a profile picture on a social networking site that has friends in the picture, as well as having a high number of online friends, can increase perceptions of the level of social connectedness one has (Zwier, Araujo, Boukes, & Willemsen, 2011). However, if the number of 'friends' is seen as excessive, these perceptions of social connectedness lower (Zwier et al., 2011).

Research suggests that online social networking may provide the opportunity for young people to build a sense of connectedness online, and that this may have positive impacts on mental health, with age and favourable attitudes towards social networking predicting higher levels of online social connectedness (Grieve, Indian, Witteveen, Anne Tolan, & Marrington, 2013; Grieve & Kemp, 2015). Other research, however, suggests that those who have a high need for belonging will seek face-to-face personal interactions more than online interactions (Chaturvedi, Munshi, Singla, Shahri, & Chanchani, 2015). Therefore, whilst some young people may prefer face-to-face connections, online social networking can foster feelings of social connectedness for other young people.

In relation to cyberbullying, research suggests there is a relationship between becoming a victim of cyberbullying and loneliness among adolescents, in that loneliness can be predicted by cybervictimisation (Sahin, 2012). Researchers suggest that a combination of loneliness, depression, empathy and self-esteem play a role in predicting cybervictimisation (Brewer & Kerslake, 2015; Olenik-Shemesh, Heiman, & Eden, 2012; Wachs, 2012). This thesis aims to further investigate the role of social connectedness in relation to help seeking intentions and coping: as a potential protective buffer against the negative effects of cyberbullying

Another factor that may influence help seeking intentions and how young people cope with cyberbullying is their level of resilience. This will now be briefly discussed before going into detail about the literature on coping.

2.2.4 Resilience

Rutter (2007) defines resilience as the phenomenon that some individuals have positive outcomes despite risk and adverse situations that they have faced, where normally they would be expected to have seriously negative consequences or outcomes. It's one's ability to successfully adapt *after* experiencing stressful, challenging or threatening

events (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990). As it is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine resilience in depth, some of the relevant issues are raised for consideration in terms of cyberbullying, help seeking intent and coping. How resilience is further conceptualised presents various ways of thinking about it, as evident below.

Taub and Pearrow (2013) explain two separate groups of protective factors associated with resilience in children, namely, internal and external. Internal factors are those that are within the individual's control, such as impulse, decision-making and problem solving, whilst external factors relate more to the child's family, school and community (Taub & Pearrow, 2013). Winslow, Sandler, Wolchik and Carr (2012), however, explain that there are three concepts central to the construct of resilience: the presence of risk factors or adversity, indicators or evidence of positive outcomes, and the protective factors or resources in place to support an individual to achieve positive outcomes despite facing adverse conditions.

Reivich, Gillham, Chaplin, and Seligman (2013) have identified seven key intrapersonal factors that increase overall resilience: emotion regulation, impulse control, causal analysis, self-efficacy, empathy, and reaching out. To increase resilience one should be able to express and control emotions, identify and resist impulses, identify causes of problems, think optimistically within realistic bounds, be confident in one's own coping abilities, identify others' emotional states, and be comfortable to connect with others through difficult times (Reivich et al., 2013). A young person's capacity to be able to demonstrate these characteristics could improve their overall resilience.

It is evident that resilience may play a role in protecting against the negative impacts of cyberbullying or life experiences in general. Due to the many negative consequences of cyberbullying, there is an imperative for young people to understand that there are many ways to positively and actively respond when victimised. As previously stated, for the purposes of this thesis, help seeking has been conceptualised as independent from coping strategies: so that it can be considered as the first active step in seeking support. Resilience may play a role in the coping styles young people use when coping with cyberbullying, however is not the primary focus of this thesis.

The review of literature will now turn to these important constructs, and will examine coping strategies generally, before discussing the independent role that help seeking may play in the cyberbullying context.

2.3 Coping

To recap, help seeking, for the purposes of this thesis, was conceptualised as independent from coping strategies. Help seeking was conceptualised as an active action of asking another for help, independent from other coping strategies, which can include *thinking* of ways to improve the situation, or *seeking information* about what to do. Coping could be considered the step before actually seeking help from a particular external source.

2.3.1 Definition

In the transactional model of stress, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define coping as the cognitive and behavioural efforts that a person will employ in order to tolerate a stressful event or circumstance. A stressful event can include "negative person-environment relationships, cognitive appraisals, and emotional response states such as fear, anger, guilt and shame" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987, p. 142). Gruen, Folkman, and Lazarus (1988), further explain that the extent to which an event is deemed stressful is dependent upon how the individual interprets the event, and how they then cope with the circumstances.

Young people engage in thought processes to determine whether an event is harmful or threatening. There are two general forms of information processing to interpret an event: emotional and cognitive, and Lemerise and Arsenio (2000) suggest that emotions are based on motivation, and cognition on knowledge. People may thus interpret a cyberbullying experience, for example, in different ways, (cognitive or emotional) with different perceptions of the severity of the incident, or even question if it constitutes cyberbullying. This is similar to how young people interpret any aggressive act, and Crick and Dodge's Social Information Processing model (1996) is useful here, as it articulates the (cognitive) processing steps required to enact any response: encoding of social cues; interpretation; response search; evaluation and enactment. As such, when coping with cyberbullying, young people may first consider: whether the person perpetrating the cyberbullying is friend or foe; whether they are

joking or if it is a serious act; how they would usually respond in this situation, whether keeping it to themselves or asking for help; what risks are evident in the situation; and finally taking some sort of action (Crick & Doge, 1996). Smith and Kirby (2009) however, explain when a situation is deemed harmful to one's wellbeing it results in an emotional response, which may be relevant to step four in the Social Information Processing model when examining risks that are present. The response to this, and how they cope with stress and emotion, may differ between individuals, and will now be discussed.

2.3.2 Theoretical Underpinnings of Coping

Lazarus' (1966), psychoanalytic approach addressed the topics of stress, emotion, and appraisal, and drew a distinction between three types of psychological stress: harm/loss, which involves dealing with damage that has already occurred; threat, which involves dealing with damage that has not yet occurred; and challenge, which involves attempts to overcome obstacles. Lazarus (1985) addressed the topic of stress as an emotion, and addressed cognitive appraisal and reappraisal, stating that all emotion depended on these. One's judgment or decision about a particular environmental encounter depended on the relevance to one's wellbeing, whether the situation had already produced harm, whether it threatened future harm, presented a challenge, or forecast positive outcomes (Lazarus, 1985). This relates to the stages of the Social Information Processing model (Crick & Doge, 1996) as aforementioned, in that young people go through a process when responding to a situation that may include evaluating the risks that are present.

Lazarus (1991; 1984) later disregarded stress as a pattern of reactions, but rather considered it as a process between a person and the environment, and that coping with stress was contextual, changing over time and across conditions (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). It was argued that these different psychological stress states were brought about by different conditions and subsequently have different consequences. Therefore, the emotional states across individuals needed to be considered (Lazarus, 1993). As such, the transaction model of stress was expanded into the Appraisal theory of emotion, as Lazarus (2006) later argued the importance of studying emotion in addition to stress, as cognitive appraisal and coping can be mediators in this person-environment relationship (Krohne, 2001). This relationship is complex, however, and Lazarus (2006, p. 36) explained that the interdependence of stress and emotion must be considered, stating

that “there are more communalities than divergences in the way these embodied states of mind are aroused, coped with, and how they affect psychological well-being, functioning, and somatic health.” As such, Lazarus (2006) argued that stress, emotion and coping can be considered as a relationship, with the three concepts belonging together as one unit, with emotion being the overarching concept as it includes both stress and coping (2006). Therefore, coping is a complex process, which can be influenced by many factors. This thesis aims to examine particular forms of coping when experiencing cyberbullying, including the stress and emotion that can be evident when responding to cyberbullying.

It is important now to consider the forms of coping that have been identified through the transactional theory of coping, as this study will employ these for sub-analyses in relation to young people’s responses to cyberbullying.

2.3.3 Forms of Coping

Lazarus and Folkman (1987) proposed two main forms of coping: *problem-focused coping*, which is a coping strategy where some form of *action* is taken to change the actual terms of the troubled person-environment relationship; and *emotion-focused coping*, which is a strategy where an individual *regulates their emotional distress* through an emotional response, rather than taking action. For example, *problem-focused coping* could involve practical, cognitive approaches to actively reduce the stress, such as seeking information that may help or thinking of active steps to take to help improve the situation. *Emotion-focused coping* could involve trying to reduce the negative emotions associated with the stressful situation through denial or self-blame, or keeping occupied or trying to relax.

Some researchers, however suggest that this distinction is too simplistic, and that a third category, *dysfunctional coping*, also exists (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989). Carver et al., (1989) suggest that there is a far more diverse nature to the coping strategies people use, and propose an instrument which assesses thirteen distinct coping scales/styles, rather than two, consisting of sixty items. This inventory, the *Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced scale* (COPE) (See Table 1 below), was created based on theory and evidence on the extent of coping strategies being adaptive or maladaptive (Carver et al., 1989). This categorisation of coping into these three different styles: problem-focused, emotion-focused, and dysfunctional; has been

validated in various studies across the lifespan. Coolidge and colleagues (2000) examined anxiety in older and younger adults, and the same three categories were also applied in a sample of dementia carers, with satisfactory psychometric properties (Cooper, Katona, & Livingston, 2008). The COPE has also been used to assess how university students deal with stressful situations, and how different coping methods influence health and wellbeing (Litman & Lunsford, 2009). Others have used the COPE to test the coping capacities of individuals and to assess risk of suicidal behaviour, and were able to allocate individuals to one of the following coping categories: active or problem-focused (adaptive), emotion-focused (maladaptive) or both adaptive and maladaptive (Sunnqvist, Persson, Westrin, TräSkman-Bendz, & Lenntorp, 2013). These three categories (emotion-focused, problem-focused and dysfunctional), thus provide a useful, valid and reliable framework to inform the classification of coping strategies/measures throughout this thesis.

Table 1: Coping Styles

Scale	Explanation
Active coping	Taking active steps to remove the stressor.
Planning	Thinking about how one can cope with the situation and planning steps to take.
Suppression of competing activities	Putting other activities aside to deal with the situation.
Restraint coping	Waiting until the right opportunity to deal with the situation, *not* acting if it is not appropriate or beneficial.
Social support for instrumental reasons	Seeking advice.
Social support for emotional reasons	Seeking moral support, empathy, and understanding.
Focusing on and venting of emotions	Tendency to focus on the stress and venting of these feelings. This can be either functional by accepting the situation, or impede adjustment by exacerbating the distress.
Behavioural disengagement /Helplessness	Reducing efforts to cope, giving up.
Mental disengagement	Distracting one's self, taking opportunities to take the mind off of the situation.
Positive reinterpretation and growth	Managing the stress through developing a positive interpretation of the situation.
Denial	Denying the reality of the event or ignoring it.
Acceptance	Accepting the reality of the situation and making attempts to deal with it

Turning to religion	Turning to religion for support, whether for emotional support, as a vehicle for positive reinterpretation and growth, or as a form of active coping.

The COPE also has been used successfully in research with young people. Phelps and Jarvis (1994), tested the COPE scale's validity when used with adolescents. They found that internal validity was high, and that the coping styles mainly used by young people fell into four factors: *active coping, avoidant-coping, emotion-focused coping, and acceptance*, with females more likely to use emotion-focused styles of coping, and males more likely to use avoidance styles (Phelps & Jarvis, 1994). In contrast, other research on coping and cyberbullying, however suggested that females were more likely to cope through avoidance techniques, such as avoiding the internet or their mobile phones, suggesting that technology may be an influencing factor, and males were more likely to drink alcohol or use drugs (Schenk & Fremouw, 2012). Furthermore, Turner, Chapman and Gratz (2014) have used the COPE to assess adolescents who self-harm, and the reasons why they continue or stop self-harming practices. They found that engaging in dysfunctional coping strategies is associated with greater risk of suicide and continuing self-harm, whereas more adaptive coping strategies are related to resilience (Turner et al., 2014).

Whilst it is evident that the COPE inventory is a useful tool for assessing coping styles, there is an inconsistency in the literature around the different coping styles and gender differences, especially in relation to young people's use of technology and potential negative impacts, such as cyberbullying.

2.3.4 Coping and Cyberbullying

Research on traditional bullying, by Murray-Harvey, Skrzypiec, and Slee (2012) suggested that students who were bullied utilised productive *self*-focused strategies to cope as opposed to productive *other*-focused strategies. In other words, students felt that they had to deal with the bullying themselves, or found things to do to make themselves feel better, as opposed to talking to someone about it (Murray-Harvey et al., 2012). This could be considered a form of emotion-focused coping, as it is an emotional response to the situation, rather than actively thinking of ways to improve the situation. Research on bullying also suggests that engaging in ineffective coping styles can sometimes prolong the bullying (Craig et al., 2007; Kristensen & Smith, 2003; Mahady

Wilton et al., 2000), resulting in long term victimisation (Smith, Shu, & Masden, 2001). Given the overlap between bullying and cyberbullying, ineffective coping which prolongs victimisation, may also contribute to the negative effects of cyberbullying, such as poor mental health (Völlink, Bolman, Eppingbroek, & Dehue, 2013). It is therefore in everyone's best interests to better understand how young people do cope when cybervictimised

Research further indicates that those not engaged in cyberbullying often view cyberbullying as something that *can* be changed by simple technology-related strategies or actions: such as simply turning off the device (Völlink, Bolman, Eppingbroek, & Dehue, 2013). Cybervictims and cyberbully-victims, however, often view cyberbullying as something that *cannot* be changed (Völlink et al., 2013), highlighting the emotions associated with being a victim of bullying generally. They may feel the only option is to accept the situation, which can result in subsequent feelings of anger and helplessness. This is an example of *emotion-focused coping*: regulating their distress through an emotional response, and supports earlier research by Riebel, Jäger, and Fischer (2009) who found that young people had used different forms of *emotion-focused coping* to deal with cyberbullying.

According to the transactional theory of coping by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) coping is a powerful *process*, which includes behavioural, emotional and cognitive attempts to manage the demands of stressful situations. Seiffge-Krenke, Aunola, and Nurmi (2009) suggest a contextual variation, where adolescents take a more active role in dealing with stressful situations in the school context, and a less active role if involving their parents at home. According to Olafsen and Viemerö (2000) the different contexts also influence the coping styles used, and the use of indirect (also known as covert or relational) bullying, especially among girls, is associated with self-destructive coping strategies among those victimised, such as self-blame, substance use, or disengagement. This suggests that those involved in indirect forms of bullying may employ more emotion-focused forms of coping, such as blaming themselves for the bullying or falling into depression, rather than trying to find solutions, retaliate or importantly, seek help.

In contrast, Bowker, Bukowski, Hymel, and Sippola (2000) found that adolescents used *problem-focused coping* more when they were in *conflict* with their

peers, as distinct from when engaged in bullying, which suggests that they are more likely to use active coping strategies when they perceive the power levels of each individual to be balanced. It follows then, that young people might be more likely to turn *to emotion-focused coping* when bullying and cyberbullying is involved, as they involve an imbalance of power. Furthermore, Völlink et al. (2013) found that children who are both victims and bully-victims of cyberbullying more frequently react to stressful situations in general by expressing emotions such as getting angry, and less frequently employ palliative coping, such as talking to someone, compared to those who are not involved in cyberbullying. This suggests that previous cybervictimisation could be a factor in developing ineffective coping styles (Jacobs, Dehue, Völlink, and Lechner, 2014). Smahel and Wright (2014) however, found that young people use *proactive* strategies (problem-focused), such as blocking the bully or changing settings, to deal with cyberbullying more frequently than support seeking strategies. Furthermore, research suggests that higher levels of digital literacy can influence the use of problem-focused online coping strategies, and is related to the use of online coping strategies aimed at solving the problem and protecting the child from further harm (Vandoninck et al., 2013). Thus far, there would seem to be a complex relationship between cyberbullying and coping strategies, with no clear-cut weight of evidence pointing to preferred coping styles used by young people, or which are more beneficial than others.

Baas, Jong, and Drossaert (2013) have indicated that, similar to traditional bullying, young people sometimes engage in cyberbullying in order to prevent being cyberbullied themselves. This is supported by McGuckin et al. (2013) and Perren et al. (2012) who explain that a way of combatting cyberbullying is either through: technical means, such as blocking or deleting the cyberbully/ cyberbullying posts; or *through retaliation, by cyberbullying back*. Price and Dalgleish (2010) found that a majority of young people are actively using such online interventions, such as blocking or deleting the cyberbully, in part perhaps, due to education campaigns advising such behaviours. Furthermore, a study of young people as victims of severe *cyberbullying* versus victims of less severe *online harassment*, found that both groups used technical solutions to combat the cyberbullying or online harassment, but severe cyberbullying victims found these strategies less effective that the harassment victims (Machackova, Cerna, Sevcikova, Dedkova, & Daneback, 2013). Both severe and less severe victims were

unlikely to retaliate, however, victims of online harassment were more likely than victims of cyberbullying to report that seeking support or ignoring the bully was effective, despite both groups using these methods at the same frequency (Machackova et al., 2013).

In addition, Smahel and Wright (2014) identified a number of methods young people use to cope with cyberbullying and/or harassment similar to those discussed above, such as: *ignoring aggressive acts*, which included belittling the bully and non-engagement with the bully; *technical measures*, such as blocking or reporting the bully; *confronting the bully*, which ranged from asking the bully to stop or standing up for oneself, to sarcastic retort, verbal retaliation, threats or physical retaliation; *seeking some form of support*; and finally *withdrawa*l, which can be either technical (for example: deleting account) or social (for example: moving home). In terms of ignoring the bully, there was a general feeling from participants that "these things happen", and so ignoring the situation is the simplest way for it to pass without making it worse (Smahel & Wright, 2014, p. 96). This report also notes that young people often would use a range of these techniques to cope (Smahel & Wright, 2014). This highlights that there is a variety of coping methods that may or may not be utilised in relation to cyberbullying, and that young people may try a number of different coping methods. The coping strategies used by young people may be influenced by any number of factors, such as feelings of social connectedness as previously discussed, or the severity of the cyberbullying.

Gender differences also may play a role in different coping styles used. Recent research suggests that older females are more likely to use privacy settings in response to cyberbullying, compared to younger females, who are more likely to use informal reporting tools, and that younger adolescents may lack the skills overall to effectively cope with cybervictimisation (Hudson et al., 2015). This suggests that both age and gender may play a role in coping methods used when dealing with cyberbullying.

A debate clearly exists around what constitutes effective coping strategies for cyberbullying, and which are more likely to be used, with many studies focusing on technical coping responses rather than behavioural differences. This study aims to explore the different approaches to coping with cyberbullying which young people may

use, and the relationship to seeking help and/or social connectedness, in an effort to contribute greater understanding to the field.

2.3.5 Support and Coping

At the center of how young people cope with stressful situations is the support they receive. Pinkerton and Dolan (2007) explain that there are specific kinds and qualities of support available to families. The first is that of *concrete support*, which relates to practical ways of assisting people (Pinkerton & Dolan, 2007). The second, is that of *emotional support*, which comprises empathy, listening and comforting others (Cutrona, 2000). The third is that *of advice support* which includes both advice as support but also reassurance, emotionally and in guiding future actions to take (Cotterell, 1996). Finally, there is *esteem support* which centers on how others rate people close to them of their personal worth during times of need, which could be done through assertion and reassurance (Pinkerton & Dolan, 2007).

Alongside these different forms, however, comes the quality of this support, as this can vary from one person to another. One person may say they are giving support to another but the value of this support could be questioned. Pinkerton and Dolan (2007) explain that closeness between those at risk and those providing the support influences the quality of support, in some cases for example, between partners and close family members, affection and support is assumed. Another factor that can influence the quality of support is that of reciprocity, whereby support that is offered is expected to be returned if the need arises (Pinkerton & Dolan, 2007). Finally, there is the issue of durability, which suggests that people are seen as reliable sources of support if they have been known for a long period of time, or if they are nearby and can offer support easily and without intrusion (Tracy & Biegel, 1994). Therefore, social support can very much influence how young people cope. If there are accessible, available and good quality sources of support, it is more likely for an individual to better cope with a stressful situation.

Table 2 below highlights these different types of support, with an explanation of each and what influences these types of support (Cotterell, 1996; Cutrona, 2000; Pinkerton & Dolan, 2007; Tracy & Biegel, 1994).

Table 2. Summary of Support with Explanation

Type of Support	Explanation	Influenced by….
Concrete	Assistance is practical	*Quality* of support
Emotional	Empathy, listening, comforting	*Value* of support
Advice	Reassurance, advice, emotional guidance	*Assumed* support (parents family members)
Esteem	Assertion of the value of the person in need, reassurance of personal worth	*Reciprocity* of support (support is expected in return)
		Durability of support (refers to how long the person has been knows and how easily support can be offered)

Furthermore, research has found that young people find the most helpful way to deal with cyberbullying is with the support of family members, especially parents, and that family social support can act as a protective factor for problems associated with cybervictimisation (Fanti, Demetriou, & Hawa, 2012; Paul, Smith, & Blumberg, 2012). However, schools also can play a role in supporting young people. Research suggests that young people find the most helpful intervention from schools for dealing with cyberbullying is to permanently suspend the cyberbully (Paul et al., 2012), whilst other research suggests that a systematic whole-school approach is the most effective in potentially preventing and managing bullying and cyberbullying in schools (Pearce, Cross, Monks, Waters, & Falconer, 2011). More recently, and as aforementioned, the Cyber Friendly Schools Program, a whole-school online cyberbullying prevention and intervention program developed with young people, has been found to reduce the odds of involvement in cyberbullying (Cross et al., 2016). It is therefore important that schools are supported in terms of bullying and cyberbullying interventions, and that they are enabled to use evidence informed practices (Pearce et al., 2011). What people do if they feel they cannot cope and are in need of help is therefore an important distinction, as is the relationship between help seeking and coping.

2.4 Help Seeking

This research aims to investigate the relationship between coping and help seeking in the context of cyberbullying, as well as any similarities and differences between the coping and help seeking processes, and how they may intertwine.

2.4.1 Definition

Help seeking, as defined by Rickwood, Deane, Wilson & Ciarrochi (2005), is the behaviour of seeking help from others in an *active* manner. Not only is help seeking

about communicating with others for understanding, advice and support, but may also be a *form of coping* based on relationships with others (Rickwood et al., 2005). The distinction may occur when the intention to seek support generally/generically, transforms into identifying a particular source to seek help from, which further can provide accessible, durable, quality support. The distinction between coping and help seeking, for this thesis, occurs when a young person seeks help as an active action of asking another for help, independent from other coping strategies.

Sources of offline help seeking can be categorised as *informal help seeking* and *formal help seeking* (Rickwood et al., 2005). *Informal help seeking* includes those who seek help from informal sources such as friends and family, whilst *formal help seeking* are those who seek more formal, professional sources such as health professionals or teachers (Rickwood et al., 2005). Michelmore and Hindley (2012), who examined seeking help for self-harm, state that young people are most likely to seek help from their peers, but are more likely to seek help from their parents rather than professionals. Additionally, research suggests that females are more likely to seek help than males (Hunter, Boyle, & Warden, 2004), and that females are more likely to seek help from their social networks, whereas males are more likely to seek help directly from emergency services (Michelmore & Hindley, 2012). Furthermore, Smahel and Wright (2014) in the EU Kids Online research found that females are more likely to seek support when faced with problematic situations online compared to males. There are a majority of young people, however, who do not seek help, particularly in relation to cyberbullying, and reasons why this is the case is not fully understood.

2.4.2 Factors Influencing Help seeking

There are many different factors that influence young people's help seeking intentions. The notion of wellness may play a role in relation to help seeking intentions. Myers, Sweeney, and Witmer (2000) defined wellness as a way of life in which mind, body, and spirit are integrated by the individual, with a goal of living life more fully. Research has found that young people who seek help, perceive themselves to have lower levels of wellness than the general public's perceptions of them (Watson & Lemon, 2011). Further research by Myers, Willse, and Villalba (2011) found that factors of wellness were predictive of self-esteem in adolescents. In this sense, it could be suggested that

the wellbeing of a young person may influence their perception of whether or not they need help and actually seek help.

Patchin and Hinduja (2010) explain that adolescence is an important time for young people's development and identity formation, which is influenced by the social environment and world around them. This is a time that young people often express a need for independence, however, according to Wilson and Deande (2007) this need for independence can be a significant barrier to seeking help from mental health services Vogel, Wester, and Larson (2007) explain five main factors which influence help seeking behaviours: including social stigma; treatment fears; fear of emotion; anticipation of utility and risks; and self-disclosure (see Table 3). These factors will now be discussed individually.

Table 3. Factors Influencing Help Seeking

Factor	Explanation: A young person may:
Social Stigma	Feel that they will be viewed negatively or seen as unstable and consequently socially rejected.
Treatment fears	Be afraid of how the counsellor may treat them or what they will think of them.
Fear of emotion	Have a fear of expressing and discussing painful emotions with a counsellor or any other person.
Anticipation of utility and risks	Have certain expectations about how useful or useless seeking help may be, as well as what the dangers associated with seeking help would be.
Self-disclosure	Be distressed about the idea of simply disclosing personal information to another person about their problems.

2.4.2.1 Social Stigma, Social Norms, and Self-Efficacy

Previous research on social stigma has highlighted a relationship between perceived social stigma and seeking help such that can influence a person's attitudes towards help seeking (Deane & Todd, 1996; Komiya, Good, & Sherrod, 2000; Sirey et al., 2001; Vogel, Wester, Wei, & Boysen, 2005). Research also suggests that less help is sought for problems that are viewed as having negative judgments from others, such as those that have a negative stigma attached (Overbeck, 1977), and as previously mentioned, young people often view cyberbullying as something that they should be able to deal with themselves, and therefore do not need help for (Murray-Harvey et al., 2012). A recent survey that addressed barriers to help seeking for mental health, found that "62.9

percent of young people worried what other people might think or not want to talk to a stranger, 61.7 percent thought the problem would get better by itself and 57.1 percent wanted to work out the problem on their own or with help from family or friends" (Lawrence et al., 2015, p. 10). Social norms for young men in particular around masculinity and perceptions that the stereotypical male is always in control and independent could be one reason why young men are reluctant to seek help (Vogel et al., 2007). Other research suggests that young people are more likely to seek help if someone else recommends them to do so (Vogel et al., 2007), and as such, how young people view others in relation to themselves could be important when examing help seeking.

Social comparison theory, which involves how a person compares themselves to others through self-evaluation (Festinger, 1954), also can be used to explain help seeking intentions. As stated above there are many factors which influence help seeking behaviours, many of which are influenced by the way a person views themselves in relation to other people, which can be considered social comparison. A young person may fear what will become of their social status if they seek help. They may fear negative evaluations by others, and may adjust their perceptions of their worth according to the anticipated evaluation of others.

Similarly, Rickwood et al. (2005) explain theory behind help seeking as a process. They explain that young people's intentions to seek help for mental health problems occurs as a process, explaining that one's own *awareness* of whether they need help is the first stage, followed by *expressing* what the problem is and how they can be helped, then the *availability* of help and finally the *willingness* of the person to express why they need help (Rickwood et al., 2005). Young people also may feel shame about being a victim of cyberbullying, fear what will happen if they tell someone, or have a lack of trust that others will understand, all of which may prevent them from seeking help (Schmeelk-Cone, Pisani, Petrova, & Wyman, 2012). Related to this is the influence of self-efficacy on help seeking behaviours. Self-efficacy refers to a person's beliefs on their own ability to regulate or control events in their lives (Bandura, 1982). Young people may believe that they have no control over their situation (low self-efficacy) and therefore not seek help: not because they do not want help, but because they believe there is no help. Játiva and Cerezo (2014) suggest that developing self-compassion and empathy in adolescence could potentially help young people recover

from negative experiences, such as cyberbullying, as well as protect from future negative experiences. Developing a sense of self-compassion could facilitate the help seeking process, through realising one's self worth.

2.4.2.2 Fears Associated with Seeking Help

Literature highlights that some people may have several fears associated with seeking help, particularly if it is professional help which is needed. Young people may fear: how the person will treat them or think of them if they ask for help (particularly from health professionals or mental health services) (Kushner & Sher, 1989); that they will not be taken seriously or that they will be viewed in a negative light by expressing painful emotions and discussing why they need help (Komiya et al., 2000), or have reservations about how useful the help may be, and if it is worth taking the risk of asking for help if it is not helpful (Vogel & Wester, 2003; Vogel et al., 2007, 2005). Another fear could be around disclosing personal information to someone, and what consequences this self-disclosure may have (Hinson & Swanson, 1993; Jourard, 1964; Vogel & Wester, 2003; Vogel et al., 2007, 2005).

Recent research suggests a number of factors can influence whether a young person seeks help at home or at school. Bauman, Meter, Nixon, and Davis (2016) explain that grade, being in special education, race/ethnicity, experiencing some forms of social mistreatment and specific foci of mistreatment were related to telling an adult at home; and grade, being in special education, having lower socioeconomic status, and physical and forms of social mistreatment were predictors of telling an adult at school. Each of the aforementioned factors, especially when considered in relation to social norms and social stigma, can influence a young person's decision to seek help for cyberbullying or personal or emotional problems. It is imperative that further research examines what could be done to aid a young person in the help seeking process, so that seeking help is not such a fearful process for young people in relation to cyberbullying experiences.

This section has highlighted the many factors that can influence young people's help seeking intentions and behaviours. This current study aims to extend the field by examining the relationships between these many factors, and how this may be influenced by coping strategies. What is known about help seeking and cyberbullying specifically will now be discussed.

2.4.3 Help Seeking and Cyberbullying

Research has found that victims of cyberbullying are less likely to report the cyberbullying or to seek help than those who are traditionally bullied (Dooley, Gradinger, Strohmeier, Cross, & Spiel, 2010; Smith et al., 2008). A crucial reason why young people may not seek help is the fear that nothing is likely to be done, or that if they seek help, nothing will come of it (Murray, 2005). Other reasons could include fear of the help seeking backfiring, getting blamed for the situation, or that the attempt to seek help will be circuitous, in that many different attempts are required before a solution is found (Murray, 2005).

Furthermore, young people may believe that there is somewhat of a digital divide between young people and adults regarding the internet and social networking sites. As Dooley et al. (2010) suggest, adults have a lack of familiarity with the virtual environment, and therefore, this limits the support they can give young people who are victims of cyberbullying. Adult's "inexperience in this environment means they are often unaware of how to provide help and support" (Dooley et al., 2010, p. 196), this can be compounded by the dynamic, ever changing nature of the online setting. Therefore, the challenge lies in educating parents and teachers about cyberbullying so that young people feel that they can confide their cyberbullying experiences to them, and that a solution will be offered. This is especially important as research has found that young people, and in particular, girls more so than boys, viewed support as the best protective factor to stop cyberbullying, which also helped them feel better (Hunter et al., 2004). This relationship between help seeking and mental health will be examined in structural equation modeling and qualitative findings in Chapters 5 and 6.

When examining help seeking for cyberbullying it is important to remember the online context within which this bullying is taking place, and that this may also be an avenue for help.

2.4.4 Online Help Seeking

A possible source of help can be found online. Ahlfors (2010) suggests that the internet provides a rational method of reaching individuals as this is where young people spend most of their time. As such they may feel more comfortable researching solutions online rather than receiving professional counselling from a stranger. Research has shown that young people feel that they can seek help online without feeling shame (Spears, Kofoed,

Bartolo, Palermiti, & Costabile, 2012) and that online sources have a number of benefits over traditional sources of help, such as: a level of anonymity; easy accessibility at all times, and a small or non-existent financial cost (Bradford & Rickwood, 2012). Furthermore, research suggests that those suffering with severe mental distress and/or suicidal ideation prefer online help sources to traditional sources (Rickwood et al., 2005; Ybarra & Eaton, 2005). This could be due to the anonymity online spaces provide, or that that the lack of face to face contact may be comforting for some people, particularly if they are in a poor mental state.

Several online help sources presently exist that are aimed at young people, with either links to external services or as a mental health intervention. Australian sites such as ReachOut, BeyondBlue, Man Therapy, Kids Helpline, and eHeadspace, are all designed to provide information and resources for those suffering from mental health issues or those who know someone with a mental health disorder, with some of these sites also providing support forums (Rickwood, Van Dyke, & Telford, 2015). Researchers have found that the use of these social media interventions are an effective way of engaging young people, with a study showing that out of adolescent users of Reachout.com, 43.3 percent of these claimed that the website had helped them to learn skills, knowledge and gain confidence to seek help (Collin et al., 2011). This study also found that young people were more likely to turn to these online sources than more formal sources, such as professional help (Collin et al., 2011). Similarly, further research on the use of text counselling via mobile devices has found that young people feel comfortable talking to a counsellor this way, and appreciated the anonymity and accessibility (Gibson & Cartwright, 2014). It has been highlighted in this chapter that there is conflicting evidence around preferred sources and avenues of help seeking amongst young people, whether online, offline, or with informal or formal sources. Therefore, it is imperative that young people continue to be used in further research to truly understand how help seeking can be encouraged (Spears et al., 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2016a, 2016b).

In an overview of issues affecting young people by Kids Helpline (Boystown, 2013), it is stated that in 2013 there were 700,649 direct contacts and self-directed help seeking website enquiries made to Kids Helpline. These included individuals seeking counselling sessions, support and /or information, webpage views of topics such as coping strategies for different problems, webpage views of other people's personal

experiences and problems, and use of the 'Search for a Service' function, which connects young people with their local services for support (Boystown, 2013).

One aspect related to online sources for help, is the use of online gaming, as either a specific form of help seeking or as a therapeutic tool, especially for young men. (2007). Gaggioli, Gorina and Riva (2007) suggest that Multiplayer Online Games (MOGs) can be used as a tool for online therapy, in that they can increase feelings of being present and surrounded by others, compared to other online therapy tools (such as emails), therefore creating more opportunities for positive communication processes and increasing trust (Gaggioli et al., 2007). Burns et al (2013), highlight that technology offers new ways of engaging with young people. The *Something Haunting You?* Campaign of the Safe and Well Online study, which focused on reframing help seeking as a desirable, acceptable, and empowering behaviour, is supportive of this (Spears et al., 2016a). As such, there is potential for the online environment to facilitate the reframing of help seeking in supportive environments such as online gaming, especially for young men. Another important consideration when examining help seeking in an online context, is trust, which is critical to the survival of online communities such as those gaming through MOGs (Feng, Lazar, & Preece, 2004). Trust, simply defined as having confidence in the future actions of others (Henderson & Gilding, 2004; Sztompka, 1999), is essential if young people are to seek help from online sources, particularly if they are to disclose personal information. Furthermore, trust may play a role in a young person's intentions to seek help from people close to them (informal sources) compared to professionals (formal sources) both online and offline.

Given the positive potential of online help resources, and MOGs, a move toward online communication is the obvious next step in increasing help seeking intentions and actual help seeking behaviours in young people, but this does not imply that the more traditional modes of contact are disregarded: rather, that there is opportunity to expand the potential for seeking help across both online and offline services, and for them to work in synchronous. Rickwood (2010) explains that the shift from traditional face-to-face help seeking, to Information and Communication Technology services, is not only essential but that the gap between these two forms is closing, and that further developing these online services to promote positive mental health in young people is required. Despite this direction, the question arises as to why some young people still do

not use online resources. This study aims to explore the reasons why young people do not seek help from friends, family or online.

2.5 Summary – Cyberbullying, Coping and Help seeking

Bullying and cyberbullying can lead to a range of negative outcomes for young people, resulting in depression and thoughts of self-harm for some youth (Campbell et al., 2012; Kowalski & Limber, 2013; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Spears et al., 2015a; van Geel et al., 2014). Others may be resilient and cope with cyberbullying in a positive way or seek help. Understanding more about how these constructs operate in relation to each other, is important.

Whilst research has investigated these three areas: cyberbullying, coping and help seeking independently, there is a dearth of research on the nature of the relationship between these three core areas and how they may influence each other, with limited research on the role of social connectedness and mental health impacts in this relationship.

In summary, this chapter provided the following main insights:

- There is a need for a consistent approach to defining and measuring cyberbullying.
- Research concerning coping also is inconsistent with regards to the many coping styles that exist. Research on how young people in particular cope with cyberbullying experiences is mixed in terms of different coping styles commonly utilised and which are most effective.
- Whilst there is an abundance of research examining help seeking of young people generally, little research has examined how help seeking relates to coping intentions, and how these are related in the face of cyberbullying experiences.
- The role that social connectedness may play in how young people cope and consequently seek help for cyberbullying has also received little attention.
- The distinction between coping and help seeking requires further attention.

This thesis will examine the help seeking intentions and coping mechanisms young people use to deal with cyberbullying and investigate the relationship between these areas.

2.6 Research Questions

This research poses the following questions (hypothesis will be presented in Chapter 4):

1. What are the main reasons why young people intend or do not intend to seek help in relation to cyberbullying (especially from formal sources)?

2. What coping strategies do young people use to deal with cyberbullying and why?

3. What is the nature of the relationship between help seeking and coping? That is, do different coping styles mediate the relationship between experiences of cyberbullying and help seeking? (i.e., prevent or encourage help seeking)

4. Are there differences in help seeking and coping intentions between sub groups (e.g. age, gender, cyber status)?

5. What is the nature of the relationship between the wellbeing profile of young people, in particular their social connectedness, and their coping and help seeking intentions?

To recap, the overarching aim of this research is to develop an understanding of the relationships between cyberbullying, help seeking intentions, approaches to coping, and impacts on mental health and wellbeing. This next chapter will outline the methodology employed in this research, beginning with the theoretical framework, followed by design, analysis, participants and sampling, ethical considerations, and the research process including instruments and measures.

3 Methodology Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology employed in the current mixed methods study. It begins by discussing the theoretical framework that underpins notions of reality, knowledge, and being, followed by details of the research design and process. The notions of reality are central to this area of research, as young people's beliefs and view of the world around them can often differ from those of adults, particularly with both an offline and online world. This is especially important in the realm of cyberbullying: where adults are unlikely to have had any experience of this form of bullying.

3.1 Theoretical Framework - Considerations of Knowledge and Reality

Two significant philosophical components that underpin research concern epistemology: how one might discover knowledge about the world; and ontology: assumptions about the nature of 'being'; and each of these resonate with different approaches to research. In determining which methodological approach to take, it is important to consider that each aspect 'sees' reality differently: a more traditional empirical approach, sees social reality as a set of facts which can be measured; whereas the more discursive or critical approach, sees reality as something mutually constructed by those experiencing it.

Audi (1998, p. 211) explains that knowledge is very much driven by beliefs, and outlines that knowledge is "justified true belief: that one knows something only if one believes it, it is true, and one's belief of it is justified". It can be deduced then, that one's perception of the world informs one's knowledge about that world and in turn the beliefs and understandings held. Bonjour (1985, 1998, 2010) expresses that there are three conditions of knowledge: the person must believe the proposition without any doubt; the proposition must be true; and the person must have a reason or justification as to why the proposition is true.

These fundamental notions are important to consider in research, in relation to what knowledge and reality is for young people, especially in this domain, where digital

technologies shift constantly and where adults only have knowledge of bullying as related directly to school settings.

3.1.1 Epistemology

Epistemology, a theory of knowledge and justification, concerns research into what is real and an understanding of why (Audi, 1998). Bonjour (1985, 1998, 2010) explains that epistemology is particularly important when undertaking research as it involves exploring what constitutes knowledge and reality. This is especially relevant to research when young people are involved, as adult perceptions are often quite different from the perceptions of an adolescent, yet both may view their perception as the correct one (Audi, 1998). This notion, of whose reality is relevant, is particularly important for the study of cyberbullying, where adults have limited, if any, experience of cyberbullying as adolescents. Furthermore, as highlighted in Chapter 2, there is no unified definition for cyberbullying specifically. Epistemology is particularly relevant here, as individuals have markedly different views of reality, and therefore, issues can arise as to whose reality determines what cyberbullying actually is. A young person's reality of cyberbullying may differ to that of an adult's, and to that of their peers. Furthermore, the nature of reality may also differ between a victim and a bully, and those not involved in cyberbullying. Therefore, it is important that youth constructions of what constitutes cyberbullying are considered.

3.1.2 Ontology

Whilst epistemology refers to the understanding of what constitutes knowledge, ontology is the field of enquiry which explores the nature of being and reality (Guarino, Oberle, & Staab, 2009), which is a complex and constantly changing process (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). Ontology can be viewed as the study of the nature of the world independently from our knowledge about it, and the rigorous description of each individual's form of being in relation to other entities in the world (Guarino, 1995). Key ontological questions that face those in social research include: whether social reality exists independent from our own conceptions; whether there is a common social reality that is shared by all or if there are instead multiple, context-specific realities; and whether social behaviour is governed by unspoken general laws (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013).

The ontological approach is particularly relevant when discussing cyberbullying, as developments in technology contribute to the changes in the nature of cyberbullying, and people's understandings and interpretations of it (Smith et al., 2008). As such, peoples' understandings and interpretations of cyberbullying and technology may differ according to their experiences and perceptions of their social reality, and unspoken 'rules'. The current study aims to develop a deeper understanding of the nature and issues associated with, and relationships between, cyberbullying, help seeking, coping, and mental health and wellbeing, and to determine how young people understand and interpret these constructs. There is an imperative to conduct research that captures young people's current knowledge, understanding, and relationships between, cyberbullying, help seeking, coping and mental health (i.e. their 'being' 'reality' and 'knowledge') to: document changes in these interpretations at this moment in time, for future comparison; guide future research, and; inform proactive and reactive responses to cyberbullying.

Objectivist, or realist epistemologies and ontologies underpin a theory-testing (positivist) approach to research, whereas subjectivist approaches align with elucidating meaning and theory-building approaches. Mixed methods approaches, therefore, brings these forms together, and is the approach used for this study. This positivism/ interpretivism divide positions the research paradigms as opposing, however, when considered together, they provide opportunities for exploring the lived realities of young people's experiences with cyberbullying, help seeking and coping, in multiple ways: through broader survey approaches, and through more in-depth interviews, so that a sense of the whole might be achieved.

3.1.3 Phenomenology

Phenomenology, a distinct but related philosophical construct, revolves around the science of consciousness and understanding 'phenomena', was founded in the early philosophical works of Husserl (1913/1983) and generally aligns with a qualitative approach to research. Husserl (1962) believed that the study of consciousness was very different from the study of nature, and that information and insight emerges from an intense study of experiences. Husserl's philosophical work was later followed by Heidegger (1927) who expanded this and believed, in essence, that phenomenology was a study of ontology: that is, of *being in the world:* of understanding the phenomena

individuals experienced. In other words, phenomenology is about understanding everyday experiences of reality in detail, in order to understand each phenomenon in question (McLeod, 2001).

Schutz (1967) extends Heidegger's work on consciousness, phenomena, being and time, and explores one's *understanding* of others, which comes from an illumination of lived experiences. This understanding of others' actions can only be inquired by investigating two different paths: understanding actions that are *with* or *without* communicative intent (Schutz, 1967). Schutz (1967) believes that people, in an ordinary world, act according to a *system of relevances*, and that they make sense of the purpose at hand by selecting what is relevant to themselves from their environment and interactions with others.

Intersubjectivity, a term originally coined by Husserl (1913/1983) is the understanding of an individual's psychological relation (consciousness) to others. Schutz (1967) believed that intersubjectivity not only referred to others, but rather the psychological relationship to anything social, and as such suggested that knowledge itself *involves the exchange of perspectives, social origins and distributions*. In terms of young people and the cyberbullying context, this could refer to young peoples' understanding of cyberbullying and its social origins, how it is constructed and is evolving from traditional forms of bullying, and the many different perspectives of those engaged in cyberbullying (whether, victim, bully, bully-victim, or bystander).

Phenomenological psychology, similarly focuses on the psychological significance and coherence of an individual's experience, but expresses the understanding of these experiences as a whole (Churchill & Wertz, 1985). Phenomenology, combined with intersubjectivity, thus provide a useful theoretical framework for considering cyberbullying, help seeking and coping intentions of young people. The nature of these phenomena, as understood by young people, are constantly being evaluated in terms of technological changes in the world around them: making meaning of their own lived experiences, their personal identities, and engaging in self-exploration. It is not sufficient therefore, to rely solely on the adult derived definitions of cyberbullying, for example, as the lived experiences of young people may differ from those of adult researchers drawing upon previous notions of bullying.

3.1.4 Summary

This research aims to extend the current understanding of young people's experiences and understanding of cyberbullying, help seeking and coping, and to examine the relationships between the three constructs to contribute to theory and evidence-based responses to cyberbullying through a mixed methods approach. Determining young people's individual reality concerning cyberbullying, help seeking and coping intentions, in conjunction with reporting the views of many, will inform the relationship between these three constructs, therefore enabling this study to extend knowledge in this field. Phenomenology, epistemology and ontology underpin the choice of methods for research, and in the instance of this study, the use of mixed methods research (Creswell, 2003). Researching what is perceived to be real for young people, the nature of this reality, and how it is understood and interpreted, is important in terms of cyberbullying, due to the changing nature of digital technologies, and the emergence of online relationship formations as an integral component of young people's lives. This study potentially can inform policy and could lead to improved prevention and intervention strategies, whereby cyberbullying is not considered in isolation, but in relation to other important aspects of their social interactions: help seeking intentions and ways of coping generally.

3.2 The Current Study

This section will explain the research design and the importance of mixed methods research to this study, as well as the importance and incorporation of triangulation (see section 3.2.4) as a method of ensuring trust, reliability, legitimacy and validity of the approaches adopted, and the data collected. An overview of the process and measures will be explained: including the stages of research; the interview process; sampling methods; and the psychometric properties of scales used in this study. Ethical considerations associated with this research also will be discussed.

3.2.1 Design

This study employed a convergent mixed methods approach, defined as combining qualitative and quantitative data in a study design in order to gain a complete understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2012; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) (see Section 3.5 for a full description of the research process). Creswell (2012) suggested that mixed methods research can present a much more powerful picture than

each method separately, as the two methods combined create a greater understanding of social phenomena, as multiple perspectives are captured. In support of this, Plano Clark, Creswell, Green, and Shope (2010) explained that mixed methods research results in an improved understanding of the problem being researched, and can enhance validity and reliability, due to the strengths of each method compensating for any weaknesses of the two approaches. Spears and Kofoed (2013) suggested that in order to fully understand cyberbullying issues from a youth perspective, researchers should consider using both methods rather than privileging one. In this way, a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods allows for a deeper understanding of the events that take place in young people's technologically/digitally enhanced lives. Specifically, the combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods emphasises participants' experiences, meanings and views of events (Espinoza & Juvonen, 2013), and extends our understanding of their experiences.

3.2.2 Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative aspect of this study involved the use of an online survey (see Section 3.5.2 for instruments and measures and Appendix C for the full survey). Surveys were hosted on the online platform, Qualtrics (Qualtrics, 2013) using: existing previously published, reliable and standardised instruments; and specially constructed questions informed by the literature review and relevant to the topics under investigation. Quantitative data were analysed through SPSS, version 21 (SPSS, 2012) and AMOS, version 21 (AMOS, 2012) to determine descriptive and inferential statistical relationships, using such techniques as:

- Frequencies (e.g., demographics, scale items)
- Correlations (e.g., inter-item correlations, exploratory relationships)
- Independent samples t-tests (e.g., differences between groups)
- Analysis of variance (Multivariate and Univariate) (e.g., main effects, differences between groups)
- Reliability analysis (for each of the scales)
- Factor analysis (Exploratory and Confirmatory)

- Structural Equation Modelling (e.g., relationships, mediation)

3.2.3 Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative aspect of this study involved face-to-face semi-structured interviews (see Appendix D for interview schedule). Qualitative data are both legitimate and trustworthy data as it allows researchers to explore the complexity of human behaviours and generate a deeper understanding of interventions, and provides rich insights into problems whilst providing *real* solutions (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004; Wallace, 1984). For this study, the interview questions covered a range of topics including: views on cyberbullying; coping methods that young people use for cyberbullying; general personal coping methods; help seeking practices young people use specifically for cyberbullying; general help seeking practices; reasons behind these coping and help seeking choices; and their suggestions for possible helpful resources.

Transcripts were analysed through the program NVivo, version 10 (2012). Thematic analysis was used to inductively analyse the data according to the patterns, themes, and categories that emerged through the qualitative responses (Patton, 2002). An interpretative phenomenological analysis was able to facilitate an understanding of young people's perceptions of their world, and their personal lived experiences (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009), as well as aid the quantitative statistics (Patton, 2002). Figure 1 explains the interpretative phenomenological analysis process (Talaei, Labbaf, Nilipour Tabatabayi, & Barekatain, 2015).

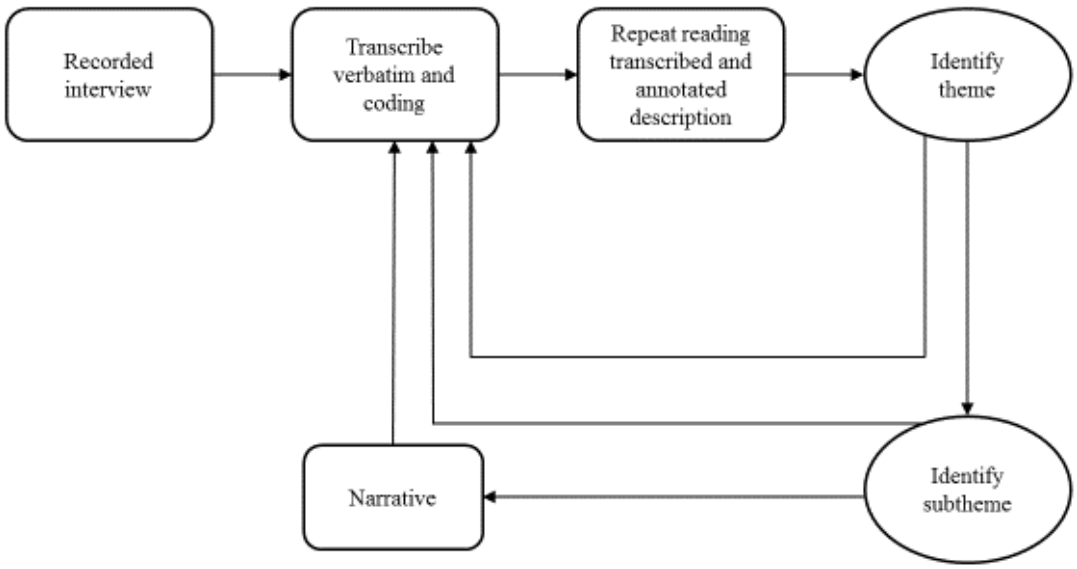


Figure 1: Interview Analysis Process

A-priori themes included the main areas of interest for this research, which involved references to cyberbullying, coping and help seeking. Sub-themes then emerged from the inductive data analysis of the interview transcripts (see Chapter 6 for coding). As patterns and themes emerged, convergences were present and data were classified according to internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity (Patton, 2002). Thus, data were categorised by those sub-themes which meaningfully linked together from those which distinctly differed (Patton, 2002). The different sub-themes of data were given descriptive codes, enabling the phenomena to be interpreted through these brief segments of text (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

3.2.4 Triangulation

3.2.4.1 Types of Triangulation

The value of mixed methods research also can be explained through the notion of triangulation. Crivello, Camfield, and Woodhead (2009) explain that the quality of research is enhanced when using mixed methods as it allows for the data to be triangulated. *Across-method* (or sometimes called between-method) triangulation was used in this study, as it involved both quantitative and qualitative methods in the same study (Denzin, 1970). Across-method triangulation is valuable as it allows for cross-validation, and therefore can yield consistent and comparable data (Jick, 1979). Moreover, Jick (1979) explains the importance of triangulation, suggesting that it can increase validity of results, has the potential for new theories to emerge, and can enhance the explanation of research findings.

Denzin (1970) explains that four forms of triangulation exist: data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theoretical triangulation, and methodological triangulation. Both methodological triangulation (across separate types of methodologies) and data triangulation (comparing separate types of data) were used in this study (Hussein, 2009). *Methodological triangulation* was evident in this research through the use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. This occurred as the research design included two methods of data collection: surveys (quantitative) and interviews (qualitative). *Data triangulation* was evident in this study through the quantitative and qualitative data collected as well as comparisons of different data sets. Data were triangulated by comparing the data from the current study to an existing large scale, randomly selected and representative, national study: the Safe and Well Online Study

(SWO) from the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre (see http://www.youngandwellcrc.org.au). Furthermore, the data that emerged from the surveys and interviews complemented each other, as data were collected at two separate times and addressed similar themes. This is of particular relevance to this study, as Mishna and Wert (2013) explain that cyberbullying can be better understood if information is collected by multiple means. By using multiple methods, comparing different types of data, as well as comparing to a national study, the concepts of cyberbullying, help seeking and coping, can be further understood.

3.2.4.2 Young and Well Co-operative Research Centre - Safe and Well Online Triangulation

The Young and Well CRC had a focus on uniting young people, specifically those between the ages of twelve and twenty five with researchers and practitioners, and had over 70 partner organisations, including not-for-profit, and policy makers (Young and Well CRC, 2013). The main focus of the Young and Well CRC was to explore the role of technology in young people's lives, and the ways in which technology can be used to improve young people's lives and their health and wellbeing.

The Young and Well CRC had three main research strands: *Safe and Supportive*, *Connected and Creative*, and *User-Driven and Empowered*. The SWO study is part of the *Safe and Supportive* program which aimed to investigate and build safe and supportive online environments, with a focus on cybersafety (See http://www.youngandwellcrc.org.au/). Each of these three main strands of research conducted multiple projects: for a full outline of the Young and Well CRC and existing projects, see Appendix B. The main reports, and published works for all of the projects can also be viewed (see Spears et al., 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2016a, 2016b).

This PhD research is positioned alongside the Safe and Supportive program, specifically the *Safe and Well Online* study (SWO). The SWO was a national five-year study of the most effective ways to design and deliver online social marketing campaigns to improve the safety and wellbeing of young people. SWO has collected information on young people's attitudes and behaviours associated with: internet practices; mental health; wellbeing; cyberbullying; help seeking, and respect, which is a construct that has underpinned all campaigns developed. The findings of the current study were triangulated with the data gathered from the SWO study to determine any similarities and differences between the two samples. This facilitated thorough

examination of the data in multiple ways, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the complex nature of cyberbullying, help seeking and coping (Hemming, 2008).

It is important to acknowledge the independent work of this thesis in relation to the SWO study. Whilst SWO determined the scope it needed for the overall contribution to the Young and Well CRC, this project was independently designed and conducted by this author, in consultation with supervisors. To this end, similar scales have been used in both studies, to enable cross-study comparisons, however, this study, specifically examines new material: how young people cope with cyberbullying, their help seeking intentions in relation to cyberbullying, and the nature of the relationships between these three constructs.

3.3 Participants and Sampling

Initial oversampling was required to prepare for factors that could influence sample size and response rate. Bauman (2013) explains that when researchers consider their sample size, they must consider factors such as nonresponse, ineligibility, attrition/mortality, and missing data. Therefore, in an effort to account for these factors, over 3000 information sheets and consent form packages were distributed to students across eight schools in South Australia. For a description of the research process, see section 3.5

Collaboration through conversations with the Department for Education and Children's Development (DECD) staff helped to identify possible schools for the study, through an initial expression of interest email. When selecting schools to be involved, purposive sampling, which allows for greater depth of information, and high internal validity (Bauman, 2013), was used to ensure a range of schools were represented. Schools then came from varied contextual/demographic backgrounds: including both inner and outer metropolitan regions of Adelaide, and both government and non-government schools, contributing to a sampling approach resonant with maximum variation sampling (Patton, 2002) where diversity is purposively sought. Table 4 details the range of schools involved. The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA), a scale that enables meaningful comparisons to be made across schools, was used to determine the contextual background of the schools (see Chapter 4).

A sample of 3,173 secondary school students from eight high schools (government and non-government) across metropolitan and rural Adelaide were approached to be involved in this research. Six government schools and two non-government schools were included in this study, with a final sample of 235 completed surveys, resulting in a response rate of 7.4%. Table 4 details the recruitment numbers and schools, as well as the level of attrition by calculating responses in relation to the initial number of information packages sent. Please note, the percentages in this table were calculated from the initial number of information and consent forms sent to the school, in order to understand the response rate in relation to how many forms were originally distributed.

For the interview component, 30 participants were randomly selected from each from those who had consented, as Baker and Edwards (2012) suggest that saturation can be achieved with this number, and that it is likely that any additional responses from participants would simply reiterate the same message.

It is important to note that whilst every effort was made to obtain a representative sample, due to the need for informed parental consent, only those with parental willingness to participate, could take part in the study. As a result, a convenience sample was achieved. It is noted that this is a potential limitation to this research, but despite this, to ensure that a diverse sample was attained, maximum variation sampling was employed to ensure that a mix of urban schools, rural schools, age groups, year levels, and genders were included. This ensured that a purposively selected, but diverse and varied sample was able to provide insight in the key issues related to this study. This is highlighted as a limitation in Chapter 8. Participants for the face-to-face interviews were selected using a random number generator from those who had consented themselves, and had parental consent.

Table 4: Recruitment of Schools and Numbers Involved – *n* Values (%)*

	School	Forms sent	Forms Returned	Yes Survey	No Survey	Yes interview	Completed surveys	Completed interviews
Public	Metro A	23	19 (82.6)	19	0	8	19 (82.6)	6
	Metro B	450	19 (4.2)	15	4	8	10 (2.2)	7
	Metro C	100	41 (41)	40	1	8	39 (39)	0
	Rural A	1010	94 (9.3)	48	46	17	40 (4)	6
	Rural B	110	63 (57.3)	63	0	11	63 (57.3)	0
	Rural C	1000	50 (5)	37	13	13	38 (3.8)	9
Private	Metro D	280	50 (17.9)	20	30	3	17 (6.1)	2
	Rural D	200	11 (5.5)	8	3	4	8 (4)	0
Total		3173	347 (11)	250	97	72	235 (7.4)	30

*For ease of interpretation, percentages are displayed only for the number of forms returned and the number of surveys completed, and are calculated from the original number of forms sent. This is to display the level of attrition for each school.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

The National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (NSECHR) (2007) outlines the areas of respect, risk, benefit, and consent, each of which should be addressed when conducting research involving humans in order to protect their welfare and rights. Survey participants were assured that their responses would remain anonymous and confidential, and that their schools would not be identifiable.

The ethical principle of beneficence, specifically minimising the likelihood of risk or harm to the individuals involved, is particularly important when researching young people. Although a low risk study, there were some important considerations. Participants were informed they would not directly benefit from participating in this study, but were providing a valuable contribution to research on young people's wellbeing. Additionally, in acknowledging that cyberbullying is a potentially sensitive topic, participants were provided with a list of counselling services and websites should they require the services. In addition, participants were informed that they could seek counselling advice through their school if needed. The school counsellors were notified at each participating school so that they were aware of the study, however, counsellors were not aware of individual participants' identities or who was involved in the study.

Overall, the study was low risk, which, according to the NSCEHR (2014), is where the only foreseeable risk is one of discomfort. Discomfort in this research may have occurred in recalling past experiences, however, the need for research in this area justifies this potential low risk to participants, as it is an area that needs further understanding and investigation.

According to the NSCEHR (2014) consent needs to be obtained from participants when conducting research. To ensure informed consent, participants and their parents/carers were provided with: an information sheet detailing the research and its aims; and a consent form, as the majority of participants were minors under the age of 18. Participants were told that they had the right to withdraw at any time, and that their responses would remain confidential, anonymous, and not identifiable. Parents/carers and participants were provided with the contact details of the researcher and University of South Australia Human Research Ethics Committee (UniSA HREC). The research process will now be discussed in detail.

3.5 Research Process

3.5.1 Overview of Process

This section will discuss the research process, including the consent and interview process. Neuman (2006) emphasises that voluntary participation is key to social research. Furthermore participants need to have an understanding of what they will be expected to do in order to make an informed decision (Neuman, 2006). Ethical approval was sought from both the UniSA HREC, and the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) Ethics department. Copies of these approvals can be seen in Appendix E and Appendix F.

Information sheets and consent forms assured confidentiality and anonymity. For duty of care reasons, the consent form requested the email address and phone number of the parent/carer, should any follow-up be required. Copies of the information sheets and consent form can be seen in Appendix G and Appendix H. The research followed the subsequent process:

- A contact person from DECD emailed principals to ascertain initial interest in the study. University Human Research Ethics Committee and DECD approval was sought and granted.

- Schools which had indicated earlier interest in the study were contacted via email with a formal invitation to be involved, and arrangements were made to begin the research process. Communication with schools occurred via email, by phone, and/or face-to-face. Data collection was arranged at times convenient for school staff and students to minimise disruption. A school contact person was identified to support the distribution and collection of consent forms and data collection process (e.g. home group teacher, e-learning coordinator, deputy principal etc.).

- Forms were distributed to the students at each of the schools involved, and participants were given two weeks to return signed consent forms to the appropriate staff member. The researcher printed and delivered the forms in person to some schools, whilst others opted to print and distribute the forms themselves.

- Students completed the survey at school on school computers, excluding one school, who opted to use iPads. The completion of surveys most commonly occurred during home group/pastoral care time, though some did occur during class time (this decision was left to the discretion of school staff).

- Interview consents were then identified, and the interview process and suitable interview times were arranged with the school contact person. All interviews occurred in a private yet visible room (i.e., had a window) as required by the ethics committee, on school grounds, during school time.

Figure 2 on the following page provides an overview of this process.

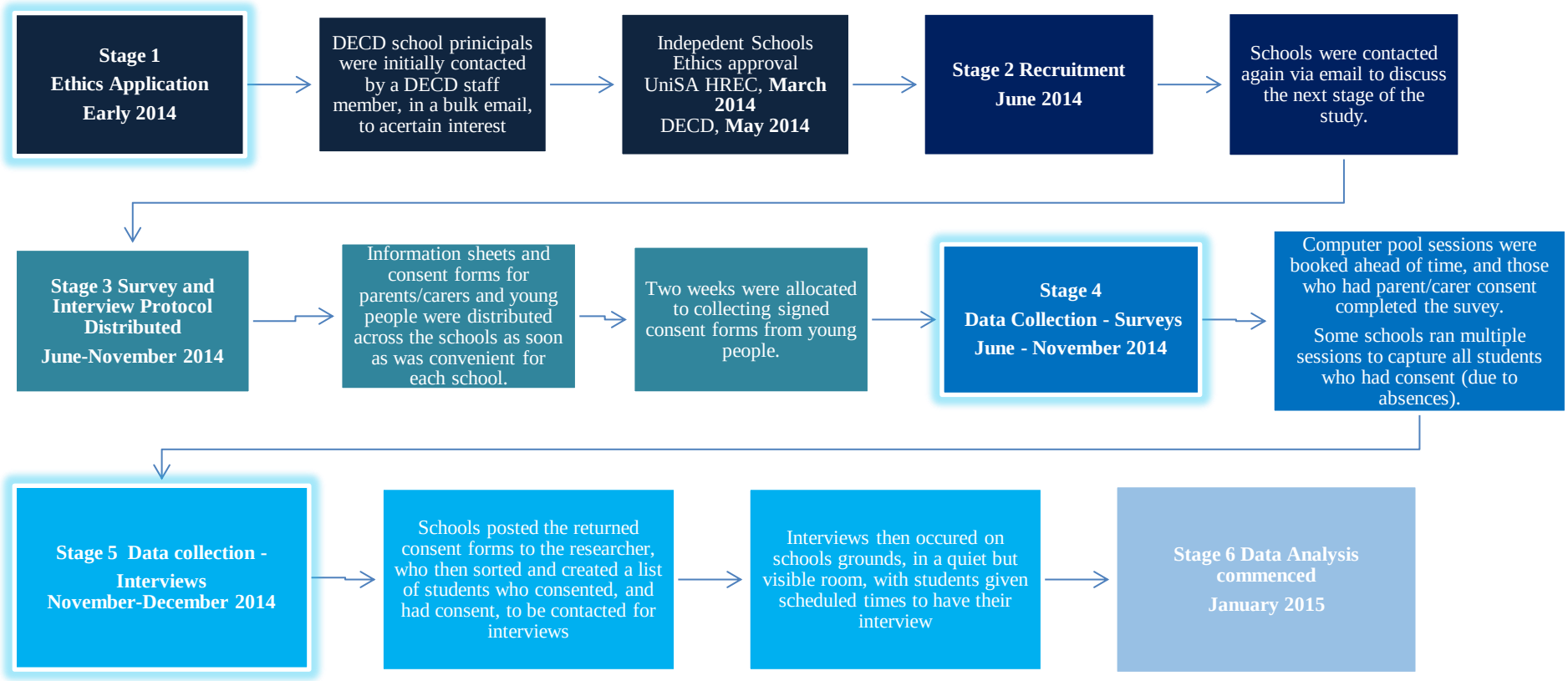


Figure 2: Overview of Research Process and Stages

3.5.2 Survey Instruments and Measures

An anonymous online survey for young people aged twelve to seventeen was devised, and hosted on the Qualtrics (2013) online platform, comprising six sections, and derived from pre-existing, reliable and valid instruments as follows (see Appendix C for the full survey):

- **Section 1 About You** – General demographic information, including age, sex, school year level.

- **Section 2 Internet Use** – Internet use questions about time spent online (from the EU kids online study, Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig, & Ólafsson, 2011), and also a question from the Young and Well National Survey about internet activities (Burns, et al., 2013). Likert scales were used in this section, ranging from 1 (never) to 6 (most of the time) for general internet use, and 1 (never) to 7 (several times a day) for specific social media activities.

- **Section 3 Cyberbullying** - Cyberbullying questions derived from the SWO survey (originally from Smith et al., 2008), and cyberbullying questions adapted from Cross et al. (2009). Likert scales were used to measure frequency, and ranged from 1 (never) to 6 (every day).

- **Section 4 Coping** – An adapted version of the Brief COPE Inventory (Carver, 1997) was developed to: assess a broad range of coping styles if hypothetically involved in cyberbullying (see Chapter 2); measure coping intentions rather than past coping behaviors; and to align with the help seeking scale. This included Likert Scales of likelihood to cope in certain ways, and ranged from 1 (highly unlikely) to 5 (highly likely).

- **Section 5 Help Seeking** – General Help Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ) (Rickwood, Deane, Wilson, & Ciarrochi, 2005) examined future help seeking intentions of young people if experiencing a personal or emotional problem. Items included Likert Scales of likelihood to seek help from certain sources, and ranged from 1 (highly unlikely) to 5 (highly likely).

- **Section 6 Mental Health and Wellbeing** – This included the: Social Connectedness Scale (SCS), (Lee, Dean, & Jung, 2008; Lee, Draper, & Lee, 2001) which measured the extent to which young people feel connected to others in their social environment; Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHCSF) (Keyes, 2002; 2007), which measured the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of young people; and the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale-(Dass21) (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) which measured the emotional states of depression, anxiety and stress. This section include Likert Scales ranging from: 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree); 1 (never) to 6 (daily); and 1 (did not apply to me at all) to 4 (applied to me very much, or most of the time).

Chapter 4 details the psychometric properties of each of these scales, as well as exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis.

The use of the scales identified above enabled data triangulation, with national datasets, specifically, the internet use and cyberbullying questions aligned with years one and two of the SWO study, and the Young and Well CRC national study, and as such provided an opportunity to conduct meaningful comparisons with the larger samples involved in the SWO study. The use of the previously tested, reliable, and valid help seeking, and mental health and wellbeing, scales also enabled data triangulation with the SWO study. The Brief COPE scale was adapted for use in this study and was specific to it, not being employed in the SWO or National study and therefore was not triangulated. Given that a number of the scales e.g. DASS21, have been used with older youth, the use of the scales also provided an opportunity to examine the psychometrics with a sample of younger adolescents.

The Brief COPE (Carver, 1997) has been used successfully in past research and with adolescents and found to be reliable and valid (Israelashvili, Gilad-Osovitzki, & Asherov, 2006; Phelps & Jarvis, 1994; Sunnqvist, Persson, Westrin, TräSkman-Bendz, & Lenntorp, 2013; Vaughn, 2003). However, as it was adapted for use with a wider age range of adolescents than previously reported on (aged 12-17) both Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were performed on the Brief COPE to examine coping styles and to determine validity and reliability of the scale with a younger youth sample, and in a cyberbullying context. Furthermore, the use of an adapted version of the COPE scale most likely contributed to variations in the coping

categories identified in this study when compared to categories previously published in aforementioned studies. Therefore, it was important to conduct the factor analysis to confirm what categories would emerge. See Section 4.2 for details on all scale psychometrics, but particularly the EFA and CFA of the Brief COPE.

The GHSQ (Rickwood et al., 2005), Social Connectedness Scale (Lee, Dean, & Jung, 2008; Lee, Draper, & Lee, 2001, MHCSF (Keyes, 2002; 2007), and DASS21 (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) have all been employed successfully with young people in the four data collection rounds of the SWO study (see Spears et al., 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2016a, 2016b) with Rickwood et al. (2005), Wilson, Ciarrochi, Rickwood, and Deane, (2002), and Wilson, Rickwood, Ciarrochi, and Deane, (2002) also finding the GHSQ to be reliable and valid with adolescents. Likewise, whilst the Social Connectedness Scale was created and tested with college students (see Lee, Dean, & Jung, 2008; Lee, Draper, & Lee, 2001) it has also been used successfully with adolescents and in an online context (Chaturvedi, Munshi, Singla, Shahri, & Chanchani, 2015; Grieve, Indian, Witteveen, Anne Tolan, & Marrington, 2013). The MHCSF also has been found to be reliable and valid with both adults and adolescents around the world (Keyes, 2005; Keyes et al., 2008; Keyes, Grant, & Hasin, 2008; Lamers, Westerhof, Bohlmeijer, ten Klooster, & Keyes, 2011; Westerhof & Keyes, 2009).

The DASS21 (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) has sparked some debate in the literature around its relevance to adolescents, with some authors stating that there may be concerns around measuring depression, anxiety and stress as distinct constructs with younger age groups (Patrick, Dyck, & Bramston, 2010). However, numerous studies have successfully found that the DASS21 does measure the three intended constructs and is reliable and valid for use with a non-clinical sample (Antony, Bieling, Cox, Enns, & Swinson, 1998; Crawford & Henry, 2003; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). Some researchers have found the DASS21 to work well with adolescents (Mellor et al., 2015; Tully, Zajac, & Venning, 2009; Willemsen, Markey, Declercq, & Vanheule, 2011), although the stress construct may need further validation (Duffy, Cunningham, & Moore, 2005; Szabó, 2010). Previous Australian studies examining cyberbullying have employed this scale and comparisons across the findings will be considered in this thesis, to determine the usefulness of this scale for this cohort (Campbell, Spears, Slee, Butler, & Kift, 2012; Spears, et al., 2015).

The semi-structured interviews consisted of both closed and open ended questions to address the topics of cyberbullying, help seeking and coping, and were developed in consultation with supervisors. For example, interview questions included: "Are you aware of ways that young people cope with cyberbullying?"; "In your experience what do you find are the best ways to cope if you are feeling stressed or sad?"; "When young people do seek help to cope with the effects of cyberbullying, can you suggest some places they might go to online / offline?"; and "Can you think of any obstacles young people might confront when seeking help to cope with the effects of cyberbullying?" (See Appendix D for the complete interview schedule).

3.5.3 Interview Process

Students were asked to provide their full name and contact details on the consent form, for research purposes only: specifically to contact them for the interview process. Interviewees were randomly selected using a random number generator from those who had consented to be contacted for an interview. Those who indicated willingness to be approached for an interview, and had parent/carer consent to participate, were allocated a time and place for their interview. Interviews took place in a room on school grounds. Interviews occurred one-on-one. All interviews for each school occurred in the one setting at each school, in a time frame of three weeks.

Participants were assured that they would remain anonymous and unidentifiable in the resulting thesis and publications. Given the potentially sensitive nature of the research topic, that is: cyberbullying, help seeking and coping; support was made available via the school's counselling services, and details of Kidshelpline, and other online and telephone counselling services (such as ReachOut) were provided. The researcher is a mandated reporter and disclosed this to the interviewees and explained the associated legal responsibilities. The duration of surveys and interviews ranged between 20 to 30 minutes. Once the interviews were conducted, all information was de-identified to ensure anonymity, by allocating a pseudonym for each individual.

3.4 Summary

In summary, the study employed a convergent mixed method approach triangulating quantitative online surveys with qualitative semi-structured face-to-face interviews. The

next chapter will outline the demographic profile of the participants before reporting all results.

4 Results – Part 1 – Scale Psychometrics and Sample differences

The results detailed in this chapter address the following research questions and hypotheses related to coping, help seeking, cyberbullying and mental health:

1. What are the main reasons why young people intend or do not intend to seek help in relation to cyberbullying (especially from formal sources)?
2. What coping strategies do young people use to deal with cyberbullying and why?
3. What is the nature of the relationship between help seeking and coping? That is, do different coping styles mediate the relationship between experiences of cyberbullying and help seeking? (i.e., prevent or encourage help seeking)
4. Are there differences in help seeking and coping intentions between sub groups (e.g. age, gender, cyber status)?
5. What is the nature of the relationship between the wellbeing profile of young people, in particular their social connectedness, and their coping and help seeking intentions?

The following null hypotheses and alternate hypotheses are suggested:

- H_0 - There will be no significant differences between participants' preferences for help- seeking sources (formal or informal).

  H_1 - Participants will be more likely to seek help from informal sources compared to formal sources.

- H_0 - There will be no differences in intentions to seek help from friends between gender or age categories.

  H_2 - Females will be more likely to seek help from friends than males.

H_3 - Young people will be more likely to seek help from all sources as age increases

- H_0 - There will be no significant difference in intentions to cope using emotion-focused coping between gender or age categories.

  H_4 - Females will be more likely to engage in emotion-focused coping than males.

  H_5 - Older age groups will be more likely to engage in active coping styles than younger age groups

- H_0 - There will be no differences between cyber status and engagement in coping styles.

  H_6 - Participants who have been involved in cyberbullying will be more likely to use emotion-focused styles of coping than active styles.

- H_0 - There will be no relationship between coping strategies and help seeking

  H_7 - There will be a positive relationship between active coping and help seeking. i.e., those who engage in active coping styles will be more likely to seek help from any source than those who engage in emotion-focused coping styles.

- H_0 - There will be no relationship between young people's social connectedness and different coping styles

  H_8 - Those who are more socially connected will be more likely to engage in active coping styles, and less likely to engage in emotion-focused coping styles.

- H_0 - Coping style will play no significant role on mental health outcomes as a result of cyberbullying.

  H_9 - Different coping styles will mediate the relationship between involvement in cyberbullying and mental health, i.e., active coping will be related to more positive mental health scores compared to emotion-focused coping

Specifically, this chapter will outline:

- Sample descriptives including age, and gender distribution, frequency of internet use
- Scale psychometrics, including EFA and CFA of the adapted Brief COPE
- Sub-sample differences (age differences, gender differences, differences by cyber status, differences by mental health status)
- Structural equation modelling to examine relationships explored and test differences between groups (gender and involvement in cyberbullying)

4.1 Sample Descriptive Statistics - Survey

This section reports on the descriptive statistics obtained from the survey data in order to gain an understanding of the participants in this study and examines differences between groups (age, gender, cyber status), as well as mental health characteristics of the sample, which are discussed in section 4.3.

A total of two hundred and thirty five (235) participants completed the survey, however, six of these participants were excluded from analysis due to incomplete responses (only completed one or two questions), resulting in a final total number of participants of 229. No other missing data was identified in these 229 responses. It is important to note that, even though for structural equation modelling a sample of 200 is considered sufficient (Garver & Mentzer, 1999; Hoelter, 1983), power analysis was conducted in order to determine that this sample would achieve significant results. It was determined that the sample of 229 was more than sufficient to achieve significant results at the 0.5 level.

Details of the sample are outlined in Tables 5a and 5b. Frequency charts and skewness and kurtosis values were examined to determine the normality of the sample and consequent analysis techniques, with results revealing a normal distribution across age (12-17 years).

Table 5a: Total Sample by Gender and Year Level Distribution

Year level	Gender %		% (N = 229)
	Female	Male	
8	22.3 (*n* = 51)	15.7 (*n* = 36)	38.0 (*n* = 87)
9	21.0 (*n* = 48)	14.4 (*n* = 33)	35.4 (*n* = 81)
10	6.6 (*n* = 15)	3.9 (*n* = 9)	10.5 (*n* = 24)
11	8.7 (*n* = 20)	7.4 (*n* = 17)	16.1 (*n* = 37)
Total	58.6 (*n* = 134)	41.4 (*n* = 95)	100 (*n* = 229)

Table 5b: Total Sample by Gender and Age Distribution

Age	Gender %		% (N = 229)
	Female	Male	
12	1.3 (*n* = 3)	0.4 (*n* = 1)	1.7 (*n* = 4)
13	14.4 (*n* = 33)	6.5 (*n* = 15)	21.0 (*n* = 48)
14	17.5 (*n* = 40)	13.5 (*n* = 31)	31.0 (*n* = 71)
15	14.5 (*n* = 33)	12.2 (*n* = 28)	26.6 (*n* = 61)
16	7.4 (*n* = 17)	4.4 (*n* = 10)	11.8 (*n* = 27)
17	3.5 (*n* = 8)	4.4 (*n* = 10)	7.9 (*n* = 18)
Total	58.6 (*n* = 134)	41.4 (*n* = 95)	100 (*n* = 229)

Table 5c displays the sample distribution across the schools involved. It is noted that the proportion of young people in public schools used in this sample (90%) is higher than the ratio of public school students in South Australia (approximately 70%) (ABS, 2016).

Table 5c: Total Sample by School Sector and Geographic Location

Sector	School	% (N = 229)
Public	Metro A	8.3 (*n* = 19)
90.0 % (*n* = 206)	Metro B	3.9 (*n* = 9)
	Metro C	16.6 (*n* = 38)
	Rural A	17.0 (*n* = 39)
	Rural B	27.5 (*n* = 63)
	Rural C	16.6 (*n* = 38)
Independent	Metro D	6.6 (*n* = 15)
10.0 % (*n* = 23)	Rural D	3.5 (*n* = 8)

Of the total sample, 3.9 % (*n* = 9) identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and 8.3 % (*n* = 19) spoke a language other than English at home. No aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people consented to being interviewed.

The School Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) is a scale that represents levels of educational advantage within a community. A value on the scale assigned to a school is the averaged level for all students in the particular school. ICSEA scores were used to determine the community socio-educational context of the schools involved (See http://www.myschool.edu.au/). The average score is 1000, with the lowest score being approximately 500 and the highest approximately 1300, with lower scores representing educationally disadvantaged backgrounds and higher scores advantaged backgrounds, and were the most recent scores to date (2014) at the time of data analysis (Table 6). A mixture of schools being considered 'advantaged' and disadvantaged' were used to gain an understanding of experiences from both types of schools.

Table 6: Schools by Sector, Geographic Location and ICSEA Value

Sector	School	ICSEA score
Public	Metro A	1041
	Metro B	1070
	Metro C	1073
	Rural A	988
	Rural B	967
	Rural C	972
Independent	Metro D	1087
	Rural D	991

4.2 Scale Psychometrics

This section details the:

1. Process for determining the cyber status categories.
2. Psychometric properties of the following scales:
    - Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS21) (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995)
    - Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHCSF) (Keyes, 2002; 2007)
    - Social Connectedness Scale (Lee, Dean, & Jung, 2008; Lee, Draper, & Lee, 2001)

- General Help Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ) (Rickwood, Deane, Wilson, & Ciarrochi, 2005)
- Brief Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced scale (COPE) (Carver, 1997)
    - Exploratory Factor Analysis and Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Brief COPE

4.2.1 Cyber Status

To ascertain individuals' cybervictim, cyberbully, and general experiences online, questions were posed from the point of view of being a victim and a bully, and were based upon the previously published work of Smith et al (2008) and Cross et al (2009):

- '*In the past term how often have you been bullied in the following ways?* (See Smith et al, 2008), followed by *how often had they bullied others*.

    The first scale included the following cyber-related response options: Text messages; Pictures; webcam or video clips; Phone calls; Email; Chat sites; Instant messaging e.g. MSN Messenger; Social networking sites e.g. Facebook; Online gaming; Blog; Webpage; Twitter; Some other way not listed above; and were measured on a 6-point frequency scale: Never, Only once or twice, Every few weeks, About once a week, Most days, Every day.

- '*In the past term, how often have the following things happened to you?* (See Cross et al, 2009), followed by *how often they had engaged in these actions*.

    The second scale comprised the following cyber-related response options: I was sent threatening emails; I was sent nasty messages on the internet (e.g., through MSN messenger); I was sent nasty text messages or received prank calls on my mobile phone; Someone pretended to be me (used my screen name and password) to hurt me; Someone sent my private emails, messages, pictures or videos to others; Mean or nasty comments or pictures about me were sent or posted to websites (e.g., Facebook); Mean or nasty messages or pictures about me were sent to others mobile phones; I have been deliberately ignored or left out of things over the internet; Something else.

These also were measured on the same 6-point scale: Never, Only once or twice, Every few weeks, About once a week, Most days, Every day.

Three indices (cybervictim, cyberbully, and cyberbully-victim) were created using a cut-off score of once or more often in the previous school term (the last 10 weeks). The cut off score of *once or more* was adopted in this study as literature suggests that one instance of cyberbullying can be hurtful, (Low & Espelage, 2013; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2008) but additionally, this criterion has been employed by prominent studies in this field (see Frisén et al. 2013; Smith et al. 2013) due to the variation in understanding of repetition in the digital setting: where one posting can be viewed innumerable times, or where it may be forwarded by others. Participants were also provided with a definition of cyberbullying.

Those who reported having been victimised on at least one of the response options during the preceding term (the last 10 weeks), but with no cyberbullying items checked, were categorised as cybervictims. If at least one of the cyberbullying behaviour options had been reported during the preceding term, but no victim items were checked, they were categorised as a cyberbully. If at least one cybervictimisation item and at least one cyberbullying item had been reported during the preceding term, they were classified as cyberbully-victims. Those who reported never being a bully or victim were categorised as non-involved. This categorisation method has been used in past studies as well as in the Safe and Well Online studies (see Frisén et al. 2013; Smith et al. 2013; Spears et al., 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2016a, 2016b).

Given the variance that could occur within each of these categories (i.e., a person could have only been a bully one time, and yet been a victim every day, and be classified as a bully-victim), cyberbullying was also examined in terms of frequency of cybervictimisation and cyberbullying perpetration. It was important to examine frequency of cyberbullying involvement, as well as categorical differences, in order to determine any differences that may be present, and to potentially further contribute to the debate on repetition as a criterion in the definition of cyberbullying.

For ease of expression, clarity and to avoid confusion in this thesis, being a *victim* of cyberbullying will be discussed using the terms *cybervictimisation* or *cybervictim*, and being a bully will be discussed using the terms *cyberbullying* or *cyberbully*.

4.2.2 Wellbeing

To obtain a comprehensive wellbeing profile of young people, previously published measures were used in this study (see section 3.5.2 for a description of these scales):

1) DASS21 (Lovibond & Lovibond 1995), examines the constructs of: Depression, (7 items; α = .93); Anxiety (7 items; α = .91); Stress (7 items; α = .91);

2) the MHCSF (Keyes 2002; 2007) measures general wellbeing (14 items; α = .96);

3) Social Connectedness Scale (Lee et al. 2008; Lee et al. 2001) examines notions of belonging and inter-personal associations and connections with others (15 items; α = .91);

4) GHSQ (Rickwood et al. 2005), examines future help seeking intentions (14 items; α = .85);

5) An adapted version of the Brief COPE (Carver, 1997) examines future coping intentions (28 items) (α = .88).

The reported alpha values of above .8, indicated good psychometric properties of the scales employed (Kline, 2000).

4.2.3 Adapted Brief COPE Categories

Carver (1997) suggests computing the Brief COPE items into 14 categories with 2 items in each. Past studies have found these categories to be reliable and valid (Israelashvili, Gilad-Osovitzki, & Asherov, 2006; Phelps & Jarvis, 1994; Yusoff, Low, & Yipp, 2010). To measure the internal consistency of each category, a reliability analysis was conducted with the current sample and generated the following results:

1. Self-distraction (α = .69)
2. Active coping (α = .69)
3. Denial (α = .70)
4. Substance use (α = .88)
5. Use of emotional support (α = .82)

6. Use of instrumental support (α = .86)
7. Behavioural disengagement (α = .65)
8. Venting of emotions (α = .63)
9. Positive reframing (α = .79)
10. Planning (α = .77)
11. Humour (α = .89)
12. Acceptance (α = .54)
13. Religion (α = .80)
14. Self-blame (α = .88).

Whilst this scale has been used successfully in a small number of studies with adolescents and found to be reliable and valid (Israelashvili et al., 2006; Phelps & Jarvis, 1994; Sunnqvist, Persson, Westrin, TräSkman-Bendz, & Lenntorp, 2013; Vaughn, 2003), there is debate in the literature regarding how coping can be categorised, including, but not limited to: problem-focused versus emotion-focused; engagement versus disengagement; accommodative coping and meaning-focused coping; and proactive coping (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010). Similarly, there is a lack of consensus in the literature regarding the number of sub-constructs obtained through factor analysis within the Brief COPE. Litman (2006) found that the items loaded onto three different dimensions: Self-Sufficient Approach-oriented Coping; Socially-Supported Approach-oriented Coping; and Avoidant-oriented Coping. Litman and Lunsford (2009) conducted research using these three categories and found that alphas for all three constructs were above .88. Conversely, Hastings et al (2005) found that the items loaded onto four distinct categories: active avoidance coping; problem-focused coping; positive coping; and religious/denial coping.

In addition to the variations in the number and type of coping sub-constructs reported in the literature (Krägeloh, 2011), there is an irregularity in parameters used to determine reliability of the COPE and Brief COPE scales and factors, as well as differing factor analysis techniques. As such, Krägeloh (2011) suggests that many reports on factor analysis of the Brief COPE may hold little value when making conclusions about particular categories. Due to the inconsistencies in the coping categories and confirmed factors, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted to extract potential factors. Given the need to understand coping intentions of adolescents

in the context of cyberbullying, more studies are required to examine the reliability and validity of the scale with adolescent samples, and as a scale that examines *future intentions of coping* rather than past behaviours. It is important to examine coping in regards to future intentions, so that a more comprehensive understanding of how young people may cope if involved in cyberbullying can be determined, regardless of past experiences.

4.2.3.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis of an adapted Brief COPE

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is a data analysis technique used to determine patterns and relationships between constructs in a data set (Rummel, 1970). EFA also can be used for many other techniques, including data reduction, classification and description, transformation, as well as testing hypotheses (Rummel, 1970). Exploratory factor analysis was used in this study to determine the sub-constructs that would emerge from the adapted version of the Brief COPE when measuring *coping intentions of young people in response to cyberbullying.* These factors were later confirmed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) prior to use in structural equation modelling (see section 4.2.3.2).

Principle components extraction was run using oblique rotation (direct oblimin), as there were many inter-item correlations. Both EFA and CFA were conducted using the whole sample. This method of rotation is considered a more accurate method when examining the complex nature of unobserved variables, given that constructs in the real world are often correlated (Harman, 1976). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, KMO = .816, a meritorious value, according to Hutcheson and Sofroniou (1999). Any coefficients below .4 were excluded. Communalities were also all above .5 (with the exception of 2 items, which were confirmed to be poor items during confirmatory factor analysis and so were removed, see section 4.2.3.2).

Extraction revealed that 27 of the 28 items loaded onto 7 potential factors (Table 7), and accounted for 67.57% of variance, all with eigenvalues greater than 1. Examination of the scree plot also supported a seven factor extraction. Only one survey item, *Say things to let my unpleasant feelings escape* failed to significantly load on any category. As evident in Table 7, the factor loadings were quite strong (greater than .5). Examination of items loading on Factor 1 suggested it encapsulated active coping;

Factor 2 emotion-focused coping; Factor 3 coping through humour; Factor 4 coping through religion; Factor 5 coping through denial; Factor 6 coping through substance use; and Factor 7 coping through distraction (Table 8). All factors demonstrated alpha values greater than .7, with Corrected Item Total Correlation values all above .3 (Field, 2013; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Factors were examined again in Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

Table 7: Factor Loadings of Adapted Brief COPE By Loading Size

Item	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
COPE23	.902						
COPE15	.837						
COPE10	.828						
COPE5	.795						
COPE7	.744						
COPE25	.725						
COPE14	.671						
COPE2	.626						
COPE26		.824					
COPE13		.787					
COPE16		.749					
COPE6		.679					
COPE21		.504					
COPE24		.466					
COPE9							
COPE28			.928				
COPE18			.889				
COPE20			.425				
COPE27				.914			
COPE22				.873			
COPE8					.799		
COPE3					.734		
COPE4						.909	
COPE11						.898	
COPE1							-.757
COPE19							-.693
COPE12							-.587
COPE17							-.561

Table 8: Adapted Brief COPE Exploratory Factor Analysis – Scale Items and Alpha Values

Factor	Proposed category	Scale Questions (Variable name)
1	Active coping (8 items, α = .910)	• Concentrate my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in (COPE2) • Get emotional support from others (COPE5) • Take action to try to make the situation better (COPE7) • Get help and advice from other people (COPE10) • Try to come up with a strategy about what to do (COPE14) • Get comfort and understanding from someone (COPE15) • Try to get advice or help from other people about what to do (COPE23) • Think hard about what steps to take (COPE25)
2	Emotion-focused (6 items, α = .827)	• Give up trying to deal with it (COPE6) • Criticise myself (COPE13) • Give up the attempt to cope (COPE16) • Express my negative feelings (COPE21) • Learn to live with it (COPE24) • Blame myself for things that have happened (COPE26)
3	Humour (3 items, α = .732)	• Make jokes about it (COPE18) • Accept the reality of the fact that it has happened (COPE20) • Make fun of the situation (COPE28)
4	Religion (2 items, α = .803)	• Try to find comfort in my religion or spiritual beliefs (COPE22) • Pray or meditate (COPE27)
5	Denial (2 items, α = .705)	• Say to myself "this isn't real" (COPE3) • Refuse to believe that it has happened (COPE8)
6	Substance use (2 items, α = .884)	• Use drugs or alcohol to make myself feel better (COPE4) • Use alcohol or other drugs to help me get through it (COPE11)
7	Distraction (4 items, α = .735)	• Turn to work or other activities to take my mind off things (COPE1) • Try to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive (COPE12) • Look for something good in what is happening (COPE17) • Do something to think about it less (COPE19)

4.2.3.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis of adapted Brief COPE

In order to use the seven coping categories that emerged for the EFA in structural equation modelling, and to confirm these factors as valid constructs, a Confirmatory

Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted. CFA was first developed by Jöreskog (1969), and tested whether a group of measures were valid indicators of an underlying construct (Holmes-Smith, 2015).

Four of the seven factors consisted of more than 2 items each, and therefore each could be run independently to test model fit and factor loadings. These four factors included: active coping, emotion-focused coping, coping through humour, and coping through distraction.

Modification indices were examined in order to determine if any alterations needed to be made to improve model fit. Byrne (2009) explains that model misspecification can be captured through examination of modification indices, the value of which represents an expected drop in the overall χ^2 value if the parameter were to be freely estimated in a subsequent run, thereby potentially improving the model fit.

Coping through humour was the only factor of the four that demonstrated adequate model fit with no adjustments. The *coping through distraction* factor was found to have acceptable model fit, although modification indices indicated a covariance between two of the four items in the distraction factor (#1 *Turn to work or other activities to take my mind off things*, and #19 *Do something to think about it less…*). This covariance aligns with theoretical underpinnings of this construct, as it reflects the style of distractive coping suggested by Carver (1997) in the creation of the scale. Adding this covariance improved the model fit.

Examination of the *active coping* and e*motion-focused coping* constructs revealed that several covariances existed between some items, and these same items demonstrated poor factor loadings (< .3) considerably lower factor loadings than other items. This resulted in three items being removed from the a*ctive coping* factor (#2 "*Concentrate my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in*"; #14 "*Try to come up with a strategy about what to do*"; and #15 "*Get comfort and understanding from someone*") and one item removed from the e*motion-focused coping* factor (#24 *"Learn to live with it"*). The decision to delete these items was informed from both a conceptual/theoretical and statistical perspective. The items that loaded poorly either differed from the other items in that factor or were very similar to another item (see list below for removed items in relation to other items). These items also demonstrated lower communality scores in the EFA earlier (<.5).

Upon removing these items, the *emotion-focused coping* factor demonstrated good fit indices with no further modifications required. The active coping modification indices once again showed two covariances in the model, between items #7 *Take action to try to make the situation better*, and #25 *Think hard about what steps to take*, and items #5 *Get emotional support from others* and #10 *Get help and advice from other people*. These covariances also align with categories suggested by Carver (1997), indicating an active coping or planning approach, and seeking support, suggesting that planning and thoughts of seeking support are subsets of active coping. Once these covariances were added, both factors were found to have adequate model fit (Table 9). These adjustments highlight the need for further studies on CFA on scales such as this. The items that form the active coping factor and the emotion-focused coping factor are listed below, *deleted items are in italics in brackets*.

- Active coping
  - *(Concentrate my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in)*
  - Get emotional support from others.
  - Take action to try to make the situation better.
  - Get help and advice from other people.
  - *(Try to come up with a strategy about what to do.)*
  - *(Get comfort and understanding from someone.)*
  - Try to get advice or help from other people about what to do.
  - Think hard about what steps to take.
- Emotion-focused coping
  - Give up trying to deal with it.
  - Criticise myself.
  - Give up the attempt to cope.
  - Express my negative feelings.
  - *(Learn to live with it.)*
  - Blame myself for things that have happened

General model fit statistic guidelines are shown in Table 9 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Table 9: Model Fit Guidelines

Measure	Satisfactory threshold
p-value for model	>.05
RMSEA	<.05 good; .05-.10 moderate; >.10 bad
LO 90	0.000
PCLOSE	>.05
χ^2/df	<3 good; <5 sometimes permissible
SRMR	<.06
GFI	>.95
AGFI	>.95
TLI	>.95
CFI	>.95 great; >.90 traditional; > .80, sometimes permissible

The model fit statistics for these 4 factors are shown in Table 10. It is noted that CFI for coping through distraction is 1.000, which can indicate perfect fit. Further analysis in future could confirm the fit of this factor.

Table 10: CFA Model Fit Statistics for Active Coping, Emotion-Focused Coping, Humour, and Distraction

Fit Statistics	Factor			
	Active	Emotion-focused	Humour	Distraction
χ^2(df, p)	5.85 (3, .119)	6.88 (5, .230)	1.446 (1, .229)	0.039 (1, .844)
RMSEA	.065	.041	.044	.000
PCLOSE	.298	.511	.352	.882
LO90	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
χ^2/df	1.949	1.376	.446	.039
SRMR	.017	.025	.013	.002
GFI	.990	.988	.996	.000
AGFI	.949	.964	.975	.999
TLI	.983	.992	.995	.024
CFI	.995	.996	.998	1.000

For the remaining three factors, model comparisons needed to be conducted, as these factors only had two items each and therefore could not be tested singularly, as there were not enough degrees of freedom for the models to successfully run. Furthermore,

model comparisons also were necessary to determine whether any factors were related or measured the same coping style as another factor, as such all seven factors were compared. Overall, all seven factors were compared to each of the other factors: 21 models were run.

The Bagozzi approach to discriminant validity was used to test whether all seven constructs would hold as independent factors when running model comparisons (Bagozzi, Yi, & Phillips, 1991). The two factors tested were drawn side by side with a covariance between them. Two versions of the whole model were then run, one unconstrained and one constrained. In the constrained model, the covariance between the two factors was constrained to 1.00, whereas in the unconstrained model this was left to be determined. Therefore, if a difference χ^2 test were to indicate that constraining the correlation between the two constructs would not significantly worsen the model fit, then we would not be able to conclude that the constructs differ, as constraining the two to be equal would result in the same model fit to the constructs being different (Holmes-Smith, 2015). When comparing all of these seven coping factors, constraining the correlation to 1.00 significantly worsened all of the models tested, therefore, it can be concluded that the each of these constructs are different and discriminant validity holds (Holmes-Smith, 2015).

4.3 Sample differences

4.3.1 Internet Use – Gender and Age Differences

Table 11 displays how frequently young people access the internet.

Table 11: Frequency of Internet Use by Total Sample

Frequency of internet use	% (N = 229)
Less than once a month	0.4 (*n* = 1)
Once or twice a week	3.0 (*n* = 7)
Every day or almost every day	47.6 (*n* = 109)
Most of the time	48.9 (*n* = 112)
Total	100 (N = 229)

It is evident that young people were frequently online, with a majority of young people using the internet *most of the time, every day or almost every day*.

More than half (59.0 %, *n* = 135) of participants accessed the internet after 11pm. Table 12 displays how frequently this sub-set of young people are accessing the internet after 11pm. Internet use after 11pm was examined as this has been highlighted in the SWO reports as being a group of young people who are at risk of being socially disconnected (Spears et al., 2015c, 2016a, 2016b).

Table 12: Frequency of Internet Use After 11pm By Total Sample

Frequency of internet use after 11pm	% (N = 229)
Less than once a week	10.0 (*n* = 23)
2-3 times a week	20.1 (*n* = 46)
4-5 times a week	10.5 (*n* = 24)
6-7 times a week	13.1 (*n* = 30)
Not selected	46.3 (*n* = 106)*
Total	100 (N = 229)

*NB: This 106 number includes 94 young people who were not offered this question as a result of not accessing the internet after 11pm. An additional 12 young people did not select a response.

Analysis of Variance with Tukey post-hoc indicated a significant strong effect of age and frequency of internet use after 11pm, though it is noted that due to the small sub-sample size these findings should be interpreted with caution, $F(5, 128) = 3.92$, $p = .002$, with those aged 16 ($n = 22$, $M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.19$) accessing the internet more frequently than those aged 13 ($n = 28$, $M = 1.96$, $SD = 1.07$, $p = .01$, $d = 1.00$). Cohen's *d* guidelines for effect sizes suggest that: .2 = small effect, .5 = medium effect, .8 = large effect (Cohen, 1988).

There were no significant differences between genders and frequency of internet use, or frequency of internet use after 11pm ($p > .05$).

4.3.2 Cyberbullying

In this thesis, to ensure clarity, *cybervictimisation* is used to indicate a target or victim's experiences, and *cyberbullying*, refers to the bully or perpetrator's experiences.

4.3.2.1 Cyberbullying Behaviours – Gender and Age Differences

Participants were asked a series of questions about their experiences of cyberbullying and cybervictimisation. This section of the survey was organised into two parts: the first focused on the types of media that had been used in experiences (such as text messages, social media); and the second on behaviours they had experienced (such as being sent

nasty messages, deliberately ignored). These questions were asked from both a cybervictim and a cyberbully perspective. These questions were then coded into the cyber categories as outlined in section 4.2.1. As Levene's test for homogenous variances was violated ($p < .05$) in this section, a *t*-test not assuming equal variances was conducted for each.

Analysis revealed that males ($n = 95$, $M = 1.56$, $SD = 1.33$) had been victimised significantly more often than females ($n = 134$, $M = 1.04$, $SD = 0.31$) through online gaming, $t(101) = 3.68$, $p < .001$, $d = .54$. Males ($n = 95$, $M = 1.54$, $SD = 1.41$) also had bullied others significantly more often than females ($n = 134$, $M = 1.01$, $SD = 0.09$) through online gaming, $t(95) = 3.65$, $p < .001$, $d = .53$. There were no other significant differences between victims and perpetrators of cyberbullying by gender ($p > .05$).

In terms of individual behaviours, females ($n = 134$, $M = 1.47$, $SD = 0.80$) were victimised via nasty text messages or received prank calls significantly more often than males ($n = 95$, $M = 1.18$, $SD = .48$), $t(222) = 3.42$, $p = .001$, $d = .44$. Females ($n = 134$, $M = 1.10$, $SD = 0.32$) also had sent nasty messages or made prank calls significantly more often than males ($n = 95$, $M = 1.02$, $SD = 0.14$), $t(197) = 2.41$, $p = .017$, $d = .32$. Females ($n = 134$, $M = 1.55$, $SD = 1.03$) also were deliberately ignored or left out of conversations/chats/events over the internet significantly more often than males ($n = 95$, $M = 1.19$, $SD = 0.55$), $t(213) = 3.44$, $p = .001$, $d = .44$. There were no other significant differences between cybervictims and cyberbullies and gender. There also was no difference between genders and frequency of involvement in cybervictimisation or cyberbullying. This indicated that whilst there were slight differences in certain cyberbullying or cybervictimisation experiences between males and females, there are no significant differences in terms of cyberbullying or cybervictimisation overall. In other words, cyberbullying and cybervictimisation experiences in this sample, are no more or less prevalent in males than females, or across ages.

4.3.2.2 Actions Taken in Response to Cyberbullying – Gender and Age Differences by total sample

Table 13 explains actions taken if cybervictimisation had been experienced. Participants could choose more than one response, and results indicated that telling friends and/or parents were the most preferred actions. This is supported in later findings (section 4.3.4).

Table 13: Actions Taken For Dealing with Cybervictimisation Experiences by Total Sample

Action	%	(N = 229)
I told a friend	35.8	(*n* = 82)
I told my brother or sister	14.4	(*n* = 33)
I told my parents	31.9	(*n* = 73)
I told a teacher	14.4	(*n* = 33)
I told the police	2.6	(*n* = 6)
I blocked the bully/ the messages	36.2	(*n* = 83)
I reported it to the website/ service provider	8.7	(*n* = 20)
I changed my email address or mobile phone number	7.7	(*n* = 18)
I kept a record of the messages	21.0	(*n* = 48)
I bullied the bully back	7.4	(*n* = 17)
I ignored the person or people who were cyberbullying me	29.7	(*n* = 68)
I did nothing about being bullied	8.7	(*n* = 20)
I told someone else	4.8	(*n* = 11)

Given that Levene's test for homogenous variances was violated ($p < .05$), a *t*-test not assuming equal variances was conducted. Analysis revealed that males ($n = 95$, $M = 0.25$, $SD = 0.44$) were less likely to have told friends about being cyberbullied than females ($n = 134$, $M = 0.43$, $SD = .51$), $t(217) = 2.90$, $p = .004$, $d = .41$; males ($n = 95$, $M = 0.24$, $SD = 0.43$) were less likely to have blocked the bully/ the messages than females ($n = 134$, $M = 0.45$, $SD = 0.51$), $t(218) = 3.33$, $p = .001$, $d = .45$; males ($n = 95$, $M = 0.13$, $SD = 0.33$) were less likely to have kept a record of the messages than females ($n = 134$, $M = 0.27$, $SD = 0.45$), $t(226) = 2.76$, $p = .006$, $d = .35$; and males ($n = 95$, $M = 0.20$, $SD = 0.40$) were less likely to have ignored the person than females ($n = 134$, $M = 0.37$, $SD = .48$), $t(221) = 2.82$, $p = .005$, $d = .38$. However females ($n = 134$, $M = 0.04$, $SD = 0.19$) were less likely to have bullied the bully back than males, ($n = 95$, $M = 0.12$, $SD = 0.32$), $t(140) = 2.13$, $p = .035$. $d = .30$.

Whilst results initially indicated a decline with age and certain actions, the differences did not reach significance.

4.3.2.3 Cyber status – Gender and Age Differences

Cyberbullying questions were recoded to form distinct cyberbully, cybervictim and cyberbully-victim categories (See Section 4.2), in order to make meaningful comparisons between groups (see Spears, Taddeo, Daly, Stretton, & Karklins, 2015). These cyber status categories are mutually exclusive: an individual can only be in one

particular category. Cyberbullying also was examined by creating an aggregated score of frequency of cybervictimisation and frequency of perpetration, in order to determine any relationships between frequency of involvement and particular behaviours, rather than just categorisations. Table 14 displays the distribution of cyber status across the total sample.

Table 14: Cyber Status Distribution by Total Sample

Category	%	(N = 229)
Not involved	41.5	(*n* = 95)
Cybervictim	26.6	(*n* = 61)
Cyberbully	1.3	(*n* = 3)
Cyberbully-victim	30.6	(*n* = 70)
Total	100	(N = 229)

58% of the total sample reported experiencing cyberbullying or cybervictimisation in some shape or form at some stage in the past school term (previous 10 weeks). This is a higher prevalence rate than previous studies have found (see ACMA, 2009; 2013, Spears et al., 2014) and reflects the categorisation which considers that once online is enough: as the repetition aspect can be attributed to others viewing and or forwarding on. This high prevalence rate also reflects the wide variation reported internationally, due to the way the problem is defined in terms of timeframe and frequency. There were no significant gender or age differences by cyber status, or frequency of cyberbullying or cybervictimisation, however this distribution can be seen in Appendix I.

4.3.3 Coping

Organic factor analysis extracted seven factors (see section 4.2.3 for details) from a total of 28 items. These included: active coping, emotion-focused coping, coping through humour, coping through religion, denial, substance use, and distraction. CFA confirmed these factors with some modifications (removal of items) to active coping and emotion-focused coping.

4.3.3.1 Gender and age differences in Coping

An independent samples *t*-test was used to determine any significant differences between coping styles and gender. Given that Levene's test for homogenous variances was violated ($p < .05$), a *t*-test not assuming equal variances was conducted (excluding

coping through denial, where this assumption was not violated). Females (n = 134, M = 16.99, SD = 4.97) were significantly more likely to cope using active coping than males (n = 95, M = 14.92, SD = 5.58), $t(187) = 2.90$, p = .004, d = .39. Females (n = 134, M = 13.00, SD = 5.02) were significantly more likely to cope using emotion-focused coping than males (n = 95, M = 9.25, SD = 3.90), $t(225) = 6.35$, $p < .001$, d = .83. Although a small effect, which requires investigation in larger studies, females (n = 134, M = 3.90, SD = 1.94) were also significantly more likely to cope using denial compared to males (n = 95, M = 3.37, SD = 1.68), $t(227) = 2.17$, p = .031, d = .29.

Whilst these findings suggest that females may be more likely to cope using a diverse range of strategies (*emotion-focused coping, active coping, and denial*) which may be dependent upon the type of issue being experienced, males may be less inclined to admit to using these methods of coping (particularly emotion-focused and denial). See Chapter 2 for a more thorough discussion of male stigma and coping. These gender differences are supportive of past research, which suggests that females are more likely to use emotion-focused coping than males (Phelps & Jarvis, 1994; Schenk & Fremouw, 2012). However, the differences found in this study between gender and coping, and the full extent of this relationship will be explored further in Chapter 5. There was no significant effect of age on coping intentions ($p > .05$).

4.3.2.2 Coping When Online

Analysis revealed significant differences between certain coping styles and those who accessed the internet after 11pm and those who did not. Those who accessed the internet after 11pm (n = 135, M = 8.88, SD = 3.49) were significantly more likely to cope through humour than those who did not access the internet after 11pm (n = 94, M = 7.66, SD = .2.86), $t(220) = 2.89$, p = .005, d = .38. Additionally, those who accessed the internet after 11pm (n = 135, M = 2.72, SD = 1.53) were significantly more likely to cope through substance use than those who do not access the internet after 11pm (n = 94, M = 2.24, SD = .97), $t(224) = 2.89$, p = .005, d = .37. This highlights some potential coping characteristics of this at risk group of young people who are online late at night.

There were no significant differences between frequency of internet use and different coping styles.

4.3.3.3 Coping and Cyberbullying

As self-identified cybervictims (n = 61) and self-identified cyberbully-victims (n = 70) make up more than 50% of the sample (n = 131), examination of their coping response patterns was undertaken. Almost half of cyberbully-victims, and more than half of cybervictims, indicated they would *cope actively.* The next most popular form of coping was *distraction*, as evident in Table 15. However, when running analysis of variance, no significant differences were found between all 4 groups and coping intentions. These findings are seemingly contrary to past research, which by contrast, suggests that young people may engage in emotion-focused coping styles if they are involved in cyberbullying (Jacobs, Dehue, Völlink, & Lechner, 2014; Jacobs, Völlink, Dehue, & Lechner, 2015). This may be an artefact of the identification procedure, therefore, it was important to look at the differences in terms of *frequency of involvement* in cyberbullying and cybervictimisation and coping intentions, to determine if any differences were evident here. This relationship will be investigated more thoroughly in path modelling in Chapter 5.

Table 15 displays cyberbully-victims' and cybervictims' likelihood of coping using the seven coping styles. These frequencies represent the collapsing of *likely* or *highly likely* categories. Participants could select more than one option, and therefore, could indicate coping in multiple ways.

Table 15: Frequency of Coping Style by Cyberbully-victims and Cybervictims

	Cyber status (% within)	
Coping Style	Cyberbully-victims (n = 61)	Cybervictims (n = 70)
Active	48.86	54.76
Emotion-focused	24.26	19.02
Humour	38.83	36.63
Religion	17.85	14.00
Denial	7.15	8.25
Substance use	6.40	1.60
Distraction	40.35	45.9

Correlations were examined to gain an understanding of any relationships that may exist between frequency of cyberbullying and cybervictimisation involvement and likelihood of coping in any one of the seven styles. Active coping was found to negatively correlate with frequency of cybervictimisation: r (229) = - .163, p = .01; and cyberbullying: r (229) = - .175, p = .008. This finding suggests that the more young

people cyberbully or are cybervictimised, the less likely they engage in active coping strategies. Only frequency of cybervictimisation was found to be positively correlated with emotion-focused coping, r (229) = .145, p = .03, and coping through substance use, r (229) = .252, p < .001, suggesting that the more young people are victimised by cyberbullying the more likely they may cope using these methods. These findings are consistent with past research, which suggest that young people are likely to use emotion-focused coping strategies when involved in cyberbullying or cybervictimisation (Jacobs et al., 2014, 2015). Therefore, these findings such that the more young people are victimised by cyberbullying, the more likely they may be to use emotion-focused coping strategies, and the less likely they may be to cope using active coping strategies.

The relationships between coping, help seeking, and mental health, and how these may/may not differ in terms of cyberbullying and/or cybervictimisation involvement will be further explored through structural equation modelling in Chapter 5.

4.3.4 Help Seeking

This section will discuss help seeking intentions as measured by the General Help seeking Scale (Rickwood et al., 2005). Table 16 on the following page displays the frequency of responses to each source of help measured in this scale. Participants could select more than one response.

Table 16: General Help Seeking Scale Frequencies

Help Seeking Option	Scale % (N = 229)				
	Highly Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Likely	Highly Likely
Boyfriend/girlfriend	33.2 (n = 76)	8.7 (n = 20)	13.5 (n = 31)	23.6 (n = 54)	21 (n = 48)
Friend (not related to you)	7.9 (n = 18)	7.0 (n = 16)	7.9 (n = 18)	38.4 (n = 88)	38.9 (n = 89)
Parent/carer	14.8 (n = 34)	10.0 (n = 23)	12.7 (n = 29)	24.0 (n = 55)	38.4 (n = 88)
Brother/sister	24.0 (n = 55)	14.4 (n = 33)	15.3 (n = 35)	25.3 (n = 58)	21.0 (n = 48)
Other relative/family member	21.0 (n = 48)	16.2 (n = 37)	20.1 (n = 46)	25.8 (n = 59)	17.0 (n = 39)
Teacher	34.5 (n = 79)	21.0 (n = 48)	21.0 (n = 48)	15.3 (n = 35)	8.3 (n = 19)
Professional at school	31.0 (n = 71)	17.0 (n = 39)	22.3 (n = 51)	19.7 (n = 45)	10.0 (n = 23)
Family doctor	49.8 (n = 114)	25.3 (n = 58)	16.6 (n = 38)	5.7 (n = 13)	2.6 (n = 6)
Professional outside school	48.0 (n = 110)	23.6 (n = 54)	14.8 (n = 34)	8.7 (n = 20)	4.8 (n = 11)
Phone help line	47.2 (n = 108)	25.8 (n = 59)	13.5 (n = 31)	9.6 (n = 22)	3.9 (n = 9)
Online help from professional	49.8 (n = 114)	23.6 (n = 54)	14.4 (n = 33)	7.9 (n = 18)	4.4 (n = 10)
Online help from non-professional	52.0 (n = 119)	22.3 (n = 51)	13.5 (n = 31)	7.4 (n = 17)	4.8 (n = 11)
I would not seek help from anyone	47.6 (n = 109)	17.9 (n = 41)	16.2 (n = 37)	10.0 (n = 23)	8.3 (n = 19)
Someone who is not listed above	62.0 (n = 142)	18.3 (n = 42)	14.4 (n = 33)	3.5 (n = 8)	1.7 (n = 4)

Table 16 indicates that the *most popular/likely sources of help seeking are informal* sources, such as boyfriends or girlfriends, friends, parents, and siblings. The *least common/likely sources include more formal sources,* such as family doctors, professionals outside of school but also online sources, including, phone help lines and online help, both professional and non-professional. This suggests that young people may prefer informal sources of help compared to formal and online sources. These findings reiterate the results of past research, which suggest that young people are more likely to turn to their friends and family for support compared to professional help (Hunter et al., 2004; Michelmore & Hindley, 2012; Spears et al., 2015a, 2016a).

Findings also revealed 20.1 % (n = 46) of the total sample recognised online safety campaigns or resources such as *Cybersmart*, or *@ppreciate*, with *Cybersmart* and *BeyondBlue* reported most frequently by young people in the sample.

The help seeking items have been aggregated in past research to form an overall score of *intention to seek help* (see Wilson, 2003; Wilson et al., 2005). The items in the help seeking scale also were aggregated in this study, to enable meaningful comparisons with previous studies, other constructs used in this research, and to create a measure of overall intention to seek help. The scale item "I would not seek help from anyone" was reverse coded for consistent directionality so that higher scores on this item would be in line with the other items. The item "someone not listed above" was not included. The reliability of this aggregate as measured by Cronbach's alpha was 0.85.

4.3.4.1 Gender and Age Differences in Seeking Help

Subsequent analysis indicated that females (M = 4.19, SD = 1.07) were significantly more likely to seek help from friends than males (M = 3.57, SD = 1.30), $t(176.35)$ = 3.86, $p < .001$, d = .52. No other significant gender differences were evident.

Multivariate analysis of variance revealed significant main effects in regards to age and intentions to seek help from some sources as well as significant differences between specific ages. Main effects were found in regards to age and seeking help from: teachers, $F(5, 223) = 2.39$, $p = .039$, $\eta^2 = .051$; professionals at school, $F(5, 223) = 2.86$, $p = .016$, $\eta^2 = .060$; professionals outside of school, Welch's $F(5, 223) = 3.48$, $p = .014$, $\eta^2 = .078$; family doctor, Welch's $F(5, 223) = 5.09$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2 = .091$; phone helplines, Welch's $F(5, 223) = 3.76$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2 = .085$; and online non-professionals, Welch's $F(5, 223) = 2.92$, $p = .030$, $\eta^2 = .064$.

Post-Hoc analysis revealed several significant differences between ages, however, only the differences between youngest and oldest ages will be reported in order to understand only the most substantial differences between ages. Games-Howell tests indicated that those aged 17, were significantly less likely to seek help from a family doctor (n = 18, M = 1.28, SD = .57) and phone helplines (n = 18, M = 1.5, SD = .86), than those aged 13, (n = 48, M = 2.33, SD = 1.23, $p < .001$, d = 1.09) (n = 48, M = 2.48, SD = 1.35, p = .013, d = 0.87) respectively.

Analysis of variance revealed a significant main effect in regard to help seeking overall and age, $F(5, 229) = 3.36$, $p = .006$, $\eta^2 = .07$. Tukey post-hoc revealed those aged 16 ($n = 27$, $M = 32.00$, $SD = 9.27$) were significantly less likely to seek help overall, than those aged 13, ($n = 48$, $M = 39.6$, $SD = 11.19$, $p = .02$, $d = 0.74$).

4.3.4.2 Help seeking, Internet Use, and Cyberbullying

Overall, the aggregated score of help seeking was negatively correlated with frequency of internet use, r (229) = - .153, $p = .02$. *This indicates that young people who were online more often were less likely to seek help in general.* Analysis also revealed that those who accessed the internet after 11pm ($n = 135$, $M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.54$) were significantly less likely to seek help from a parent than those who do not access the internet after 11pm ($n = 94$, $M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.18$), $t(224) = 3.96$, $p < .001$, $d = .52$. *Help seeking intentions overall however, was not significantly different for young people who accessed the internet after 11pm and those who did not.*

Examination of response patterns from those who were identified as cyberbully-victims revealed that informal sources were much more likely sources of help compared to formal sources (consistent with the total sample). There were no significant relationships, however, between frequency of involvement in cyberbullying or cybervictimisation and particular help seeking intentions, or the help seeking aggregate. This *indicates that those frequently involved in cyberbullying or cybervictimisation were neither more, nor less, likely to seek help than those who have never been involved in cyberbullying or cybervictimisation.* This suggests that help seeking may be influenced by personal characteristics such as age, or gender, more than cyberbullying or cybervictimisation experiences themselves. This highlights that it is important to encourage help seeking for all young people regardless of their experiences with cyberbullying.

Table 17 displays different help seeking intentions for cyberbully-victims and cybervictims. To facilitate interpretation, these frequencies represent the collapsed responses: *unlikely* or *highly unlikely* to any one of these items. Participants could select more than one answer. The least popular sources of help were phone help lines and family doctors, with 82.8 % of cyberbully-victims being unlikely or highly unlikely to seek help from a family doctor, and 78.7 % of cybervictims being unlikely or highly unlikely to seek help from phone help lines.

Table 17: Frequency Distribution of Cyberbully-Victims And Cybervictims Unlikelihood To Seek Help

	Cyber status (% within)	
Source of help	Cyberbully-victims (n = 61)	Cybervictims (n = 70)
Boyfriend/girlfriend	35.7	40
Friend (not related to you)	11.4	13.2
Parent/carer	31.4	26.2
Brother/sister	38.5	45.9
Other relative/family member	44.3	40.7
Teacher	61.4	59.1
Professional at school	51.8	47.5
Family doctor	82.8	75.4
Professional outside school	78.6	68.9
Phone help line	75.7	78.7
Online help from professional	75.7	75.4
Online help from non-professional	74.3	73.7
I would not seek help from anyone	68.6	65.6

4.3.4.3 Help seeking and Coping

The aggregated score of help seeking positively correlated with: active coping, r (229) = .550, $p < .001$; religious coping, r (229) = .160, p = .010; denial, r (229) = .137, p = .038; and distraction, r (229) = .231, $p < .001$; suggesting that there may be many ways a young person copes. Help seeking also was negatively correlated with coping through humour, r (229) = -.148, p = .025, suggesting that those who have a positive attitude to help seeking overall may be less likely to use humour as a coping strategy.

Main effects were found between not seeking help from anyone and particular coping styles: viz: emotion-focused coping, $F(4, 224) = 9.1$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .140$; humour, $F(4, 224) = 5.98$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .096$; denial, $F(4, 224) = 3.83$, $p = .005$, $\eta^2 = .064$; substance use, Welch's $F(4, 224) = 3.18$, $p = .02$; and distraction, $F(4, 224) = 3.91$, $p = .004$, $\eta^2 = .065$.

Significant differences were evident between those who indicated they would be *likely to not seek help* from anyone, and those *highly unlikely to not seek help* from anyone, and particular coping styles. Tukey post-hoc revealed that those *unlikely to seek help were significantly more likely to cope through emotion-focused coping* (n = 23, M = 14.40, SD = 4.76), *humour* (n = 23, M = 10.96, SD = 3.38), and *distraction* (n = 23, M = 13.83, SD = 3.38); than those highly likely to seek help (n = 109, M = 9.83, SD =

4.52, p = 001, d = .98) (n = 109, M = 7.69 SD = 3.30, p < 001, d = .98) (n = 109, M = 11.28, SD = 4.12, p = .033, d = .68), respectively.

This has highlighted that there is an intricate relationship between particular coping styles and help seeking intentions. In particular, this section indicated that there may be a positive relationship between seeking help and coping actively, and that emotion-focused coping may be more common in those less likely to seek help. This relationship will be explored more thoroughly through structural equation modelling in Chapter 5, as these findings certainly highlight that there may be some relationships between particular coping styles and help seeking intentions worthy of further explorations.

4.3.5 Mental Health and Wellbeing

This section discusses results related to mental health and wellbeing of young people employing the following measures, the: Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS21) (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995), Social Connectedness scale (Lee, Dean, & Jung, 2008; Lee, Draper, & Lee, 2001); and Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHCSF) (Keyes, 2002; 2007). The relationships between each of the mental health constructs measured are examined.

As expected, *social connectedness was found to be negatively correlated with all three constructs of the DASS21*: depression, r(229) = - .649, p < .001; anxiety, r(229) = - .555, p < .001; and stress, r(229) = - .598, p < .001; and *positively correlated with the MHCSF*, r(229) = .608, p < .001. Furthermore, a significant main effect was found in relation to social connectedness and severity levels of depression, F(4, 229) = 3.09, p = .017, η^2 = .066. When examining differences between severity levels, results indicated that those classified as extremely severe for levels of depression (n = 29, M = 40.83, SD = 9.51), anxiety (n = 47, M = 44.02, SD = 10.86) and stress (n = 15, M = 36.93, SD = 7.66), were *significantly less socially connected than those classified as normal for depression* (n = 118, M = 60.92, SD = 8.1, p < .001, d = 2.27), *anxiety* (n = 117, M = 59.94, SD = 9.16, p < .001, d = 1.58), and *stress* (n = 156, M = 58.07, SD = 9.95, p < .001, d = 2.38).

The MHSCF was negatively correlated with all three constructs of the DASS21: depression r(229) = - .564, p < .001, anxiety r(229) = - .481, p < .001, and stress r(229)

= - .486, $p < .001$. When examining different severity levels of the DASS21, results indicated that *those classified as extremely severe for levels of depression* ($n = 29$, $M = 40.38$, $SD = 19.47$), *anxiety* ($n = 47$, $M = 43.94$, $SD = 17.45$) and *stress* ($n = 15$, $M = 36.60$, $SD = 20.79$), had *significantly lower scores on the MHCSF* than those classified as normal for depression ($n = 118$, $M = 65.85$, $SD = 14.98$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.47$), anxiety ($n = 117$, $M = 64.91$, $SD = 15.84$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.26$), and stress ($n = 156$, $M = 62.2$, $SD = 16.09$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.38$).

These results provide a comprehensive snapshot of wellbeing, with those who have higher scores of depression, anxiety and stress, having lower scores of social connectedness and on the MHCSF.

4.3.5.1 Gender and Age Differences in Mental Health and Wellbeing

As evident in Table 18, whilst the majority of the sample were within the normal to mild ranges, it is of concern that: 22.8% ($n = 52$) of the sample were either severe or extremely severe on scores of depression; 25.7% ($n = 59$) were severe or extremely severe on scores of anxiety, and 14.8% ($n = 34$) were severe or extremely severe on scores of stress. Importantly, approximately one fifth of the sample suffered extremely severe anxiety, making it the highest category.

Table 18: DASS21 Constructs by Level of Severity

	DASS21 Construct % (N = 229)		
Severity	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
Normal	51.5 (n = 118)	51.1 (n = 117)	68.1 (n = 156)
Mild	8.7 (n = 20)	8.7 (n = 20)	7.9 (n = 18)
Moderate	17.0 (n = 39)	14.4 (n = 33)	9.2 (n = 21)
Severe	10.1 (n = 23)	5.2 (n = 12)	8.3 (n = 19)
Extremely Severe	12.7 (n = 29)	20.5 (n = 47)	6.5 (n = 15)
Total	100 (n = 229)	100 (n = 229)	100 (n = 229)

Analysis was conducted to establish differences between subsamples, specifically, if significant differences existed between males and females with regard to their DASS21 scores. Results revealed that *females were significantly more depressed* ($n = 134$, $M = 6.76$, $SD = 6.19$), $t(224) = 3.42$, $p = .001$, $d = .45$; *anxious* ($n = 134$, $M = 6.08$, $SD = 5.75$), $t(220) = 2.68$, $p = .008$, $d = .35$; and *stressed* ($n = 134$, $M = 7.22$, $SD = 5.93$), $t(225) = 3.25$, $p = .001$, $d = .43$; than *males* ($n = 95$, $M = 4.24$, $SD = 4.94$), ($n = 95$, $M = 4.19$, $SD = 4.88$), ($n = 95$, $M = 4.96$, $SD = 4.58$), respectively. .

Frequencies of the severity of depression, anxiety and stress by gender, age and school year are shown in Tables 19 and 20, and reiterate these gender differences. Those aged 13, 14 and 15 years had the highest levels of those in the severe and extremely severe categories for depression, anxiety, and stress, indicating that this may be a particularly important time to offer support. Similarly, those in years 8 and 9 had higher levels across all constructs, which may suggest those in the early years of high school are more prone to mental health concerns.

Females also were significantly less socially connected (n = 134, M = 52.51, SD = 11.88), $t(227) = 2.79$, $p = .006$, $d = .38$; and *had lower scores on the MHCSF* (n = 134, M = 54.19, SD = 17.60), $t(227) = 2.79$, $p = .006$, $d = .37$; than males (n = 95, M = 56.76, SD = 10.58), (n = 95, M = 60.72, SD = 17.23) respectively.

These findings have highlighted that *females in this study were more depressed, anxious, stressed, less socially connected, and had lower scores on the Mental Health Continuum (Short Form) than males*, indicating that they have poorer (self-reported) mental health and wellbeing overall, which supports previous studies in this area (World Health Organisation, 2014) .

Table 19: DASS21 Construct Severity Level by Age (Years)

DASS Construct and Severity Level	Gender % (*n*)		Age (years) % (*n*)					
	Female	Male	12	13	14	15	16	17
Depression								
Normal	25.8 (n = 59)	25.8 (n = 59)	0.9 (n = 2)	8.3 (n = 19)	20.5 (n = 47)	11.8 (n = 27)	5.7 (n = 13)	4.4 (n = 10)
Mild	6.1 (n = 14)	2.6 (n = 6)	0.0 (n = 0)	2.6 (n = 6)	1.7 (n = 4)	2.2 (n = 5)	1.3 (n = 3)	0.9 (n = 2)
Moderate	10.0 (n = 23)	7.0 (n = 16)	0.4 (n = 1)	4.4 (n = 10)	2.6 (n = 6)	6.6 (n = 15)	1.3 (n = 3)	1.7 (n = 4)
Severe	7.0 (n = 16)	3.1 (n = 7)	0.0 (n = 0)	2.6 (n = 6)	1.7 (n = 4)	3.5 (n = 8)	1.7 (n = 4)	0.4 (n = 1)
Extremely Severe	9.6 (n = 22)	3.1 (n = 7)	0.4 (n = 1)	3.1 (n = 7)	4.4 (n = 10)	2.6 (n = 6)	1.7 (n = 4)	0.4 (n = 1)
Anxiety								
Normal	27.1 (n = 62)	24.0 (n = 55)	0.9 (n = 2)	9.6 (n = 22)	19.7 (n = 45)	11.8 (n = 27)	4.8 (n = 11)	4.4 (n = 10)
Mild	4.4 (n = 10)	4.4 (n = 10)	0.0 (n = 0)	0.9 (n = 2)	2.6 (n = 6)	3.9 (n = 9)	0.9 (n = 2)	0.4 (n = 1)
Moderate	8.3 (n = 19)	6.1 (n = 14)	0.4 (n = 1)	4.4 (n = 10)	3.9 (n = 9)	3.5 (n = 8)	1.7 (n = 4)	0.4 (n = 1)
Severe	4.4 (n = 10)	0.9 (n = 2)	0.0 (n = 0)	0.9 (n = 2)	0.4 (n = 1)	2.6 (n = 6)	0.4 (n = 1)	0.9 (n = 2)
Extremely Severe	14.4 (n = 33)	6.1 (n = 14)	0.4 (n = 1)	5.2 (n = 12)	4.4 (n = 10)	4.8 (n = 11)	3.9 (n = 9)	1.7 (n = 4)
Stress								
Normal	35.8 (n = 82)	32.3 (n = 72)	1.3 (n = 3)	12.7 (n = 29)	23.6 (n = 54)	17.5 (n = 40)	7.9 (n = 18)	5.2 (n = 12)
Mild	4.8 (n = 11)	3.1 (n = 7)	0.0 (n = 0)	3.5 (n = 8)	1.7 (n = 4)	1.7 (n = 4)	0.9 (n = 2)	0.0 (n = 0)
Moderate	6.1 (n = 14)	3.1 (n = 7)	0.4 (n = 1)	1.7 (n = 4)	2.2 (n = 5)	3.5 (n = 8)	0.0 (n = 0)	1.3 (n = 3)
Severe	5.7 (n = 13)	2.6 (n = 6)	0.0 (n = 0)	2.2 (n = 5)	1.3 (n = 3)	2.2 (n = 5)	1.7 (n = 4)	0.9 (n = 2)
Extremely Severe	6.1 (n = 14)	0.4 (n = 1)	0.0 (n = 0)	0.9 (n = 2)	2.2 (n = 5)	1.7 (n = 4)	1.3 (n = 3)	0.4 (n = 1)

Table 20: DASS21 Construct Severity Level by School Year Level

DASS Construct and Severity Level	Year Level % (N = 229) 8	9	10	11
Depression				
Normal	20.5 (*n* = 47)	19.2 (n = 44)	3.5 (n = 8)	8.3 (n = 19)
Mild	3.1 (*n* = 7)	3.1 (n = 7)	0.4 (n = 1)	2.2 (n = 5)
Moderate	6.1 (*n* = 14)	5.7 (n = 13)	2.6 (n = 6)	2.6 (n = 6)
Severe	2.6 (*n* = 6)	4.4 (n = 10)	0.9 (n = 2)	2.2 (n = 5)
Extremely Severe	5.7 (*n* = 13)	3.1 (n = 7)	3.1 (n = 7)	0.9 (n = 2)
Anxiety				
Normal	21.0 (n = 48)	19.7 (n = 45)	2.6 (n = 6)	7.9 (n = 18)
Mild	2.2 (n = 5)	4.4 (n = 10)	0.9 (n = 2)	1.3 (n = 3)
Moderate	5.7 (n = 13)	5.2 (n = 12)	1.7 (n = 4)	1.7 (n = 4)
Severe	1.3 (n = 3)	1.3 (n = 3)	1.3 (n = 3)	1.3 (n = 3)
Extremely Severe	7.9 (n = 18)	4.8 (n = 11)	3.9 (n = 9)	3.9 (n = 9)
Stress				
Normal	26.6 (n = 61)	25.8 (n = 59)	4.8 (n = 11)	10.9 (n = 25)
Mild	3.9 (n = 9)	2.2 (n = 5)	1.3 (n = 3)	0.4 (n = 1)
Moderate	2.6 (n = 6)	3.5 (n = 8)	1.7 (n = 4)	1.3 (n = 3)
Severe	3.1 (n = 7)	1.3 (n = 3)	1.7 (n = 4)	2.2 (n = 5)
Extremely Severe	1.7 (n = 4)	2.6 (n = 6)	0.9 (n = 2)	1.3 (n = 3)

4.3.5.2 Internet use, Cyberbullying and Mental Health

Analysis revealed positive correlations between frequency of internet use and stress, $r(229) = .167$, $p = .01$; and anxiety, $r(229) = .150$, $p = .02$, and a significant negative correlation was found between the MHCSF and frequency of internet use, $r(229) = -.193$, $p = .003$. There was no significant relationship with social connectedness. This suggests that young people who access the internet more often, have poorer mental health and wellbeing, than those who access the internet less frequently. Alternatively, it could indicate that those with already existing poor mental health are going online more often. Longitudinal research is needed to explore this relationship further.

No significant differences were found between young people generally, who reported accessing the internet after 11pm and those who did not: with scores on the DASS21, social connectedness scale or on the MHCSF.

Analysis revealed significant main effects with regard to levels of depression, $F(3, 228) = 5.18$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2 = .065$. Analysis of Variance with Tukey post-hoc tests revealed that *cyberbully-victims* ($n = 70$, $M = 7.66$, $SD = 6.15$) *were significantly more depressed than those non-involved* ($n = 95$, $M = 4.17$, $SD = 5.21$, $p = 001$, $d = .612$).

Significant main effects also were evident with regard to levels of anxiety. Welch's $F(3, 229) = 5.62$, $p = .016$, $\eta^2 = .079$ with Games-Howell post-hoc analysis revealed that *cyberbully-victims* ($n = 70$, $M = 7.27$, $SD = 5.95$) *were significantly more anxious than those non-involved* ($n = 95$, $M = 3.67$, $SD = 4.68$, $p < .001$, $d = .672$).

Additionally, Analysis of Variance revealed significant main effects with regard to levels of stress, $F(3, 229) = 5.17$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2 = .065$. Tukey post-hoc tests revealed that *cyberbully-victims* ($n = 70$, $M = 8.19$, $SD = 5.73$) *were significantly more stressed than those non-involved* ($n = 95$, $M = 4.88$, $SD = 5.11$, $p = .001$, $d = .604$).

DASS21 scores across each cyber status can be seen in Table 21. These results highlights that *cyberbully-victims are a highly vulnerable group in terms of depression, anxiety and stress, more so than the other categories, particularly those non-involved, which is consistent with past research* (Campbell, Spears, Slee, Butler, & Kift, 2012; Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder, & Lattanner, 2014; Spears et al., 2015a; van Geel, Vedder, & Tanilon, 2014).

Table 21: DASS21 Construct Severity Level by Cyber Status

DASS Construct and Severity Level	Cyber status % (*n*) (N = 229)			
	Non involved	Victim	Bully	Bully/victim
Depression				
Normal	26.6 (n = 61)	13.1 (n = 30)	0.4 (n = 1)	11.4 (n = 26)
Mild	3.1 (n = 7)	2.2 (n = 5)	0.4 (n = 1)	3.1 (n = 7)
Moderate	4.8 (n = 11)	5.2 (n = 12)	0.4 (n = 1)	6.6 (n = 15)
Severe	3.1 (n = 7)	2.6 (n = 6)	0.0 (n = 0)	4.4 (n = 10)
Extremely Severe	3.9 (n = 9)	3.5 (n = 8)	0.0(n = 0)	5.2 (n = 12)
Anxiety				
Normal	27.5 (n = 63)	12.7 (n = 29)	0.4 (n = 1)	10.5 (n = 24)
Mild	2.6 (n = 6)	2.2 (n = 5)	0.4 (n = 1)	3.5 (n = 8)
Moderate	5.7 (n = 13)	3.9 (n = 9)	0.4 (n = 1)	4.4 (n = 10)
Severe	0.4 (n = 1)	2.2 (n = 5)	0.0 (n = 0)	2.6 (n = 6)
Extremely Severe	5.2 (n = 12)	5.7 (n = 13)	0.0 (n = 0)	9.6 (n = 22)
Stress				
Normal	31.9 (n = 73)	17.0 (n = 39)	1.3 (n = 3)	17.9 (n = 41)
Mild	3.5 (n = 8)	1.7 (n = 4)	0.0 (n = 0)	2.6 (n = 6)
Moderate	1.3 (n = 3)	4.8 (n = 11)	0.0 (n = 0)	3.1 (n = 7)
Severe	3.1 (n = 7)	2.2 (n = 5)	0.0 (n = 0)	3.1 (n = 7)
Extremely Severe	1.7 (n = 4)	0.9 (n = 2)	0.0 (n = 0)	3.9 (n = 9)

A significant main effect was evident between cyber status and social connectedness, Brown-Forsythe $F(3, 225) = 4.81$, $p = .003$, $\eta^2 = .041$. Results indicated that those classified as *cyberbully-victims* ($n = 70$, $M = 51.39$, $SD = 1.36$) *were significantly less socially connected than those classified as non-involved* ($n = 95$, $M = 56.22$, $SD = 1.17$, $p = .04$, $d = 3.81$).

Whilst ANOVA revealed a significant main effect with regard to the MHCSF and cyber status, $F(3, 225) = 2.86$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2 = .037$, post-hoc analysis revealed that this did not reach significance.

Correlations were examined between mental health and frequency of cybervictimisation and cyberbullying perpetration. As expected, frequency of cybervictimisation was positively correlated with depression, $r(229) = .393$, $p < .001$; anxiety, $r(229) = .363$, $p < .001$; and stress, $r(229) = .381$, $p < .001$; and negatively correlated with both social connectedness, $r(229) = -.324$, $p < .001$; and the MHCSF, $r(229) = -.275$, $p < .001$. Cyberbullying frequency, however, was positively correlated with depression, $r(229)$

= .138, p = .038; and anxiety, $r(229)$ = .176, p = .008; but had no relationship with stress, social connectedness, or the MHCSF.

This section has underlined that those classified as *cyberbully-victims are a particularly vulnerable group, experiencing higher levels of depression, anxiety and stress, and lower levels of social connectedness and mental health and wellbeing than those who have never been involved in cyberbullying as victim or bully*.

4.3.5.3 Coping and Mental Health

Bivariate correlation analyses revealed several weak but significant positive correlations between types of coping intentions and the three constructs of the DASS21. Positive correlations were found between emotion-focused coping and depression, $r(229) = 0.388$, $p < .001$; anxiety, $r(229) = 0.335$, $p < .001$; and stress, $r(229) = 0.420$, $p < .001$; and coping through substance use and depression, $r(229) = 0.301$, $p < .001$, anxiety, $r(229) = 0.256$, $p < .001$, and stress, $r(229) = 0.261$, $p < .001$. A significant negative correlation was found between active coping and depression, $r(229) = -0.163$, $p = .014$, and anxiety, $r(229) = -0.130$, $p = .049$. These results highlight that there may be a relationship between those with an intention to use emotion-focused coping and coping though substance use and poor mental health, and that those who intend to cope actively may have more positive scores of mental health.

Significant main effects were also found in relation to severity levels of:

- depression and coping through substance use, Welch's $F(4, 224) = 3.91$, $p = .007$, $\eta^2 = .064$;
- anxiety and emotion-focused coping, Welch's $F(4, 224) = 6.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .090$, and coping through substance use, Welch's $F(4, 224) = 3.81$, $p = .010$, $\eta^2 = .071$; and
- stress and emotion-focused coping, $F(4, 224) = 7.71$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .023$; and coping through substance use, Welch's $F(4, 229) = 2.73$, $p = .043$, $\eta^2 = .110$.

Analysis of variance revealed some significant differences between levels of severity on the DASS21 and particular coping intentions. Significant differences were found between multiple levels, however only the most extreme differences are reported: between those classified as extremely severe and those classified as normal for all three constructs. Post-hoc

tests found significant differences between mean scores for emotion-focused coping and those classified as extremely severe for levels of depression (n = 29, M = 14.24, SD=4.95), anxiety (n = 47, M = 13.64, SD = 5.26) and stress (n = 15, M = 15.40, SD = 5.63), compared to those classified as normal for depression (n = 118, M = 9.80, SD = 4.01, p = .001, d = .98), anxiety (n = 117, M = 10.08, SD = 4.02, p = .001, d = .76), and stress (n = 156, M = 10.39, SD = 4.42, p < .001, d = .99), suggesting that *higher severity levels of stress, anxiety and depression may be related to engagement in emotion-focused coping.*

Significant differences also were found between mean scores for coping through substance use and those classified as extremely severe for levels of anxiety (n = 47, M = 3.11, SD = 1.98) compared to those classified as normal for anxiety (n = 117, M = 2.22, SD = .81, p = .035, d = .588), suggesting that *higher levels of anxiety may be more prevalent among those who engage in substance use as a form of coping.*

Correlations were evident between social connectedness and particular coping styles. *Social connectedness was positively correlated with active coping*, r(229) = .298, p < .001, and *negatively correlated with emotion-focused coping*, r(229) = - .380, p < .001, and *substance use*, r(229) = - .303, p < .001.

Positive correlations were found between the MHCSF and active coping, r(229) = .388, p < .001 and distraction, r(229) = .138, p = .04; and negative correlations were found with emotion-focused coping, r(229) = -.300, p < .001; and substance use, r(229) = -.324, p < .001.

These results indicate that particular coping styles, in particular, *emotion-focused coping and coping through substance use, are negatively associated with positive mental health*. These results also are concerning, given that young people engaging in maladaptive coping styles are less likely to seek help, as highlighted in Section 4.3.4.3. These relationships will be further examined in Chapter 5.

4.3.5.4 Help Seeking and Mental Health

Whilst no significant relationships were found between the help seeking index and the DASS21, *help seeking overall was positively correlated with social connectedness*, r(229) = .195 p = .003; *and the MHCSF*, r(229) = .279, p < .001, *suggesting that those with a positive attitude to help seeking may also have higher levels of social connectedness and wellbeing*.

When examining the item "*I would not seek help from anyone*" on the help seeking scale, significant main effects and differences were found between those likely to seek help and those highly unlikely to seek help and scores of: depression, $F(4, 229) = 4.25$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2 = .07$; stress, $F(4, 229) = 3.12$, $p = .016$, $\eta^2 = .053$; social connectedness, $F(4, 229) = 6.47$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .104$; and the MHCSF, $F(4, 229) = 3.96$, $p = .004$, $\eta^2 = .066$. *Young people who were likely to not seek help from anyone had significantly higher scores of depression* ($n = 23$, $M = 9.30$, $SD = 4.94$), *and stress* ($n = 23$, $M = 8.91$, $SD = 5.91$), *than those highly unlikely to not seek help from anyone*, ($n = 109$, $M = 4.81$, $SD = 5.89$, $p = .006$, $d = .826$), ($n = 109$, $M = 5.28$, $SD = 5.34$, $p = .03$, $d = .645$), respectively. Those likely to not seek help from anyone had significantly lower scores of social connectedness ($n = 23$, $M = 47.78$, $SD = 10.6$), than those highly unlikely to not seek help from anyone, ($n = 109$, $M = 57.86$, $SD = 10.56$, $p = .001$, $d = .953$). Finally, those likely to not seek help from anyone had significantly lower scores on the MHCSF ($n = 23$, $M = 49.04$, $SD = 14.51$), than those highly unlikely to not seek help from anyone, ($n = 109$, $M = 60.26$, $SD = 17.37$, $p = .04$, $d = .701$).

These results suggest that *those who have a negative attitude to help seeking, and particularly those who have indicated that they would be likely to not seek help from anyone, are a vulnerable group in terms of mental health outcomes, and experience higher levels of depression, anxiety and stress, and lower levels of social connectedness and wellbeing than those more willing to seek help.*

4.3.6 Sample differences - Brief Summary

The results thus far have highlighted the complex relationships between cyberbullying and cybervictimisation, help seeking, coping and mental health. This section has indicated that, whilst some young people would cope actively with cyberbullying or cybervictimisation experiences, those who choose alternate methods of coping may ultimately be less likely to seek help, and subsequently have poorer mental health outcomes. Results thus far have indicated that *social connectedness may play a role in the relationship between coping and help seeking*, due to the many relationships that have been found with both. The following Chapter will examine these findings further, by exploring the relationships between young people's involvement in cyberbullying and cybervictimisation, and their coping, help seeking, and mental health and wellbeing through the use of structural equation modelling. This will further explain the path relationships between coping and help seeking, and possible mediating or moderating factors. Furthermore, Chapter 5 will determine if any factors

influence the effects of cyberbullying on mental health, and will compare findings to other research in the field.

In summary, this chapter had the following main insights:

- *Active coping* (e.g. thinking of steps to take or seeking support) was the *most frequently reported coping intention for coping with cyberbullying by cybervictims and cyberbully-victims,* followed by distraction;
- *Social connectedness is related to many variables, and may be associated with active coping;*
- *Cyberbully-victims are the most vulnerable group*, having poorer mental health compared to those non-involved; and
- *Young people who engage in dysfunctional coping styles, including emotion-focused coping and substance use, tend to have poorer mental health compared to those who engage in active coping.*

5 Results- Part 2 – Structural Equation Modelling

5.1 Structural Equation Modelling - Overview

This section examines the relationships between cyberbullying, help seeking, coping and mental health by employing structural equation modelling and mediation analysis (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Mediation occurs when a given variable accounts for the relationship between the predictor variable and the criterion or dependent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The cyberbullying construct was interrogated in two ways. First, the observed variables used in Chapter 4 of frequency of cybervictimisation (an aggregated score of cybervictimisation items) and frequency of cyberbullying (an aggregated score of cyberbullying items) were examined as the initial predictors in all models: predicting coping, help seeking, social connectedness, and mental health outcomes. Whilst the following examinations of relationships will attempt to unravel the predictors on help seeking and mental health in this study, as this is a cross- sectional study, findings will need to be treated cautiously and should be re-examined in future longitudinal studies. The models and analyses are informed by the hypotheses this thesis is testing. It is important to note that whilst variables are found to predict each other, the interpretations and conclusions drawn are not causal or necessarily one-directional.

Continuous frequency variables were used to examine cyberbullying involvement in the first instance as this can help to capture greater variance. Second, using the same scales, involvement in cyberbullying was re-coded to form two distinct categories: *involved and non-involved*; to determine any differences between models, regardless of frequency or status: that is, cyberbully, cybervictim or cyberbully-victim. This would allow for any relationships determined to not only be examined across the total sample, but also depending on whether participants had either no experience of cyberbullying or having experienced it at some stage in the past term.

A multiple model approach with the two groups: involved and non-involved; was conducted to test each model. This involved constraining all paths to be equal in one model and leaving them to be freely determined in the other. When doing this, if a difference χ^2 test were to indicate that constraining the correlation between all of the constructs did not significantly worsen the model fit, then we would not conclude that the models differ

between groups, as constraining the two to be equal resulted in equal model fit to the constructs being different (Holmes-Smith, 2015). As such if the constrained model was significantly different to the unconstrained model, this would indicate that the two groups had statistically significant differences in the models. This approach enabled model comparison to determine if the model fit was acceptable for both sub samples (involved and non-involved in cyberbullying), and if relationships between coping, help seeking, and mental health differed between the two groups. This was also used to test differences between males and females.

Fourteen (14) models are presented in this Chapter. Each of the models, examining help seeking and mental health as outcome variables (2 separate models initially), were tested with each style of coping directly predicting help seeking and mental health. Initial hypotheses as well as the research questions informed the placement of these constructs in each of the models. The models were run in order to examine what influences a young person's decision to seek help, whether it be coping style, social connectedness, or mental health. However, it must be noted that due to the cross sectional nature of this study, causal outcomes cannot be concluded. Rather, the preliminary focus is on investigating relationships and the significance of these relationships.

Given the correlations evident between social connectedness, coping, help seeking, and mental health, mediation analyses were then conducted to establish if *social connectedness mediated the relationship between: coping and help seeking; and coping and mental health* (as predicted in the initial hypotheses, see below Figure 3 for specific hypotheses). The full models were then run to test the relationships between the observed frequency variable of cyberbullying and cybervictimisation, and the latent variables of social connectedness, each coping style, and help seeking. Each coping style was examined independently in the testing of the path models, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between cyberbullying, social connectedness, help seeking and mental health and each identified coping style: active coping; emotion-focused coping; coping through humour; coping through distraction; coping through denial; coping with substance use; and coping through religion. The model analyses followed a nine step process:

Predicting outcome variable: Help seeking

Step 1: Testing of relationships between cyberbullying frequency and cybervictimisation frequency and each of the 7 coping styles

Step 2: Inclusion of social connectedness as a mediator between cyberbullying involvement and each coping style

Step 3: Addition of help seeking to the model as an outcome variable, predicted by cyberbullying involvement, social connectedness, and each coping style

Step 4: Analysis of the full model by non-involved and involved in cyberbullying

Predicting outcome variable: DASS21 constructs: Stress; Anxiety and Depression

Step 5: Tests of each coping style as a mediator between cyberbullying involvement and the DASS21

Step 6: Analysis of each model again (including social connectedness mediation) but with each element of the DASS21 replacing help seeking as the outcome variable

Step 7: Analysis of the full model by non-involved and involved in cyberbullying

Predicting outcome variables: DASS21 constructs and MHCSF (separate models), help seeking.

Step 8: Analysis of each model in full, including all variables and all paths, with help seeking overall as the final outcome variable.

Step 9: Analysis of each model by gender

Each model also was tested using a multiple model approach, to test for invariance across groups (involved and non-involved).

In summary, the following models were run from step 2 onwards (step 1 was simply to determine direct paths to be included in the following steps):

- Step 2 – coping and social connectedness: two models per coping style (active coping, emotion-focused coping, coping through distraction, and coping through humour) = eight models in total
- Step 3 – coping, social connectedness and help seeking: two models per coping style = eight models in total
- Step 4 – coping, social connectedness and help seeking across models: two models per coping style, constrained and unconstrained, involved and non-involved = eight models in total

- Step 5 – coping, and DASS21: two models per coping style = eight models in total
- Step 6 – coping, social connectedness and DASS21: two models per coping style – eight models in total
- Step 7 – coping, social connectedness and DASS21: two models per coping style, constrained and unconstrained, involved and non-involved = eight models in total
- Step 8 – full models, all paths and only sig paths: four each style (victim, bully, all paths, and only sig paths) = 12 models in total
- Step 9 – as above = 12 models in total

This resulted in a final 14 models to be discussed in this chapter, which were established though 72 model analyses.

Figure 3 provides a visual representation of the model analyses process. Three of the coping styles (denial, substance use, and religion) were eliminated from further model analysis early on (see section 5.2.1, and so are not included in this diagram).

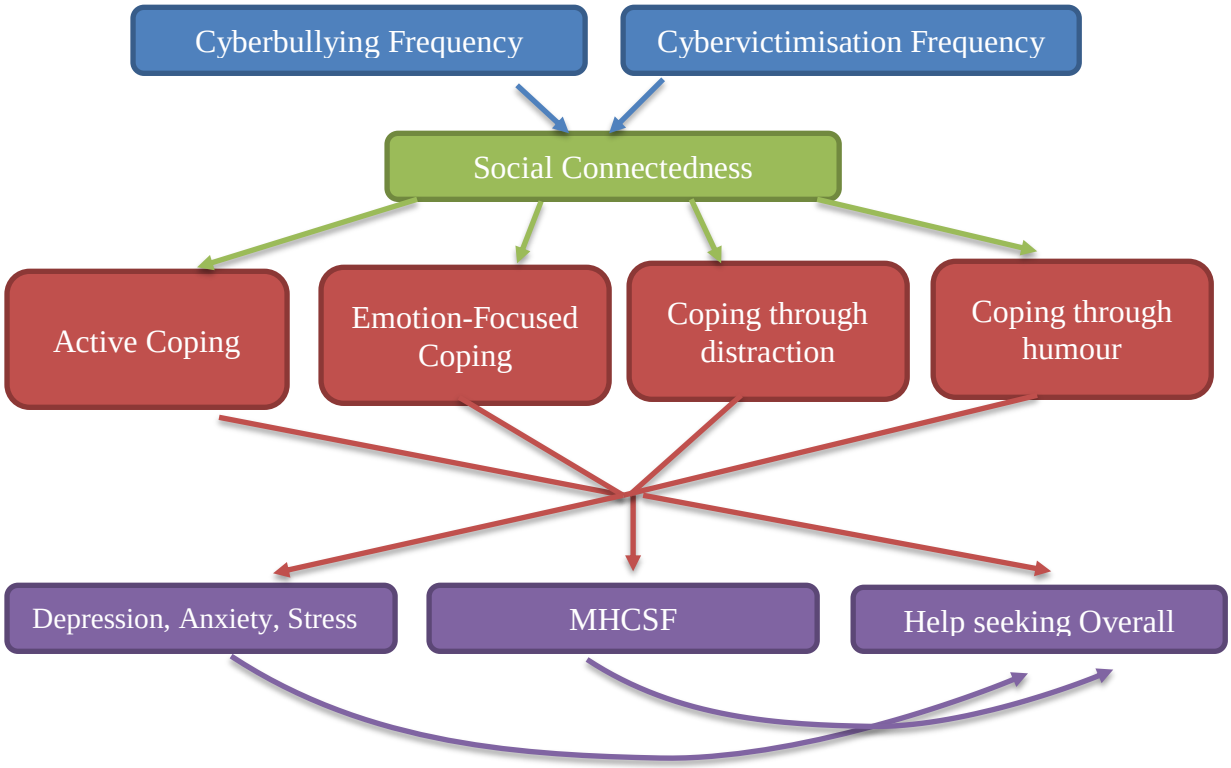


Figure 3: Model analysis process

Regression weights and significance values will be presented in Tables with each model, and variance discussed. To recap, the models tested the following hypotheses:

- H6 - Young people who have been involved in cyberbullying will be more likely to use emotion-focused styles of coping than active styles.
- H7 - There will be a positive relationship between active coping and help seeking. i.e., those who engage in active coping styles will be more likely to seek help from any source than those who engage in emotion-focused coping styles.
- H8 - Those who are more socially connected will be more likely to engage in active coping styles, and less likely to engage in emotion-focused coping styles.
- H9 - Different coping styles will mediate the relationship between involvement in cyberbullying and mental health, i.e., active coping will predict more positive mental health scores compared to emotion-focused coping.

In order to consider and include the constructs of social connectedness (Lee, Dean, & Jung, 2008; Lee, Draper, & Lee, 2001), help seeking overall (Rickwood, Deane, Wilson, & Ciarrochi, 2005), depression, anxiety and stress from the DASS21 (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995), and mental health as measured by the MHCSF (Keyes, 2002, 2007); a parameter estimates calculator (Holmes-Smith, 2015) was used to determine factor loadings and error variance. This is particularly appropriate for complex models which have multiple latent variables, and multiple observed indicators for those variables, as the number of parameters to be estimated in the model becomes too large (Holmes-Smith, 2015). This can result in the models which are 'not robust due to the confounding of measurement and structural parameter estimation problems' (Holmes-Smith, 2015). The variables and their corresponding measures to be used in the following chapter are detailed in Table 22. These are the unstandardised factor loadings. When standardised, all values are greater than .9: an excellent loading (Stevens, 2002).

Table 22: Parameter Estimates for Constructs Used In SEM

Name of Latent Variable	*SD* of Composite (s_x)	Reliability of Composite (r_x)	Factor Loading, (l) (s_x*Ör_x)	Error Variance (q) (s_x^2 [1-r_x])
DEPRESSION	5.83	0.93	5.62	2.38
ANXIETY	5.48	0.91	5.23	2.70
STRESS	5.51	0.91	5.26	2.73
MHCSF	17.70	0.96	17.32	13.48
SC	11.53	0.90	10.93	13.56
HSAll	10.17	0.85	9.38	15.41

Each of the variables included in the models are listed below, with their variable names in brackets.

- Social Connectedness (SC)
- Mental health continuum short form (MHCSF)
- Overall help seeking intentions (HELP, with HSAll as the indicator)
- Cybervictimisation frequency (VICT_FREQ)
- Cyberbullying frequency (BULLY_FREQ)
- Active coping (COPE_ACTIVE)
- Emotion-focused coping (COPE_EM)
- Coping through humour (COPE_HUMOUR)
- Coping through distraction (COPE_DIS)
- Depression (DEPRESSION, with index depression as the indicator)
- Anxiety (ANXIETY, with index anxiety as the indicator)
- Stress (STRESS, with index stress as the indicator)

Each of the styles of coping are depicted with multiple indicators, each labelled as COPE1, COPE2, etc., representing each item of the Brief COPE scale that represents that factor. The error variances are presented by a lowercase ‘e’ and number (e.g., e1). Each of the variables listed above are latent variables (with the exception of cybervictimisation frequency and cyberbullying frequency, which are observed).

As a reminder, general model fit statistic guidelines are shown in Table 23 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Table 23: Model Fit Guidelines

Measure	Satisfactory threshold
p-value for model	>.05
RMSEA	<.05 good; .05-.10 moderate; >.10 bad
LO 90	0.000
PCLOSE	>.05
χ^2/df	<3 good; <5 sometimes permissible
SRMR	<.06
GFI	>.95
AGFI	>.95
TLI	>.95
CFI	>.95 great; >.90 traditional; > .80, sometimes permissible

5.2 Structural Equation Modelling Results

5.2.1 Steps 1-4: Cyberbullying - Coping, help seeking and social connectedness

Exploratory analyses indicated a complex relationship between help seeking and coping, and it was initially hypothesised that any relationships between help seeking and coping may be influenced by social connectedness. Initial statistical tests (e.g., correlations, mean analysis, see Chapter 4) were conducted to determine the relationship between cyberbullying and cybervictimisation and each of the different coping styles, and also between each coping style and help seeking. Mediation analyses then were conducted to further test the relationships between cyberbullying, cybervictimisation and coping, and coping and help seeking, before examining all factors collectively. Note Chin's (1998) guidelines were used to determine the level of meaning to standardised loadings and amount of variance explained in each of the models. Chin (1998) explains that standardised values should be at least 0.20 or 0.30 or higher to be meaningful, and variance values of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 are considered substantial, moderate, and weak respectively.

Step 1 of the modelling process involved initial analysis of the relationships between cybervictimisation frequency and cyberbullying frequency and each of the coping styles: active; emotion-focused; humour; distraction; denial; substance use; and religion. Initial analysis indicated negative relationships between: cybervictimisation frequency; cyberbullying frequency; and active coping, *suggesting the more young people are victimised or bully others, the less likely they are to cope actively*. The standardised un-mediated direct effect of cybervictimisation frequency on active coping was -.188 (p = .007), and the effect of cyberbullying frequency was -.167 (p = .017).

There was no significant direct effect of cybervictimisation frequency -.003 (p = .965) or cyberbullying frequency -.022 (p = .766) on distraction. A positive relationship existed between cybervictimisation frequency and emotion-focused coping, with the standardised un-mediated direct effect of cybervictimisation frequency on emotion-focused coping.178 (p = .012), *suggesting the more young people are victimised the more likely they are to use emotion-focused coping*.

There was no significant direct effect of cyberbullying frequency on emotion-focused coping (standardised direct effect of .034, p = .625). There was no significant direct effect of cybervictimisation frequency or cyberbullying frequency on coping through humour, with the standardised un-mediated direct effect of cybervictimisation frequency on coping through humour being .037 (p = .590), and the effect of cyberbullying frequency being .008 (p = .908).

A small number of latent variables, namely coping styles of denial, substance use, and religion, demonstrated negative error variances. A potential reason for this could be due to having a small number of factors contributing to the variable, particularly in a smaller sample size or if the factor loadings are low (see Kline, 2011). Furthermore, given that exploratory analysis (see Chapter 4) revealed that these three coping styles were the least popular sources of coping among young people, and had few significant relationships with cybervictimisation, cyberbullying or help seeking, the testing of the subsequent models focused on the more commonly used coping methods of *'active coping', 'emotion-focused coping', 'coping through humour', and 'distraction'.* This also aligned with the hypotheses proposed in this thesis which focused predominately on emotion-focused coping and active coping, and potential mediators: such as social connectedness, which will be examined in the following section.

To recap: active coping involves actively taking steps to cope (such as asking for support or thinking of steps to take); emotion-focused coping involved an emotional response (such as self- blame or giving up trying to cope); coping though humour involves making fun of the situation or making jokes about it; and coping through distraction involves distracting from the situation, either by thinking about it in a positive light or doing something to avoid thinking about it.

5.2.1.1 Step 2 - Coping and Social Connectedness Mediation

Given the positive relationship between social connectedness and help seeking (see Chapter 4), it was important to isolate and examine the relationship between social connectedness and coping before adding it to more complex models which predicted help seeking and included mental health constructs. To determine any mediation and indirect effects that may be evident, bootstrapping was performed for each of the models with 5000 samples, and bias-corrected confidence intervals set to 95 %.

5.2.1.1.1 Active Coping

Cybervictimisation Frequency

As mentioned, the standardised un-mediated direct effect of cybervictimisation frequency on active coping was -.188 (p = .007). When social connectedness was added, the path become non-significant, with a standardised value of -.082 (p = .250), however a significant indirect effect still existed (standardised indirect effect: -.105 (.001), 95 % CI (-.186, -.046). This indicated that social connectedness fully mediated the relationship between cybervictimisation frequency and active coping. A negative relationship between cybervictimisation frequency and social connectedness and a positive relationship between social connectedness and active coping were evident (Table 24). *This indicates, that whilst cybervictimisation was not a direct predictor of the use of active coping strategies, young people who were more socially connected were more likely to use active coping strategies, and suggests that social connectedness may act as a protective mechanism*. In other words, if active coping is viewed as a positive coping style, then social connectedness may protect those who are frequently cybervictimised from coping in other, dysfunctional ways. This model accounts for 12 % of the variance in active coping.

To determine model fit, the non-significant direct path was removed and the model was tested. All regression weights can be seen in Table 24, with standard errors in parentheses. This model is depicted in Figure 4, showing the standardised values, and model fit is shown in Table 25. All p values suggest that the regression path estimates are significantly different from zero and should be retained in the model.

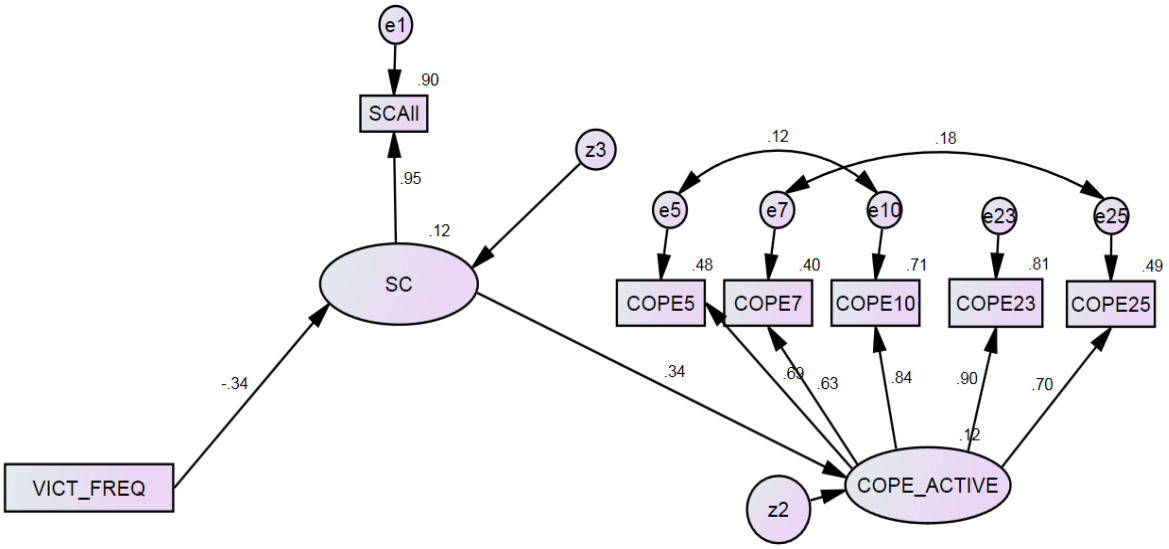


Figure 4: Model 1a.

Cyberbullying frequency

The standardised un-mediated direct effect of cyberbullying frequency on active coping was -.167 (p = .017). In contrast to the cybervictimisation model, when running this model again, the relationship between cyberbullying frequency and social connectedness was not significant, with a direct effect of -.009 (p = .895). Therefore, *whilst social connectedness remained a positive predictor of active coping, it did not mediate the relationship between cyberbullying frequency and active coping.* Path modelling also revealed that young people who indicated they had bullied others were unlikely to engage in active coping strategies (Figure 5). This model accounts for 14 % of the variance in active coping.

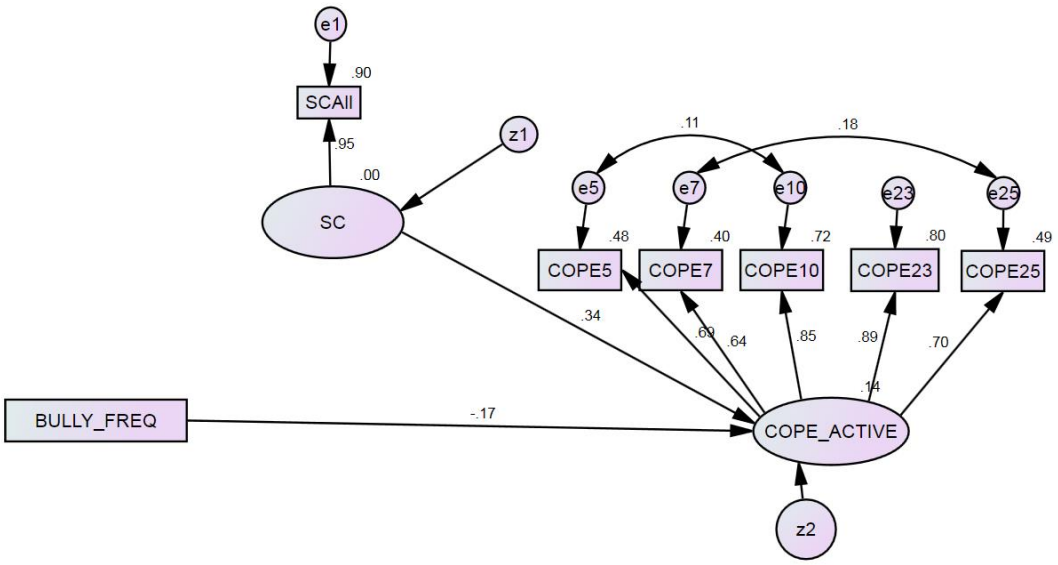


Figure 5: Model 1b.

Table 24: Regression Weights Models 1a and 1b

Victim model paths	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Cybervictimisation frequency			
→Active coping	-.009 (.008)	-.082	.250
→Social connectedness	-.041 (.008)	-.344	.000
Social connectedness → Active coping	.320 (.070)	.340	.000
Bully model paths	**Unstandardised**	**Standardised**	***p***
Cyberbullying frequency			
→Active coping	-.050 (.020)	-.166	.013
→Social connectedness	-.003 (.022)	-.009	.895
Social connectedness → Active coping	.318 (.070)	.337	.000

Table 25: Model 1a and 1b Fit Statistics

Fit Statistics	Victim model	Bully model
χ^2(df, p)	18.908 (12, .091)	17.472 (12, .133)
RMSEA	.050	.045
PCLOSE	.449	.530
LO90	0.000	0.000
χ^2/df	1.576	1.456
SRMR	.038	.029
GFI	.978	.978
AGFI	.948	.948
TLI	.980	.984
CFI	.989	.991

5.2.1.1.2 Emotion-Focused coping

Cybervictimisation Frequency

Investigations into the model predicting the outcome variable of emotion-focused coping, revealed the standardised un-mediated direct effect of cybervictimisation frequency on emotion-focused coping was .178 (p = .012), however with the inclusion of social connectedness, the path become non-significant, .023 (p = .733). Consistent with Model 1, a negative relationship was once again evident between cybervictimisation frequency and social connectedness. A negative relationship also was evident between social connectedness and emotion-focused coping, *suggesting that young people who were more socially connected were less likely to engage in emotion-focused coping strategies in response to being cyberbullied.*

The standardised indirect effect of cybervictimisation frequency on emotion-focused coping was .154 (.000), 95 % CI (.006, .022). This suggests that social connectedness fully mediates the relationship between cybervictimisation frequency and emotion-focused coping.

Therefore, *if young victims of cyberbullying are more socially connected, there is less tendency they will engage in emotion-focused coping in response to being victimised.*

To determine model fit, the non-significant direct path was removed and the model tested. All regression weights can be seen in Table 26. This model is depicted in Figure 6 below, showing the standardised values, and model fit is shown in Table 27. Model 2 (Figure 6) accounts for 21 % of the variance in emotion-focused coping.

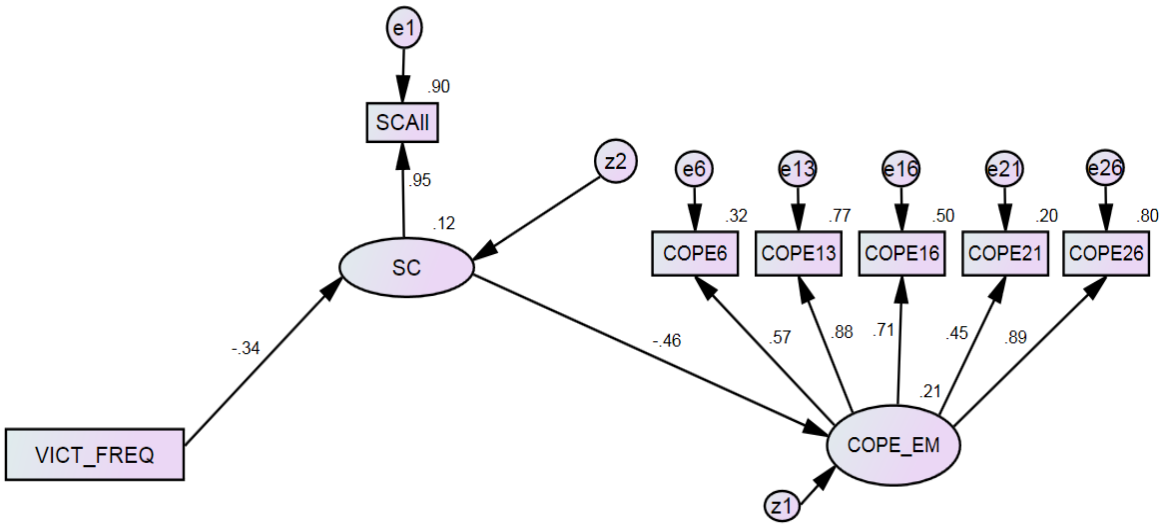


Figure 6: Model 2.

Cyberbullying Frequency

When running this model again with cyberbullying frequency, both the path to social connectedness (p = .895) and the path to emotion-focused coping (p = .628), were not significant. The unstandardised estimate of social connectedness on emotion-focused coping remained significant at -.309, suggesting that a 1 unit increase in social connectedness would result in a .309 decrease in emotion-focused coping, p < .001. The standardised regression weight (effect size) of this path was -.458. This indicates that *whilst there is a significant effect on emotion-focused coping from social connectedness, cyberbullying frequency had no effect on emotion-focused coping intentions or levels of social connectedness*.

Given, that cyberbullying frequency has been found to have no relationship with emotion-focused coping, help seeking, or social connectedness, it will not be examined any further with emotion-focused coping in this section. This suggests *that the mediating effect of*

social connectedness on coping intentions may not be significant for those who frequently cyberbully others compared to those who are frequently victimised.

Table 26: Regression Weights Model 2

Victim model paths	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Cybervictimisation frequency			
→Emotion-focused coping	.002 (.005)	.023	.733
→Social connectedness	-.041 (.008)	-.343	.000
Social connectedness → Emotion-focused coping	-.310 (.050)	-.459	.000
Bully model paths	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Cyberbullying frequency			
→ Emotion-focused coping	-.007 (.014)	-.031	.628
→Social connectedness	-.003 (.022)	-.009	.895
Social connectedness → Emotion-focused coping	-.309 (.055)	-.458	.000

Table 27: Model 2 Fit Statistics

Fit Statistics	Emotion-focused coping (cybervictimisation model)
χ^2(df, p)	22.7114 (14, .065)
RMSEA	.052
PCLOSE	.420
LO90	0.000
χ^2/df	1.622
SRMR	.039
GFI	.973
AGFI	.946
TLI	.976
CFI	.984

5.2.1.1.3 Coping through Humour

Coping through humour was found to have no significant relationship with cybervictimisation frequency (p = .720), cyberbullying frequency (.918), or social connectedness in both the victim and bully models (p = .687, p = .579). However, given a direct path exists between coping through humour and help seeking, this will be examined in section 5.2.1.3.

5.2.1.1.4 Coping through Distraction

Cybervictimisation Frequency

Cybervictimisation frequency did not demonstrate a significant direct relationship with Coping through distraction (p = .429), however, upon performing bootstrapping when social

connectedness was added as a mediator, a significant indirect effect was found at -.071 (.013), 95 % CI (-.146, -.016). Specifically, a positive relationship was evident between social connectedness and coping through distraction, which *suggests that social connectedness predicted this particular coping style, and suggests that those who are more socially connected may be more likely to cope using distraction than those who are less socially connected*. All direct regression weights can be seen in Table 28. Model 3 is depicted in Figure 7 below, showing the standardised values, and model fit is shown in Table 29. All *p* values suggest that the regression path estimates are significantly different from zero and should remain in the model. Though very small and requiring further investigation, this accounts for 3 % of the variance in coping through distraction.

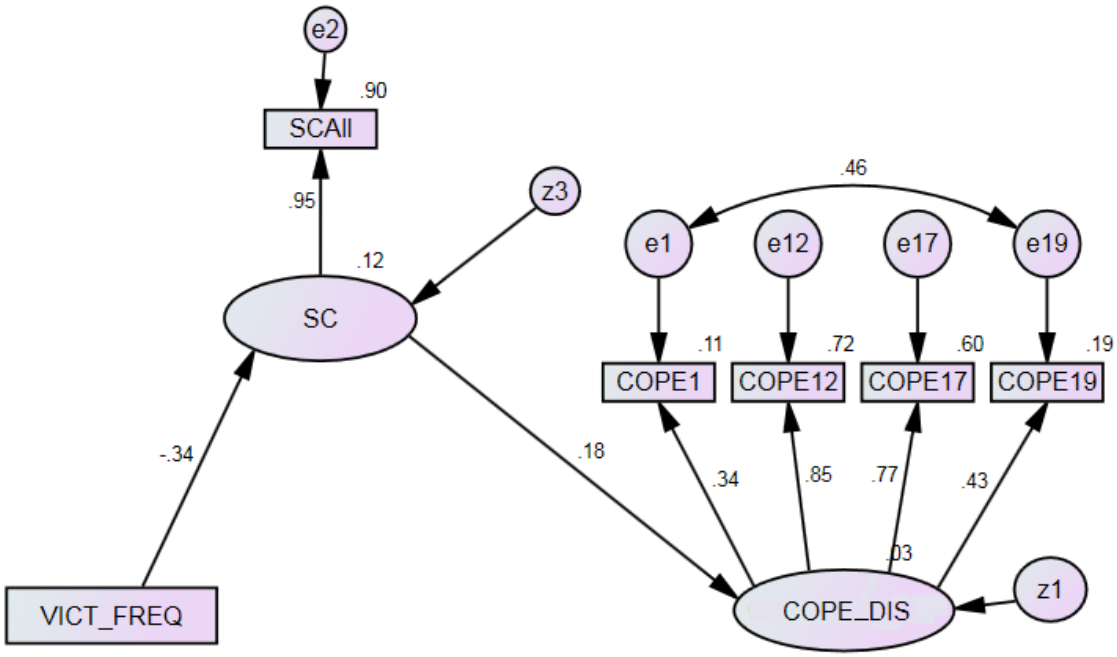


Figure 7: Model 3.

Cyberbullying Frequency

Cyberbullying frequency did not demonstrate a significant relationship with coping through distraction (p = .724) or social connectedness (p = .895), and therefore this model was not tested any further. All regression weights can be seen in Table 28.

Table 28: Regression Weights Model 3

Victim model paths	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Cybervictimisation frequency			
→Distraction	.003 (.004)	.062	.429
→Social connectedness	-.041 (.008)	-.341	.000
Social connectedness → Distraction	.077 (.036)	.184	.032
Bully model paths	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Cyberbullying frequency			
→ Distraction	-.003 (.010)	-.026	.725
→Social connectedness	-.003 (.022)	-.009	.895
Social connectedness → Distraction	-.078 (.036)	.186	.030

Table 29: Model 3 Fit Statistics

Fit Statistics	Coping through distraction (cybervictimisation model)
χ^2(df, p)	10.533 (8, .230)
RMSEA	.037
PCLOSE	.585
LO90	0.000
χ^2/df	1.317
SRMR	.037
GFI	.985
AGFI	.961
TLI	.982
CFI	.991

5.2.1.1.5 Step 2 Summary

Results thus far have indicated that *social connectedness mediated the direct effect of cybervictimisation frequency on coping intentions*. *This suggests that those who were more socially connected were more likely to cope actively or through distraction when frequently cybervictimised, and less likely to use emotion-focused coping*. As such social connectedness may provide a buffer between cybervictimisation and negative coping strategies. Analysis also has indicated that this mediating role of social connectedness on coping intentions is not significant in models that investigated relationships with frequency of cyberbullying compared with cybervictimisation.

This next section examines the mediated relationship with social connectedness when help seeking intentions is added as an outcome variable.

5.2.1.2 Step 3 - Coping, Social Connectedness and Help Seeking

Given the many relationships that were evident between cyberbullying and cybervictimisation, coping, help seeking, and social connectedness, it was important to run the initial help seeking models with social connectedness added as a mediating variable, to determine whether the effects from coping to help seeking remained significant or whether social connectedness played a role.

The standardised, un-mediated direct effect of social connectedness on help seeking was .223 (p = .003). Initial tests also indicated that active coping and coping through distraction had strong positive direct relationships with help seeking overall, *indicating that the more young people intended to cope using these styles, the more likely they were to seek help* (active coping standardised effect: .637 p < .001; distraction standardised effect: .293, p = .003). Coping through humour demonstrated a significant negative effect on help seeking intentions (standardised effect: -.205, p = .007), whilst no significant relationship was evident with emotion-focused coping (standardised effect: -.044, p = .562).

5.2.1.2.1 Active Coping

Cybervictimisation Frequency

In the active coping model, cybervictimisation frequency had a direct positive relationship with social connectedness but had no direct significant effect on active coping (p = .307), though the indirect effect found through social connectedness in section 5.2.1.1 was still significant, again highlighting that social connectedness fully mediates the relationship between cybervictimisation frequency and active coping. However, social connectedness had no significant effect on help seeking overall, with a direct, standardised mediated path of .005 (p = .942). The standardised indirect effect of social connectedness on help seeking was .216 (p = .000), 95 % CI (.124, .329). This indicated that *active coping fully mediated the relationship between social connectedness and help seeking, suggesting that the use of active coping may influence the effect of social connectedness on help seeking* (Figure 8). In summary, Model 4a suggests *the more a young person was victimised the less likely they were to be socially connected*. Given that social connectedness mediates the relationship between cybervictimisation and active coping, which is a desired coping style that further positively predicts help seeking, *it is important to support young people to build social connections.*

Path modelling investigations revealed a strong relationship between active coping and help seeking. Given that two items (COPE23 and COPE10) in the active coping construct made reference to seeking help, which could impact on the mediation of active coping on the effect of social connectedness on help seeking, the two items were removed and the relationship between the two variables was re-examined to establish if the removal of the two items affected the relationship in any way. *In this instance, the change of the effect from active coping to help seeking was minimal when the help seeking related items were removed from the active coping construct. This indicated that the two items did not contribute to over- or under-estimating the effects on the model and as such were retained in the active coping construct and subsequent analyses.* Furthermore, as each manifest variable loaded quite strongly on the factor (all greater than .60), this suggests that *each of the variables* are contributing adequately to one underlying latent variable of active coping.

All regression weights can be seen in Table 30. This model is depicted in Figure 8 below, showing the standardised values. Model fit statistics can be seen in Table 31. This model accounts for 41 % of the variance in help seeking intentions.

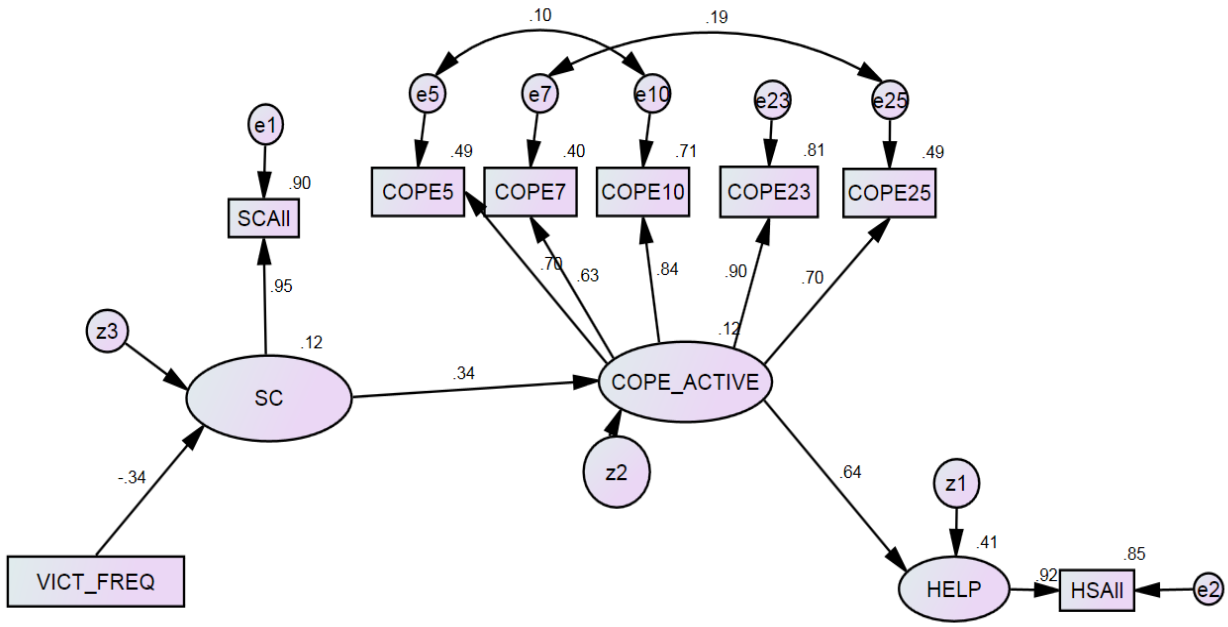


Figure 8: Model 4a.

Cyberbullying Frequency

Model 4b substituted cybervictimisation frequency with cyberbullying frequency. As previously established, cyberbullying frequency demonstrated no significant relationship with

social connectedness (p = .896), however the direct path to active coping remained strong. Consistent with path investigations related to Model 4a, social connectedness had no significant effect on help seeking (p = .877). This model is depicted in Figure 9 below, showing the standardised values. All regression weights can be seen in Table 30. This model accounts for 40 % of the variance in help seeking. Findings indicated that *active coping was a significant positive predictor of help seeking for both bullies and victims*. The relationships between the key constructs of the models discussed above, namely, social connectedness, coping and help seeking will be further tested across non-involved and involved in cyberbullying categories, to determine if these relationships hold across both categories (Section 5.2.1.3).

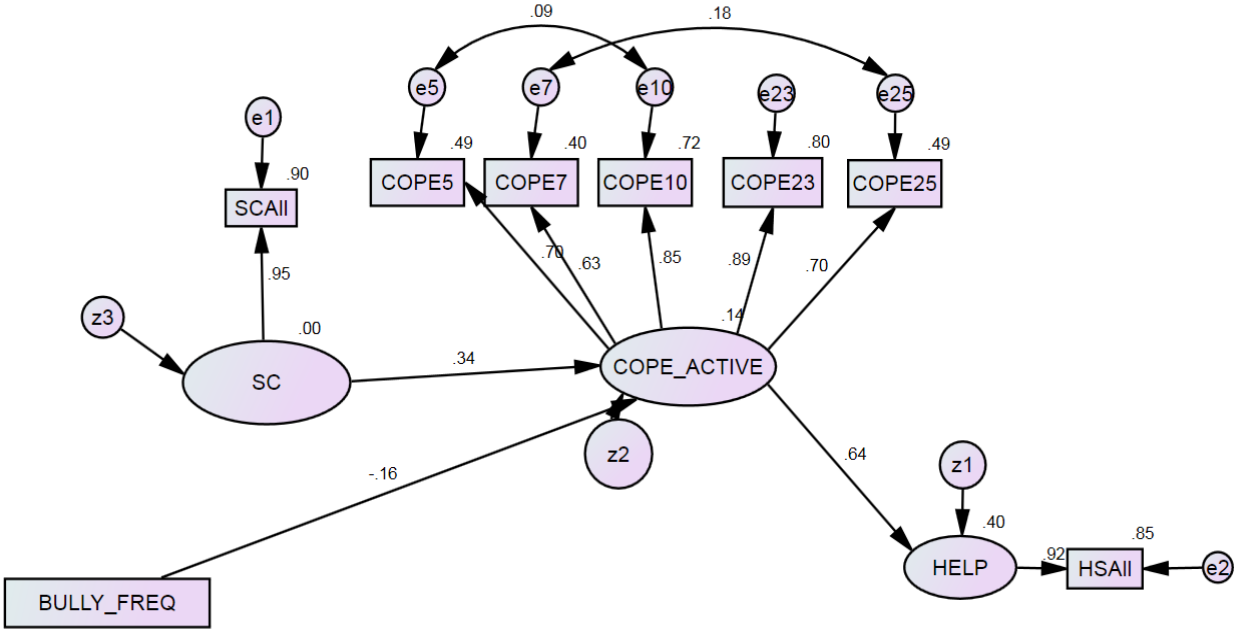


Figure 9: Model 4b.

Social connectedness did not mediate the relationship between cyberbullying frequency and active coping intentions, in contrast to Model 4a. With cyberbullying frequency negatively predicting active coping (though it should be noted this is a weak relationship in this model), it is important to promote and encourage active coping for cyberbullies, and to also consider the role and importance of social connectedness as a significant predictor of active coping.

Table 30: Regression Weights Model 4a and 4b

Victim model paths	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Cybervictimisation frequency			
→ Social connectedness	-.041 (.008)	-.344	.000
→ Active coping	-.007 (.008)	-.073	.307
Active coping → Help seeking	.669	.636	.000
Social connectedness			
→ Help seeking	.005 (.068)	.005	.942
→ Active coping	.324 (.071)	.340	.000
Bully model paths	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Cyberbullying frequency			
→ Social connectedness	-.003 (.022)	-.009	.896
→ Active coping	-.047 (.020)	-.155	.020
Active coping → Help seeking	.665 (.081)	.635	.000
Social connectedness			
→ Help seeking	.011 (068)	.011	.877
→ Active coping	.322 (.070)	.337	.000

Table 31: Model 4a and 4b Fit Statistics

Fit Statistics	Victim model	Bully model
χ^2(df, p)	22.223 (18, .222)	22.920 (18, .194)
RMSEA	.032	.035
PCLOSE	.739	.708
LO90	0.000	0.000
χ^2/df	1.235	1.273
SRMR	.035	.032
GFI	.977	.975
AGFI	.953	.950
TLI	.991	.989
CFI	.994	.993

5.2.1.2.2 Emotion-Focused Coping

As previously established: frequency of cybervictimisation had no direct effect on emotion-focused coping when social connectedness was added to the model, but a significant indirect effect was evident (p = .000); and whilst social connectedness did have an effect on help seeking, emotion-focused coping did not have an effect on help seeking. This will be further examined in a full model in section 5.2.3, which will include all paths (significant and non-significant) in order to understand all direct and indirect effects.

5.2.1.2.3 Coping through Humour

Investigations have established that there is no significant relationship between cyberbullying involvement or social connectedness and coping through humour (direct or indirect), however *there was a significant negative effect of coping through humour on help seeking*. This relationship holds even when social connectedness is added to the model, which overall accounts for 9 % of the variance in help seeking (Figure 10). It is noted that item "COPE20 - Accept the reality of the fact that it has happened" loaded at .35 here, however given that it has loaded at a higher value EFA, in initial mediation testing, in other models, and has model fit, this item was retained for further examination. Furthermore, Hair, Tatham, Anderson, and Black (1998) explain that in a sample of approximately 250, a loading level of .35 is acceptable. Also, whilst it is noted that this item is related to acceptance, it was retained in order to aid in understanding if coping through humour may be a way of accepting the situation (Kuiper, 2012; Lefcourt, 2001). Further factor analysis on this scale may wish to examine this item further. Regression weights are shown in Table 32, and model fit in Table 33.

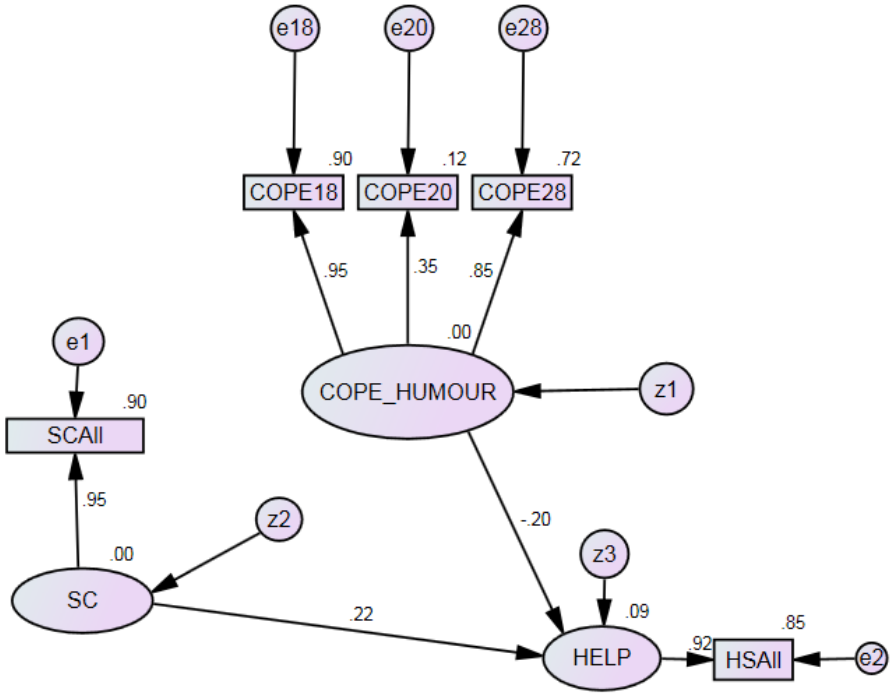


Figure 10: Model 5

Table 32: Regression Weights Model 5

Path	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Humour → Help seeking	-.149 (.056)	-.198	.008
Social connectedness→ Help seeking	.216 (.073)	.216	.003

Table 33: Model 5 Fit Statistics

Fit Statistics	Coping through Humour
χ^2(df, p)	3.698 (5, .594)
RMSEA	.000
PCLOSE	.819
LO90	0.000
χ^2/df	.740
SRMR	.025
GFI	.993
AGFI	.980
TLI	1.009
CFI	1.000

5.2.1.2.4 Coping through Distraction

Coping through distraction has already been found to have no direct relationship with cybervictimisation frequency (though it is does have an indirect effect, -.071 (.013), 95 % CI (-.146, -.016)), and a positive relationship with social connectedness. This model revealed that distraction also demonstrated a direct positive influence on help seeking, as did social connectedness. Given that it has been established there are no relationships between cyberbullying frequency and coping through distraction or social connectedness in this model, this was not tested further. The overall relationship between social connectedness, coping through distraction and help seeking will be tested across models in Step 4 (Section 5.2.1.3).

All regression weights can be seen in Table 34. This model is depicted in Figure 11 below, showing the standardised values, and model fit is shown in Table 35. All *p* values suggest that the regression path estimates are significantly different from zero and should remain in the model. This model accounts for 11 % of the variance in help seeking. It is recognised that item "COPE1" loads at .35 in this model, but given it has loaded at a higher value in CFA and in initial mediation analyses, and this has model achieved excellent model fit in CFA and in each model analysis, it was retained. Furthermore, given the covariance of item "COPE1 - Turn to work or other activities to take my mind off things" and "COPE19 - Do something to think about it less", it did not make theoretical sense to remove this item from this construct.

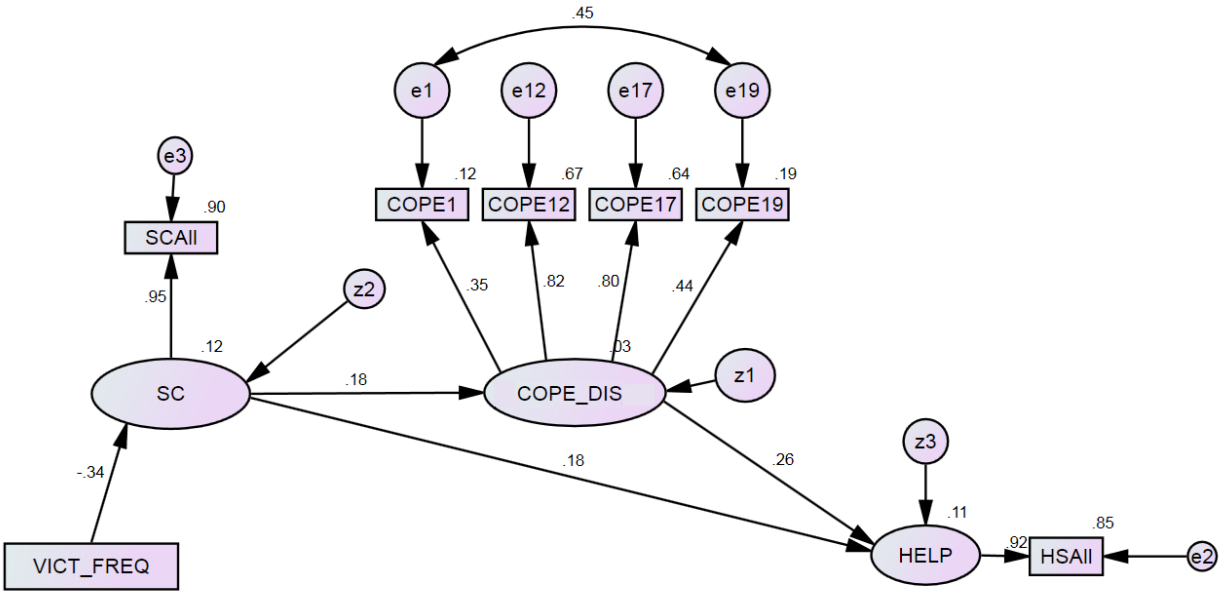


Figure 11: Model 6.

Table 34: Regression Weights Model 6

Victim model paths	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Cybervictimisation frequency			
→ Social connectedness	-.040 (.008)	-.340	.000
→ Distraction	.003 (.004)	.068	.392
Distraction → Help seeking	.606 (.220)	.260	.006
Social connectedness			
→ Help seeking	.175 (.074)	.175	.018
→ Distraction	.076 (.036)	.177	.037

Table 35: Model 6 Fit Statistics

Fit Statistics	Coping through distraction
χ^2(df, p)	15.545 (12, .213)
RMSEA	.036
PCLOSE	.642
LO90	0.000
χ^2/df	1.295
SRMR	.037
GFI	.981
AGFI	.956
TLI	.979
CFI	.988

5.2.1.2.5 Step 3 Summary

Step 3 involved *the addition of help seeking to each model as an outcome variable, predicted by cyberbullying involvement, social connectedness, and each coping style*. Analysis in this section has highlighted *the importance of engaging in active coping strategies when coping with cyberbullying, as a strong predictive relationship has been found between active coping and help seeking. Coping through distraction also was found to positively predict help seeking,* whilst coping through humour had a negative effect. Contrary to initial hypotheses, *emotion-focused coping had no significant effect on help seeking,* which suggests engagement in emotion-focused coping styles is not a predictor of a young person's help seeking intentions. This next section will now examine each of these relationships across multiple models (involved and non-involved in cyberbullying), to determine if these relationships differ according to past involvement in cyberbullying, regardless of frequency of specific experiences.

5.2.1.3 Step 4 - Coping, Social Connectedness and Help Seeking Across Multiple Models

Experience of cyberbullying was categorised into two groups: those non-involved; and those involved. Each model was then tested for invariance, to determine if the relationships would hold or differ for each category. The parameters were constrained to be equal between the groups, and whilst there were some differences between paths between the groups, the chi-square difference statistic did not reveal any significant difference between the unconstrained and the constrained-equal models for all further analysis in this section. Therefore the model held measurement invariance across groups, that is, the model applied to both the Involved and Non-involved categories, and the constrained models were accepted. *This result indicated that: the relationships between the different coping styles, social connectedness, and help seeking applied regardless of past cyberbullying experience (involved or not).* This is consistent with earlier findings (Section 4.3.3), which revealed there were no significant mean differences between cyber status and coping intentions. *This highlights that whilst involvement in cyberbullying generally (regardless of status) may not predict coping or help seeking intentions,* ***frequency of involvement can influence how young people cope***. This warrants further investigations with larger samples.

For all statistical results of this analysis: regression weights for each model and category; chi-square difference statistics; and model fit statistics for constrained and unconstrained models; see appendix J.

5.2.2 Steps 5 -7: Cyberbullying – Coping, Social Connectedness and the DASS21

As discovered in the exploratory analysis, *there is a complex relationship between coping and mental health, which may be influenced by social connectedness*. Therefore, and in line with initial hypotheses, the relationships between coping styles and the DASS21 were initially tested independently and then again with social connectedness as a mediator, by employing the same process that was utilised to test help seeking (section 5.2.1).

5.2.2.1 Step 5 - Coping and the DASS21 Mediation

This section details investigations into the relationships between different coping styles with the three constructs of the DASS21: Stress; Anxiety and Depression; as the outcome variables. As established earlier in this thesis, there are direct and indirect relationships between *frequency* of involvement in cyberbullying and different coping styles, and therefore it is important to investigate whether these predict mental health outcomes.

Results presented in Chapter 4 revealed that cybervictimisation negatively predicted depression, anxiety, and stress, which was confirmed with significant unmediated direct paths from cybervictimisation frequency to depression (standardised effect: .408, $p < .001$), anxiety (standardised effect: .380, $p < .001$) and stress (standardised effect: .400, $p < .001$). Furthermore, as discussed in section 5.2.1, cyberbullying frequency demonstrated no direct relationship with emotion-focused coping, coping through humour, coping through distraction, or stress (standardised effect: .108, $p = .118$), but did predict depression (standardised effect: .143, $p = .036$), and anxiety (standardised effect: .184, $p = .007$).

Significant unmediated negative direct effects were found between active coping and depression (standardised effect: -.211, $p = .004$, anxiety (standardised effect: -.178, $p = .016$) and stress (standardised effect: -.161, $p = .029$). In contrast, significant unmediated positive direct effects were found between emotion-focused coping and depression (standardised effect: .440, $p < .004$, anxiety (standardised effect: .387, $p < .001$) and stress (standardised effect: .461, $p < .001$). This suggests that *active coping may be an important predictor of depression, anxiety and stress, and emotion-focused coping may also have an effect (though not as strong as active coping).* In other words, *young people who engaged in active coping were less likely to experience depression, anxiety and stress, whilst those who engaged in emotion-focused coping strategies were more likely to be depressed, anxious and stressed.* It

is noted, however, that the relationships between emotion-focused coping and depression, anxiety, and stress are weak, and so should be interpreted with caution.

Frequency of cybervictimisation or frequency of cyberbullying had no significant relationship with coping through humour, and coping through humour had no direct effect on depression, anxiety, or stress ($p > .05$), and it has already been established earlier in section 5.2.1 that there was no relationship with social connectedness. Therefore, coping through humour will not be examined any further in this chapter. *The only significant finding in relation to this coping style (through humour) is that it did have a significant negative effect on help seeking, regardless of social connectedness,* as such may not be a particularly productive method of coping.

Frequency of cybervictimisation or cyberbullying had no significant direct relationship with coping through distraction, as previously established, and coping through distraction had no effect on depression, anxiety and stress (all paths had a *p* value greater than .05). However, as this was influenced by social connectedness in section 5.2.1, and that indirect effects do exist, this will be further examined in the full models.

The next section details the path modelling investigations that examine coping styles, the DASS21 and the addition of social connectedness to the model, given results showed it influenced coping and help seeking.

5.2.2.2 Step 6 - Coping, Social Connectedness and the DASS21

5.2.2.2.1 Active Coping

Cybervictimisation Frequency

A model predicting the outcome variable of depression was examined and incorporated social connectedness as a mediator between cybervictimisation and active coping. Results showed the negative direct effect of active coping on depression became non-significant when social connectedness was added to the model ($p = .404$), however social connectedness did demonstrate a significant direct effect on depression and active coping (Table 36). Additionally, whilst a significant indirect effect ($p < .05$) existed between cybervictimisation frequency and active coping, the direct effect of cybervictimisation frequency on active coping became non-significant ($p = .238$), once again being mediated by social connectedness. Therefore, ***whilst active coping may not directly influence depression****, **it is affected by social connectedness**, indicating that young people who were more socially*

connected were more likely to cope actively, and less likely to experience higher scores of depression the more frequently they were victimised.

Whilst the results were similar for anxiety and stress, there were some differences: active coping did not have a significant effect on anxiety (p = .437), or stress (p = .156). Cybervictimisation frequency also had no significant effect on active coping (see Table 36). Given the similarities between all three constructs of the DASS21, only the visual representation of the models are presented here for the outcome variable of depression, however all regression weights, including those related to models which predicted stress and anxiety as outcome variables can be seen in Table 36, with model fit indices in Table 37. The visual representation of the anxiety and stress full models (section 5.2.3 and 5.2.4) are presented in Appendix L. These models account for 53.3 % of the variance in depression, 40.9 % of the variance in anxiety, 46.8 % of the variance in stress, and 11.2 % of the variance in active coping (Figure 12).

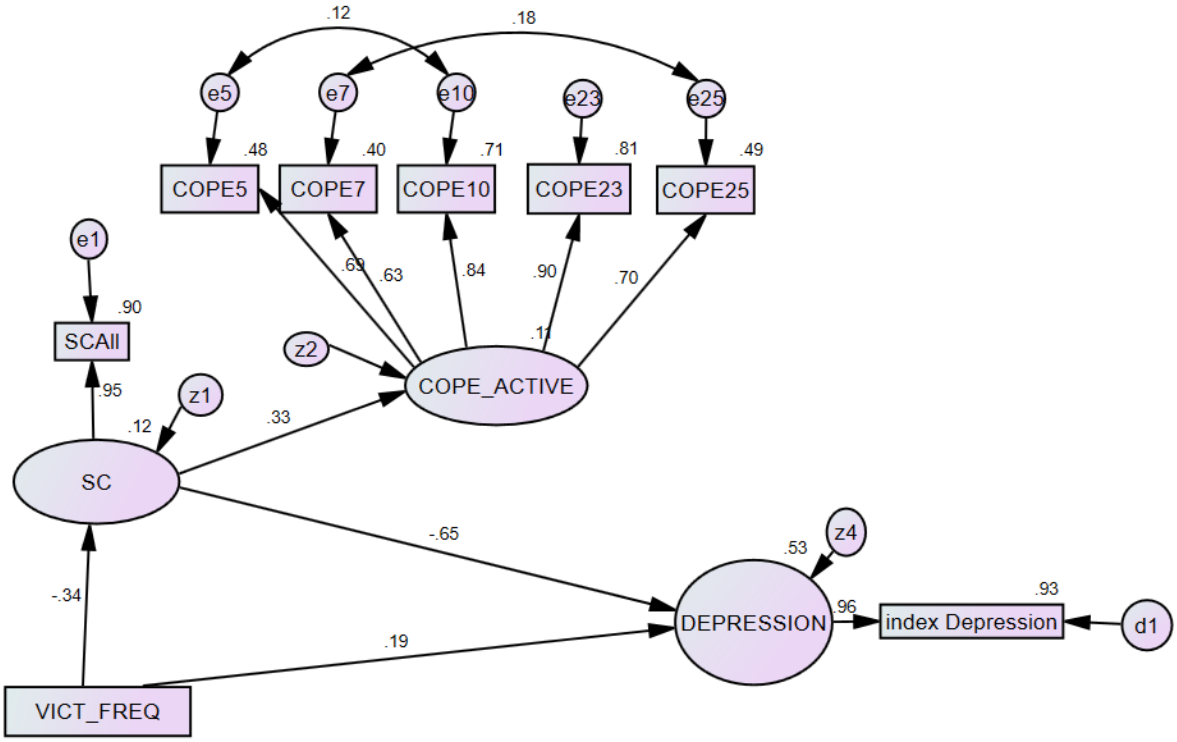


Figure 12: Model 7.

Cyberbullying frequency

Cyberbullying frequency also was examined in path modelling investigations that predicted outcome variables of depression, anxiety and stress. *Results revealed that a relationship was only evident between cyberbullying frequency and the outcome variable of anxiety*. However, the path from social connectedness to anxiety was not significant (p = .895), as was the path from active coping to anxiety (p = .277). *This suggests that there are no direct relationships between cyberbullying frequency and social connectedness, or active coping and anxiety.* The full model will be tested again in section 5.2.3 with the addition of help seeking.

Table 36: Regression Weights Model 7

Victim model paths	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Cybervictimisation frequency			
→Depression	.022 (.007)	.186	.000
→Social connectedness	-.041 (.008)	-.344	.000
→Active coping	-.009 (.008)	-.084	.238
Active coping → Depression	.052 (.062)	.048	.404
Social connectedness → Depression	-.645 (.058)	-.645	.000
Social connectedness → Active coping	.315 (.070)	.335	.000
Cybervictimisation frequency			
→Anxiety	.023 (.007)	.192	.002
→Social connectedness	-.041 (.008)	-.344	.000
→Active coping	-.009 (.008)	-.084	.241
Active coping → Anxiety	.053 (.068)	.050	.437
Social connectedness → Anxiety	-.547 (.064)	-.547	.000
Social connectedness → Active coping	.316 (.070)	.336	.000
Cybervictimisation frequency			
→Stress	.023 (.007)	.196	.000
→Social connectedness	-.041 (.008)	-.344	.000
→Active coping	-.010 (.008)	-.085	.233
Active coping → Stress	.093 (.066)	.088	.156
Social connectedness → Stress	-.592 (.062)	-.591	.000
Social connectedness → Active coping	.313 (.070)	.332	.000

Table 37: Model 7 Fit Statistics

Fit Statistics	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
χ^2(df, p)	27.245 (17, .055)	26.244 (17, .070)	30.515 (17, .023)
RMSEA	.051	.049	.059
PCLOSE	.435	.481	.299
LO90	0.000	0.000	.022
χ^2/df	1.603	1.544	1.795
SRMR	.042	.042	.048
GFI	.972	.973	.969
AGFI	.941	.944	.935
TLI	.978	.979	.970
CFI	.986	.987	.982

5.2.2.2.2 Emotion-Focused Coping

As discovered in section 5.2.1, whilst a significant indirect effect was evident, p = .000, the direct effect between cybervictimisation frequency and emotion-focused coping became non-significant when social connectedness was added to the model (p = .723). All other paths however, remained significant, *which indicated that emotion-focused coping, whilst predicted by social connectedness, may play a role in mental health scores on the DASS21*. However further studies will need to examine this. These findings suggest that *those who were more socially connected were less likely to engage in emotion-focused coping, but those who were likely to engage in emotion-focused coping were more likely to have higher scores of depression, though a very weak relationship. Further studies are needed to confirm this.* All regression weights, along with anxiety and stress can be seen in the Table 38, and in Figure 13. Model fit statistics are shown in Table 39. Note in Table 38 that when social connectedness was added to the model on anxiety, the path between emotion-focused coping and anxiety became non-significant. The model fit for stress was also poor. These models account for 55 % of the variance in depression, 42 % of the variance in anxiety, 50 % of the variance in stress, and 21 % of the variance in emotion-focused coping.

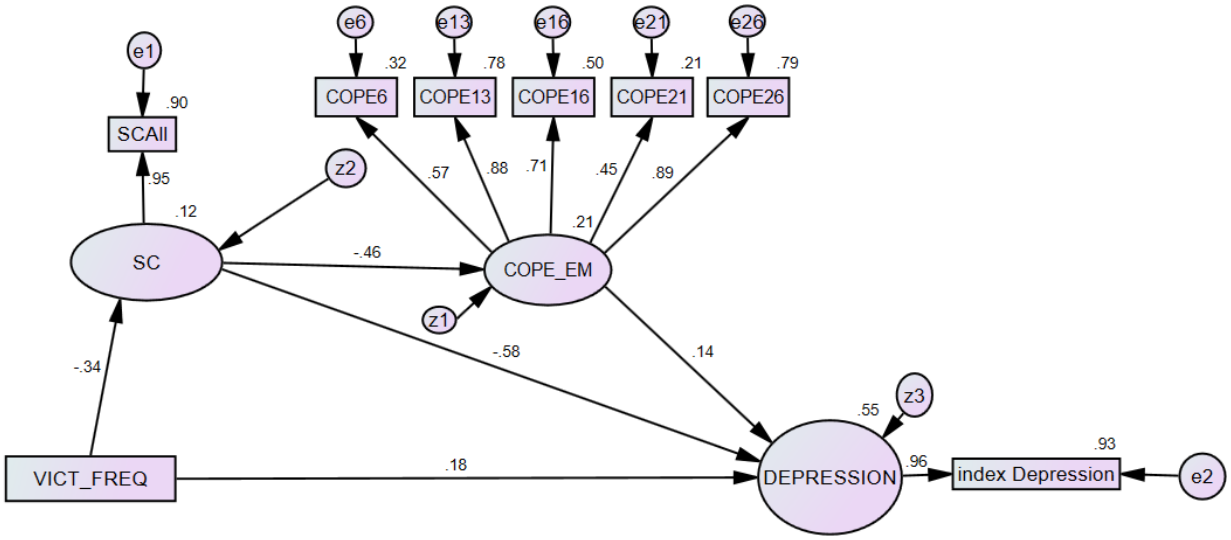


Figure 13: Model 8.

Table 38: Regression Weights Model 8

Victim model paths	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Cybervictimisation frequency			
→Depression	.022 (.006)	.184	.000
→Social connectedness	-.041 (.008)	-.343	.000
→Emotion-focused coping	.002 (.006)	.024	.723
Emotion-focused coping → Depression	.206 (.092)	.140	.025
Social connectedness → Depression	-.584 (.064)	-.584	.000
Social connectedness → Emotion-focused coping	-.310 (.055)	-.458	.000
Cybervictimisation frequency			
→Anxiety	.023 (.007)	.190	.002
→Social connectedness	-.041 (.008)	-.343	.000
→ Emotion-focused coping	.002 (.005)	.023	.731
Emotion-focused coping → Anxiety	.191 (.102)	.129	.061
Social connectedness → Anxiety	-.556 (.064)	-.556	.000
Social connectedness → Emotion-focused coping	-.316 (.055)	-.468	.000
Cybervictimisation frequency			
→Stress	.023 (.007)	.192	.000
→Social connectedness	-.041 (.008)	-.343	.000
→ Emotion-focused coping	.002 (.005)	.024	.729
Emotion-focused coping → Stress	.288 (.099)	.195	.004
Social connectedness → Stress	-.507 (.068)	-.507	.000
Social connectedness → Emotion-focused coping	-.310 (.055)	-.459	.000

Table 39: Model 8 Fit Statistics

Fit Statistics	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
χ^2(df, p)	26.759 (18, .084)	27.420 (19, .095)	30.756 (18, .031)
RMSEA	.046	.044	.056
PCLOSE	.530	.571	.355
LO90	0.000	0.000	.017
χ^2/df	1.487	1.443	1.709
SRMR	.037	.043	.036
GFI	.972	.971	.969
AGFI	.946	.945	.937
TLI	.980	.981	.971
CFI	.987	.987	.981

5.2.2.2.3 Coping through Humour and Coping through Distraction

Cybervictimisation frequency had no direct significant relationship on both coping through humour and coping through distraction, and coping though distraction had no significant direct relationship on depression, anxiety or stress (all paths had a *p* value greater than .05), and social connectedness did not alter this. *Therefore, we can conclude that it is the levels of social connectedness that were stronger predictors of mental health scores on the DASS21, rather than intentions to cope through humour or distraction.* However the indirect effects of coping through distraction remained significant and will be examined further in the full model in section 5.2.3.

5.2.2.2.4 Step 6 Summary

In this section of analysis, models indicated that active coping, coping through humour and coping through distraction had no significant effect on mental health outcomes as measured by the DASS21, though social connectedness did demonstrate a significant effect. Emotion-focused coping, however, did predict depression and stress scores. *These results therefore highlight again the importance of social connectedness among young people, as not only did social connectedness mediate the relationship between victimisation frequency and coping styles, but it also positively predicted help seeking intentions, and negatively predicted scores of depression, anxiety and stress. These findings also highlight the negative direct effects of emotion-focused coping.* Whilst emotion-focused coping did not significantly predict help seeking intentions, it was a negative predictor of depression and stress. *Therefore, there may be merit in encouraging young people to consider alternate ways of coping, as emotion-focused coping may be associated with higher levels of depression and stress.*

These models will now be examined once again across the non-involved and involved categories, before all constructs are examined in a full model and tested across gender as with the MHCSF.

5.2.2.3 Step 7 - Coping, Social Connectedness and the DASS21 across Multiple Models

The relationships between coping, social connectedness, and the DASS21, were tested again across multiple models (as conducted in step 4), to determine if these relationships would hold or differ between non-involved and involved categories. The parameters were constrained to be equal between the groups (non-involved and involved in cyberbullying), in all models, and whilst there were some differences in paths, the chi-square difference statistic did not reveal a significant difference between the unconstrained and the constrained-equal models in all analysis for this section. This again indicated that *whether involved in cyberbullying or not, the relationships between the different coping styles, social connectedness, and mental health applied regardless of past cyberbullying experience (involved or not).*

For all statistical results of this analysis: regression weights for each model and category, chi-square difference statistics and model fit statistics for constrained and unconstrained models; see Appendix J.

5.2.3 Step 8 - Full Models – Coping, Help Seeking, the DASS21, and the MHCSF

Each of the models, predicting mental health and help seeking outcomes, were then combined and tested with all paths in order to get an understanding of whether the models would fit with all variables examined thus far included in them, and to establish confirm the relevance of all relationships established thus far. The models were tested again with only significant paths to gain a greater understanding of model fit. Ultimately, the aim was to run each coping style with the same pathways (Figure 14), but with the different coping styles in each model. This would also allow for direct and indirect effects to be fully examined, as well as facilitating examination of gender differences and testing with the Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHCSF) (Keyes, 2002; 2007) in place of the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress (DASS21) constructs (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995).

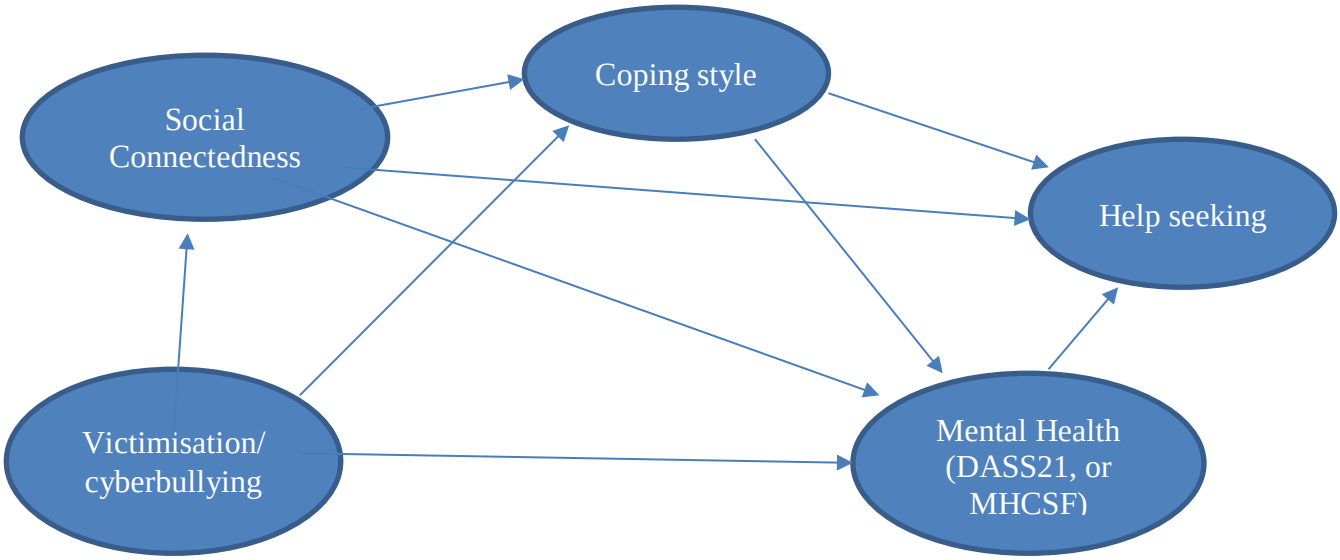


Figure 14: Full Model Example Structure

This model tests if: (a) social connectedness and coping style mediate the relationship between involvement in cyberbullying and mental health outcomes; (b) social connectedness mediates the effect of involvement in cyberbullying and coping style; (c) if coping style mediates the effect of social connectedness on help seeking; and (d) coping style mediates the effect of social connectedness on mental health. Overall the aim is to fully examine the nature of all relationships that can predict help seeking. For ease of interpretation, models (and associated fit indices) are shown twice: first with all paths depicted (both significant and non-significant), and *second with only significant direct paths depicted.* Model variance is presented for final refined models, that is, those with only significant paths.

Bootstrapping to 5000 cases with a 95 % confidence interval was performed to determine any significant indirect effects. Coping through humour was not examined here, given that this coping style did not predict any DASS21 constructs, cybervictimisation frequency, or social connectedness. We can conclude, however the coping through humour directly negatively influences help seeking, as established in section 5.2.1.

5.2.3.1 Active Coping

Cybervictimisation Frequency

The full model for active coping is shown in Figures 15 and 16 with standardised values. Results revealed the following direct paths were not significant: social connectedness to help seeking; active coping to depression; and cybervictimisation frequency to active coping,

supporting findings in section 5.2.1 and 5.2.2. However, an indirect effect held between cybervictimisation frequency and active coping, with a standardised value of -.106 (p = .001), and a 95 % CI (-.186, -.046) respectively. The indirect effect of social connectedness on help seeking was also non-significant, and depression was found to have no significant effect on help seeking. *This suggests that both social connectedness and depression scores did not predict help seeking overall, and that whilst social connectedness predicted better mental health scores and engagement in active coping,* ***it is this engagement in active coping that was the stronger predictor of help seeking. Results indicated that social connectedness was a core construct*** **when** ***considering mental health, given it significantly and directly predicts mental health and active coping***. *Young people who were more socially connected were those with better mental health, more likely to cope actively, and more likely to seek help*. Results were consistent across anxiety and stress. Fit statistics are detailed in Table 40. Model 9a accounts for 41 % of the variance in help seeking, and 53% of the variance in depression (Figure 16).

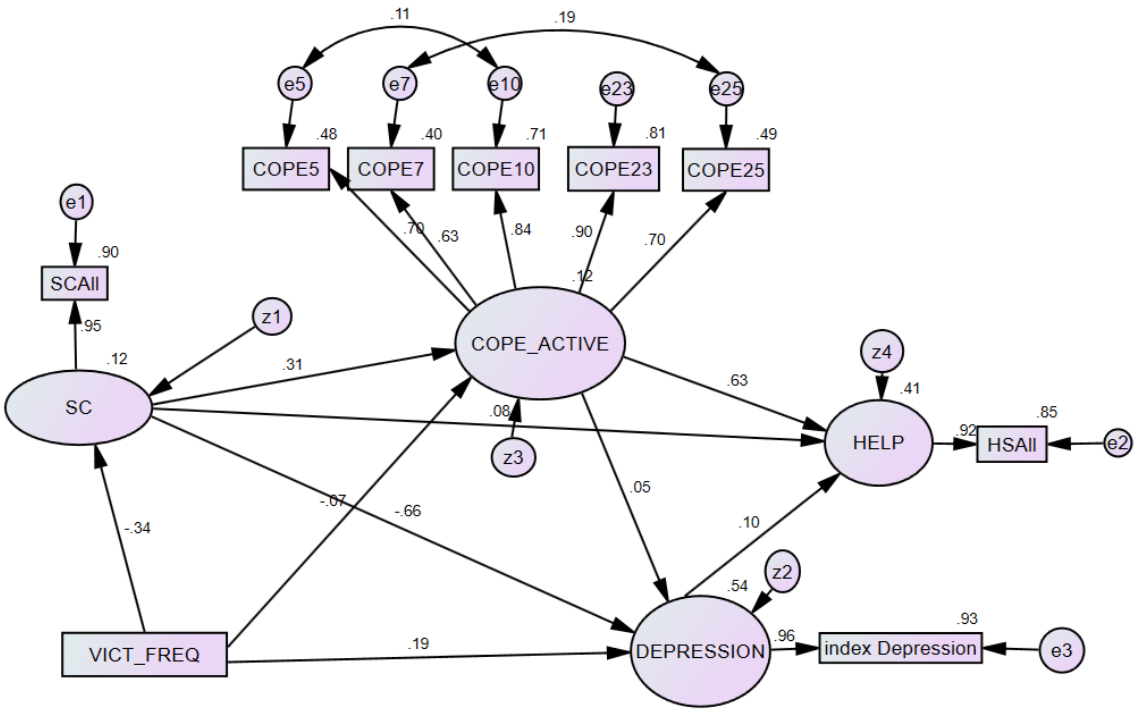


Figure 15: Model 9a, All Paths

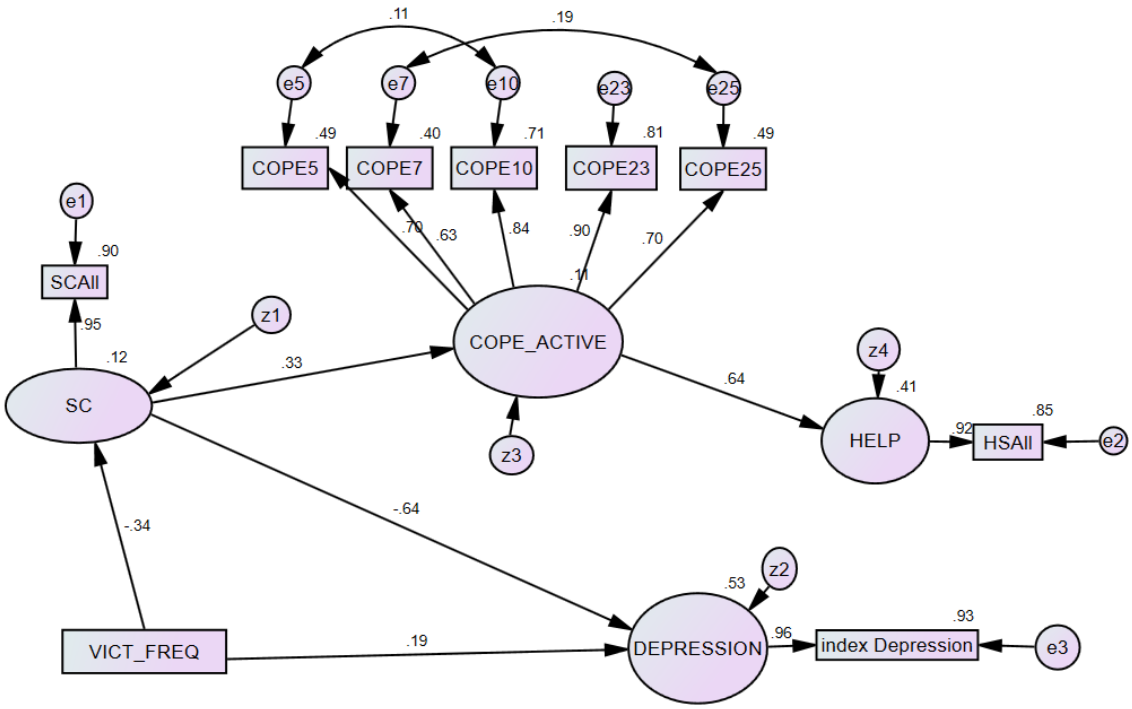


Figure 16: Model 9a, Only Significant Paths

Table 40: Model 9a Fit Statistics

Fit Statistics	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
All paths			
χ2(df, p)	28.076 (20, .108)	26.500 (20, .150)	30.820 (20, .077)
RMSEA	.042	.038	.045
PCLOSE	.610	.679	.556
LO90	0.000	0.000	0.000
χ2/df	1.404	1.325	1.468
SRMR	.034	.034	.038
GFI	.974	.976	.972
AGFI	.941	.945	.940
TLI	.983	.985	.979
CFI	.990	.992	.988
Only significant paths			
χ^2(df, p)	31.028 (24, .153)	31.425 (24, .142)	34.175 (24, .082)
RMSEA	.036	.037	.043
PCLOSE	.729	.714	.607
LO90	0.000	0.000	0.000
χ^2/df	1.293	1.309	1.424
SRMR	.039	.041	.045
GFI	.971	.971	.969
AGFI	.947	.945	.942
TLI	.987	.986	.981
CFI	.992	.991	.987

Cyberbullying frequency

The model differed when cyberbullying frequency was incorporated, with the following paths becoming non-significant: cyberbullying frequency to social connectedness; social connectedness to help seeking; active coping to depression. The path from social connectedness to help seeking had no significant indirect effect on help seeking in this model. *This suggests that whilst social connectedness partially mediated the effect of cybervictimisation frequency on active coping,* ***it (social connectedness) did not play a role in the relationship between cyberbullying frequency and active coping***. The results were consistent across anxiety and stress, however, model fit statistics were not as strong with cyberbullying frequency compared to cybervictimisation frequency (Table 41). It is noted that the direct effect of cyberbullying frequency on depression is weak, but is significant (p = .008). Model 9b accounts for 40 % of the variance in help seeking, and 52% of the variance in depression (Figure 18).

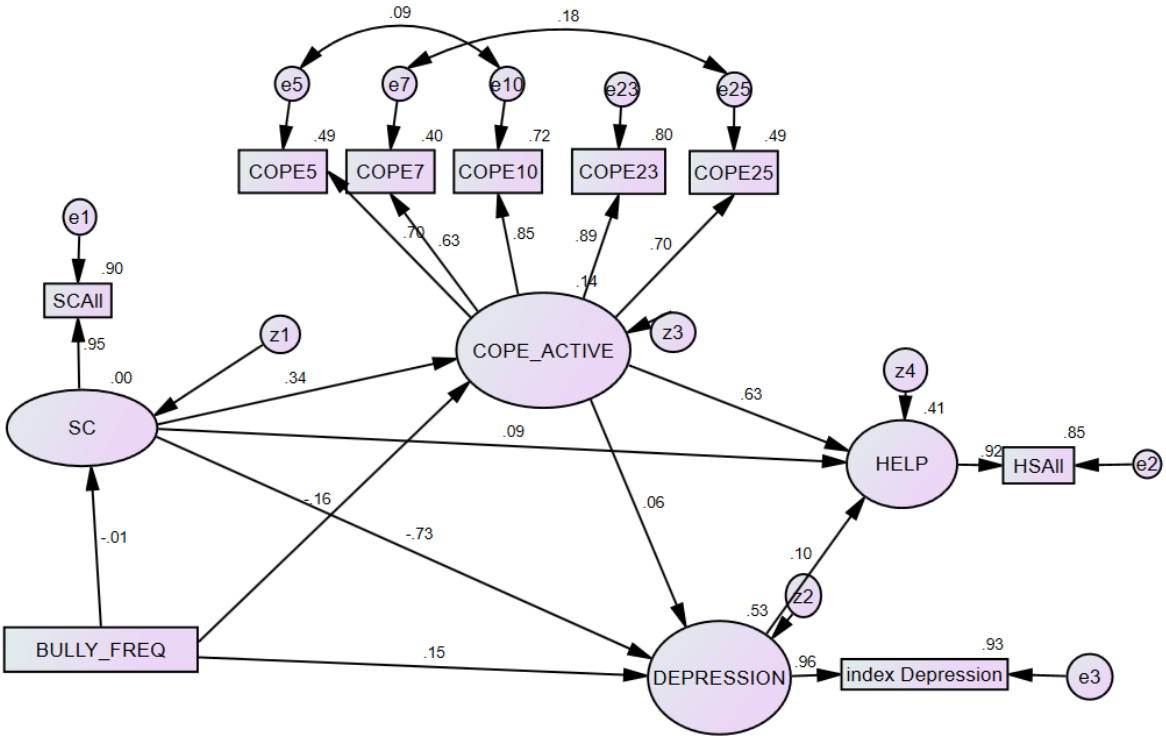


Figure 17: Model 9b, All Paths

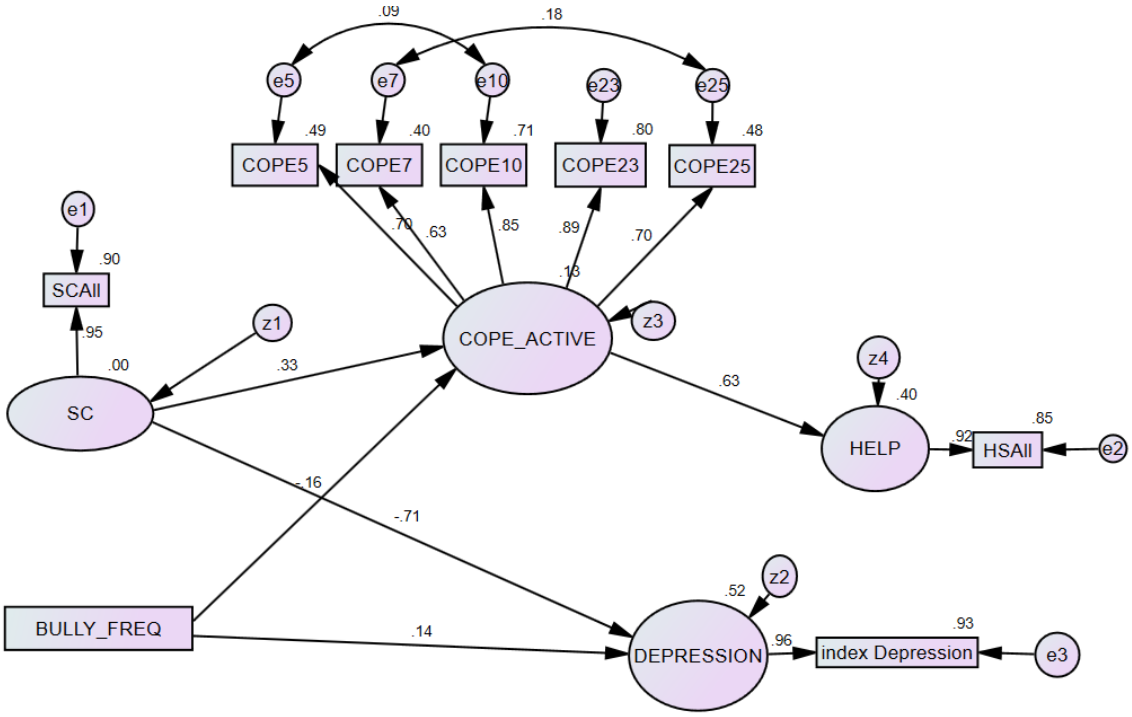


Figure 18: Model 9b, Only Significant Paths

Table 41: Model 9b Fit Statistics

Fit Statistics	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
All paths			
χ^2(df, p)	31.900 (20, .044)	31.521 (20, .049)	35.090 (20, .020)
RMSEA	.051	.050	.058
PCLOSE	.442	.458	.317
LO90	.008	.004	.023
χ^2/df	1.595	1.576	1.755
SRMR	.033	.033	.037
GFI	.970	.971	.968
AGFI	.933	.934	.928
TLI	.974	.973	.965
CFI	.985	.985	.981
Only significant paths			
χ^2(df, p)	34.231 (24, .081)	36.146 (24, .053)	41.923 (25, .018)
RMSEA	.043	.047	.053
PCLOSE	.605	.528	.369
LO90	0.000	0.000	.023
χ^2/df	1.426	1.506	1.677
SRMR	.039	.042	.046
GFI	.968	.966	.962
AGFI	.941	.937	.932
TLI	.981	.976	.969
CFI	.987	.984	.978

Cybervictimisation Frequency

This model was then tested again, but with the Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHCSF) in place of depression. In this model, the following direct paths became non-significant: cybervictimisation frequency on the MHCSF; cybervictimisation frequency to active coping; and social connectedness to help seeking. However, *significant indirect effects still existed for: social connectedness and help seeking,* with a standardised value of .244 (p = .002), 95 % CI (.105, .385); *cybervictimisation frequency and active coping*, with a standardised value of -.107 (p = .001), and a 95 % CI (-.187, -.046.); and *cybervictimisation frequency and the MHCSF*, with a standardised value of -.232 (p < .001), and a 95 % CI (-.350, -.115). The *MHCSF had no significant effect on help seeking*. This suggests that *whilst active coping may not influence scores of depression, anxiety, or stress;* ***it (active coping) did positively predict scores on the MHCSF, and positively predicted help seeking***. This model accounts for 41 % of the variance in help seeking, 48 % of the variance on the MHCSF (Figure 20). Model fit statistics are shown in Table 42.

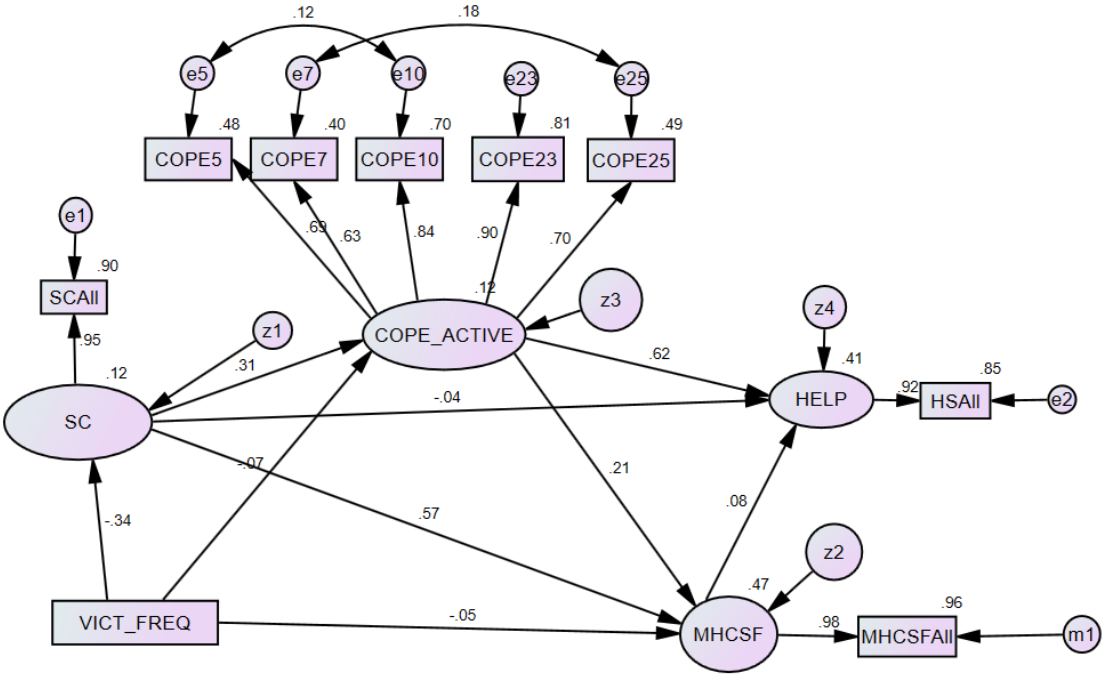


Figure 19: Model 10, All Paths

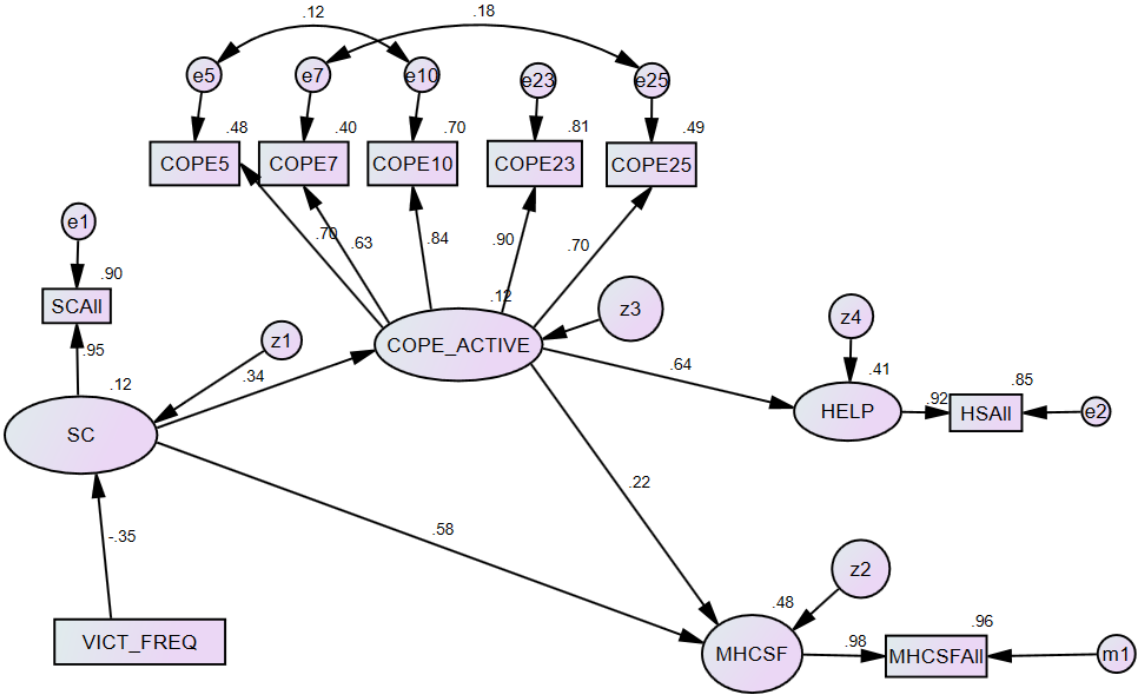


Figure 20: Model 10, Only Significant Paths

Table 42: Model 10 Fit Statistics

Fit Statistics	MHCSF
All paths	
χ^2(df, p)	27.637 (20, .118)
RMSEA	.041
PCLOSE	.629
LO90	0.000
χ^2/df	1.382
SRMR	.033
GFI	.974
AGFI	.942
TLI	.983
CFI	.991
Only significant paths	
χ^2(df, p)	30.303 (24, .175)
RMSEA	.034
PCLOSE	.755
LO90	0.000
χ^2/df	1.263
SRMR	.036
GFI	.972
AGFI	.948
TLI	.988
CFI	.992

Cyberbullying frequency had no significant direct or indirect effect on the MHCSF unmediated or mediated), and therefore will not be examined further.

The findings in this ***section suggest that social connectedness is a key construct in terms of mediating the effect of cybervictimisation frequency on active coping****, but not cyberbullying frequency, and* ***active coping played a direct role in influencing help seeking***. However, active coping did not influence mental health, whilst social connectedness did. In summary, *young people who were more socially connected were more likely to cope actively and ultimately seek help, but also less likely to suffer mental health concerns.*

5.2.3.2 Emotion-Focused Coping

The full model for emotion-focused coping is shown in Figures 21 and 22 with standardised values. The following direct paths were non-significant: from cybervictimisation frequency to emotion-focused coping; depression to help seeking; and emotion-focused coping to help seeking. However, a significant indirect effect was still evident between cybervictimisation frequency and emotion-focused coping, with a standardised value of .153 ($p < .001$), and 95

% CI (.078, .260). Findings were consistent across anxiety and stress in place of depression, though note that the direct effect of emotion-focused coping on anxiety was fully mediated by social connectedness, as presented in section 5.2.2.2. This suggests that *whilst emotion-focused coping did not predict help seeking, it did predict scores of depression, and stress* (though it is noted that this is weak for depression: $p = 0.23$), with this model accounting for 55 % of the variance in depression, and 5 % of the variance in help seeking (Figure 22). Model fit is shown in Table 43.

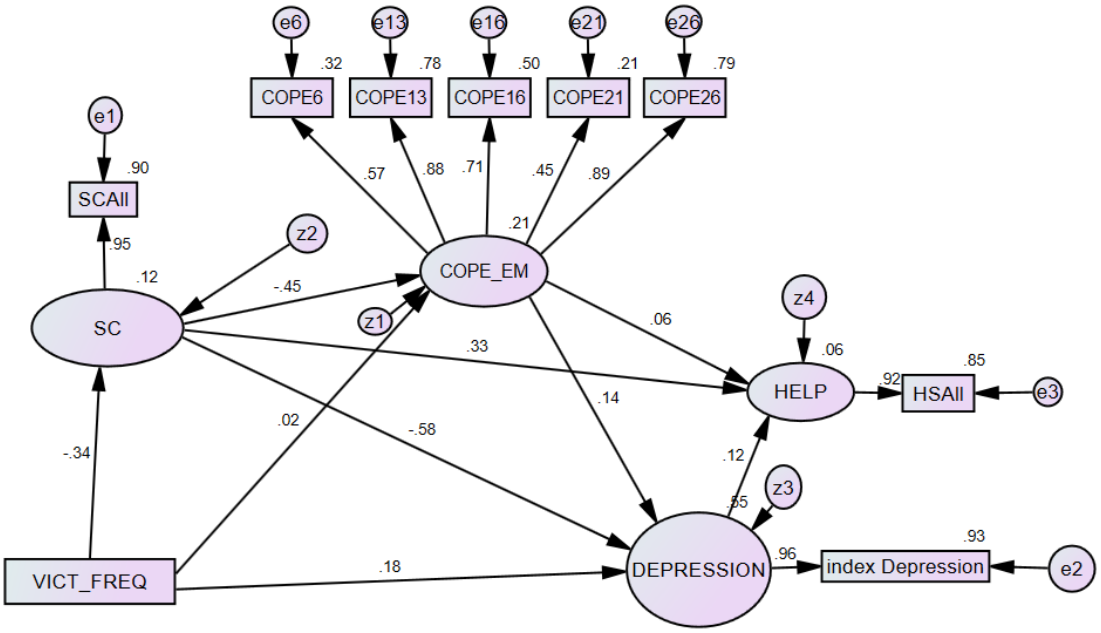


Figure 21: Model 11, All Paths

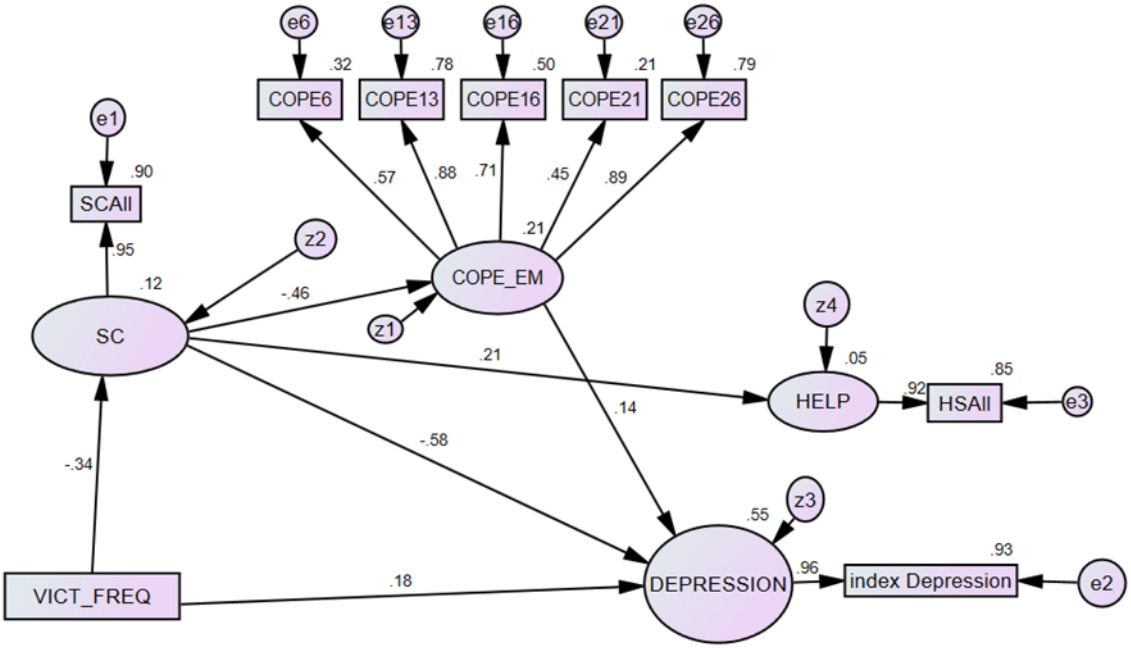


Figure 22: Model 11, Only Significant Paths

Table 43: Model 11 Fit Statistics

Fit Statistics	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
All paths			
χ^2(df, p)	30.208 (22, .114)	30.717 (23, .130)	33.805 (22, .051)
RMSEA	.040	.038	.049
PCLOSE	.646	.686	.495
LO90	0.000	0.000	0.000
χ^2/df	1.373	1.336	1.537
SRMR	.037	.041	.036
GFI	.972	.972	.970
AGFI	.944	.944	.938
TLI	.981	.981	.972
CFI	.988	.988	.983
Only significant paths			
χ^2(df, p)	32.123 (25, .154)	34.374 (26, .126)	36.440 (25, .065)
RMSEA	.035	.038	.045
PCLOSE	.741	.713	.577
LO90	0.000	0.000	0.000
χ^2/df	1.285	1.322	1.458
SRMR	.041	.046	.040
GFI	.971	.968	.967
AGFI	.947	.944	.940
TLI	.985	.982	.976
CFI	.990	.987	.983

As cyberbullying frequency was already found to have no direct or indirect relationship with social connectedness or emotion-focused coping, this model was not tested.

When the emotion-focused full model was run with the MHCSF, the direct paths from cybervictimisation frequency to emotion-focused coping, and emotion-focused coping to help seeking remained non-significant, however the indirect effect of cybervictimisation frequency on emotion-focused coping still remained significant, $p < .001$. Both cybervictimisation frequency and emotion-focused coping were found to have no significant direct effect on the MHCSF, however, cybervictimisation frequency held an indirect effect as discovered in the model predicting active coping, with standardised value of -.219 ($p = .001$), with a 95 % CI (-.321, -.111). In this model also, *the direct and indirect effects of social connectedness on help seeking became non-significant, with the MHCSF directly predicting help seeking*. This suggests that *whilst emotion-focused coping had a negative influence on the depression and stress scores, it had no significant direct effect on the MHCSF*. The model, with standardised values, is shown below. This model accounts for 44 % of the variance in the MHCSF, and 10 % of the variance in help seeking (Figure 24). Model fit is shown in Table 44.

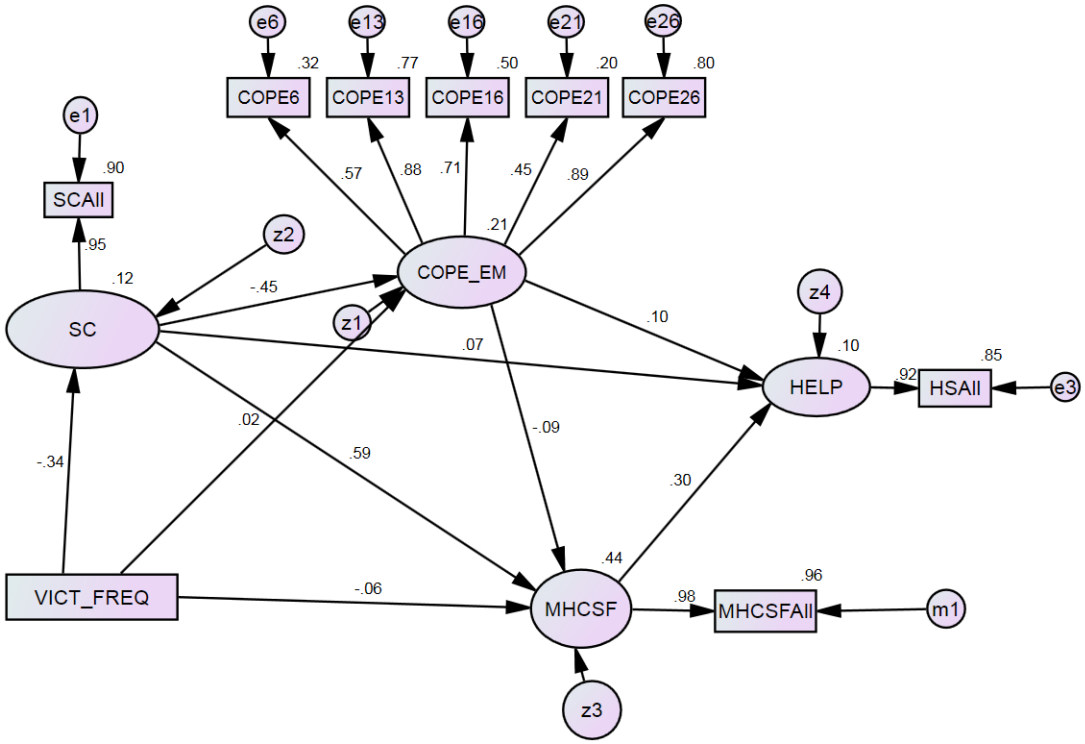


Figure 23: Model 12, All Paths

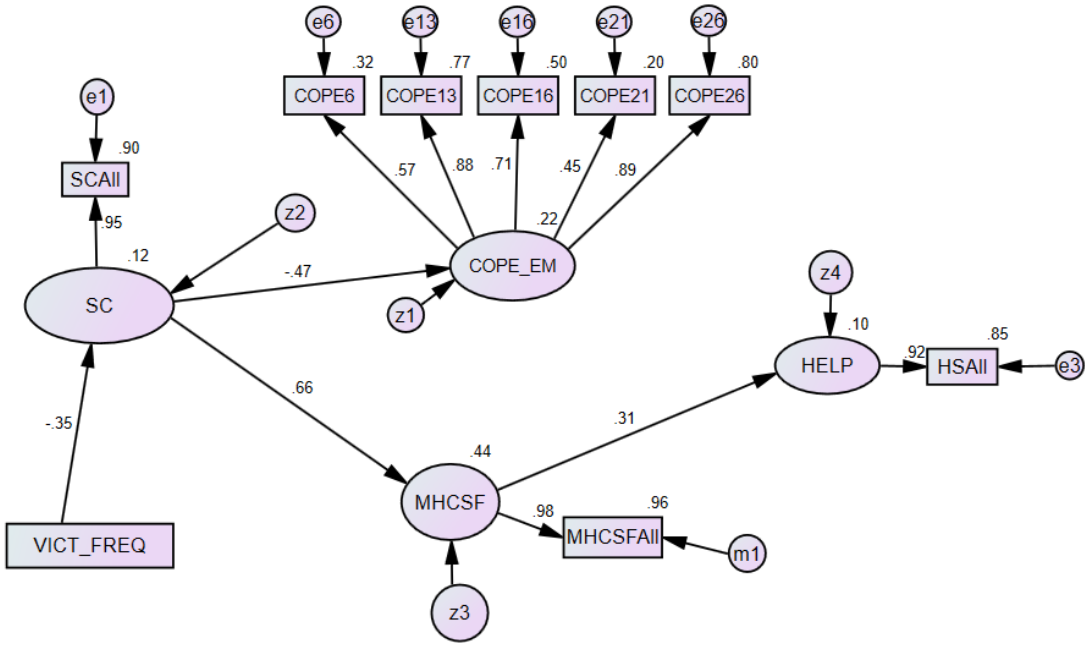


Figure 24: Model 12, Only Significant Paths

Table 44: Model 12 Fit Statistics

Fit Statistics	MHCSF
All paths	
χ^2(df, p)	31.000 (22, .096)
RMSEA	.042
PCLOSE	.613
LO90	0.000
χ^2/df	1.409
SRMR	.041
GFI	.972
AGFI	.942
TLI	.978
CFI	.987
Only significant paths	
χ^2(df, p)	35.498 (27, .127)
RMSEA	.037
PCLOSE	.724
LO90	0.000
χ^2/df	1.315
SRMR	.045
GFI	.967
AGFI	.945
TLI	.983
CFI	.987

5.2.3.3 Coping through Distraction

Coping through distraction was similar to the active coping results, in that cybervictimisation frequency had no direct effect on this coping style, though a significant indirect effect via social connectedness was evident between cybervictimisation frequency and coping through distraction, with a standardised value of -.069 (p = .015), with 95 % CI (-.145, -.013). Coping through distraction also did not directly predict depression scores, and depression scores did not significantly predict help seeking. Social connectedness to help seeking remained significant in this model, though weak (p = 0.25), compared to the active coping model, and coping through distraction predicted help seeking (p = .006). These findings indicated that *coping through distraction had no significant direct effect on depression, anxiety, and stress, but it did predict help seeking. However, social connectedness also significantly predicted help seeking in this model.*

Findings were consistent across anxiety and stress in place of depression. Model 13 accounts for 11 % of the variance in help seeking and 53 % of the variance in depression (Figure 26). Model fit is shown in Table 45.

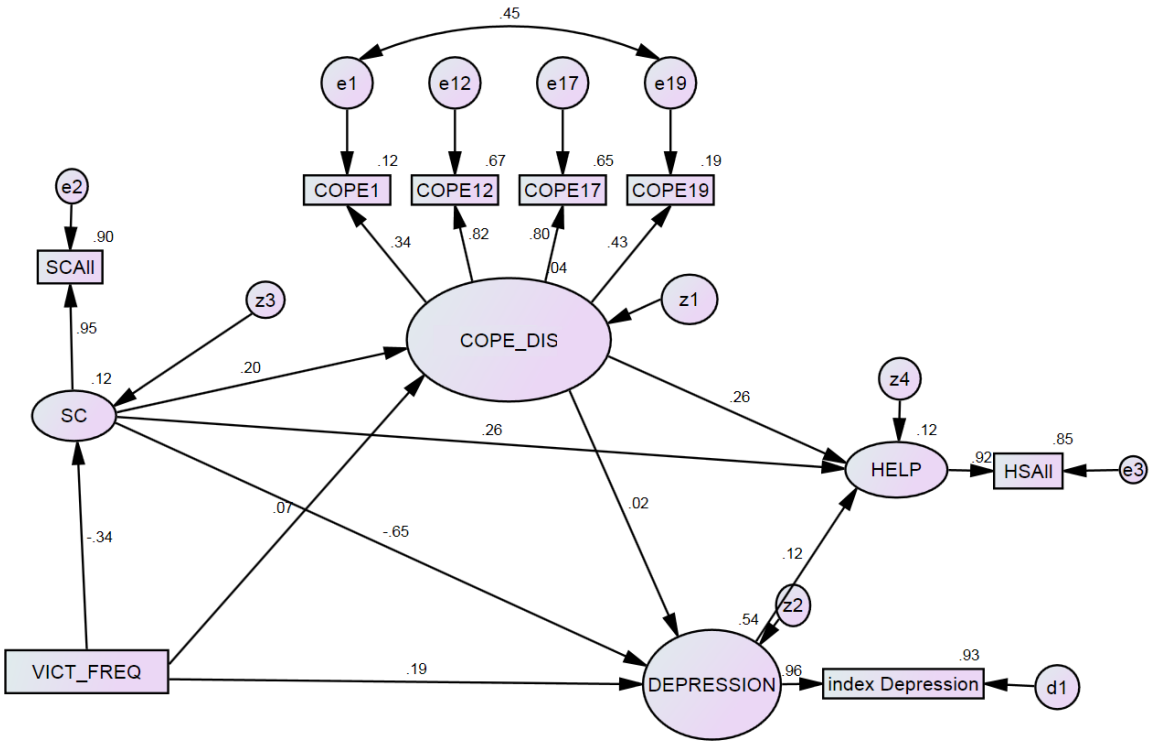


Figure 25: Model 13, All Paths

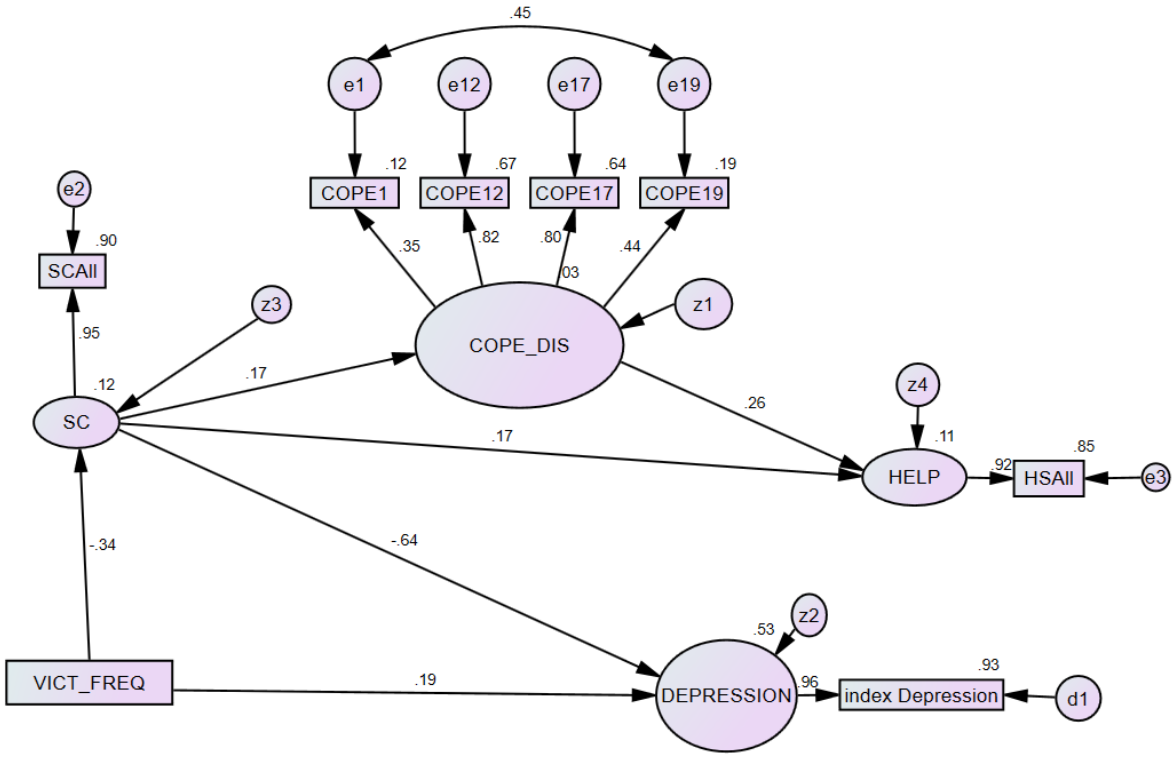


Figure 26: Model 13, Only Significant Paths

Table 45: Model 13 Fit Statistics

Fit Statistics	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
All paths			
χ^2(df, p)	18.180 (14, .199)	20.183 (14, .124)	26.608 (14, .022)
RMSEA	.036	.044	.063
PCLOSE	.658	.551	.252
LO90	0.000	0.000	.024
χ^2/df	1.299	1.442	1.901
SRMR	.036	.038	.045
GFI	.981	.979	.973
AGFI	.951	.946	.930
TLI	.980	.968	.939
CFI	.990	.984	.969
Only significant paths			
χ^2(df, p)	20.170 (17, .266)	24.084 (17, .117)	29.437 (17, .031)
RMSEA	.029	.043	.057
PCLOSE	.767	.585	.341
LO90	0.000	0.000	0.000
χ^2/df	1.186	1.417	1.732
SRMR	.039	.042	.048
GFI	.979	.975	.970
AGFI	.955	.948	.937
TLI	.988	.970	.950
CFI	.993	.982	.970

As cyberbullying frequency was already found to have no direct or indirect relationship with social connectedness or coping through distraction, this model was not tested.

Findings were similar when the coping through distraction model was run with the MHCSF, with cybervictimisation having no direct effect on coping through distraction or on the MHCSF. However, distraction had no significant effect on the MHCSF, and social connectedness was again found to have no direct effect on help seeking (though an indirect effect of .211 was significant, p = .003, 95 % CI: .076, .365). *Coping through distraction had no significant direct effect on mental health in general, as findings were consistent across all constructs of the DASS21 and the MHCSF. However, this coping style (distraction) directly predicted help seeking, and scores on the MHCSF may mediate the effect of social connectedness on help seeking.* The model, with standardised values, is shown below. This model accounts for 15 % of the variance in help seeking and 44 % of the variance on the MHCSF (Figure 28). Model fit is shown in Table 46.

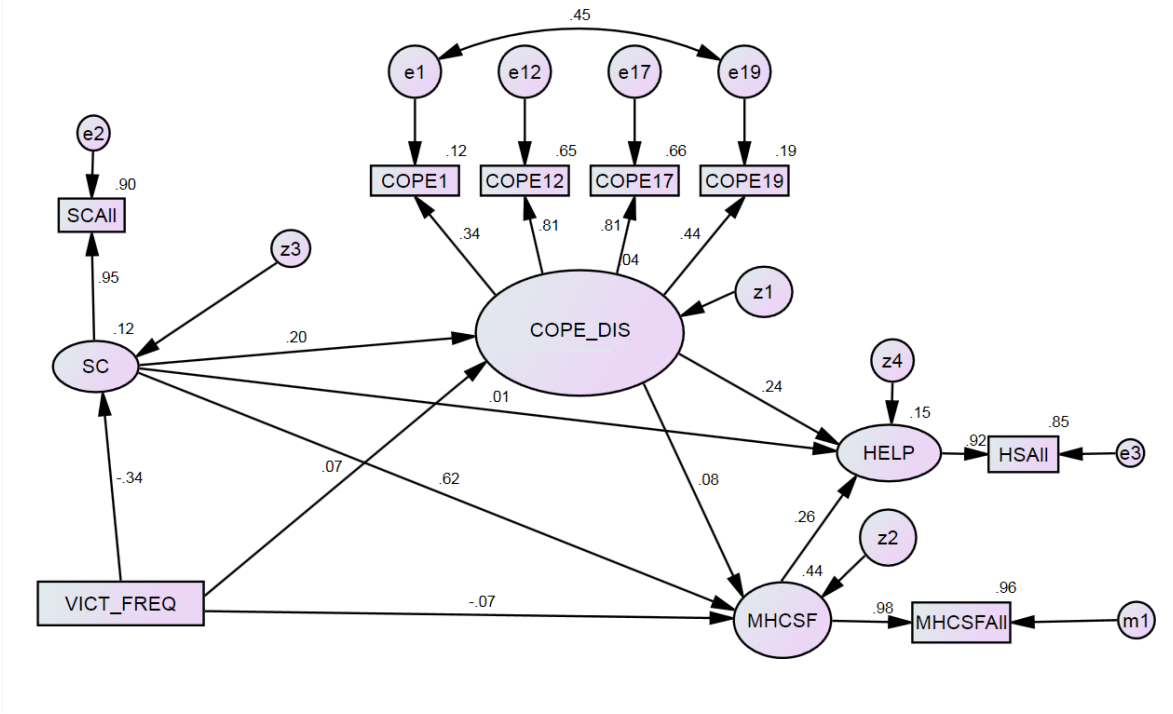


Figure 27: Model 14, All Paths

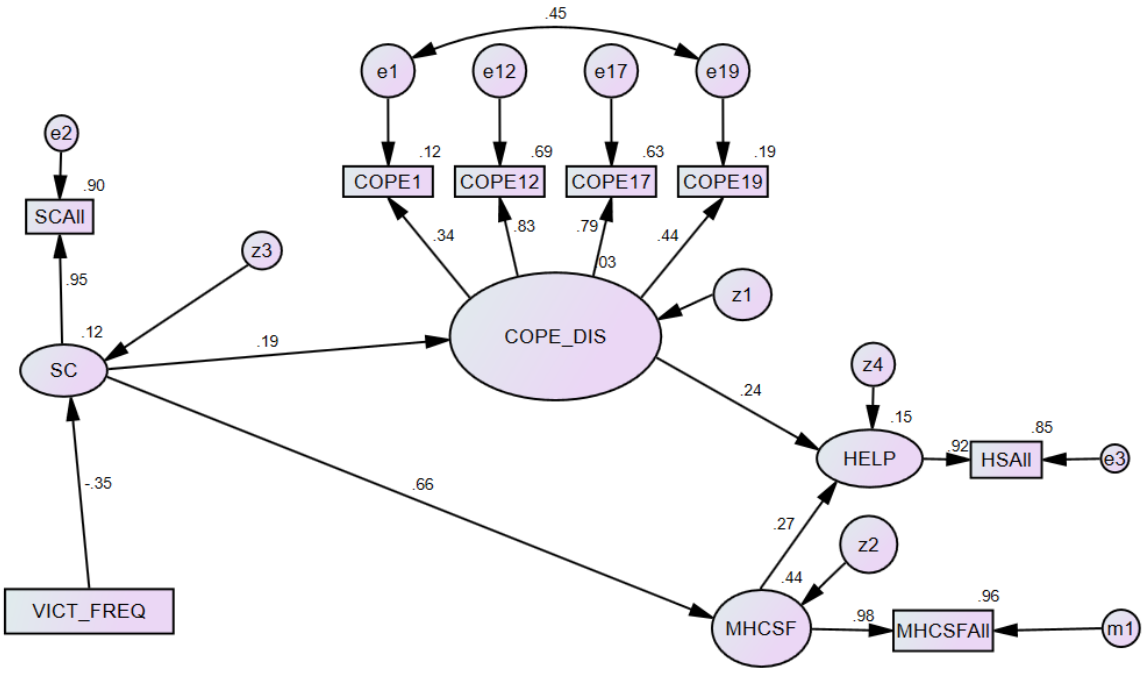


Figure 28: Model 14, Only Significant Paths

Table 46: Model 14 Fit Statistics

Fit Statistics	MHCSF
All paths	
χ^2(df, p)	19.185 (14, .158)
RMSEA	.040
PCLOSE	.604
LO90	0.000
χ^2/df	1.370
SRMR	.033
GFI	.980
AGFI	.948
TLI	.974
CFI	.987
Only significant paths	
χ^2(df, p)	22.771 (18, .200)
RMSEA	.034
PCLOSE	.715
LO90	0.000
χ^2/df	1.265
SRMR	.037
GFI	.976
AGFI	.952
TLI	.982
CFI	.988

5.2.3.4 Step 8 Summary

In terms of active coping, young people who were more socially connected were more likely to cope actively and ultimately seek help, but also less likely to suffer mental health concerns. Whilst *emotion-focused coping* was found to have a negative influence on the DASS21, it had no significant direct effect on the MHCSF, suggesting that whilst it *may predict levels of depression, anxiety and stress, it may not predict positive feelings of wellbeing.* This section also revealed that *emotion-focused cooping did not significantly predict help seeking.* Finally, coping through distraction had no significant direct effect on mental health in general, as findings were consistent across all constructs of the DASS21 and the MHCSF. However, we can conclude that this coping style directly predicted help seeking. *Overall, those who were more socially connected were more likely to cope actively or through distraction (potentially through friends), and also more likely to seek help generally.* Those who were less socially connected may be more likely to use emotion-focused coping if frequently victimised, but also had higher levels of depression, anxiety, and stress, and were less likely to seek help. *This section has also highlighted that whilst social connectedness*

played an important role for young people who were frequently victimised, it ***may not be so important among those who frequently bully***.

These models will now be tested using the multiple model approach in order to examine any differences between genders, in line with initial hypotheses.

5.2.4 Step 9: Gender Differences across All Models

These full models were then run by gender. Each model was tested for invariance, to determine whether the relationships would hold or differ for both males and females.

The parameters were constrained to be equal between the groups, and then model comparisons were examined. *Most model fit statistics were not particularly strong in this section, however this is most likely due to the small sample size when separating into groups* (Chumney, 2013; Fan, Thompson, & Wang, 1999). *Therefore, gender differences need to be taken into consideration, but future research will need to confirm any statistically significant differences.* Due to the limitations associated with the small sample sizes, these results are displayed in Appendix K however, a summary of these findings are presented below.

For ease of interpretation, models are displayed with all paths, as well as with only significant paths (as in section 5.2.3). The unconstrained model fit statistics are presented for the model with all paths (used to determine if the model held across groups), followed by the model fit statistics for each gender when separated (if the unconstrained model was accepted, indicating that the model was different across groups).

5.2.4.1 Gender Differences Summary

Each of the models did not hold measurement invariance across groups, that is, the models did not apply across groups. *This indicated that these path relationships were different for males and females*. Therefore the un-constrained models were accepted for each.

In summary (see appendix K for detail) the models suggested that social connectedness and active coping may play a significant role in the decision to seek help, or in predicting mental health outcomes in males, independent of cybervictimisation experiences. *However, for females,* it appears that whilst both social connectedness and depression scores did not significantly predict help seeking overall, *social connectedness predicted better mental health scores and engagement in active coping, and it is this engagement in active coping that predicted help seeking*. In other words, *those who are more socially connected are those with*

better mental health, more likely to cope actively, and more likely to seek help. How this relates to frequency of cybervictimisation needs further investigation.

5.2.5 Structural Equation Modelling – Overall Brief Summary

The results detailed in this chapter indicated that ***social connectedness is an important predictor of active coping, and in turn active coping is important for positively predicting help seeking. On the other hand, emotion-focused coping may negatively predict mental health (specifically, depression, anxiety, and stress).*** Findings suggest that whilst social connectedness is an important predictor of wellbeing, it is ***engagement in active coping and coping through distraction which are positive precursors to help seeking***, with active coping being more likely among people with higher levels of social connectedness. Specifically, active coping had no direct effect on depression, anxiety or stress, but did demonstrate a positive effect on wellbeing as measured by the MHCSF, and directly predicted help seeking. *Young people who were more likely to cope actively, were more socially connected, more likely to have better mental health, and more likely to seek help*. The effects of social connectedness on coping intentions, and mental health outcomes, whilst significant for females, were not significant for males. Further, it may be less important among those who frequently bully compared to those who are frequently victimised. These particular findings are worthy of further investigation in larger samples and in longitudinal studies.

Whilst emotion-focused coping, did not directly mediate a decision to seek help; it did have a positive significant effect on depression, anxiety, and stress. Social connectedness may impact the likelihood of emotion-focused coping for those being victimised, and this engagement in emotion-focused coping also directly mediates mental health outcomes, with social connectedness also playing a role. In other words, emotion-focused coping may have a negative influence of mental health by increasing scores of depression, anxiety and stress, but not for wellbeing as measured by the MHSCF. Therefore, ***those who were less socially connected were those more likely to engage in emotion-focused coping, and had poorer mental health, with those who had higher social connectedness scores more likely to seek help***.

This chapter also has highlighted that ***regardless of young people's involvement in cyberbullying (involved or not involved), the relationships between coping, help seeking, and mental health held constant.*** This is in line with earlier results in Chapter 4, which

found that there were no significant differences in terms of the four cyber status categories and coping or help seeking intentions (although there were significant differences for mental health). This highlights that *whilst being involved or not involved in cyberbullying may not change coping or help seeking intentions, the* ***frequency of involvement may have a more significant effect by increasing or decreasing the likelihood to cope in certain ways (either adaptively or maladaptive)*****.** It is important, however to remember that small sample size may have influenced these results and so further research with larger samples is needed.

It is important therefore, that any future research which investigates mental health outcomes or help seeking *considers including measures of both social connectedness as well as coping styles,* as this thesis has demonstrated the predictive relevance these constructs can have on seeking help and mental health outcomes.

In summary, this section provided the following main insights:

- *Experiences of frequent cybervictimisation is predictive of a higher likelihood of coping emotionally, and a lower likelihood of coping actively*.
- *Social connectedness may act as a protective buffer against the effects of frequent cybervictimisation,* in the sense that those who are more socially connected are more likely to engage in active coping, and less likely to engage in emotion-focused coping. *Therefore, social connectedness may be linked to active coping styles when cyberbullied*.
- *Active coping and coping through distraction are positively linked with help seeking intentions*, indicating that young people who intend to cope in these ways may be more likely to seek help than those who use other coping strategies.
- *Emotion-focused coping did not demonstrate a significant effect on help seeking, but did predict mental health outcomes in an adverse manner,* indicating that those who intend to cope emotionally may also have poorer mental health than those who intend to cope actively.
- *The protective function of social connectedness may not be as relevant for males compared to females, or for those who frequently bully compared to those who are frequently victimised*.

- Each of the aforementioned findings are consistent regardless of prior involvement or non-involvement in cyberbullying.

This next section will now discuss the results of the qualitative stage of this study, in order to give some insight into what these quantitative results may mean, and reasons behind *why* young people may cope using these methods.

6 Results – Part 3 – Qualitative

This chapter discusses the qualitative component of this study and will begin by outlining the analysis process and coding of themes, followed by critical analysis of each of the themes that emerged. This Chapter is a descriptive account of the key themes which emerged from the data. The discussion in terms of the literature, will occur in Chapter 7, when the quantitative and qualitative results are brought together, where a thorough discussion of the qualitative results, and how they triangulate with the quantitative component of this study, will be discussed. Qualitative data is a legitimate and trustworthy data source (discussed in section 3.2.3), and themes and sub-themes that the researcher identified were reviewed, discussed and cross-checked by the supervisors of this researcher. The quotes presented in this chapter are credible and valid and are representative of all responses relating to each theme, unless otherwise identified. Triangulating these findings with the quantitative results and past research further confirms the validity of these findings.

The face-to-face interviews were conducted in November, 2014, with 30 participants in total. Table 47 displays the distribution of the interview sample by gender and age groups.

Table 47 Demographic Profile of Interview Sample

Age (Years)	Gender		% (*n*)
	Female	Male	
13	20.0% (*n*=6)	6.7% (*n*=2)	26.7% (*n*=8)
14	20.0% (*n*=6)	23.3% (*n*=7)	43.3% (*n*=13)
16	6.7% (*n*=2)	10.0% (*n*=3)	16.7% (*n*=5)
17	10.0% (*n*=3)	3.3% (*n*=1)	13.3% (*n*=4)
Total	56.7% (*n*=17)	43.3% (*n*=13)	100% (N=30)

6.1 Qualitative Analysis

Interpretative phenomenological analysis was used to analyse the data according to patterns, themes, and categories that emerged from the interview transcripts (See Chapter 3) (Patton, 2002; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Transcripts were analysed through the program NVivo, version 10 (NVivo, 2012).

Whilst it was expected that overarching a priori themes would fall under the main areas of interest for this research: viz, cyberbullying, coping and help seeking; sub-themes

were not pre-determined and emerged from the data throughout. Therefore, as patterns and themes emerged, data were categorised by those themes which linked together in a meaningful way, but also allowing for examining those which clearly differed from each other (Patton, 2002). An inductive approach was therefore used to analyse the sub-themes which emerged from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The thematic analysis employed in this study followed the six phase procedure outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006):

1. Phase 1: Familiarisation with data - all 30 interviews were transcribed personally by the researcher. Ideas and themes that emerged were noted during the transcribing process. Transcripts were read and re-read so that the researcher could become familiar with the data.
2. Phase 2: Generating initial codes - interviews were coded individually according to interesting features of the text that arose.
3. Phase 3: Searching for themes - These initial codes were arranged into subfolders of which overarching theme they would fit under (cyberbullying, coping, or help seeking).
4. Phase 4: Reviewing themes – Codes were reviewed to ensure they fit under the overarching areas. A thematic map was drawn to gain an understanding of which sub-themes were evident.
5. Phase 5: Defining and naming themes – Ongoing analysis occurred to further refine the specifics of each theme. Sub-themes were created to further refine the analysis process and identify the story the themes told.
6. Phase 6: Producing the final report – vivid and compelling quotations were highlighted to illustrate identified themes and further considered in relation to the literature, research questions and quantitative results.

The specific a priori themes established prior to analysing the interview included the overarching areas of interest: cyberbullying and defining cyberbullying; perceptions of coping methods used by young people who have had an experience of cyberbullying either as a cybervictim, cyberbully-victim and why these methods are generally chosen; help seeking sources for cyberbullying and why young people did not seek help; and the relationship between coping and help seeking (what alternative coping strategies are there to seeking help?).

Transcripts were initially coded based on key words and phrases which emerged from the data and were assigned to an overarching theme and allocated a subtheme. For example: when asked “how do you think young people cope with cyberbullying?” a response such as “probably just ignore it”, would be placed under the main section “coping methods” but coded to “ignore it”, which was subsequently recoded to: “disregard”. This process occurred within the NViVo program.

Sub-themes were created and these sections of transcript were coded accordingly. A mind map was created in order to provide a visual representations of the data to aid in understanding the many sub-themes that emerged during coding, and the relationships which existed between each theme. This is depicted in Figure 29. The section in yellow emerged from the data as relationships appeared between help seeking and coping. In total 20 sub-themes became evident from the data. The coding and findings related to each sub-themes will be detailed in the following section. The themes and sub-themes were reviewed, discussed and cross-checked by the supervisors of this researcher.



Figure 29: Mind Map of All Themes

6.2 Qualitative Codes and Findings

This section discusses each of the overarching themes identified, the associated sub-themes and provides extracts from the data which illustrate the sub-themes. Further discussion and triangulation with the quantitative results will be discussed in Chapter 7.

6.2.1 Overarching a Priori Theme – Cyberbullying Definition

In order to set the context, the interviews began by asking questions around participants' understanding of, and perceptions about, what constitutes cyberbullying. An interesting theme that emerged in line with the continuing debate around this in the literature (see Chapter 2), were the differing opinions on whether the notion of repetition is problematic in the online environment, and whether a cyberbullying incident needs to occur repeatedly over time or not. Participants' views were evenly divided on this issue, with about half of the participants believing that cyberbullying needs to happen more than once, and the remaining participants believing it can happen one time and still be considered cyberbullying. Table 48 displays the sub-themes with example quotations, and will each now be discussed in turn.

Table 48: Sub-Theme 1 – Repetition

Main theme	Sub-themes	Example quotation
What constitutes repetition is problematic in the online environment	It needs to happen more than once	*"Probably [needs to happen more than once] like um sometimes some people can overact with cyberbullying…You gotta try and figure out when it's actually cyberbullying and when it's actually a joke. If it's not a joke then its cyberbullying." (14 year old female)*
	Once is enough	*"A one off can be cyberbullying, because all it takes is one comment to make someone feel that bad about themselves." (17 year old female)* *"I guess like you punch someone in the face once that's still physical bullying, you harass someone online that's still bullying doesn't*

matter how many times you do it." (16 year old male)

6.2.1.1 Sub-Theme 1 - Repetition Is Needed

Reference was made many times to the idea that one single incident is unlikely to be intended cyberbullying, suggesting that intent remains a crucial criterion when defining cyberbullying.

It became clear through the interview responses that young people believed that sometimes a one off incident could have been accidental. In other words, it could have been intended as a joke or was not intended to be as harmful as it was. This finding reflects the notion of cognitive appraisal, highlighted by Gruen, Folkman, and Lazarus (1988), and the extent to which an event is deemed stressful and how the individual interprets the event. Some young people may interpret an act as a joke or 'fun', whereas others may feel it offensive or threatening, and therefore, cyberbullying. The notion of cognitive appraisal in interpretations of cyberbullying, and consequently, how it is defined, needs further investigation. The statements below further highlight these concerns of repetition in cyberbullying:

> *"Yeah. Because if it happens once it could be that they were just having a bad day so they took it out on you and they didn't really mean it or anything, but if it happens more than once then yeah they are just always like that."(13 year old female)*

> *"... it depends the severity I guess…like… if it's something really harsh for the first time then I think that counts, but if it's something …like… a slight dig and then it doesn't really continue then I wouldn't really accept that …I'd say it's a one off thing, but if it continues, then yeah I'd say its cyberbullying …like it sort of depends like if you are joking around with your friends… like I call my friends stupid all the time, but they don't take offense, cause they know I don't mean it…like that's what you do, but some people don't like necessarily think they have that level of friendship with people, and like discern it as cyberbullying rather than like just joking around." (17 year old female)*

It was apparent that the young people above who expressed these opinions felt that this was important, and the label 'cyberbullying' is sometimes too quickly associated to a particular incident that may not have been a serious situation. However, some young people interviewed

felt differently: that one single incident is enough to constitute cyberbullying. These differing views highlight the tensions evident when trying to define what constitutes repetition in online settings.

6.2.1.2 Sub-Theme 2 - Once Is Enough

Many young people believe that if an event is harmful and causes a negative emotional response, then it is cyberbullying, no matter what the intent of the cyberbully was (a joke or not).

Participants held strong beliefs about the harm that cyberbullying can cause, even in the instance of a one-off scenario:

> *"I think cyberbullying is cyberbullying, anything you post that you don't have permission or trying to hurt their feelings yeah, I don't think it has to happen multiple times, I think it's cyberbullying when it happens." (17 year old male)*

> *"I think that even one thing can make someone feel horrible about themselves and just um really um yeah not comfortable." (13 year old female)*

Based on these statements, some young people do believe that a single incident can be considered cyberbullying, and that it does not need to occur repeatedly over time. This is in contrast to well-known definitions as described in the literature review, which state that repetition is a criterion for both traditional bullying and cyberbullying (Olweus, 1978; Smith et al., 2008; Smith & Steffgen, 2013).Therefore, it is pertinent that perhaps the cyberbullying definition argument should shift to focus more on 'cyberaggression', as researchers highlight that this focuses more on the aggressive nature of online acts, and may be simpler to distinguish behaviours in comparison to bullying (Bauman, Underwood, & Card, 2013; Corcoran, Guckin, & Prentice, 2015; Grigg, 2010). The disparity in these first two subthemes highlight that young people themselves are uncertain as to whether repetition is required or not for a behaviour to be considered cyberbullying.

6.2.2 Overarching Theme – Different Coping Processes

Participants were asked about their: views on how young people cope with being involved in cyberbullying; personal preferences for effective coping methods when stressed or sad about anything in general; and their views about why young people choose particular coping methods. Participants were informed that whilst their responses were confidential, and

anonymous, that the researcher had a duty of care and would take the action required to support them if the researcher deemed the participant to be at risk through their disclosure. None revealed any content which inferred that they were in a poor mental state or in danger of harm. A variety of themes related to useful coping methods emerged in this section, and are detailed below in Table 49 and throughout this section.

Table 49: Sub-themes 3-7 – Seeking Support, Disregard, Withdrawal, Self-Distraction, Personal Characteristics

Main theme	Sub-theme	Example quotation
Coping methods	Seeking support	*"[they might]cope by talking to people, or like telling other people so then they're not alone, they can tell someone and then it's gonna be ok." (14 year old female)* *"…talking to my friends helps a lot, that's really what I do with everything at the moment, just talk to my friends, be around them, uh talk to my mum." (16 year old female)*
	Disregard	*"I guess some people they just like ignore it … but then yeah I guess most people don't like report it or anything yeah they just like try and brush it off." (14 year old male)*
	Withdrawal	*"If it's severe I guess they might tell someone but a lot of people don't I think, like a lot of people just try and keep it to themselves and get over it." (13 year old female)* *"Well I think people should tell other people like friends or family that they are being cyberbullied, but I don't think many people do. I think they just like try and hide it and get on with life." (13 year old male)*
	Self-distraction	*"Probably think about it a lot and uh just try and keep it off my mind as much as I can, play sport." (14 year old male).*
	Personal characteristics	*"Sort of depends who you are like…some people deal with it by like talking to people about it or finding like someone, say they go to their parents to talk about it just to like calm them down or something, just to deal with it." (14 year old female)*

6.2.2.1 Sub-Theme 3 – Seeking Support

A diverse range of coping methods emerged from participants when asked how they believed young people coped with cyberbullying. It is promising to see that some participants believed that seeking support, whether from friends, parents, or teachers, was a commonly used form of coping, and was considered to be the most effective method of coping with cyberbullying incidents.

Those who believed that talking to someone was a useful coping method, and something that young people would do to cope with cyberbullying, believed that it was the act of talking through the problem with someone that made it a useful and effective coping method. This supports the literature which suggests young people find the most helpful way to deal with cyberbullying is with the support of family members, and that family social support can act as a protective factor for problems associated with cybervictimisation (Fanti, Demetriou, & Hawa, 2012; Paul, Smith, & Blumberg, 2012). The statements below highlight some of the personal experiences of young people in coping with general situations (not cyberbullying specifically):

> *"I usually tell a friend about it and then they can comfort me and like I have someone there, 'cause like, if I try and keep it to myself I just get angry and I dunno I just can't deal with it sometimes, I need to tell someone and all that." (13 year old female)*

> *"Well I used to self-harm, and then my friends made me start seeing a counsellor, and yeah my counsellor helped me out when I was stressed, and I had friends and family helping me out through it …" (14 year old female).*

Young people who chose 'talking to someone about their problems' (mainly friends) said that it is because friends are 'easy to talk to', and that it helps them to 'feel better'.

6.2.2.2 Sub-themes 4 and 5 – Disregard and Withdrawal

Reasons for not talking to someone mostly included not wanting to bother their friends or involve them in their troubles. Other themes that emerged were similar to the obstacles faced when seeking help, and therefore will be discussed in section 6.2.4.

Unfortunately the most common methods believed to be utilised by those involved with cyberbullying, and also commonly utilised by young people to cope with generally stressful situations, included a certain disregard for the situation, and keeping the issue to

themselves through withdrawing from those around them. This is of concern, given that literature suggests that engaging in ineffective coping styles can sometimes prolong the bullying (Craig, Pepler, & Blais, 2007; Kristensen & Smith, 2003; Mahady Wilton, Craig, & Pepler, 2000), potentially resulting in long term cybervictimisation. The quotes below highlight some of these beliefs:

> *"Me personally like I would like go to my room and just like think about it for a bit and then yeah normally I would just like brush it off." (14 year old male)*

> *"There's a few things that I'm not really happy about, but um I haven't really told anyone about, I have actually kept to myself, um I probably should [tell someone], but I haven't…I just try to cope with it on my own." (13 year old female)*

> *"I um don't handle stress well, um I actually have an anxiety disorder which just makes everything worse. I try and do something to relax, like being by myself helps, um listening to music, drawing, you know, things I enjoy." (16 year old female)*

Denial and withdrawal were by far the most commonly referred to methods of coping. It was both what young people believed others do when they experience cyberbullying, and what they found was their best way of coping with a challenging situation. The statements below further highlight one of the main messages that came across in the interviews: that ignoring the situation is a commonly used method to cope, and something many young people believed others would do if cyberbullied.

6.2.2.3 Sub-Theme 6 - Self Distraction

Another theme which emerged related to coping, was the notion of self-distraction. Some young people believed that keeping occupied or finding something to do to keep their minds off the situation was a useful coping method. It is important to note here that quantitative frequencies results also revealed distraction was a popular coping method (Chapter 4, section 4.3.2.3). The quotes below highlight these thoughts.

> *"I know some people that find hobbies and stuff to deal with the stress." (14 year old female)*

> *"I usually get like really busy, I drop everything to help out people, so I'm never home. So if I'm always helping people then I don't have time to think about my own problems, there's no me time it's just them." (17 year old female)*

The coping style of distraction, also was found to be a common method of coping among cybervictims and cyberbully-victims in Chapter 4. These results will be further discussed and triangulated in Chapter 7 to help establish what this coping style may mean for young people in terms of help seeking and mental health.

6.2.2.4 Sub-Theme 7 – Personal Characteristics

There are a variety of reasons why young people choose the coping methods that they do, and generally it comes down to the method they believe will be most effective for them given the situation. Young people were very clear that coping methods chosen are very much dependent on the person and the situation, and as such coping methods may vary accordingly. The quotes below highlight these thoughts:

> *"Some people cope better than others, like some people like, a lot of people just ignore it but some people do decide to do something about it and some just give up sort of."(14 year old male)*

> *"Depends really on what type of person you are, I'd say if you get bullied quite frequently you wouldn't take it too well but I dunno some people might take it as a joke some people won't care, just depends on what type of person you are." (17 year old male).*

It was evident that young people have varied beliefs in relation to preferences about the coping methods used by those involved in cyberbullying. However, findings from the interviews suggested that the most commonly used method of coping was *ignoring the situation*. Whilst some young people felt that seeking help or talking to someone was a commonly used or helpful coping method, the review of all responses revealed it was *not* the most common method put forwards. This is in contrast to the quantitative results, which revealed that many young people *intend* to cope actively: by seeking support or talking to someone: which leads to the topic of help seeking more specifically.

6.2.3 Overarching Theme – Relationship Based Help Seeking

Participants were asked who young people would seek help from if they were involved in cyberbullying. Furthermore, participants were asked what obstacles may prevent young people from seeking help, and what other methods of coping they may use as an alternative to seeking help (Table 50).

Table 50: Sub-themes 8 and 9 – Trust and Relationships

Main theme	Sub-theme	Example quotation
Trusting relationships and help seeking	Trusting sources of help	*"Um, friends and maybe like, yeah I can only say friends, I can't see anyone talking to like a teacher or maybe the parents if they are like have a really close relationship but yeah I can't really see anyone talking to like a teacher or counsellor to be honest or…" (16 year old male)* *"Probably their friends more like 'cause you can trust them more, um some people would go to like a school counsellor or a teacher, sometimes your parent if you're close enough with them." (13 year old female).*
	Relationship with sources	*"Probably their parents, um because obviously that's just in the home and then it won't go public or anything, um some people might like tell their teachers but I think most people will just tell their parents because then, that's like their like they're family whereas the teachers like you know then it's getting the school involved and things like that, and also their parents will decide if you know whether they need to tell the school or if they need to tell the police or whatever." (13 year old female)*

6.2.3.1 Sub-Theme 8 – Trusting Sources of Help

It was apparent that young people preferred to seek help from people whom they trusted or who were close to them. Seeking help from friends was considered to be the most popular source of help, although parents also were mentioned by a majority of young people, with some suggesting teachers or school counsellors.

It was evident that young people felt that friends would be the first source of help if they needed to talk about a cyberbullying situation, but if an intervention was needed then parents or a teacher were considered to be a more appropriate source of help. In other words, if the young person wanted something done about the situation, then they would go to parents because they knew that they would take action. However, young people trusted their friends and felt that they would most likely confide in them first. The statements below highlight these beliefs:

"I guess in a way yeah they know if they tell their parents it will get really serious, whereas if they just say the one thing to their friends it's not gonna really go anywhere, so I guess they will probably tell their friends more than their parents." (13 year old female)

"They'd most likely go to like one of their friends or they'd go to someone they know they can like trust, and they know that something will get done." (14 year old female)

Young people considered trust and relationships with potential sources of help important.

6.2.3.2 Sub-Theme 9 – Relationship-Based Help Seeking

Young people provided several reasons as to why particular sources of help were preferred and chosen over others. Young people believed it mostly depended on the nature of the relationships they had with others, stating that the first source of help would be someone they felt close to or who would make them feel better. Some young people felt that friends would be the first choice, whilst others identified parents.

The statement below further highlights that the relationship one has with parents, teachers, or other people is an important consideration/factor in the decision to seek help and whom to seek help from:

"It depends on their relationship with their parents like I'm pretty open with my parents, but some people probably wouldn't be, …like …they wouldn't have a really big conversation at the dinner table, they'd eat their food and go away so really depends a lot…so I'd say if they are open to their parents they'd tell them, if they're not then they'd be telling their friends or coping on their own, or if it's a sensitive issue they'd tell their friends not their parents. With teachers it depends on the teacher …like… I wouldn't go up to my science teacher, where there are some I know I can talk to about that …like… we have the chaplain and they are the sort of like counsellors at the school I'd say...yeah… I dunno …like… if you have problems you'd go there to talk about it, they can also give you advice, they'd be the sorta teachers I guess to go to , but if you know some other teachers and you are like friends with them then yeah." (16 year old male)

Young people identified a number of obstacles that might prevent them from seeking help for cyberbullying altogether.

6.2.4 Coping and Help Seeking Obstacles

Participants were asked what they believed were barriers to seeking help, but also why young people chose particular coping methods over others. Ultimately, the responses were very similar in terms of obstacles for active coping strategies (compared to emotional responses) and seeking help or telling someone about the situation in general.

6.2.4.1 Sub-Theme 10 – Over Reactive Parents

Young people highlighted concerns that adults may over-react if they disclosed information about a cyberbullying experience. Young people feared that both parents and teachers would take their intervention 'too far', such as bringing the bully in to see the principal or involving the police. This is highlighted in Table 51 below.

Table 51: Sub-theme 10 – Over Reactive Parents

Main theme	Sub-theme	Example quotation
Anxiousness about response from source	Over reactive parents/carers exacerbating the situation	*"Sometimes I think students might be afraid of their parents finding out and talking to the school about it and like sometimes, like mostly for the students who ignore it as their form of coping, 'cause like if they are fine ignoring it then they are afraid that their parents might bring it up and then that will make it happen at school rather than like just being able to ignore it as if it doesn't happen." (17 year old female)* *"I dunno I find like my mum takes it way too far with it and she tells like, she has rung once the counsellor and I don't like it when they do that." (13 year old female).*

The statement below further highlights one of the views young people expressed: that they believed if parents were to get involved, they would then go to the school and potentially make the situation worse. This statement also relates to the next theme that emerged in terms of a fear that the cyberbullying will get worse if help is sought (see sub-theme 11).

> *"Well they would get involved, because a parent is usually very worried about their child so they would go and like ring up the school and you know make appointments, and then oh you know "oh I saw your mum in the front office talking about this" and you know it gets around the school and you know no one wants their mum to come to the school 'cause that's just embarrassing." (17 year old female)*

This statement highlights one of the many barriers young people face when experiencing cyberbullying. The statement "no one wants their mum to come to the school 'cause *that's just embarrassing*", reiterates one of the later themes to be discussed: stigma and embarrassment. This highlights one of the main reasons why young people are reluctant to seek help: they are anxious about the way adults, in particular parents, might react and respond to the information disclosed.

6.2.4.2 Sub-Theme 11 – Making the Situation Worse

In relation to sub-theme 10, the majority of young people interviewed felt that telling someone about the cyberbullying, whether it be parents, teachers, or friends, could potentially make the situation worse, and therefore had a fear of disclosing the information to someone (Table 52). This is in line with literature discussed in Chapter 2 around particular fears young people may face when seeking help (see Vogel et al., 2007).

Table 52: Sub-theme 11 – Making the Situation Worse

Main theme	Sub-theme	Example quotation
Fear of disclosure	Making the situation worse	*"Just not wanting to make it any worse for themselves, like if you tell one person like "omg did you know this is happening with so and so" and it will just spread, go round and make things worse I guess." (16 year old female)* *"Like the bullies. Like if they went to the school. 'Cause like if I was one of them I wouldn't say anything, 'cause they might do it again or bully me more." (13 year old male)*

In relation to the fear of the situation getting worse or being bullied further, was the idea of needing to deal with the situation themselves. The following statements highlight both these themes, and will be further explored in the next section (sub-theme 12).

> *"Um probably thinking that they are gonna make it worse, that they're you know gonna tell somebody and that people are gonna call them or say you can't cope with it on your own or whatever, so they might think they are a wuss or yeah. Um so probably that they think that it's just gonna make it worse if they tell somebody." (13 year old female)*

> *"I think it's just because they're scared, and they think they might like make it worse or maybe um because they're, maybe even because they agree with the person, maybe*

they think like maybe that is how I am or that is how I look, um so they do just you know they do start thinking that is just me and I can't help it, there's no point telling anyone because it's not gonna change, um , yeah and they just think that maybe the cyberbullyer isn't really cyberbullying them, but they are just stating the truth so yeah." (13 year old female)

The second statement highlights a separate issue that was not readily discussed in the interviews but brought up by this young female: that sometimes the victim may come to *believe* whatever the bully is saying and therefore not seek help because they feel they may 'deserve it'. In other words, some young people may believe cyberbullying is not something that they need/deserve to seek help for. This may highlight some cases were young people may not be aware that they are being cyberbullied.

6.2.4.3 Sub-Theme 12 – Need To Deal with the Situation Themselves

As discussed, another theme that emerged was the notion that one needs to deal with their own problems, or that their problems are not 'bad enough' to warrant asking for help (Table 53). This related to previously discussed literature around the notion that cyberbullying is something young people feel they need to deal with on their own (Murray-Harvey et al., 2012).

Table 53: Sub-theme 12 - Need To Deal with the Situation Themselves

Main theme	Sub-theme	Example quotation
Social norms	Needing to deal with the situation alone - resilience	*"'Cause they are afraid of what people could say and if it's a big deal or not you know like a friend could say "uh that's not such a big deal, you know get over it"." (13 year old female)* *"Um I don't know maybe um some people probably would ty to ignore it maybe if it's not that big a thing like they think like "it's nothing I can get over that" and yeah." (14 year old female)*

In relation to this was the notion that others may not believe their situation, or confirm the belief of the experience being something to just 'get over'.

"Insecurity and thinking that they might be ignored or something like that." (14 year old male)

"They are just scared that no one will believe them that it's happened." (14 year old female)

These beliefs were reiterated by several young people and is a potential barrier to help seeking. Another theme that coincided with this belief was the notion of embarrassment and stigma. The thought of seeking help and either not being believed or being told to deal with their own problems, was something that came up in a number of responses.

6.2.4.4 Sub-Theme 13 – Stigma/Embarrassment

Fear, embarrassment and stigma associated with seeking help was a view that many young people had (Table 54). Some young people believed that they may be viewed differently if other people knew of their problems, or that they would be embarrassed to discuss their cyberbullying experiences or personal problems. This theme does overlap somewhat with sub-theme 10, in that young people may be worried about telling their parents for fear of the situation getting worse, but also due to their parents embarrassing them.

Table 54: Sub-theme 13 – Stigma/Embarrassment

Main theme	Sub-theme	Example quotation
Social norms	Stigma/embarrassment of seeking help	*"... a psychiatrist like you go in there, you tell them your problems, and like sit on the comfy couch, and that seems like too unrealistic like you won't get any help, or they'll judge you severely, because people will like "oh I have a counsellors appointment" and they'll be like "oh what do you have problems for?" like...so people don't like to see them you know because that reflects badly on their image. (17 year old female)* *"...it's looked down upon when you talk about yourself too much." (16 year old male*

Males in particular felt that seeking help was 'weak', or just 'not acceptable', relating to the previous theme of needing to deal with the problem themselves. The below statement highlights this view:

"Maybe, like, in my opinion it might be a bit embarrassing, like say you are like being harassed or something via Facebook like that's just words, or maybe you might be scared 'cause you might get a response like maybe like "just grow up" or "it doesn't matter don't listen to them" sort of deal, yeah I dunno...probably just like normal social sort of things like it's not normally something you would go do, I

guess because everyone is like conforming and trying to be like each other so they don't stand out or whatever, so I don't think anyone really wants to make a big deal about getting a few bad messages or something, even if it might be a bit more than that." (16 year old male).

The notion of 'making a big deal' about cyberbullying was something that came up with a number of interviewees. Whilst some young people were aware of the damage cyberbullying can cause, there were many young people who felt that it was not something to 'make a big deal' out of, or was something that every teenager has to go through at some stage in their lives. Again, this was more common among males than females, and was apparent in the later stage of the interviews when asking what advice would be given to a friend in need (see section 6.2.5).

6.2.4.5 Sub-Theme 14 – Being a Disruption

Finally, young people also believed that involving others by asking for help would just be a disruption on their lives, and that instead, dealing with the problem themselves would minimise this disruption (relating to sub-theme 11 that the situation is something they can take care of themselves) (Table 55).

Table 55: Sub-Theme 14 - Disruption

Main theme	Sub-theme	Example quotation
Self-worth	Disruption	*"Um if there is like family issues at the time, then that's like a big obstacle because you don't really want to interfere with that, so you could be holding it in to try and find a good time but you never do, so that could build up inside, or if you're one of the shy people, you don't really want to talk to people about this stuff…I know I go through that a lot. " (14 year old female)* *"They feel like they can deal with the problem themselves, or they don't want to bother people with their problems…" (17 year old female).*

Some young people who discussed being a disruption to others also reiterated earlier views of the cyberbullying not 'being a big deal', or something to be dealt with on their own. The statements below further highlight these beliefs alongside the notion of being a disruption to other people's lives:

"Um maybe they believe it and just don't want to get anyone else involved like "oh this has to do with me it doesn't have anything to do with you, you don't need to know

it's not that important" you know even when it's really serious. So yeah just wanting to keep to themselves I guess…" (16 year old female)

"…you know everyone seems too busy to help them out, or they say "I'm fine, it just a little…" they don't see it as a big deal." (17 year old female)

It is evident from the statements above that there are many obstacles that stop young people from wanting to seek help for cyberbullying. Therefore, it was important to ask what alternative coping methods young people believed are used instead of seeking help. Similar to when asked about coping methods, the most common response to this was to ignore the situation, or to keep to yourself. Online resources were only mentioned by two participants. Retaliate or standing up to the bully was also mentioned by a handful of participants.

6.2.5 Advice

Young people were asked what advice they would give to a friend if they said they were having a hard time coping with cyberbullying, and also if they said they needed help for cyberbullying. Similar themes emerged in both these areas

6.2.5.1 Sub-Theme 15 – Advise Friends to Get Help

It is promising that a majority of young people stated that if their friend confronted them and asked for advice that they would tell their friend to speak to someone and get some help (Table 56). Many young people felt that telling someone about the situation who would be able to put a stop to it, or help in some way, was the best way to cope with cyberbullying.

Table 56: Sub-Theme 15 – Get Help

Main theme	Sub-theme	Example quotation
Taking action	Get help/talk to someone	*"I would advise them to talk to someone that could actually help, like it's all well and good to like say talk to me if I can like calm them down or whatever and help reassure them that what is happening isn't too bad or whatever, but I'd advise them to go actually talk to someone that could help stop it." (16 year old male)* *"I would say you've definitely gotta let someone else know other than yourself… like even if it's your parent your best friend um anyone at school, I dunno someone else has to know and be aware because they can sort of talk to you about it and what's going on and you can sort*

	of see things from other views as well not just your own." (16 year old female)

Many young people clearly explained that whilst they would be quick to tell their friend to seek help, or speak to someone more capable of intervening, some stated that they would try and help in whatever way they could. This links to the next theme which emerged around 'being there' for friends when in need. The below statements highlight both of these themes (14 and 15): encouraging to seek help and being supportive however possible.

> *"Well the fact that they've told me is pretty good, so, if the person is really stubborn like my best friend he probably wouldn't tell his parents, but I dunno I probably wouldn't want to intervene in anything like that, it depends how bad the issue is but if it's really bad then maybe I'd just let them know, 'cause yeah I don't want my best friend going through a really tough time just 'cause he's stubborn about it um yeah, so yeah I might intervene I might not, I might just help them out whatever way I can, just give them advice if I can yeah." (16 year old male)*

6.2.5.2 Sub-Theme 16 – Be There However Possible

Several young people stated that they would just try to be there for their friend, and listen to what they had to say, or offer some sort of advice (Table 57). It was apparent among these respondents however, that they were unclear about how to respond. Whilst the quotations below seem distinct, it was evident when interviewing these participants that they had not had this experience before and were not sure what exactly they would do. In spite of this, the positive attitudes they had toward being supportive of their friends was encouraging.

Table 57: Sub-Theme 16 – Be There

Main theme	Sub-theme	Example quotation
Providing support	Be there for them	*"I would tell them to hang in there, don't give up, that I was there to help them and I would help as much and try to find the best help and try to stop it I guess." (14 year old male)* *"I would probably like I dunno I would do like what I could to help them, probably, just I dunno be there for them, and then like have them talk to me, or try and get them to talk to me." (14 year old male)*

6.2.5.3 Sub-Theme 17 – Advise To Ignore It

Of concern, however, a good proportion of young people (albeit mostly male participants) stated that they would tell their friend just to ignore the situation or not to think about it, in the hope that it would 'just go away' (Table 58).

Table 58: Sub-Theme 17 – Ignore It

Main theme	Sub-theme	Example quotation
Denial and self-distraction	Ignore it	*"Well really you can kind of just step away from the computer or the phone, you can just step away from it and remove it from your life for a bit and eventually it might just go away." (16 year old male)* *"I would um just help them through it and tell them to not think about it and think about something else and just think on the bright side." (14 year old male)*

It was evident among these participants that some young people appeared to have a blasé attitude toward coping with cyberbullying, in that they feel ignoring the situation is an effective coping method. Alternatively, they are employing a strategy which has, for a long time, been an anti-bullying strategy recommended by schools: to ignore it, and show you are not bothered, or don't care. The aim of this is supposedly to let the bully know that they are not having any impact. These young people also suggested just 'not thinking about it', or engaging in something to distract themselves from the cyberbullying (in relation to sub-theme 5). The below statements highlight some of these opinions.

> *"Just like stay home, sleep maybe or just have a fun time playing video games by yourself at home or just listen to music I guess, that's about it, just not even thinking about what they are saying or anything else that's bad you know." (14 year old male)*

> *"Probably try and uh help them try and take their mind off of it, try and keep them positive , and keep plenty of people around, people that they love and love them." (14 year old male)*

It is evident that there are a variety of methods young people would suggest, or do for, friends in need, including to: suggesting they seek help; comforting them; or advising them to ignore the situation completely. A handful of participants suggested deleting the posts or blocking the bully, whilst some also suggested retaliating and confronting the bully, which could be suggested as active forms of coping (taking action). Only a couple of participants mentioned

looking for help online (through kidshelpline) and therefore, when asked about what resources they believed would be useful, a theme emerged about why online is often not used, but also how to improve this area of help seeking so that is it used in the future.

6.2.6 Resources

To conclude the interview, young people were asked if they had any suggestions for resources that they would consider useful to help with cyberbullying. It emerged from the interviews that some people did not see online help, or the use of apps, as a useful source of help. However, some suggestions were made to make online help better known, or how to improve it.

6.2.6.1 Sub-Theme 18 – Prefer Face-To-Face Interaction

A main theme that emerged during the interviews was that young people still prefer talking to someone face to face, rather than going online for help (Table 59).

Table 59: Sub-Theme 18 – Prefer Face-To-Face

Main theme	Sub-theme	Example quotation
Online vs offline sources of help	Prefer face-to-face	*"If I was cyberbullied I personally wouldn't [go online]…like I would go to family and ask for help like I would just get their opinion but I wouldn't personally go to a website..." (17 year old female)* *"I would go to like one of the websites I guess if I didn't want to talk someone but I normally talk to people, like I have heard of some of the websites but I haven't been on them, I haven't looked them up, I haven't called them or anything." (13 year old female)*

The statement below was from a very passionate young man who firmly believed that adults are concentrating their efforts on online resources and they are not being used, and never will be. The statements highlights the idea that some young people would simply never consider online resources, and feel that, in terms of help seeking, online is not where young people are going:

> *"The thing about those websites like in all honestly like no one goes to them like I can't think of any and even if there was like this app like 'go to this app if you need help' like no one's gonna download it no one's gonna, like I imagine some would but I don't, like I can't really …the amount of people that get cyberbullied and stuff and the amount of people that go seek help from these sort of websites like it's not a large*

portion like, I don't know like it's sort of like I can't even remember the names of any of these things like, and it's not just the cyberbullying ones it's like all of them, like all the ones that are like if you have, if you just need to talk to someone or if you have an abusive parent or something I can't remember any of them. And I think it's just because they don't really stand out and they don't really capture your attention or anything they just kinda, I think people don't actually think they work, like they think people don't actually understand what's going on, they are just gonna like listen, and that can help sometimes but…it probably wouldn't do a lot." (16 year old male)

It seems that, *despite the fact that young people are online so often, that they do not view online sources of help as either useful or as their preference*. However, some young people did believe that if young people were more aware, or more apps were available, that they could be a good place to seek help and support:

"I'm not sure about any apps or anything I'm sure there are some anonymous ones, where your user name is anonymous and it will just come up with say you are talking to "bob", and bob helps you out and you go away, I guess it would have to be a private conversation…but, if you are being bullied like the first thing that came to my head is "oh that's just the pussy way about doing it" like I don't really say those sorts of things but that might be the mindset that people would have, I'm not sure about girls like that might be better, but if you can really see through that, like take a step back then it could be a really good place that's good for you." (16 year old male)

In light of these beliefs highlighted in this theme, participants were asked what could be done to both make these resources better known, or how to improve them so that they are actually used by young people.

6.2.6.2 Sub-Theme 19 - Utilise Social Media

A common suggestion that emerged was that advertisements or online help should be placed on social media, and that if young people were more aware of online resources then they may be utilised more (Table 60).

Table 60: Sub-Theme 19 –Social Media

Main theme	Sub-theme	Example quotation
Future utilisation of online help seeking	Use social media	*"Start where it all started, advertise on social media, because if they are getting cyberbullied they are gonna be on social media so that would be the place to start, have like Facebook pages*

	and you know pop it up in peoples news feed because you know if people read it once they'll think "oh that's nice" and you know maybe when that happens they'll think "you know I saw that, I'll go there". (17 year old female) *"…everyone has Facebook and that's probably where a lot of cyberbullying would happen … so yeah like they have those little add bars on the side so yeah probably just chucking an add on the side that would help a lot." (17 year old male)*

Some young people also suggested utilising apps and games, and the advertisements that appear through them to capture people's attention:

> *"Um probably like adds on electronics would be good because you know all these games and things they always pop up with like adds and things, and I know I do, I do actually look at them, especially like if you have an add on like these social media sites um then where the problem is there is also yeah a helping thing. Yeah just basically adds um things like that." (13 year old female)*

Whilst many organisations already have Facebook pages or Twitter accounts, *young people are still unaware of the services they provide*. Having pop-ups on Facebook or in apps or games would help capture the attention of young people so that in times of need they may remember those organisations. This was a powerful message that came across in the interviews: that making young people more aware, even if they feel they do not need the services at the time, could promote use of the services in the future. The Safe and Well Online Study aligned with this research (see Chapter 3) tested the use of a social marketing campaign to promote treating others with respect. One of the four campaigns *Keep It Tame*, utilised social marketing by having a pop up message appear on a young people's screen when they visited popular youth websites. The pop up message then directed them to the campaign. The messaging which promoted positive messages about respect resonated well with young people and highlights the potential for these types of campaigns to be utilised in future interventions (Spears et al., 2015b, 2015c, 2016a, 2016b). Other international research highlights the importance of utilising the online space for mental health eservices and interventions (McGorry, Bates, & Birchwood, 2013).

6.2.6.3 Sub-Theme 20 – Experts at School

In relation to awareness of online services, some participants believed that having experts come to school and talk about cyberbullying and online help would be useful, and that this could not only help those experiencing cyberbullying, but could also promote some of the online services already available (Table 61).

Table 61: Sub-Theme 20 - Experts

Main theme	Sub-theme	Example quotation
Utilising schools and face-to-face interaction	Experts at school	*"I reckon they should actually make like places for people getting cyberbullied, like a class but with a teacher for people getting cyberbullied like not just on the internet 'cause it's not the same, like if you have like one to one with say an expert on cyberbullying it can be really helpful." (14 year old male)* *"…maybe like people going around to schools and telling them that there's this site if you ever need help and yeah something like…so they can explain to them that there is help out there for you." (14 year old female)*

Whilst some people view online resources as helpful, it seems that there is still a majority of young people who view face-to-face communication as more useful and appropriate than seeking help online, certainly in the first instance. It is evident that there is a need to: increase awareness about available resources; consider ways to make the resources more engaging for young people; and design resources with young people at the center, so the relevance and benefits can be maximised for young people. These were fundamental considerations for each of the four campaigns of the Safe and Well Online study. To read the full reports of these campaigns, see Spears et al. (2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2016a, 2016b).

6.2.7 Qualitative Findings – Brief Summary

These qualitative results indicate that a proportion of young people in this study believe that talking to someone about the situation, is a form of advice young people would give friends. Of concern, however, is that ***young people expressed that they do not commonly cope this way themselves, and they do not think that those who are cyberbullied do so either.*** Therefore, whilst most participants *believed* that this would be an effective coping method and that they would encourage their friends to do this (in line with quantitative finings which

suggested active coping was a popular coping intention, see Chapter 4), *they do not believe young people are readily doing this. Rather, ignoring the situation or engaging in distraction techniques were the most popular form of coping discussed among participants*. This is in line with the quantitative findings which suggested distraction was a popular form of coping compared to the other styles. It also highlights that strategies provided by schools, to ignore the cyberbullying (generally in an effort to show the bully that they are not impacted by the bullying, i.e., do not care), are being employed, but that young people do not perceive this to be an effective form of coping, even when adopting this behaviour. It is evident in this study, however, *that young people are using ignoring the bullying as a form of distraction, in an effort to remove themselves from the situation*. *Consequently, this form of coping is about themselves, rather than an effort to make the bully think they do not care*. This disconnect between which methods young people are utilising and which they feel are actually more effective, highlights the need for much more consideration in terms of the strategies adults are recommending, what coping strategies are seen as effective by young people, and which result in positive outcomes.

This section has also highlighted the importance of increasing young people's awareness about online resources available to them, and also has shed light on the importance of speaking to young people about their concerns and beliefs, attitudes and practices. Engaging youth directly in determining which resources and strategies are most effective for them is of prime importance. Furthermore, working in partnership with them, to co-design effective approaches is warranted (Spears et al., 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2016a, 2016b).

In summary, this chapter had the following main insights:

- Whilst young people intend to cope actively, and understand that this is an effective form of coping, they do not believe that most young people are coping this way, and instead feel that most would just ignore the situation or try to deal with it themselves.

- There are many barriers that young people face when seeking help or coping actively, such as feeling of stigma, embarrassment, or that nothing will come of it if they ask for help, or on the contrary, the response will be too drastic and worsen the bullying.

- Few young people are using online resources for help, and feel that face-to-face help is more preferred, but there may be benefits in utilising social media.

These results, and how they relate to the quantitative findings as well as current and past research, will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 7.

7 Discussion

This chapter will address each of the research questions and hypotheses by outlining and triangulating the quantitative results, structural equation models, and the qualitative findings. Reference to relevant literature will be incorporated throughout this chapter, demonstrating where findings from this current study either support or challenge previous research, and highlighting areas for further investigation. This chapter will also draw comparisons with the national Safe and Well Online (SWO) study where relevant. Implications of findings in relation to each research question will be discussed, as well as in relation to the study as a whole. Limitations of the research will also be detailed.

This chapter will begin by revisiting and restating the research questions and hypotheses proposed in Chapters 2 and 4 of this thesis. It briefly will discuss the prevalence statistics of internet use and cyberbullying and draw comparisons with prevalence rates reported in the literature. The core focus areas of this thesis then will be addressed, namely: help seeking intentions; coping with cyberbullying; the relationship between help seeking and coping; sub-sample differences; and finally the relationship between social connectedness and mental health.

To recap, Table 62 shows each of the research questions and which hypotheses, if any, relate to each question.

Table 62: Research Questions and Related Hypotheses

Research Question	Related hypotheses
What are the main reasons why young people intend or do not intend to seek help in relation to cyberbullying (especially from formal sources)?	No specific hypothesis, explored in qualitative findings.
What coping strategies do young people use to deal with cyberbullying and why?	H_6 - Young people who have been involved in cyberbullying will be more likely to use emotion-focused styles of coping than active styles.
What is the nature of the relationship between help seeking and coping? That is, do different coping styles mediate the relationship between cyberbullying	H_7 - There will be a positive relationship between active coping and help seeking. i.e., those who engage in active coping styles will be more likely to seek help than those

involvement and help seeking? (i.e., prevent or encourage help seeking)	who engage in emotion-focused coping styles.
Are there differences in help seeking and coping intentions between sub groups (e.g. age, gender, cyber status)?	H_1 - Young people will be more likely to seek help from informal sources compared to formal sources. H_2 - Females will be more likely to seek help from friends than males. H_3 - Young people will be more likely to seek help from all sources as age increases. H_4 - Females will be more likely to engage in emotion-focused coping than males. H_5 - Older age groups will be more likely to engage in active coping styles than younger age groups.
What is the nature of the relationship between the emotional state of young people and their coping and help seeking intentions?	H_8 - Those who are more socially connected will be more likely to engage in active coping styles, and less likely to engage in emotion-focused coping styles. H_9 - Different coping styles will mediate the relationship between involvement in cyberbullying and mental health, i.e., active coping will be related to more positive mental health scores compared to emotion-focused coping.

Before addressing each of the main research questions and themes of this research, it is first important to discuss some prevalence statistics in relation to past research, in order to provide an understanding of the context of this research.

In terms of internet use, findings were consistent with both Australian and International research (Burns et al., 2013; Livingston, Carr, Byrne, 2015; Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig, & Ólafsson, 2011), with almost 97 percent of young people in this study using the internet at least *almost every day*, and with more than half of young people surveyed accessing the internet after 11pm. Whilst estimates on the prevalence of cyberbullying differ quite markedly across Australian and International studies (see Cross et al., 2009; Green, et al., 2012; Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder, & Lattanner, 2014; Navarro, Yubero, & Larrañaga, 2016; Rigby & Johnson, 2016; Spears et al., 2014; 2016), this study found that more than half of participants have been involved in cyberbullying in the past term, whether as a cyber victim, cyberbully, or cyberbully-victim (refer to Chapter 4). These rates are consistent with the national Safe and Well Online Study, which also found that at least half or more than half of young people had had experiences of cyberbullying in the past term (see Spears et al., 2015a, 2015c, 2016a, 2016b). Whilst these prevalence percentages are

high, and likely due to the criteria employed and the cut-offs adopted (see Frisén et al., 2013), due to the cross-sectional nature of this study, no conclusions can be drawn regarding the rate of increase of cyberbullying in comparison to previously reported studies. Furthermore, these high prevalence rates also could be due to higher usage of social media. As technology is advancing and social media is more widely adopted, the chances of being involved in cyberbullying is also more likely.

The following sections will now discuss the results in relation to the main research questions and hypotheses.

7.1 Help Seeking Challenges

What are the main reasons why young people do or do not seek help in relation to cyberbullying?

This section will address this research question, outlining the (help seeking) challenges that young people face if intending to seek help.

The qualitative findings revealed a range of primary obstacles young people encountered when seeking help for, or trying to cope with, cyberbullying. One of the obstacles included a fear that the situation would worsen when disclosing to others, either via the bully finding out and continuing the behaviour, or by others getting involved and being victimised themselves. Young people expressed a fear that telling someone about cyberbullying experiences could create the spread of rumours and "*just make everything worse*". In relation to this was the fear of adults' 'overreacting', particularly parents. Young people expressed a concern that parents would 'make a big deal' out of the cyberbullying situation which could consequently make the situation worse or embarrass them. These findings align with past research, where disclosing an experience of cyberbullying has been identified as a common barrier for young people experiencing cyberbullying (Dooley et al., 2010; Murray, 2005). Furthermore, recent research indicates that whilst young people and their parents have similar views on how they should respond to cyberbullying, young people still indicated they would disagree with their parents on what to do, and therefore would seek advice from their friends rather than their parents (Wadian, Jones, Sonnentag, & Barnett, 2016). This is reiterative of the view that some young people expressed when intending to seek help: that their parents were 'making the situation worse'.

These findings highlight, that it is important for parents to be aware that young people might not report cyberbullying to them, for fear that the situation could get worse. Reframing parental attitudes so that they become encouraging, listening and supportive, as distinct from trying to 'fix' the problem, will go part of the way. At the same time, reframing help seeking attitudes with young people, from being something 'weak' to do, to something active and action-oriented, is important: where disclosing cyberbullying to someone is perceived as a positive action with positive outcomes, and that seeking help is thus an acceptable behaviour, and not something to be fearful or ashamed of. This notion of reframing help seeking aligns with findings from the national Safe and Well Online Study, Campaign 3 (see Spears et al., 2016a), which had a focus of promoting and reframing help seeking in young men, in particular. The national study indicated that young people felt help seeking could be reframed from being seen as a weak and vulnerable act with negative outcomes and social consequences, to something desirable, accepted, and empowering (Spears et al., 2016a). Other research also has investigated the role of stigma and help seeking attitudes in regards to masculine norms, and highlighted that there is a strong link, and that this can act as a barrier for help seeking (Hammer, Vogel, & Heimerdinger-Edwards, 2013). Furthermore, it is important that young people and their parents have discussions around cyberbullying, and about appropriate actions to take should they be involved in it. This way, young people may not feel so embarrassed or fearful to tell their parents about cyberbullying experiences.

Another obstacle young people encountered when seeking help, consistent with findings from previous research (Murray-Harvey et al., 2012) was the perception that they needed to deal with the situation themselves: which could be considered a form of proactive coping, or distraction. Young people felt that either the cyberbullying was not 'bad enough' *to warrant asking for help*, or *they just had to deal with it and move on* because it was something that so many young people experienced. Young people, therefore, should be encouraged to seek help when involved in cyberbullying, and informed that it is not something that they need to, or should cope with on their own. The notion of stigma and embarrassment associated with seeking help for cyberbullying relates to this feeling of needing to deal with the cyberbullying themselves. The findings from the current study in relation to not needing help or feeling too embarrassed to seek help for cyberbullying, supports previous research (Dooley et al., 2010; Michelmore & Hindley, 2012; Schmeelk-Cone et al., 2012; Vogel et al., 2007) which also has shown that young people, especially those with mental health concerns, are reluctant to seek help.

This research has supported previous studies which highlighted that young people generally do not seek help for bullying or mental health issues (Murray-Harvey et al., 2012; Overbeck, 1977; Rickwood et al., 2005; Wilson & Deane, 2012; Vogel et al., 2007) and contributed further to an understanding of the reasons *why* young people do not seek help and the obstacles which act as potential barriers to help seeking, in relation to cyberbullying. Future interventions could focus on reframing help seeking to be a positive action, and perhaps focus on educating parents/carers about appropriate ways to respond if the child discloses cyberbullying experiences to them, so that young people feel comfortable and not reluctant to ask for help from their parents/carers. Further to this is the power of engaging young people directly in research of this nature, so that their collective voice informs future prevention and intervention strategies. Spears & Kofoed (2013, p 212) referred to young people as 'knowledge brokers' where their voice 'provides a bridge between what they know and understand and what researchers need to know and understand to properly inform policy and practice'. In this way, qualitative research is not just contributing personal lived experiences, *but is a powerful vehicle for youth advocacy for what needs to be addressed and how. Reframing help seeking so that it aligns with something positive to do, and not something which indicates weakness, is a critical step in empowering young people to take back control in a seemingly powerless situation such as cyberbullying.*

7.2 Coping with Cyberbullying

What coping strategies do young people use to deal with cyberbullying and why?

This section will address the different coping *intentions* young people have for coping with cyberbullying, and in particular will address the second research question above: Specifically, this section also will discuss the related hypothesis: *Young people who have been involved in cyberbullying will be more likely to use emotion-focused styles of coping than active styles.*

Quantitative frequency results revealed that in response to cyberbullying experiences, young people in this study indicated that *they would most frequently choose active coping* (for example, thinking of a solution to the problem or seeking support), *followed by distraction* (for example, trying to see the situation in a different light). These results are contrary to past research (Jacobs et al., 2014; 2015) and do not support Hypothesis A, (see Chapters 2 and 4 or the beginning of this chapter) which suggests that young people may be more likely to engage in *emotion-focused* coping styles (for example, giving up trying to cope with the situation) if they are involved in cyberbullying.

However, recent research suggests that young people may use a combination of adaptive (active coping) and maladaptive (emotion-focused) coping strategies to deal with cybervictimisation (Wright, 2016). This intention to cope actively, however, is not so clear-cut, as other influences may be mediating factors: e.g. young people who accessed the internet after 11pm, were more likely to cope through *both* emotion-focused coping and substance use, as shown through sample differences and mean analysis. The path models suggested that *frequency of cybervictimisation* could predict coping strategies, with findings revealing that the more young people were victimised, the more likely they were to engage in emotion-focused (maladaptive) coping compared to active (adaptive) coping. *These findings highlight the frequency of involvement in cyberbullying is important, and should be examined in future research, rather than just the cyberbully-victim categories.*

Furthermore, it is also important to remember the protective influence of social connectedness on coping intentions in response to cybervictimisation that was revealed in Chapter 5. This will be further discussed in Section 7.5. The intersection of the findings highlight that coping, in relation to cyberbullying, is influenced by several factors. *Whilst it is evident that a majority of young people intended to cope actively, frequency of cybervictimisation and online use after 11pm could lead to a higher likelihood of engaging in emotion-focused coping instead*. This is a concern, given that emotion-focused coping was linked to poorer mental health than those who may cope actively, and internet use after 11pm could also be linked to poor mental health (see Spears et al., 2016a and Section 7.5). Excessive internet use, whether late at night or not, has consistently been found to be linked to poor mental health (Morrison & Gore, 2010; Salmela-Aro, 2017; Sharma, 2016; Young & Rogers, 1998). Therefore, future research, and interventions, should focus on internet use after 11pm, as *this study has found that being online late at night could be linked to maladaptive coping styles and negative mental health outcomes.*

Consistent with the quantitative results, qualitative findings also revealed that active coping was frequently identified as a coping *intention*. Most young people said that they *would encourage friends* to seek help if they were being cyberbullied, however they did not believe young people are *actually* seeking help. Indeed, young people in this study expressed that *ignoring* the situation or *doing something to distract themselves* is a more common coping method. This is consistent with recent research by Weinstein et al. (2016), which indicates that young people generally recommend to their friends to: get help from others; communicate with the bully directly; cut ties with the person involved; ignore the situation;

or to utilise digital solutions (such as blocking, deleting, reporting etc). This is in line with what they are generally told at school by teachers: to ignore it, *but ignoring is usually positioned as way of dealing with the bully, rather than a coping mechanism*: so that the bully does not gain power or status from the target's reaction, and therefore give them something else to feed off. *Ignoring here, is construed as a coping strategy, whereby ignoring the situation might serve to empower them, through taking back some personal control*. In this way, ignoring becomes an *active* position, as distinct from a *passive* one. This possible dual orientation needs to be further explored in future studies, but all young people agreed that deliberate, active coping *would* be more effective and is something they *intended* to do in the future. This was also supported in the quantitative findings, with distraction being a frequently reported coping strategy by young people. *These results indicate that young people may be uncertain as to how to cope effectively with cyberbullying, but that they may be aware that coping actively and seeking help would be an effective method when informed about its benefits.* This highlights the need to raise awareness about the benefits of coping actively, rather than emotionally, and the type of strategies that constitute active coping.

7.3 The Relationship between Help Seeking and Coping

Is there a relationship between help seeking and coping and what is the nature of the relationship? That is, do different coping styles mediate the relationship between cyber status and help seeking? (i.e., prevent or encourage help seeking).

This section will address the third research question and the relationship between help seeking and coping.

These questions relate to H_7, namely: There will be a positive relationship between active coping and help seeking. i.e., those who engage in active coping styles will be more likely to seek help than those who engage in emotion-focused coping styles. Both the descriptive quantitative findings and the structural equation models highlight the importance of active coping and help seeking, and the relationship between the two. Surprisingly, distraction was another method of coping found to be positively linked to help seeking behaviour. In other words, those whose preferred method of coping was through *distraction* were also *more likely to seek help* than those who did not prefer this coping method. This could indicate that coping through distractive means, such as ignoring the situation or doing something to think about the situation less, could be a positive coping method and actually lead to help seeking later on.

Emotion-focused coping, whilst negatively impacting on mental health in this study (see section 7.5), did not demonstrate a direct negative influence on help seeking outcomes. Coping through humour, however, did have a significant negative influence on help seeking intentions. These findings suggest that whilst maladaptive coping styles may have a negative influence on young people in terms of mental health, *they do not have a direct negative or positive effect on help seeking*. This finding offers an opportunity for interventions to focus on supporting *active coping methods and help seeking* as proactive strategies, and that these are important to learn and adopt.

These results are somewhat supportive of past research which has suggested that engaging in ineffective coping styles can sometimes prolong the cyberbullying (Craig et al., 2007; Kristensen & Smith, 2003; Mahady Wilton et al., 2000). Recent research also indicates that negatively coping with anger (using negative emotional regulation strategies) results in higher levels of cyberbullying behaviours, and that young people are more likely to engage in the cyberbullying behaviours or blame others if they cope emotionally (den Hamer & Konijn, 2016). Therefore, if young people are using ineffective coping strategies, such as emotion-focused strategies, and the cyberbullying is prolonged as a consequence, then there is every possibility that this could lead to poorer mental health outcomes. *However, encouraging active coping and help seeking, and reframed as something positive and useful to do, instead of as sign of weakness, potentially shifts the power base back to the target and away from the bully: giving some control back, and breaking the circuit.* It is important, therefore, that adolescents are taught how to constructively cope with their anger if being cyberbullies, so as not to start to bully others themselves or blame others. Further research examining different coping styles and if this influences the continuation of the cyberbullying is worthy of investigation.

The qualitative interviews revealed that young people face the same obstacles when thinking about coping methods as they do with help seeking, indicating that young people face barriers when not only coping with cyberbullying but also when wanting to seek help. Young people expressed similar barriers to coping actively to those identified for help seeking, in that some young people felt that distraction or emotion-focused coping styles were ‘easier’, or that active coping was too much of a disruption to other people’s lives, if they were to eventually seek help. These barriers indicate that there is a need for interventions that promote seeking support, as well as what support is available for young people in high school, particularly in relation to cyberbullying. *Young people need to be aware that seeking*

help is acceptable, and that help is available. The relationship between coping styles, cyberbullying and social connectedness will need to be examined further (and is discussed further in Section 7.5), and ideally in longitudinal studies to help build a greater understanding of the nature of this relationship given that the current study, to the author's knowledge, the first to examine the relationships between all of these factors.

These findings again highlight that due to the common obstacles, help seeking and coping intentions are very much intertwined, and there is merit in further examining this relationship to inform initiatives that aim to support young people in dealing with cyberbullying.

7.4 Sub sample differences

The research question: '*Are there differences in help seeking and coping intentions between sub groups (e.g. age, gender, cyber status)?*' will now be discussed. The associated hypotheses for this questions are as follows:

- Females will be more likely to seek help from friends than males.
- Young people will be more likely to seek help from all sources as age increases.
- Females will be more likely to engage in emotion-focused coping than males.
- Older age groups will be more likely to engage in active coping styles than younger age groups.
- Young people will be more likely to seek help from informal sources compared to formal sources.

Quantitative results confirmed that *females were more likely to seek help from friends* than males (consistent with Spears et al., 2016a), and that *females were more likely than males to engage in a variety of strategies:* active coping, emotion-focused coping, and denial. This complexity of approaches requires further investigation to determine which approaches are deployed under which circumstances, when and by whom (e.g. age, or status related). Literature regarding age and gender differences when coping with cyberbullying, and coping in general, also are not definitive and present more questions to pursue with future research. Whilst some research states that females are more likely to cope using emotion-focused coping, expressing negative feelings or turning to their social connections, and that males are

more likely to use humour to cope or distract themselves by playing sport (Phelps & Jarvis, 1994; Plancherel & Bolognini, 1995; Schenk & Fremouw, 2012), other researchers state that older females are more likely to use privacy settings in response to cyberbullying, compared to younger females, who are more likely to use informal reporting tools (Hudson et al., 2015). Other research suggests there may be no gender differences in coping styles (Moret-Tatay, Beneyto-Arrojo, Laborde-Bois, Martínez-Rubio & Senent-Capuz, 2016). Therefore, gender and age differences need further consideration in future research that addresses coping with cyberbullying.

Findings further revealed that some males may feel less inclined to admit to their particular coping intentions, compared to females, if they feel the particular coping intentions reflect negatively on a 'masculine' image. This is in line with Spears et al. (2016), Vogel et al. (2007), and other international research by Curtis (2010) with findings highlighting that a sign of weakness was a prominent concern, males in particular had more negative perceptions around the social norms of help seeking: whereby it was perceived to be associated with being weak and not being able to problem solve for oneself. This was supported by findings from the qualitative interviews, with a majority of males stating that they would encourage their friends to 'just ignore' the cyberbullying if it was happening to them which was *perceived as a strong thing to do, whereas help seeking was deemed an 'easy way out'*, as one young male participant stated. Indeed, in comparison to females, *very few males suggested that they would encourage their friends to seek help*. However consistent with quantitative results, distraction was still the main coping method that young people, both males and females, felt is currently utilised by those involved in cyberbullying, although participants, in particular females, iterated that they would encourage their friends to cope actively. This further supports past literature that suggests that males in particular may turn to distraction or humour as a coping mechanism (Plancherel & Bolognini, 1995), *which may be protective for males*. If males find that making jokes about their situation is helpful, or that distracting themselves through sport or other means is an effective coping mechanism, then this should not be discouraged. Indeed, this research did indicate that distraction can ultimately be linked to help seeking, so this relationship should be explored further.

Results also suggest that as young people get older they are less likely to seek help from particular formal sources, but also less likely to seek help overall, consistent with the national SWO study (Spears et al., 2016a), and international research (Goodwin et al., 2016). There were no age differences in coping methods young people used, which did not support

Hypothesis F. Furthermore, informal sources such as family and friends were much more popular than formal sources of help such as health professionals, and online sources, also consistent with the national SWO study (Spears et al., 2016a). Recent international literature also suggests that young people generally will seek help for cyberbullying experiences, and that they prefer peers over other adults to seek help from (Navarro, & Serna, 2016). These findings indicate that as young people get older, not only are they less likely to seek help but they may be less inclined to use formal sources of help. Young people are turning to their friends for support if they are being cyberbullied, who may be ill-equipped to know how to respond appropriately. Therefore, future interventions that focus on educating young people about what to do if their friends were to confide in them about cyberbullying experiences could be helpful. The advice a young person gives may be critical in the outcome of the cyberbullying experience.

The view that young people preferred face-to-face interaction when seeking help was reiterated in the qualitative interviews, with the majority of young people *explicitly stating that they preferred face-to-face support services compared to online.* Whilst online resources offer new ways of engaging with young people (Burns et al, 2013), and could be useful in reframing help seeking as a desirable, acceptable, and empowering behaviour through avenues such as online gaming (Spears et al., 2016a), the use of face-to-face support is still equally important. Researchers, however, do suggest that online interventions could be utilised to enhance feelings of connectedness, and consequently, improve mental health, and so should not be disregarded (Rice et al., 2016). Whilst young people may be developing particular skill sets due to being online so frequently, research highlights that developing real-life social skills in the face-to-face context remain vital to effective communication in the online context, and are important for young people to be able to use technology beneficially (Wu, Outley, Matarrita-Cascante & Murphrey, 2016). This view highlights that whilst many organisations are striving to make online support services more available, young people in this study do still prefer face-to-face help compared to online services. This may suggest that informal resources need to better understand how the various online services can be used to complement face to face support services. There is a role for schools to play here, in directing young people to known, credible online and formal resources as well as providing face-to-face counselling and reporting support. School remains a critical setting for encouraging help seeking behaviours and implementing intervention programs (Liamputtong, 2016).

These results shed light on the preferred sources of help that young people access in response to cyberbullying experiences, and highlight that in this study, online sources are not the preferred support system for young people, despite accessing the internet frequently and spending considerable time online. As this contradicts other current research (Vogl et al., 2016), exploring how online sources and services could be better promoted as part of active coping is warranted. Qualitative findings revealed that many young people felt that schools could draw more on experts (e.g. Reachout or headspace) as a possible way of informing young people about these online services. This could also help young people to see the connection between online and face-to-face help options.

7.5 Coping, Help Seeking, and Mental Health

What is the nature of the relationship between the emotional state of young people and their coping and help seeking intentions?

This section will address the final research question and the relationships reported between coping, help seeking, and mental health. The relevant hypotheses are:

- Those who are more socially connected will be more likely to engage in active coping styles, and less likely to engage in emotion-focused coping styles.
- Different coping styles will mediate the relationship between involvement in cyberbullying and mental health, i.e., active coping will be related to more positive mental health scores compared to emotion-focused coping.

Initial results indicated a positive relationship between social connectedness and active (adaptive) coping, and a negative relationship with emotion-focused (maladaptive) coping and substance use. This indicated that *young people who were more socially connected were more likely to cope actively.* Importantly, the structural equation model showed that social connectedness was a *protective buffer against the effects of cyberbullying involvement and coping styles*, particularly emotion-focused coping and active coping, promoting active coping and having a negative influence on emotion-focused coping. Social connectedness also had some effect on the mental health outcomes associated with cyberbullying and cybervictimisation. Specifically, those who were more socially connected reported better mental health, and were more likely to engage in active coping as a result of cyberbullying, and less likely to engage in emotion-focused coping. This is in line with past research, which highlights that social connectedness can have a positive effect on depression, and that there

may be a relationship between cybervictimisation and feelings of loneliness, or social disconnection (Brewer & Kerslake, 2015; Fraser & Pakenham, 2009; Olenik-Shemesh et al., 2012; Sahin, 2012; Wachs, 2012). Furthermore, recent research indicates that the less social support young people have, the lower their sense of self-efficacy, and the lonelier they feel, the more likely they will experience lower levels of wellbeing overall and the higher the likelihood they will become involved in cyberbullying in some way (Eden, Heiman & Olenik-Shemesh, 2016). This is also in line with the Safe and Well Online Study, which found that cyberbully-victims were significantly less socially connected than those non-involved in cyberbullying (Spears et al., 2015c, 2016a, 2016b).

Given that social connectedness predicts active coping, providing opportunities for young people to connect with peers/others, and encouraging young people to look out for people who may be lonely, could be important for providing a buffer and equipping young people with support networks. This could help to facilitate effective positive coping methods should they become a victim of cyberbullying. Indeed, research highlights that both school connectedness and social connectedness is important in terms of positive mental health outcomes, and that social connectedness alone is not enough (Bond et al., 2007). This again reiterates the importance of young people 'looking out for each other', in that being socially connected with friends and peers, but not feeling connected in a school environment may still contribute to poor mental health compared to feeling connected both socially and in a school context. This also could indicate why coping through distraction was a common coping method reported by participants which linked to help seeking, as distraction could include something relationship based, such as playing sport or having a night out with friends.

The relationship between cyberbullying involvement and social connectedness certainly requires further research. Due to the cross-sectional nature of this research, whilst it appears that social connectedness can act as a protective factor against negative coping styles and negative mental health, conclusions cannot be drawn with regard to cyberbullying causing a decrease in social connectedness, or conversely if a decrease in social connectedness causes an increase in cyberbullying. *This study has, however, revealed that a relationship does exist between frequent cybervictimisation and lower scores of social connectedness.* Longitudinal research is needed to determine the role of social connectedness as a protective and/or predictive factor.

This study has revealed that whilst it may seem that those who are frequently cyberbullied are less likely to cope actively and more likely to cope emotionally, if they are *highly socially connected* this may not be the case. Consequently, it is important to encourage social connectedness and try to intervene when it appears a young person may be socially disconnected, as this may be associated with negative coping styles, a resistance to seek help, and poorer mental health. Emotion-focused (maladaptive) coping was found to negatively impact mental health scores, and was linked to higher scores on the DASS21 and lower scores on the MHCSF. This is consistent with past research which suggests engagement in maladaptive coping styles, in contrast to adaptive coping styles, exacerbate the negative effects of cyberbullying, and as such may be associated with depression, anxiety and stress (Mahmoud, 2011). Other researchers suggest that using problem-focused coping styles (i.e. active coping) may have benefits when receiving treatment of symptoms for mental health problems (Moret-Tatay et al., 2016), and significantly influence how someone may cope with negative or traumatic events in future, and that the use of maladaptive or ineffective coping strategies may be linked to psychological distress (Chahal, Rana & Singh, 2016). *This finding that emotion-focused coping may be linked to poorer mental health outcomes compared to active coping is important, as it suggests that interventions should focus on discouraging emotion-focused coping strategies in young people, and that by ignoring the situation or by not trying to cope actively with it, young people may be at greater risk of poor mental health.*

Thus far, it has been highlighted that frequent involvement, particularly cybervictimisation, in cyberbullying may be predictive of maladaptive coping styles, which in turn may influence mental health outcomes and help seeking intentions. This is of concern, given that cyberbully-victims in this sample were found to be significantly more depressed, anxious, and stressed than those non-involved, supportive of past research (Campbell et al., 2012; Kowalski et al., 2014; van Geel et al., 2014). Of interest, the role of social connectedness may not be as important for males compared to females, or among those who frequently bully compared to those who are frequently victimised. In particular, the effects of cybervictimisation on different coping styles, help seeking, and mental health may not be influenced by feelings of social connectedness among males.

The implications of all findings discussed in this chapter will now be discussed. Specifically, section 7.6 will discuss implications in terms of: help seeking challenges; coping with cyberbullying; sub sample differences in help seeking and coping in relation to

cyberbullying experiences; and social connectedness and mental health and how they link to cyberbullying, coping, and help seeking.

7.6 Implications

This research has examined the many obstacles young people face when seeking help, and has highlighted the importance of listening to them. It has highlighted the importance of talking with young people so that we can further understand how they cope and why they respond the way they do, the implications of which are that we need to consider what we as researchers are doing online in light of the findings, in terms of where and how young people are reaching out for help.

A strength and key contribution of this research, is *the enhanced understanding about the role social connectedness plays in young people's lives.* This research has revealed the importance of social connectedness as a potentially protective buffer between cyberbullying involvement and help seeking intentions. Whilst findings suggest that frequent involvement in cyberbullying can predict a lower likelihood of help seeking, the structural equation models showed that social connectedness may be a protective factor for some people against the negative effects associated with frequent cybervictimisation. Therefore, *providing opportunities that support young people to develop and sustain social connectedness, and helping young people to develop the social skills that facilitate positive social connections, is of critical importance*.

This thesis has demonstrated the complex relationship between cyberbullying and coping strategies. Determining which methods of coping are favoured by young people is a complex process due to the many different ways that young people can choose to cope with a problem, and that their own ways of defining different coping styles can be quite different to that of a researcher. In other words, what a young person may consider to be an active way of coping, a researcher of parent could interpret as distraction or some other form of coping. Therefore, there could be an inconsistency between what young people believe constitutes certain styles of coping and what adults and researchers believe.

Results revealed no differences between particular coping styles favoured and cyber status, however, the models showed that there may be a relationship between frequent victimisation and using emotion-focused coping. In other words, *when young people were categorised as non-involved, cyberbullies, cybervictims, or cyberbully-victims, there were no differences between categories and which coping styles were more preferred*. However, when

examining the relationship between *frequency of cybervictimisation*, it appeared that those who are victimised more, are less likely to cope actively and more likely to cope emotionally or by dysfunctional means (i.e., substance use) than those victimised less frequently. However, as aforementioned, social connectedness can play an important protective role here, and may encourage active coping among those frequently victimised if they are highly social connected. There are, however, limitations to this, as young people who are cybervictims may be less socially connected and isolated before being victimised, and therefore attempting to engage in active coping methods without appropriate support networks in place would be challenging. *Therefore, it would be beneficial for schools to have some form of strategies or processes in place where isolated children are offered support in some way in order to protect them from isolation and potential victimisation*.

This study also has revealed *the importance of encouraging active coping styles among young people coping with cyberbullying*. *This however should be considered in parallel with social connectedness.* Promoting the benefits of social connectedness, as an important predictor of active coping styles and help seeking, is critical. This research also has highlighted that emotion-focused coping, whilst it does not negatively influence help seeking intentions, it also does not positively predict help seeking. This suggests then that *active coping strategies are more likely to be productive and result in help seeking practices than emotion-focused coping strategies, and that those who are more socially connected may be more likely to cope actively, and less likely to cope emotionally, than those less socially connected when frequently victimised by cyberbullying.*

These findings shed light on the reasons why young people do not seek help or engage with help services, and that in the first instance, *a focus on promoting effective coping strategies is needed* before we can expect to see a greater number of young people engaging with help seeking. This is particularly critical as the findings from this study have shown that *young people who are not seeking help are those who are more likely to be coping in maladaptive ways.* It is important that future research also examines coping intentions and social connectedness when addressing help seeking concerns, as this research has revealed the intricate relationship that exists between each of these factors.

This thesis has highlighted the preferred sources of help that young people access in response to cyberbullying experiences, and highlighted that online sources are not the preferred support system for young people in this study, despite accessing the internet frequently. Exploring how online sources and services could be better promoted as part of active coping is

warranted in order to maximise the opportunities for supporting young people. Qualitative findings revealed that many young people felt that schools could draw more on experts as a possible way of informing young people about these online services. This could also help young people to see the connection between online and face-to-face help options.

This research, to the author's knowledge, is the first to investigate the interplay between the following constructs: cyberbullying, help seeking, coping, social connectedness and mental health. *With results indicating that those who engage in emotional and dysfunction forms of coping are less likely to seek help, and more likely to experience negative mental health outcomes, there is an imperative to promote and encourage young people to engage in active coping strategies, which have been shown to be positive predictors of help seeking intentions.* This study has highlighted the importance of social connectedness in coping and help seeking practices, with results indicating that *social connectedness can play a pivotal role in young people's coping and help seeking intentions if experiencing cyberbullying.* Increasing awareness amongst educators, parents, carers, and health professionals about the key role social connectedness can play as a protective mechanism, and the role of active coping is critical, so that young people's capacity to seek help and cope productively can be strengthened and enhanced.

In summary, these findings have contributed to new knowledge concerning the relationships between cyberbullying, help seeking and coping which can inform health professionals, educators, and parents about: the coping methods commonly used by young people; the need to promote the benefits of active coping; the importance of feeling socially connected; and the extent to which frequency of cyberbullying involvement can have on coping styles young people choose to adopt. This study has uniquely highlighted that cyberbully-victims and frequent cybervictims are at risk of mental health concerns, are unlikely to seek help, with some also likely to use dysfunctional coping strategies, further contributing to poor mental health. Ongoing research is needed to further inform this field and to continue examination of the nature of the relationship between cyberbullying, help seeking, and coping, as well as the role mental health plays in this. These results highlight a need to develop better understanding of the various coping styles, in particular the potential disadvantages and negative effects of dysfunctional coping styles and benefits of active coping, which could increase help seeking and possibly reduce the risk of mental health concerns. This next chapter will now conclude this overall thesis, and further discuss the implications of this research and future directions.

8 Conclusion

This thesis set out with the overall aim of *developing an understating of the relationships between cyberbullying, help seeking and coping*. This chapter will conclude this thesis by reflecting on the aims proposed in Chapter 1, and how this thesis has achieved these aims, addressed the research questions and made a contribution to knowledge in this field.

8.1 Reflecting on the Research Aims

To recap, this thesis had the following main aims, to:

6) Better understand the main reasons young people do or do not seek help in relation to cyberbullying;

7) Explore the coping strategies of young people who do not seek help;

8) Examine the relationship between help seeking intentions, coping styles, and experiences of cybervictimisation and cyberbullying, and how these intentions might differ between sub-samples;

9) Develop an understanding of the influence different coping styles may have on mental health outcomes associated with cyberbullying and cybervictimisation experiences;

10) Develop an understanding of the role of social connectedness and coping and help seeking intentions in response to cyberbullying and cybervictimisation experiences.

This chapter will now discuss each of these aims in turn, and how this research contributes to existing knowledge in cyberbullying literature.

8.1.1 Understanding Help Seeking

In regards to the first aim, this thesis has developed a thorough understating of the reasons why some young people are reluctant to seek help for cyberbullying. There are many obstacles that young people face when seeking help, such as fearing an overreaction from parents or the situation getting worse, being too embarrassed to seek help or feeling like the problem is something they should deal with themselves, which are all in line with past

research (Dooley et al., 2010; Michelmore & Hindley, 2012; Murray, 2005; Murray-Harvey et al., 2012; Schmeelk-Cone et al., 2012; Vogel et al., 2007).

An important contribution this thesis has made to the field of help seeking research, is the role and impact that coping strategies and social connectedness can have on help seeking intentions. In other words, this research has highlighted there is a need to move beyond reviewing the help seeking process in isolation, and to consider the role and impact of coping strategies and social connectedness as part of a more comprehensive approach to understanding the help seeking process. Findings from this thesis have indicated that the relationship between involvement in cyberbullying and help seeking is not linear, rather, there are many other factors that contribute to this relationship.

A particularly significant finding of this research is that *social connectedness can be an important protective factor against the impact of cyberbullying, and can contribute to active coping strategies and pro-active help seeking intentions*. Therefore, given that cybervictims often have poor support systems in place, it is important for schools, parents, and peers to identify isolated young people and offer some sort of support or avenue for social connection, whether online or offline. This way, young people will have a greater opportunity to cope actively, particularly if they were cybervictimised. These findings will be discussed further in section 8.1.3. Consistent with the literature (Lawrence et al., 2015; Michelmore & Hindley, 2012), this thesis revealed that young people prefer seeking help from informal sources compared to formal sources, but also has highlighted that the majority of young people reported they did not access online help. Furthermore, young people seem to be unaware of the online services that are available, and it is suggested that online social marketing techniques may be of great value in promoting services that are currently available (in line with Spears et al., 2016a, 2016b).

8.1.2 Understanding Coping

This research has shed light on coping strategies employed by young people involved in cyberbullying. Research in this area has been inconsistent (Krägeloh, 2011), as such it certainly requires more attention and could benefit from a longitudinal study. *This thesis, contradictory to past research (Jacobs et al., 2014, 2015), has found that young people do* ***intend*** *to cope actively, in that young people intend to cope with cyberbullying experiences by thinking of active solutions to the problem and possibly seeking support, even though when faced with cyberbullying experiences they may not adopt these strategies.* This finding

affords opportunities for health stakeholders to connect with young people by explicitly discussing active coping strategies they might employ *in the future*.

Consistent with prior research (Mahmoud, 2011), emotion-focused coping, however, is still used by some young people when dealing with experiences of cyberbullying, and is of concern due to the links with poorer mental health outcomes, and lower likelihood of seeking help, when compared with those employing active coping strategies. Furthermore, survey results and structural models suggested that the more young people were victimised by cyberbullying, the more likely they were to use emotion-focused coping as opposed to active coping strategies. Qualitative findings supported these results, in that young people do understand that active coping is a more productive coping strategy for victims of cyberbullying, however, they do not believe that this is the type of coping young people are actioning. This suggests that whilst young people are aware that they *should* be coping actively and seeking help, they may not be doing so. These findings from this thesis have contributed new insights into young people's approaches to coping with cyberbullying, and has highlighted the complex interplay of factors in the coping and help seeking process, including the important role of social connectedness. *Overall, it is evident that looking only at coping is not enough. In order to understand young people's responses to cyberbullying, their social connectedness and help seeking intentions also have an important role to play.*

8.1.3 Understanding the Relationship between Cyberbullying, Help Seeking, Coping, and Mental Health

The overall aim of this research was to develop an understating of the relationship between cyberbullying, help seeking and coping, but specifically to examine any differences between sub samples and how these relationships may change accordingly.

This research revealed that different coping styles can influence help seeking intentions, but importantly, *that active coping is of critical importance*. Active coping was found to *positively influence help seeking*, and as such there is merit in building young people's capacity to engage in active coping. Importantly, this study has revealed that actively coping with a cyberbullying experience, whether seeking advice, support or thinking about a method to help the situation, is indicative of help seeking intentions, which, consequently, predicts much better outcomes for young people than coping in other ways.

Consistent with some past research (Mahmoud, 2011), the results suggested that emotion-focused coping can be associated with negative mental health outcomes. Whilst this

form of coping did not demonstrate a negative relationship with help seeking, the relationship with mental health status is important and requires further investigation. Social connectedness was found to act as a potential buffer between involvement in cyberbullying and coping styles, and mental health outcomes. Specifically, the more socially connected young people were, the more likely they were to: cope actively; seek help, and have better mental health outcomes, when compared to those who were less socially connected, who reported coping in other ways. Whilst some researchers have explored the relationships between social connectedness and cyberbullying (Brewer & Kerslake, 2015; Fraser & Pakenham, 2009; Olenik-Shemesh et al., 2012; Sahin, 2012; Wachs, 2012), *this dissertation extends the field by examining this in relation to coping and help seeking*. In other words, whilst is known that connections are important for young people in terms of better mental health and as a protective factor for cybervictimisation, *what was not known until now, is the importance of these connections and how they relate to coping and help seeking intentions, if frequently victimised.* This research has indicated that if young people are connected with others is important in terms of whether they cope actively or emotionally, or in other maladaptive ways, and consequently if they seek help if frequently cybervictimised. From this perspective, *interventions should have a more relationships based approach when educating young people about coping with cyberbullying, in contrast to promoting strategies such as ignoring the bully or distracting oneself (unless this distraction method involves social connection, such as playing sport).*

Given the limited research that has examined the relationships between: cyberbullying, help seeking, coping, mental health, and social connectedness; *this thesis has provided innovative perspectives and an evidence base to better understand the complex relationships between these key constructs.* There are however, some limitations of the study which will be outlined in the next section and which should be considered in future related research.

8.2 Research Limitations

There are a few limitations to this research that need discussion, although many are obstacles that researchers can encounter, when conducting research with young people.

This study achieved a small *sample size*. Whilst every effort was made to involve a large number of young people (Target N=1,000), due to multiple levels of approval required and the parental consent process, this target was not achieved. It should be noted that this

sample was not needed to run appropriate analysis, for structural equation modelling a sample of 200 is considered sufficient (Garver & Mentzer, 1999; Hoelter, 1983). Furthermore, depending on the relationship between the young person and their parent, given that parental consent was needed, this could have biased the sample towards those who had a positive relationship, and were more willing to engage; or it could have meant that those who were involved in cyberbullying, were not allowed to participate. On this note, whilst every effort was made to obtain a representative sample, a convenience sample was achieved, and it is noted that this is a potential limitation to this research. It is important that further research be conducted to examine some of the main findings with larger samples, and on an international scale.

The *cross-sectional* nature of this study is another limitation. Whilst longitudinal research is fraught with difficulties, structural equation models hold further value when tested on longitudinal data. Therefore, longitudinal research is warranted to examine the causal relationships between different coping intentions and social connectedness, and the influence of these on seeking help for cyberbullying and mental health outcomes. This will provide an opportunity to collect data on young people over extended periods of time to determine the long-term influences different coping styles may have on their lives, and to establish the impact of frequency of cyberbullying in relation to these coping styles. Longitudinal studies are costly and require more time and resources than was available for this thesis, hence these findings are pointers towards future explorations. Furthermore, due to time and resource constraints, this research was limited to South Australia. Whilst findings have been compared to national and international research, further research on a large, international scale would be beneficial.

Longitudinal research is important to fully develop an understanding of relationships revealed in this small-scale research. Longitudinal research over the course of a few years could determine potential cause and effect relationships. For instance, it could determine the true extent of the impact of social connectedness on coping and help seeking. Following the same people over a period of time could help to determine if social connectedness truly does influence coping and help seeking intentions and could determine the nature and impact of cyberbullying involvement on coping styles, whether frequent involvement does indeed cause a lack of active coping, and whether or not social connectedness could influence in this.

As with any self-report research, there is always a risk of *social desirability bias* (Maccoby & Maccoby, 1954). Social desirability bias can involve either falsely responding to questions or neglecting to admit to particular behaviours due to a desire to appear more socially desirable to the researcher, and is a common concern in social research (Fisher, 1993; Levy, 1981; Peltier & Walsh, 1990; Robinette, 1991; Simon & Simon, 1974; Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987). In this research, young people may have under reported any incidents of cyberbullying they had been involved in, either as the victim or bully, due to either not wanting to admit to being bullied or not wanting to disclose that they had bullied someone. Furthermore, young people, particularly males, may have been reluctant to admit to engaging in particular coping styles, especially if it is perceived to be a sign of weakness or vulnerability (see chapter 2). Whilst efforts were made by screening the data for any obvious false respondents, some instances of cyberbullying or cybervictimisation may have been under or over reported. Therefore, replicating the study is needed to further validate the results presented herein.

The *cut off score* for involvement in cyberbullying could also be a potential limitation. This study had a cut off of once or more often in the previous term for involvement in cyberbullying, and therefore could lend itself to high prevalence rates. However, as argued throughout this thesis, the criterion of frequency and whether cyberbullying needs to distinctly be a repeated event is still under debate across the field.

Other general factors such as *fatigue, boredom, time of day* (just before lunch, early morning) could have influenced participants' responses and completion rates. This was evident with a very small number of participants (N=6) who did not complete any questions in the second half of the survey. Whilst most interview participants were open about their experiences, some participants were reluctant to go in depth during the interview. This could be due to a number of factors, such as feelings of shame or perhaps past experiences, but did limit some of the insight that could have been gained had they been more open.

Despite these limitations, this study has contributed to the existing research on cyberbullying, and has developed a greater understanding of the complex relationships that exist between cyberbullying, help seeking, coping and mental health. Further research is needed to validate these findings, and to shed light on the critical role social connectedness can play in adolescent help seeking, coping, and mental health outcomes when involved in cyberbullying.

8.3 Research Strengths

There were many strengths of this research. The study included three forms of analysis: initial statistical differences between sub-samples; structural equation modelling; and qualitative analysis. As such, this study had the ability to triangulate three forms of analyses and findings, and had the added strength of being able to relate to a national study (SWO, see Spears et al., 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2016a, 2016b). Another strength was the use of a diverse and varied sample of South Australian youth, using eight different high schools ranging from rural to urban, private and public, and having an age range from twelve to seventeen. Finally, this research is the first of its kind, known to the researcher, to investigate the relationship between the following in one study: cyberbullying experiences, help seeking intentions, coping intentions, social connectedness, and mental health.

8.4 Implications and Future Recommendations

This research has highlighted there is a need to examine further the role that social connectedness plays in help seeking, coping, and mental health outcomes as a result of cyberbullying. Furthermore, coping with cyberbullying needs continued attention, as this thesis has highlighted the complex process of coping and how it might be predicted by social connectedness, and frequency of involvement in cyberbullying. The relationships established between coping and help seeking also requires further examination in relation to cyberbullying and mental health outcomes.

Findings of this study could be used to build the capacity of parents, teachers, policy makers, and young people themselves to more effectively cope with cyberbullying. It is imperative that the importance and potential benefit of adopting active coping strategies is promoted and encouraged for young people, particularly as research suggests that some young people are unlikely to reach out to their parents for fear of them overreacting, making the situation worse, or not understanding the situation altogether (Baas et al., 2013; Hannah, 2010; Hinduja & Patchin, 2013; Spears et al., 2011). Therefore, by educating schools and parents, this information can be relayed to young people, so that they are aware of the potentially devastating consequences if they do not seek help for cyberbullying. Furthermore, understanding the importance of being socially connected and the potential for social connectedness to act as a protective buffer in instances of cyberbullying is especially critical. Whilst this is not something that can be easily changed, it reinforces the need to help and connect with young people who appear to be lonely or disconnected. Programs that educate

and communicate to schools, parents and youth the importance of social connectedness, can provide an avenue for addressing loneliness, to ultimately and positively influence help seeking and mental health outcomes that can arise as a result of experiences of cyberbullying.

Examination of young people's perspectives on help seeking revealed the majority of young people were not aware of the online help services available to them. Therefore, even though most young people indicated they would not use online services, this could be due to a lack of awareness of these services and the need for messages regarding their efficiency and usefulness to be more clearly communicated. As such given the extent to which young people access the internet, the online space may provide a viable avenue to promote help seeking for cyberbullying. Online social marketing in particular could be useful, which involves the use of interventions though the use of the internet, and includes the delivery of relevant messages targeted at young people, generally through popular sites (Spears & Zeederberg, 2013). Delivering messages about online help services in this way could be particularly beneficial, as this study revealed that some young people felt that using sites like Facebook to advertise help sites would be advantageous. Young people are always 'on' and connected online, it makes sense then to deliver targeted helpful services and messages in the online environment to complement that which occurs in the face-to-face setting.

Furthermore, given young peoples' extensive presence in the online space, when developing interventions or help seeking services, it is important to adopt and maintain a youth focused and youth driven approach. If the aim is to develop services that will be used by young people and will actually be helpful and relevant for young people, then research that involves young people in all stages of the research and design process is critical (Cahill, 2007; Bjögvinsson, Ehn, & Hillgren; 2012; Blake et al., 2016; Spears et al., 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2016a, 2016b). There is merit therefore, in including youth voice in research design and in the development of initiatives that aim to address active coping in instances of cyberbullying (Spears et al, 2011).

There is, however, a challenge for researchers moving forward in this space, and particular attention should be drawn to the use of complexity theory.

8.4.1 A Challenge Moving Forwards – Complexity Theory

This thesis has identified that the relationships between cyberbullying and cybervictimisation, social connectedness, coping, help seeking, and mental health are complex. Whilst this thesis

has tested several hypotheses and provided some insight into what may influence how young people cope with experiences of cyberbullying and cybervictimisation, there remains many questions to be answered, and there could be an array of other influencing factors aside from those tested in this research. As such, it is suggested that a challenge for future researchers examining coping, help seeking, and social connectedness and how it relates to involvement in cyberbullying as a bully or victim, should consider complexity theory and the role it plays.

Complexity theory, which examines uncertainty and non-linear processes, focuses on interactions, relationships, and links between many factors, in a non-causal way (Axelrod & Cohen, 2000; Cohen & Stewart, 1995; Yaneer Bar-Yam, 2005). This thesis, through the use of structural equation modelling, has touched the surface on the use of complexity theory in education research in relation to cyberbullying and cybervictimisation. Given the ever changing environment of the online space, as well as the school environment, complexity theory suggests that researchers should investigate multiple causality, multiple perspectives, and as such understand the many externals factors that can shape particular situations (Byrne, 1998). This research alone has highlighted that the relationship between cybervictimisation and help seeking, for example, is not linear, and is influenced by coping methods and social connectedness.

The notion of complexity theory links to the earlier philosophical discussion in this thesis around epistemology, ontology, and phenomenology. These notions are important in this research as they each involve considering the perceptions of young people as different from that of adults around them, particularly in light of technology and technological changes. Epistemology and ontology are particularly relevant to the topic of cyberbullying as adult perceptions are often quite different from the perceptions of an adolescent (Audi, 1998), and as such peoples' understandings and interpretations of cyberbullying and technology may differ according to their experiences and perceptions of their social reality. Phenomenology, as aforementioned, provides a useful theoretical framework for considering cyberbullying, help seeking and coping intentions of young people, as the nature of these phenomena are constantly being evaluated in terms of technological changes in the world around them. In light of this, complexity theory is a natural progression forward for examining cyberbullying, coping and help seeking, as much research that exists examines causal relationships and linear pathways. As such there is a need to examine cyberbullying and cybervictimisation as the complex process that it is, and understand that it is dynamic and unpredictable.

In education, particularly in the context of bullying and cyberbullying experiences, it is important that positivist researchers adapt interactionist and constructivist perspectives (Morrison, 2008). As such, complexity theory indicates that there is a need for not only case study methodology and qualitative research, but participatory design that takes on multiple perspectives and interpretations, and quantitative research which utilises structural equation modelling and recognises the complexity of relationships between variables (Morrison, 2008).

Connectedness is a key part of complexity theory, and is particularly relevant when researching in education and cyberbullying, due to the many connections that exist between students, families, teachers, the community, social groups and the online world. As such, Morrison (2008) highlights that these many levels of connectedness can shape the individual and groups through internal and external pressures, and that many complex and adaptive systems exist. In regards to this thesis, social connectedness can be evident on many levels, through schools in the physical sense, and both online and offline, and this connectedness can be with friends, family, teachers and other members of the community. As such, connectedness in itself is a complex process, influenced by a variety of factors. In terms of coping, this research has highlighted that young people may cope in a number of ways, and these methods can be influenced by not only experiences of cyberbullying or cybervictimisation, but their level of social connectedness as well. Relationships were also found in some cases with mental health, which in itself could be influenced by another set of factors. As such, the process is complex, and researchers should examine multi-factorial research and non-linear relationships.

Complexity theory provides a challenge to educational researchers and conventional approaches that exist in research. Whist this research has taken a step away from typical linear analysis though the use of structural equation models, further work is needed to fully understand the many complex relationships that exist between the integral factors of cyberbullying and cybervictimisation, social connectedness, coping, help seeking and mental health. Each of these factors in themselves are complex, influenced by a variety of factors and are ever changing between individuals. Therefore, this thesis poses this challenge to future researchers in this field, and suggests that complexity theory be an integral part of research design and analysis.

8.4 Conclusion

This research has provided insights into the help seeking and coping intentions of young people involved in cyberbullying. This research has explored the relationships that exist between these core variables, and also has captured personal insights from young people themselves, including suggestions regarding future strategies and directions to promote active coping and help seeking among youth. This research suggests that active coping may be the first step towards seeking help, and that emotion-focused coping can have negative consequences for mental health outcomes. This study posits that social connectedness plays a pivotal role in mediating the relationship between coping and experiences of cyberbullying, with the findings revealing that social connectedness influenced coping intentions when cyberbullied and ultimately predicted help seeking and mental health outcomes. This study has highlighted that researching help seeking, coping, and cyberbullying is a complex process, and one that certainly requires further attention.

This research aimed to understand *why* young people do not seek help and why some cope in negative and dysfunctional ways and what can be done to change this. The thesis has shown that there are a number of reasons young people may choose not to seek help, and highlighted the obstacles they face, including that isolation or loneliness may predict the way they choose to cope. *It is, therefore, imperative that young people are made aware of the importance of helping others to feel connected to the people around them, and that available help services are promoted in targeted ways.* A relationships based approach is of vital importance when considering interventions and support services for young people involved in cyberbullying, whether victim or bully. Supporting young people to connect with others could influence their willingness and ability cope in productive ways and ultimately seek help, as well as have better mental health. This thesis has highlighted that feeling socially connected can be the difference between coping actively and coping emotionally, and can predict the decision to seek or not seek help, with ultimate implications for young people's mental health. It is imperative that educators, health professionals, and parents/carers promote encourage active coping in young people, and further engage in discussions about the importance of feeling socially connected and the influence this can have on a person's mental health.

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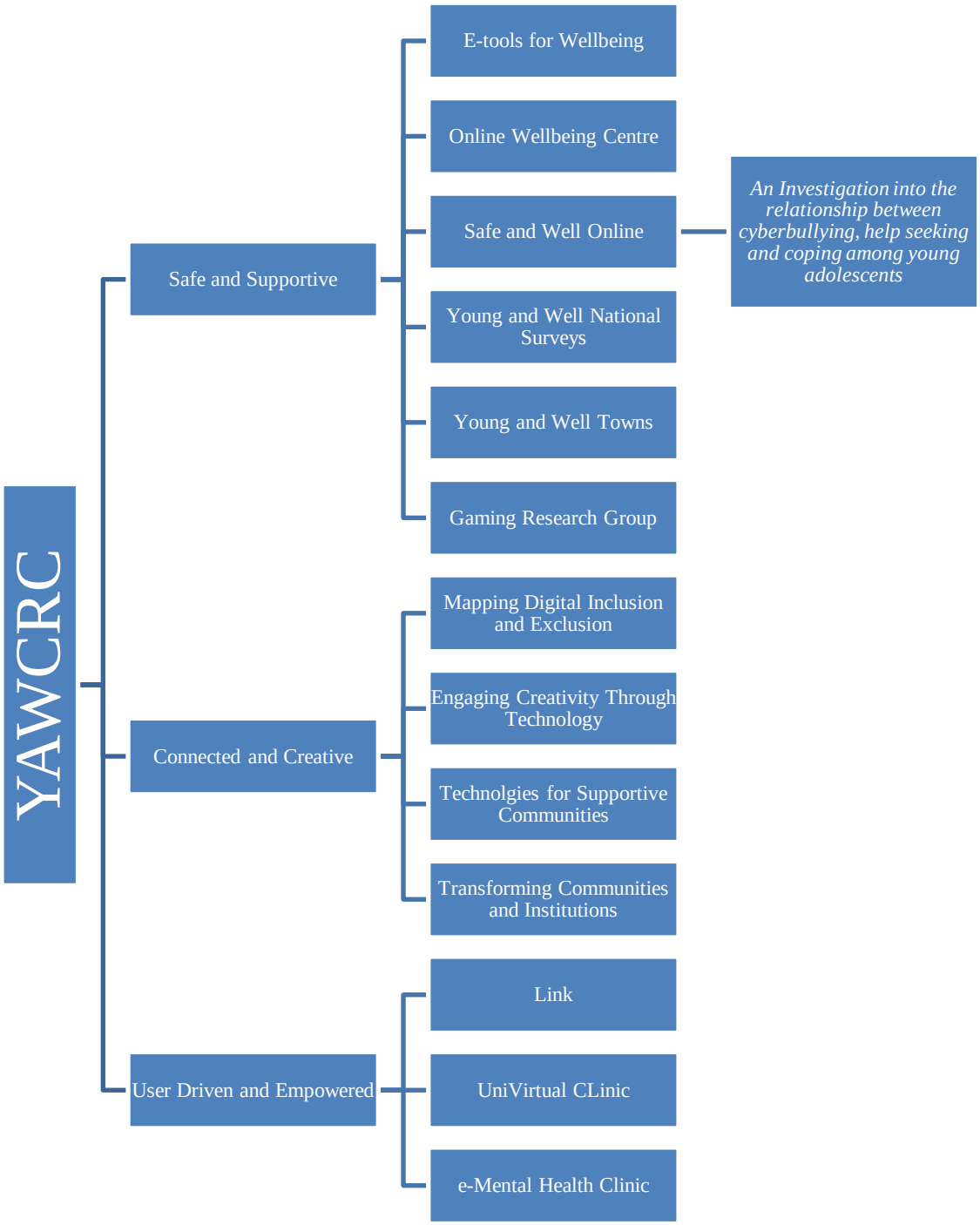
10 Appendices

Appendix A Personal Motivation

When I was eighteen years of age, my young sister was twelve, and was in her final year of primary school. She was on all the social media sites that were popular at the time, but "Bebo" was her favourite. A range of things happened, but the one that was most damaging occurred after falling out with a close friend, who then proceeded to hack into her Bebo and change all her information to say "I am a slut". She was very upset about this and it did not end there, and the school principal was at a loss of how to deal with the situation. I remember thinking, "I did not have to deal with this when I was in school", "how do schools know what to do?". It was not a concern when I was younger, it did not exist yet, yet young people today not only have to deal with the trials and tribulations of not only high school but primary school as well, and now they also need to navigate the dangerous waters of social media. Not only do young people have an image to portray at school, but they also have an online image to keep in check too, one that can easily be manipulated.

It was these thoughts that initial sparked my interest into researching cyberbullying several years ago. It was not until years later, when my family discovered my younger sister had been self-harming and was admitted to hospital, that I felt a desire to find out why this was happening. How could I, having researched about young people already, not have noticed this? Why was she doing this? Why did she not ask for help? Spread all over the media are constant stories of young people committing suicide, whether due to cyberbullying or other reasons. So I wanted to know, why do young people resort to this? Why do they cope this way and not seek help? How can we, as adults, researchers, parents, educators, change this and let young people know that they *can* ask for help? These were the underlying questions and motivations behind why I chose to research this particular area. The fundamental aim is to somehow make a difference in this field, and educate the aforementioned adults about how they can help young people.

Appendix B Young and Well Structure



Appendix C Survey

Hi,

Thank you for taking the time to help with this survey.

There are five main sections, which ask about your internet use, experiences with cyber cyberbullying, coping mechanisms, help seeking intentions, and mental health and wellbeing. This is your chance to let us know what you think! Your honest views and opinions are important. There are no right or wrong answers and while some questions might seem similar, they ask about slightly different things.

Your responses are confidential and for research purposes only. You will not be identified, as we will collate all feedback together to get to the results.

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely without comment or penalty.

If you have questions regarding this study, please contact Larisa Karklins on (08) 8302 4150.

This project has been approved by the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee and The Department for Education and Child Development Ethics Committee.

If you have any ethical concerns about the project or questions about your rights as a participant please contact the University of South Australia's Ethics and Compliance Officer, Tel: +61 8 8302 3118; Email: vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au

By answering the following questions you will help us to better understand these areas.

This survey should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Please note: When in the survey do not press the back button on your browser, as some of your responses may not be recorded. If you close your browser window for any reason, you can always go back to the survey by clicking the survey link again. This should take you back to the survey page you were on.

- ❍ I agree to participate in this study
- ❍ I do not agree to participate in this study

Section 1 - About You

What school year are you in?

- ❍ 8
- ❍ 9
- ❍ 10
- ❍ 11
- ❍ 12

How old are you?

- ❍ 12
- ❍ 13
- ❍ 14
- ❍ 15
- ❍ 16
- ❍ 17
- ❍ 18

I am

- ❍ Male
- ❍ Female

What is your post code?

What school do you go to?

Do you identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Do you speak a language other than English at home?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Please tell us which language

Section 2 - Internet Use

How often do you use the Internet?

- ❍ Never
- ❍ Less than Once a Month
- ❍ Once or Twice a Month
- ❍ Once or Twice a Week
- ❍ Every day or almost every day
- ❍ Most of the time

Do you access the Internet after 11pm at night?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

How often do you access the Internet after 11pm?

- ❍ Less than Once a Week
- ❍ 2-3 Times a Week
- ❍ 4-5 Times a Week
- ❍ 6-7 Times a Week

Please indicate how often you do the following:

	Never	Once a term	Once or twice a month	Once a week	Several times a week	Once a day	Several times a day
I update my personal status on social media e.g. Facebook, Twitter	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I post/comment on friends' social media pages	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I use instant messaging with friends online e.g. MSN, Facebook, Messenger, Snapchat	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I play games online	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I gamble online	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I search for new friends	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I use social media to help me with my schoolwork	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I upload personal videos to a social media site e.g. You Tube, Facebook	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I use the Internet to share photographs and other digital material	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I allocate my online 'friends' to various groups e.g. school friends, family, close friends	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I manage the membership of friends in these groups	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My friends and I help solve each other's problems online	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I invite friends to join conversations e.g. Skype	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Section 3 - Cyberbullying

When answering the following questions, consider the following: Cyberbullying includes any behaviour that is aggressive or hurtful towards another person using electronic forms. This includes mobile phones, social networking sites, blogs, photo sharing sites and MSN.

In the past term, how often have you been bullied in the following ways?

	Never	Only Once or Twice	Every Few Weeks	About Once a Week	Most Days	Every Day
Text (SMS)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Pictures, webcam or video clips	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Phone calls	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Email	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Chat sites	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Instant messaging e.g. MSN messenger	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Social networking sites e.g. Facebook	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Online gaming	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Blog	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Web page	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Twitter	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Some other way not listed above	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

If you selected "some other way not listed above", please tell us how.

In the past term, how often have you bullied someone in the following ways?

	Never	Only Once or Twice	Every Few Weeks	About Once a Week	Most Days	Every Day
Text (SMS)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Pictures, webcam or video clips	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Phone calls	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Email	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Chat sites	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Instant messaging e.g. MSN messenger	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Social networking sites e.g. Facebook	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Online gaming	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Blog	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Web page	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Twitter	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Some other way not listed above	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

If you selected "some other way not listed above", please tell us how.

In the past term, how often have the following things happened to you?

	Never	Only Once or Twice	Every Few Weeks	About Once a Week	Most Days	Every Day
I was sent threatening emails	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I was sent nasty messages on the internet (e.g., through MSN messenger)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I was sent nasty text messages or received prank calls on my mobile phone	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Someone pretended to be me (used my screen name and password) to hurt me	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Someone sent my private emails, messages, pictures or videos to others	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Mean or nasty comments or pictures about me were sent or posted to websites (e.g., Facebook)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mean or nasty messages or pictures about me were sent to others mobile phones	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I have been deliberately ignored or left out of things over the internet	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Something else	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

If you selected "Something else", please tell us what.

In the past term, how often have the following things happened to you?

	Never	Only Once or Twice	Every Few Weeks	About Once a Week	Most Days	Every Day
I sent threatening emails	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I sent nasty messages on the internet (e.g., through MSN messenger)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I sent nasty text messages or made prank calls on my mobile phone	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I pretended to be someone else (used their screen name and password) to hurt them	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I sent someone else's private emails, messages, pictures or videos to others	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I sent mean or nasty comments or pictures or posted to websites about someone else (e.g., Facebook)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I sent mean or nasty messages or pictures about about someone else to others mobile phones	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I deliberately ignored or left someone out of things over the internet	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Something else	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

If you selected "Something else", please tell us what.

If you have been cyberbullied in the past, what actions did you take? Select as many as needed

- ❑ I told a friend
- ❑ I told my brother or sister
- ❑ I told my parents
- ❑ I told a teacher
- ❑ I told the police
- ❑ I blocked the bully/ the messages
- ❑ I reported it to the website/ service provider
- ❑ I changed my email address or mobile phone number
- ❑ I kept a record of the messages
- ❑ I bullied the bully back
- ❑ I ignored the person or people who were cyberbullying me
- ❑ I did nothing about being bullied
- ❑ I told someone else

If you told someone else, please tell us who, e.g. relative, counsellor and why...

Section 4 - Coping
The following items deal with ways you may cope with a stressful or emotional situation such as **cyberbullying**. Do not answer based on whether you believe the method would work

or not, but rather on whether you would engage in it. Make your answers as true for you as you can. There are no right or wrong answers.

If I was involved in **cyberbullying**, I would...

	Highly Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Likely	Highly Likely
Turn to work or other activities to take my mind off things	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Concentrate my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Say to myself "this isn't real"	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Use drugs or alcohol to make myself feel better	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Get emotional support from others	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Give up trying to deal with it	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Take action to try and make the situation better	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Refuse to believe that it has happened	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Say things to let my unpleasant feelings escape	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Get help and advice from other people	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Use alcohol or other drugs to help me get through it	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Try to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Criticize myself	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Try to come up with a strategy about what to do	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Get comfort and understanding from someone	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Give up the attempt to cope	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Look for something good in what is happening	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Make jokes about it	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Do something to think about it less, such as go to the movies, watch TV, read, daydream, sleep or shop	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Accept the reality of the fact that it has happened	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Express my negative feelings	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Try to find comfort in my religion or spiritual beliefs	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Try and get advice or help from people about what to do	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Learn to live with it	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Think about what steps to take	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Blame myself for things that have happened	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Pray for meditate	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Make fun of the situation	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Section 5 - Help Seeking

Below is a list of people from whom you might seek help or advice IF you were experiencing a personal or emotional problem. Make your answers as true for you as you can. There are no right or wrong answers.

If I was involved in **cyberbullying**, I would seek help within 4 weeks from...

	Highly Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Likely	Highly Likely
Boyfriend/girlfriend	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Friend (not related to you)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Parent/carer	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Brother/sister	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other relative/family member	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Teacher (e.g. year advisor, classroom teacher)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Professional at school (e.g. school counsellor)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Family doctor	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Professional outside school (e.g. psychologist, psychiatrist)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Phone help line (e.g. Kids Help Line, Lifeline)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Online help from professional (e.g. web counselling)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Online help from non-professional (e.g. from chat or social network site)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I would not seek help from anyone	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Someone who is not listed above	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

If you would seek help from someone not listed above, please write who that person would be.

If you selected "other" please tell us what this would be.

Have you come across any campaigns or resources to do with online safety or cyberbullying? (e.g. CybersmartCloud, BackMeUp, Be Bold Speak Up, Keep It Tame, @ppreciate mate app)

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Please tell us which one(s)

Section 6 - Health and Wellbeing
Thinking about your wellbeing, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel distant from people.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I don't feel related to most people.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I feel like an outsider.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I see myself as a loner.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I feel disconnected from the world around me.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I don't feel I participate with anyone or any group.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I feel close to people.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Even around people I know, I don't feel that I really belong.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I am able to relate to my peers.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I catch myself losing a sense of connectedness with society.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I feel understood by the people I know.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I have little sense of togetherness with my peers.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My friends feel like family.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I find myself actively involved in people's lives.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Even among my friends, there is no sense of brother/sisterhood.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

During the past month, how often did you feel …

	Never	Once or twice a Month	Once a Week	2-3 Times a Week	Almost Everyday	Daily
Happy	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Interested in life	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Satisfied with life	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
That you had something important to contribute to society	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
That you belonged to a community (like a social group, your school, or your neighbourhood)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
That our society is a good place, or is becoming a better place, for all people	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
That people are basically good	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
That the way our society works made sense to you	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
That you liked most parts of your personality	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Good at managing the responsibilities of your daily life	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
That you had warm and trusting relationships with others	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

That you had experiences that challenged you to grow and become a better person	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Confident to think or express your own ideas and opinions	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
That your life has a sense of direction or meaning to it	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Please read each statement and indicate how much the statement applied to you over the past week. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any statement

	Did not apply to me at all	Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time	Applied to me a considerable degree, or a good part of the time	Applied to me very much, or most of the
I found it hard to wind down	❍	❍	❍	❍
I was aware of dryness of my mouth	❍	❍	❍	❍
I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all	❍	❍	❍	❍
I experienced breathing difficulty (e.g. excessively rapid breathing, breathlessness in the absence of physical exertion)	❍	❍	❍	❍
I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things	❍	❍	❍	❍
I tended to over-react to situations	❍	❍	❍	❍
I experienced trembling (e.g. in the hands)	❍	❍	❍	❍
I felt that I was using a lot of nervous energy	❍	❍	❍	❍
I was worried about situations in which I might panic and make a fool of myself	❍	❍	❍	❍
I felt that I had nothing to look forward to	❍	❍	❍	❍

I found myself getting agitated	❍	❍	❍	❍
I found it difficult to relax	❍	❍	❍	❍
I felt down-hearted and blue	❍	❍	❍	❍
I was intolerant of anything that kept me from getting on with what I was doing	❍	❍	❍	❍
I felt I was close to panic	❍	❍	❍	❍
I was unable to become enthusiastic about anything	❍	❍	❍	❍
I felt I wasn't worth much as a person	❍	❍	❍	❍
I felt that I was rather touchy	❍	❍	❍	❍
I was aware of the action of my heart in the absence of physical exertion (e.g. sense of heart rate increase, heart missing a beat)	❍	❍	❍	❍
I felt scared without any good reason	❍	❍	❍	❍
I felt that life was meaningless	❍	❍	❍	❍

Please remember the following services are available to you should you need....

beyondblue the national depression initiative www.beyondblue.org.au	**1300 22 4636**
headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation	**headspace.org.au**
Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800	**1800 55 1800**
Lifeline AUSTRALIA	**13 11 14**
Talk it over Mens Line AUSTRALIA	**1300 789 978**
SUICIDE CALL BACK SERVICE	**1300 659 467**

Appendix D I Interview Guiding Questions

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Research question:

What are the help seeking and coping behaviours of young people engaged in cyberbullying?

Specifically:

- What are the main reasons why young people do or do not seek help in relation to cyberbullying?
- What coping strategies (other than seeking help) do young people use to deal with cyberbullying and why?
- Is there a relationship between help seeking and coping and what is the nature of it?
- Are there differences in help seeking and coping behaviours among those with mental health issues?

Introductory

1. What do you think cyberbullying involves?
2. Among the young people you know, is cyberbullying seen as a problem or not?

Coping

1. Are you aware of ways that young people cope with cyberbullying?
2. Do you have any views about these coping methods? (Why these are chosen? Are these effective?)

Open Ended

1. In your experience what do you find are the best ways to cope if you are feeling stressed or sad?
2. If you had a friend that you knew was having a hard time coping with cyberbullying, what advice would you give them?

Help seeking

1. When young people do seek help to cope with the effects of cyberbullying, can you suggest some places they might go to online / offline?
2. Can you think of any obstacles young people might confront when seeking help to cope with the effects of cyberbullying?
3. Apart from seeking outside help, can you identify any other ways young people might deal with the effects of cyberbullying?

Open Ended

1. What advice would you give someone if they told you they were involved in cyberbullying and needed help?
2. Why do you think some people do not seek help when they are negatively impacted by cyberbullying?
3. Do you have any suggestions about what resources would be helpful to young people who are impacted by cyberbullying and who are either not coping very well or are considering getting help?

Appendix E DECD Ethics Approval

Government of South Australia
Department for Education and Child Development

Strategy and Performance

Level 8
31 Flinders Street
Adelaide SA 5000
GPO Box 1152
Adelaide SA 5001
DX 541
Tel: 8226 3825
Fax: 8226 1605

DECD CS/14/513-3

30 May 2014

Ms Larisa Karklins
School of Education
University of South Australia
School of Education
Magill Campus
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA SA 5072

Dear Ms Karklins

Your project titled *"An investigation into the relationship between cyber bullying, coping and help seeking among young adolescents"* has now been reviewed by a senior Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) consultant with respect to protection from harm, informed consent, confidentiality and suitability of arrangements. Accordingly, I am pleased to advise you that your project has been **approved.**

Please contact Ms Kali Stefanopoulos, Project Support Officer - Research and Evaluation on (08) 8226 3825 or email: kali.stefanopoulos@sa.gov.au for any other matters you may wish to discuss regarding the general review/approval process.

Please supply the department with an electronic copy of the final report which will be circulated to interested staff and then made available to DECD educators for future reference.

I wish you well with your project.

Dr Mark Witham
DIRECTOR, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Att: Principal/Director/Site Manager letter

Appendix F University Ethics approval

Dear Applicant

Re: Ethics protocol "An investigation into the relationship between cyberbullying, coping and help seeking in young adolescents" (Application ID: 0000031405)

Thank you for submitting your ethics protocol for consideration. Your protocol has been considered by the E2 Committee Review Group.

I am pleased to advise that your protocol has been granted ethics approval and meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research.

Please note that the E2 Committee Review Group's decision will be reported to the next meeting of the Human Research Ethics Committee for endorsement.

Please regard this email as formal notification of approval.

Ethics approval is always made on the basis of a number of conditions detailed at http://www.unisa.edu.au/res/forms/docs/humanresearchethics_conditions.doc; it is important that you are familiar with, and abide by, these conditions. It is also essential that you conduct all research according to UniSA guidelines, which can be found at http://www.unisa.edu.au/res/ethics/default.asp

Please note, if your project is a clinical trial you are required to register it in a publicly accessible trials registry prior to enrolment of the first participant (e.g. Australian New Zealand Clinical Trials Registry http://www.anzctr.org.au/) as a condition of ethics approval.

Best wishes for your research.

Executive Officer
UniSA's Human Research Ethics Committee
CRICOS provider number 00121B

This is an automated email and cannot be replied to. Please direct your query to ethics@unisa.edu.au.

Appendix G Information Sheets

Parent Information Sheet

PARENT INFORMATION SHEET for RESEARCH PROJECT	
An Investigation Into the Relationship between Cyberbullying, Coping and Help Seeking Among Young Adolescents	
Research Contact Details:	**Larisa Karklins** **School of Education** **University of South Australia** **Ph: 8302 4150** **E-mail: larisa.karklins@mymail.unisa.edu.au**

Description

This research will investigate the help seeking and coping methods young people use to deal with cyberbullying

Whilst a lot is now known about cyberbullying, little is known about why young people do or do not seek help, and with cyberbullying being a significant issue for young people generally, I seek your permission for your son/daughter to participate in an anonymous, online survey about help seeking, cyberbullying and how young people generally cope with peer relations.

For your information, the survey will ask questions about:

- Your child's use of the internet (including playing games online and any exposure to online gambling)
- Any cyberbullying experiences they may have had
- Any coping strategies that your child may use to cope with cyberbullying (if they have experienced it), which includes asking about positive (supportive) and negative strategies, such as drug or alcohol use
- Help seeking practices and to whom they might go to for assistance
- Their wellbeing overall, including mental health

At the completion of the survey, students will be provided with a list of Help services (such as beyondblue) should they feel they require them, and to remind them that these support services are available. For your information a copy of these services is provided with this information sheet.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions on the above contact details.

Participation

Participation will involve students completing an online survey at a time that is best for all. It will take approximately 20-30 minutes, and participation in this project is voluntary. Students can withdraw from participation at any time during the project without consequence. A follow-up interview will be conducted with those who indicate willingness to have a chat with me about their help seeking and coping strategies.

Expected benefits

Participation in this study will raise awareness about help seeking and being safe online. It is expected however, that there will not be direct personal benefit to you, but it may subsequently benefit the general community by providing a guide to deal with or avoid negative online experiences such as cyberbullying. Involvement will also benefit the school community as I will return to give a talk about

what young people are telling us. An executive summary will also be made available to the school for their information.

Risks

There is no personal risk beyond that experienced in day to day activities. Participation involves an anonymous, online survey, with students and the school remaining unidentifiable. All interviews will take place on school grounds, in clear view of experienced staff. A list of counselling services will be provided and the school counsellor is available in the unlikely event that they will be required.

Confidentiality

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially. The survey is anonymous, and all responses will be aggregated and de-identified. For any interviews, the researcher will take every care to remove responses from any identifying material as early as possible. Individuals' responses will be kept confidential by the researcher and not be identified in the reporting of the research. However, as a mandated notifier, and in line with requirements, the researcher is under obligation to take action should any material presented raise a concern to your child's wellbeing, or if your child is seen as in need of help and support. If this occurs, actions will take place with respect to what is best for your child and their wellbeing. All information will remain confidential.

Your child is not obliged to disclose information about illegal behaviours. However, this survey is anonymous and there is no identifying information that can personally identify your child.

All data will be stored for an additional 5 years after the completion of the project under password protection by the researcher.

Consent to Participate

If you would like for your child to participate, and he/she also consents to participate, would you both please sign the attached (consent) form, and return to your school

Questions / further information about the project

Please contact Larisa Karklins (details above) if you have any questions or if you require further information about this project.

This project has been approved by the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee, and the Department for Education and Child Development Ethics Committee. UniSA is committed to researcher integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. However, if you do have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the Executive Officer of this Committee, Tel: +61 8 8302 3118; Email: vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au, or my Supervisor, Dr Barbara Spears, Tel: +61 8 8302 4500; Email: Barbara.Spears@unisa.edu.au, The Research Ethics Officer is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an impartial manner.

Thank you for participating in this study.
The following services are available should you or your child require them:



1300 22 4636



headspace.org.au



1800 55 1800



13 11 14



1300 789 978



1300 659 467

Teacher Information Sheet

TEACHER INFORMATION SHEET for RESEARCH PROJECT	
An Investigation Into the Relationship between Cyberbullying, Coping and Help Seeking Among Young Adolescents	
Research Contact Details:	**Larisa Karklins** **School of Education** **University of South Australia** **Ph: 8302 4150** **E-mail: larisa.karklins@mymail.unisa.edu.au**

Description

This research will investigate the help seeking and coping methods young people use to deal with cyberbullying

Whilst a lot is now known about cyberbullying, little is known about why young people do or do not seek help, and with cyberbullying being a significant issue for young people generally, I seek your permission for your students to participate in an anonymous, online survey about help seeking, cyberbullying and how young people generally cope with peer relations.

For your information, the survey will ask questions about:

- Students' use of the internet (including playing games online and any exposure to online gambling)
- Any cyberbullying experiences they may have had
- Any coping strategies that students may use to cope with cyberbullying (if they have experienced it), which includes asking about positive (supportive) and negative strategies, such as drug or alcohol use
- Help seeking practices and to whom they might go to for assistance
- Their wellbeing overall, including mental health

At the completion of the survey, students will be provided with a list of Help services (such as beyondblue) should they feel they require them, and to remind them that these support services are available. For your information a copy of these services is provided with this information sheet.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions on the above contact details.

Participation

Participation will involve students completing an online survey at a time that is best for all. It will take approximately 20-30 minutes, and participation in this project is voluntary. Students can withdraw from participation at any time during the project without consequence. A follow-up interview will be conducted with those who indicate willingness to have a chat with me about their help seeking and coping strategies.

Expected benefits

Participation in this study will raise awareness about help seeking and being safe online. It is expected however, that there will not be direct personal benefit to you, but it may subsequently benefit the general community by providing a guide to deal with or avoid negative online experiences such as cyberbullying. Involvement will also benefit the school community as I will return to give a talk about what young people are telling us. An executive summary will also be made available to the school for

their information.

Risks

There is no personal risk beyond that experienced in day to day activities. Participation involves an anonymous, online survey, with students and the school remaining unidentifiable. All interviews will take place on school grounds, in clear view of experienced staff. A list of counselling services will be provided and the school counsellor is available in the unlikely event that they will be required.

Confidentiality

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially. The survey is anonymous, and all responses will be aggregated and de-identified. For any interviews, the researcher will take every care to remove responses from any identifying material as early as possible. Individuals' responses will be kept confidential by the researcher and not be identified in the reporting of the research. However, as a mandated notifier, and in line with requirements, the researcher is under obligation to take action should any material presented raise a concern to a student's wellbeing, or if a student is seen as in need of help and support. If this occurs, actions will take place with respect to what is best for that student and their wellbeing. All information will remain confidential.

Students are not obliged to disclose information about illegal behaviours. However, this survey is anonymous and there is no identifying information that can personally identify each student.

All data will be stored for an additional 5 years after the completion of the project under password protection by the researcher.

Consent to Participate

If parents would like for their child to participate, and he/she also consents to participate, both will be required to sign the attached (consent) form, and return to the school.

Questions / further information about the project

Please contact Larisa Karklins (details above) if you have any questions or if you require further information about this project.

This project has been approved by the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee, and the Department for Education and Child Development Ethics Committee. UniSA is committed to researcher integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. However, if you do have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the Executive Officer of this Committee, Tel: +61 8 8302 3118; Email: vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au, or my Supervisor, Dr Barbara Spears, Tel: +61 8 8302 4500; Email: Barbara.Spears@unisa.edu.au, The Research Ethics Officer is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an impartial manner.

Thank you for participating in this study.

The following services are available should students require them:



1300 22 4636



headspace.org.au



1800 55 1800



13 11 14



1300 789 978



1300 659 467

Principal Information Sheet

PRINCIPAL INFORMATION SHEET for RESEARCH PROJECT	
An Investigation Into the Relationship between Cyberbullying, Coping and Help Seeking Among Young Adolescents	
Research Contact Details:	**Larisa Karklins** **School of Education** **University of South Australia** **Ph: 8302 4150** **E-mail: larisa.karklins@mymail.unisa.edu.au**

Description

This research will investigate the help seeking and coping methods young people use to deal with cyberbullying

Whilst a lot is now known about cyberbullying, little is known about why young people do or do not seek help, and with cyberbullying being a significant issue for young people generally, I seek your permission for your students to participate in an anonymous, online survey about help seeking, cyberbullying and how young people generally cope with peer relations.

For your information, the survey will ask questions about:

- Students' use of the internet (including playing games online and any exposure to online gambling)
- Any cyberbullying experiences they may have had
- Any coping strategies that students may use to cope with cyberbullying (if they have experienced it), which includes asking about positive (supportive) and negative strategies, such as drug or alcohol use
- Help seeking practices and to whom they might go to for assistance
- Their wellbeing overall, including mental health

At the completion of the survey, students will be provided with a list of Help services (such as beyondblue) should they feel they require them, and to remind them that these support services are available. For your information a copy of these services is provided with this information sheet.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions on the above contact details.

Participation

Participation will involve students completing an online survey at a time that is best for all. It will take approximately 20-30 minutes, and participation in this project is voluntary. Students can withdraw from participation at any time during the project without consequence. A follow-up interview will be conducted with those who indicate willingness to have a chat with me about their help seeking and coping strategies.

Expected benefits

Participation in this study will raise awareness about help seeking and being safe online. It is expected however, that there will not be direct personal benefit to you, but it may subsequently benefit the general community by providing a guide to deal with or avoid negative online experiences such as cyberbullying. Involvement will also benefit the school community as I will return to give a talk about what young people are telling us. An executive summary will also be made available to the school for

their information.

Risks

There is no personal risk beyond that experienced in day to day activities. Participation involves an anonymous, online survey, with students and the school remaining unidentifiable. All interviews will take place on school grounds, in clear view of experienced staff. A list of counselling services will be provided and the school counsellor is available in the unlikely event that they will be required.

Confidentiality

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially. The survey is anonymous, and all responses will be aggregated and de-identified. For any interviews, the researcher will take every care to remove responses from any identifying material as early as possible. Individuals' responses will be kept confidential by the researcher and not be identified in the reporting of the research. However, as a mandated notifier, and in line with requirements, the researcher is under obligation to take action should any material presented raise a concern to a student's wellbeing, or if a student is seen as in need of help and support. If this occurs, actions will take place with respect to what is best for that student and their wellbeing. All information will remain confidential.

Students are not obliged to disclose information about illegal behaviours. However, this survey is anonymous and there is no identifying information that can personally identify each student.

All data will be stored for an additional 5 years after the completion of the project under password protection by the researcher.

Consent to Participate

If parents would like for their child to participate, and he/she also consents to participate, both will be required to sign the attached (consent) form, and return to the school.

Questions / further information about the project

Please contact Larisa Karklins (details above) if you have any questions or if you require further information about this project.

This project has been approved by the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee, and the Department for Education and Child Development Ethics Committee. UniSA is committed to researcher integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. However, if you do have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the Executive Officer of this Committee, Tel: +61 8 8302 3118; Email: vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au, or my Supervisor, Dr Barbara Spears, Tel: +61 8 8302 4500; Email: Barbara.Spears@unisa.edu.au, The Research Ethics Officer is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an impartial manner.

Thank you for participating in this study.

The following services are available should students require them:

beyondblue the national depression initiative www.beyondblue.org.au	**1300 22 4636**
headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation	**headspace.org.au**
Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800	**1800 55 1800**
Lifeline AUSTRALIA	**13 11 14**
Talk it over MensLine AUSTRALIA	**1300 789 978**
SUICIDE CALL BACK SERVICE	**1300 659 467**

Participant Information Sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET for RESEARCH PROJECT nvestigation into the Relationship between Cyberbullying, Copi and Help Seeking Among Young Adolescents"

Research Contact Details: Larisa Karklins
School of Education
University of South Australia
Ph: 8302 4150
E-mail: larisa.karklins@mymail.unisa.edu.au

WHAT IS IT?

Why do young people not seek help for cyberbullying? This research will investigate the help seeking and coping methods young people use to deal with cyberbullying. As a researcher I ask for your assistance because, as a young person, what you think matters. This research may help your parents and teachers understand cyberbullying and how you feel about it, and may assist in helping future young people, like yourself, from harm.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Your participation will involve completing an online survey at a time that is suitable for all. It will take approximately 20-30 minutes, and some of you will be invited to a possible follow- up 20-30 minute interview. Your participation in this project is voluntary. If you do agree to participate, you can withdraw from participation at any time during the project without comment or penalty.

WHAT DO I GET FROM IT?

Being part of this study will raise awareness about being safe online. It may also benefit other young people, as findings may help to inform a guide on how to deal with or avoid negative online experiences such as cyberbullying.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS?

There is no personal risk beyond that experienced in day to day activities. Participation involves an anonymous, online survey, with yourself and your school remaining unidentifiable. Interviews will be held at the school, in a space which is private yet visible by others. Should you feel in need of support, a list of counselling services will be given to you and the school counsellor is available to you.

WILL PEOPLE KNOW WHO I AM?

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially. This means that any information that can identify you will be removed as soon as possible, so that you will not be identified in any publications or results.

However, as a mandated notifier, I will need to take action should any of your responses suggest you are in need of help or are at risk. If this occurs, actions will take place with respect to what is best for you and your wellbeing. Your information will remain confidential.

You do not have to share any information about illegal behaviours. However, this survey is anonymous and there is no identifying information that can personally identify you.

All data will be stored for an additional 5 years after the completion of the project under password protection by the researcher.

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

If you would like to be a part of this, please ask your parent/guardian for signed permission, sign the attached consent form yourself, and return to your school.

I WANT TO KNOW MORE…

Please contact Larisa Karklins (details above) if you have any questions or if you would like to know more.

This project has been approved by the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee, and the Department for Education and Child Development Ethics Committee. UniSA is committed to researcher integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. However, if you do have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the Executive Officer of this Committee, Tel: +61 8 8302 3118; Email: vicki.allen@unisa.edu.au, or my Supervisor, Dr Barbara Spears, Tel: +61 8 8302 4500; Email: Barbara.Spears@unisa.edu.au, The Research Ethics Officer is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an impartial manner.

☺ THANK YOU! ☺

THE FOLLOWING SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE SHOULD YOU REQUIRE THEM:

beyondblue
the national depression initiative
www.beyondblue.org.au

1300 22 4636

headspace
National Youth Mental Health Foundation

headspace.org.au

Kids Helpline
1800 55 1800

1800 55 1800

Lifeline
AUSTRALIA

13 11 14



1300 789 978



1300 659 467

Appendix H Consent Form

UniSA | Research and Innovation Services

Human Research Ethics Committee
CONSENT FORM

Consent to Participate in Research

This project has been approved by the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any ethical concerns about the project or questions about your rights as a participant please contact the Executive Officer of this Committee, Tel: +61 8 8302 3118; Email: Vicki.Allen@unisa.edu.au, or my Supervisor, Dr Barbara Spears, Tel: +61 8 8302 4500; Email: Barbara.Spears@unisa.edu.au.

SECTION 1: CONTACT AND PROJECT DETAILS

Researcher's Full Name:	Larisa Karklins
Contact Details:	Ph: 8302 4150 E: larisa.karklins@mymail.unisa.edu.au
Protocol Number:	0000031405
Project Title:	An investigation into the relationship between cyberbullying, coping, and help seeking among young adolescents

SECTION 2: PARTICIPANT CONSENT

In signing this form, I confirm that:

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that I am not obliged to disclose information about illegal behaviours. I understand that this survey is anonymous and there is no identifying information that can personally identify me.
- I understand that if I am selected for an interview, that it will be audio-taped.
- I understand that, as the researcher is a mandated notifier, if I am selected for an interview and if any information I disclose suggests I am in need of help or support, the researcher is required to take certain actions
- I understand the data will be stored for an additional 5 years after the completion of the project under password protection by the researcher

Would you like to be contacted for a short follow-up interview?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Participant Signature	*Printed First and Last Name*	*Date*

SECTION 3: PARENTAL CONSENT (Participants under 18 years of age must have a parent/carer complete this part)

As parent/carer, I confirm that:

1. I have read the information provided.
2. Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.
3. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for future reference.
4. I understand that:
   - My child may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.
   - My child is free to withdraw from the project at any time and is free to decline to answer particular questions.
   - While the information gained in this study will be published as explained, my child will not be identified, and individual information will be confidential
   - Whether my child participates or not, or withdraws after participating, will not affect her/his status now or in the future.

Do you consent for your child to be involved in an online survey?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you consent for your child to be involved in a short follow-up interview?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Parent/carer Signature	*Printed Name*	*Contact Number*	*Email*	*Date*

Researcher Certification

I have provided a written information sheet to the participant and have included my contact details should they have any questions.

	Larisa Karklins	18/06/2014
Researcher Signature	*Printed Name*	*Date*

Appendix I Cyberbully-victim status demographics

Table Appendix I: Cyberbully-victim status by gender, age and year level

Cyberbully-victim status	Gender % (*n*)				Age (years) % (*n*)									
	Female		Male		12		13		14		15		16		17	
Non-involved	22.6	(*n* = 53)	18.7	(*n* = 44)	0.9	(*n* = 2)	8.5	(*n* = 20)	13.2	(*n* = 31)	11.5	(*n* = 27)	3.8	(*n* = 9)	3.4	(*n* = 8)
Victim	17.9	(*n* = 42)	9.4	(*n* = 22)	0.9	(*n* = 2)	6.8	(*n* = 16)	6.8	(*n* = 16)	7.2	(*n* = 17)	3.4	(*n* = 8)	2.1	(*n* = 5)
Bully	0.0	(*n* = 0)	1.3	(*n* = 3)	0.0	(*n* = 0)	0.4	(*n* = 1)	0.4	(*n* = 1)	0.4	(*n* = 1)	0.0	(*n* = 0)	0.0	(*n* = 0)
Bully-victim	18.3	(*n* = 43)	11.9	(*n* = 28)	0.0	(*n* = 0)	5.5	(*n* = 13)	9.8	(*n* = 23)	7.2	(*n* = 17)	4.7	(*n* = 11)	3.0	(*n* = 7)

		School year level % (*n*)									
	% within	8		9		10		11		Total % (*n*)	
Not involved	School year	39.3	(*n* = 35)	48.9	(*n* = 40)	25.00	(*n* = 6)	40.0	(*n* = 16)	41.3	(*n* = 97)
	Total sample	14.9		17.00		2.6		6.8			
Victim	School year	29.2	(*n* = 26)	23.2	(*n* = 19)	33.3	(*n* = 8)	27.5	(*n* = 11)	27.2	(*n* = 64)
	Total sample	11.1		8.1		3.4		4.7			
Bully	School year	1.1	(*n* = 1)	2.4	(*n* = 2)	0	(*n* = 0)	0	(*n* = 0)	1.3	(*n* = 3)
	Total sample	0.4		0.9		0		0			
Bully-victim	School year	30.3	(*n* = 27)	25.6	(*n* = 21)	41.7	(*n* = 10)	32.5	(*n* = 13)	30.2	(*n* = 71)
	Total sample	11.5		8.9		4.3		5.5			
	Total % (*n*)	37.9	(*n* = 89)	34.9	(*n* = 82)	10.3	(*n* = 24)	17	(*n* = 40)	100	(N = 235)

Appendix J Multiple model results – involved and non involved

Coping, help seeking and social connectedness.

Active coping

When testing for Active coping and help seeking, the model held in both the non-involved and involved groups (with social connectedness once again having no significant effect on help seeking, non-involved: $p = .391$, involved: $p = .515$). The parameters were constrained to be equal between the groups, and the chi-square difference statistic did not reveal a significant difference between the unconstrained and the constrained-equal models (more parsimonious model), $\chi^2 = 5.243$, $df = 2$, $p = .073$. Therefore the model held measurement invariance across groups (that is, the model applies across groups). Therefore we accept the constrained model. The fact that both models with active coping fit regardless of category, indicates that whether involved in cyberbullying or not, the relationships between active coping and help seeking still hold, and social connectedness does not influence this relationship. The regression weights can be seen in Table J-1 below, and the model fits are shown in Table J-2. This finding suggests that involvement in cyberbullying may not influence the relationship between coping and help seeking, consistent with earlier findings which found that there were no significant differences between cyberbully-victim status and coping behaviours. This highlights that whilst involvement in cyberbullying in some shape or form may not change coping or help seeking intentions, frequency of involvement does.

Table Appendix J-1: Regression weights for active coping across groups

Group	Model	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Non-involved	Active coping → Help seeking	.821 (.137)	.711	.000
	Social connectedness → Active coping	.426 (.113)	.437	.000
Involved	Active coping → Help seeking	.548 (.091)	.593	.000
	Social connectedness → Active coping	.253 (.096)	.252	.009
Constrained	Active coping →Help seeking	.653 (.077)	.626	.000
	Social connectedness → Active coping	.328 (.073)	.329	.000

Table Appendix J-2: Model fit statistics for Active coping and help seeking across models

Fit Statistics	Coping style and model	
	Active (unconstrained)	Active (constrained)
χ^2(df, p)	31.078 (26, .225)	36.321 (28, .135)
RMSEA	.029	.036
PCLOSE	.819	.743
LO90	0.000	0.000
χ^2/df	1.149	1.623
SRMR	.040	.062
GFI	.963	.957
AGFI	.920	.914
TLI	.988	.981
CFI	.992	.987

Emotion-focused coping

As has already been established, it appears involvement in cyberbullying may have no direct effect with emotion-focused coping when social connectedness is added to the model, though an indirect effect does exist, and that emotion-focused coping has no significant relationship with help seeking. Thus, the only significant direct paths are from social connectedness to emotion-focused coping, and social connectedness to help seeking, therefore, there were no differences between those involved and non-involved in cyberbullying.

Coping through humour

The model for the relationship between coping through humour and help seeking held across both groups, however, the path from coping though humour to help seeking became non-significant in the non-involved group, but remained significant in the involved group (see Table L-3). The paths for, social connectedness to help seeking remained significant in the non-involved group, but became non-significant in the involved group. The parameters were constrained to be equal between the groups, and the chi-square difference statistic did not reveal a significant difference between the unconstrained and the constrained-equal models, $\chi^2 = 1.111$, $df = 2$, $p = .574$. Therefore the model held measurement invariance across groups (that is, the model applies across groups). This suggests that this difference in paths was not

significant, and that non-involved and involved would experience the same relationship between coping through humour and help seeking, and we accept the constrained model, which suggests both paths are significant. Model fit is displayed in Tale J-4.

Table Appendix J-3: Regression weights coping through humour across models

Group	Model	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Non-involved	Humour →Help seeking	-.073 (.071)	-.107	.305
	Social connectedness →Help seeking	.294 (.128)	.260	.021
Involved	Humour →Help seeking	-.165 (.071)	-.228	.021
	Social connectedness →Help seeking	.171 (.090)	.184	.058
Constrained	Humour →Help seeking	-.139 (.056)	-.184	.012
	Social connectedness →Help seeking	.215 (.074)	.192	.004

Table Appendix J-4: Model fit statistics for coping through humour across models

	Coping style and model	
Fit Statistics	Humour (unconstrained)	Humour (constrained)
χ^2(df, p)	13.777 (10, .183)	14.887 (10, .248)
RMSEA	.041	.033
PCLOSE	.567	.679
LO90	0.000	0.000
χ^2/df	1.378	1.241
SRMR	.066	.066
GFI	.976	.974
AGFI	.929	.935
TLI	.973	.983
CFI	.987	.990

Coping through distraction

The model for the relationship between coping through distraction and help seeking held across both groups, however, all paths became non-significant in the non-involved group (see Table J-5). In the involved group, the path from social connectedness to coping through

distraction became non-significant, as well as the path from social connectedness to help seeking. The parameters were constrained to be equal between the groups, and the chi-square difference statistic did not reveal a significant difference between the unconstrained and the constrained-equal models, $\chi^2 = 1.174$, $df = 3$, $p = .759$. Therefore the model held measurement invariance across groups. This suggests that this difference in paths was not significant, and that non-involved and involved would experience the same relationship between coping through distraction and help seeking, and we accept the constrained model. Model fit is shown is Table J-6.

Table Appendix J-5: Regression weights coping through distraction across groups

Group	Model	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Non-involved	Distraction →Help seeking	.688 (.425)	.237	.106
	Social connectedness →Help seeking	.207 (.132)	.184	.118
	Social connectedness →Distraction	.104 (.058)	.268	.071
Involved	Distraction →Help seeking	.595 (.264)	.285	.024
	Social connectedness →Help seeking	.164 (.090)	.177	.067
	Social connectedness →Distraction	.038 (.047)	.085	.415
Constrained	Distraction →Help seeking	.626 (.224)	.207	.005
	Social connectedness →Help seeking	.180 (.074)	.162	.016
	Social connectedness →Distraction	.070 (.035)	.191	.048

Table Appendix J-6: Model fit statistics coping through distraction across models

	Coping style and model	
Fit Statistics	Distraction (unconstrained)	Distraction (constrained)
χ^2(df, p)	19.544 (14, .145)	20.718 (17, .239)
RMSEA	.042	.031
PCLOSE	.583	.741
LO90	0.000	0.000
χ^2/df	1.396	1.219

SRMR	.057	.058
GFI	.974	.973
AGFI	.921	.921
TLI	.956	.956
CFI	.980	.986

Coping, help seeking, and mental health

Active coping

In the active coping model, the path from active coping to depression was once again found to be non-significant, however other paths remained significant. Therefore, we can conclude that whilst social connectedness may have an effect on active coping, active coping does not influence depression scores, whilst social connectedness does. The chi-square difference statistic did not reveal a significant difference between the unconstrained and the constrained-equal models, $\chi^2 = .922$, $df = 2$, $p = .613$. Therefore the model held measurement invariance across groups, and we accept the constrained model. Regression weights and model fit can be seen below. The model fits and chi-square difference statistics fell the same way for anxiety, $\chi^2 = 1.374$, $df = 2$, $p = .503$; and stress, $\chi^2 = .617$, $df = 2$, $p = .734$. Weights and model fit can be seen in Tables J-7 and J-8.

Table Appendix J-7: Regression weights active coping, DASS21 across groups

Group	Model	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Non-involved	Social connectedness →Active coping	.364 (.106)	.416	.000
	→ Depression	-.659 (.080)	-.720	.000
Involved	Social connectedness →Active coping	.244 (.098)	.238	.012
	→ Depression	-.710 (.076)	-.692	.000
Constrained	Social connectedness →Active coping	.301 (.071)	.362	.000
	→ Depression	-.685 (.055)	-.734	.000
Group	Anxiety Model	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Non-involved	Social connectedness →Active coping	.368 (.106)	.421	.000
	→ Anxiety	-.531 (.086)	-.612	.000
Involved	Social connectedness →Active coping	.243 (.098)	.238	.013

	→ Anxiety	-.624 (.084)	-.600	.000
Constrained	Social connectedness			
	→Active coping	.303 (.071)	.365	.000
	→ Anxiety	-.645 (.060)	-.645	.000
Group	Stress Model	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Non-involved	Social connectedness			
	→Active coping	.356 (.106)	.408	.000
	→ Stress	-.640 (.088)	-.674	.000
Involved	Social connectedness			
	→Active coping	.243 (.098)	.238	.013
	→ Stress	-.639 (.080)	-.634	.000
Constrained	Social connectedness			
	→Active coping	.297 (.071)	.358	.000
	→ Stress	-.640 (.059)	-.675	.000

Table Appendix J-8: Model fit statistics for active coping, DASS21 across models

	Depression		Anxiety		Stress	
Fit Statistics	Unconstrained	Constrained	Unconstrained	Constrained	Unconstrained	Constrained
χ^2(df, p)	34.648 (24, .074)	35.569 (26, .100)	31.619 (24, .137)	32.994 (26, .162)	36.900 (24, .045)	37.518 (26, .067)
RMSEA	.044	.040	.037	.034	.049	.044
PCLOSE	.586	.667	.705	.759	.495	.592
LO90	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	.008	0.000
χ^2/df	1.444	1.368	1.317	1.269	1.538	1.443
SRMR	.038	.044	.040	.047	.052	.052
GFI	.961	.960	.964	.962	.960	.959
AGFI	.908	.913	.916	.919	.906	.912
TLI	.973	.978	.980	.983	.967	.973
CFI	.985	.986	.988	.989	.981	.983

Emotion-focused coping

In the emotion-focused coping model, the path from emotion-focused coping to depression also became non-significant, however it remained significant in the constrained model. The chi-square difference statistic did not reveal a significant difference between the unconstrained and the constrained-equal models, $\chi^2 = .268$, df = 3, p = .966. Therefore the model held measurement invariance across groups, and we accept the constrained model. This suggests that emotion-focused coping, whilst influenced by social connectedness, also influences depression scores. The model fit for this, however is poor. This could be due to the earlier findings that emotion-focused coping is not directly influenced by involvement in cyberbullying, and therefore trying to predict model fit across involvement categories is resulting in poor fit. Regression weights and model fit are shown below in Tables J-9 and J-10. The findings were very similar for the other DASS constructs, with the chi-square difference statistics falling the same way for anxiety, $\chi^2 = 1.987$, df = 3, p = .575; and stress, $\chi^2 = .617$, df = 3, p = .892.

Table Appendix J-9: Regression weights emotion-focused coping across groups

Group	Model	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Non-involved	Social connectedness →Emotion-focused coping	-.294 (.090)	-.391	.001
	→ Depression	-.607 (.087)	-.663	.000
	Emotion-focused coping→ Depression	.181 (.116)	.149	.119
Involved	Social connectedness → Emotion-focused coping	-.319 (.072)	-.487	.000
	→ Depression	-.646 (.088)	-.629	.000
	Emotion-focused coping→ Depression	.205 (.136)	.131	.133
Constrained	Social connectedness → Emotion-focused coping	-.311 (.056)	-.406	.000
	→ Depression	-.629 (.062)	-.671	.000
	Emotion-focused coping→ Depression	.191 (.088)	.156	.031
Group	Anxiety Model	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Non-involved	Social connectedness → Emotion-focused coping	-.296 (.090)	-.391	.001
	→ Anxiety	-.439 (.091)	-.506	.000
	Emotion-focused coping→ Anxiety	.309 (.125)	.270	.013
Involved	Social connectedness → Emotion-focused coping	-.319 (.072)	-.488	.000
	→ Anxiety	-.603 (.099)	-.579	.000
	Emotion-focused coping→ Anxiety	.072 (.151)	.046	.630

Constrained	Social connectedness			
	→ Emotion-focused coping	-.308 (.056)	-.398	.000
	→ Anxiety	-.509 (.067)	-.575	.000
	Emotion-focused coping→ Anxiety	.219 (.095)	.191	.021
Group	Stress Model	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Non-involved	Social connectedness			
	→ Emotion-focused coping	-.296 (.090)	-.391	.001
	→ Stress	-.538 (.092)	-.565	.000
	Emotion-focused coping→ Stress	.362 (.129)	.288	.005
Involved	Social connectedness			
	→ Emotion-focused coping	-.319 (.072)	-.488	.000
	→ Stress	-.574 (.093)	-.569	.000
	Emotion-focused coping→ Stress	.210 (.144)	.136	.144
Constrained	Social connectedness			
	→ Emotion-focused coping	-.307 (.056)	-.397	.000
	→ Stress	-.551 (.065)	-.586	.000
	Emotion-focused coping→ Stress	.299 (.096)	.246	.002

Table Appendix J-10: Model fit statistics emotion-focused coping, DASS21 across models

	Depression		Anxiety		Stress	
Fit Statistics	Unconstrained	Constrained	Unconstrained	Constrained	Unconstrained	Constrained
χ^2(df, p)	64.030 (26, .000)	64.298 (29, .000)	61.308 (26, .000)	63.295 (29, .000)	68.312 (26, .000)	68.929 (29, .000)
RMSEA	.080	.073	.077	.072	.085	.078
PCLOSE	.024	.056	.037	.065	.011	.028
LO90	.056	.049	.052	.048	.060	.054
χ^2/df	2.463	2.217	2.358	2.183	2.627	2.377
SRMR	.067	.064	.064	.068	.067	.070
GFI	.930	.929	.932	.931	.924	.924
AGFI	.848	.864	.854	.867	.835	.852
TLI	.908	.924	.909	.921	.896	.912
CFI	.943	.947	.944	.945	.936	.939

Coping through distraction

Coping through distraction fell in a similar way to Active coping, with no significant path on depression but still influenced by social connectedness. This path was non-significant in the involved group, however, the chi-square difference statistic did not reveal a significant difference between the unconstrained and the constrained-equal models, $\chi^2 = 1.782$, df = 2, p = .410. Therefore the model held measurement invariance across groups, and we accept the constrained model. This may suggest that whilst social connectedness may have an effect on coping through distraction, coping through distraction does not influence depression scores, whilst social connectedness does. The findings were very similar for the other DASS21 constructs, with the chi-square difference statistics falling the same way for anxiety, $\chi^2 = 1.953$, df = 2, p = .377; and stress, $\chi^2 = 1.372$, df = 2, p = .504. Weights and model fit can be seen in Tables J-11 and J-12..

Table Appendix J-11: Regression weights coping through distraction, DASS21 across groups

Group	Model	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Non-involved	Social connectedness → Distraction	.119 (.060)	.316	.046
	→ Depression	-.662 (.080)	-.723	.000
Involved	Social connectedness → Distraction	.031 (.046)	.070	.503
	→ Depression	-.711 (.076)	-.692	.000
Constrained	Social connectedness → Distraction	.076 (.035)	.252	.032
	→ Depression	-.687 (.055)	-.736	.000
Group	Anxiety Model	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Non-involved	Social connectedness → Distraction	.115 (.059)	.307	.050
	→ Anxiety	-.529 (.086)	-.610	.000
Involved	Social connectedness → Distraction	.036 (.046)	.081	.439
	→ Anxiety	-.626 (.084)	-.601	.000
Constrained	Social connectedness → Distraction	.076 (.035)	.245	.031
	→ Anxiety	-.578 (.060)	-.644	.000
Group	Stress Model	Unstandardised	Standardised	*p*
Non-involved	Social connectedness → Distraction	.116 (.059)	.309	.049
	→ Stress	-.645 (.088)	-.678	.000
Involved	Social connectedness → Distraction	.034 (.046)	.077	.463
	→ Stress	-.641 (.080)	-.635	.000

Constrained	Social connectedness			
	→ Distraction	.076 (.035)	.247	.032
	→ Stress	-.642 (.059)	-.677	.000

Table Appendix J12: Model fit statistics for coping through distraction, DASS21 across models

	Depression		Anxiety		Stress	
Fit Statistics	Unconstrained	Constrained	Unconstrained	Constrained	Unconstrained	Constrained
χ^2(df, p)	14.426 (16, .567)	16.208 (18, .578)	17.775 (16, .337)	19.728 (18, .348)	17.507 (16, .354)	18.879 (18, .399)
RMSEA	.000	.000	.022	.021	.020	.015
PCLOSE	.920	.934	.808	.835	.819	.864
LO90	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
χ^2/df	.902	.900	1.111	1.096	1.094	1.049
SRMR	.053	.054	.054	.051	.062	.058
GFI	.979	.977	.975	.972	.975	.974
AGFI	.945	.945	.934	.935	.935	.938
TLI	1.008	1.008	.990	.991	.992	.996
CFI	1.000	1.000	.995	.995	.996	.997

Appendix K – Gender Differences across Multiple Models

Active Coping

The chi-square difference statistic revealed a significant difference between the unconstrained and constrained-equal models for active coping, $\chi^2 = 22.822$, $df = 8$, $p = .004$. Therefore the model did not hold measurement invariance across groups, that is, the model did not apply across groups. *This indicated that these path relationships were different for males and females*. Therefore we accept the un-constrained models, and each gender will now be discussed in turn.

For males, the direct path from cybervictimisation frequency to social connectedness became non-significant. For females, cybervictimisation frequency to depression became non-significant (the indirect path via social connectedness remained significant: standardised value = .357, $p < .001$, 95 % CI: .250, .463).

All other direct paths were consistent with those explained in section 5.2.3. The indirect effect of cybervictimisation frequency on active coping however, became non-significant in males. This could be due to males being less likely than females to cope actively (as established in Chapter 4). *This suggests that the mediation effect of social connectedness and active coping on depression may not be significant in males, but still holds for females.* The models are shown below, with standardised values. Findings were consistent once again across anxiety: $\chi^2 = 21.022$, $df = 8$, $p = .007$; and stress: $\chi^2 = 22.259$, $df = 8$, $p = .004$; however, cybervictimisation frequency was found to have a significant direct positive effect on stress for both males and females. The models account for 35 % of the variance for depression in males compared to 61 % in females, and 49 % of the variance in help seeking in males compared to 32 % in females. Further examination is needed to draw conclusions around what these findings may mean, and mediations by gender require further scrutiny with a larger sample. Model fit is shown in Table K-1.

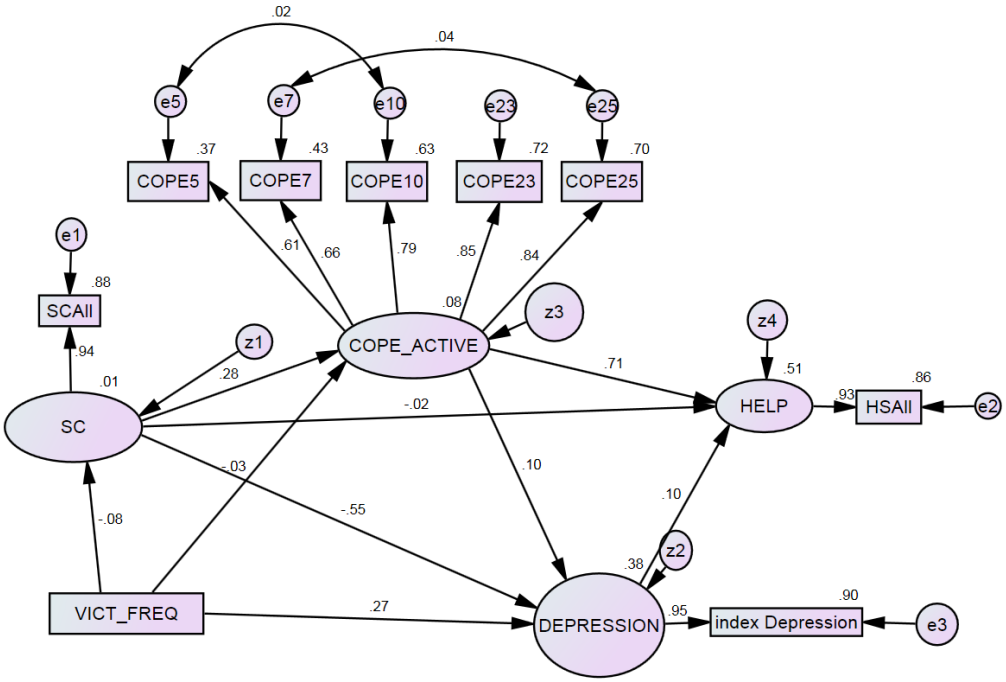


Figure K-1: Model 9a, Males, All Paths

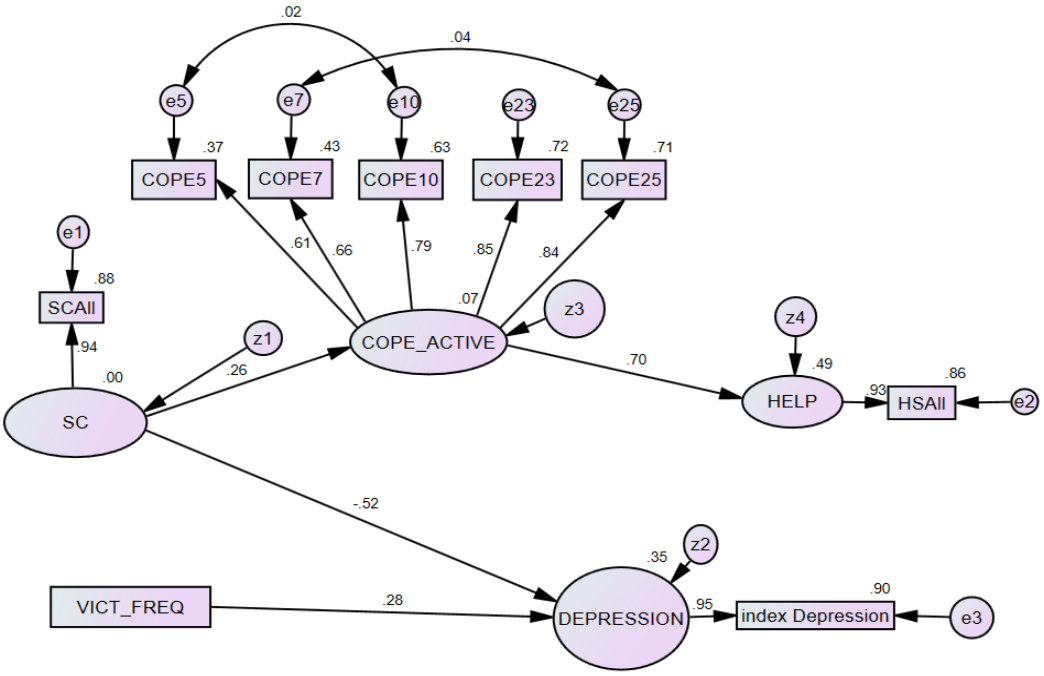


Figure K-2: Model 9a, Males, Only Significant Paths

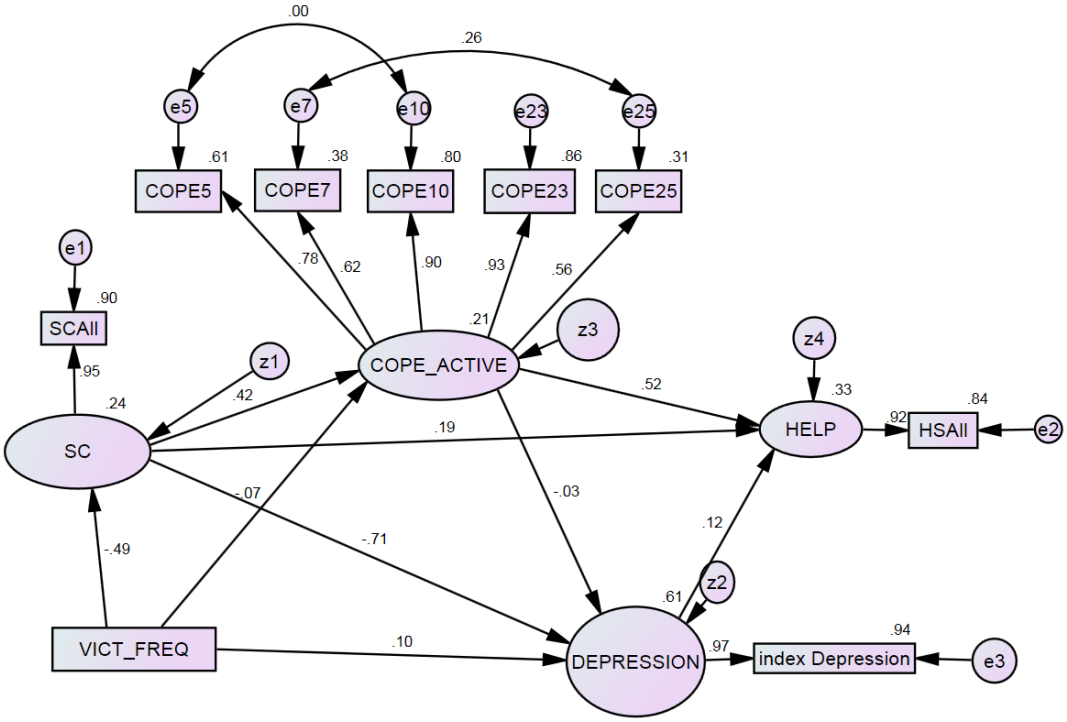


Figure K-3: Model 9a, Females, All Paths

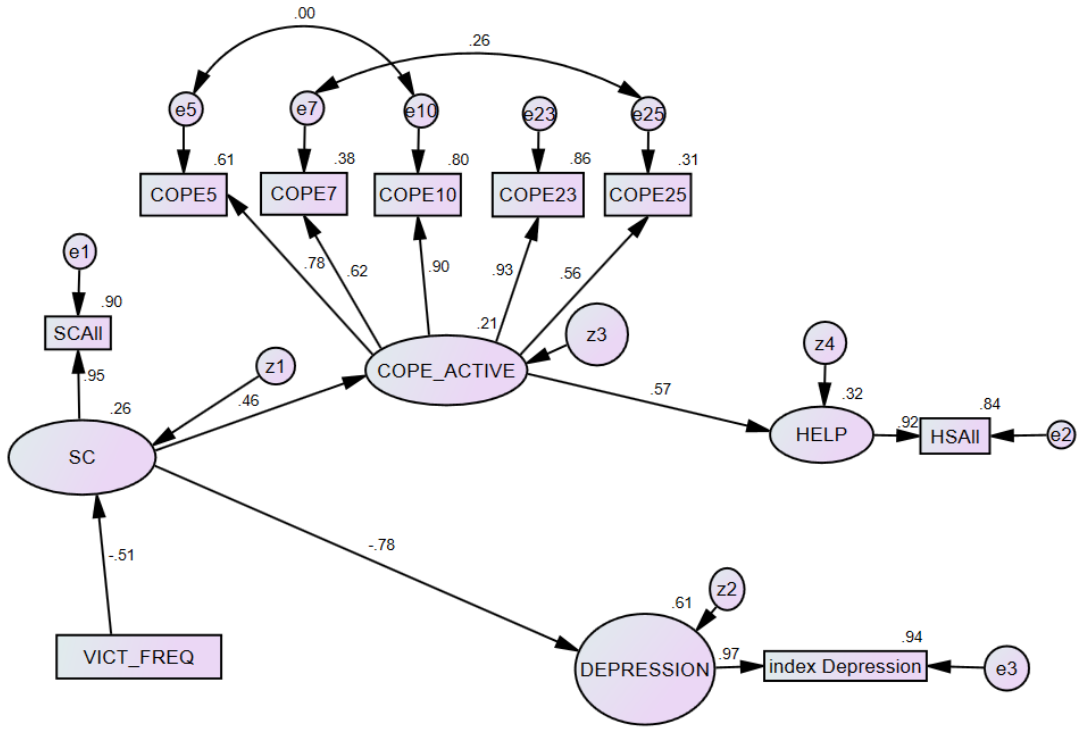


Figure K-4: Model 9a, Females, Only Significant Paths

Table K-1: Gender, Active Coping and DASS21 Unconstrained Fit Statistics

Fit Statistics	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
All paths			
χ^2(df, p)	57.514 (40, .036)	56.878 (40, .041)	57.434 (40, .036)
RMSEA	.044	.043	.044
PCLOSE	.634	.653	.636
LO90	.012	.009	.012
χ^2/df	1.438	1.422	1.436
SRMR	.059	.063	.063
GFI	.949	.951	.951
AGFI	.886	.889	.889
TLI	.964	.963	.963
CFI	.980	.980	.979
Only significant paths males			
χ^2(df, p)	36.292 (25, .067)	38.937 (25, .037)	40.408 (25, .026)
RMSEA	.069	.077	.081
PCLOSE	.246	.169	.135
LO90	0.000	.019	.028
χ^2/df	1.452	1.557	1.616
SRMR	.069	.071	.075
GFI	.923	.917	.916
AGFI	.861	.850	.849
TLI	.946	.931	.925
CFI	.963	.952	.948
Only significant paths females			
χ^2(df, p)	28.529 (25, .284)	27.250 (25, .344)	23.012 (24, .519)
RMSEA	.033	.026	.000
PCLOSE	.677	.732	.846
LO90	0.000	0.000	0.000
χ^2/df	1.141	1.090	.959)
SRMR	.036	.038	.036
GFI	.955	.958	.964
AGFI	.919	.924	.933
TLI	.991	.994	1.003
CFI	.994	.996	1.000

The model was similar when cyberbullying frequency was involved, with the path to social connectedness only significant for females (p = .001), but cyberbullying frequency on depression not significant for females (with the indirect path via social connectedness remaining significant at .208, p = .009, 95 % CI: -.240, -.021). *This again suggests that the mediation effect of social connectedness and active coping on depression may not be significant in males, but still holds for females, in terms of both cybervictimisation frequency and cyberbullying frequency, however this needs further analysis in larger samples*. Findings were consistent across anxiety: χ^2 = 21.022, df = 8, p = .007; and stress: χ^2 = 23.127, df = 8, p

= .003, however, cyberbullying frequency had no significant direct effect on stress in both groups (though females still experienced significant indirect effects on stress: standardised value = .185, *p* = .021, 95 % CI: .034, .333), but cyberbullying frequency did directly affect anxiety in both groups. This model accounts for 35% of the variance in depression for males and compared to 60 % for females, and 49% of the variance in help seeking for males compared to 32% for females. Model fit is shown in Table K-2..

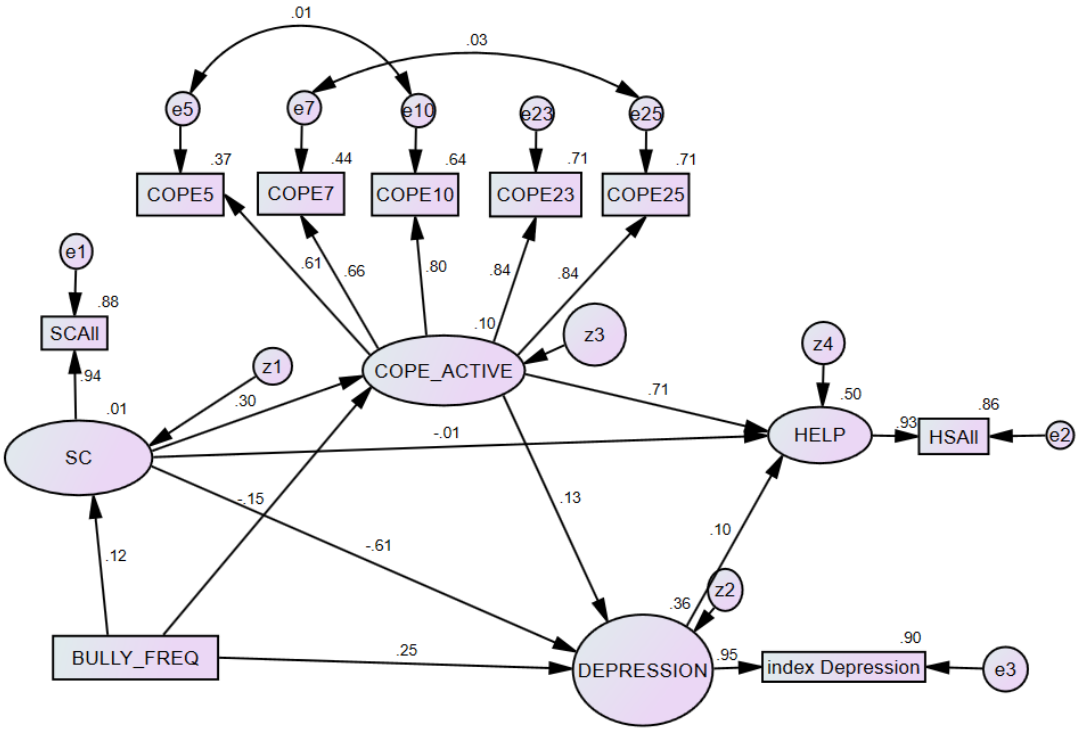


Figure K-5: Model 9b, Males, All Paths

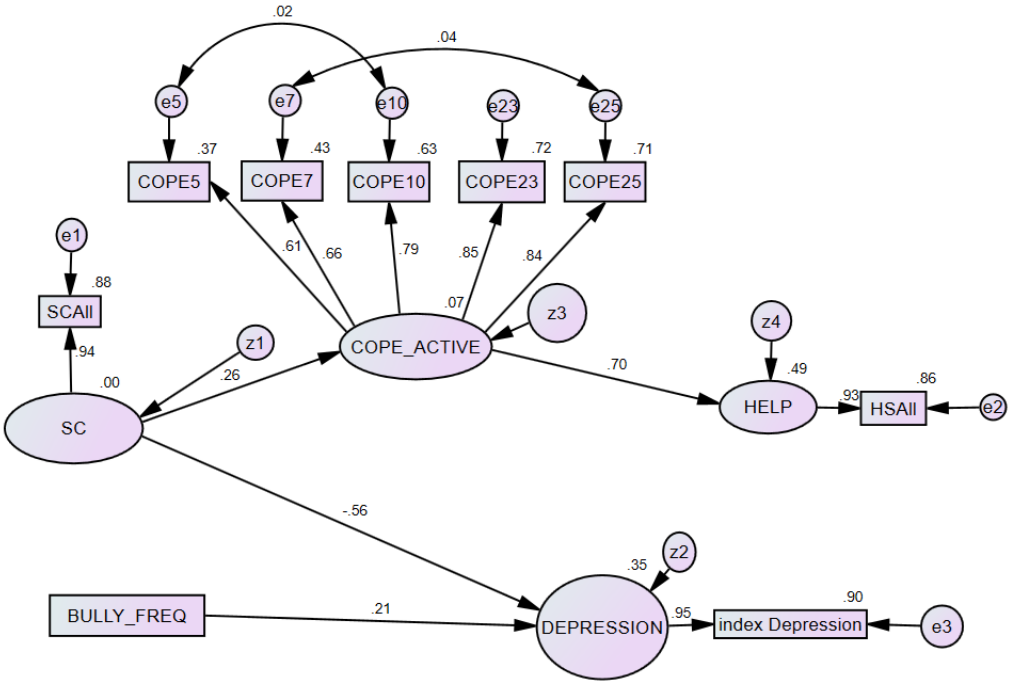


Figure K-6: Model 9b, Males, Only Significant Paths

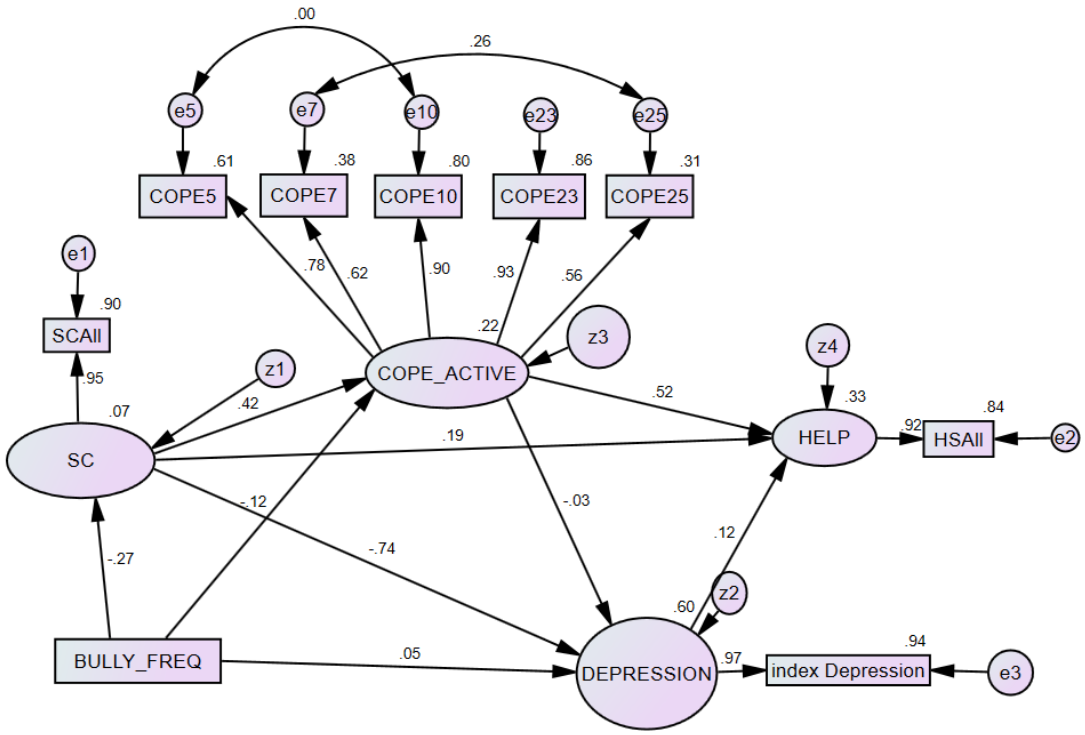


Figure K-7: Model 9b, Females, All Paths

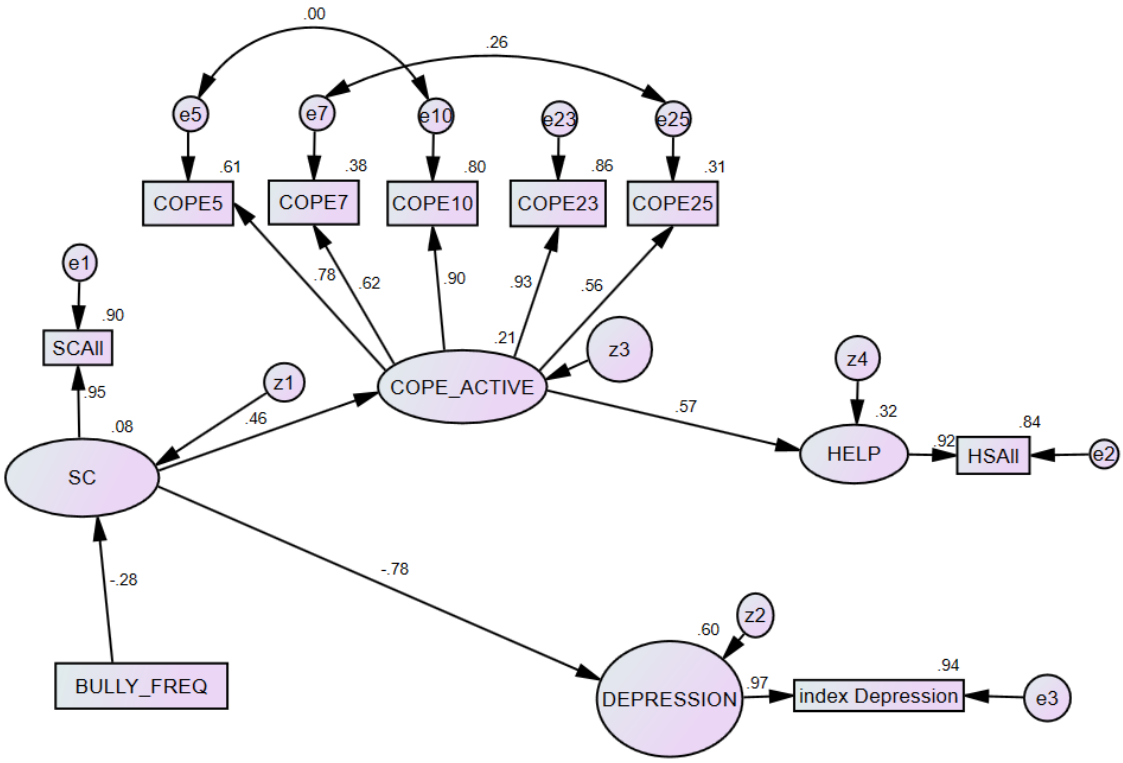


Figure K-8: Model 9b, Females, Only Significant Paths

Table K-2: Gender, Active Coping and DASS21 Unconstrained Fit Statistics (Bully)

Fit Statistics	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
All paths			
χ^2(df, p)	45.038 (40, .068)	54.449 (40, .063)	54.313 (40, .065)
RMSEA	.039	.040	.040
PCLOSE	.735	.723	.727
LO90	0.000	0.000	0.000
χ^2/df	1.351	1.361	1.358
SRMR	.056	.060	.084
GFI	.952	.953	.953
AGFI	.893	.893	.895
TLI	.970	.968	.968
CFI	.983	.982	.982
Only significant paths males			
χ^2(df, p)	39.008 (25, .037)	38.937 (23, .037)	40.408 (25, .026)
RMSEA	.077	.077	.081
PCLOSE	.167	.169	.135
LO90	.020	.019	.028
χ^2/df	1.560	1.557	1.616
SRMR	.074	.071	.076
GFI	.922	.917	.916
AGFI	.860	.850	.849
TLI	.933	.931	.925
CFI	.954	.952	.948
Only significant paths females			
χ^2(df, p)	25.356 (25, .443)	27.250 (25, .344)	23.012 (24, .519)
RMSEA	.010	.026	.000
PCLOSE	.805	.732	.846
LO90	0.000	0.000	0.000
χ^2/df	1.014	1.090	.959
SRMR	.040	.038	.036
GFI	.958	.958	.964
AGFI	.925	.924	.933
TLI	.999	.994	1.003
CFI	.999	.996	1.000

When this model was tested with the MHCSF in place of depression, results were similar between the groups, but with slight differences. The chi-square difference statistic revealed a significant difference between the unconstrained and constrained-equal models, $\chi^2 = 21.132$, $df = 8$, $p = .007$. Therefore the model did not hold measurement invariance across groups and the un-constrained model was accepted. The direct path from cybervictimisation frequency to social connectedness became non-significant in males, however, in both groups the following paths became non-significant: cybervictimisation frequency to active coping; cybervictimisation frequency on the MHCSF; and social connectedness on help seeking. Indirect effects still were significant for females for all of these aforementioned paths, but

only the indirect path from social connectedness to help seeking via active coping (standardised value: .174, p = .013, 95 % CI: .039, .314); and on the MHCSF via active coping (standardised value: .082, p = .001, 95 % CI: .032, .164), were significant for males.

Therefore, *once again social connectedness may not play as strong a mediation role for males compared to females in promoting active coping the more frequently a young person is victimised. However, social connectedness did indirectly influence the MHCSF and help seeking independently of cybervictimisation in males*. The fit statistics were, however, poor for this model (Model 10), so caution when interpreting these results is advised. These models are shown below, with fit statistics in Table K-3.. These models account for 48 % of the variance in help seeking for males compared to 32 % in females, and 29 % of the variance on the MHCSF in males compared to 59 % for females. These models can be seen on the following page. Model fit is shown in Table K-3.

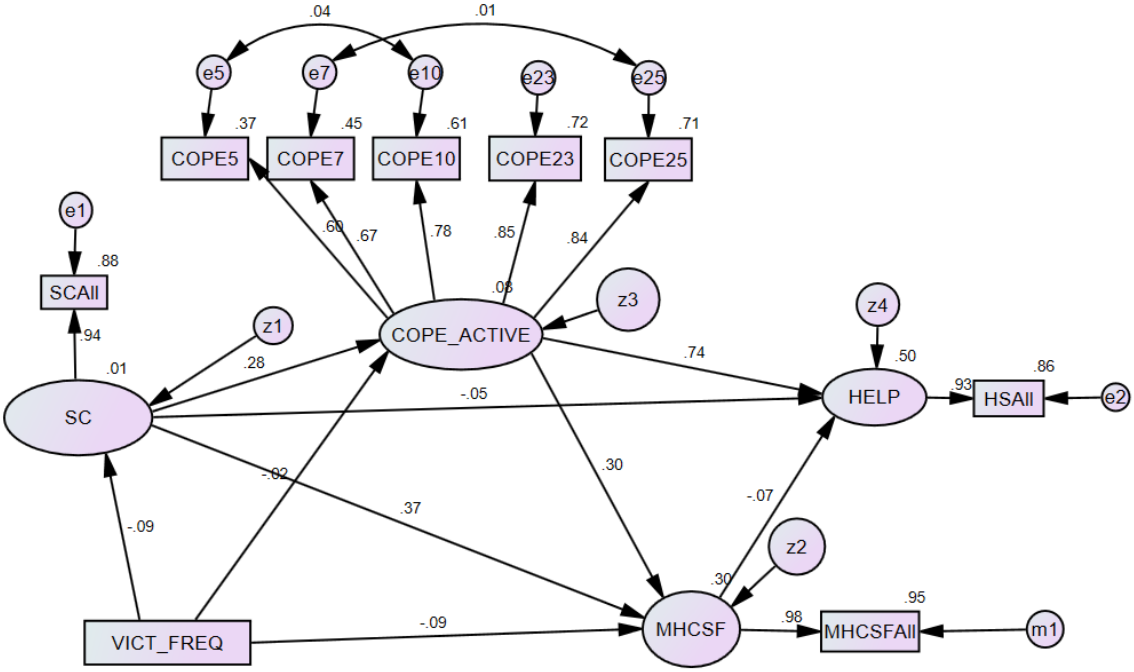


Figure K-9: Model 10, Males, All Paths

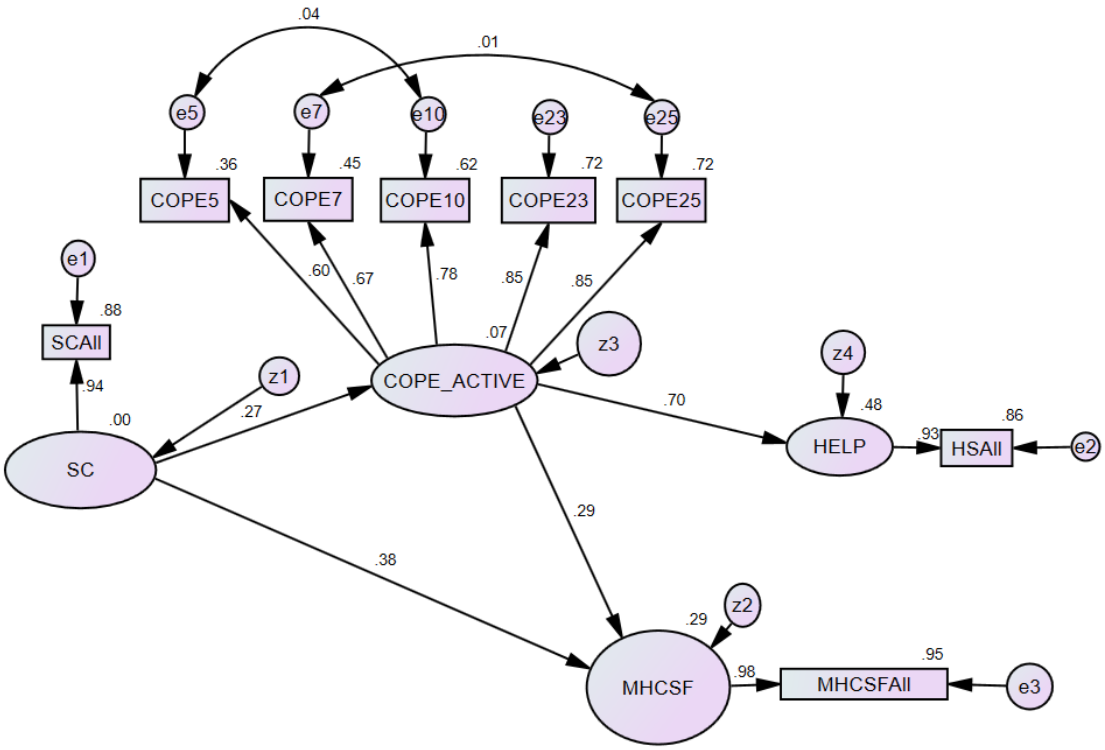


Figure K-10: Model 10, Males, Only Significant Paths

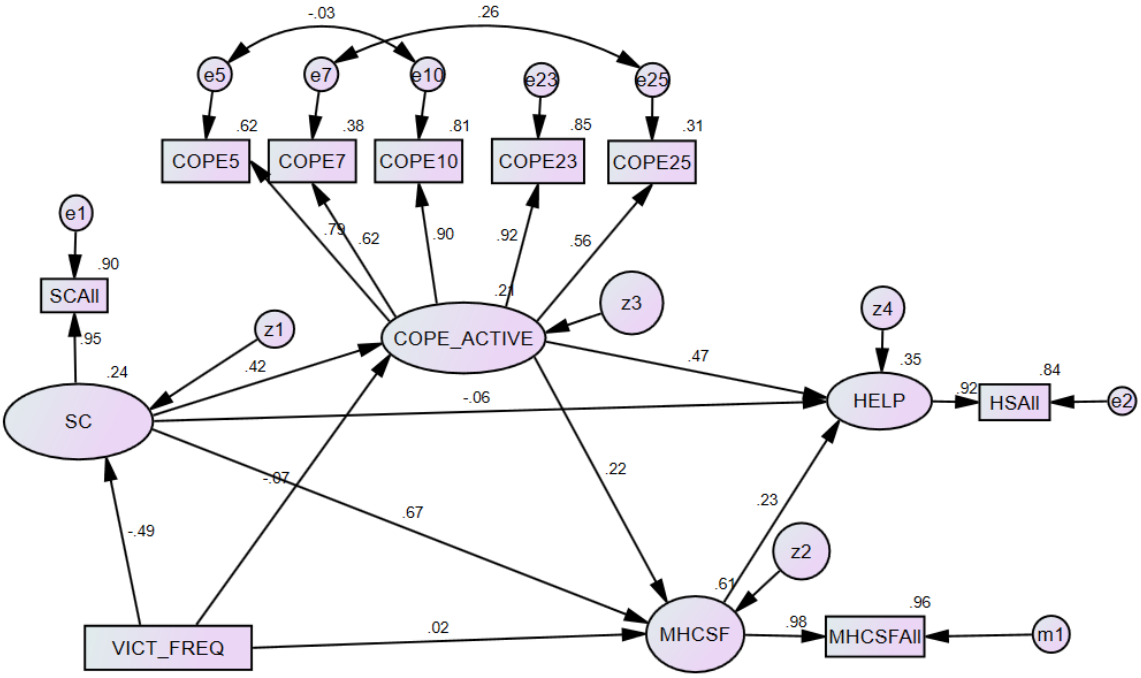


Figure K-11: Model 10, Females, All Paths

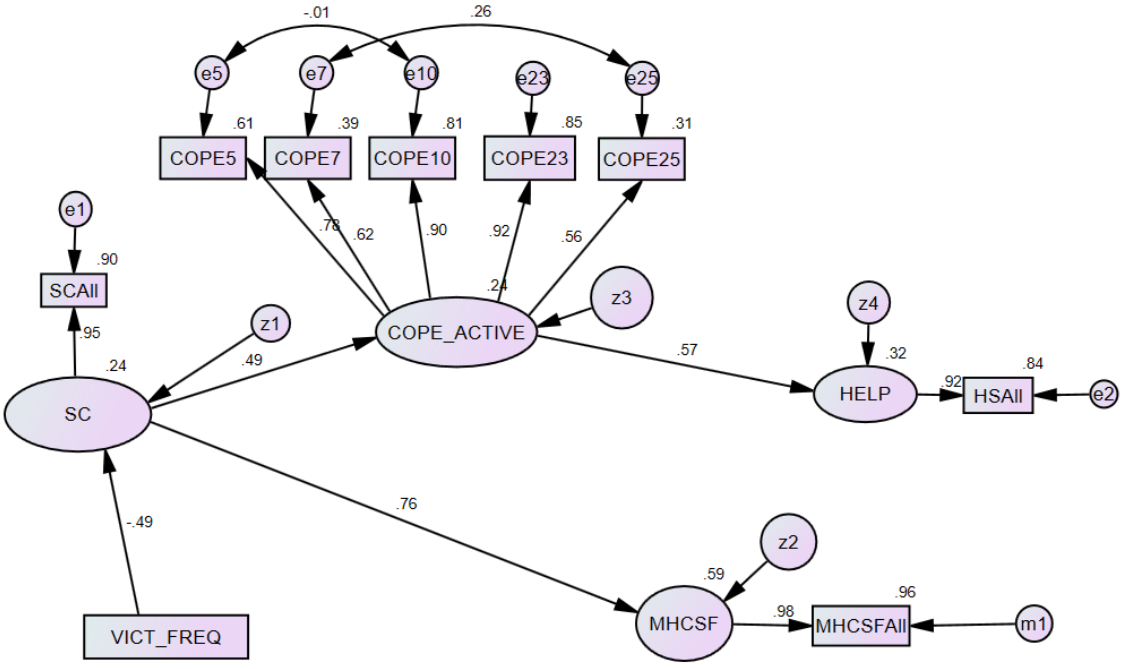


Figure K-12: Model 10, Females, Only Significant Paths

Table K-3: Gender, Active Coping and MHCSF Unconstrained Fit Statistics

Fit Statistics	MHCSF
All paths	
χ^2(df, p)	61.353 (40, .017)
RMSEA	.048
PCLOSE	.515
LO90	.021
χ^2/df	1.534
SRMR	.055
GFI	.947
AGFI	.881
TLI	.956
CFI	.975
Only significant paths males	
χ^2(df, p)	25.417 (17, .086)
RMSEA	.073
PCLOSE	.244
LO90	0.000
χ^2/df	1.495
SRMR	.049
GFI	.940
AGFI	.873
TLI	.953
CFI	.971
Only significant paths females	
χ^2(df, p)	37/308 (25, .054)
RMSEA	.061
PCLOSE	.305
LO90	0.000
χ^2/df	1.492
SRMR	.061
GFI	.946
AGFI	.902
TLI	.969
CFI	.978

Findings thus far suggest that social connectedness and active coping may play a significant role in the decision to seek help, or in predicting mental health outcomes in males, independent of cybervictimisation experiences. ***However, for females***, it appears that whilst both social connectedness and depression scores did not significantly predict help seeking overall, ***social connectedness predicted better mental health scores and engagement in active coping, and it is this engagement in active coping that predicted help seeking*** *(Figure 40).* In other words, *those who are more socially connected are those with better mental health, more likely to cope actively, and more likely to seek help. How this relates to frequency of cybervictimisation needs further investigation.*

Emotion-Focused

The chi-square difference statistic revealed a significant difference between the unconstrained and constrained-equal models, $\chi^2 = 30.887$, $df = 9$, $p < .001$. Therefore the model did not hold measurement invariance across groups (that is, the model does not apply across gender groups). Therefore the un-constrained model is accepted, and so each gender will now be discussed in turn.

Investigations revealed that for female participants, the direct path from cybervictimisation frequency to depression became non-significant, however the indirect path via social connectedness did remain significant: standardised value = .359, $p < .001$, 95 % CI: .248, .490). Additionally, the direct path from emotion-focused coping to depression did not remain significant for females, and the direct and indirect effects of social connectedness on help seeking also became non-significant. For males, the direct path from cybervictimisation frequency to social connectedness became non-significant, and the direct and indirect effects of social connectedness on help seeking became non-significant. *This again suggests that for males* ***social connectedness may not play a mediating role between cybervictimisation frequency and coping styles.***

All other paths were consistent with findings from section 5.2.3, although no significant indirect path existed between cybervictimisation frequency and emotion-focused coping for males. This suggests that *whilst social connectedness and emotion-focused coping may have limited predictive relevance in depression scores for men,* ***they play a role in predicting depression for females***. This could be due to the finding that females are more likely to cope in emotion-focused ways in general (as reported in Chapter 4). The full models, with standardised values are shown below. Findings were consistent for anxiety: $\chi^2 = 28.866$, $df = 9$, $p = .001$; and stress: $\chi^2 = 30.033$, $df = 9$, $p < .001$, although the direct effect of cybervictimisation on stress was significant in both males and females. These models account for 11 % of the variance in help seeking in females, and 43 % of the variance in depression in males compared to 60 % in females. Model fit is shown in Table K-4.

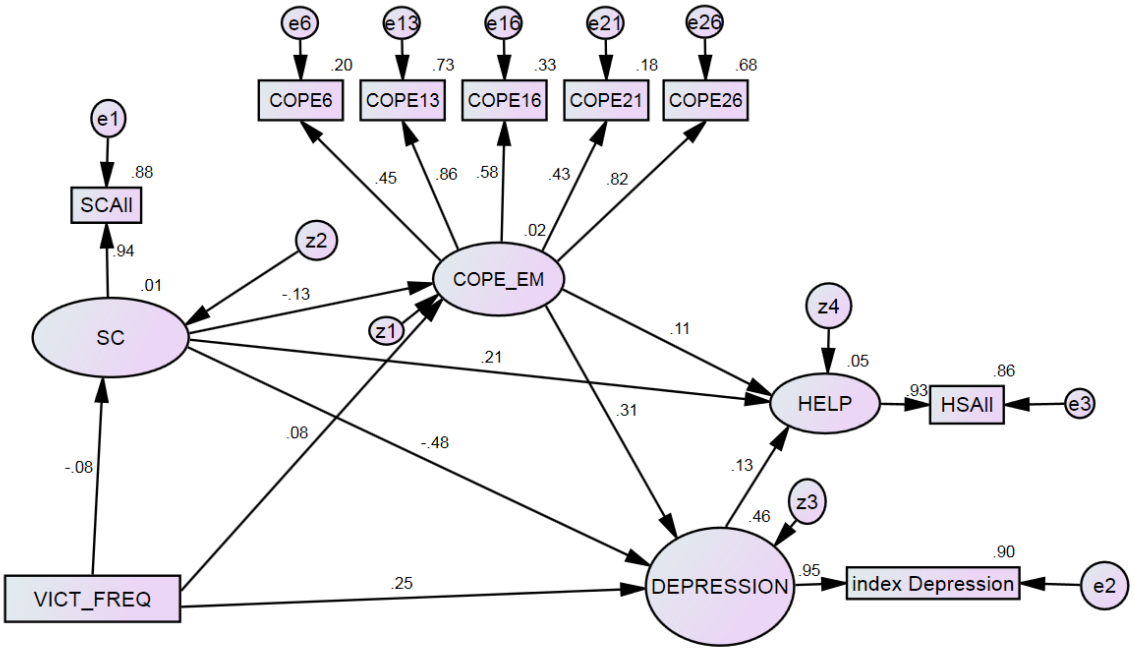


Figure K-13: Model 11, Males, All Paths

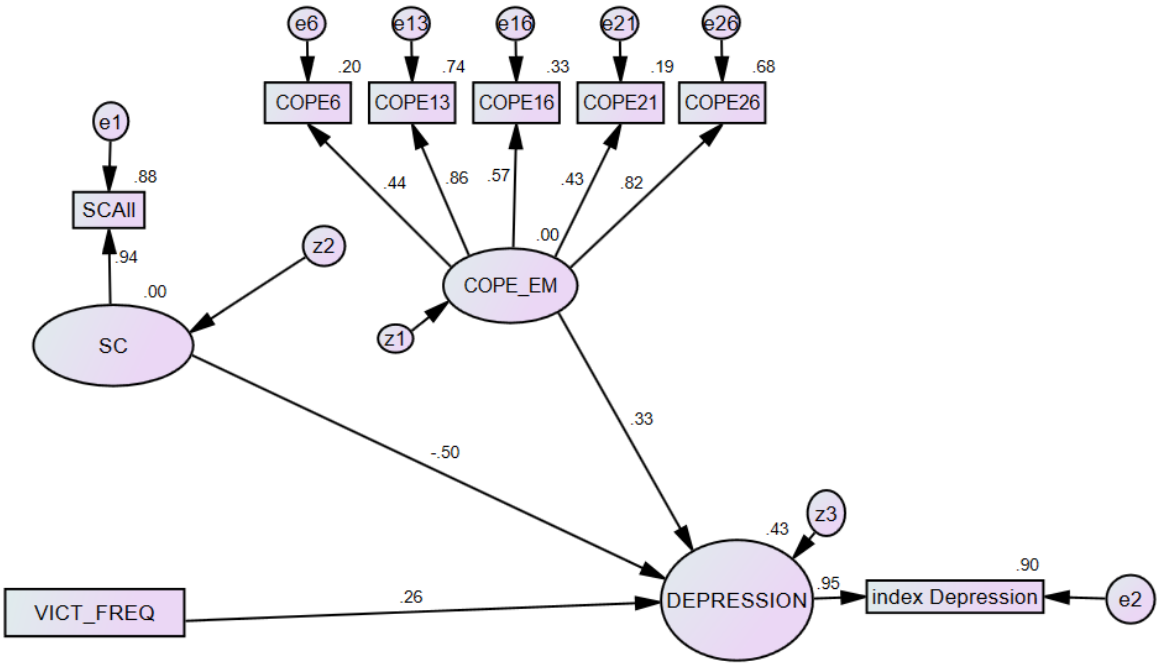


Figure K-14: Model 11, Males, Only Significant Paths

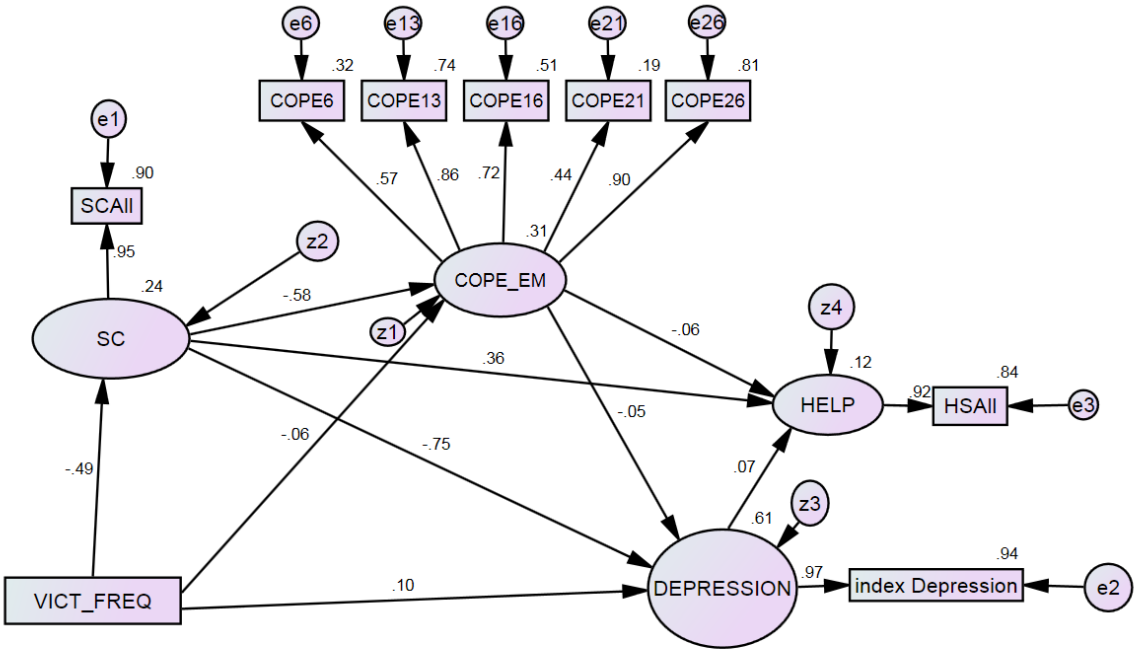


Figure K-15: Model 11, Females, All Paths

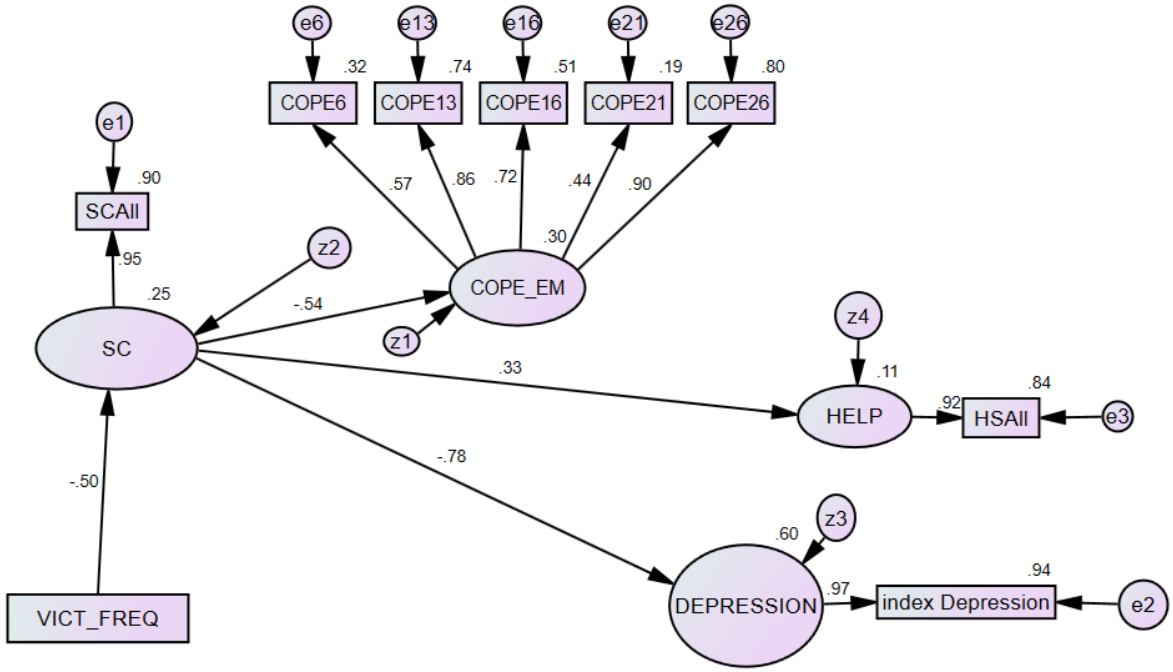


Figure K-16: Model 11, Females, Only Significant Paths

Table K-4: Gender, Emotion-Focused Coping and DASS21 Unconstrained Fit Statistics

Fit Statistics	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
All paths			
χ^2(df, p)	60.461 (44, .050)	60.403 (44, .051)	62.445 (44, .035)
RMSEA	.041	.041	.043
PCLOSE	.720	.722	.666
LO90	0.000	0.000	.012
χ^2/df	1.374	1.373	1.419
SRMR	.079	.078	.074
GFI	.948	.947	.946
AGFI	.893	.892	.889
TLI	.956	.953	.950
CFI	.973	.972	.969
Only significant paths males			
χ^2(df, p)	34.885 (20, .021)	33.987 (20, .026)	34.748 (20, .021)
RMSEA	.089	.086	.089
PCLOSE	.100	.118	.103
LO90	.035	.030	.034
χ^2/df	1.744	1.699	1.737
SRMR	.093	.092	.088
GFI	.918	.919	.917
AGFI	.852	.854	.851
TLI	.884	.879	.881
CFI	.917	.914	.915
Only significant paths females			
χ^2(df, p)	21.853 (27, .745)	24.542 (27, .600)	22.273 (26, .674)
RMSEA	.000	.000	.000
PCLOSE	.950	.898	.924
LO90	0.000	0.000	0.000
χ^2/df	.809	.909	.857
SRMR	.040	.045	.039
GFI	.965	.960	.964
AGFI	.942	.933	.938
TLI	1.016	1.008	1.012
CFI	1.000	1.000	1.000

Findings were similar with the MHCSF, in that the following direct paths became non-significant for males: cybervictimisation frequency to social connectedness; social connectedness to emotion-focused coping; and the MHCSF to help seeking. The indirect effect of cybervictimisation frequency on emotion-focused coping via social connectedness (standardised value = .287, $p < .001$, 95 % CI: .186, .427) and the MHCSF via social connectedness (standardised value = -.366, $p = .001$, 95 % CI: -.482, -.241) was not significant for males, and social connectedness had no direct or indirect effect in help seeking in both groups. ***In summary, the only direct path that remained significant for males was from social connectedness to the MHCSF****, this model is not reported here, and* ***suggests that***

the relationships established thus far between victimisation frequency, emotion- focused coping, and the MHCSF, may not be as evident in males compared to females. The full models are shown below with standardised values. These models account for 18 % of the variance in help seeking in females, and 22 % of the variance on the MHCSF in males compared to 58 % in females. Model fit is shown in Table K-5.

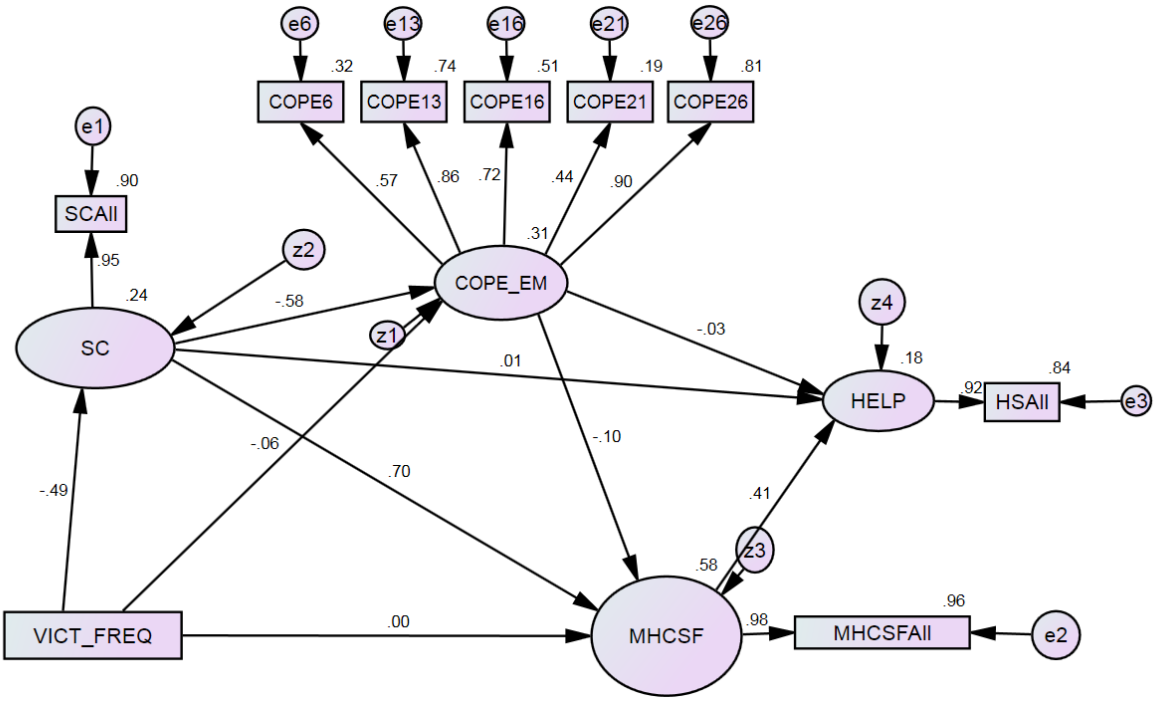


Figure K-17: Model 12, Females, All Paths

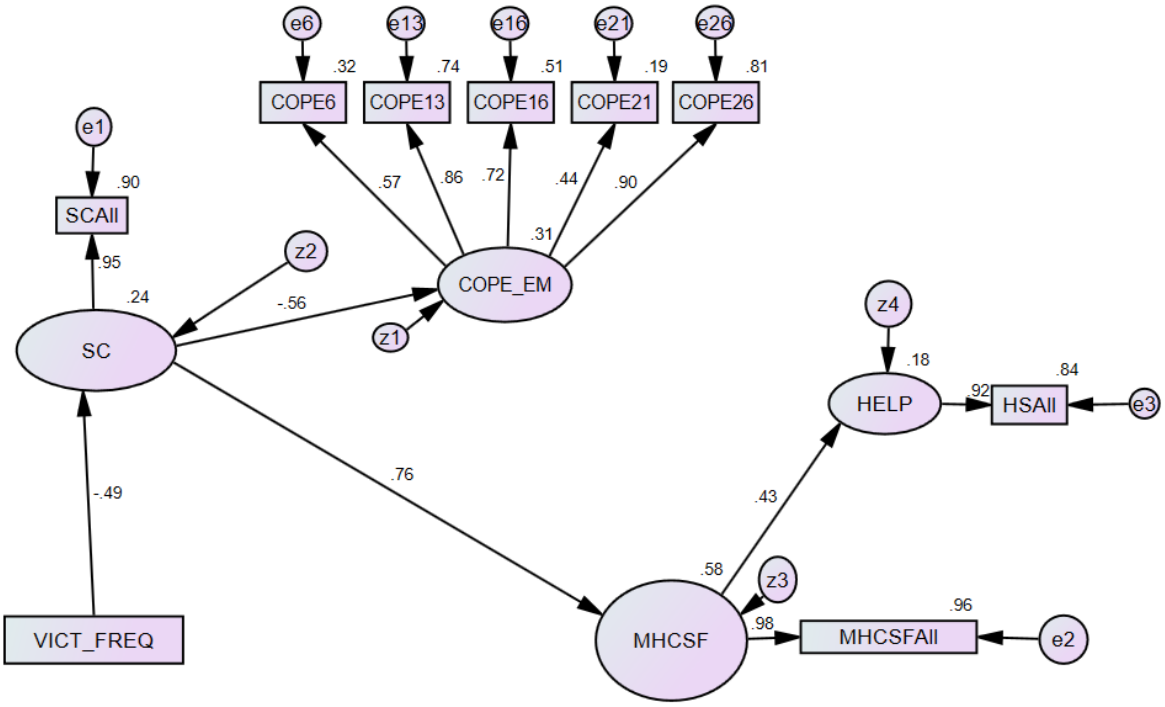


Figure K-18: Model 12, Females, Only Significant Paths

Table K-5: Gender, Emotion-Focused Coping and MHCSF Unconstrained Fit Statistics

Fit Statistics	MHCSF
All paths	
χ^2(df, p)	59.168 (44, .068)
RMSEA	.039
PCLOSE	.754
LO90	0.000
χ^2/df	1.345
SRMR	.079
GFI	.949
AGFI	.895
TLI	.958
CFI	.975
Only significant paths females	
χ^2(df, p)	18.141 (27, .899)
RMSEA	.000
PCLOSE	.987
LO90	0.000
χ^2/df	.672
SRMR	.040
GFI	.971
AGFI	.951
TLI	1.027
CFI	1.000

The results thus far suggest that social connectedness and emotion-focused coping may play a minor role in the relationships between cybervictimisation, help seeking and mental health outcomes for males compared to females. Whilst emotion-focused coping had a negative influence on the DASS21 for females, it had no significant direct effect on the MHCSF, suggesting that whilst it may predict increased levels of depression, anxiety and stress, it may not necessarily predict the MHCSF. However, given the small sample in this study, and some small effect sizes, replicating the study with larger samples is needed to confirm these findings. Furthermore, wellbeing as measured by the MHCSF may mediate the effect of social connectedness on help seeking, ***suggesting that the more positive young people feel about their wellbeing, the more likely they will be to seek help, regardless of how socially connected they feel.***

Coping through Distraction

The chi-square difference statistic revealed a significant difference between the unconstrained and constrained-equal models, $\chi^2 = 22.562$, $df = 9$, $p = .007$. Therefore the model did not hold measurement invariance across groups, that is, the model did not apply to males and females.

Therefore we accept the un-constrained models, and so each gender will now be discussed in turn.

For males, the path from cybervictimisation frequency to social connectedness became non-significant (with no indirect effect), and social connectedness to coping through distraction also became non-significant. The only path that remained significant was coping through distraction to help seeking. ***This could suggest that whilst males may engage in distraction techniques as a way of coping with cybervictimisation, this distractive behaviour may ultimate have a positive influence on seeking help compared to other forms of coping. For example, through keeping one's self occupied, a young person may realise that they need to seek support.*** Social connectedness and cybervictimisation frequency remained predictors of depression, however, neither of these three constructs had any significant direct effects with coping through distraction or help seeking in males. Therefore, this model and corresponding fit statistics are not reported here, and further analysis is need to confirm how males may cope using distraction methods.

For females, the following direct paths became non-significant: cybervictimisation frequency to depression (though the indirect path via social connectedness remained significant: standardised value: .359, $p < .001$, 95 % CI: .251, .475); and social connectedness to coping though distraction. ***The only direct paths that remained significant were: social connectedness on help seeking, social connectedness on depression; and victimisation frequency to social connectedness*** (all paths $p < .001$); *suggesting that whilst coping through distraction was found to predict help seeking for males, it may not have any predictive relevance for help seeking in females.* Given that no direct paths remained significant in relation to coping through distraction and all other variables, this model and corresponding fit statistics will not be reported here. Further research is needed to examine this coping style and any gender differences.

The findings were consistent when the DASS21 constructs were substituted with the MHCSF, however, no significant direct or indirect effects were found between cybervictimisation frequency and coping through distraction for both genders in this model. The following direct paths became non-significant for males: cybervictimisation frequency to social connectedness; and cybervictimisation frequency and the MHCSF. The only direct paths that remained significant for males were: coping through distraction to help seeking;

coping through distraction to the MHCSF; and social connectedness to the MHCSF (all paths $p < .001$).

The following direct paths became non-significant for females: coping through distraction to help seeking, and coping through distraction to the MHCSF, though an indirect effect to help seeking via the MHCSF was significant (standardised value: -.368, $p = .001$, 95 % CI: -.484, -.243). Whilst no direct effect existed between social connectedness and help seeking in both groups, a significant indirect effect via coping through distraction was present in females (standardised value: .373, $p = .007$, 95 % CI: .125, .613). The only direct paths that remained significant for females were: cybervictimisation frequency to social connectedness; social connectedness to the MHSCF, and the MHCSF to help seeking. ***This reiterated findings from section 5.2.3, which suggested that coping through distraction may have little predictive role in help seeking on the MHCSF in females.*** Therefore, this model and corresponding fit statistics will not be reported here for females, again suggesting that further research is needed to examine coping through distraction in females.

These results suggest that ***the distraction coping style may directly predict wellbeing (MHCSF) and overall help seeking in males, whereas social connectedness may predict mental health in females, with mental health mediating the effect of social connectedness on help seeking.*** The model, with standardised values, is shown on the following page. These models account for 16 % of the variance in help seeking in males, and 26 % of the variance on the MHCSF in males. Model fit is shown in Table K-6.

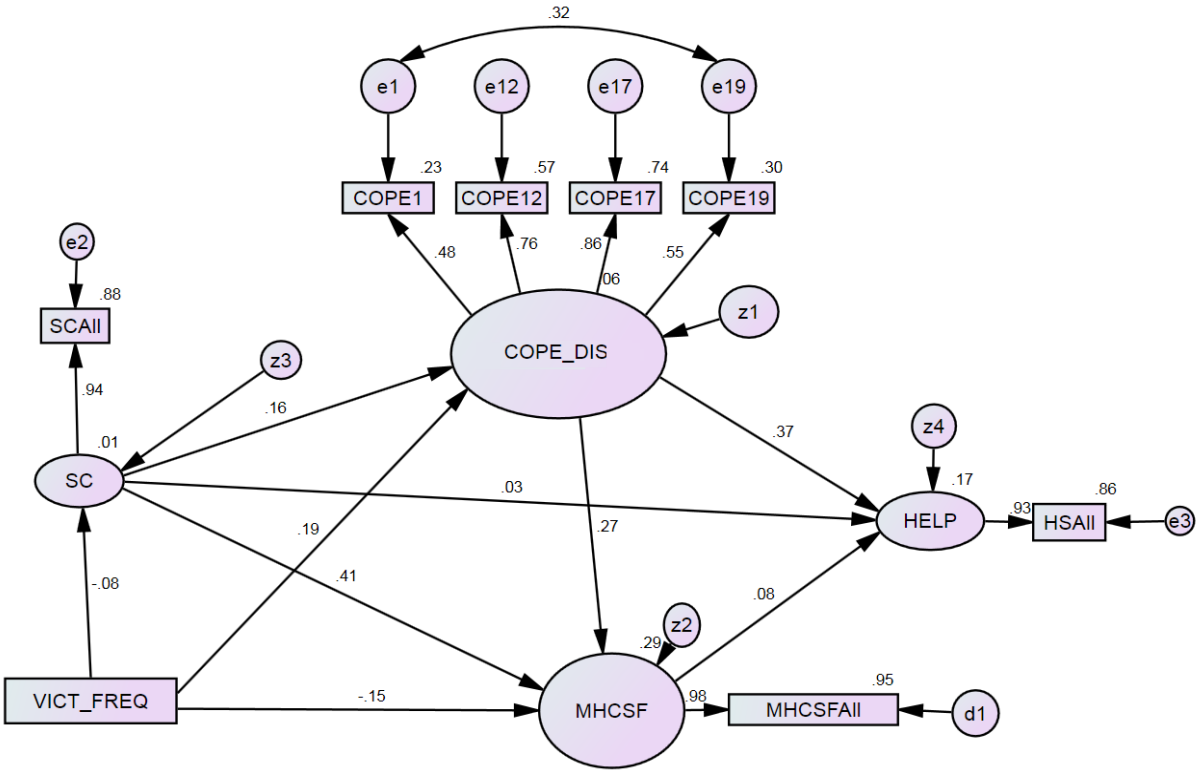


Figure K-19: Model 14, Males, All Paths

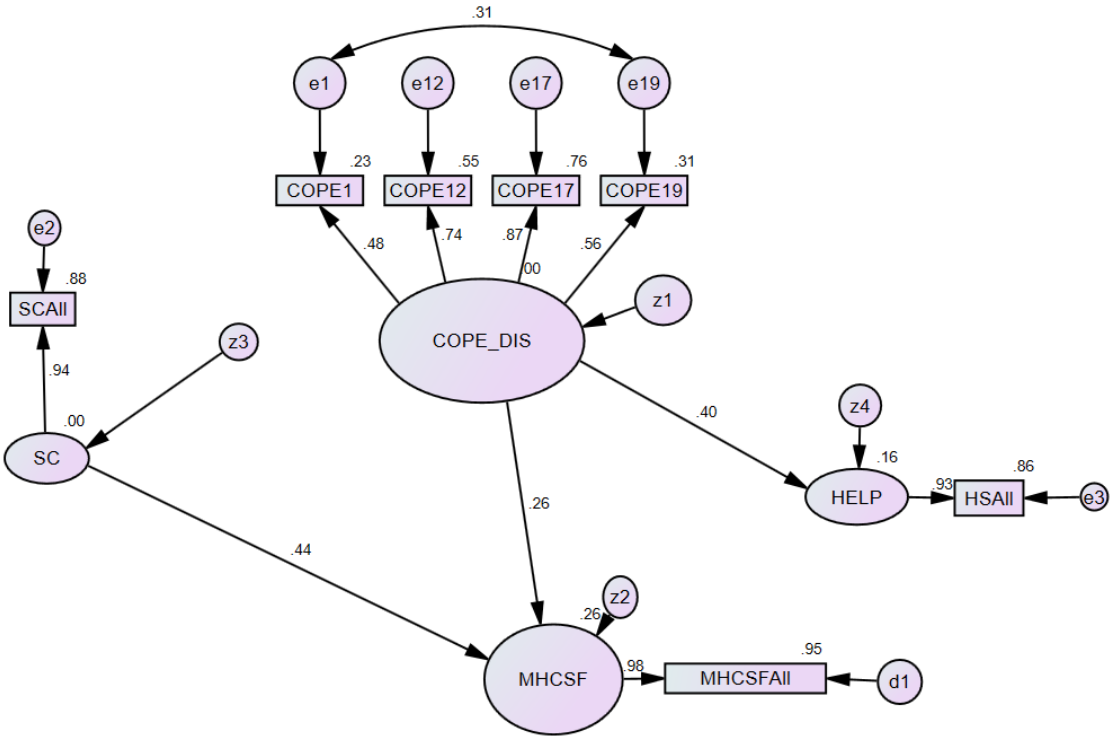


Figure K-20: Model 14, Males, Only Significant Paths

Table K-6: Gender, Coping Through Distraction and MHCSF Unconstrained Fit Statistics

Fit Statistics	MHCSF
All paths	
χ^2(df, p)	42.562 (28, .038)
RMSEA	.048
PCLOSE	.518
LO90	.011
χ^2/df	1.520
SRMR	.065
GFI	.957
AGFI	.890
TLI	.933
CFI	.967
Only significant paths males	
χ^2(df, p)	21.485 (13, .064)
RMSEA	.083
PCLOSE	.179
LO90	0.000
χ^2/df	1.653
SRMR	.086
GFI	.941
AGFI	.873
TLI	.907
CFI	.943

Appendix L Anxiety and Stress Models

Full Models by Total Sample

Active Coping

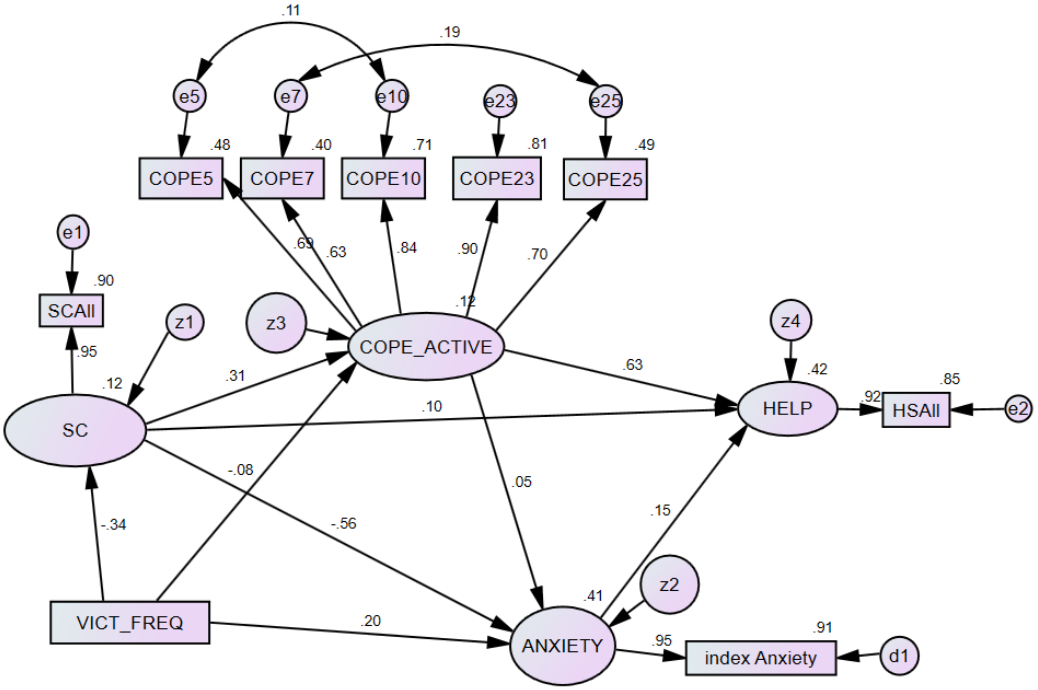


Figure Appendix L-1: Active Coping and Anxiety – All Paths

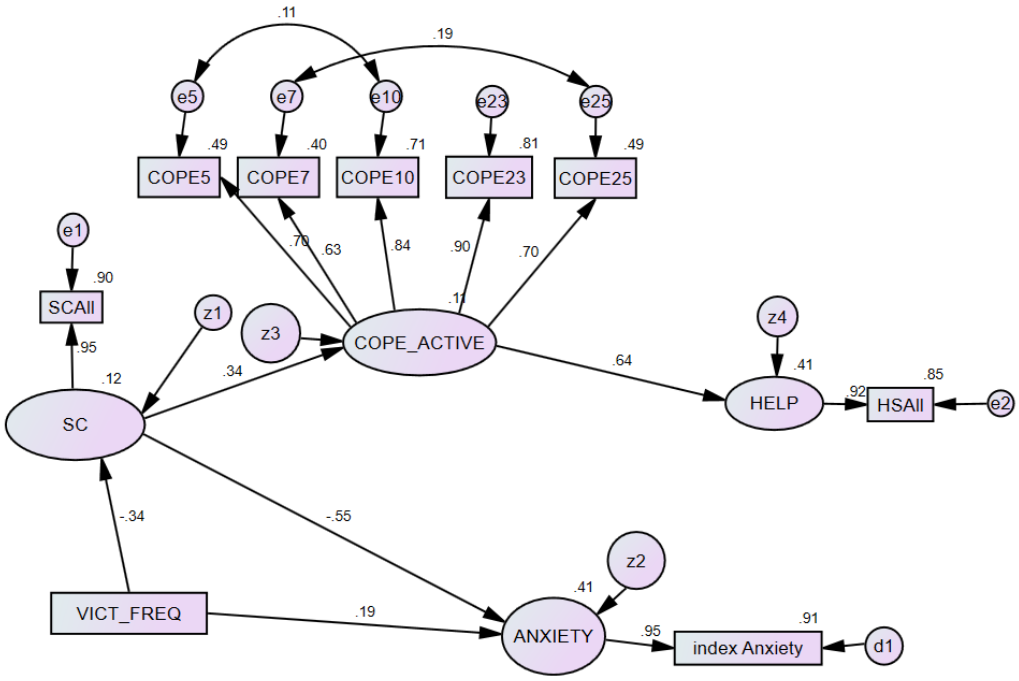


Figure Appendix L-2: Active Coping and Anxiety – Only Significant Paths

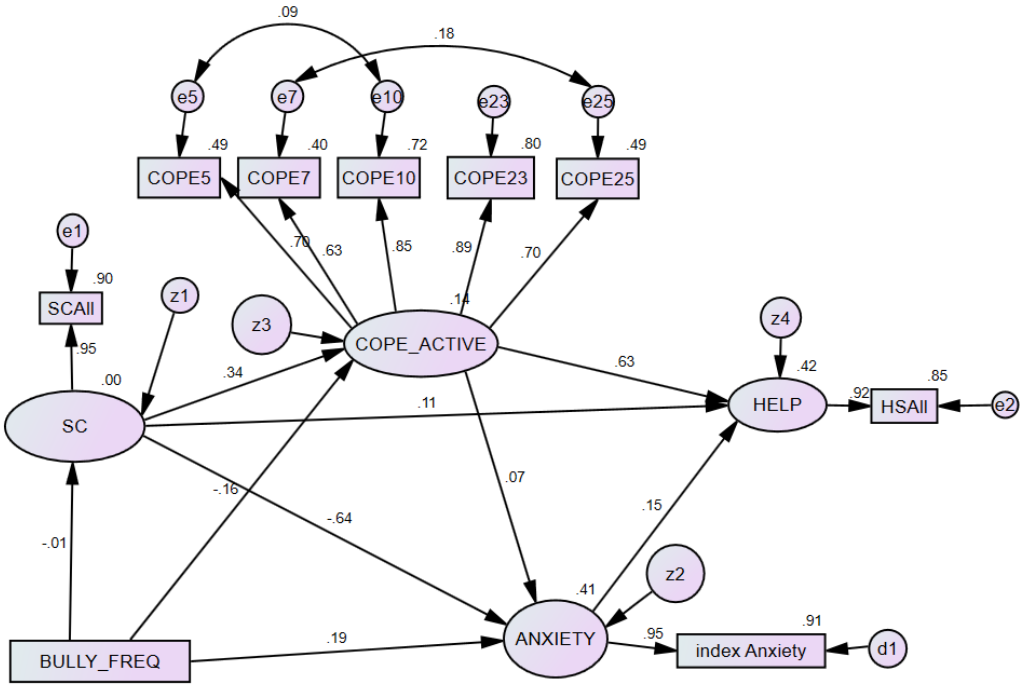


Figure Appendix L-3: Active Coping and Anxiety (Bully) – All Paths

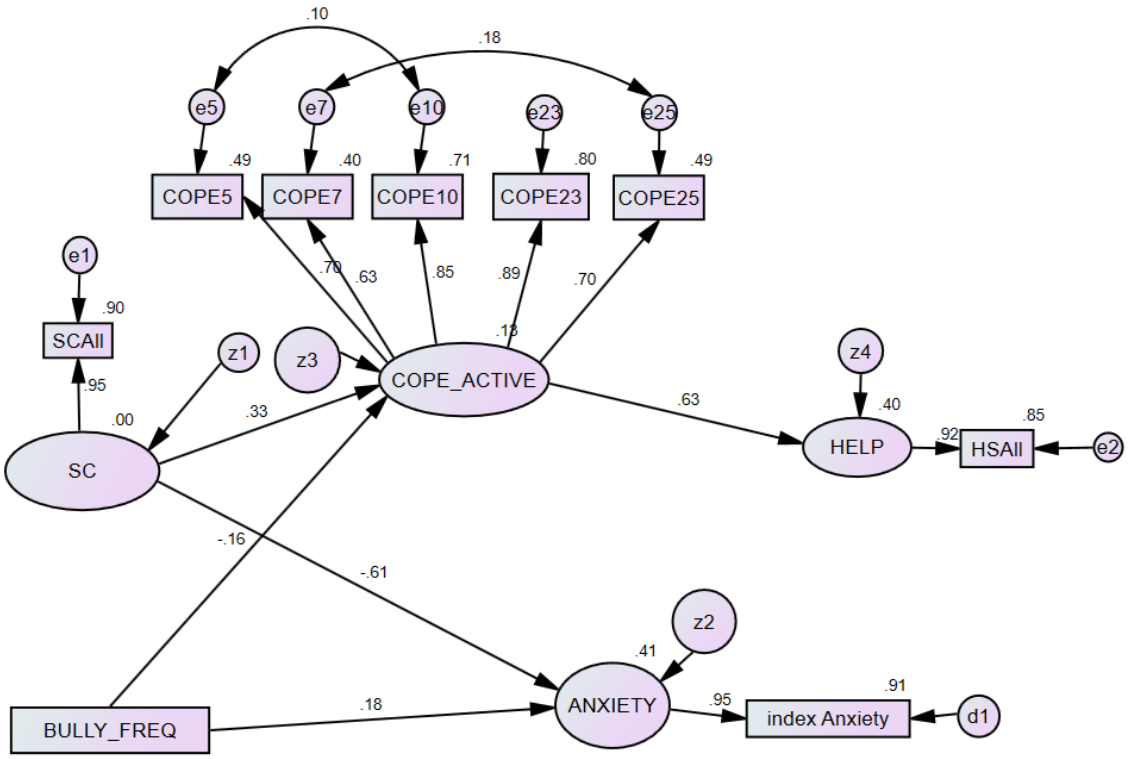


Figure Appendix L-4: Active Coping and Anxiety (Bully) – Only Significant Paths

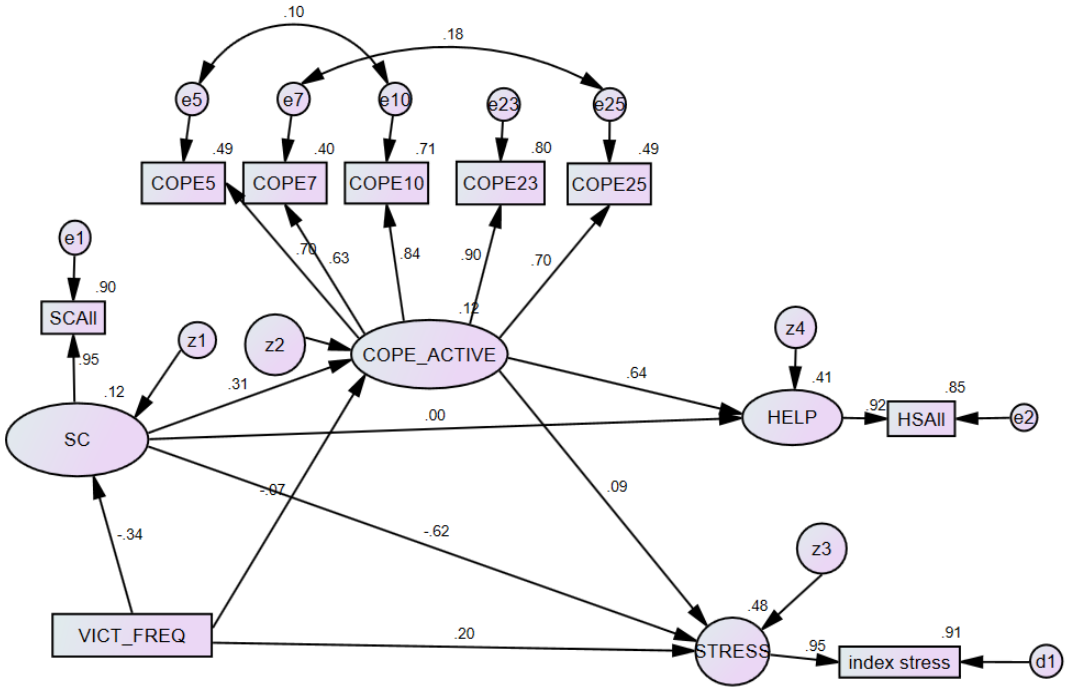


Figure Appendix L-5: Active Coping and Stress – All Paths

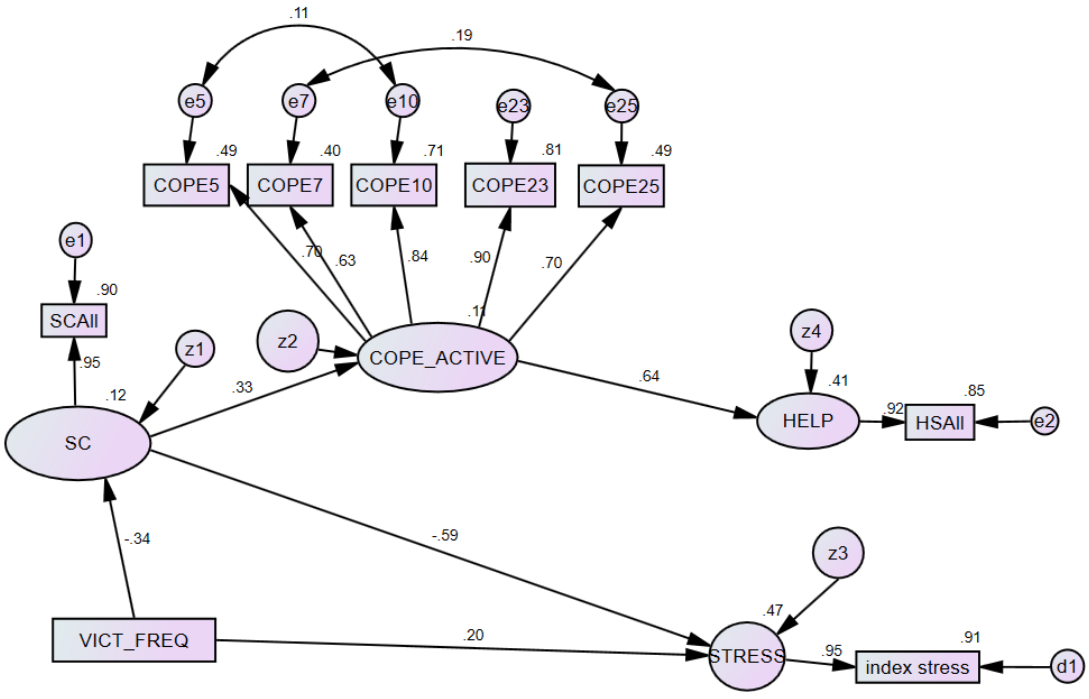


Figure Appendix L-6: Active Coping and Stress – Only Significant Paths

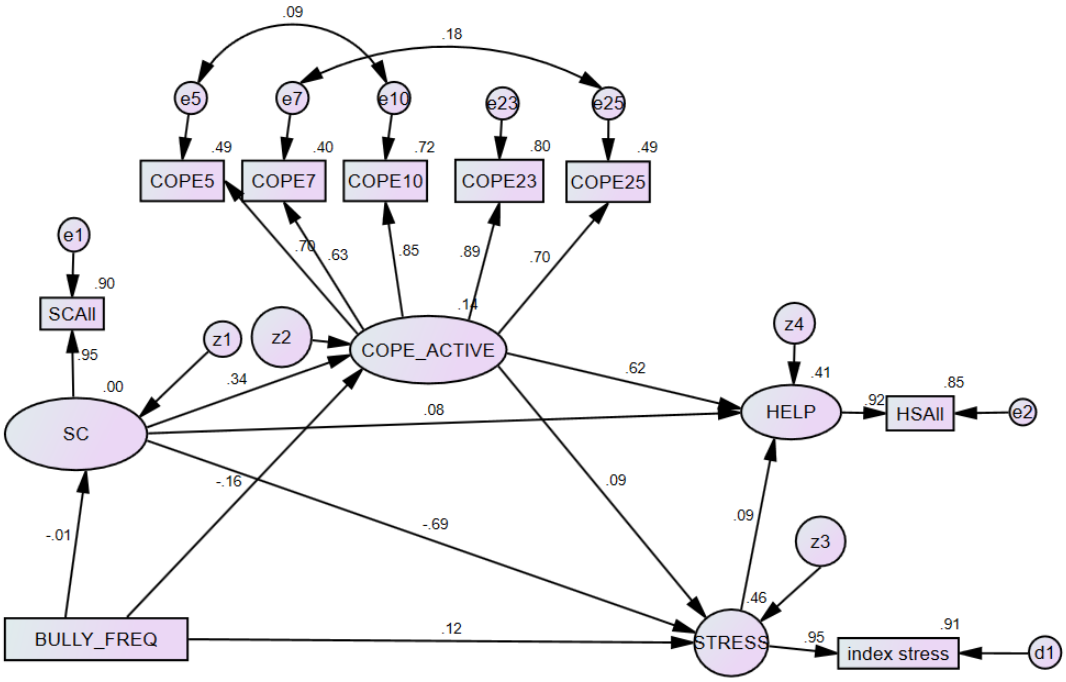


Figure Appendix L-7: Active Coping and Stress (Bully) – All Paths

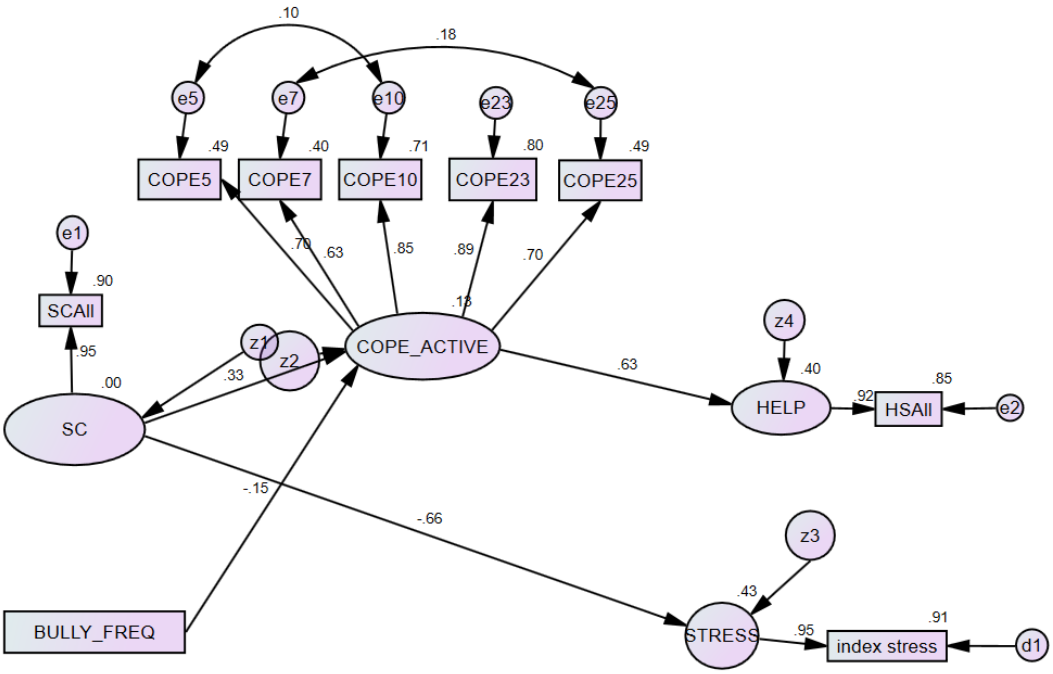


Figure Appendix L-8: Active Coping and Stress (Bully) – Only Significant Paths

Emotion-Focused Coping

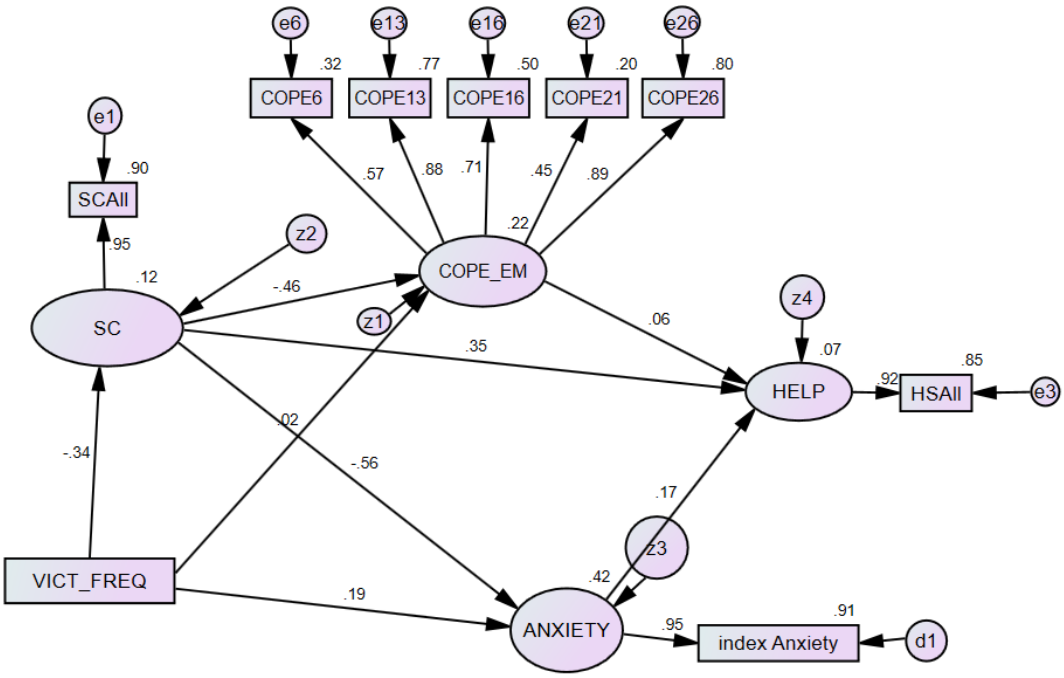


Figure Appendix L-9: Emotion-Focused Coping and Anxiety – All Paths

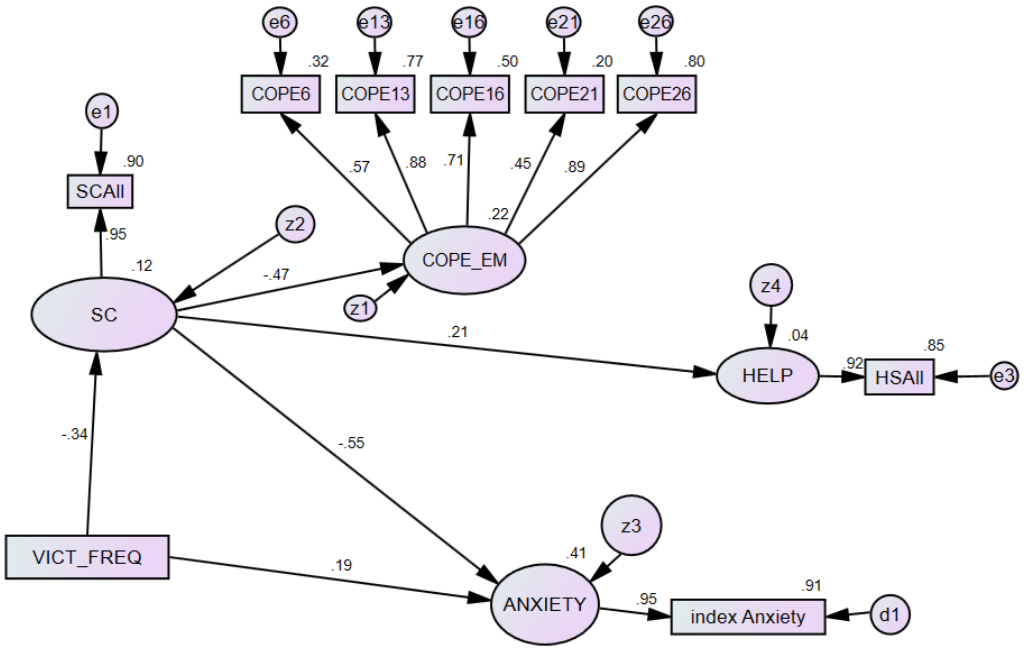


Figure Appendix L-10: Emotion-Focused and Anxiety – Only Significant Paths

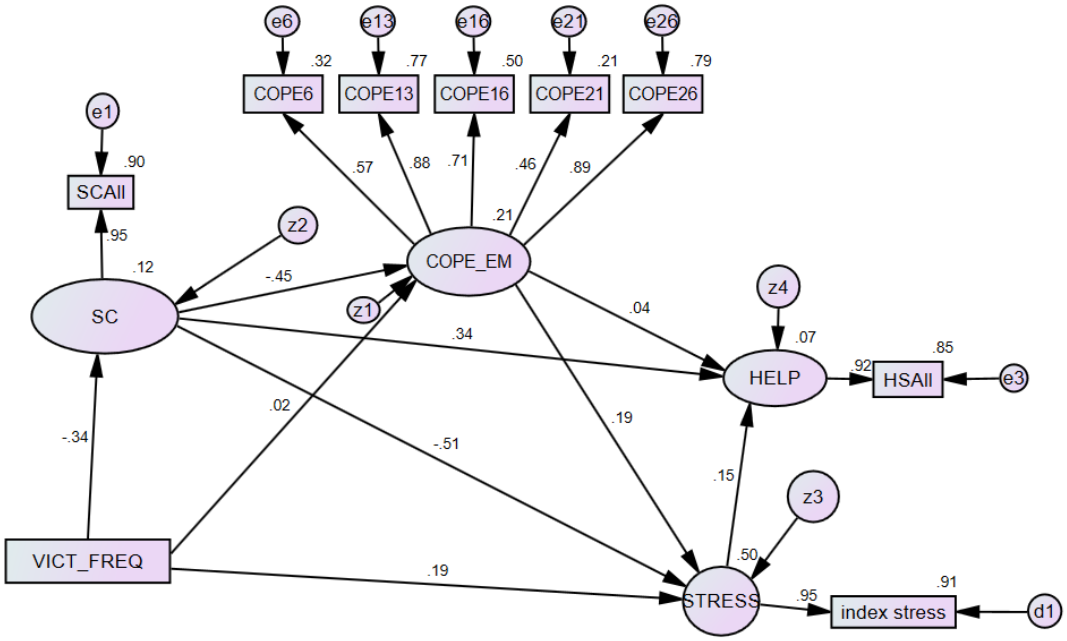


Figure Appendix L-11: Emotion-Focused Coping and Stress – All Paths

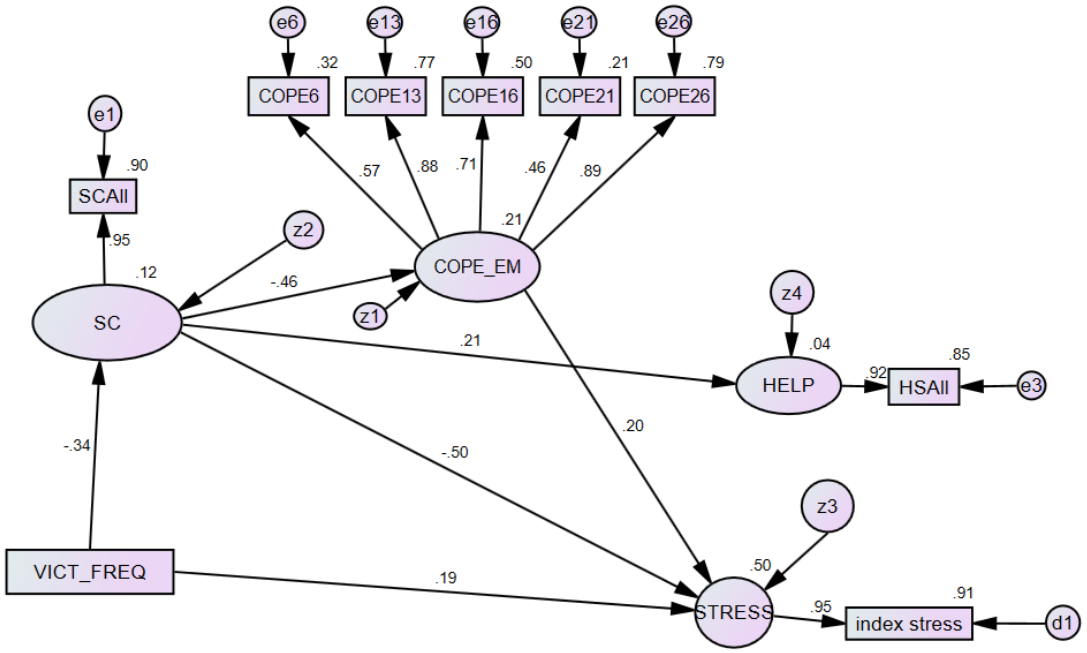


Figure Appendix L-12: Emotion-Focused and Stress – Only Significant Paths

Coping Through Distraction

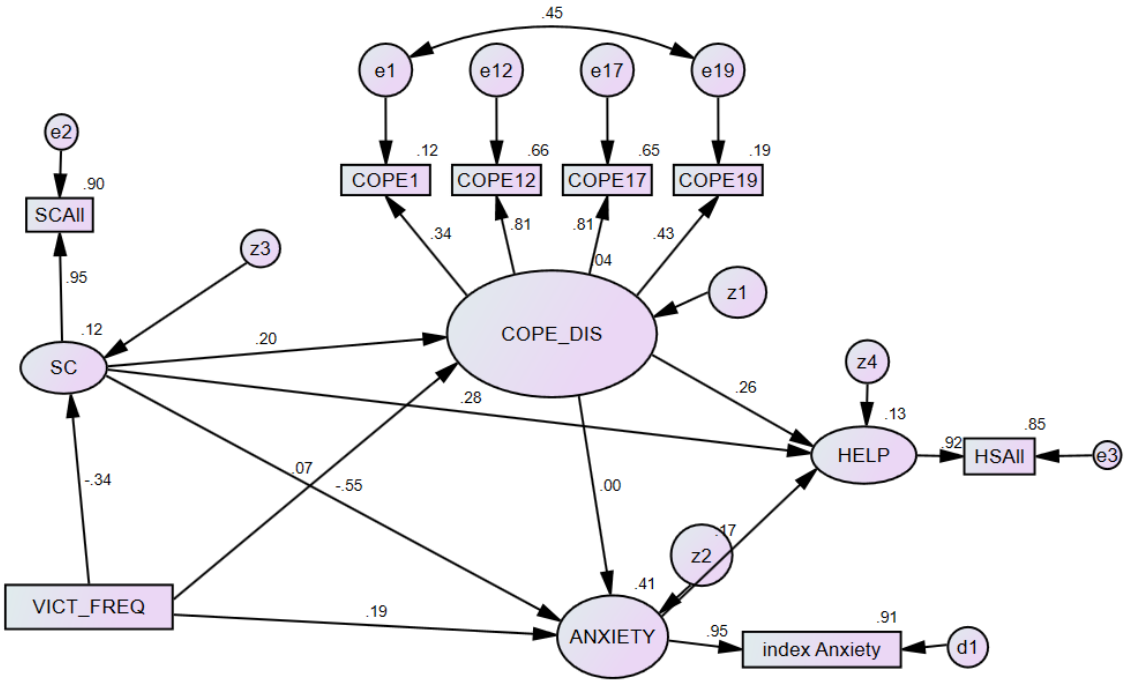


Figure Appendix L-13: Coping through Distraction and Anxiety – All Paths

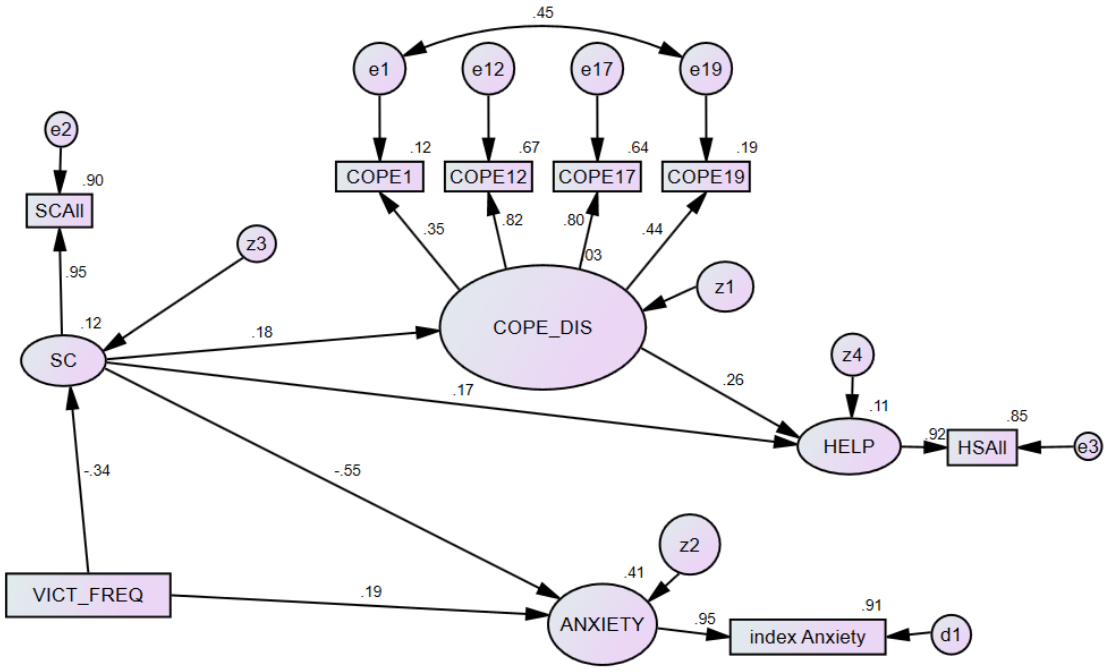


Figure Appendix L-14: Coping through Distraction and Anxiety – Only Significant Paths

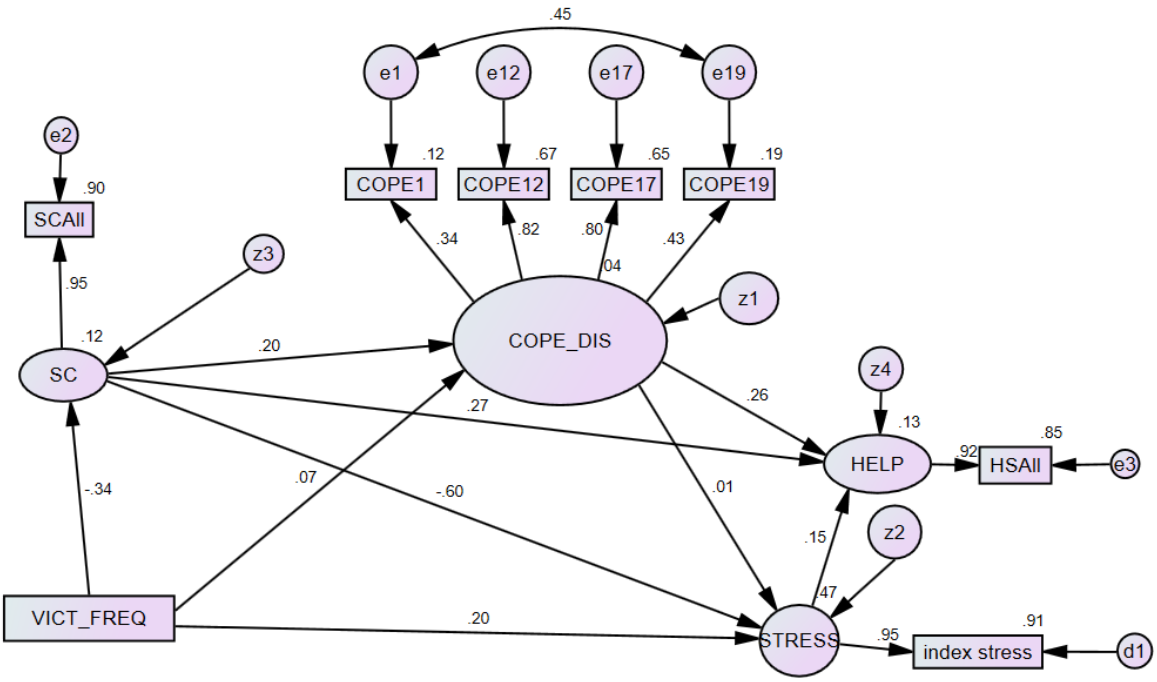


Figure Appendix L-15: Coping through Distraction and Stress – All Paths

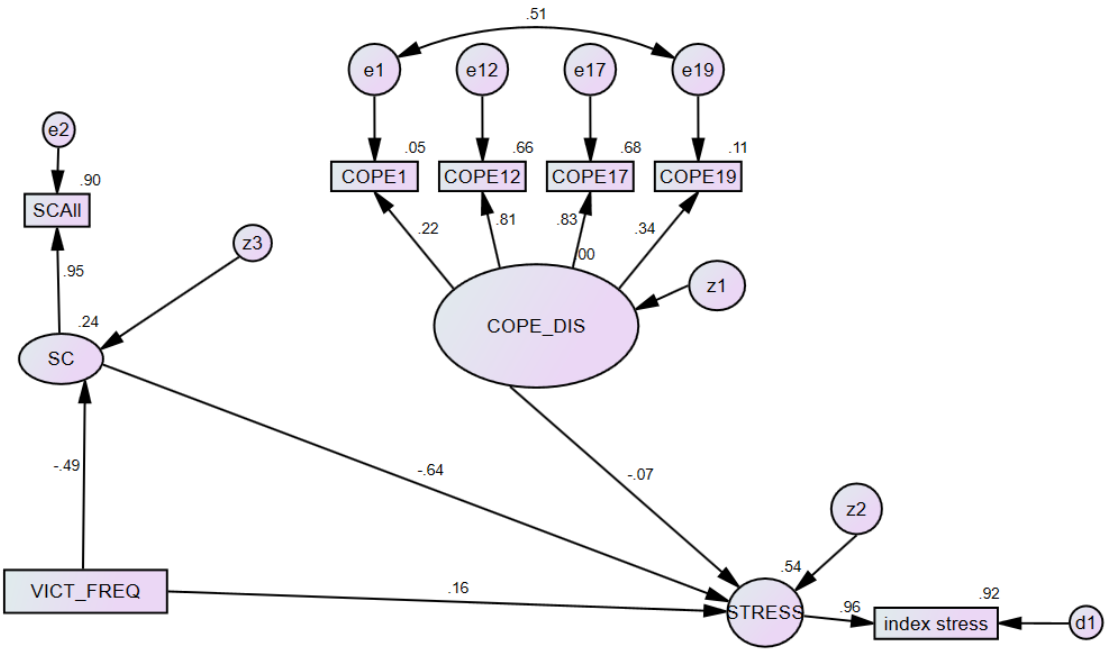


Figure Appendix L-16: Coping Through Distraction and Stress – Only Significant Paths

Full Models by Gender

Active Coping

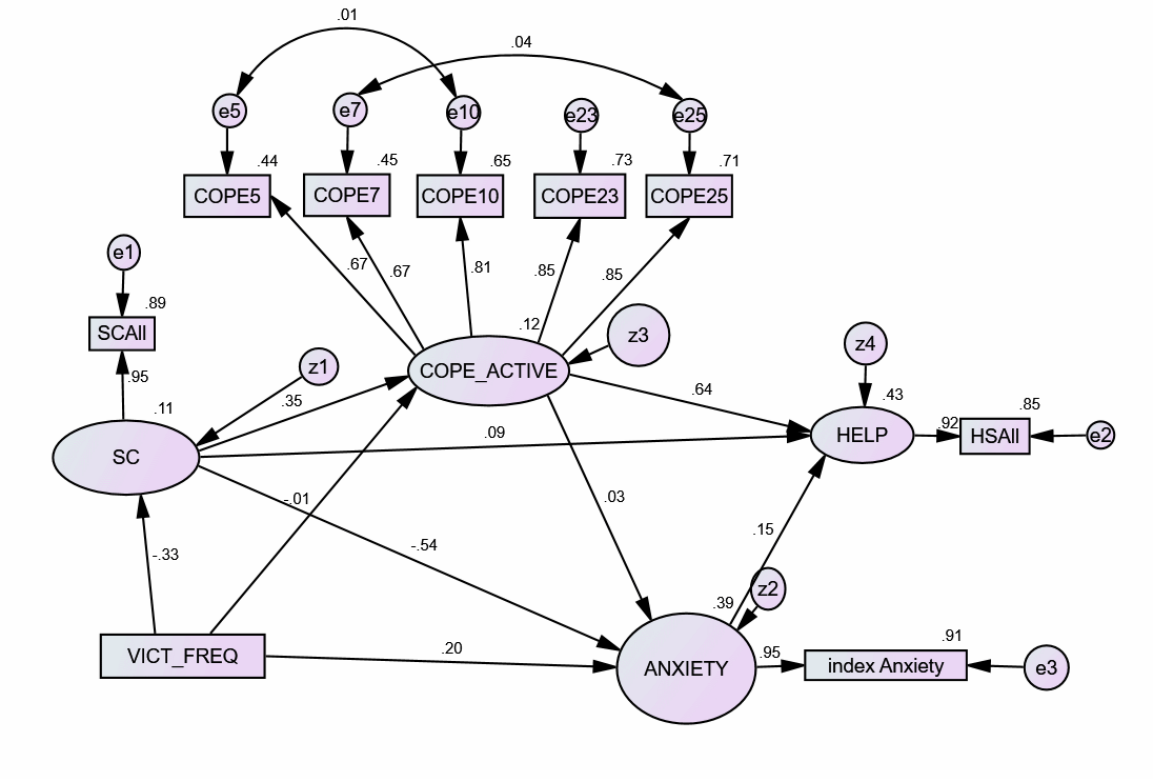


Figure Appendix L-17: Active Coping and Anxiety (Males) – All Paths

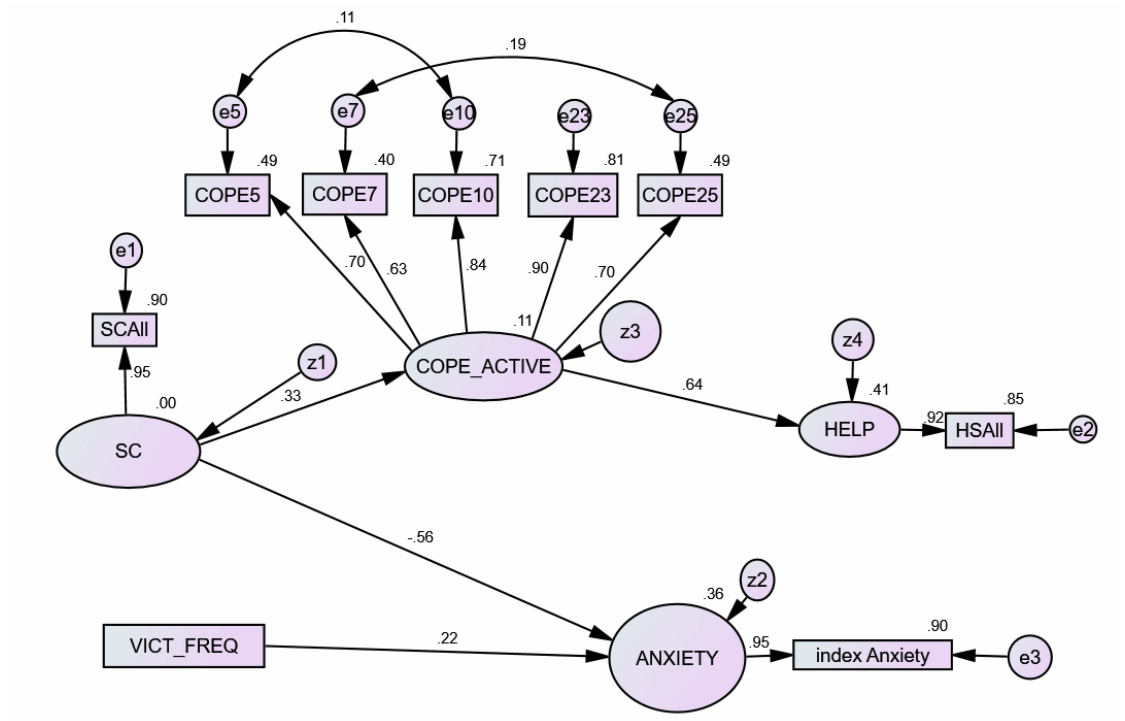


Figure Appendix L-18: Active Coping and Anxiety (Males) – Only Significant Paths

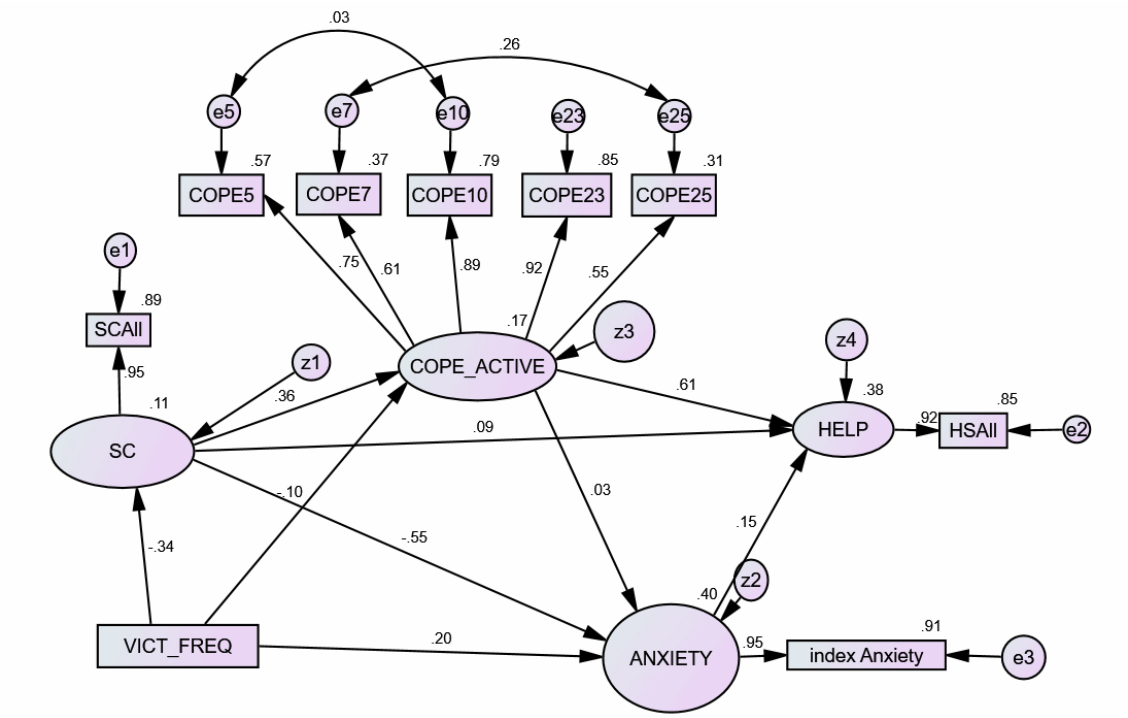


Figure Appendix L-19: Active Coping and Anxiety (Females) – All Paths

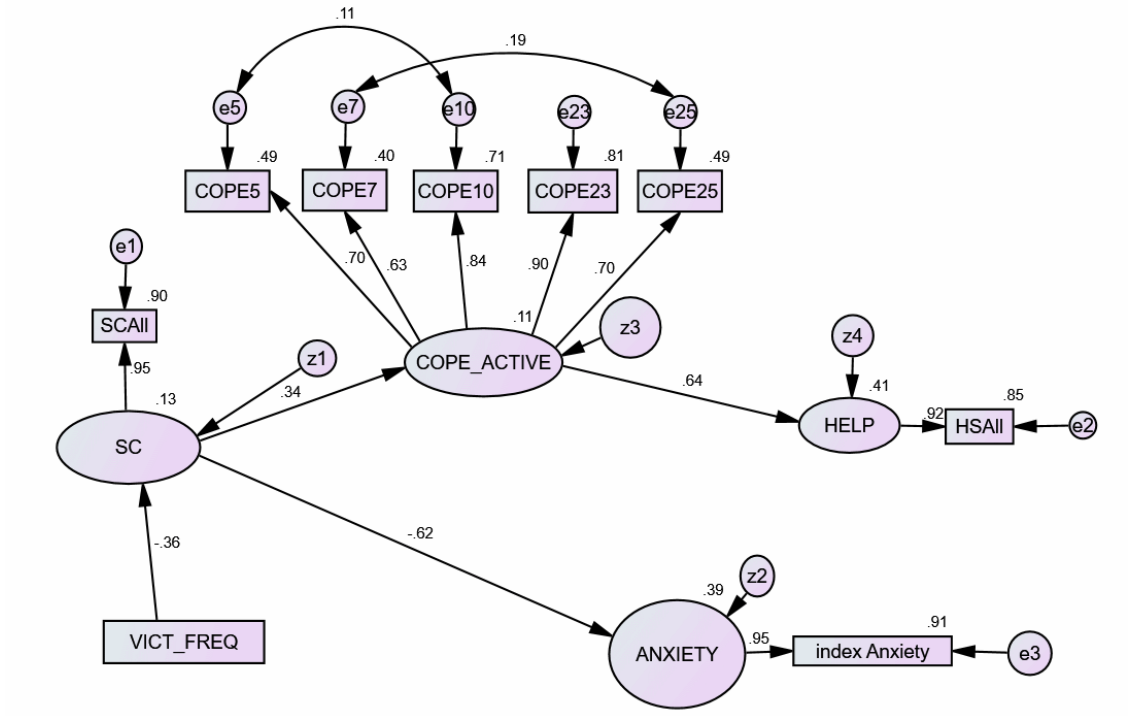


Figure Appendix L-20: Active Coping and Anxiety (Females) – Only Significant Paths

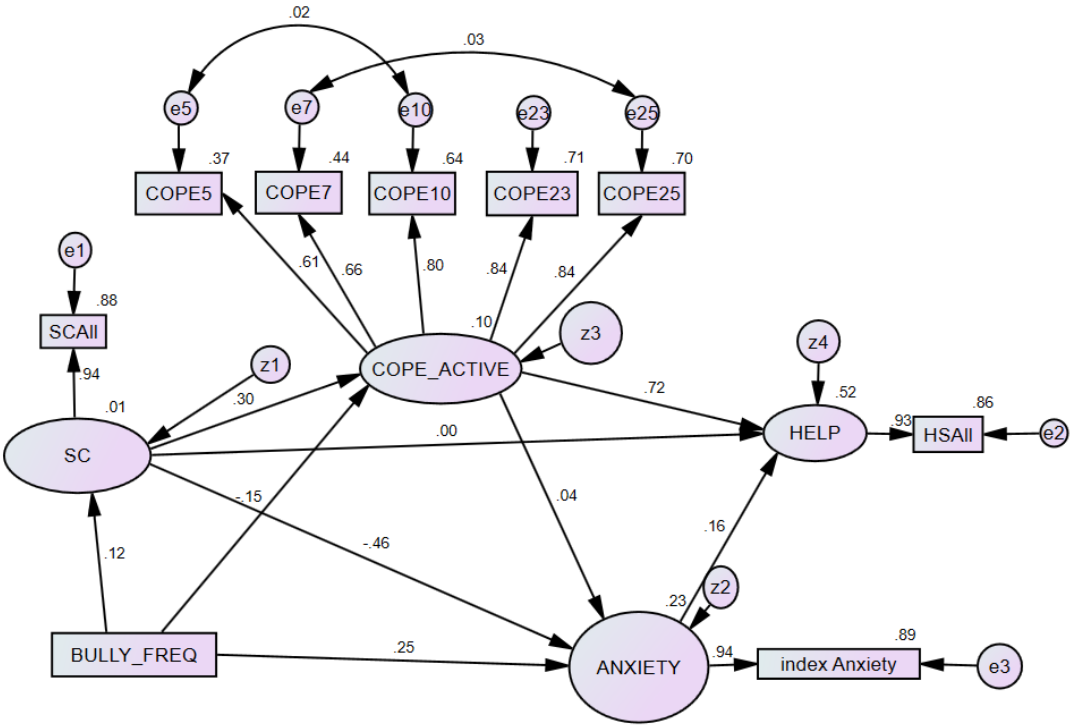


Figure Appendix L-21: Active Coping and Anxiety (Males- Bully) – All Paths

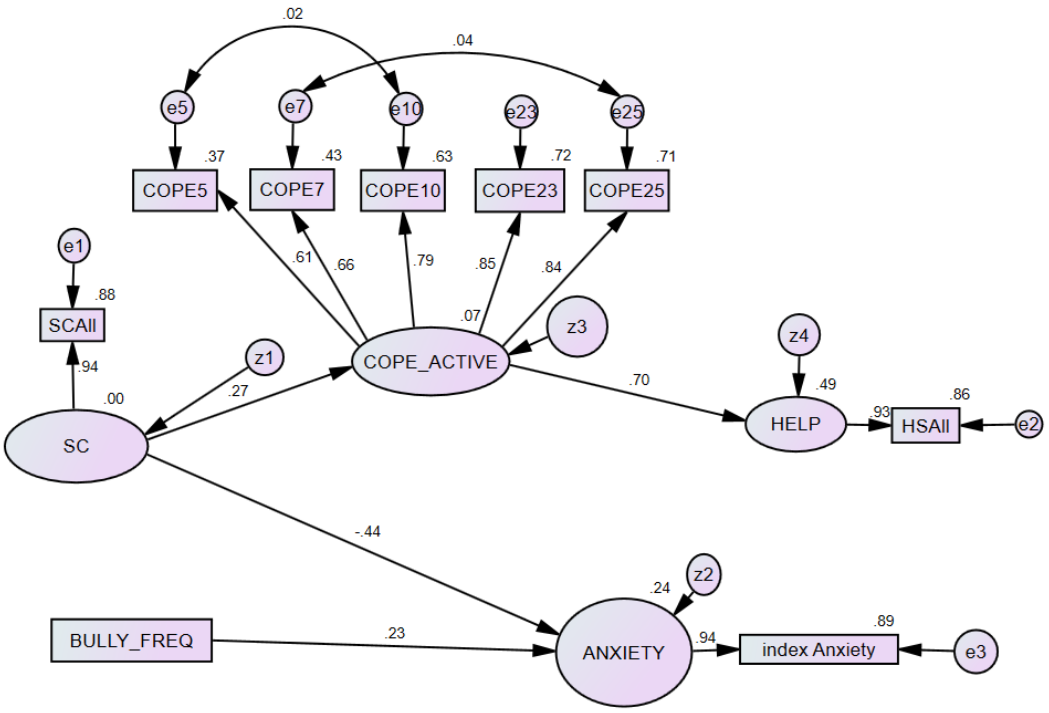


Figure Appendix L-22: Active Coping and Anxiety (Males- Bully) – Only Significant Paths

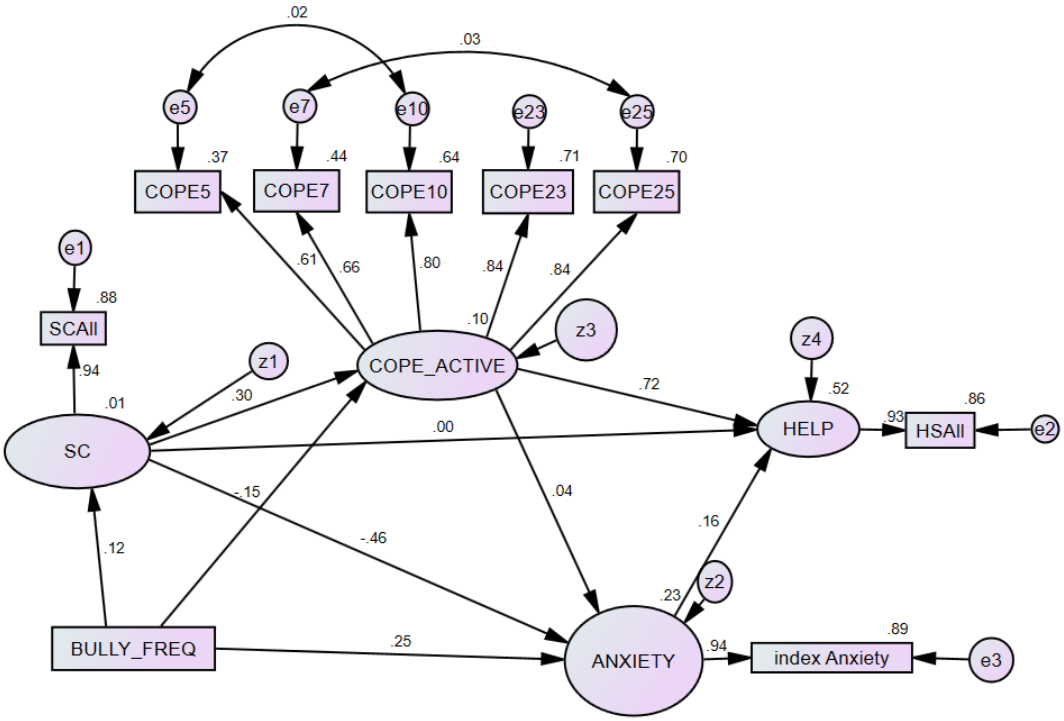


Figure Appendix L-23: Active Coping and Anxiety (Females –Bully) – All Paths

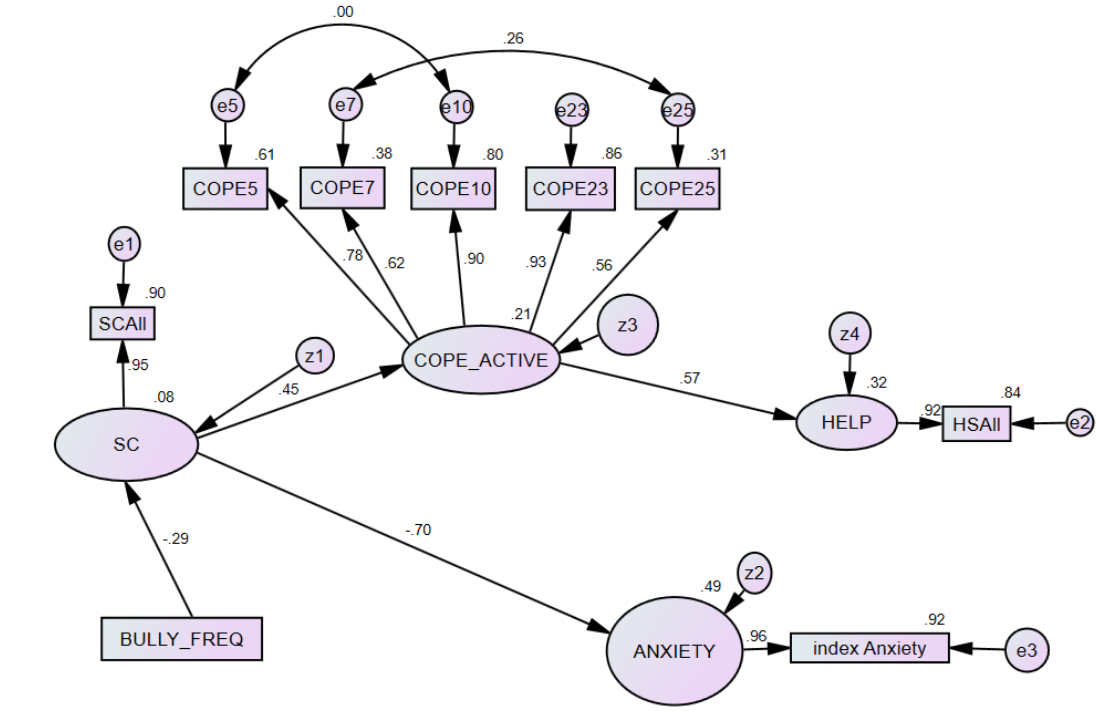


Figure Appendix L-24: Active Coping and Anxiety (Females - Bully) – Only Significant Paths

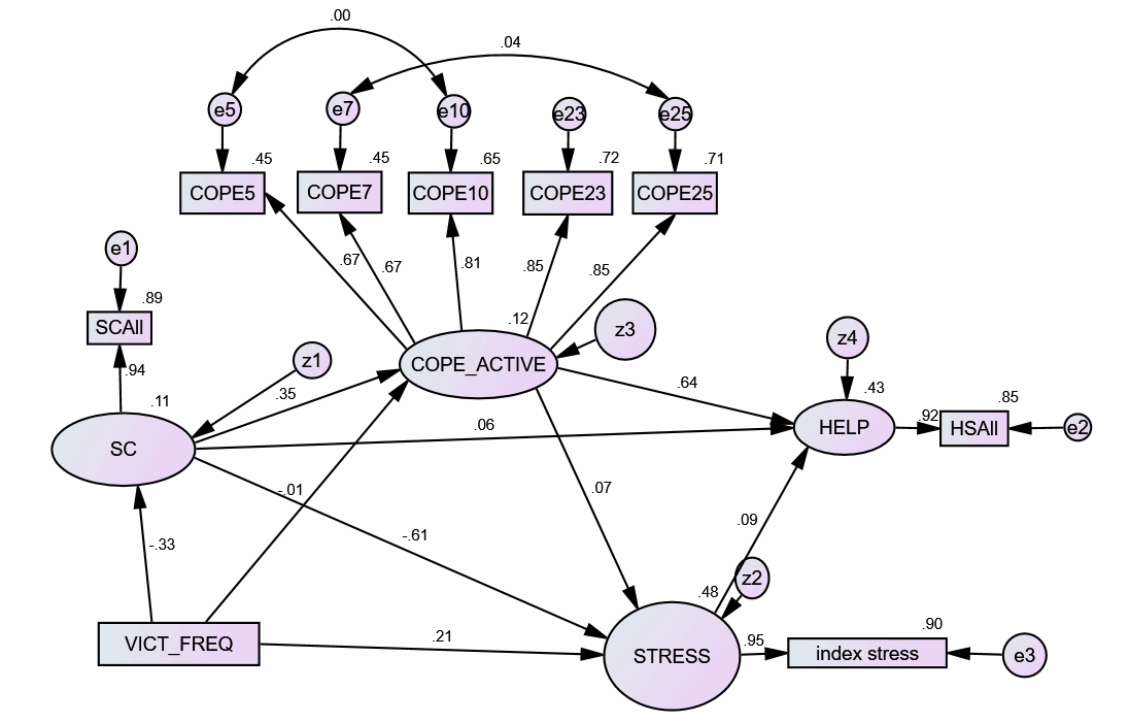


Figure Appendix L-25: Active Coping and Stress (Males) – All Paths

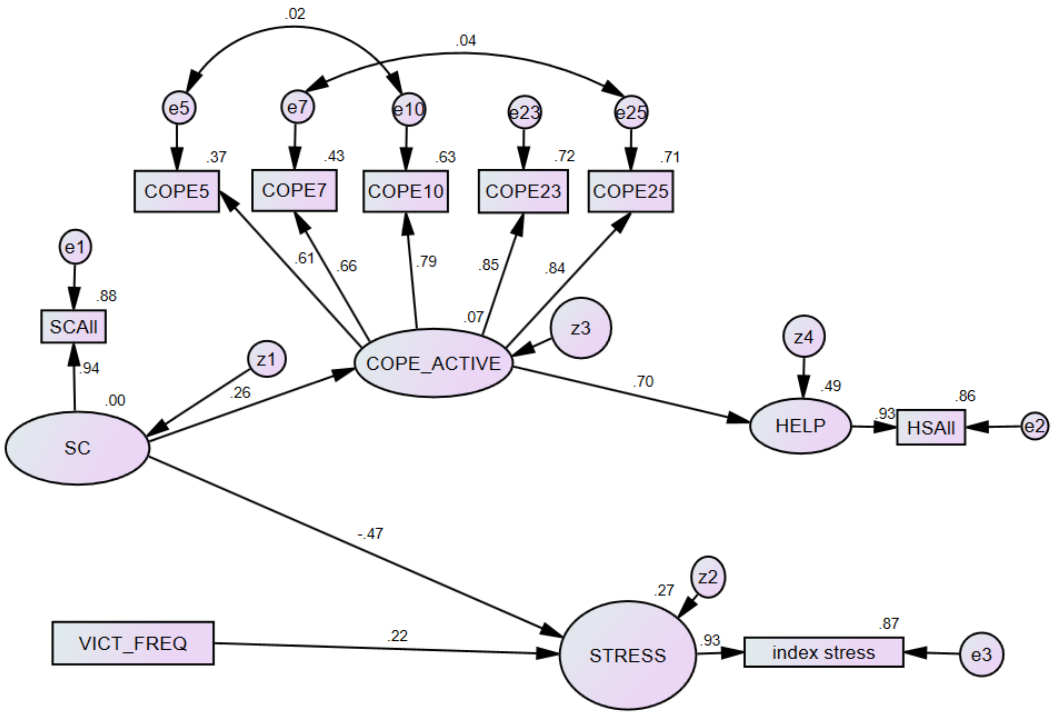


Figure Appendix L-26: Active Coping and Stress (Males) – Only Significant Paths

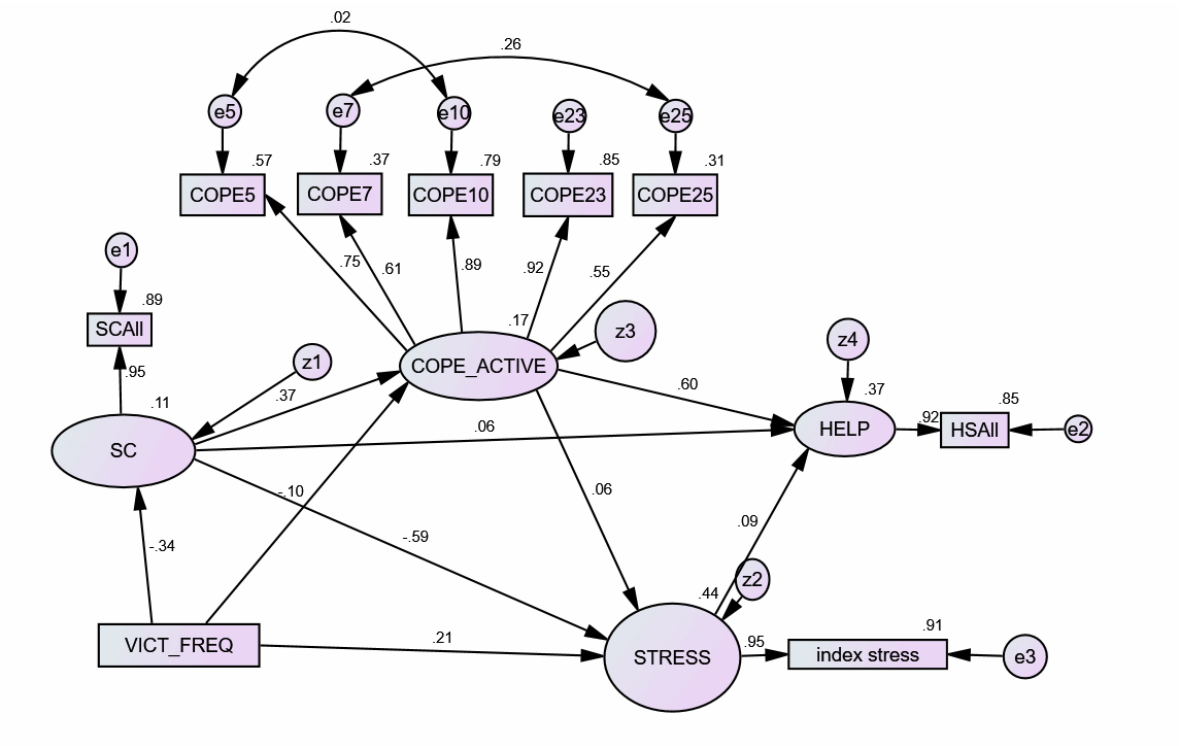


Figure Appendix L-27: Active Coping and Stress (Females) – All Paths

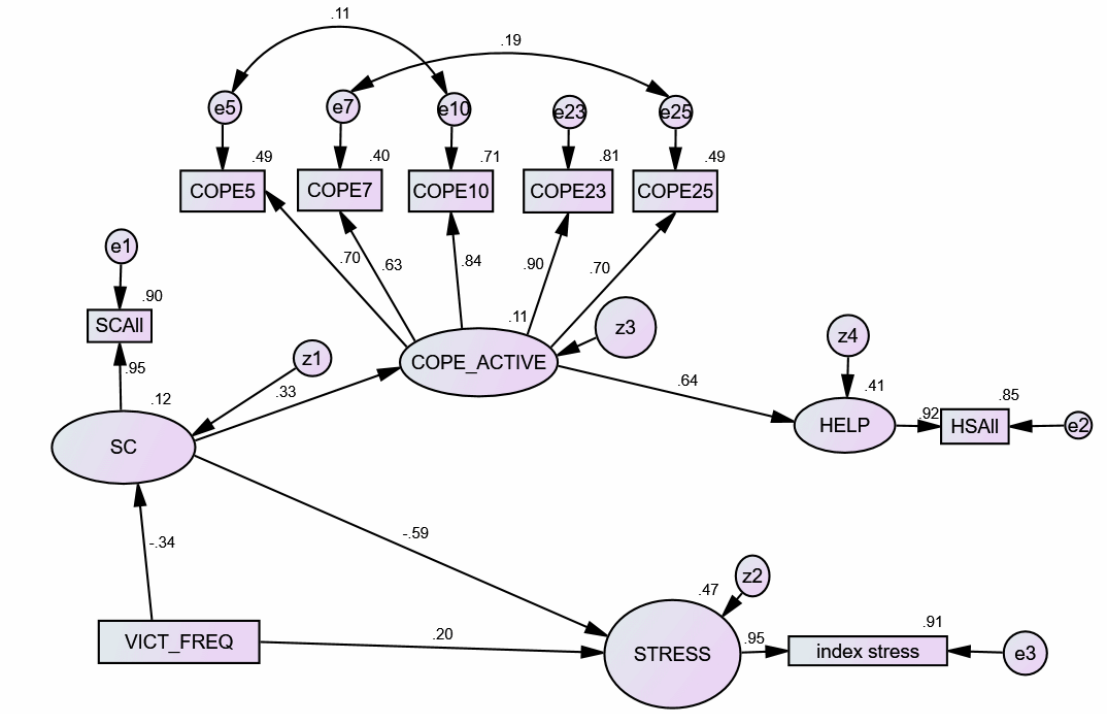


Figure Appendix L-28: Active Coping and Stress (Females) – Only Significant Paths

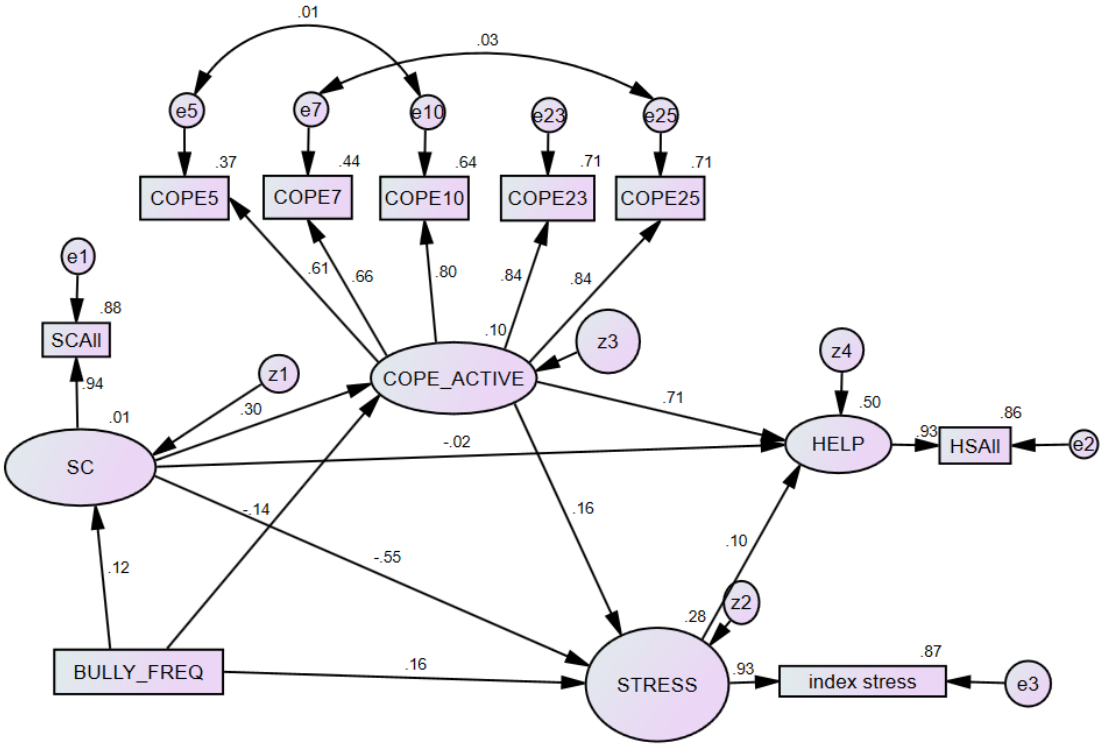


Figure Appendix L-29: Active Coping and Stress (Males- Bully) – All Paths

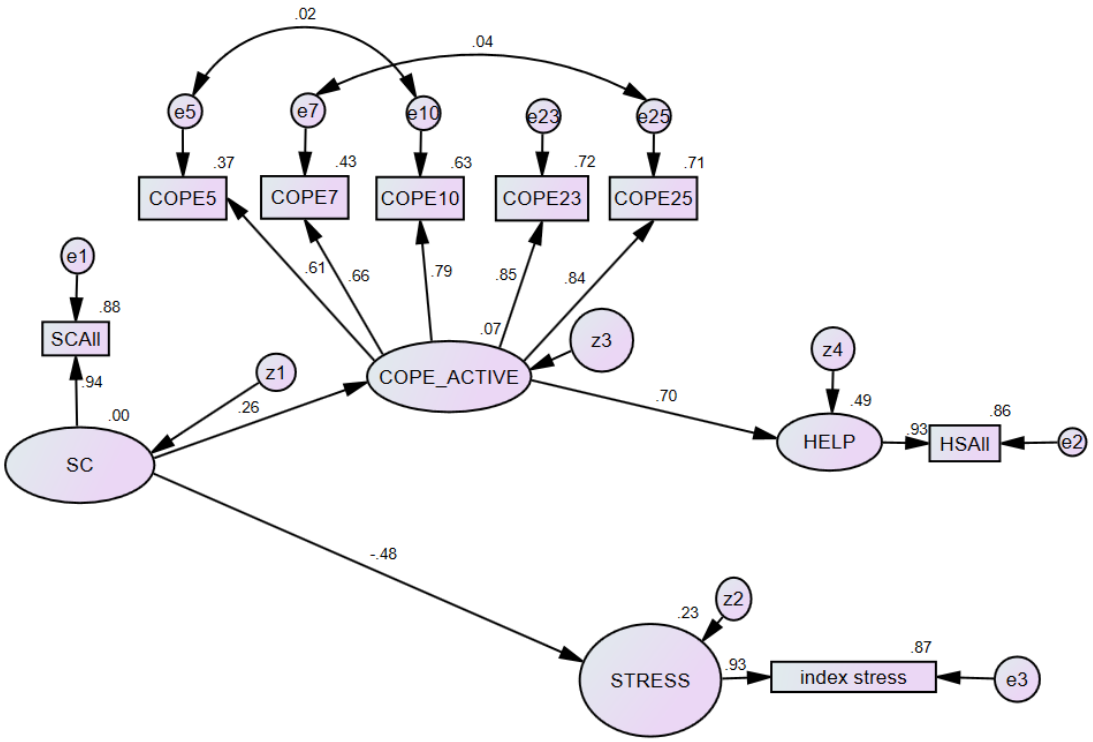


Figure Appendix L-30: Active Coping and Stress (Males- Bully) – Only Significant Paths

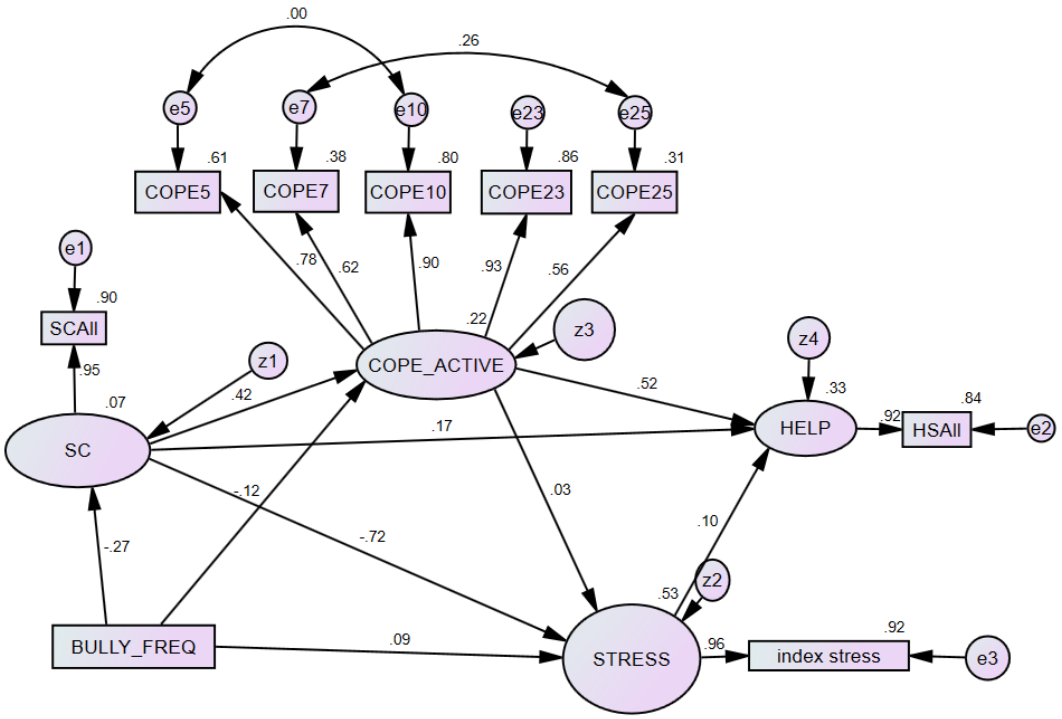


Figure Appendix L-31: Active Coping and Stress (Females –Bully) – All Paths

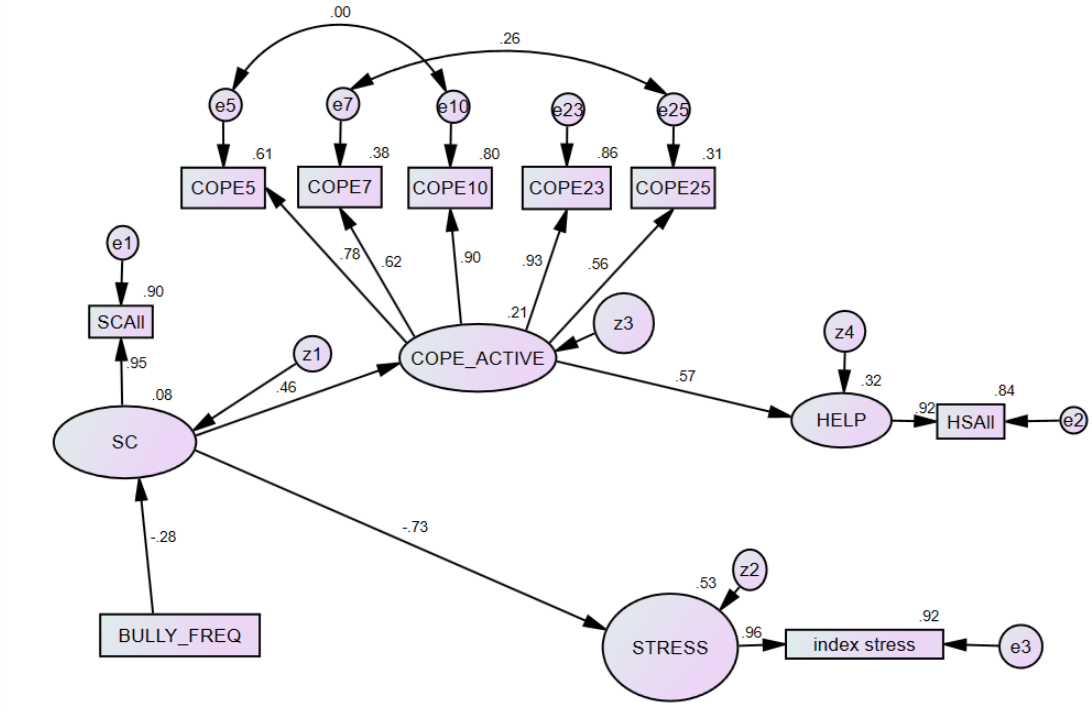


Figure Appendix L-32: Active Coping and Stress (Females - Bully) – Only Significant Paths

Emotion-Focused Coping

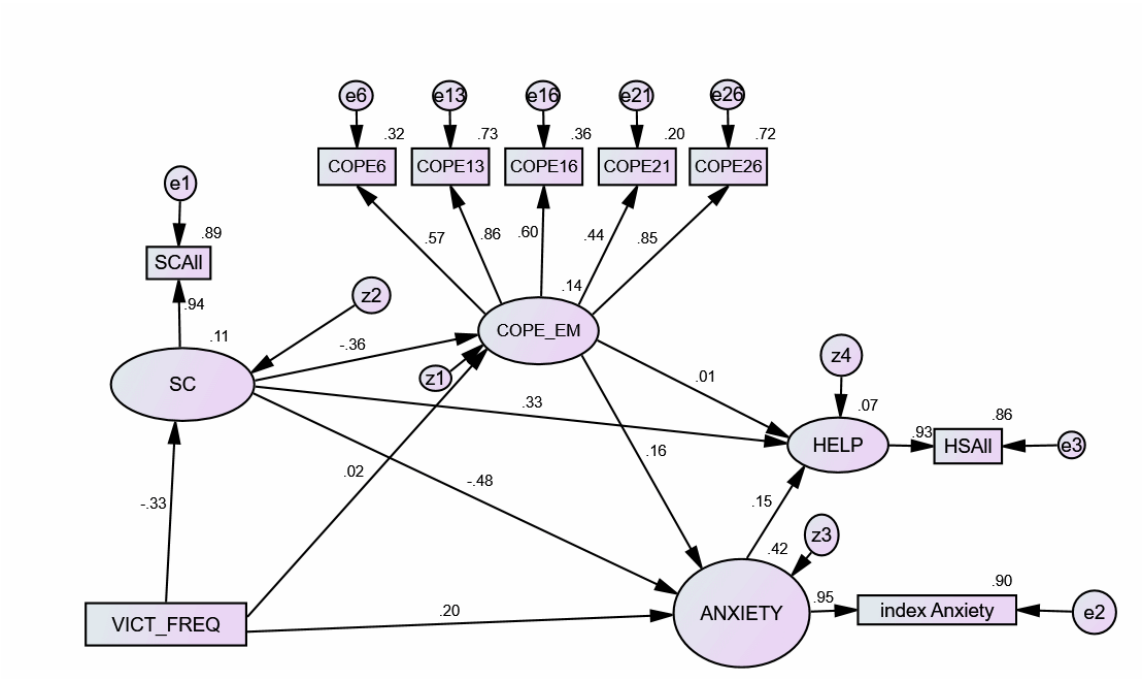


Figure Appendix L-33: Emotion-Focused Coping and Anxiety (Males) – All Paths

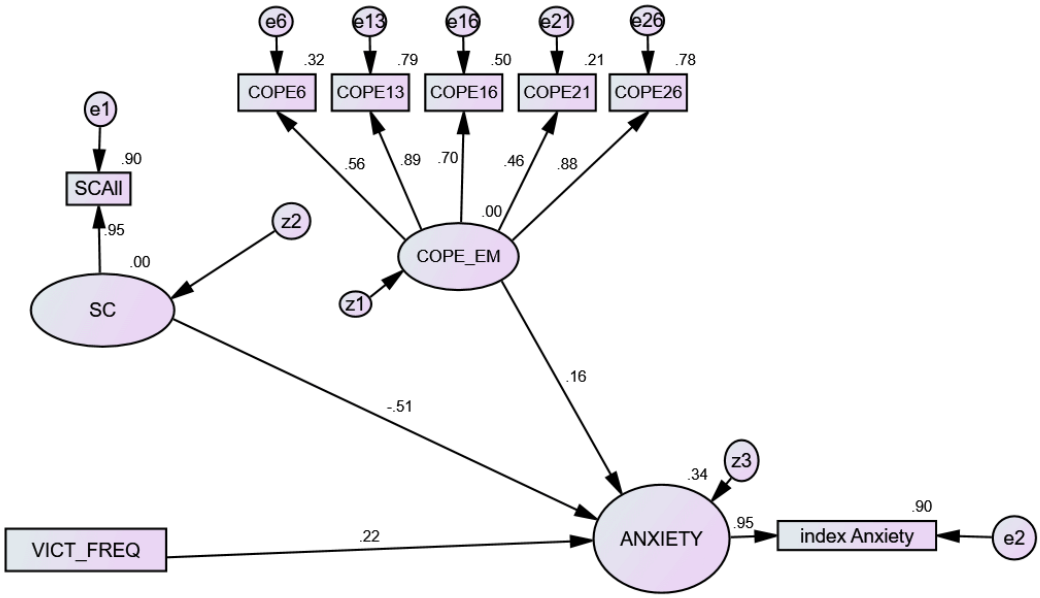


Figure Appendix L-34: Emotion-Focused Coping and Anxiety (Males) – Only Significant Paths

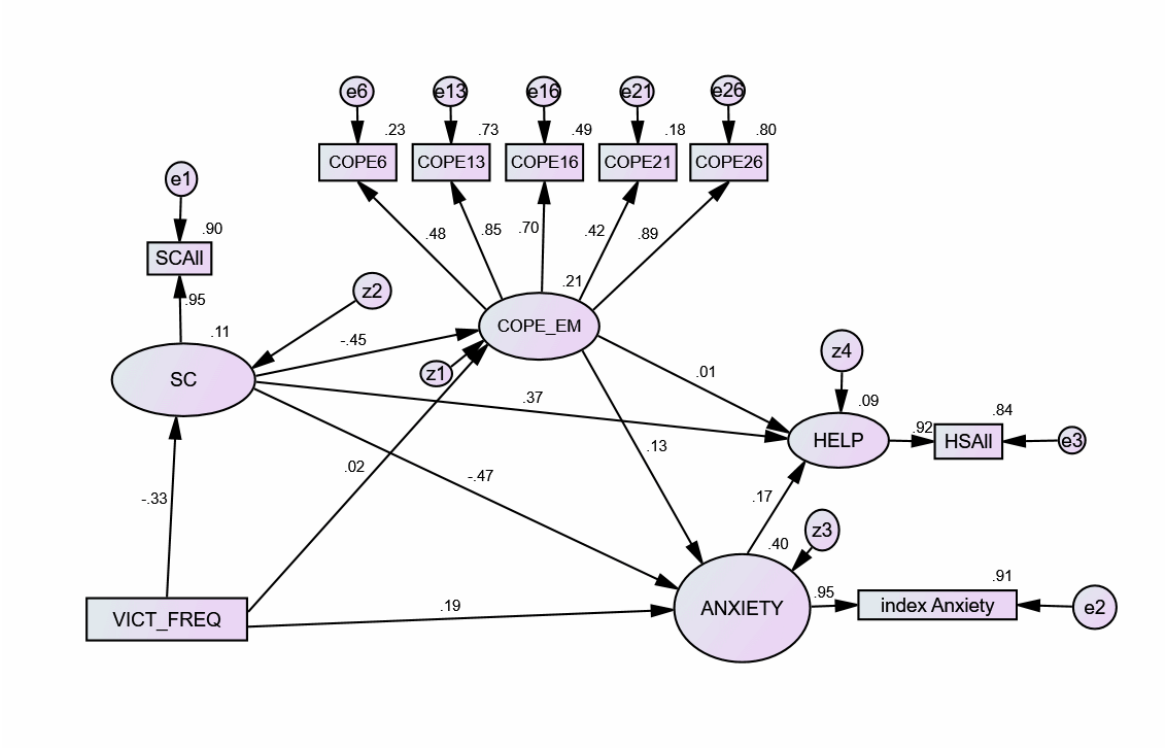


Figure Appendix L-35: Emotion-Focused Coping and Anxiety (Females) – All Paths

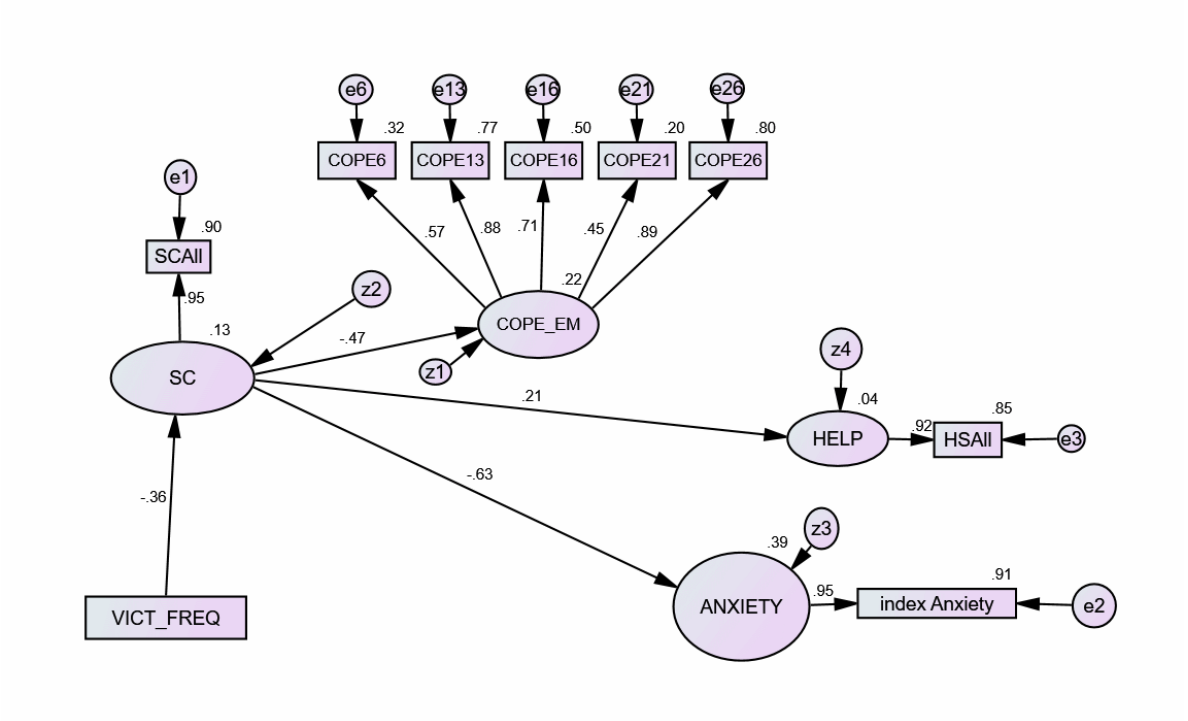


Figure Appendix L-36: Emotion-Focused Coping and Anxiety (Females) – Only Significant Paths

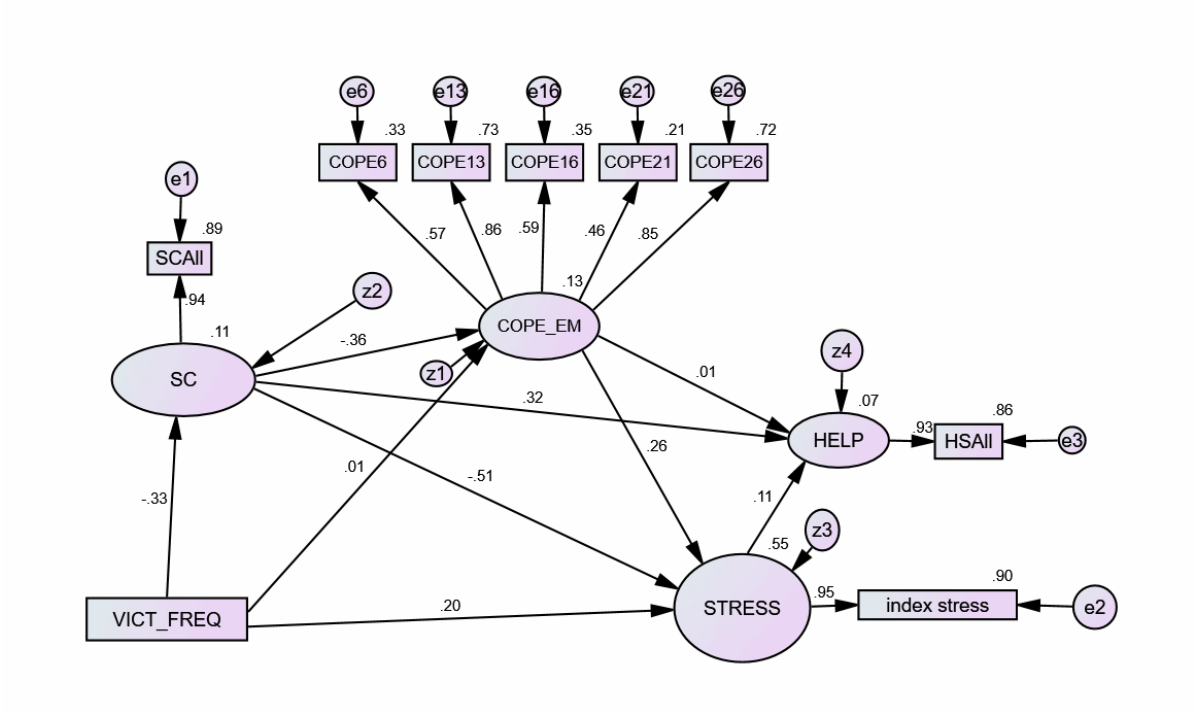


Figure Appendix L-37: Emotion-Focused Coping and Stress (Males) – All Paths

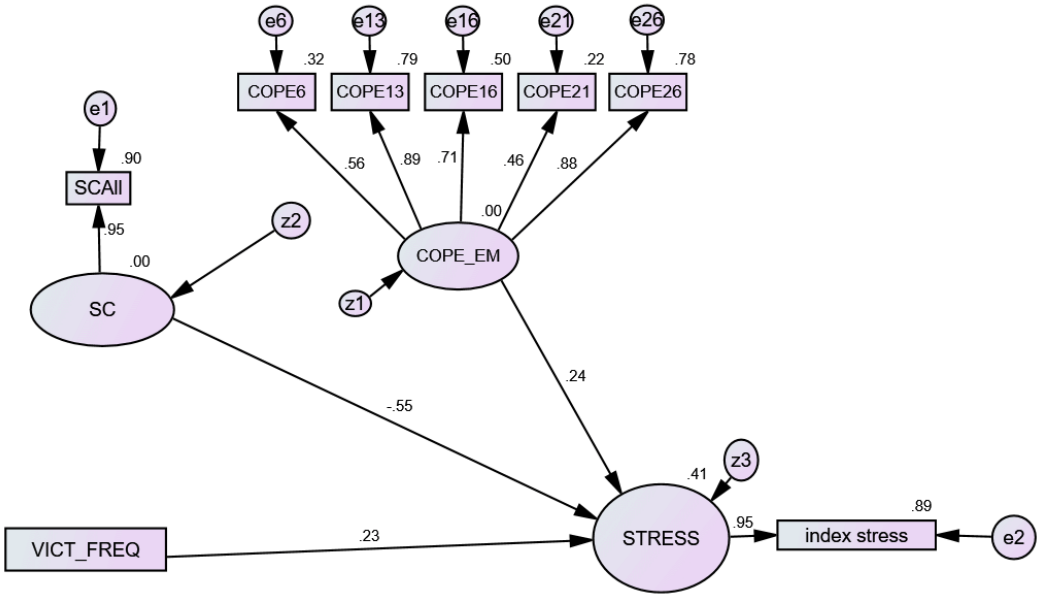


Figure Appendix L-38: Emotion-Focused Coping and Stress (Males) – Only Significant Paths

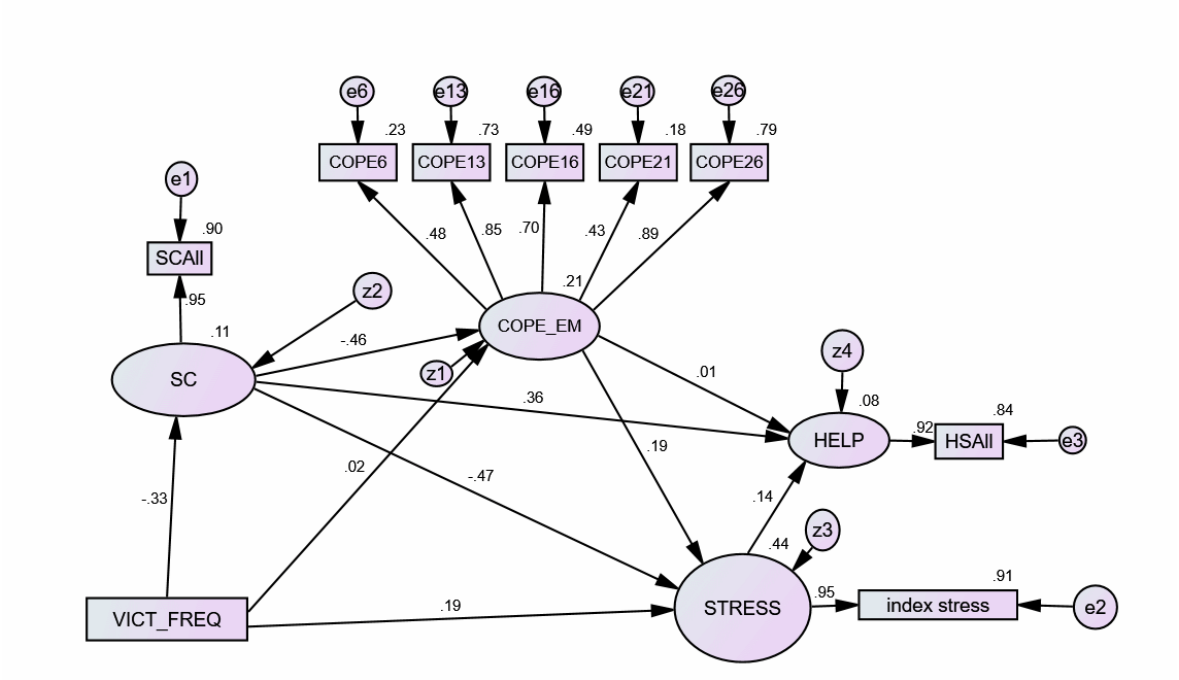


Figure Appendix L-39: Emotion-Focused Coping and Stress (Females) – All Paths

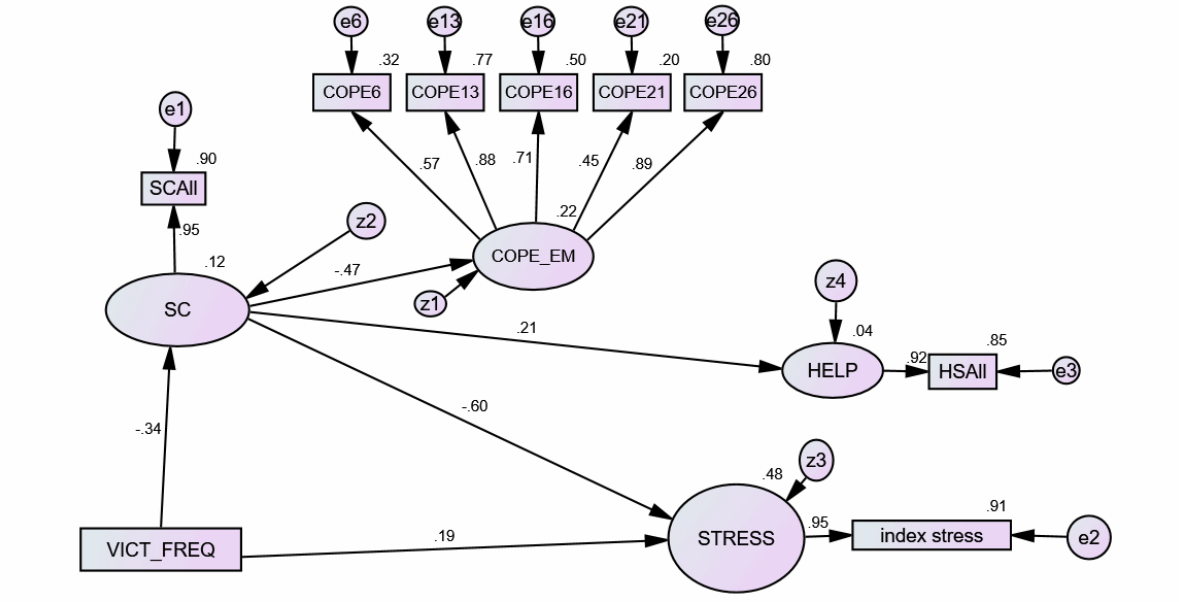


Figure Appendix L-40: Emotion-Focused Coping and Stress (Females) –Only Significant Paths

Coping Through Distraction

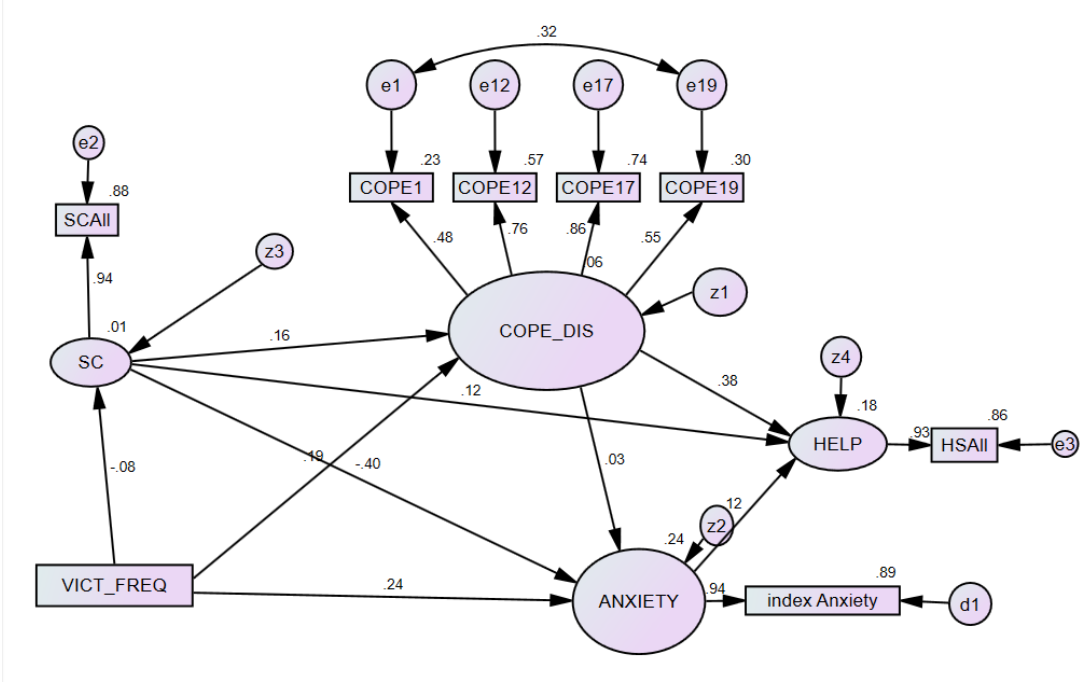


Figure Appendix L-41: Coping through Distraction and Anxiety (Males) – All paths

The model for coping through distraction and anxiety for males is not provided, as no paths remained significant in relation to this coping style.

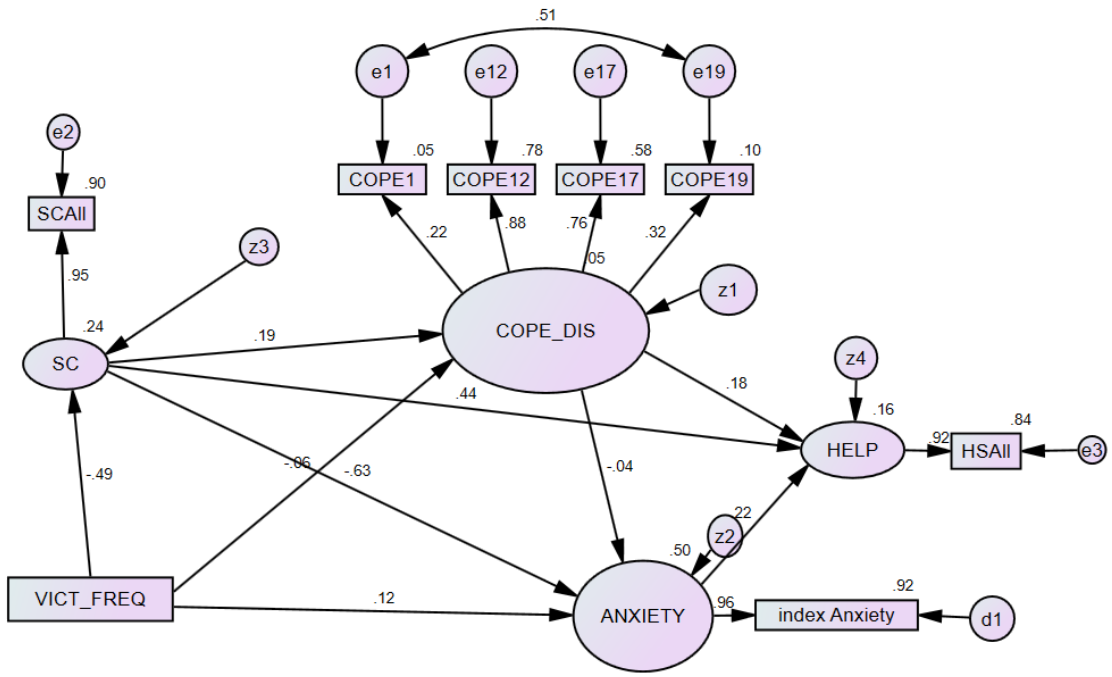


Figure Appendix L-42: Coping through Distraction and Anxiety (Females) – All paths

The model for coping through distraction and anxiety for females is not provided, as no paths remained significant in relation to this coping style.

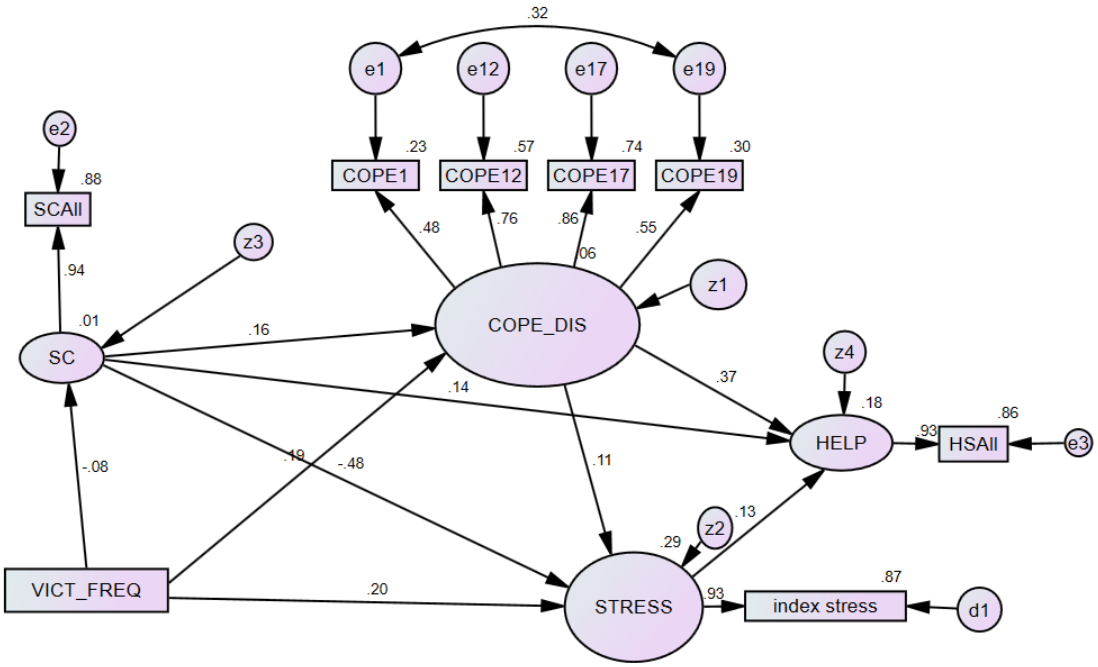


Figure Appendix L-43: Coping through Distraction and Stress (Males) – All paths

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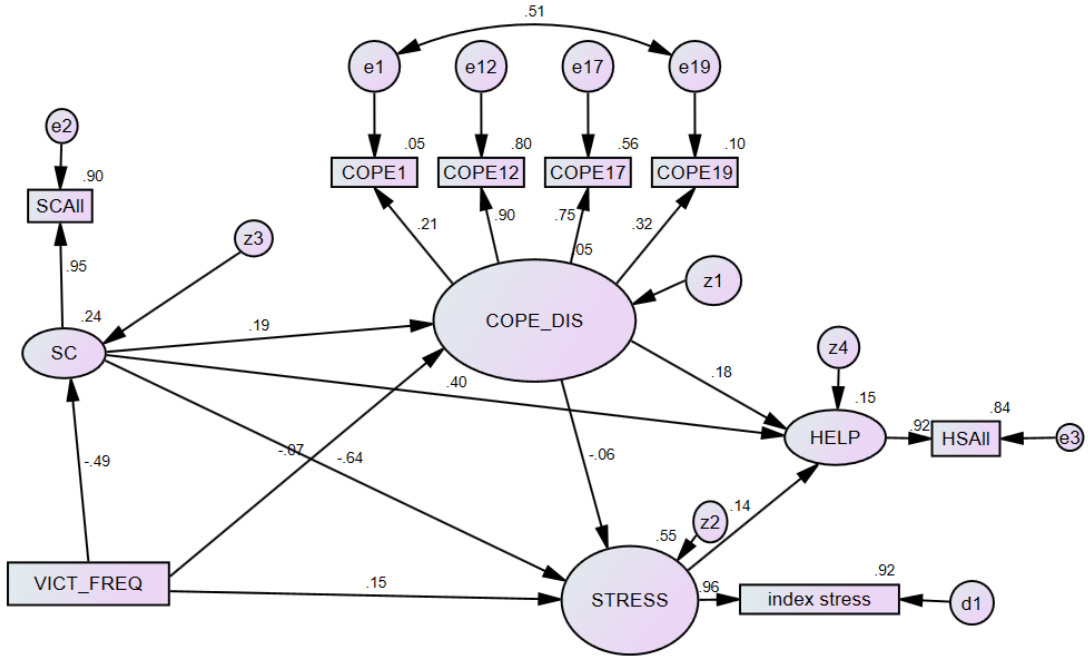


Figure Appendix L-44: Coping through Distraction and Stress (Females) – All paths

The model for coping through distraction and stress for females is not provided, as no paths remained significant in relation to this coping style.