

ABSTRACT

Parents' and counsellors' understanding of stress among youth of Indian descent in New Zealand

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In New Zealand, youth of Indian descent are regarded as highly vulnerable to mental health issues and have, for example, reported a high prevalence of depression (Fortune et al., 2010). Experiences of stress/coping can be viewed as intertwined with the social, cultural, and familial contexts which shape them. Parents are one of the most important influences on youth in the Indian culture. Furthermore, there is a high degree of stigma against seeking professional help in Asian communities in New Zealand (Te Pou, 2010). There is little research investigating parents' and counsellors' experiences and understanding of stressors faced by youth. This study adopted a social constructionism theoretical framework, narrative methodology, and mediated dialogue method to explore the parents' and counsellors' understandings of the stress/coping experienced by the youth of Indian descent. Seven parents (3 pairs and 4 single) and three school-based counsellors were purposefully sampled. Semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus groups were conducted (via face-to-face and/or Zoom), audiotaped, and transcribed verbatim. This presentation will discuss various stressors faced by youth of Indian descent expressed by the participants included navigating cultural differences, identity crisis, peer pressure, social media, parental expectations, academic pressure, and stereotypes. The coping strategies adopted by the youth will be discussed according to the understanding of both parents and counsellors, such as aggression, sharing concerns with peers, and extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, the perspective of parents' and counsellors' regarding their role in helping the youth cope with stress will be discussed. Although there is a basic understanding of the stress faced by youth among the participants, more open communication and a collaborative approach are required to enhance the wellbeing of youth of Indian descent.

References

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