Development and Psychometric Properties of the College Help-Seeking Behavior Scale

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Introduction
Although college students have access to many free or low-cost services, a majority do not take advantage of these resources. For decades, researchers have sought solutions to this misalignment of service availability, need, and utilization. Impeding this goal is the lack of a sufficiently broad psychometric instrument that can measure and predict help-seeking in an individual. No such measure currently exists.

Help-seeking behavior is defined in this study as communication or action initiated by an individual with the intention of addressing a problem or need by accessing support, advice, or assistance (Gourash, 1978; Barker, 2007).

Intention has been shown to be a dominant factor in predicting behavioral engagement (Ajzen, 1991; Li, Dorstyn, & Denson, 2014; Wilson, Deane, & Ciarrochi, 2005).

The purpose of this study was to develop the College Help-Seeking Behavior Scale (CHSB) to assess college students’ intention and past behavior regarding seeking help from social networks and on-campus services for various problems.

Method
Participants
Ninety one participants were recruited from psychology classes as a convenience sample. Participants included two freshmen, 25 sophomores, 30 juniors, 22 seniors, five graduate students, one “other”, and six declined to state. There were 60 females, 25 males, and six declined to state.

Procedure
Twenty nine scale items were generated using a table of specifications and domain sampling. Paper and pencil measures were administered in small groups in a lab. All data was kept anonymous and informed consent was obtained. Three additional scales were included in the packet along with the CHSB in order to evaluate its criterion, convergent, and discriminant validity.

Instrumentation
The Help-Seeking Behaviors Scale (HSB) is a 15-item, self-report questionnaire developed to assess help-seeking behavior in adolescents (Pham, 2014).

Two subscales of the Brief Cope (Carver et al., 1993), active coping (A. Cope) and using emotional support (E. Cope), were used to establish convergent validity.

The Barratt Impulsivity Scale (BIS-11) is a 30-item scale developed by Patton et al. (1995) to assess personality and behavioral impulsiveness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>CHSB</th>
<th>HSB</th>
<th>A. Cope</th>
<th>E. Cope</th>
<th>BIS-11</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHSB</td>
<td>(.91)</td>
<td>.57**</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>.50**</td>
<td>-23*</td>
<td>82.67</td>
<td>14.23</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSB</td>
<td>(.95)</td>
<td>.50**</td>
<td>.65*</td>
<td>-19</td>
<td>44.37</td>
<td>14.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Cope</td>
<td>(.62)</td>
<td>.40*</td>
<td>-21</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Cope</td>
<td>(.73)</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIS-11</td>
<td>(.82)</td>
<td>58.75</td>
<td>9.64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Values in parenthesis are internal consistency reliability coefficients

Table 1. Reliability, Intercorrelations Among Measures, and Means and Standard Deviations

Results
Test-retest reliability was $r_t = .87$, $p < .001$. See Table 1 for Cronbach’s alpha reliability, intercorrelations among variables, and means and standard deviations for all measures.

Discussion
Overall, the CHSB appears to be a reliable and valid measure. The CHSB showed strong internal consistency reliability and acceptable test-retest reliability.

The moderate, positive correlation between the CHSB and the HSB was close to the expected range hypothesized. Difficulty in establishing a high criterion validity coefficient was cited by Rickwood and Thomas (2012) as, in part, the result of a lack of an agreed upon measure in the field of help-seeking research.

As expected, converging patterns of association suggest that help-seeking behaviors are related to active coping and coping by using emotional support.

The weak, negative correlation between the CHSB and the BIS-11 was expected because impulsivity is not theoretically related to help-seeking behavior and thus adds to the discriminant validity of the CHSB.

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Acknowledgments
I would like to thank Dr. Bill Reynolds and Rebekah for their invaluable support and guidance.