



Children's Stress and Coping: A Family Perspective

Elaine Shaw Sorensen

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In spite of the increase in stress-coping research, little is known about how stress is actually perceived by children in the family setting. This is due in part to the real difficulties involved in collecting data on children's subjective experiences. In addition, what we currently know about children's stress and coping has traditionally derived from adult reporters, rather than from the children themselves.

Filling a gap in the literature, this volume explores theoretical and methodological issues related to the study of children and families in general, and to stress-coping phenomena from the child's perspective in particular. The book challenges traditional deference to adult assessment of stress and coping among children by drawing data from both parents and children, revealing significant contrasts between the two. Through open-ended, qualitative measures of children's diaries and drawings, the book offers a glimpse into the inner world of the child and gives scholarly expression to the fact that children can, and readily will, articulate needs and perceptions if given an appropriate vehicle.

The book's well-documented chapters discuss traditional approaches to stress and coping, implications for current child and family study, specific needs related to the study of children within the family, and implications for theory and methods. Taxonomies of children's stressors, coping responses, and coping resources are drawn from the data and examined in detail. The book concludes with suggestions for future research and clinical practice.

Providing fascinating insight into children's actual experience of stress and coping, this volume lays the groundwork for ongoing research, scholarship, and therapeutic practice. Academicians, practitioners, and graduate students in family studies, child development, psychology, and nursing will find this book invaluable in shedding light on the often overlooked culture of children.

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