



Age-varying Associations Between Coping and Depressive Symptoms Throughout Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood



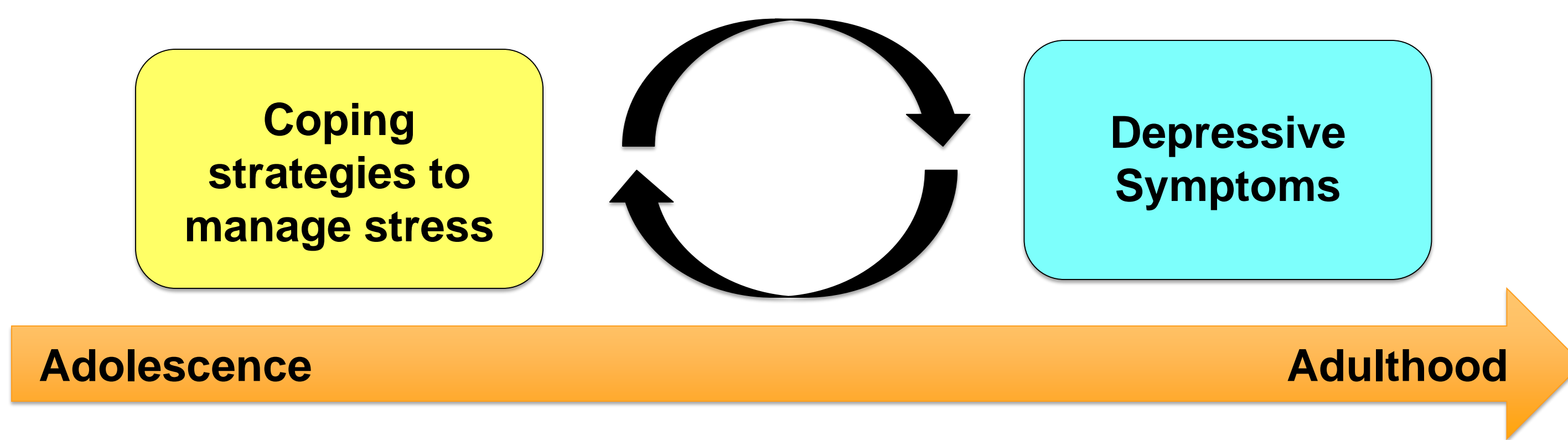
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BACKGROUND

❖ Despite the strong theoretical and empirical links between coping and depressive symptoms, the role of developmental age scarcely has been considered in understanding these relationships.

Figure 1. Relationship Between Coping and Depressive Symptoms Likely Changes Across Developmental Ages.



Age-related differences in the coping-depression relationship likely occur due to developmental shifts in:

- ❖ **Individual resources:** executive functioning, emotional reactivity, social cognition/skills, brain structure and function
- ❖ **Social contexts:** school vs. work, family vs. peer, autonomy
- ❖ **Stressors:** type, frequency, severity, controllability

OBJECTIVE

To utilize time-varying effect modeling (TVEM) to examine how the associations between specific coping strategies and depressive symptoms change dynamically across adolescence and emerging adulthood.

METHODS

Participants:

- ❖ 9th and 10th grade high school students from seven public high schools in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States
- ❖ 53% female; Baseline Age: M = 15.1, SD = 0.8
- ❖ 58% Non-Hispanic White; 23% African American; 11% Hispanic/Latino; 3% Asian; 5% "other"

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To obtain a copy of this poster, please visit adolescentadjustmentproject.org.

METHODS

Procedure:

- ❖ Self-report questionnaires were administered during school in the spring of 2006 (T1), 2007 (T2), 2008 (T3), and 2009 (T4).
- ❖ Self-report questionnaires were completed online in 2014 (T5).

Measures:

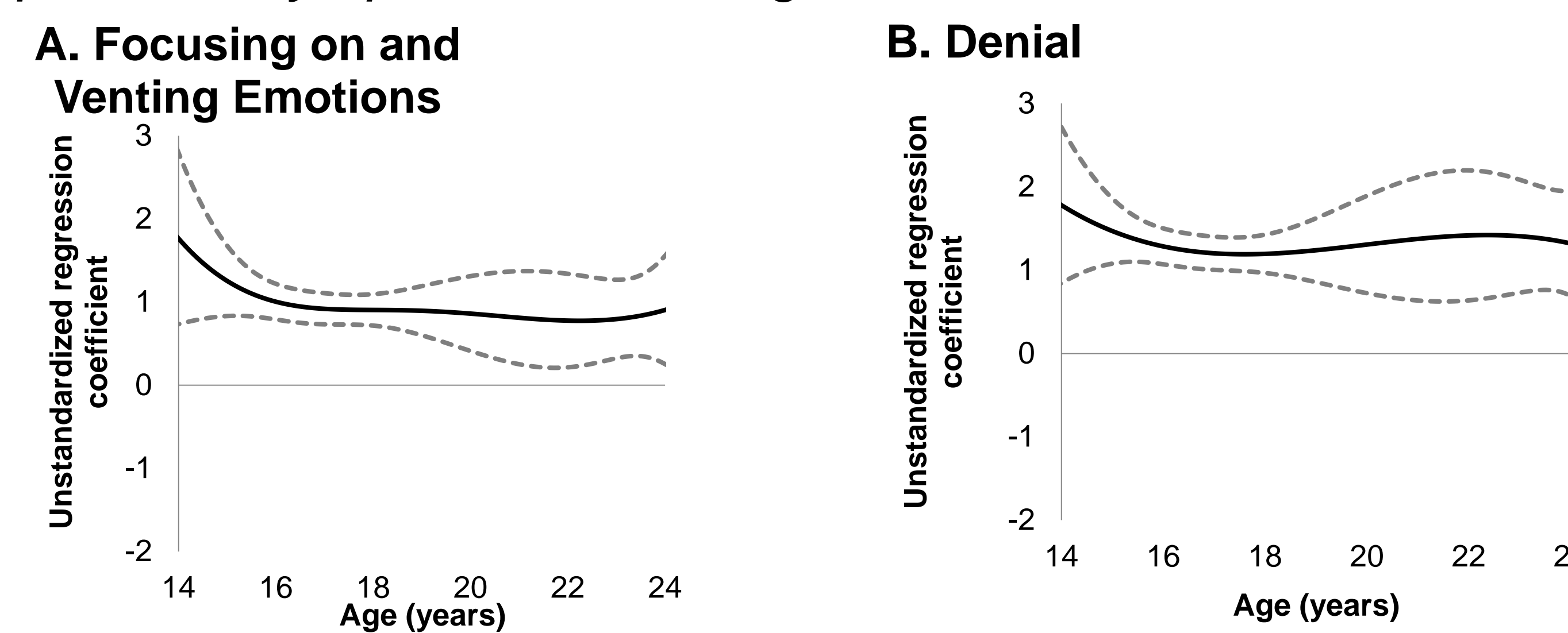
Construct	Measure	Scales
Coping	COPE Inventory	Venting Emotions ($\alpha = .82$) Denial ($\alpha = .82$) Active coping ($\alpha = .78$) Planning ($\alpha = .85$) Social support seeking ($\alpha = .83$) Humor ($\alpha = .87$)
Depressive Symptoms	Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale for Children (CES-DC)	Total score ($\alpha = .91$)

Analytic Plan: time-varying effect modeling (TVEM); linear regression models using the p-spline estimation approach.

- ❖ **Predictor variables:** COPE Inventory subscale scores
- ❖ **Dependent variable:** CES-DC total score
- ❖ **Time metric:** Age to the nearest month (14.0 to 24.0)
- ❖ **Time-invariant covariate:** Gender

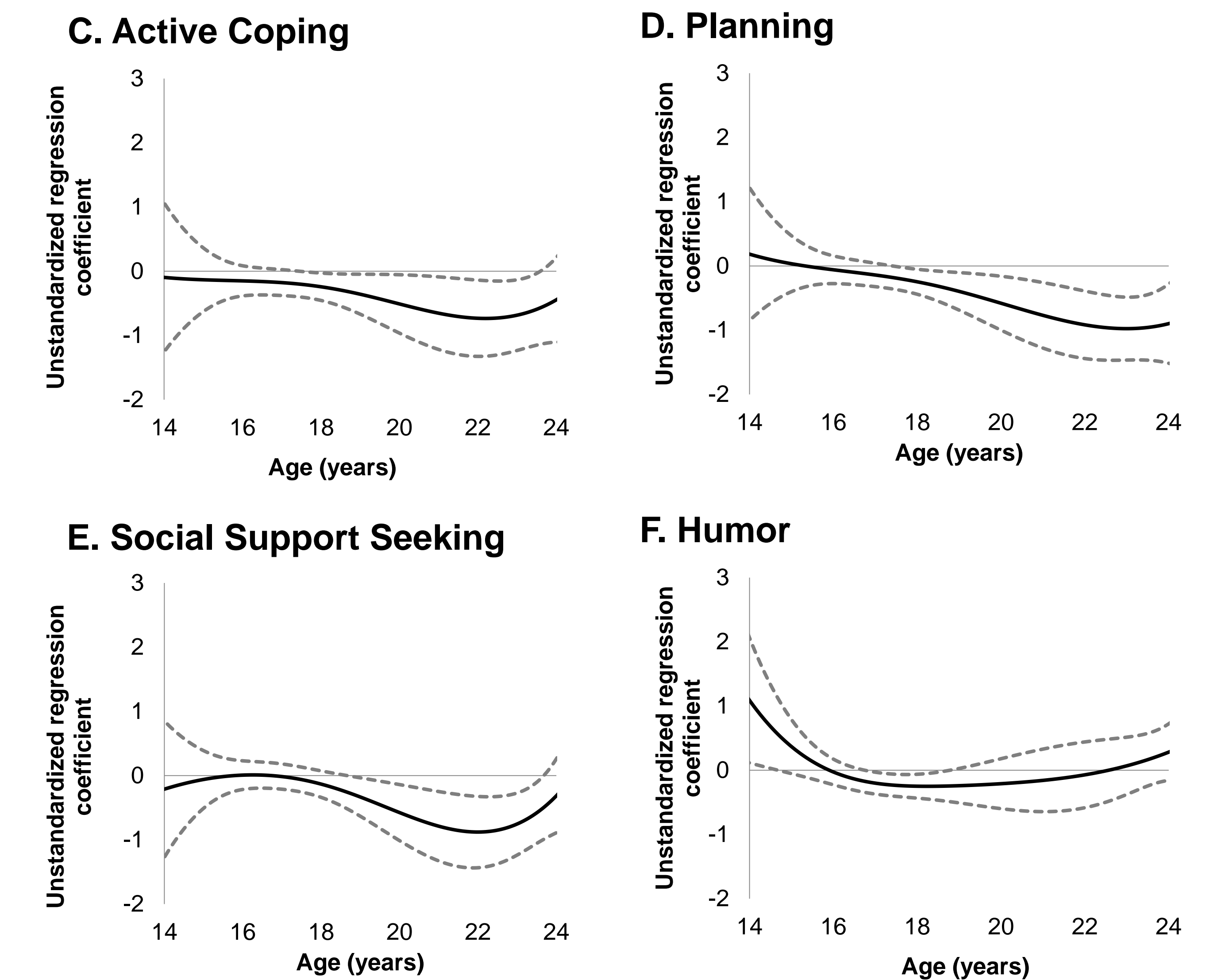
RESULTS

Figure 2. Age-Varying Regression Coefficient Functions Depicting the Bivariate Associations Between Use of Coping Strategies and Depressive Symptoms Across Ages 14-24.



RESULTS

Figure 2 cont. Age-Varying Regression Coefficient Functions Depicting the Bivariate Associations Between Use of Coping Strategies and Depressive Symptoms Across Ages 14-24.



Note: Black solid lines represent the mean unstandardized regression coefficients of the coping-depressive symptoms association as a continuous function of age, and gray dotted lines represent 95% confidence intervals (CIs). Regression coefficients were considered statistically significant when the 95% CIs did not overlap with zero.

CONCLUSIONS

- ❖ The magnitude and direction of the associations between coping and depressive symptoms may be age-dependent.
- ❖ Findings emphasize need for existing theories involving coping and depression to incorporate a developmental perspective since relationships change across age.
- ❖ Maladaptive coping strategies may be optimal universal intervention targets due to their persistence of effects across adolescence and emerging adulthood.
- ❖ Encouraging the use of problem solving-oriented strategies may not be useful until late adolescence.