

Stressors and Coping Mechanisms of the Children of Abra Bahay Pag-asa

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to determine the profile, the stressors and coping mechanisms of the 18 children of Abra Bahay Pag-asa during this pandemic. The qualitative method of research was utilized. An interview schedule was used to elicit the needed data in this study. The interviews were done via the Zoom platform. The data gathered were presented and treated using thematic analysis through the generation of codes and themes for the final write-up. The study revealed that almost all the children are teenagers, most of them are enrolled in the Senior High School and College levels and most of their case category is rape. Moreover, the children experienced several stressors particularly about the status of their cases, the situation of their families back home, their modular learning, and their mutual relationships. Nevertheless, the children employed active and positive coping mechanisms to alleviate their worries. Specifically, these were performing productive tasks, engaging in recreational activities, seeking social support, and spiritual activities. As a recommendation, Abra State Institute of Sciences and Technology through the College of Teacher Education may establish a linkage with the Provincial Government of Abra through and Extension Program on juvenile empowerment for the children of Abra Bahay Pag-asa to include literacy and numeracy; arts and music; life skills training; mental health and stress management. Additionally, other studies may be conducted again among the children to look into other aspects or factors on their personality development and rehabilitation process.

Keywords: Stress, stressors, coping mechanisms, children, Philippines.

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INTRODUCTION

In the late months of 2019, people all over the globe were alarmed by a virus that is quickly spreading around the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) announced a pandemic following the outbreak of the coronavirus in Wuhan, China. Thousands of people all over the globe, including the Philippines, have already been infected with the virus. Some had died and others recovered, which caused the lockdown of several countries, travel bans, facemasks, and alcohol shortages to name a few.

In the Philippines, President Rodrigo R. Duterte signed Proclamation No. 929 Series of 2020 which declared a State of Calamity throughout the country and imposed an Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) in the entire Luzon due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, Republic Act No. 11469 or the “Bayanihan to Heal As One Act”, granted the President temporary authority to carry out tasks necessary to implement measures to mitigate if not contain the transmission of COVID-19, and undertake measures to prevent the overburdening of the healthcare system among others. Part of this act were the measures to do to save lives or for the prevention of the pandemic. In such a case, everybody was required to stay home. Work, school, gatherings, travels, and the like were suspended.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Age	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
13-15	2	10.53
16-18	11	57.89
19-21	5	26.32
22-24	1	5.26
Total	19	100

Age Upon Commission	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
17	2	10.53
16	7	36.84
15	8	42.11
14	1	5.26
13	1	5.26
Total	19	100

Year of admission	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
2017	3	15.79
2018	4	21.05
2019	8	42.11
2020	1	5.26
2021	3	15.79
Total	19	100

Education	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Junior High School	2	10.53
Senior High School	6	31.58
College	6	31.58
ALS	4	21.05
OSY	1	5.26
Total	19	100

Case Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Murder	1	5.26
Homicide	2	10.53
Rape	6	31.58

Acts of Lasciviousness	3	15.79
Illegal Possession of Firearms	2	10.53
Robbery	1	5.26
Illegal Drugs/RA 9165	3	15.79
Slight Physical Injury	1	5.26
Total	19	100

Objective

This study determined the profile, the stressors and coping mechanisms of the children of Abra Bahay Pag-asa. Specifically, aims to:

1. Determine the profile of the respondents along: age upon commission, present age, year of admission in the center, education status, and case category.
2. Determine the stressors experienced by the children of Bahay Pag-asa during this pandemic.
3. Determine the coping mechanisms that the children employ over the stressors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Background Theory

With the pandemic that is happening in the world, adolescents are most likely to be affected so the tendency to experience stressors. Stressors are situations that are experienced as a perceived threat to one's well-being or position in life, especially if the challenge of dealing with it exceeds a person's perceived available resources (Oken et.al., 2015). Stressors lead to stress.

Stress is the body's response to pressure. Many different situations or life events can cause stress. It is often triggered when people experience something new, unexpected, or that threatens their sense of self, or when they feel they have little control over a situation.

However, if stressors are experienced, a certain level of adjustment or coping is most likely to happen. The transactional model of stress and coping developed by Lazarus and Folkman, as cited by Echemendia (2019), discusses coping as a phenomenon that comprises both mental and behavioral responses that people utilize in an effort to achieve internal and/or external stressors that seem to exceed their individual resources. Chowdhry (2020), also cited Lazarus and Folkman's coping theory saying that a person employs mechanisms depending on his own personality patterns and perceptions. No two persons employ the same coping mechanism because they are always different. The strategies that individuals employ may either be positive or negative because it always depends whether changes occur in them. Positive coping denotes coping mechanisms that makes a person handle his problems or difficulties in a productive or beneficial manner (Ackerman, 2021). Negative coping on the other hand refers to coping mechanisms or styles that may result to the individual's destruction because of risky behaviors.

Previous Studies

In a study in John's Hopkins University, Mendelson (2020) said that, the greatest impacts felt by adolescents stem from school closures, being in the house with family members, and not getting to see friends and peers. Adolescents have different developmental needs than adults. Teenagers are at the stage in life when they are very invested in social connections and in separating from their parents. So, COVID-19 social distancing requirements have a different emotional impact on them than on adults.

Depending on their age and developmental stage, some adolescents may have a hard time understanding what the pandemic means and how it impacts their world. Moreover, in a study by Ellis et.al. (2020), the effects of the stress experienced by adolescents on the pandemic may be heightened due to important developmental characteristics. Canadian adolescents completed online surveys and responded to questions on stress surrounding the COVID-19 crisis, feelings of loneliness and depression, as well as time spent with family, virtually with friends, doing schoolwork, using social media, and engaging in physical activity. Results showed that adolescents are very concerned about the COVID-19 crisis and are particularly worried about schooling and peer relationships.

A study by Compas (2017) found out that their children respondents used adaptive strategies, like looking at a problem differently, engaging in problem-solving or pursuing constructive communication, they were better able to manage the adverse effects of stress. Furthermore, those who used maladaptive strategies like suppressing, avoiding, or denying their feelings, had higher levels of problems associated with stress.

METHODOLOGY

This study made use of the quantitative and qualitative method of research. Quantitative method was used to determine the profile of the children respondents. It is qualitative because non-numerical data were collected.

The respondents of this study were the 19 Male Children who are presently residing at the Bahay Pag-Asa under the Provincial Government of Abra. They are otherwise known as Children in Conflict with the Law or CICL.

The researcher asked permission from the Provincial Government through the Provincial Social Welfare Officer who heads the Bahay Pag-Asa for the conduct of the interview. The children were also asked for their consent if they were willing to do the interview. An interview was then set together with the resident Social Worker of Bahay Pag-Asa and interviewed through video conference using the Zoom platform. After all the responses were gathered, data analysis was done.

Data

The data were gathered through interviews done via the Zoom platform among the Children of Bahay Pag-asa. Since qualitative type of research was utilized, thematic analysis was considered.

Model Development

The stressors of the respondents as well as the coping mechanisms that they employed were gathered through the interviews done using thematic analysis. The stimulus and response model was utilized where the stressors experienced are the stimuli and the response were the coping mechanisms that they employed.

Method

The data gathering instrument used was an interview schedule composed of open-ended questions to elicit the necessary responses from the children. The questions were about their sources of stress during this pandemic and the coping mechanisms they employ to address their stress. The data gathered were treated using thematic analysis through the generation of codes and themes for the final write-up. Percentages and mean were utilized in interpreting the profile of the respondents.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Results

The data gathered in terms of the profile were analyzed based on the table. While the data gathered through the interviews conducted to determine the stressors and coping mechanisms that the children employ, were analyzed by identifying themes. The results of the study are discussed in this section.

Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents.

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Table 1 presents the profile of the children of Bahay Pag-asa. In terms of the age of the respondents, it ranges from 13 to 24 years. Most of them belong to 16-18 years old bracket while there is one on his 20's. The data further shows that almost all the children at Bahay Pag-asa are teenagers. On the age of the respondents upon commission, majority of them were 15 years old. There is one who committed the crime at 13 years old. This shows that these children were relatively young in committing the crime. Further, on the year of admission from the start of the Bahay Pag-asa's services in 2017 up to now, most of the children were admitted in the year 2019. Along education, majority of them are in the Senior High School and College levels. There is only one who is not in school at the moment. Lastly, on the case category, most of the children were accused of rape. Least were accused of slight physical injury, murder and robbery.

The Stressors Experienced by the Children

The pandemic has tested the situation of the children of Bahay Pag-asa through the stressors they now experience. These were categorized mainly into specific themes namely: the situation of their families back home, status of their cases,, modular learning, and mutual relationships.

The Situation of their families back home. This stressor experienced by children is about their worries about the present situation of their parents, grandparents, and siblings back home. With the pandemic, they find it difficult to think of their family's situation especially that visitation hours and the number of visitors are limited at the Bahay Pag-asa. These are what they had to say:

Child 1: Daytoy situwasyon ti kinarigat ti panagbiag ti pamilya mi ti pakaburiborak. Ti kasasaad ni father ko nga agmaymaysa nga agrabtrabaho para kadakami. Maas-asyanak unay kanyana. Ken ni adingko diak payen pulos maasikaso isuna wenna maiparikna ti panagayatko kanya na. Dimmakel man lang nga awanak iti sibay na. (I am worried about the poor situation of our family. I pity my father who is working alone for us. As for my younger sibling, I cannot even show my care and love to him. He is growing up without me by his side.)

Child 4: Ti pakarikotak pay a maysa ket iti haan a panagtutunos ti pamilyak. Kanayon ko a mapanunot dayta. Sapay koma ta agkakappia dan. (What worries me also is about the conflicts happening in my family. I always think about it.)

Child 6: Tatta pandemic ti pakaproblemaak ket daytoy pamilyak nu nakaradkad da met lang. Isu ti kanayon ko a mapanunot. (This time of the pandemic, I am worried about my family if they are healthy. This is what I am always thinking.)

Child 7: Malagipko ti pamilyak ken kanayon ko mapampanunot ni lolok ta ngamin nakapsot kano isunan. (I always think of my family and my grandfather who is weak right now.)

Child 8: Ti pakaproblemaak ket ti pamilyak nu natalged da met laeng ta idi ket umay da amin bumisita ket tattan saanen gapu ti istrikto a protocol. Isu daytoy ti maysa pagdandanagak. (I worry about my family's condition if they are fine because before, they all come and visit me but now because of strict protocols, they don't come anymore. This is what I am worried about.)

Child 10: Ma-miss ko unay ti pamilyak ken kayatko ti agawiden. (I miss my family so much and I want to go home already.)

Child 14: Mapampanunot ko kanayon ti kinarigat iti biag tatta a pandemya ken ti kinarigat ti pamilya mi idiy ruar. Madanagan nak nu ania ti mapasamak kanya dan ken pampanunotek met pay dagiti kasapulak. (I am always thinking about the hardships we experience during this pandemic as well as the struggles of my family outside. I am worried about what is happening to them and also thinking of all my needs.)

Child 17: Ti manggululo ti panunot ko ket nu kaano nak makaawid ngamin kayatko unayen a makadua ti pamilyak. (What worries me is when will I go home because I want to be with my family.)

The children's responses revealed a great deal of longing for their families. They worry that they have limited communication due to the protocols brought about by the pandemic. According to the resident Social Worker, the children are not allowed to have their cellphones and the children's families' visitation hours were very limited which explains their predicaments. As a result of their responses, it can be deduced that their family matters. This can be backed up in one article written by Dr. Thatcher (2020), that some rewards of having a family are amplified gladness and contentment. Studies have shown that having more time with family can help lessen stress and anxiety, lead to a healthier lifestyle, and extends one's life.

Status of their cases. This stressor refers to the present situation of the cases of the children in court. Most of the children mentioned that their cases are what they always think and are worried about. The status of their cases always makes them think too much about when will these be over. These are some of the common responses of the respondents:

Child 1: Maproblemaan nak daytoy kinaawan ti hearing ko ta kayatko koma metten nga malpas koma toy kasok ta makaawidakon idiy balay mi. (I am worried about the absence of hearing schedules because I already want my case to end.)

Child 2: Nabayag unay ti hearing ken nu adda man haan to pay la a matuloy ta maipostpone. (The hearing of my case takes too long and if there is a hearing, still it will be even postponed.)

Child 4: Ti pakarikutak ita nga pandemya ket daytoy nabayag wenno nabuntog nga court hearing. Ti pay manggululo ti panunotko ket nu kaano nga malabsan daytoy a kasok. (My problem with this pandemic is my slow court hearing. What I am worried about is when will my case end.)

Child 5: Daytoy naaramid ko nga basol iti linteg ti manggululo ti panunot ko. Ken kaanon to ngata nga malpas daytoy? (The crime I have committed is what worries me and when it will all end.)

The respondents revealed that they worry much about their cases. This may be because the court always postpones their hearing because of the unavailability of the judge and sometimes because of quarantine periods for the lawyers due to COVID 19. It can be gleaned that the children look forward to getting free from their situation living in the Bahay Pag-asa and going home to their families. Despite the worries of the children in their specific cases, still, the Bahay Pag-asa is their temporary shelter. It is the mandate of the Bahay Pag-asa to serve as a transformational center where these children are provided with appropriate interventions to rehabilitate them and to help them discover and bring out their full potentials to become responsible, self-reliant, and mature individuals. It is a home for healing the effects of their traumatic experiences towards better lives (Bahay Pag-asa Operations Manual, 2019).

Modular learning. This stressor is referring to the education condition of the children through modular learning which they find difficulty with. They claim that it is hard for them to do their modules since they accomplish these on their own. It shall be noted that the children living in the Bahay Pag-asa are all enrolled as Senior High School or College students. These are their responses:

Child 3: Maproblemaan nak daytoy panagbasak ta nagrigat ngamin ti ag-answer ti module. Adu ti masapul nga basaen ken isurat. Msapulmi ti makatulong kanya mi. (I am worried about my studies because it's really hard to answer the module. There is a lot to read and write. We need help.)

Child 9: *Agdanagak daytoy basak gapu ta module ket marigatan nak. Diay dadduma nga lesson mi ket masapul nga actual skills activities koma ngem madi met mabalin. (I worry about my education because I find the module to be difficult. Our other lessons should be actual skills but this time it is not yet allowed.)*

Child 16: *Daytoy panggep ti panagmodule ti pakarigatanmi dito ta awan met unay mangisuro kanya mi. Haan nga kasla idia eskwela nga adda mestra. Sikami payen agsisinnuro. (We are hard up in doing our modules because no one can teach us here. Unlike in school that teachers are present. We teach each other.)*

It can be perceived from the replies of the children, that they need assistance in doing their modules. They find it difficult to do the modules on their own. The data corresponds with the result of Calo's (2020) study that the number of modules to answer resulted in too much time allotment, therefore, leading to stress. Moreover, in an article written by Stenger (2018), she mentioned a study made by a group of Psychologists that, too much homework becomes a stressor among students. They normally respond to the stressor although, from other research results, some level of stress can be healthy but chronic stress can cause unwanted physical, mental, and behavioral outcomes.

Mutual Relationships. This refers to their worries about the status of their mutual relationship with the opposite sex. There were three who mentioned that they long for their girlfriends. These were their statements:

Child 6: *Maproblemaan nak kenni Karen. Kaano kami ngata nga agkatuluyan? (I am problematic about Karen. When will she become my girlfriend?)*

Child 11: *Haan ko a matawagan ti nobyak. Mailiwak kanya na ngem ania ngarud kastoy met ti situwasyon kon. (I cannot call my girlfriend. I miss her but I can't do anything because of the present.)*

Child 17: *Madanagan nak nu isina nak ton diay gf ko. Haanko ngamin makapatpatang nabayagen. Isu ti maysa a problemak. (I fear that my girlfriend may break up with me. We haven't talked for a while. It's one of my problems.)*

From the statements of the children, it is perceived that they also long for the attention of a special someone and worry if they will be rejected. This supports the claim of one writer that as puberty starts, young adolescents become curious about the opposite sex, and they long for romantic affection. Yet, the relationship between opposite sex is not constrained to dating or falling in love but being plain friends is part of ordinary social life. Moreover, it shall be noted also that cellphones are not allowed at the center while only two family members are allowed to visit. This is an additional reason why the children are worried about their friends because they cannot call or invite them to visit due to the restriction in the shelter.

The Coping Mechanisms of the Children

The children of Bahay Pag-asa employed different coping mechanisms with the different stressors that they experience especially this time of the pandemic. The following themes were established as the main coping mechanisms employed by the children: performing productive tasks, engaging in recreational activities, seeking social support, and practicing spiritual activities.

Performing productive tasks. This coping mechanism employed by the children refers to doing household activities and participating in all activities conducted by the Social Workers to divert their attention from the stressors that they experience. These are some of their responses:

Child 1: *Mapanko pakanen dagidiay alagak nga manok, kalapati ken pato. Nu dadduma, isuda payen ti kapatpatangko. (I go and feed my chickens, pigeons, and ducks. Sometimes, I even talk to them.)*

Child 2: *Agparticipate nak kadagiti amin nga activities mi dito center nangruna dagiti character building ken skills development tapno haanak unay maburiboran kadagiti problemak. (I participate in all the activities here at the center especially character building and skills development so that I will not worry much with my problems.)*

Child 3: *Agpartisipar nak ti activities nangruna tay driving ken therapy massage ta makatulong to payen kaniak a mairabahok nu rumuarak ditoy. (I participate in all activities especially driving and therapy massage because this can help me get a job later on when I will be out from here.)*

Child 4: *Tapno maiwasak ti agpampanunot unay, mapanak agiroot idiy ruar ken tumulungak nga agluto, Magustuwak ngamin ti agluto. (To avoid overthinking, I go out and pull the weeds. I also help in cooking because I love cooking.)*

Child 8: *Mapanak met agdalis idiy ruar iti mabalin nga pagmulaak iti natnateng nga pangalaanmi iti kanen mi. (I go outside and look for a spot to clean where I can plant vegetables that we can eat.)*

Child 9: *Tumulungak iti carpentry ken panagluto tapno maliklikan iti agpanunot iti problema. (I help in carpentry and cooking to avoid thinking about problems.)*

Child 14: *Obraek dagiti obligasyon ko ditoy center kas koma panagdalos, panaglaba, panaginnaw ken dadduma pay tapno mayaw-awan ko dagitoy adu a mapampanunot ko a problema. (I do all my obligations here at the center like cleaning, doing the laundry, washing the dishes, and the like to forget my problems.)*

Child 17: *Agrabaho ak langenen tapno malipatak dagiti problemak. Adu ti maobra ditoy kasla koma agdalos ditoy aglawlaw ken ag-garden kami pay. (I will just work so that I can forget my problems. There are a lot of things to do here like cleaning the surroundings and gardening.)*

It can be gleaned from the responses of the children that most of them do productive tasks at the Bahay Pag-asa to forget their problems or the stressors that they are experiencing. This is supported by the statement of their resident Social Worker that the children are very industrious in terms of all household chores in the center including their interest in gardening and raising poultry like chickens, ducks, and pigeons. They have their schedules to accomplish such tasks. This is also in consonance with one of the objectives of the Bahay Pag-asa that is to give proper rehabilitation programs to Children in Conflict with the Law or CICLs wherein they are involved in different training programs, behavioral modification, and activities geared in behavioral change and skills enhancements in promoting positive behaviors (Abra Bahay Pag-asa Operations Manual, 2019).

Engaging in recreation activities. The children engage in enjoyable activities as their coping mechanism to the stressors that they experience. This includes playing, watching, singing, dancing, and exercising. The following are their common responses:

Child 1: *Ti musika ken panagsurat ko iti kanta ket dakkel unay a tulong kaniak tapno mailiwliwag ko ti problemak. (Music and song writing are very helpful for me in forgetting my problems.)*

Child 6: *Mapanak met abuya lattan iti TV tapno maliwliwa nak bassit. (I go and watch television to relax a bit.)*

Child 7: *Ti panaggitara ken panagkanta ti magustuwak nga aramiden nu awan obraek a sabali tapno malipatak ti iliw ko iti pamilyak. Agbestkatball nak pay. Dagitoy ti makatkatulong kaniak tapno haanak unay agdandanag. (Playing the guitar and singing are my favorite things to do to divert my longing for my family. I also play basketball. These activities help me a lot not to worry much.)*

Child 9: *Magustuwak ti agbuya iti movies tapno maiwasak ti agpanunot kadagiti problemak. Agtukar nak pay ti gitara wenna drums ken agZumba. (I love watching movies to avoid thinking about my problems. I play the guitar and drums as well as join the Zumba exercise.)*

Child 10: *Tapno maiwasak ti agpanunot ti kinarigat ti biag, mapanak agbasketball kaduak dagiti dadduma nga ubbing ditoy. (For me to keep away from thinking about the difficulties of life, I go and play basketball together with the other children here.)*

Child 12: *Ang ginagawa ko para maiwasan ang problema ko ay nagbabasa ng komiks at nanonood ng TV. (What I do to cope with my problem is to read comics and watch the television.)*

Child 16: *Agiggem nak iti gitara ken agtukar nak tapno mailiwliwagko dagiti pampanunotek wenna agpraktis kami iti kanta, sala wenna agrecite ti tula. (I hold the guitar and play it for me to ease out myself in thinking of my problems. We also practice singing, dancing, or poem recitation.)*

From the responses of the children, most of them find entertainment from the recreation activities that they employ like. According to their resident Social Worker, most of the things that they love doing are playing musical instruments and singing. They have a set of musical instruments in the center which anytime they can use for entertaining themselves. Moreover, they also engage in physical recreation exercises such as playing basketball and Zumba exercises not only to address the stressors but also for fitness and health purposes. Similarly, studies show that the most common habits young people manage their stressors are listening to music and watching television.

Seeking social support. Seeking social support is another coping mechanism that the children employ wherein they ask for help and advice from their companions and the social workers at Bahay Pag-asa. Their statements below are their common responses:

Child 5: Mapanak met makipulapol kadagiti padak nga ubbing ditoy center nangruna kadagiti amin nga activities mi. Sikami payen ti agtitinnulong tapno lumag-an ti rikna mi iti daytoy a siwasyon mi ita. (I join the other children in the center in all our activities. We help each other to feel better especially with our kind of situation now.)

Child 7: Ti lang ar-aramidek ket makipatpatang nak latta kadagiti kakadwak tapno maiyaw-awan dagiti problemak. (What I do is to talk with the other children to feel better.)

Child 10: Tapno naragsak latta, mapanak maki-innistorya kadagiti kakadwak tapno agkatawa nak met. (To stay happy, I chat with the other children and we laugh together.)

Child 11: Ibagami met nu dadduma dagiti problema mi kadagitoy agbanbantay kanya mi. Nalaing da met mangted ti advice nangruna iti lovelife. (We sometimes share our problems with our caretakers. They are good in giving advice especially in our lovelife.)

Child 16: Agpatulongak kadagiti kakadwak nga ubbing ditoy Bahay Pag-asa nu ammo da diay topic ayan ti module. Agtitinnulong kamin a nga mangsungbat. (I ask help from the other children here in Bahay Pag-asa if they know the topic in the module. We help each other in answering.)

It is revealed from the answers of the respondents that they also seek support from other people particularly among themselves and the staff of the Bahay Pag-asa. This is one way of trying to forget the stressors that they are experiencing. In a study made by Calo et.al. (2021), they found out that their respondents employed a coping strategy with their struggle in their modules by seeking support from other people. This support is usually emotional or academic. Students get emotional support from the advice, sympathy, and encouraging words that they get from their friends, parents, or teachers.

Likewise, Scott (2020) in her article discussed that social support can be good for decreasing stressors and results in lesser stressful events thus improving mental and physical health. To have better relationships in life make it good for everyone.

Practicing spiritual activities. This coping mechanism of the children involves simple activities that involve reflecting, praying, reading and sleeping.

Child 3: Agaramidak ti journal nga pagsuratak ti amin nga mapampanunotko tapno maiwasak met ti agpanunot ti haan a nasayaat. Ken haan tayo a malipatan ti agkararag a kanayon. (I make a journal where I write everything I think about to avoid thinking about bad things. Also, we should not forget to pray always.)

Child 11: Agbasa nak pay iti Biblia tapno maiwasak ti agpanunot ti saan a nasayaat. Makatulong kaniak daytoy panagbasak iti Biblia. (I read the Bible to avoid thinking about bad things. Reading the Bible helps me a lot.)

Child 13: Ti number one nga ubraek ket agkararag lang kenni Apo ta isu ti adda kapangyarihan nan ga tumulong kaniak. (The number one thing that I do is to pray to God because He has the power to help me.)

Child 15: Tapno haanak unay a naliday ditoy uneg, agkankanta ak ken agkarkarag nak latta ken Apo Dios nangruna ti salaknib na iti pamilyak. (In order for me not to be sad here, I always sing and pray to God for the safety of my family.)

Child 18: Maiwasak ti agpampanunot unay nu agkararagak ken iturogko tapno marela ti utek ko. (For me not to overthink things, I always pray and sleep because these also make my mind relaxed.)

The responses of the children revealed how they cope with their stressors through praying and reading the Bible. One of the activities in the Bahay Pag-asa as part of the children's rehabilitation is the Spiritual Enrichment Program where there is an opportunity for spiritual and value formation. Several of the activities that are conducted include Holy Masses, Bible reading and reflections, film-viewing and discussions, recollections, retreats, and other spiritual activities that may promote the welfare of the children (ABP Operations Manual, 2019).

Robustness Test

The Turnitin Plagiarism check was utilized to test the robustness of the study. Similarity index is 2%. See Appendix C below.

Analysis

The stressors experienced by the children of Bahay Pag-asa this pandemic are varied. It is revealed that they find difficulty in thinking about their own situation as well as their families and friends especially that their movements are limited due to strict protocols. This finding is aligned with the study of Mendelson (202), that teenagers are at the stage in life when they are very invested in social connections and in separating from their parents. So, COVID-19 social distancing requirements have a different emotional impact on them than on adults. Depending on their age and developmental stage, some adolescents may have a hard time understanding what the pandemic means and how it impacts their world.

From all the responses of the children on their coping mechanisms, it can be gleaned that they utilized positive coping from the stressors they have experienced although varied. This result is aligned with Lazarus and Folkman's coping theory stating that a person employs mechanisms depending on his own personality patterns and perceptions. No two persons employ the same coping mechanism because they are always different. The strategies that individuals employ may either be positive or negative because it always depends whether changes occur in them (Chowdhry, 2020). The coping mechanisms of the children of Bahay Pag-asa are all positive in nature because they employed effective handling of their stressors. As mentioned by Ackerman (2021), positive coping denotes coping mechanisms that makes a person handle his problems or difficulties in a productive or beneficial manner.

The children also employed active coping strategies as divulged from their responses. These are either behavioral or psychological responses designed to change the nature of the stressor itself or how one thinks about it. This has similarity with the study of Compas (2017) who found out that their children respondents used adaptive strategies, like looking at a problem differently, engaging in problem-solving or pursuing constructive communication, they were better able to manage the adverse effects of stress.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The children of Bahay Pag-Asa are relatively young and in their teenage years, almost all are enrolled in High School and College levels while most of their cases is that they are accused of rape. In their stay at the Bahay Pag-asa, they are experiencing stressors during this time of the pandemic. They are worried particularly about the status of their cases, the situation of their families back home, their modular learning, and their mutual relationships. Nevertheless, the children employed active and positive coping mechanisms to alleviate their worries. Specifically, these were performing productive tasks, engaging in recreational activities, seeking social support, and doing spiritual activities.

Recommendation

The Abra State Institute of Sciences and Technology through the College of Teacher Education may establish a linkage with the Provincial Government of Abra through the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office for an Extension Program on Juvenile Empowerment for the Children of Abra Bahay Pag-asa. Series of activities are included like literacy and numeracy; arts and music; life skills training; mental health awareness and stress management. Additionally, other studies may be conducted again among the children to look into other aspects or factors on their personality development and rehabilitation process.

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BIOGRAPHY

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