

**THE EMPOWERMENT OF  
LESOTHO ADOLESCENTS EXPERIENCING STRESS**

by

**MAPITSO INNOCENTIA MACHELA**

submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for  
the degree of

**MASTER OF EDUCATION**

in the subject

**PSYCHOLOGY OF EDUCATION**

at the

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**SUPERVISOR: DR. H. M. VOGEL**

**MARCH 2009**

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to the glory of my LORD and Saviour, Jesus Christ who loved me and redeemed my soul from sin making me a new creature.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to my Father God in heaven who, in spite of various discouraging situations and opposing forces, encouraged and strengthened me. He made the completion of this work possible.

My unreserved thanks go to my supervisor, Dr H. M. Vogel who painstakingly supervised this work and made its completion a reality. Her academic ingenuity, counsel and moral support deserve special recognition. The role of Professor G.D. Kamper in the assessment of the instrument for this dissertation is highly commendable. I am highly appreciative of Professor E.M. Lemmer for her meticulous editing of this project.

I am also highly indebted to my spiritual parents, the Jegedes for their enviable mentoring, counsel, prayers and moral support. Without them, this project would not have been started. I am also obliged to Professors D. Braimoh and O.Y. Patrick for their sacrificial contributions in taking over where my beloved Pastor and Daddy, Dr J.O. Jegede left when he passed on to glory.

I wish to express my gratitude to Brothers T.T.E. Khoboko, L.E Khoboko, and especially N. Sello who did their best to see that this work was type written. Furthermore, I am grateful to the Principals and the students of the schools used for the data collection of this study.

My unfeigned love to my loving mother, Mrs M.E. Machela for her unconditional support and unreserved care. I finally wish to express my utmost appreciation to all my brethren for their encouragement and prayers for me.

## ABSTRACT

This study investigated stress prevalence among high school adolescents in Maseru, the capital city of Lesotho. The aim was to suggest guidelines on how to deal with adolescents' stress. A total of 300 respondents were purposively chosen from 5 high schools in Maseru. The subjects completed a self adopted instrument based on reviewed literature and Adolescence Stress Questionnaire (ASQ). The results showed that most adolescents in the sample experienced stress. There was no significant difference in the experience of stress between female and male adolescents. The adolescents in the higher grade reported more stress than those in the lower grade. Home problems were perceived as the most stressful factors while academic and other factors were seen as lesser concerns. Availability of money was considered as the least important source of stress. Most adolescents preferred to be alone when they were under stress and a few used drugs. Implications of the findings for adolescents, parents, teachers and educational psychologists are discussed.

### **Key Terms**

*Adolescent Stress, Stress Theoretical Models, School Stress Related, Home related Stress, Mediators of Stress, Consequences of Stress, Stress Coping Strategies, Time Management, Negotiation Skills, Study Skills.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER ONE

### Orientation to study

1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEM	1
1.3 FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM	3
1.3.1 Background of study	3
1.3.2 Research questions	6
1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY	6
1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND SAMPLING	7
1.6 DEMARCATION AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY	8
1.7 DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPTS	8
1.7.1 Stress	8
1.7.2 Adolescence	8
1.7.3 Sexual child abuse	9
1.7.4 Victim	9
1.7.5 Empowerment	9
1.8 PROGRAMME OF STUDY	9
1.9 SUMMARY	10

# CHAPTER TWO

## Review of related literature

2.1 INTRODUCTION	11
2.2 DEFINITIONS OF STRESS	11
2.3 MODELS FOR UNDERSTANDING STRESS	12
2.3.1 The General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)	13
2.3.1.1 Alarm stage	13
2.3.1.2 Resistance stage	13
2.3.1.3 Exhaustion stage	13
2.3.1.4 A critique of GAS	13
2.3.2 The Life Change Model (LCM)	14
2.3.2.1 A critique of the LCM	14
2.3.3 The Transaction Model (TM)	14
2.3.3.1 A critique of TM Theory	15
2.4 CAUSES OF STRESS	16
2.4.1 Pressure at home	16
2.4.1.1 Death of parent or siblings	16
2.4.1.2 Marital discord	16
2.4.1.3 Parental work involvement	17
2.4.1.4 Socio-economic hardship	17
2.4.1.5 Crowding	17
2.4.1.6 Home transfer	18
2.4.1.7 Child abuse	18
2.4.1.8 Parental discipline techniques and adolescent autonomy	19

2.4.2 Pressure at School	19
2.4.2.1 Examination system	19
2.4.2.2 Homework	20
2.4.2.3 Attitude of teachers	20
2.4.2.4 Attitudes of parents	20
2.4.3 Pressure other than school and home experiences	21
2.4.3.1 Self	22
2.4.3.2 Peer group	22
2.4.3.3 Culture	23
2.4.3.4 The outside world	24
2.4.3.5 Satanism and occultism	24
2.4.3.6 Thinking error	25
2.4.4 High school students' perception of sources of stress: A case study	25
2.4.4.1 Parents and family	26
2.4.4.2 Work and money	27
2.4.4.3 Friends	27
2.4.4.4 Addiction to drugs	29
2.4.4.5 Gangs and school	29
2.4.4.6 School	29
2.4.4.7 Summary of adolescents' stressors	31
2.5 AWARENESS OF ADOLESCENT STRESS	32
2.6 MEDIATORS OF STRESS	33
2.6.1 Intrinsic factors	33
2.6.1.1 Appraisal or perception of events	33
2.6.1.2 Locus of control	33
2.6.1.3 Resiliency and vulnerability	34
2.6.1.4 Gender	34
2.6.1.5 Problem solving abilities	35
2.6.1.6 Temperament and personality	35
2.6.1.7 Self-concept	36
2.6.2 Extrinsic factors	36

2.6.2.1 Attachment and family support	36
2.6.2.2 Social support	36
2.7 RESPONSES TO STRESS	37
2.8 CONSEQUENCES OF STRESS	38
2.9 SUMMARY	41
2.10 COPING WITH STRESS	41
2.10.1 Conceptualisation of stress coping strategies	42
2.10.2 Stress coping strategies	42
2.11 HELPING ADOLESCENTS HANDLE STRESS	49
2.11.1 Parents	50
2.11.1.1 Observation skills	50
2.11.1.2 Enhancement of self-esteem	50
2.11.1.3 Proactive intervention	50
2.11.1.4 Attention and love	51
2.11.1.5 Acknowledgment of feelings	51
2.11.1.6 Viewing situation more positively	51
2.11.1.7 Positive discipline	52
2.11.1.8 Alleviation of stress in one's life	52
2.11.1.9 Stress reduction skills	52
2.11.2 Teachers	53
2.11.2.1 Co-operating with parents	53
2.11.2.2 Practicing self-control and coping skills	53
2.11.2.3 Classroom organisation	53
2.11.2.4 Materials	54
2.11.2.5 Activity	54
2.11.2.6 Co-operative classroom activities	54
2.11.2.7 Individual talk time	54
2.11.2.8 Classroom talks	55



2.11.3 Educational psychologists	55
2.11.3.1 Therapeutic models	55
2.11.3.2 Stressors identification	55
2.11.4 Other coping strategies to help adolescents	56
2.11.4.1 Mental strategies	56
2.11.4.2 Physical strategies	57
2.11.4.3 Study skills and time management	61
2.11.4.4 Interpersonal and communication skills	67
2.11.4.5 Treating oneself right	70
2.12 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE	71

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Research methodology**

3.1 INTRODUCTION	72
3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	72
3.3 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH	72
3.3.1 Research in education	72
3.3.2 Research design	73
3.4 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES	73
3.4.1 Population	73
3.4.2 Sampling	73
3.5 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT: QUESTIONNAIRE	74
3.5.1 Validity and reliability	75
3.5.1.1 Content validity	75
3.5.1.2 Reliability: Pilot study	76

3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES	85
3.7 DATA PROCESSING METHOD	86
3.7.1 Research Question One	86
3.7.2 Research Question Two	86
3.7.3 Research Question Three	86
3.7.4 Research Question Four	87
3.7.5 Research Question Five	87
3.7.6 Research Question Six	87
3.7.7 Research Question Seven	87
3.8 CONCLUSION	88

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Data analysis and interpretation**

4.1 INTRODUCTION	89
4.1 RESEARCH QUESTION ONE	89
4.2 RESEARCH QUESTION TWO	93
4.3 RESEARCH QUESTION THREE	94
4.4 RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR	94
4.5 RESEARCH QUESTION FIVE	95
4.6 RESEARCH QUESTION SIX	96
4.7 RESEARCH QUESTION SEVEN	96
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	98

# CHAPTER FIVE

## Discussion and recommendations

5.1 INTRODUCTION	99
5.2 AREAS OF DISCUSSIONS	99
5.2.1 Stress experience	99
5.2.2 Gender and grade difference in stress experience	102
5.2.3 The people consulted by adolescents when stressed	104
5.2.4 The feelings of adolescents under stress and their expectations of other people	106
5.2.5 Lesotho adolescents stress coping strategies	107
5.2.6 Suggested method of managing and coping with stress	110
5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS	111
5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	112
5.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	113
BIBLIOGRAPHY	114
LIST OF FIGURES	121
LIST OF TABLES	121
APPENDIX	122
RESEARCH INSTRUMENT: QUESTIONNAIRE	122

# CHAPTER ONE

## ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Stress has been found to be an important fact of life among high school students (Armacost 1990: 105, Seiffge-Krenke 2004: 367). Many factors that affect students emanate from school, the home and their social environment. Continued experience of these stressful life events may have a negative impact on high school adolescents' general well-being. Thus, knowledge of stress-related factors is essential to address adolescents' health problems. Sakoane (1999: 2) maintains that "many people who visit doctors daily for physical complaints have stress-linked problems without being aware of either the prevalence of stress or how to handle it". Awareness of stress, therefore, becomes an important factor in day-to-day living.

Adolescence is a period of life between childhood and adulthood (Van den Aardweg 1993: 10). According to Hankin, Mermelstein and Roesh (2007: 279), it is a time during which radical changes take place. Woodbridge (1998 a: 47) maintains that today's young people are confronted daily by a variety of potentially stressful events as they struggle to live in a complicated, and often hostile world. The changes in adolescents' lives and the events of today's hectic and fast paced world confront the youth, many of whom possess inadequate stress coping strategies. This results in increased level of stress among adolescents.

### 1.2 AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEM

Although a growing body of research has recently given much attention to childhood and adolescent stress (Hagquist, 1998, Drapeau, Samson and Saint 1999, Benson, 2002, Garber, 2002, Hampel and Peterman 2007), in the context of Lesotho there has been a paucity of empirical data to show equal concern about adolescents' stress. The few studies that have been conducted on stress concern either stress prevalence at university level or among post primary teachers, and not adolescents per se (Phatsoane, 1995, Ratšiu, 1997, Sakoane, 1999). This paucity of research concerning adolescent stress in Lesotho high schools has prompted this research which specifically investigates the prevalence of stress among Lesotho high school adolescents.

Other factors that instigated a study concerning adolescent stress in Lesotho include socio-economic and family structures. In his study of stress and perceived health among adolescents in Sweden, Hagquist (1998: 250) discovered a link between economic stress and perceived health among the adolescents. The occurrence of perceived poor health was reported much greater among those who frequently or constantly worried about their families' finances than among those who seldom or never experienced such worry. Hample and Peterman (2007: 809) also posited that parental economic situation has a bearing on adolescents' psychological well-being.

This incident may also be applicable to Lesotho in view of the retrenchment of mine workers from South Africa whereby, Lesotho earns a bulk of her income and the privatisation of state owned companies. The retrenchment and privatisation have led to the acute problem of extensive job losses in Lesotho since many families depended on them for sustenance (Public Eye, 16 September 1999: 6). It is very likely that school adolescents whose parents fall in these categories are undergoing some difficulties as their family income has suddenly diminished drastically. Such students have to learn quickly and radically to make do with much less. In this respect, Drapeau, et al. (1999: 15) discovered that marital separation and divorce is another factor that induces stress among teenagers. The researcher, a high school teacher, has frequently encountered teenagers from such families. Most of them hardly cope with their studies. Due to loss of jobs, many fathers become alcoholics. This might be as a result of the loss of self-esteem. In the process, they beat their wives while under the influence of alcohol. Ultimately, separation results as the pressure becomes too much on the wives. The negative impact of family discord on adolescents in Lesotho, therefore, calls for serious attention in order to assist the affected adolescents.

Case studies conducted by "Save the children" UK on sexually abused children in Lesotho indicated that majority of adolescent girls fall victims to their fathers – biological and/or step-fathers (Workshop 2002: 15; 2007: 1). Most of the men in such cases were retrenched mine workers. Despite being awarded relatively reasonable packages upon retrenchment many of them face financial problems when they arrive home. As indicated earlier, their loss of pride and self-esteem results in heavy drinking. Under alcoholic influence, they engage in illicit sexual relationships with their daughters. This may be one of the reasons why girls report more stress than boys (Groer, Thomas & Shoffer, 1992: 309; Plunkett, Henry & Knaub 1999: 147; Kauser & Munir 2004: 60; Jose & Ratcliffe 2004: 145).

Closely related to sexual abuse is the case of rape. Many adolescent girls live with a sense of insecurity due to increasing reports of rape. In some cases, rape is associated with elopement whereby girls are

abducted against their will. In most cases, men in the rural areas of Lesotho take pride in marrying adolescent school girls. These illegal cases threaten the psychological and physical security of the adolescents. School structure appears to be a potential factor that induces stress among learners (Rajendram & Kaliappan, 1990: 193; Kouzma & Kennedy 2004: 314). Rajendram and Kaliappan (1990) conducted a study where they examined the efficacy of behavioural problems in managing academic stress and improving performance in high school students. The students involved had reported high stress associated with personal inadequacy, fear of failure and interpersonal difficulties. The components of the programme included training in relaxation activities, study skills, assertiveness, and effective communication. In the study both the pre and the post programme measures showed that the programme increased the personal adequacy level, reduced fear of failure and improved interpersonal relations with teachers and parents. Overall, the changes in stress levels led to improved academic performance. To this effect, the researcher feels that organised programmes of this nature could greatly assist Lesotho adolescents to improve their studies.

The researcher has also observed through interaction with both teachers and students in the school setting that learners with difficulties are seldom given proper attention by their teachers. As a result of home factors which are likely to induce stress in the learners' lives, many adolescents leave home for school daily under great pressure. At school, due to lack of or inadequate counselling, these learners face further troubles as they find it difficult to cope with the challenges and expectations of the school. Many teachers in Lesotho, possibly because of a lack of observational skills and awareness, fail to realise when a student has acute stress problems. In most cases, when a student shows some abnormal behaviour or deteriorates academically, the teacher would either ignore the student or blame him or her for laziness and negligence without finding out the root cause.

As a result of these issues, the researcher finds it necessary to conduct a study to ascertain the factors that induce stress among Lesotho adolescents, and the coping strategies that the teenagers employ. After identifying the stress predictors, the intention is to proffer likely solutions to the problem.

### **1.3 FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM**

#### **1.3.1 Background of the study**

Investigating factors that affect adolescent well-being makes this an important study based on the researcher's experience in dealing with adolescents as a high school teacher. As Sharma and Sud (1990:

185) have noted, academic achievement is a priority for almost every educational institution and education professionals endeavour to achieve this goal. However, some students still find it difficult to cope with the demands of school and they resort to damaging behaviour such as smoking, alcohol abuse, over-eating, sexual promiscuity, and other self-destructive behaviours (Howard & Medway 2004: 291). Since the general belief is that stress can contribute to health disorders and poor academic performance, the problem to be investigated is the extent to which students at Lesotho High Schools are aware of stress-related issues. Another interest in the study is to find out how stress sources can be identified and how to cope with stress.

Suman and Gupta (1990: 185) investigated adolescent stress and found out that a vast majority of adolescents experience stress although they are unaware of the effect that stress has on their well-being. He also found out that many adolescents are ignorant of stress management and stress prevention. In this relation, Sakoane (1999: 5) opines that the students' ignorance could be due to the fact that school administration tends to ignore the importance of supportive mechanisms that could facilitate effective coping strategies. This seems to affirm the idea that adolescents need basic support, even though they may never articulate this need or understand it themselves (Stanley, 1996: 8; Frydenberg & Lewis, Bugalski, Cotta, McCarthy, Luscombe-Smith & Poole 2004: 117).

In Lesotho, almost all schools are operating without any formal counselling unit. As such, this has led to students' lack of information necessary to develop appropriate responses to stress. The Ministry of Education is on the verge of introducing counselling in schools. A few high schools were selected by the ministry as trial schools. However, the reality of both the home and the school situations which are liable to induce stress in adolescents suggest the need for immediate supportive mechanisms.

As pointed out earlier, adverse economic situations have led to a high increase in divorce, separation and instability in families in Lesotho. Some women whose husbands are not working, go to South African farms and other places in search of jobs. Only a few return home. Many abandon their families in the hands of their husbands in which case, many adolescent girls become objects of sexual abuse by their fathers.

Adolescents who fall victims of their fathers' sexual abuse cannot cope with the demands at schools. Apart from this, many Basotho adolescents are alarmed by their own physical development. This is illustrated by the nature of questions that teenagers often direct to the national newspaper help line. For instance, in the *Public Eye* (September 10, 1999: 11), two adolescents asked similar questions

concerning their physical development. A sixteen-year old boy had an unusual problem concerning breasts and did not know what to do. A girl, the same age, was concerned about her small breasts and late menstruation. This illustrates that potential stress during early adolescence includes characteristics related to puberty, peer acceptance, and familiar expectations (Spencer, Dupree, Swanson & Cunningham, 1998: 189; Howard & Medway, 2004: 391).

Helpful answers were provided by the help line. Nonetheless, the concern is that such adolescents might experience psychological strain for a considerable period before taking action. On the other hand, others may not even dare to ask such questions for fear of being identified. Hence, the researcher feels that the existence of formal, counselling services in schools could prevent this distress. Furthermore, if parents were as supportive to adolescents as expected, problems of this nature could be solved at the families' levels. Stanley (1994: 9); Howard & Medway, (2004: 391), therefore, attests that the presence and availability of dependable adult figure is crucial to the adolescent's psychological and physical security.

It appears, therefore, that institutions such as high schools need to be well equipped with competent personnel with observation skills and knowledge of actions to be taken by stress victims in coping with stressful events. Without high school teachers improving their skills and effectiveness in counselling learners with stress related problems, students will not achieve the expected results. A recent empirical study was carried out and confirms this view (Benson, 2000: 156-185). The study was conducted to determine the relationship between exposure to a relaxation response curriculum and academic achievement among secondary school students. In the curriculum, teachers were to teach relaxation response exercises and self-care strategies. The findings were that the students who had more exposure to the relaxation response curriculum showed an improvement in academic scores over the course of a two-year period. In attestation to this, Kraag, Zeegers, Kok, Hosman, Abu-Saad (2006: 449) underscore that school programmes targeting at relaxation training are effective in reducing stress.

In Lesotho, the initial orientation workshops for the selected schools regarding counselling services in high schools have mainly been attended by principals. It stands to be argued that exposing only principals and not teachers may not adequately address the situation as students' problems at school are usually first handled by class teachers. The personal experience of the researcher has been that students with difficulties are seldom appropriately attended to. They are either shouted at or punished severely for some undesirable measures may have been taken. In some other instances, the class teacher, due to a feeling of inadequacy, may postpone the meetings with their students after finding out what it may



take to assist them. This indefinite procrastination ultimately results in the students being left unaided. Not only does this frustrate the concerned students, but it also negatively affects the trust that students might have had in their teachers. Thus, the researcher agrees with Katona and Sizito (2000: 49) that “...one of the major elements of an effective curriculum is to counteract negative emotions.”

It is, therefore, in connection with the above that the researcher seeks to find out:

1. Prevalence of stress among Lesotho high school adolescents;
2. Factors causing stress amongst the adolescents;
3. Coping strategies high school students adopt for stress;
4. Ways of assisting the adolescents to manage and cope with stress

### **1.3.2 Research questions**

In the course of the study, the following questions will be answered:

1. To what extent do Lesotho adolescents experience stress?
2. What are the major predictors of stress among Lesotho adolescents?
3. Are there any gender and grade differences in the level of stress experienced?
4. How do the adolescents feel when they are stressed?
5. With whom do adolescents share their stress experiences?
6. What are their expectations of those from whom they seek help in order to minimise stress?
7. What stress adaptive coping strategies do these adolescents employ?

## **1.4 AIMS OF THE STUDY**

Learning cannot take place effectively and efficiently if learners are under stress. Teachers may not be able to enjoy teaching while dealing with the burdened students. Their output will be negatively affected if learners perform poorly. Similarly, students cannot learn optimally under stressful conditions because stress affects cognitive functioning. The researcher, therefore, feels that it is of vital importance for teachers to be enlightened on factors that can predict the learner's stress. This will enable them to become better equipped to counsel their students more effectively. It will further help them to plan suitable interventions to acquire appropriate coping skills.

The major concern of the study is to find out the extent to which Lesotho adolescents experience stress. Moreover, it intends to discover the factors that induce stress among them. It also aims at finding out more about students' perception and their expectations of home and school as a way of assisting them to minimise the harmful effects of stress. The researcher makes suggestions on expected supportive mechanisms from the school. The study is also intended to help Lesotho high school students and teachers to recognise the sources of adolescents' stress. This can help the adolescents to develop better strategies for managing stress. This can lead to better health and effectiveness in their studies and to avoid negative consequences of excessive and prolonged stress.

## **1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND SAMPLING**

Upon consideration of the problem: "The empowerment of the Lesotho adolescents experiencing stress", the researcher found the descriptive survey research design appropriate for the study. As McMillan and Schumacher (1993: 266) put it, descriptive research design entails the assessment of the nature of existing condition. It describes, inter alia, behaviours or other characteristics of a group of subjects.

In survey research the investigator selects a sample of respondents and administers a questionnaire or conducts interviews to collect information of interest. The data are gathered and used to describe characteristics of a certain population. Surveys are used to learn about people's behaviours, opinions, habits, desires and other types of information. They are used frequently in psychology and education because accurate information can be obtained for large numbers of people with a small sample (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993: 279).

In this case it was used to investigate the situation of Lesotho adolescents as far as stress manifests in their lives at the time of conducting the study.

The population of the study consisted of all the high school adolescents in the Maseru district in Lesotho. Non-probability sampling was used to select the sample: namely, convenience and purposive sampling. The sample comprised 300 students drawn from five high schools. Participants were drawn from Forms B and D (Grades 9 and 11) to ensure representation of both lower secondary and higher levels. The instrument used for data collection was a self-compiled questionnaire based on Adolescent Stress Questionnaire (ASQ) (Byrne & Mazanov 2000), and a reviewed literature. It was further

subjected to pre-testing among a group of 30 students who were not part of the final study but with characteristics similar to those who were used in the study (Forms B and D).

For data collection the researcher negotiated with principals of the sampled schools, and administered the questionnaires personally. The analysis of the data was carried out on the basis of the research questions formulated and explained under 1.4.

## **1.6 DEMARCATION AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The study was limited to five high schools in Maseru district – the city centre. This was due to time and financial constraints which did not allow for the coverage of all the high schools in Maseru. Predictors of stress and management strategies among high school adolescents were examined. However, it was not in the interest of the researcher to generalise the findings from the study to the entire country. Nor was it the aim of the study to investigate effects of stress on adolescents' academic performance or the effectiveness of different stress coping strategies.

## **1.7 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

### **1.7.1 Stress**

Stress is a term that has no universally accepted definition (Armacost, 1990: 105). Kausar and Munir (2004: 600) view stress as a relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and threatening to the well being. In Sakoane (1999: 4) stress is defined as the “non-specific response of the body to any demand”. He drew a distinction between eustress, which is a positive force that is the equivalent of finding excitement and challenge in life, and distress, which is the destructive form of stress. Generally, stress is associated with distress and only the negative form is thought of. It is this commonly accepted meaning of stress as something negative or undesirable that is used throughout this study.

### **1.7.2 Adolescence**

The term adolescence is derived from the Latin verb *adolescere*, which means “to grow up or to grow to adulthood” (Kruger 1992: 14). Adolescence is the period of life between childhood and adulthood (Van den Aardweg 1993: 10). It is also defined as the transition period to young adulthood (Kausar &

Munir 2004: 600). An adolescent, therefore, will be taken to mean a youth at the age between childhood and adulthood. The age limit will be arbitrarily ascribed to range between 13 years and 19 years.

### **1.7.3 Sexual child abuse**

Sexual child abuse means the exposure of children to sexual behaviour that is inappropriate to their age and psychosexual development and their role in the family (Keen & Budhia 1993: 5). In this case, sexually abused children are subjected to sexual behaviour for which they are not ready and to which they are too ignorant to consent. In the workshop organised for secondary schools' principals by the Lesotho Ministry of Education (2007: 15), it was indicated some men abuse children due to the myth that they would be cured of their HIV infection. This act violates accepted social and family norms.

### **1.7.4 Victim**

A victim is a person who suffers pain, harm, destruction as a result of others' actions (Longman 1991, s.v. "Victim"). In this study victim is used to indicate an individual who is subjected to harm or abuse and who neither has the power or the ability to defend himself or herself.

### **1.7.5 Empowerment**

In the context of this research, empowerment means assisting the adolescents to cope with stressful life events by means of exploring possible coping strategies.

## **1.8 PROGRAMME OF STUDY**

The delineation of the chapters in this dissertation is summarised hereunder.

**CHAPTER ONE:** It dealt with the introduction orientation, formulation of the problem, aims of the study, definition of concepts, research design and sampling, demarcation and delimitation of the study, and the programme of the investigation.

**CHAPTER TWO:** This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the literature in relation to adolescent stress. In the chapter, the following sub-topics were discussed:

1. Definition of stress
2. Awareness of adolescents stress
3. Mediators of stress
4. Reactions to stress
5. Coping with stress
6. Helping adolescents to handle stress
7. Summary of literature

**CHAPTER THREE:** Chapter three deals with the research methodology used for the study. The chapter entails the research, the population and sampling techniques. Research instruments, pre-testing of the instrument and the methods of data analysis were extensively elaborated.

**CHAPTER FOUR:** In chapter four the findings are presented and discussed.

**CHAPTER FIVE:** Chapter five ends with the conclusion, limitations of the study, and the recommendations for further research in this area.

## **1.9 SUMMARY**

Stress is a human phenomenon experienced frequently but differently by adolescents. Adults have to be aware that various factors can induce stress in adolescents. The importance of applying useful skills to help adolescents with stress cannot be overemphasised. In chapter two a review of literature on adolescent stress is presented.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Stress is a common phenomenon of everyday life. However, there are times that are more stressful in an individual's life than others. Adolescence has been found to be one such stressful period (Geisthardt & Munch 1996: 287, Kauser & Munir 2004: 600). Possible reasons for adolescent stress could be on account of biological changes, changing social roles, peer relationships which become more important, development of relationships with the opposite sex, and transition to high school. Although these factors can be stressful, they are not uniformly so for all adolescents. Few authors can afford to ignore the prevalence of stress among adolescents. Literature contains many findings about stress. However, the present study is organised under the following sub-headings:

- Definitions of stress
- Models for understanding stress
- Causes of stress
- Awareness of adolescents' stress
- Mediators of stress
- Responses to stress
- Consequences of stress
- Coping with stress
- Helping adolescents cope with stress

#### **2.2 DEFINITIONS OF STRESS**

Stress is a major concern to all and sundry. It is a consistent disturbing feature of modern life affecting everybody – children, adolescents and adults (Woodbridge 1998 a: 46). In addressing it, most authors have adopted different approaches as far as the definition of the term is concerned. As a result, the word is defined either explicitly or contextually. According to a study conducted by Phatsoane (1995: 5), stress is described as a tension experienced by an organism as a response to the stimuli that threaten the organism's existence and well-being.

Sakoane (1999: 8) opines that it is vital to explain stress in connection with pressure as well as coping resources which individuals use as they attempt to cope with their difficulties. Stress in this respect could refer to a situation whereby a victim experiences a significant excess of pressure that exceeds available coping resources. Yahaya (1998: 90) also presents stress in three ways. Firstly, he describes stress as any event which troubles, bothers, upsets or disturbs a person in his or her daily living. Secondly, stress is presented as any influence which disturbs the natural equilibrium of the body including physical injury, exposure, deprivation and emotional disturbances. Lastly, he views stress as the body's physical, mental and chemical reaction to circumstances that frighten, excite, confuse, endanger or irritate an individual.

On the other hand, Woodbridge (1998 a: 48) believes that in an attempt to conceptualise stress, three components are significant. These are cognitive, behavioural and physiological components. He defines physiological stress in terms of response. In this respect, he explains that certain demands produce certain physiological responses such as automatic arousal, neuro-endocrine changes and gastric ulceration. He also views cognitive stress in relation to the transaction between the person and the environment. From the transactional perspective, Woodbridge asserts:

*The stressfulness of the environmental events is greatly dependent on the person's perception of events (for example, whether they are perceived as threatening or non-threatening), and the impact of the potential stressor on the person depends on the available resources he/she has for coping with these events.*

According to the behavioural approach, however, stress is defined in terms of stimuli: it is considered as resulting from experiencing a number of threatening situations that make demands on the person. These threatening events include, inter alia, death of a parent, suspension from school, and breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend (Woodbridge 1998 a: 48, Byrne, Davenport & Mazanov 2007: 402).

### **2.3 MODELS FOR UNDERSTANDING STRESS**

Although the literature contains theoretical models for understanding the phenomenon of stress, Sue and Sue (1997: 191) highlight three of the most frequently cited. They are discussed in the ensuing paragraphs.

### **2.3.1 The General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)**

This is a three stage model proposed by Hans Selye in an attempt to understand the body's physical reaction to biological stressors. The three stages identified are resistance, alarm or adaptation and lastly, exhaustion and collapse (Sue & Sue 1997: 191-192). Each stage will be discussed saliently.

#### **2.3.1.1 *Alarm stage***

The first stage termed the alarm stage has two phases: the shock phase and the counter-shock phase (Edwards & Louw, 1998: 625). In the first shock phase, there is rapid lowering in the body's ability to cope with the stressor. In the second, the body's resources are mobilised to produce an emergency reaction. According to the authors, in this stage of heightened arousal, people often experience symptoms such as heartbeat, sweating and shaking.

#### **2.3.1.2 *Resistance stage***

The second phase is the stage of resistance, which involves the continued application of the body's coping mechanisms, which cease upon the achievement of the adaptation (Phatsoane, 1995: 8). It appears the body can successfully continue to resist stress for a considerable length of time. The early part of the resistance stage has been described as a positive variety of stress or eustress (Edwards & Louw, 1998: 626). However, this stage cannot continue indefinitely.

#### **2.3.1.3 *Exhaustion stage***

Eventually, the resource needed to cope with the stressors becomes depleted. When this happens, the person enters the third stage of exhaustion or collapse. This is the stage of an unpleasant and unhealthy form of stress. During the exhaustion stage, the person feels fatigued and exhausted, struggles to concentrate, is easily irritated and can become extremely pessimistic. Edwards and Louw (1998: 26) go further to assert that at this stage, if there is no form of intervention, death can even result.

#### **2.3.1.4 *A critique of GAS***

Although widely cited, Selye's model does not acknowledge the role of psychological and social stressors (Kruger, 1992: 62). His use of stress concepts has also been found inconsistent and ambiguous. He sometimes describes GAS as the manifestation of stress and on other occasions, as the reaction to



stress (Phatsoane, 1995: 8, Kruger, 1992: 62). He also disregards the individual's ability to recognise stress and act in various ways to change his or her situation.

Since adolescence is a period of physical, emotional and social changes, this model proposed by Selye has been found to fulfil only one aspect of adolescent stress, namely, physiological stressors. The other two aspects are neglected (Roets & Lewis, 2002: 207).

### **2.3.2 The Life Change Model (LCM)**

According to this model, major external events are not necessarily precursors to stress. The LCM explains stress as being the result of changes in a person's life. These changes could be large or small, desirable or undesirable. The collection of small changes can, therefore, be as powerful as the cumulative effect of one major stressor (Roets & Lewis, 2002: 208). The work of Holmes and Holmes as well as Rache contributed to the formulation of this particular theory (Sue & Sue, 1997: 193).

#### **2.3.2.1 A critique of the LCM**

According to Sue and Sue (1997: 194-195), although physical and psychological illness are in part caused by stressful life events, one cannot conclude that stress alone is the cause of these illnesses. Apart from that, the LCM approach mainly hinges on the idea of change that causes illness, even though much stress arises from chronic or repeated conditions of living. These conditions, as Kruger (1992: 78) puts them, include boredom, continuing tension in a family relationship, isolation and loneliness, absence of meaning and commitment.

### **2.3.3 The Transactional Model (TM)**

GAS considers stress as the body's reaction to stressors. On the other hand, LCM perceives stress as being caused by external events. Neither considers the individual's perception or interpretation of a stressful event or life changes. The research of Richard S. Lazarus is of importance here. Lazarus formulated the TM theory that stress occurs neither in the person, nor the situation alone, but in a transaction between the two – hence, the transaction model (Roets & Lewis, 2002: 208, Frydenberg & Lewis 2004: 26). According to this model, an understanding of a person's interpretation of a stressful event is important (Sue & Sue, 1997: 197). From the transactional perspective, it is contended that:

- The stressfulness of environmental events is greatly dependent on the person's perception of events (whether they are perceived as threatening or not).
- The impact of the potential stressors on the person depends on the available resources he or she has for coping with these events (Woodbridge, 1998 a: 48).

### **2.3.3.1 A critique of the TM Theory**

Several shortcomings have been identified in TM (McNamara, 2000 b: 8-9). Debate remains concerning whether people need to appraise something as stressful to have stress-related emotions. In other words, sometimes people can react in a certain way without ever having thought about an event in a particular light. Also, an underlying assumption of this version of stress is that there are general personalities with certain traits and patterns of behaviour. However, an argument could be that people do not always respond to stress in a predictable way according to personality type. Research shows that different coping strategies are used in different situations.

The given criticisms, however, do not rule out the significance of TM theory for this research. It recognises the adolescent's perception or interpretation of stressors. As maintained by Lewis (2001: 272-288), one person's interpretation and subsequent experiencing of an event may differ profoundly from that of another. Aspects of the individual as well as the context in which the adolescent is functioning are thus taken into account.

Given these notes on GAS, LCM as well as TM, Sue and Sue (1997: 195) significantly note that "No one factor is enough to cause illness [but] illness results from a complex interaction of psychological, physiological, and cognitive stressors." The implication here could be that although the models seem to be different, their proponents seem to have one objective in mind. They provide the boarder basis to understand adolescent stress.

The next section will deal more specifically with some sources of adolescent stress.

## **2.4 CAUSES OF STRESS**

In relation to stress, many authors, (Kruger 1992: 102-116, Woodbridge 1998 a: 62 and Yahaya 1998: 91) point out some conditions that give rise to stress. For example, Yahaya (1998: 91) indicates that development of stress symptoms could be a function of several factors operating within or outside individuals. According to him, such stress predicting factors include individual, group and organisational factors.

Under individual factors, Yahaya (1998: 91) points out that someone who is competitive is likely to be more stressful than one who is not competitive. Group factors concern peer or group influences. As he “” classroom and poor teaching facilities under organisational factors.

Woodbridge (1998 b: 62) also indicated that a noticeable degree of adolescents’ stress emanates from three sources: pressure at home, pressure at school, and pressure other than school and home.

### **2.4.1 Pressure at home**

The predictors of stress under this factor includes death of parent or sibling, marital discord, work involvement of parent, socio-economic hardships, crowding, frequent transfers to a new home, parental alcoholism, child abuse, parental discipline techniques and adolescent autonomy (Kruger, 1992: 102-117).

#### **2.4.1.1 *Death of parent or siblings***

Death of a loved one such as a parent or a sibling has always been a bitter experience (Murburg & Bru, 2004: 387). This may lead to reduced academic achievement. According to Kruger (1992: 102), death of a sibling is harder to accept than that of a parent. She points out that adolescents like other people believe that only old people die. Hence, a child’s death has a greater impact on the adolescent’s faith resulting in psychological adjustment reactions.

#### **2.4.1.2 *Marital discord***

Marital discord is rampant in the Lesotho context. In many families, parents are constantly in conflict. Ultimately, such families end up in separation, or at worse, divorce. Moreover, the problem with such

cases in Lesotho is that they are hardly ever documented. According to information from Lesotho Mounted Police Service at the Crime Prevention and Gender Issues organised by the Lesotho Institute of Research (September 30 - October 2, 2002) families hold such matters as highly private and are hence reluctant to disclose them to anybody. As a high school teacher, the researcher often interacts with oppressed students who ultimately trace their problems back to family conflicts and discords. As pointed out by Trad and Greenblatt (1990: 20), frequent marital discord leads to significant aggression among adolescents.

#### ***2.4.1.3 Parental work involvement***

According to Kruger (1992: 109), work involvement of parents is a stressor. Work involvement has two phases: the case whereby both parents work, and an incidence whereby both are unemployed. Kruger is of the view that children of workaholic parents are always deprived of their parental attention and support. Hence, in an attempt to regain the undivided attention of their workaholic parents, they may resort to behaviours such as vandalism and armed robbery that cause an increased level of family stress. On the other hand, parental unemployment influences the standard of living in the family circle. Particularly significant to the adolescent is material wealth, which improves peer acceptance.

#### ***2.4.1.4 Socio-economic hardship***

Children from poor families have been found to be less motivated and produce a poor academic performance (Kruger, 1992: 110). This is as a result of parents' inability to provide for the basic needs of the family. Another identifiable cause of stress is parental alcoholism and substance abuse. Although there is lack of research to support this, parental alcoholism is a serious social problem in Lesotho. Many children suffer neglect due to this problem. When parents are under the influence of alcohol they may abuse their children or molest them.

#### ***2.4.1.5 Crowding***

Older children are also affected by crowding and household density, that is, the number of persons per room (Kruger, 1992: 109). As they grow older, adolescents value privacy. It is in this process that they normally demand individual rooms. Where parents fail to provide individual rooms, the result is adolescent-parent conflict. Although it may not always be to provide individual room for each child, this implies that parents should consider this as a potential stressor and act proactively where possible.

#### **2.4.1.6 Home transfer**

Mates and Allison (1992: 461) have identified moving from one's original habitation and attending a new school as a type of stressor. Moves can result from parental job transfers or attraction to a better place. The implication is that adolescents have to re-settle themselves in some areas of their lives. These include new schools, building new circles of friends and encountering new demands of new teachers. Moving, therefore, has the potential of inflicting emotional stress on children and adolescents. It can also affect their academic achievement, particularly if the affected adolescents possess low intelligence.

#### **2.4.1.7 Child abuse**

Abuse by parents or siblings is one of the most stressful experiences of adolescence. Among the three distinguishable kinds of abuse – physical abuse and neglect, sexual maltreatment and emotional abuse and neglect – sexual abuse is the most prevalent among youths with an increasingly negative psychological impact on the victims (Ramasar, 1997: 34).

Ramasar (1997: 34-35) outlined the distinctions of the three kinds of abuse as follows: physical abuse refers to the intentional, severe and persistent physical injury of the child by the parent or other caregivers. Usually such abuse takes the form of beating, kicking, punching or burning with cigarettes or boiling water. Common consequences are bone fracture, brain and cranial injuries, haemorrhages and internal injuries. On the other hand, physical neglect implies that parents or guardians do not provide the child's minimum physical means even though they have the means to do so. This maltreatment has the potential of exposing the adolescents to hazardous situations. This includes cases in which they may look outside the family for the gratification of basic needs. This exposes the victims to different forms of sexual exploitation whereby they are paid for their service with, money, trips, clothes, liquors, drugs and special privileges.

Emotional abuse and neglect as other forms of child abuse are characterised by adults' persistent criticism of children, humiliation and issuing of threats. This inhibits the child's normal development of positive self-concept and esteem. Emotional neglect happens when the parents ignore to attend to important aspects of the child's care such as provision of physical needs, safety, a sense of love and belonging and discipline (Ramasar, 1997: 35). Whatever form it takes, abuse betrays the victim's trust in the adults and can be very traumatic.

#### **2.4.1.8 Parental discipline techniques and adolescent autonomy**

Parental discipline techniques and adolescent autonomy form the last predictor of stress to be discussed among the stressors emanating from the home. Kruger (1992: 116) asserts that parents and adolescents get into clashes due to conflicting views over independence and discipline. Although parents have the desire that their children mature and act independently, they sometimes disagree with the adolescents about their degree of the autonomy. Parents get into conflict with their adolescent children in matters concerning time to be at home, style of dress, music, money spending patterns, indulgence in liquor and smoking. In response to this quest for autonomy, parents apply inappropriate parenting practices and disciplinary measures that may raise adolescents' stress level significantly. This may imply that parents should apply correctional measure proportionate to their adolescents' level of growth and maturity. They may consider controlling their emotions when administering punishment. Most importantly, punishment could be administered with love and affection. It should aim at correcting the unwanted behaviour, and not to harm the adolescent.

#### **2.4.2 Pressure at school**

The second of the major stressful life events of the adolescents according to Woodbridge (1998 b: 62) is pressure at school. This includes pressure due to too much homework, learning difficulties (possibly due to poor skills), pressure from teachers, getting poor marks at school and repeating a class at school. Tyszkowa (1998: 97) adds the following to pressure at school: unclear questions, difficult formulation of questions by teachers, frequent replacement of one teacher by another, accumulation of tests, being asked to solve difficult tasks in a short period of time and public criticism by teachers and classmates. The effect of this factor may be frequent strikes (students boycotting classes) and absenteeism from school or dropping out of school.

According to Suman and Gupta (1990: 8), school related factors could be classified into three categories. These are examination system, homework, attitude of teachers and attitude of parents.

##### **2.4.2.1 Examination system**

The exploratory study conducted by the Suman and Gupta (1990: 8) indicated that the examination system is one of the academic stressors. Examinations do not always assess students' academic performance. Instead, the system tests the students' memory. Academic stress, therefore, creeps in due

to uncertainty of remembering what has been learnt. The fear is also created by secrecy of examination papers, uncertainty of getting deserved marks, negative consequence of failure, self responsible for failure and ego threat. The situation is complicated by vast syllabi and partiality in marking papers (Suman & Gupta, 1990: 8). In view of this, the researcher wants to find out the applicability of the examination system as a cause of stress in the Lesotho context.

#### **2.4.2.2 Homework**

The burden of homework was found to be another factor leading to academic stress. Suman and Gupta (1990: 8) indicated that students often feel that part of the homework they are given is not only too much but also boring and monotonous. This seems to interfere with the adolescents' time to play and pursue their leisure activities. Apart from the time factor, it has also been stressed that inability to complete the given homework leads to punishment. These negative consequences may be a major cause of stress among adolescents who are under pressure to complete the work

#### **2.4.2.3 Attitude of teachers**

Attitude of teachers regarding punishment and partiality in marking, also leads to academic stress. Fear of punishment forces an adolescent to complete his or her work, sometimes without even understanding it. The students' burden is compounded by the shortage of teachers and low teaching competence, in some cases. Often, classes are so huge that teachers cannot find any time for individual attention. According to Suman and Gupta (1990: 9), a feeling of neglect develops in the students and not being liked by the teacher makes the students reluctant to come to school.

#### **2.4.2.4 Attitude of parents**

Parents' expectations as perceived by most of the students are too high (Suman & Gupta 1990: 9). Sometimes, these unrealistic expectations can lead to a sense of burden for the adolescents. Most parents push their adolescents to get higher grades. Since most adolescents have different goals from those of parents this conflict may lead to lack of parental support. Difficulty in adjustment at home can lead to academic stress. Another factor can be that parents expect their children to do better than their siblings. In trying to push a child, they may unknowingly develop inferiority in the other (Suman & Gupta 1990: 9). In trying to please their parents and avoid punishment, the adolescent undergoes academic stress.

**TABLE 2.1: School related stressors**

<p><b>I. Teaching methods</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teachers who cover materials so quickly that students have trouble keeping up.</li> <li>▪ Teachers who fail to explain what their classes intend to achieve.</li> <li>▪ Boring lessons.</li> </ul>	<p><b>V. Personal organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not completing an assignment by due date.</li> <li>▪ Forgetting to do an assignment.</li> <li>▪ Learning the wrong material for a test.</li> <li>▪ Missing classes.</li> <li>▪ Arriving late for a class.</li> </ul>
<p><b>II. Student-teacher relationship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unfair treatment by some teachers.</li> <li>▪ Misunderstanding with teachers.</li> </ul>	<p><b>VI. Relationship with parents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Too much pressure to do well at school.</li> <li>▪ Getting along with parents.</li> </ul>
<p><b>III. School load</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Examinations.</li> <li>▪ Studying for examinations.</li> <li>▪ Too much assessment in school.</li> <li>▪ Writing assignments.</li> <li>▪ Too much homework.</li> <li>▪ Learning new skills.</li> </ul>	<p><b>VII. Anxiety about the future</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Waiting for test/exam results.</li> <li>▪ Waiting for final results (Junior Certificate).</li> <li>▪ Worrying whether one will be accepted in the tertiary course desired.</li> <li>▪ Worrying whether there will be a job at completion.</li> </ul>
<p><b>VI School environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hot classrooms.</li> <li>▪ Crowded classroom.</li> <li>▪ Poor classroom lighting.</li> <li>▪ Noisy classrooms.</li> <li>▪ Cold classrooms.</li> </ul>	<p><b>VIII. Feeling vulnerable</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Feeling negative about personal ability to cope with academic demands.</li> <li>▪ Being asked to give an answer in class.</li> <li>▪ Giving a wrong answer in class.</li> </ul>

Source: Burnett and Fanshawe (1997: 422)

### **2.4.3 Pressure other than school and home experiences**

The last of the three categories of stress is pressure other than school and home experiences. This includes among others, thinking errors (Woodbridge, 1998 b: 62). To this end, Kruger (1995: 95) adds the following as the other causes of stress to the adolescents: self, peer, group, culture, and outside



world. Stress predictors induced by self include biological changes, physical development, self-identity and appearance. On the other hand, stress predicted by culture could entail theft, politics, and religion. Advertisements on television can constitute television stress and technological events.

#### **2.4.3.1 *Self***

Self in this context refers to the individual adolescent. Several stressors impinge on the adolescent's self. These include the forming of self-identity, biological changes, physical development, and appearance (Roets & Lewis, 2002: 209). Adapting to physiological changes associated with puberty is psychologically difficult for many early adolescents. With the onset of puberty, physical appearance and body image become central to their overall self-image (Spencer et al, 1998: 190). According to Spencer et al, most early adolescents are more concerned about their physical appearance than any other aspect of themselves. Physical characteristics not only influence adolescents' self-esteem, but also their peers' perceptions of them. Undesirable physical characteristics make the adolescent vulnerable to ridicule and isolation.

#### **2.4.3.2 *Peer group***

Kruger (1992: 97) identifies three types of peer group: the clique, the crowd and the gang. Kruger views a clique as a small intimate group comprising two to nine members who share the same interests and backgrounds. On the other hand, a crowd comprises twenty to thirty members and can also be seen as an association of cliques. A gang, in contrast, consists of a group of adolescents who are often associated with illegal, antisocial and criminal activities.

Peer group pressure can act as a stressor in the life of the adolescent. This has been found particularly in the following areas: dating attitudes, sexual activity and use of drugs and alcohol (Hoberg, 2003: 241). Competition and rivalry are other areas which create stress in the life of adolescents. In certain social occasions, in attempt to conform, the adolescent sometimes aspires to possess better, bigger, more beautiful and expensive items than the peers. Inability to keep up in this competition can cause severe stress for the adolescent.

Social loneliness acts as a stressor in the lives of many adolescents. According to Bowker, Bukowski and Sippola (2000: 220), this loneliness could be viewed as a feeling of rejection by peers. It implies not being connected to a group of people, not belonging. Kruger (1992: 97) attests that some adolescents

are rejected for their aggressive, disruptive, bothersome and defiant behaviours. On the other hand, others tend to be isolated, forgotten or ignored, and they have no friends. This feeling of rejection itself is stressful.

The association between stressful life events and substance abuse has been investigated by a number of researchers. Hoberg (2003: 223) found out that frequent intoxication (from alcohol, dagga and mandrax, cocaine, heroin, and ecstasy) was motivated by peer group pressure. One of the factors that have been found to contribute to adolescent substance abuse is an attempt to cope with stress (Newcomb, 1994: 164). This, however, inevitably leads to heightened stress. It also clusters with other stressors such as clashes with the law, parents and teachers (Kruger, 1992: 98).

#### **2.4.3.3 Culture**

Stress can also be predicted by the culture and society of an individual adolescent (Kruger, 1992: 95). In this regard, Hoberg (2003: 245) attests that social norms are favourable to factors such as substance abuse especially alcohol. This is because alcohol is freely available to adolescents. In many instances no questions are asked when adolescents purchase alcohol. Many public bars welcome them even during school hours. This is very rampant in the Lesotho context.

Other factors include inconsistent familial monitoring practices, and disorganised neighbourhoods (Hoberg, 2003: 224). Some parents have lost control over their adolescents. Except when parents are at home with their adolescents, in most cases they do not care about the welfare of the adolescents outside home. Thus, one of the main reasons that adolescents are susceptible to peer influence is that they are often more rewarded by the attention and approvals of their peers than their parents (Pennal, 1994: 23).

Community structures have become disorganised and dysfunctional. There is an increasing large-scale disruption of family life which has brought about an unstable network of social relationships (Prinsloo, 2003: 281). According to Prinsloo, fragmented care in the growing number of female-headed and child-headed households cause a lack of control, attention, guidance and a lack of male identification figures in the society. The result is the breakdown of authority and discipline. This has led to high rates of crime and violence especially among adolescents. Moral licentiousness among adults and young people has also led to the disastrous AIDS pandemic, which endangers the future of adolescents.

#### **2.4.3.4 *The outside world***

According to Kruger (1992: 129), outside world stressors include technological stress and future shock, television stress, Satanism and occultism. Arnold (1990: 14) observes that the accelerating pace of technological revolution or post-industrial revolution is not as stressful for children and adolescents as it is for adults. The reason for this is that adults have the dual burden of unlearning the familiar while adjusting to the new.

It is the feeling of the researcher, however, that the use of advanced technology, rather than the acquisition of skills, can be stressful for the adolescent. For example, computer and television games require not only skill, but also considerable powers of concentration. Playing such games for a short period of time can be relaxing. On the other hand, long hours in front of the computer without healthy social interaction can be a source of stress for the individual.

Continuing on this theme, Burns and Arnold (1990: 95) assert that availability of electricity is associated with earlier onset of menarche. Rapid maturation is partly explained by better nutrition in electrified, industrialised cultures. Nonetheless, controlled experiments with farm animals confirmed that supplementing daylight with artificial nocturnal light promotes more rapid growth, earlier onset of fertility and even increased productive vigour. The early onset of puberty, possibly before the adolescent is cognitively and emotionally ready for it, can be caused in part by technological advances. This can be a special stress factor in adolescence.

Another pressure on adolescents is the bombardment of the media – especially television. In the course of their viewing, adolescents see things that they never would have been exposed to in pre-television days (Kruger, 1992: 132). These include violence in many forms: drug abuse, alcoholism, sex and the horrors of war.

Advertisements on television also exert considerable stress to the adolescents. This happens when desires are created upon viewing which cannot be satisfied. Adolescents begin to think that their acceptance into a group and their self-worth depends on wearing certain designs and brands of clothes. Failure to acquire such materials results in a negative, low self-concept (Kruger, 1992: 133).

#### **2.4.3.5 Satanism and occultism**

Colliers (2004: 1) testifies of occultism and Satanism as sources of trouble for adolescents. According to Brits (in Kruger 1992: 134), different types and degrees of Satanism are distinguishable. These range from orgies where sex, violence and drugs are always present, to ritual 'blood covenants' and experiments with various forms of meditation and fortune-telling. He also notes that a certain type of personality manifested in both adults and adolescents tend to become trapped in Satanism. The people involved are usually among those who suffer from the destructive effects of major derailments in their lives. These happen to be adolescents who come from broken homes and frequently have had negative encounters with figures of authority.

Many adolescents turn to Satanism because they consider it to be a means of gaining power. They feel they will be able to impress others and make their voices heard by instilling fear. Stressors that cluster with Satanism and occultism include sexual violence, drug abuse and frequently, child abuse and molestation (Kruger 1992: 134). Fear of detention and arrest, or fear of the 'leaders' of groups may also cause severe stress. Even adolescents, who are not directly involved with Satanism but lack a soundly based religious faith, may experience serious stress. This may be due to uncertainty or worry about the participation of members of their peer group in these activities.

#### **2.4.3.6 Thinking error**

Four types of thinking error that provoke anxiety among adolescents have also been identified (Woodbridge, 1998 b: 62). The first thinking error is called catastrophising. This is where the teenager expects disaster in the absence of real danger. The next thinking error is exaggerating, in which case minor events are viewed as absolute failures. Following this is over-generalisation. This is experienced when one difficult experience is translated into a principle thereby affecting one's entire life. Finally, Woodbridge identifies the error of ignoring the positive. This is characterised by instances of overlooking past success and imagining negative results.

#### **2.4.4 High school students' perception of sources of stress: A case study**

Mates and Allison (1992: 461-474) adopted yet another approach to finding out sources of stress and coping strategies of high school students. The data were derived from a series of focus group interviews with Grade 10 students from three high schools in metropolitan Toronto. The purpose was to hear

directly from the students how some of these factors induce stress in them. A focus group in this context refers to an open-ended discussion with about seven to ten respondents, facilitated by a moderator (Mates & Allison, 1992: 464). One focus group interviewed was conducted at each of the three high schools. Two facilitators met privately with groups to discuss two general questions: “What are the general sources of stress and pressure in the everyday lives of the students?” and, “In general, how do students deal with or cope with these kinds of problems?” The focus group interviews were audio recorded.

Five different categories of stress emerged from the focus groups. These were parent/family, work/money, friends, gangs/strangers and addiction/drugs. Each of these categories is presented below.

#### **2.4.4.1 Parents and family**

Parent and families were reported as sources of stress among students. Students described pressure from parents to do well in school and/or at sports (Mates & Allison, 1992: 465-407).

*And then you take up doing it and if your parent was really good at it, then he's going to expect you to be really good at it.*

Students also complained about parental abuse and yelling. Again, they showed concern about problems in communication or in the ability to discuss things with their parents without arguing:

*Well, the parents have some problems of their own and they just take them out on you, like just yell at you.*

*If you argue, they get mad. If they are arguing with you and you don't say anything, they still get mad.*

Another issue the students remarked on concerns parental control. They were forced to do certain things or not allowed to do others:

*You are old enough to know that; you're too young to do that – well, what are you?*

*When you act older, they want you to act younger.*

*They're telling you not to do this, telling you not to do that; that you're old enough to do this. And they bring up all this stuff to make you feel guilty for what you are old enough to do.*

Most significantly, students reported problems with their siblings: fighting, comparison made between them by parents, and responsibility for them. One boy commented with reference to his mother and siblings:

*She doesn't like you as much as the others. Then you have a bad feeling.*

#### **2.4.4.2 Work and money**

The second category of stress reported by students was work/money. Students noted that they never have enough money. One of the boys stated:

*If I don't have money, there's nothing to do; unless, like I skateboard, but then you need money – if you're thirsty, you need a drink or you are hungry. This whole world revolves around money right now, to me.*

Most students, however, were not thinking about the work they would do when they finished school. To this effect, two boys commented:

*A lot of kids are not thinking about it like me.*

Even students who knew what they wanted to do when they finished school were not thinking of the future. One of the comments was:

*I know what I want; I'm just not thinking about it*

#### **2.4.4.3 Friends**

Friends are another category of stressor reported as inducing stress. All the students cited peer pressure as a source of stress, yet they had conflicting opinions. Pressure to engage in deviant activities such as

stealing or smoking were cited as sources of stress. However, many students had different views of peer pressure:

*Peer pressure is just a scapegoat (A boy).*

*I don't believe in peer pressure, because if you don't want to, you just won't do it (A girl).*

Some students indicated either that peer pressure did not exist, or that it was a problem for younger or “more immature” students. Though they stated that they did not believe in peer pressure, during the discussion on friends, they did make indirect reference to it.

*When you got your parents wanting you to go one way or your friends wanting you to go another, which is really hard (A girl).*

*Like they say, “Come on, let's go somewhere.” You know that you cannot do that but ... you know you go with your friend because you don't want to lose them (A boy).*

When the issue of boyfriends/girlfriends was raised, students did not report experiencing pressure to have a boyfriend/girlfriend. However, they did state that stress was experienced in the relationship itself. One of the boys indicated:

*Say you like your girlfriend a lot, and you are talking to her or something and she is acting negative to you, that makes you mad.*

Girls reported pressure from boyfriends to become sexually active. They also stated problems with boyfriends who are controlling them, as illustrated by the following comment:

*You can't wear this. This is too tight. This is too short.*

#### **2.4.4.4 Addiction and Drugs**

Addiction to drugs was found to be a category cited by boys in particular. This included conflict with parents about students' use of drugs and alcohol. Also included were pressures from friends to engage in smoking, drinking alcohol and using drugs:

*You are at a party and everybody is drinking. Your friends are drinking. Everyone is laughing because you are not drunk. You are just sitting there, so you want to get drunk too so you can laugh along.*

#### **2.4.4.5 Gangs and school**

In the aspect of gangs and fear of strangers, some boys argued for the need to belong to a gang so as to be able to fight people who are hostile to them – strangers.

*It is good to have a lot of friends because say you are out somewhere, right, like you are fighting, a couple of guys come and beat you up. Then you get your friends and go and beat them up.*

#### **2.4.4.6 School**

Time conflicts resulting from school were mentioned, such as work, getting homework done, or having too much home work.

*The teacher gives you homework for one hour and they forget that the other teachers all give you one hour. (A boy).*

*You have a time when you don't have any tests, and then you have a time when you have five tests on one day. (A girl).*

Problems with teachers were also reported as a source of stress. The problems included strict rules, expecting too much, teacher prejudice and teachers who did not treat students as grown-ups. Some students complained:



*They like holding you too much.*

*You have it from your parents and from your teachers. They all give you the same story:  
“You are capable of doing better work.”*

*They treat us like kids too much ... They don't have to patronise us like that*

.

From the foregoing case study, the three factors of stress among adolescents which were discussed earlier under section 2.4 were supported by the actual utterances of some students. It appears the adolescents tend to be worried about almost everything that forms their immediate environment. Conclusively, one can say that the stimulus that causes one to fail in one's expectations is a predictor of stress – a stressor.

To this effect, Heubeck and O'Sullivan (1998: 133) summarise frequent and distressing school hassles as follows:

**2.4.4.7 Table 2.2 Summary of Adolescents' Stressors**

<p><b>Home Hassles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Parents being critical on home work.</li> <li>▪ Parents giving too much jobs.</li> <li>▪ Parents expecting better grades.</li> <li>▪ Parents checking on students with teachers.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Teacher Hassles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A teacher being unfair.</li> <li>▪ A teacher shouting at a student.</li> <li>▪ A teacher ignoring a student.</li> <li>▪ A teacher refusing to listen.</li> <li>▪ Detention or other punishment task.</li> <li>▪ Teachers' negative comments about students' work.</li> <li>▪ Too noisy classroom.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Scholastic Hassles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Forgetting things that need to be done.</li> <li>▪ Trouble with reading writing and spelling.</li> <li>▪ Too much homework or homework too hard.</li> <li>▪ Having to speak in front of the class.</li> <li>▪ Sitting for a test.</li> <li>▪ Trouble with difficult subject.</li> <li>▪ Too many things to do.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Peer Hassles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Being left alone.</li> <li>▪ Being deliberately hurt.</li> <li>▪ Other teasing and picking on one.</li> <li>▪ Difficulties with friends.</li> <li>▪ Being interrupted or cut off by others.</li> <li>▪ Other students' negative comments about one's work.</li> <li>▪ Swearing, foul language or upsetting ideas.</li> <li>▪ Problems with other students.</li> <li>▪ Other students refusing to become friends with one.</li> </ul>

**Source:** Heubeck and O'Sullivan (1998: 133).

Having looked at some causes of stress and the perception of students on causes of stress, it may be logical to draw adults' attention to adolescents' stress prevalence. This is because during this potentially stressful period, family relationships are still crucial. The role of parents changes from nurturing, protecting and socialising to supporting, guiding, and directing adolescents in their growing autonomy and preparation for their adult role. Nonetheless, parents cannot assist, direct or guide adolescents through stressful time periods if parents are unaware of their adolescents' stressful situations.

## 2.5 AWARENESS OF ADOLESCENT STRESS

Although adolescence is no longer believed to be a period of universal storm and stress for young people, it has, however, been found as a time of unprecedented change: biological, cognitive, psychological and social change (Hartos & Power 1997: 371). These authors are of the view that the changes experienced by adolescents in this stage expose them to more life stressors than they experienced as children and or pre adolescents. Examples of such changes include an increased conflict between adolescents and their parents (Paikoff & Brooks, 1991: 47-66). In the article the author stated that parents and adolescents often quarrel over mundane things such as cleaning of the house. In addition, adults and adolescents' relationship have been found to mostly demonstrate emotional distancing characterised by withholding of feelings, diminished closeness, and less frequently expressed affection. Moreover, family relationships are likely to become distressed as parents and adolescents experience decreased positive and increased negative affects and fewer shared activities (Holmbeck & Hill 1991: 1030.)

Even if family relationships are not distressed, parents and their children spend less time together during adolescence than they did during childhood. Therefore, adolescents have more freedom, more responsibility, and more life experience with less parental supervision. As a result, some of the responsibilities and life experiences may lead to stress.

Another important change during adolescence is that adults and adolescents' communication often becomes strained. For example, in the study carried out by Grannis (1992: 7-19), parents and adolescents rarely indicated having discussion on topics such as sexuality, and drugs. Another area of research which focuses on adults and adolescents has indicated that adults and adolescents disagree about parenting behaviour and about which issues are under the realm of parental authority (Smetana, 1998: 321). While adolescents wish to be more independent, Smetana (1998: 321) found that parents would still endeavour to ensure their parental supremacy over adolescents.

In view of the above, it is likely that adults may not be fully aware of adolescents' stress given evidence of changing parent/adolescent relationships, and low parent/adolescent agreement about daily experience. Hence the researcher feels that adolescents may not be adequately assisted as far as stress is concerned while such low level of awareness in their parents prevails.

As indicated earlier, (2.3.3.1), different individuals respond differently to given situations. Hence, the following section deals with factors responsible to varying interpretations of similar circumstances.

## **2.6 MEDIATORS OF STRESS**

Ainslie, Shafer and Reynolds (1996: 914) define stress mediators as “a variable’s ability to protect the individual from the deleterious effects of negative life event”. These negative life events are behavioural and personality characteristics which increase or decrease a person’s vulnerability to stress. The moderators of stress have been identified as falling under two categories: factors intrinsic to the individual, and extrinsic factors (Kruger, 1992: 136). Factors intrinsic to the person include, inter alia, appraisal or perception of events, sex, locus of control, temperament and personality, self concept and problem solving abilities. On the other hand, extrinsic factors entail attachment, family support and social support.

### **2.6.1 Intrinsic factors**

#### ***2.6.1.1 Appraisal or perception of events***

With regard to perceptions of events, the idea is that the adolescent who tends to interpret stressors as threatening will have a negative experience of them. However, the one who sees stressors as challenges would engage with them in a more positive and productive way (Kruger, 1992: 136-137). According to Trad and Greenblatt (1990: 36), age also plays a role as a buffer of stress. It is contended that different kinds of stressors affect children at different ages and stages of development. Early adolescents have been found to be more influenced by peer pressure as opposed to late adolescents. Late adolescents seem to be attached to the peer group’s values, ideas and expectations. As a result, they are able to be more assertive than early adolescents.

#### ***2.6.1.2 Locus of control***

Another moderator of stress under consideration is locus of control. This denotes the degree to which an individual perceives that reinforcements are contingent upon his or her own behaviour or attitudes versus external forces (Ainslie et al, 1996: 914). This means that individuals vary in the tendency to attribute personal control in a given situation. Trad and Greenblatt (1990: 39) assert that youngsters with a strong locus of control rate stressors as manageable or controllable and experience them as a

challenge and engage productively with them. At the other extreme, those with external locus of control tend to be controlled, at the mercy of forces and power outside themselves. They, therefore experience a stressor as threatening.

### **2.6.1.3 Resiliency and vulnerability**

Resiliency and vulnerability are closely related to locus of control as mediating factors. Resiliency factors have been described as “personal and social resource in young people that enable them to cope with stress in a constructive manner, even in adverse situations” (McNamara, 2000 a: 53). Some adolescents are more vulnerable to stress than others. Adolescents who are more resilient or less vulnerable are also known as stress-resistant adolescents. According to Kruger (1993: 139), such adolescents display distinctive characteristics of the following nature:

- They are personable, sensitive to the feelings and needs of others, empathic, well-liked by peers and adults, verbally fluent.
- They think for themselves, have good attention processes, are problem solvers, and are reflective and resourceful.
- They have capacities for frustration tolerance and gratification delay, are optimistic and have a sense of humour.
- They have a positive self-regard and self-esteem, an internal locus of control, and accept responsibility.

### **2.6.1.4 Gender**

One of the robust findings, regardless of issues examined or methodology employed, is that female adolescent record higher stress scores, on average, than males do. This has been attributed to the idea that parents and teachers tend to be less supportive of girls’ attempts at mastering tasks than boys. Groer, Thomas and Shoffer (1992: 210) posit that young boys are taught to be independent, while young girls learn how to express emotions, be sensible and dependent (Payne, 2000: 272 & Trad, Greenblatt 1996: 287).

However, Trad and Greenblatt (1990: 38) have come up with evidence that boys are more vulnerable to stress than girls. On the other hand, De-Anda, Baroni, Boskin, Morgan and Ow (2000: 450) found no gender difference in the stressors experienced by the respondents. It seems there is no consensus on the issue of gender as the moderator of stress. Consequently, there is a need to find out what the situation is in the context of Lesotho.

#### ***2.6.1.5 Problem solving abilities***

Problem solving abilities form part of what moderates stress. As stated in Kruger (1992: 140), problem solving abilities rely on factors such as general intelligence, the ability to think abstractly, reasoning skills, generalisation and discrimination abilities, memory and past experience. The ability of adolescents to interpret stressful events, to generalise, reason and discriminate act to moderate stress experience. Problem solving abilities have been linked to developmental differences. It has been postulated that stress level decreases as adolescents mature (Griffith, Dubow, & Ippolito, 2000: 199). Perhaps as adolescents gain a wider, more independent array of social experience and the capacity to reflect on multiple aspects of a situation simultaneously, they are more likely to take active steps to solve stressors. Hui (2000: 190) suggests that adolescents' problems appeared to reach a peak at 14 years of age. This, however, is subjected to verification in the Lesotho context.

#### ***2.6.1.6 Temperament and personality***

Temperament and personality have further been found to be significant in moderating stress (Compas, Commor-Smith & Jasar 2004: 27). Researchers have identified certain personalities that appear to be more sensitive to stress than other personalities (Feshback & Weiner 1991: 363). They differentiate between the Type A and Type B personalities. Type A individuals have qualities such as an explosive speech patterns and tenseness of facial muscles. In addition, they are characterised with appearance of being exposed to time pressure and the challenge of responsibility. Apart from that, they happen to be significantly competitive, high achieving, aggressive, hasty, impatient and restless. In contrast, Type B has a more relaxed personality. They tend to be easy-going, casual, and less ambitious than their counterparts. It then follows that a Type A adolescent will experience more stress, for instance, in school tests, than the Type B since the former esteems achievement higher than the latter does. Although this factor may not be applicable to every situation, it appears personality and temperament can play a role to mediate stress.

### **2.6.1.7 Self-concept**

Lastly, self-concept has also been identified among the intrinsic factors that can buffer stressors. Self concept refers to a configuration of convictions oneself and attitudes towards oneself that are dynamic and of which and of which one is normally aware of (Van den Aardweg 1993: 193). The empirical research shows that adolescents with low self-esteem lack motivation lose focus in life, hence, perform poorly at school (Hess & Copeland 2001: 390). Adolescents who have a positive self-esteem, in contrast, feel more in control of their lives and expect success as they handle stressful life situations. As they successfully handle their stressors, they in turn improve their self-esteem. This successful handling of stressful events also heightens a sense of mastery and comparison and increases resistance to the effects of stress. The researcher feels that parents and teachers may encourage positive self concept in adolescents by helping them set reasonable and attainable goals. This may enhance their sense of self-worth.

### **2.6.2 Extrinsic factors**

The second category of stress mediator is factors existing to an individual. This concerns attachment and family support, social support and social economic status.

#### **2.6.2.1 Attachment and family support**

Studies have indicated that family support contribute to an individual's ability to withstand stress (Nitz, Ketterlinus & Brandt, 1995: 359, Murburg & Bru 2004: 387). The authors found out that generally mothers provide a frequent source of support to adolescents under stress. A sibling was identified next as a source of support, and lastly any other relative. This however, does not preclude the fact that depending on the uniqueness of every adolescent, the family may even serve as a predictor of stress. For example, a conflict may arise when parents and adolescents disagree about roles and responsibilities expected of adolescents. Again, rivalry among siblings may also prove stressful.

#### **2.6.2.2 Social Support**

The role of social support as the moderator of stress has also received considerable attention (Chen, Langer, Raphaelson & Matthews, 2004: 1039). In view of early research in this area, Plunkett (1999: 150) defined social support as the ability of an individual to seek help from those with whom they have

personal relationship. These could be parents, relatives, friends or neighbours. It was found out that social support can be a shield for people facing crisis. It can insulate them from divergent dangerous conditions. According to Ainslie, et al (1996: 922), the provision of emotional sustenance, tangible resources, information, and cognitive guidance by supportive other is thought to help individuals mobilise their psychological resources. It could also assist their ability to cope with stress. In their study of moderators of adolescents stress in a College Preparatory environment, Ainslie, et al discovered that students who reported higher levels of social support also reported significantly lower levels of stress. Peers were found to be more important source of support for adolescents (Geisthardt & Munch, 1996: 288). Although peers gradually become more important sources of support for most adolescents, parents and other adults still remain consistently important sources of support for adolescents (Geisthardt & Munch, 1996: 288). On the other hand, social support like family support may not be regarded as a universal remedy depending on the subject peculiar situation.

As a result of the foregoing moderators of stress, individuals tend to respond to stress differently.

## **2.7 RESPONSES TO STRESS**

A stressor can elicit a wide range of responses from the individual. These responses depend on the meaning of individual attributes to the stressor (McNamara, 2000 a: 7). It is a question of whether the adolescent experiences it positively or negatively, threatening or challenging. The study focuses on how the adolescents respond to stress if the situation has been negatively interpreted.

Edwards and Louw (1998: 626) outline four ways in which adolescents can respond to stress. These are physical exhaustion as found in people with low energy, always feeling tired, reporting frequent headaches, poor sleep and changes in eating habits. On the other hand, emotional exhaustion means adolescents' experiences of depression and hopelessness. Mental or attitudinal exhaustion describes a situation whereby the victim becomes cynical about others, has negative attitudes towards them and has nothing good to say about such people, whereas feelings of low personal accomplishment occur when adolescents feel that they have not achieved their goals and are therefore dissatisfied and low-spirited.

In Kruger (1992: 149), five clusters of stress response were presented. These are passive-aggressive; dependent; repressed; impulsive (overactive) and impulsive (acting out). These response patterns can be described as follows:



- **Passive-aggressive:** adolescents who adopt a passive-aggressive response are most often described as underachievers who procrastinate. They are indifferent about their school grade in school and tend not to complete their assignments. Some also tend to be uncooperative and stubborn while others are overly complaint and agreeable.
- **Dependent:** adolescents who adopt a dependent response will seldom assert their will. They are characterised by a lack of self-confidence and independence, regressive habits and childhood mannerisms. Some dependent adolescents are less passive. Being more assertive, they adopt a demanding manner to have their needs met. They are also described as headstrong, selfish and wilful.
- **Repressed:** adolescents who adopt a repressed response are described as quiet, reserved, shy, sensitive, withdrawn, easily hurt and upset. They are jumpy, sometimes moody and detached and afraid of new situations. They tend to have difficulty in making decisions, are unable to tolerate criticisms and lack self-confidence.
- **Impulsive:** adolescents who normally adopt an impulsive (overactive) response are described as easily excited, mischievous, playful and talkative. Since they are not shy, passive or withdrawn, they frequently participate with abandon in activities.

Research further differentiates three types of responses typifying the school situation. These are institutionalisation, flight, and fight (McNamara, 2000 b: 24). Institutionalisation refers to responses in situations where the learner experiences stress but passively remains a part of the school system. Flight situations are those in which the child responds to stress by leaving the school. In contrast, fight situations are those in which the adolescent stays at school but displays a reactive behaviour.

Literature highlights, however, that adolescents develop a variety of response patterns or change their responses according to the situation or gradually over time (Kruger, 1992: 150).

## 2.8 CONSEQUENCES OF STRESS

According to Kruger (1992: 143), the consequences and attendant symptoms of stress are divided into two categories. These are mental and physical categories. She presents a summary of different consequences, effects and symptoms of stress in a tabulation form. This is shown in Table 2.3.

**Table 2.3 Symptoms of stress**

<b>Physical Symptoms of Stress</b>	<b>Mental (Psychological) Symptoms of Stress</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Headaches; tension headaches</li> <li>▪ Stomachaches</li> <li>▪ Tight muscles, cramps &amp; muscle spasms</li> <li>▪ Dental problems</li> <li>▪ Diarrhoea; constipation</li> <li>▪ Hives</li> <li>▪ Fatigue; constant tiredness</li> <li>▪ Hypertension</li> <li>▪ Peptic ulcer</li> <li>▪ Wetting pants</li> <li>▪ Lack of appetite</li> <li>▪ Craving for food when pressurised</li> <li>▪ Frequent indigestion or heartburn</li> <li>▪ Insomnia</li> <li>▪ Tendency to sweat for no reason</li> <li>▪ Nervous twitches</li> <li>▪ Nail biting</li> <li>▪ Nausea</li> <li>▪ Breathlessness without exertion</li> <li>▪ Fainting spells</li> <li>▪ Frequent crying or desire to cry</li> <li>▪ Impotency or frigidity</li> <li>▪ Inability to sit without fidgeting</li> <li>▪ High blood pressure</li> <li>▪ Migraine</li> <li>▪ Asthma</li> <li>▪ Pruritus: itching</li> <li>▪ Colitis</li> <li>▪ Menstrual difficulties</li> <li>▪ Nervous dyspepsia: flatulence and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Anxiety</li> <li>▪ Depression</li> <li>▪ Lack of motivation</li> <li>▪ Withdrawals</li> <li>▪ Moods swings or changes</li> <li>▪ Difficulty in paying attention</li> <li>▪ Unhappiness</li> <li>▪ Suicidal thoughts</li> <li>▪ Lack of risk-taking behaviour</li> <li>▪ Unrealistic goal-setting</li> <li>▪ Low self-efficiency</li> <li>▪ Nightmare</li> <li>▪ Constant irritability with people</li> <li>▪ Restlessness</li> <li>▪ Interpersonal problems</li> <li>▪ Maladaptive and inappropriate behaviour</li> <li>▪ Use of denial and avoidance</li> <li>▪ Poor eating or overeating</li> <li>▪ Substance abuse</li> <li>▪ Low achievements</li> <li>▪ Running away: truancy</li> <li>▪ Regressed behaviour (tantrums, wetting pants)</li> <li>▪ Verbal and physical aggression</li> <li>▪ Daydreaming and retreats from reality</li> <li>▪ Impulsive behaviour</li> <li>▪ Loss of memory</li> <li>▪ Self-destructive behaviour</li> <li>▪ Fear of failure and success</li> <li>▪ Overreactions or inappropriate reactions</li> <li>▪ Feeling unable to cope</li> </ul>

<p>indigestion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Skin disorders: dryness and rashes</li> <li>▪ Depression</li> <li>▪ Pounding of the heart</li> <li>▪ Enuresis</li> <li>▪ Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa</li> <li>▪ Burnout</li> <li>▪ Minor physical ailment</li> <li>▪ Reflex sympathetic dystrophy</li> <li>▪ Frequent urination</li> <li>▪ Dry mouth, lump in throat</li> <li>▪ Speech problems, stammer, stuttering</li> <li>▪ Compulsive ear tugging, hair pulling or eye brow plucking</li> <li>▪ Rapid breathing, hyperventilation</li> <li>▪ Complaints of neck and back pains</li> <li>▪ Easily startled by unexpected sounds</li> <li>▪ Hyperactivity</li> <li>▪ Bruxism</li> <li>▪ Thump sucking</li> <li>▪ Trembling</li> <li>▪ High-pitched, nervous laughter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Low self-esteem</li> <li>▪ Insecurity</li> <li>▪ Feeling guilty</li> <li>▪ Lack of interest in life</li> <li>▪ Constant or recurrent fear of disease</li> <li>▪ A feeling of being a failure</li> <li>▪ Difficulty in making decisions</li> <li>▪ Awareness of suppressed anger</li> <li>▪ Inability to show true feeling</li> <li>▪ A feeling of being a target of other people's animosity</li> <li>▪ Loss of humour</li> <li>▪ Dread of failure</li> <li>▪ Inability to finish one's task before rushing on to the next</li> <li>▪ Lowered academic performance</li> <li>▪ Academic failure, underachievement</li> <li>▪ Emotional deprivation, does not laugh or cry readily</li> <li>▪ Usual shyness</li> </ul>
--	---

Source: Kruger (1992: 144)

The implication of the above itemised symptoms is that teachers and parents should identify stress in the adolescents and help them overcome the problem of excessive stress. Another significant aspect deduced from the table is the existing interaction between the predictors, mediators, reactions, consequences and symptoms of stress.

## **2.9 SUMMARY**

It appears the individual is affected by a number of stressors emanating from different sources: from the individual, the family, the school, the peer group and the outside world in general. What determines the influence of stressors is the way in which the person attributes meaning to the stressors. Every individual, therefore, attributes his own unique meaning to a stressor, hence becomes uniquely involved with it. There are various mediators that influence his or her meaning attribution and engagement. These mediators serve as buffers against the influence of stressors.

There is an interaction between the stressors, mediators, consequences and symptoms. What amounts to a stressor to one person turns out to be a mediator for the next person. For example, substance abuse can be a stressor as well as a symptom of stress at the same time. It is, therefore, important to note the fluidity of these concepts in the study of stress. The grouping of and allocation of these interchangeable factors may therefore vary from one researcher to the other.

The outlined symptoms of stress in Table 2.3 prompt the question of how stress victims manage to cope and adapt to the tension of whatever situation without getting ill.

## **2.10 COPING WITH STRESS**

In attempt to deal with coping resources, three types of stressors were identified by Mates and Allison (1992: 461). The first is called life events, which are acute but of relatively short duration. Examples of these include an illness, a move to another school or the death of a loved one. The second type is called the everyday problems of life, such as hassles in dealing with crowds on a bus, waiting in a queue or having an argument with someone else. The third type is enduring life strain – the chronic, long term pressures associated with the performance of roles such as being a student, a teenage son or daughter. The present study focuses primarily on enduring life strain, particularly stress associated with school and home life. Examples include academic achievement, pressure to be popular and problems getting along with parents, and/or teachers (Frydenberg & Lewis 2004: 25).

### **2.10.1 Conceptualisation of stress coping strategies**

Stress coping strategies have been conceptualised in a variety of ways. For instance, one method distinguishes problem-focussed coping from emotional-focussed coping (Griffith et al. 2000: 184, Hampel & Peterman, 2007: 407)). Problem focussed coping efforts are directed towards changing the stressful situation, whereas emotion-focussed coping efforts are directed to altering emotional responses to stressors. An alternative conceptualisation, according to the authors, is the approach avoidance distinction. Approach coping strategies involve direct effort to alter the stressful situation, while avoidance-coping strategies are characterised by the absence of attempts to alter the situation (Eschenbeck, Kohlmann & Lohaus, 2007: 18). The example could be avoiding the situation, denying its existence and losing hope.

In their study of “Development and Cross-Situation Differences in Adolescents Coping Strategies,” Griffith et al (2000: 184) noted that the approach-avoidance conceptualisation differs in that the former approach emphasises the focus of the coping efforts on the situation or one’s emotions while the latter (avoidance) emphasises on whether the individual reacts by seeking to alter or distance himself or herself from the stressors. However, there is substance overlap between the two conceptualisations. Like problem-focussed coping, approach coping encompasses direct efforts to adjust to stressors by distancing oneself either by focussing on one’s feelings or otherwise avoiding solving the problem or problems (Eschenbeck, et al. 2007: 26). Coping with stress in the context of this study means any effort to prevent or weaken stressors, or to tolerate stressors’ effects in the least harmful manner.

### **2.10.2 Stress coping strategies**

Edwards and Louw (1998: 650-656) come up with a general way of coping with stress. They introduce the strategies by drawing a distinction between preventive and combative coping methods as illustrated in Table 2.4.

**Table 2.4 Preventive and Combative Coping Methods**

<b>Preventive Strategies</b>	<b>Combative Strategies</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Avoiding stressors through life adjustment</li> <li>2. Adjusting demand level</li> <li>3. Altering stress-inducing behaviour patterns</li> <li>4. Developing coping strategies:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) physiological assets                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) better nutrition</li> <li>ii) more exercise</li> </ol> </li> <li>b) psychological assets:                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) confidence</li> <li>ii) sense of control</li> <li>iii) self-esteem</li> </ol> </li> <li>c) cognitive assets:                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) functional beliefs</li> <li>ii) time management skills</li> <li>iii) academic competence</li> </ol> </li> <li>d) social assets:                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) social support</li> <li>ii) friendship skills</li> </ol> </li> <li>e) financial skills</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitoring stressors and symptoms</li> <li>2. Marshalling resources</li> <li>3. Attaching stressors:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) problem solving</li> <li>b) assertiveness</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Tolerating stressors:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) cognitive restructuring</li> <li>b) denial</li> <li>c) sensation focussing</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Lowering arousal:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) relaxation</li> <li>b) disclosure</li> <li>c) catharsis</li> <li>d) self-medication</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

Source: Edwards and Louw (1998: 650)

Preventive coping tries to prevent stressors from appearing. This is done either by changing perceptions (appraisals) of them or by developing resources which might help to resist their effects. In this respect, four preventive strategies were identified (Edwards and Louw, 1998: 651, Washburn-Ormachea, Hillman & Sawilowsky 2004: 31).

The first preventive strategy deals with avoiding stress altogether by foregoing an unrewarding relationship, for example. Another way is adjusting demands level. That is matching the level of demands against the individual's resources. An example would be ensuring that one does not take on a task that is beyond one's level of skill. The next is altering stress-inducing behaviour patterns. This could be exemplified by modifying a Type A behaviour (Section 2.5.1.5). Lastly are developing coping strategies. This concerns building up one's capacity to deal effectively with stressors. An example of this would be through better nutrition and more exercise (physiological), building self-esteem and self-confidence (psychological), changing beliefs and attitudes about stressors (cognitive) and developing a social network of support (social).

Combative coping refers to active attempts to overcome stressors in order to control them more effectively or eliminate them altogether. Edwards and Louw state that combative coping make use of the following strategies: self-monitoring of stress levels, mastering resources, attacking stressors, tolerating stressors, and lowering arousal.

Self-monitoring as the first combative coping strategy involves noting and recording the presence of different stress symptoms at different times of the day so as to see how to alleviate the occurrence of such. On the other hand, mastering resources include organising and planning for an effective coping effort. For example, changing a diet without considering one's exercising habits may be ineffective. Planning which includes modification of both practises may be highly effective. Also attacking stressors would entail using techniques to eliminate the stressors by dealing with them directly. One way of doing this is by problem solving. While attacking stressors imply using techniques, tolerating them means learning to accept a certain level of discomfort or stress without letting it disrupt performance of every task. This is valuable for students who have to write examinations, since students cannot avoid exams and still experience success. The last strategy under coping strategies concerns lowering arousal. These include various forms of relaxation training methods to release built-up emotions.

In addition to preventing combative strategies, Edwards and Louw (1998: 652) advocate managing stress with a healthy life-style which entails, completing unfinished tasks whenever possible. This implies avoiding procrastination. It also calls for admitting and dealing with one's own emotions constructively. Furthermore, one can manage stress by not depending on drugs and by maintaining honest communities with friends, family members and others (DuMont, Widom & Czaja 2007: 270).

Woodbridge (1998 a: 50-56) has also revealed an integrated stress management training programme for adolescents. The programme addresses three social-psychological conceptualisations of stress: stress experienced as a psychological arousal; stress resulting from an event that is perceived as threatening; and stress caused by stimuli (stressors) in the environment.

He proposes relaxation training techniques to help adolescents deal with stress induced by psychological arousal. The training entails teaching the clients to alternatively tense and relax different muscle groups of the body in a systematic manner.

For correcting cognitive distortion in the appraisal of events resulting in stress, cognitive intervention training techniques have been found helpful. Adolescents are helped to identify self-defeating thoughts and to replace the disturbed thoughts with coping thoughts (Woodbridge 1998 a: 52). According to him, cognitive therapy can be conceptualised as a four stage process: presentation of rationale, self-observation, assessment and modification of cognition, and cognition concerning change.

Presentation of rationale is the first stage in which a client is presented with the idea that what people think determines how they respond to a situation. The next stage concerns self-observation. This stage involves a client becoming an observer of his or her own behaviour. In this way, a client is helped to identify his or her automatic thoughts and is trained how to observe the consequences of external events and his or her reactions to them. At assessment and modification of cognition stage, faulty cognitive and underlying beliefs are discussed and assessed for logic and validity. It is believed that as cognition and beliefs are convincingly disputed, the client becomes willing to substitute more reality-oriented appraisals and interpretations for them, resulting in development of rational adaptive thought and behaviour. Cognition concerning change as the final stage of cognitive therapy focuses on what the client says to himself or herself about his or her newly acquired cognition and belief. It has been contended that this self-verbalisation determines whether therapeutic change will be maintained.

Woodbridge (1998 a: 54-56) further argued that young people could be helped to cope behaviourally with social (interpersonal) and environmental stressors by going through social skills training. Social skills training programmes, according to the author, usually concentrates on teaching adolescents the behavioural skills they lack in their interpersonal relationships, thereby reducing problems relating to the peer group. Woodbridge identifies five procedures to the training:

- An explanation of the relationship between social skills deficits and stress.



- Training young people to identify their own specific stress-filled events, for instance, asking them to identify a particular situation where they could be more assertive, such as among friends.
- Training adolescents to cope with particular stress-filled events effectively, using behavioural modelling of events and behavioural rehearsal with or without coaching, for the new response to the event, whereby it is indicated to the adolescent how he/she is faring.
- Helping the adolescents to apply their newly learned skills in their own social environment using increasingly difficult homework assignments. This means the transfer of training by means of real-life practice in social skills.

Woodbridge's integrated coping strategy is preferred by the researcher for its applicability. It appears more directed and focussed to the situation of the adolescents unlike the general approach of Edwards and Louw (1998: 650-656). For example, with the integrated strategy of managing stress, it is contended that the adolescent who is facing an accusation may decide to choose, firstly, a relaxation strategy as he or she relaxes before facing the expected accusation. Secondly, the individual may opt for a cognitive intervention strategy by relaxing and telling oneself that accusations are a normal part of everyday life. Finally, the application of a social skill strategy can also be applied, in which case the situation could be managed more successfully using certain behaviours, such as appropriate assertiveness.

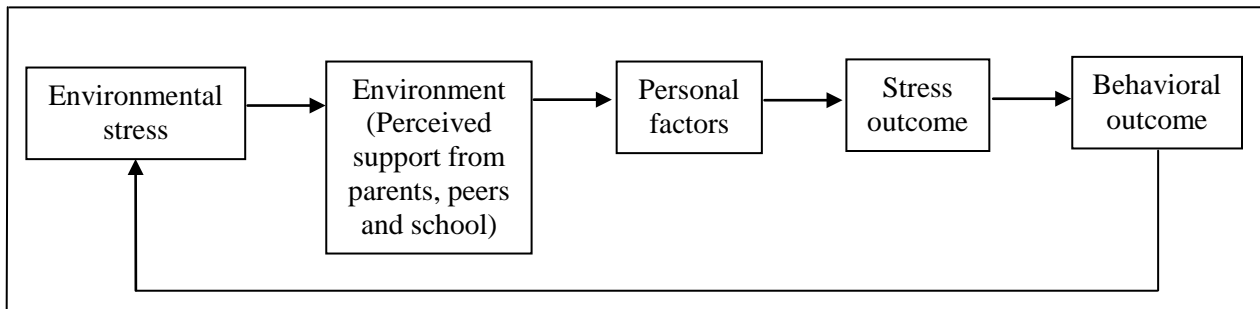
In the study edited by Bosma and Jackson (1990: 95), adolescents were asked to explain coping behaviours and strategies they employ when encountering difficult situations. Bosma and Jackson found that effective coping with difficulties depends not only upon giving one's sustained, or continuous attention, but also on the information which is at the individual's disposal. Hence, some subjects responded with the indication that they normally search for more information when they are faced with difficulty especially at school.

Some subjects also mentioned expressive behaviours as a way of coping with stress in which case they could either shout at others or answer impolitely in some incident. This strategy is observable among many adolescents in Lesotho. Other coping strategies include resorting to magic practices such as occultism especially if the subject cannot overcome stress and attempting to understand the conflict in case of interpersonal situations. Others use different techniques for controlling emotions particularly when faced with a difficult task at school. Such conscious techniques include taking a break while

solving a task, relaxation and looking at the funny side of the situation. The most frequent coping behaviour used by adolescents is talking to others and seeking support from them.

Literature has postulated an adolescent model of stress and coping processes (Printz, Shermis & Webb, 1999: 716). The researcher has found such a model applicable as a summary to clearly indicate the interrelation between stressors, mediators, symptoms, consequences and coping strategies of stress. The model is called **cognitive-behavioural model of adolescent stress and coping**. See figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1. **Cognitive-behavioural model of adolescent stress and coping**



Source: Printz et al. (1999: 716)

The model has five major components: environmental stressors, environmental mediators, personal factors, stress outcomes and behavioural outcomes (Printz et al. 1999: 716-717).

Environmental stressors include daily hassles and major life events. Examples of daily hassles include getting involved in an argument or having plans changed unexpectedly. Major life events are made up of events such as parental divorce, death of friend or relative, serious illness or injury. Environmental moderators include support from family members, peers, and school personnel. These people may offer advice, teach skills, provide material aid, help adolescents overcome distress, and share responsibilities (Printz et al. 1997: 717). Printz et al.'s study suggested that it is the adolescent's perception of the support that actually determines the extent to which the effect of stress is moderated.

Personal factors, with cognition prominent, may also impact affective and behavioural outcome. Printz et al. (1999: 717) discovered self-talk as a cognitive coping strategy. Included to self-talk is cognitive appraisal such as perceptions of loss of control, self-esteem, and problem solving skills as personal moderating factors.

Stress outcomes may include physical and psychological symptoms, such as headache or depression. Finally, behavioural outcomes which are linked to stress outcomes can be thought of as secondary responses to stress. Printz et al. (1999) have identified drug abuse, delinquency, pregnancy and dropping out of school as maladjusted behavioural responses to stress.

In the same vein with Edwards and Louw (1998: 650-656), Woodbridge (1998 a: 50-56); Bosma and Jackson (1990:91-111), Printz et al. (1999: 715-734), Fanshawe and Burnett (1991: 92-98) investigated school related stressors and coping mechanisms in adolescents. The summary of coping mechanisms according to Fanshawe and Burnett (1999: 92-98) are presented in Table 2.5.

**Table 2.5 School related stressors and coping mechanisms**

<b>Negative Avoidance</b>	<b>Positive Avoidance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Smoking</li> <li>▪ Drinking alcohol</li> <li>▪ Riding around in a car</li> <li>▪ Trying to stay away from people as much as possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trying to think of good things in one’s life</li> <li>▪ Trying to keep friendships or make new friends</li> <li>▪ Spending time with someone cared for</li> <li>▪ Saying nice things to others</li> <li>▪ Trying to see positive things in a difficult situation</li> </ul>
<b>Anger</b>	<b>Family Communication</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Saying mean things to people</li> <li>▪ Blaming others for what is going wrong</li> <li>▪ Getting angry and yelling at people</li> <li>▪ Letting off steam by complaining to family members</li> <li>▪ Letting off steam by complaining to friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Talking to mother about what is bothering one</li> <li>▪ Talking to father about what is bothering one</li> <li>▪ Try to reason with parents and reach compromise</li> <li>▪ Do things with family</li> <li>▪ Going along with parents’ requests and rules</li> </ul>

Source: Fanshawe and Burnett (1999: 96)

Literature has shown that people (including adolescents) experience divergent stressors, hence they employ different stress coping strategies depending on the kind of pressure they are faced with. It is on the basis of the foregoing that the researcher seeks to find how far such strategies are applicable in the Lesotho context since there has not been any related study conducted in Lesotho.

**2.11 HELPING ADOLESCENTS HANDLE STRESS.**

In relation to ways in which adults can intervene in the lives of adolescents faced with stress, some suggestions have been postulated. To this effect, the contributions of different authors were found applicable: (Roets & Lewis 2002: 211-217, Honig & Wittmer 1999: 19, Kruger 1992: 234, McNamara

2000 b: 118-211; Sue & Sue 1997: 213-215 and Frydenberg & Lewis 2004: 118-132). The techniques, they advocate are outlined below.

### **2.11.1 Parents**

Parents are regarded as primary educators. In order to help adolescents cope well at home, at school and socially, they can employ the following techniques:

#### ***2.11.1.1 Observation skills***

Adolescents under stress need to be recognised. It is important for parents to realise when adolescents suffer from the symptoms of stress. Alertness and sensitivity to the signs of stress are imperative in dealing with adolescents, not only reactively but proactively. Parents should be in a position to decide when the young person's moods and behaviour are simply normal reactions to everyday stress and new feelings. They should differentiate normal reactions from signs that things are going wrong. It remains the parents' responsibility to think more carefully about when to step back and when to intervene. In this case, as primary educators, parents have to trust their own intuition and act accordingly.

#### ***2.11.1.2 Enhancement of self-esteem***

Parents need to be encouraging, caring and have a warm personal regard for adolescents. They must focus their attention on them. This is because adolescents are particularly sensitive to matters affecting them-selves. When adolescents see special interest, their inner source of pride and self-esteem may develop. This may assist them to develop some sense of control over pressure exerted upon them from within or outside.

#### ***2.11.1.3 Proactive intervention***

Proactive intervention entails responses initiated prior to, or in anticipation of stressful events or conditions. On the other hand, being reactive in approach concerns initiating a response to, or after a stressful event has occurred, and behaviour reactions have been identified.

By using proactive intervention techniques, unnecessary stress can be avoided. Parents could assist in this by discussing developmental changes with adolescents. When such changes occur, they would not

be alarming to the adolescents. They could also educate the adolescents on interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills will help adolescents communicate their feelings and perceptions acceptably.

#### ***2.11.1.4 Attention and love***

Parents could provide adolescents who seem sad or upset with special positive attention and love. If parents suspect that their adolescents are having difficulties, they should try to find a way of tactfully asking whether anything is wrong. Parents should have time to listen to their adolescents. Parents need to show their adolescents that they care about them in whatever way seems most proactive. This social support from parents may be enough to help an adolescent cope with stressful situations.

#### ***2.11.1.5 Acknowledgement of feelings***

Adolescents who are going through a bad time need acknowledgment and empathy. This gives an opportunity for them to give expression to their emotions. For example, they may feel lacking in direction, lost, or acutely lonely at times. They may feel that do not fit in. At other times they may feel devastated at the break-up of a relationship. Such emotions are part of growing up. However, it is important that parents take them serious and offer understanding and support.

#### ***2.11.1.6 Viewing situations more positively***

By helping adolescents re-frame bad experiences and negative thoughts, a more positive outlook on a situation can help them manage stressors more effectively. Parents could help young people learn to replace extreme thoughts with realistic and helpful ones. Parents can suggest that instead of using words such as “always”, “never” or “must”, they can use “often”, “rarely”, and “might”. For example, if an adolescent has a negative thoughts, such as “Things never get better for me”, they can be taught to be positive and say something like “Sometimes things don’t work out as planned. I have to be positive. Things will work out.” A different perceptive on a matter can go a long way in alleviating unnecessary stress.

### ***2.11.1.7 Positive discipline***

Positive discipline is the best strategy to take with adolescents. An authoritarian parental discipline technique may be very stressful to adolescents because coercive or overindulgent parents may take away opportunities for adolescents to make responsible choices and to become more mature and well socialised. Positive discipline teaches self-control and has a more lasting and positive effect than negative discipline measures. By contrast, authoritative parents create a stress free environment for the adolescents to develop and test his or her independence against predetermined rules and expectations, no matter how firm. Positive discipline aids them learn self-control and have a more lasting and positive effect than negative discipline measures.

### ***2.11.1.8 Alleviation of stress in one's life***

When an attempt is made to reduce stressors by the parent, a healthier relationship with adolescents is enhanced. Parents may experience conflicting demands in life. For example, a parent may be struggling to be available to support a stressed adolescent, while desperately trying to give attention to his or her partner or other children. This struggle may be compounded by a continual effort to fulfil commitments at work or elsewhere. In such moments, it is important to get whatever help available in order to be able to cope. A parent can try to involve other members of the family for appropriate support. The open line of communication with people may help the parent to gain more information about the particular difficulties, hence making it easier to help the stressed adolescent.

### ***2.11.1.9 Stress reduction skills***

Parents also need to practice stress reduction routines. They should, for example, develop a healthy social network in the family. They could also employ exercise and relaxation techniques to alleviate stress. This has two merits: firstly, adolescents are not stressed due to 'stressed out' parents. This means adolescents would not see an opportunity to blame the parents for their stress. Secondly, they may even adopt and apply such techniques to their own lifestyles both in present and in future. In general, it appears parents may need to show more interest in their adolescents' welfare. Although it may not be easy, they may need to attempt to bridge the generation gap of appearing too dictatorial when helping adolescents in their unacceptable behaviours.

## **2.11.2 Teachers**

Teachers as secondary educators can help enormously in dealing with adolescents who experience stress (Roets & Lewis 2002: 213, Sue & Sue 1997: 213-215). In addition to the above mentioned parenting techniques, teachers can apply the following specific techniques owing to their unique working context.

### ***2.11.2.1 Co-operating with parents***

Working closely with parents to identify and reduce stress can result in a mutually supportive system. This can reduce the effects of stress on adolescents and enhance their sense of security within the classroom and at home. Therefore, parent-teacher associations should effectively deal with life situations that affect the adolescents. This could help both parties to deal with matters arising either at school or home. Teachers could also communicate with parents through issuing of report cards.

### ***2.11.2.2 Practising self-control and coping skills***

Teachers are expected to respond accordingly and moderately when provoked by students. At times adolescents could deliberately defy the teacher's instructions in class, hence tempting the teacher to react. By keeping calm and taking control when such problems arise in a classroom situation, tension may be reduced. By demonstrating a more mature attitude, teachers would indirectly be teaching adolescents self-control.

### ***2.11.2.3 Classroom organisation***

By creating an attractive and comfortable classroom, unnecessary stress can be prevented or alleviated. An organised teacher and teaching environment assists in creating a stress free environment. When learners are occupied, they have less opportunity to engage in deviant behaviour which may lead to stress. Teachers then should plan learners' activities such as to avoid idleness on the learners' part while encouraging active participation.



#### ***2.11.2.4 Materials***

Teachers should provide creative materials in which adolescents may express and address certain life stressors. Art, for example, is one such way in which deep-seated emotions can be expressed creatively and constructively. The expression of emotions may help to release the stress of keeping feelings suppressed. For example, if an adolescent from a poor family is granted an opportunity to draw, he or she may express his or her aspiration on paper. He or she may do this by drawing a well furnished house with colourfully decorated surroundings. In this ways, such an expression may release stress.

#### ***2.11.2.5 Activity***

Sufficient exercise, physical activity and creative movement can be an outlet for accumulated stress. These activities help reduce stress and relieve their symptoms. Hence, the school curriculum should give attention to extra-mural activities. School authorities should see a need to create a conducive environment that allows adolescents physical activity. However, physical activity should be balanced with academic activity.

#### ***2.11.2.6 Co-operative classroom activities***

By structuring classroom activities to enhance co-operation rather than competition, stress can be reduced among learners. Teachers should group learners and assign them specific tasks together. Such classroom tasks could even extend to bigger project. This is where learners could be expected to research a particular topic as a group. These cooperative efforts would shift learners' attention from individual achievement to collective success.

#### ***2.11.2.7 Individual talk-time***

Taking time to talk to troubled adolescents on their perceived threats or stressors should be highlighted. Teachers should develop an interest in learners' total being. Their interaction with learners should not be confined within the borders of classrooms. They should show concern to depressed learners, and create opportunities to talk with them. Problem-solving can be the result of such discussions resulting in coping-skill alternatives.

### ***2.11.2.8 Classroom talks***

Adolescents should be afforded an opportunity to discuss things bothering them. By having regular classroom talks, adolescents can talk about stressors that affect their lifestyles in a safe, calm atmosphere. Adolescents may identify with someone else's experience(s) and possible mechanisms may be discussed and even adopted by others. This can help adolescents realise that almost every adolescent is at times confronted by stress. They would be enabled to recognise that stress is not unique, hence, adopting better ways of coping with it.

### **2.11.3 Educational psychologists**

Educational psychologists contribute enormously to supplement what parents and teachers do to reduce stressors in adolescents' lives. They are consulted to offer school related services. According to Roets and Lewis (2002: 216), this category includes physicians, psychiatrists, educational, pastoral and clinical psychologists, family care associations, ministries of religion and social workers. Psychologists in educational issues, in particular, can apply such techniques as those enumerated in the following paragraphs.

#### ***2.11.3.1 Therapeutic models***

The broad knowledge of stress models and therapeutic models can help educational psychologists understand adolescents stress better. Therapeutic models proposed by psychodynamic, biological, behavioural and socio-cultural theorists contribute to a better understanding of adolescent stress and possible approaches to the treatment thereof.

#### ***2.11.3.2 Stressors identification***

Psychometry could be used to identify and measure stress by the counselling psychologist. Tools such as psychological measurement, observation, behavioural observation, interviews and self-assessment questionnaires are applicable. Effective usage of these tools in the therapeutic process can help adolescents with stress.

## 2.11.4 Other coping strategies to help adolescents

McNamara (2000 b: 118-211) and Frydenberg, et al. (2004: 118-132) identifies five more coping strategies for dealing with stress. The coping strategies are coupled with some preventative strategies which are reported to have an effect on reducing the likelihood of stress. These strategies are as follows:

- Mental strategies of coping with stress
- Physical ways of coping with stress
- Study skills and time management
- Interpersonal and communication skills
- Treating oneself right

### 2.11.4.1 *Mental strategies*

#### *(a) Recognising stress*

Recognising the problem is the first step. Awareness is the key to learning to manage stress successfully. Adolescents can be taught to learn to recognise signs of stress in their bodies, their moods or their cognition. Being aware that they are under stress and the reason behind this is highly important for young people. If they fail to recognise that they are under stress or have insights into what may be causing the strains, it is more difficult for them to try to address this constructively and to solve the problem. The sources and symptoms of stress described in Table 2.2 can assist in this case.

#### *(b) Keeping things in perspective*

Learners have to know how to control the way they appraise or think about things. This allows them to control the way situations affect them. Adolescents have to be made aware that their feelings, whether they are ones of anxiety, depression or worry have been produced by their thoughts processes. They need to understand where they need to intervene in order to restore their emotional balance. Where they feel upset or under pressure, young people are likely to generalise, think in a very extreme way, look only at the bad things, take things personally, blame themselves or other people in an irrational way, or jump to conclusions which are not founded. This will lead to much more anxiety, as the body will react according to the way the mind has interpreted the situation. If young people can learn to replace these extreme thoughts with more realistic and helpful ones, they can learn to tune down their stress responses.

The following are common examples of negative thoughts and how they can be replaced with positive ones:

- Negative: I am not good at anything.
- Positive: I have to focus on what I am good at.
- Negative: I always ruin things.
- Positive: Sometimes things do not work out as planned, but it happens to everyone and I will try my best.
- Negative: This is unbreakable.
- Positive: I have the strength to deal with this and there are others who can help me. I have to keep things in perspective.

#### (c) Thought stopping

Thought stopping has been found as a technique that can help adolescents to overcome thought which cause stress and worry. It aids them to resist thoughts which prevent them from being able to relax. Typical recurring thoughts which cause anxiety to adolescents include feeling unattractive, unpopular, unintelligent, or incompetent. Persistent thoughts may take the form of self-doubt; for example, feeling that they will never succeed at school. They may also take a form of anxiety; for example, worrying about their parents splitting up or things not working out. Thoughts of this nature can understandably cause a lot of stress.

For the application of thought stopping techniques, adolescents have to first of all know the sort of thoughts to stop and then to switch off and empty their mind. They can either simply say 'STOP' to themselves, or they can get into the habit of replacing these thoughts with reassuring and more constructive, rational statements such as I will not fail if I work a little harder. It will be fine. This type of coping skill undoubtedly requires discipline. It is something that adolescents can train themselves to do. Thought stopping involves concentrating on the unwanted thoughts and after a short time, suddenly stopping and emptying one's mind.

#### **2.11.4.2 Physical strategies**

Physical ways in which adolescents could be helped to combat stress include giving attention to nutrition, sleep and exercise. This is done to keep the immune system strong and the energy levels high. Teaching adolescents more about relaxation and premenstrual tension can also reduce their stress experience.

*(i) Nutrition and eating habits*

Eating well is crucial to good health, and being healthy will help young people cope better with life stress. It is a useful skill to recognise the foods which make adolescents feel energetic and positive. On the other hand, it is imperative to notice the food which can make them feel fatigued and negative. Nutrition plays a vital role in warding off headaches, sluggishness, irritability, and even premenstrual syndrome. It also boosts the immune system, thus keeping the individual healthy and able to cope.

Basic principles to healthy eating have been postulated. These are to reduce saturated fat, sugar, caffeine and alcohol and to increase fibre and starches, fruits and vegetables. The importance of starch intake has been found to be that of improving moods. McNamara (2000 b: 200) explains that starch should form the main source of energy in adolescents' diets because they cause the release of serotonin which improves mood. Examples include potatoes, rice, pasta, bread, porridge, breakfast cereal, and muesli. To control fattening effect of these foods young people could be taught to control the appetite and prevent the sudden drop in blood glucose level which causes shaking. If adolescents do not eat well, they may feel tired and run down.

The adolescents have to be encouraged to drink one litre of water a day. If they eat a lot of fast foods, adolescents may need more water since fast food contains a lot of salt. Those who take regular exercise will also need to drink more. It is worth advertising that many soft drinks actually dehydrate the body. Caffeine, as contained in coffee, tea and some carbonated drinks should be moderately taken or avoided, if possible. This is because caffeine is a stimulant; hence it can contribute to irritability, tiredness, and sleep problems. Young people should also be taught that alcohol is a depressant. It depresses the brain activity, as well as makes people lose concentration. This can have a deleterious effect on schoolwork. Thus, the role of drink in people's lives must be discussed with the adolescents.

*(ii) Exercise*

Exercise can be seen as a physical education class or an aerobics class. However, adolescents should be made to see exercise as a natural part of living life to the full. Dancing, working, running, swimming, cycling, soccer, tennis, and rollerblading are examples of aerobic exercises. There are many reasons which are given for advising adolescents to take plenty of exercise. Mentally, it will reduce stress. It will also improve concentration and memory, lift depression, improve self-confidence and enhance creativity. Physically, it improves self-image, boosts energy levels, reduces body fat, improves general

health, boosts the immune system, improves quality of sleep, and reduces physical tension. It affects behaviour by reducing hostility and irritability.

When exercising, adolescents are encouraged to:

- Do at least twenty minutes of aerobics activity at least three times a week. This means increasing the heart rate and breathing.
- Keep active. Walk or cycle to school with a friend instead of taking the bus. They should also help out with housework, or go dancing.
- Make exercise sociable, for example, by joining team sports. This creates incentives as young people can meet with others, and they will feel they are letting others down if they do not attend exercise.

### *(iii) Sleep*

Sleep is central to coping with life, managing stress and having positive feelings of well-being. Experiencing poor sleep quality can make adolescents feel miserable, irritable and unable to cope. It is therefore an important stress management tool for young people to learn how much sleep they need, and try to get this. Three kinds of problems have been identified pertaining to sleep: difficulty falling asleep, wakefulness during the night and waking too early in the night. Some adolescents may think they have a sleeping problem, when they are actually underestimating how much sleep they get. Sleep needs vary greatly; however, young people are encouraged to take about eight hours' sleep a night. They may need more around exam time to improve concentration the next day, according to McNamara (2000 b: 152). The following tips are suggested to help adolescents if they do not get enough sleep:

- Accept that whatever sleep they get will be of benefit to them, enjoyable and restful. They should not fret about how much sleep they are getting.
- Try to go to bed at the same time every night and always set an alarm when they need to wake up at a certain time. Otherwise, sleep can be disturbed as they worry about waking.
- Avoid indulging in weekend sleep binges that disturb their normal sleep routine.
- Take regular exercise.
- Avoid heavy meals and drinks containing caffeine before bed.
- Try taking warm milk or warm malt drinks before bed.
- Avoid taking sleeping tablets as these ultimately exacerbate sleep difficulties.

#### *(iv) Learning how to relax*

Developing relaxed attitudes and habits is said to be the best way to prevent stress in life. Living in a relaxed way is a habit, a skill and a way of life. As a skill, young people have to become aware of their bodies, knowing when their muscles are tensed, and learning to let the tension go through mental and physical exercises. As a routine, they should be able to get into the habit of sustaining a calm lifestyle and learning to react to stress in a particular way. Learning to relax is a way of caring for one's life by replacing energy resources that are being used up all the time.

Learning to relax involves keeping an eye on posture, not rushing around, making time to do relaxing and enjoyable things and creating options so that worrying too much about things not working out is avoided. It also entails taking breaks and finding a quiet time everyday. Adolescents could also try listening to relaxation tapes, taking a hot bath, having someone rub their feet or back or going for a walk.

Breathing forms an integral part of relaxation. Two types of breathing have been identified: Chest breathing and abdominal breathing. Chest breathing is said to be useful when undergoing vigorous exercise but inappropriate for ordinary, everyday activity. When feeling stressed or anxious, the mind interprets chest breathing as a threat and activates a response (fight-or-flight) to enable an individual to run. Abdominal breathing is the most efficient way of breathing in terms of the amount of oxygen taken in. The advantages of abdominal breathing are that it gives the body enough energy, it expels carbon dioxide adequately (unlike chest breathing) and it relaxes the body and mind. It improves circulation to abdominal organs (which aids digestion and protects against ulcers).

#### *(v) Premenstrual Syndrome*

Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) is described by the researchers as the world's most common disease which affects adolescents as well as older women. Symptoms of premenstrual syndrome include irritability, anxiety, depression and fatigue. As McNamara (2000 a: 157) puts it, the organisation of reproduction in women is carried out by the menstrual controlling centre in the hypothalamus at the base of the brain. This is part of the brain which contains the controlling centres for day /night rhythms, weight and mood control. The exact causes of PMS are uncertain but there are suggestions to alleviate it:

- Diet: Diet has been argued to be the most important way of reducing PMS. Adolescents should be advised to avoid sugar at this time, as it can cause a sharp drop in sugar levels after a while. The effect of the drop is to make them feel tired and crave sweet things. They should also be advised to cut down on caffeine before and during their menstrual time.
- Coping skills: By charting their good and bad days on a menstrual chart, adolescents can learn when their most vulnerable times are. They can then take extra care of themselves at these times, for example, by resting more, using relaxation or taking mild exercise, like walking.
- Avoidance tactics: Adolescents should try to be aware of when their symptoms are at their worst. At these times, they should avoid planning anything difficult. Factors which make PMS worse include tiredness, hunger, stress, alcohol and smoking. Hence, they should make sure they get enough rest. If they suffer from PMS they may be recommended to rest about eight hours in bed. Lack of rest results in irritability and tiredness. If they cannot sleep, resting in bed is said to be just as effective.
- Exercise: Exercise is invigorating, increasing the circulation of blood and oxygen consumption. It helps to release tension, and premenstrual aggression.
- Adolescents should cut down on alcohol: Even small amounts of alcohol is said to make PMS worse. When alcohol is taken it interferes with the normal action of progesterone in brain chemistry, which may exacerbate any feelings of depression that may already be experienced (McNamara 2000 b: 160).

#### **2.11.4.3 Study skills and time management**

Examination stress and pressure at school have been shown to contribute significantly to adolescent stress. It, therefore, appears apparent that adolescents need to be helped to achieve their best at school while at the same time nurturing their self-esteem, self-confidence and mental health. In order to achieve this, they need to be assisted to develop essential study skills and time management. The study skills are discussed in the paragraphs below as postulated by Kokot (1994: 415-416), Copley and Williams (1995: 188), McNamara (2000b: 161-165) and Frydenburg & Lewis (2004: 25-27).



## *Study skills*

### (a) Making it easy

#### *i. Where to study*

Students' studies should be made as attractive and comfortable as possible. They should try to work in one place each time, for example, a study. This will help them keep things organised. Keeping their desk tidy and free from unnecessary clutter is also a good idea. It will help them feel in control and focussed and will not turn them off studying.

#### *ii. How to study*

It is essential for the adolescents to learn to list what they have to do for efficient studying. They should always write down what they want to get out of their study session before they start. It is a good idea to prepare a schedule for the amount of time and incorporate breaks into this. This will help get rid of the common excuse that they do not know what to do or where to start as they have so much to do. Not knowing what to do can make it easy to not do anything. In addition, ticking things off a list will give them a sense of progress as they work through the items.

The proposed study skill which is widely used is SQ3R (Kokot 1994: 415). This is a five step study approach consisting of a survey, the setting of questions, reciting or recalling the subject matter, and reviewing.

- Survey

The intention in this phase is that the learner must survey the whole piece of work or chapter to be studied. The whole chapter should be skimmed through briefly, paying particular attention to the headings. The summary at the end of the chapter should be read in any case. This phase must not take much time.

- Setting questions

This step entails converting headings and subheadings in a chapter into questions. Questions create interest and promote a constructive attitude towards the work. This method also promotes the learner's ability to spot and remember facts.

- Reading

The section, about which questions have been asked, should be read attentively, actively, critically and purposefully. The reading is done to answer the set questions. Care must always be taken to understand what is being read. The learner should seek relationships between new facts and existing knowledge and try to apply new knowledge to new situations.

- Reciting and recalling the subject matter

After reading the section of the chapter, learners should try to recall what they have read without referring to the text. Instead of only reciting, they could also make brief notes on what they remember. Learners should be encouraged to spend a great deal of time on this phase. According to Kokot (1994:416), learners should spend 80 percent of all study time on recitation when learning formulas and symbols in subjects like chemistry and physics.

- Reviewing

After a section of work has been recalled, it should be monitored. In other words, it should be compared with the original text or with notes and summaries. Reviewing is important because it is the only way of checking whether the work has been remembered correctly. Where facts can be remembered well, the learner should reread to get accurate facts.

One of the variations of SQ3R is SQ4R (Kokot 1994: 417). SQ4R is similar to SQ3R except that there is another step to it. That step is to react. Therefore, SQ4R method entails Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review and React. The react has been added because it was felt that what was learned should also be applied by doing something.

### *iii. Why study*

Everyone loses motivation sometime when they are working towards something. In order to sustain interest, learners should write down their reasons for working. They should, in addition, indicate what they hope to achieve in the short and long term. If attractively articulated, the reason for studying is likely to motivate the learner to finish the course of work.

#### c) Making it enjoyable

##### *i. Body clocks*

It may not be possible for young people to choose the time of day when they study. Equally, they may not feel that this is important. However, some people concentrate better at certain times of the day. Some people concentrate better in the morning, while others are more active either in the afternoon or evening. If they notice a difference in how productive their work is at different times, it is a good idea to work around this. This may be relevant at weekends when they have more control over when they work. They should use the time to study when their concentration is at its best and avoid feeling guilty relaxing at other times. However, it is important to remember that examinations do not take place at night, and developing a habit of working late may not help to perform on the day.

##### *ii. Taking breaks*

If it were to be felt that sitting down to study has to be for hours, it would be a huge disincentive to even begin. Having realistic portions of study planned before students sit down will help them to get down to work. Concentration is said to be best when learners stick to chunks of about forty-five minutes with a ten to fifteen minute break in between (McNamara 2000 b: 164). If breaks are timetabled in, students will not feel guilty about taking them and will stick to their schedule.

##### *iii. Choosing several subjects*

A change is as good as a rest. Study can be made easier when a choice is made on several subjects to look at in one session. Therefore, learners are to be encouraged to plan for more than one subject per study period. In addition, large projects broken down into smaller chunks are far less intimidating and more enjoyable.

## *Time management*

The central principle of time management is to spend one's time doing things valuable to one or those things that help one to achieve one's goal (McNamara 2000 b: 171, Frydenberg & Lewis 2004: 26). Many adolescents find this area very difficult. Symptoms of poor time management include:

- A sense of being rushed and hurried all the time.
- Being late regularly.
- Feeling low in energy and motivation.
- Feeling irritated and impatient.
- Not getting things done.
- Being indecisive about what to do.
- Always putting things off.

In order to address the problem of poor time management, the Villanova University 2003 gives some important strategies.

### Timely tips for more effective personal time management

1. Spending time planning and organising: Using time to plan and think is well-spent time. Adolescents need to be taught and encouraged to engage in this exercise. The old saying is that failure to plan is planning to fail. They should be taught how to plan their activities in advance.
2. Setting goals: Goals will give life. The way time is spent gives direction. Students need to be encouraged to decide what they want to achieve. Next, they need to set goals which are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely. Optimum goals are those which cause one to stretch but not to break as one strives for achievement. Goals give creative people a much needed sense of direction.
3. Prioritisation: This could be done by applying the 80-20 Rule originally stated by the Italian economist, Vilfredo Pareto. He noted that 80 percent of the reward comes from the 20 percent of the effort. The trick to prioritising is to isolate and identify that valuable 20 percent. Once identified, time should be prioritised to concentrate work on the items with the greatest reward.

4. Using of a to do list: Adolescents should be encouraged to construct a list of things they want to get done on a daily basis. The list could be constructed either the last thing the previous day or first thing in the morning. Another method of drawing up a to do list is to divide the list into three sections; A, B, C. The items placed in the A section are those needed to be done that day. The items placed in the B section need completion within the week. This could be exemplified by preparations and sitting for weekly tests. The C section items are those things that need to be done within the month. The B and C items become more pertinent they are bumped up to the A or B list (Self development center – on line).
  
5. Conquering procrastination: A technique is the Swiss Cheese Method. When avoiding something, break it into smaller tasks and do just one of the smaller tasks. Alternatively, one can set a timer and work on the big task for just fifteen minutes. By doing a little at a time, eventually students will reach a point where they will want to finish.
  
6. Learning to say no: adolescents must first be convinced that their priorities are important before they can be able to say a no. This poses a great challenge to them but is important as they have to learn to determine what must come first in their lives. Once they are convinced of things that are important to them, refusing the unimportant in life gets easier.
  
7. Rewarding oneself: According to McNamara (2000 b: 165), the oldest trick in the book is rewarding oneself for doing things one had preferred not to do. This is especially true for studying. It is believed that if studying is associated with treats, it would be easier doing it the next time. Adolescents could be taught this strategy in order to motivate themselves to study. Even for small successes, they should celebrate achievement of goals. They should promise themselves a reward for completing each task or finishing the total job, for instance, passing with good credit. However, such rewards should be positive to health. This will help them maintain the necessary balance in life between work and play.
  
8. Combining several activities: Another suggestion of managing the available time is to combine several activities into one spot. While commuting to school or doing some house chores (washing clothes) adolescents could be encouraged to listen to taped notes. This allows up to an hour or two of good study review. While showering they could be making a mental list of things that need to be done. Adolescents should be creative, and combine activities that deem applicable for them as individuals (Self Development Centre – on line).

#### **2.11.4.4 Interpersonal and communication skills**

McNamara (2000 a: 177) believes that being aware of how individuals respond to people and situations is a useful skill. To this, she adds that most adolescents have developed habitual ways of responding over time and may not even be conscious that they are acting routinely in a particular way. The researcher opines that if the adolescents can become aware of these tendencies, they will be in a better position to decide whether reacting in a particular way is helpful, healthy or brings them happiness. Kokot (1994) and McNamara (2000 b) encourage the following strategies in helping the adolescents in their interpersonal skills:

##### ***Helping adolescents realise their pattern of behaviour***

According to McNamara (2000 b: 176), adolescents have to be taught to start thinking about their relationships. In addition, they should also be trained to think of how they can start changing their challenging relationships. It was discovered that asking some crucial questions can help them to work out what is going on in their interactions with others. Such questions could include asking the young people to think about a relationship which is causing them much stress or sadness. Relationships included here relationships with family, friends, teachers, other adults, boyfriends or girlfriends. They could also be asked to explain the time when they feel the worst in these relationships. Similarly, it is important to ask them when they feel the best too.

##### ***Taking responsibility***

Having realised their pattern of behaviour, young people could then be admonished to learn to take their fair share of responsibility within the relationship. This will give them more freedom and control. This means that they do not allow others to make all the decisions. Instead, they participate. They should not respond to others in aggression. They also avoid placing blame without acknowledging their own part in the relationship. According to McNamara (2000 b), learning to be flexible and responsive is important to stop them getting stuck in habitual ways of behaving which could prove hard to break.

##### ***Watching others change***

It is common for adolescents to blame people for bad behaviour towards them. In order to help young people to overcome this, the exercise that follows can be suggested: they can decide to change their

behaviour towards a person who is causing them a great deal of stress. If they normally ignore this person, they can try being more attentive to what that person is doing or saying. If they usually act in a withdrawn and submissive manner, they can try being assertive and tell the person calmly how they feel. Although people may not respond in the way they would like, at least they will be able to see that the relationship is not outside their control.

### *Solitude*

Relationships are important to our well-being. However, it is imperative to remember that spending time alone also can be fulfilling and a worthwhile experience. Many of the things achieved and of which people become most proud happen when people are alone, such as working on a project. Other things like listening to music can be even more enjoyable when one is alone. Adolescents need to know how that solitude is valuable at the appropriate time. If they are at ease with themselves, they are likely to be at ease with others.

### *Communication skills*

It is difficult for many of us to express the way we feel. This may be particularly hard for adolescents who may feel self-conscious about what they want to say. They may feel too unsupported or angry to discuss things which are important to them. Not being able to express how one feels may be stressful for many reasons. Others do not know what one wants. It is hard to get help when one is having trouble coping with a problem. In addition, it could mean that when one feels sad, one cannot talk about ways of feeling better. Moreover, it could also lead to misunderstanding in relationships.

In order to assist adolescents with regard to communication skills, literature has shown the following to be of paramount significant:

#### **(a) Assertiveness**

Assertiveness means “being fair to oneself and fair to others” McNamara (2000 b: 179). In collaboration with Copley and William (1995: 188), McNamara emphasises the need for the adolescents to learn to be able to ask for what they want, to express their likes, dislikes and interest freely. They should be encouraged to talk about themselves without self-consciousness and to accept compliments.

Moreover, it is important that they learn the habit to disagree politely, to say no and be relaxed around other people (Workshop 2007).

Failure for the adolescents to assert themselves can be very stressful. This is because all the feelings which are to be expressed can build up leading to hostility or resentment. It can also lead to exploding in bursts of anger or crying. It has been discovered that sometimes such feelings are stored up for a long time and are a source of silent hurt. Hence, it becomes apparent that avoiding being assertive may not be good for the well-being of the adolescents.

### **(b) Negotiation skills**

Negotiation forms a large part of all relationship throughout life. During adolescence, adolescents must negotiate with parents, siblings, teachers, friends, boyfriends and girlfriends on a multitude of issues. The issue may include leisure time, pocket money, choice of friends, choice of boy or girlfriends, choice of school subjects, holidays and choice of school. Therefore adolescents need to learn negotiation as a useful skill. This is because it will teach them the rule of cooperation and to see responsibilities as linked to rights.

In circumstances which require negotiation or cooperation, adolescents can be encouraged to apply the suggestions below, as stipulated by Copley and William (1995), McNamara (2000 b) and Frydenberg, et al. (2004)

- Be clear when they express themselves to avoid misunderstandings.
- See the situation from another person's perspective.
- Be constructive, avoiding placing blame as a way to proceed.
- Accept responsibility – it is rarely helpful to start discussion on the defensive or on the moral high ground.
- Recognise individuality: different individuals become upset about different things or take different things in their stride. Similarly, some people need a good deal of intimacy while others need space. Some people like to talk about feeling while others prefer to remain silent.
- Think about how they would like to be treated in a particular situation and act in a similar way to others – if they would like understanding and warmth, then try to give this.
- Know that it is acceptable to talk about the way they feel. Repressing emotions has a negative effect on the mental and physical health.



- Keep a lid on insults – this usually causes arguments to escalate.

#### **2.11.4.5 Treating oneself right**

Butter and Hope (1995: 89) opines that there is no amount of skills, strategies, ideas and information on learning how to cope with stress that can be of any use unless young people value themselves and have the self-confidence to put them into effect. In order to develop as rounded, happy people, Butter and Hope (1995: 189) attests that people, need to give themselves rewards and to treat themselves right. Treats do not necessarily have to be things, which are not good for oneself. In this context, they are simply recognition of efforts made and the need to take break in order to remain relaxed and stress free.

When adolescents think of treats, they must be encouraged to think of treats which are just as good for them in the long run as in the short term. For example, frequent drinking, smoking, eating fast foods or staying up all night are likely to leave them twice as drained. This will make their health suffer and their energy level decline. The following are suggestions forwarded by Butter and Hope (1995: 190) on how adolescents can treat themselves appropriately. They could be asked to:

- Think about a difficult task they are facing and to plan a treat for having finished it.
- Introduce the treat immediately after the task is completed to maximise the effect.
- Think of small, regular treats that are harmless pleasures.
- Do the things they dread first to get them over and done with. Utilise the energy that comes with beginning a project to the difficult parts first.
- Use the things they like doing as rewards. For example, if they are planning to go bowling, they could squeeze in some study time before they go rather than having to face it when they get back. The following are the different sources of energy, which adolescents may use as treats. However, it is noteworthy that sources of energy differ for individuals. They could include going dancing, spending time with friends, watching a video, listening to a favourite CD, going for a walk or taking a bath.
- Count to ten or go for a walk if they are getting angry. Anger rarely achieves anything in discussion. If they have grievances, these should be expressed in a calm and expressive way that helps to change the situation.

## **2.12 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE**

Stress is a complicated concept that is studied from a variety of perspectives. A few of these approaches that particularly influenced the researcher's own definition of stress were discussed. The principal determinants (stressors, mediators, responses and coping) were also considered in the light of their importance for the study at hand. It is important to notice that every person attributes his or her own unique meaning to stressors. Aside from that, every person's experience of and encouragement with stressors are affected by a variety of factors and mediators. Furthermore, it must be borne in mind at all times that any classification of stressors and responses, is a subjective exercise. Every researcher's opinion about it may differ from that of another. A classification is simply an ordering principle for scientific investigations of the phenomenon. It is apparent that what is seen as stressors in one instance may act as a mediator in another. Similarly, a symptom or coping technique may change over time into a stressor for a particular individual. This chapter dealt with stress in general, although the emphasis was placed on the experience of the adolescents and coping with stressors.

The next chapter deals with the findings and interpretation of data.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes the research design and methods used by the researcher in conducting the study. These include research questions, methodological approach, sampling, data collection method, data collection procedures and data processing methods.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions (1.4) were answered in the course of the study:

1. To what extent do Lesotho adolescents experience stress?
2. What are the major factors of stress among them?
3. Are there any grade and gender differences in the level of stress experienced?
4. How do the adolescents feel when they are stressed?
5. With whom do the adolescents share their stress?
6. What are the adolescents' expectations of the people from whom they seek help from in order to minimise stress?
7. What stress adaptive coping strategies do these adolescents employ?

#### **3.3 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

##### **3.3.1 Research in education**

Research in education is carried out for diverse reasons. According to Wiesma (1991: 13), educational research is carried out specially to improve educational processes through the refinement and extension of knowledge. It is also directed towards the solution of an existing educational problem (Wiesma 1991: 34). The current research suggests strategies for managing and coping with stress by adolescents experiencing stress.

### **3.3.2 Research design**

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1998: 268), this type of research design concerns the assessment of the nature of the existing condition. Survey design has been considered to have more quantitative qualities, with a questionnaire as an instrument to collect data (De Vos, Strydom, Foucher, Poggenpoel, Schurink & Schurink 2002: 142). A descriptive research design is deemed appropriate for this current study because it is used in gathering information about a given aspect of reality as it appears at the moment (Jegede 1999: 28). In this case it is used to deal with the situation of adolescents as far as stress manifests in their lives at the time of conducting the study.

## **3.4 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES**

### **3.4.1 Population**

Jegede (1999: 114) defines a population as the universe to which the investigator wishes to make a generalisation. In this study, the population of interest was defined as Lesotho adolescents experiencing stress. It comprised all the high school adolescents in Maseru City Centre. The reason for choice of Maseru was because of its proximity to the researcher.

### **3.4.2 Sampling**

A group of people forming a sample is normally chosen from a population. Jegede (1999: 144) states that this group of people is typically representative of the population of interest. The process by which the sample is chosen is referred to as sampling.

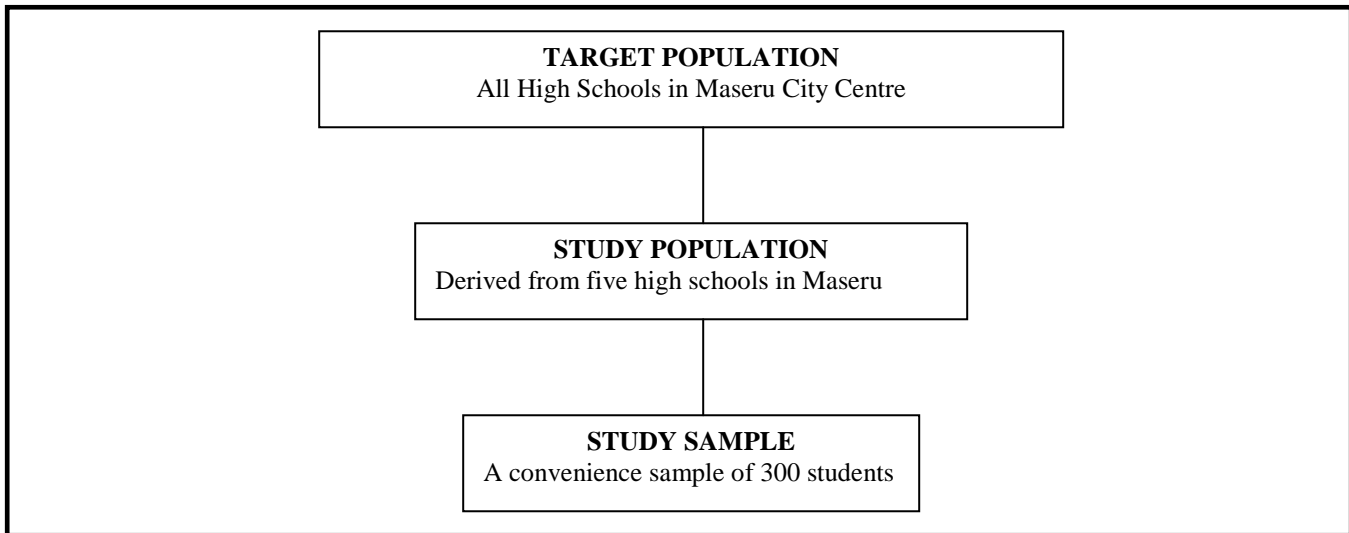
The sample for this study was chosen using convenience and purposive sampling methods which are non-probability approaches. Although generalisation of the results is not possible in non-probability sampling, it, however, saves time and money.

The sample consisted of 300 students chosen from five different schools. In each school a sample of thirty students was randomly chosen from Grade nine and eleven respectively. In selecting the sample the researcher adopted simple random sampling using a flip-paper approach. This was done with the

aim of ensuring participation of adolescents from both higher and secondary level excluding those preparing to sit for final examinations. It was felt that this would secure diversity regarding grade levels.

Another rationale of choosing those grades was based on the observation that although students at all academic levels may share similar sources of stress and coping responses, they may not all be regarded homogenous in this regard (Mates & Allison 1990: 463). To this effect, the life situation and socialisation pattern for senior levels may be quite different from those of the junior levels.

The sampling techniques can be summarised in a tabular form as thus:



### **3.5 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT: QUESTIONNAIRE**

The instrument used for data collection was a self-compiled questionnaire, based on the Adolescence Stress Questionnaire (ASQ) by Byrne and Mazanov (2002). Some of the items were supplemented from the literature review.

The questionnaire was in English. It was divided into sections as follows:

#### **SECTION A**

This section elicited the demographic data about the subjects. Examples of such items are grade, and age.

## **SECTION B**

Items under this section were based on stress experience. The respondents were required to indicate, inter alia, whether they are experiencing stress or not. They were also asked to show the frequency of the experience. From a list of suggested causes of stress they were requested to identify the factors that cause to them by rating them on a 5- point Likert scale where 1 = Not at all stressful (irrelevant to me); 2 = A little stressful; 3 = Moderately stressed; 4 = Quite stressful; and 5 = Very stressful.

## **SECTION C**

The questions under this section considered the coping strategies of stress. Items comprised reactions of the respondents to stress and consequences of stress upon them. Again, the subjects were requested to state how they normally react and cope when they are under stress. This section further examined the students' expectations of other people when they are under stress. Examples of such stress include: Whom do you look up to when you are stressful? How do you such a person (people) can help you?

### **3.5.1 Validity and reliability**

#### **3.5.1.1 Content validity**

The validity of the questionnaire was ascertained by giving the instructions to three experts in education research and psychology. Those experts were familiar with stress prevalence among adolescents. They were all university lecturers except one who had resigned, and was then a director of a research institute. The two were working in the University of South Africa. One is a Professor and the other a Senior Lecturer. The third had been a Senior Lecturer in the National University of Lesotho and was then a Director in the Lesotho Institute of Research. The questionnaire was read and corrected by those experts. For example, it was suggested that different terminology in the questionnaire had to be avoided as the adolescents would struggle with such terms. The corrections on the instrument were incorporated accordingly in readiness for pilot testing.

### **3.5.1.2 Reliability: Pilot study**

The consistency of the instrument was determined by subjecting it to pre-testing. Pre-testing was done among a pilot group of thirty students with similar characteristics to those of the sample. However, those students were not included in the final sample of the study. The pilot study was conducted under similar conditions to that of the actual study. Most items required encircling the applicable response from the different alternatives that were provided. The pilot test was conducted to check for clarity, ambiguity in sentences, time for completion and other problem that could arise. The instrument posed no difficulty to the subject except that respondents needed clarification on what to do about items which do not apply to them. The introductory part of item five was highlighted to them that such items could be skipped. The pilot test also assisted in validating the content since the response to the items; especially item five were not the same. The response resulted in a spread of scores.

Since respondents could skip certain items irrelevant to them in question five, factor analysis could not be used to test reliability. This is because not all the thirty-four items would ultimately be filled. Instead of factor analysis, frequencies were calculated for each item as presented in Table 3.1

**Table 3.1 Frequencies for the pilot study of the 34 items of question 7**

<b>Q7_ 1 (When I am sick)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	11	39.29	11	39.29
<b>Yes but mild</b>	10	35.71	21	75.00
<b>Moderately</b>	3	10.71	24	85.71
<b>Much</b>	4	14.29	28	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 3*

<b>Q7_ 2 (Having money)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	17	68.00	17	68.00
<b>Yes but mild</b>	6	24.00	23	92.00
<b>Much</b>	2	8.00	25	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 6*

<b>Q7_ 3 (Lack of money)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	4	15.38	4	15.38
<b>Yes but mild</b>	8	30.77	12	46.15
<b>Moderately</b>	4	15.38	16	61.76
<b>Much</b>	4	15.38	20	76.92
<b>Extremely</b>	6	23.08	26	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 5*

<b>Q7_ 4 (Being teased)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	7	29.17	7	29.17
<b>Yes but mild</b>	6	25.00	13	54.17
<b>Moderately</b>	2	8.33	15	62.50
<b>Much</b>	7	29.17	22	91.00
<b>Extremely</b>	2	8.33	24	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 7*



<b>Q7_ 5 (Beginning to date)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	11	50.00	11	50.00
<b>Yes but mild</b>	4	18.18	15	68.18
<b>Moderately</b>	1	4.55	16	72.73
<b>Much</b>	3	13.64	19	86.36
<b>Extremely</b>	3	13.64	22	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 9*

<b>Q7_ 6 (Breaking up with a boy/girl friend)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	12	57.14	12	57.14
<b>Yes but mild</b>	2	9.52	14	66.67
<b>Moderately</b>	1	4.76	15	71.43
<b>Much</b>	4	19.05	19	90.48
<b>Extremely</b>	2	9.52	21	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 10*

<b>Q7_ 7 (No legitimate father)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	7	46.67	7	46.67
<b>Yes but mild</b>	1	6.67	8	53.33
<b>Moderately</b>	1	6.67	9	60.00
<b>Extremely</b>	6	40.00	15	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 16*

<b>Q7_ 8 (Father's death)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	3	13.64	3	13.64
<b>Yes but mild</b>	1	4.55	4	18.18
<b>Moderately</b>	2	9.09	6	27.27
<b>Much</b>	8	36.36	14	63.64
<b>Extremely</b>	8	36.36	22	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 9*

<b>Q7_ 9 (Mother's death)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	2	10.00	2	10.00
<b>Moderately</b>	1	5.00	3	15.00
<b>Much</b>	5	25.00	8	40.00
<b>Extremely</b>	12	60.00	20	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 11*

<b>Q7_ 10 (Loss of job by parent)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	2	10.53	2	10.53
<b>Yes but mild</b>	3	15.79	5	26.32
<b>Moderately</b>	1	5.26	6	31.58
<b>Much</b>	4	21.05	10	52.63
<b>Extremely</b>	9	47.37	19	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 12*

<b>Q7_ 11 (Parents separate)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	3	15.00	3	15.00
<b>Moderately</b>	2	10.00	5	25.00
<b>Much</b>	4	20.00	9	45.00
<b>Extremely</b>	11	55.00	20	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 11*

<b>Q7_ 12 (Parents divorce)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	3	21.43	3	21.43
<b>Yes but mild</b>	1	7.14	4	28.57
<b>Much</b>	4	28.57	8	57.14
<b>Extremely</b>	6	42.86	14	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 17*

<b>Q7_ 13 (Parent marries step parent)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	2	10.53	2	10.53
<b>Yes but mild</b>	2	10.53	4	21.05
<b>Moderately</b>	3	15.79	7	36.84
<b>Much</b>	4	21.05	11	57.89
<b>Extremely</b>	8	42.11	19	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 12*

<b>Q7_ 14 (Parents' illness)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Yes but mild</b>	7	28.00	7	28.00
<b>Moderately</b>	2	8.00	9	36.00
<b>Much</b>	9	36.00	18	72.00
<b>Extremely</b>	7	28.00	25	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 6*

<b>Q7_ 15 (Relative hospitalised)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	2	8.33	2	8.33
<b>Yes but mild</b>	7	29.17	9	37.50
<b>Moderately</b>	5	20.83	14	58.33
<b>Much</b>	5	20.83	19	79.17
<b>Extremely</b>	5	20.83	24	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 7*

<b>Q7_ 16 (Parent jailed)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	3	16.67	3	16.67
<b>Yes but mild</b>	2	11.11	5	27.78
<b>Moderately</b>	2	11.11	7	38.89
<b>Much</b>	1	5.56	8	44.44
<b>Extremely</b>	10	55.56	18	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 13*

<b>Q7_ 17 (Parents fighting)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	3	13.64	3	13.64
<b>Yes but mild</b>	1	4.55	4	18.18
<b>Moderately</b>	2	9.09	6	27.27
<b>Much</b>	9	40.91	15	68.18
<b>Extremely</b>	7	31.82	22	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 9*

<b>Q7_ 18 (Being an adopted child)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	5	38.46	5	38.46
<b>Yes but mild</b>	2	15.38	7	53.85
<b>Moderately</b>	1	7.69	8	61.54
<b>Much</b>	1	7.69	9	69.23
<b>Extremely</b>	4	30.77	13	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 18*

<b>Q7_ 19 (Parental sexual abuse)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	3	25.00	3	25.00
<b>Yes but mild</b>	1	8.33	4	33.33
<b>Much</b>	1	8.33	5	41.67
<b>Extremely</b>	7	58.33	12	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 19*

<b>Q7_ 20 (Sexual abused by relative)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	3	23.08	3	23.08
<b>Yes but mild</b>	1	7.69	4	30.77
<b>Much</b>	3	23.08	7	53.85
<b>Extremely</b>	6	46.15	13	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 18*

<b>Q7_ 21 (Writing tests)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	12	46.15	12	46.15
<b>Yes but mild</b>	8	30.77	20	76.92
<b>Moderately</b>	2	7.69	22	84.62
<b>Much</b>	2	7.69	24	92.31
<b>Extremely</b>	2	7.69	26	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 5*

<b>Q7_ 22 (Poor performance)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	3	12.00	3	12.00
<b>Yes but mild</b>	5	20.00	8	32.00
<b>Moderately</b>	2	8.00	10	40.00
<b>Much</b>	8	32.00	18	72.00
<b>Extremely</b>	7	28.00	25	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 6*

<b>Q7_ 23 (Questioning teachers' ability)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	9	47.37	9	47.37
<b>Yes but mild</b>	6	31.58	15	78.95
<b>Much</b>	4	21.05	19	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 12*

<b>Q7_ 24 (Changing a school)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	9	34.62	9	34.62
<b>Yes but mild</b>	10	38.46	19	73.08
<b>Moderately</b>	2	7.69	21	80.77
<b>Much</b>	1	3.85	22	84.62
<b>Extremely</b>	4	15.38	26	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 5*

<b>Q7_ 25 (Beginning high school)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	10	45.45	10	45.45
<b>Yes but mild</b>	5	22.73	15	68.18
<b>Moderately</b>	3	13.64	18	81.82
<b>Much</b>	2	9.09	20	90.91
<b>Extremely</b>	2	9.09	22	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 9*

<b>Q7_ 26 (writing exam)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	6	22.22	6	22.22
<b>Yes but mild</b>	7	25.93	13	48.15
<b>Moderately</b>	6	22.22	19	70.37
<b>Much</b>	6	22.22	25	92.59
<b>Extremely</b>	2	7.41	27	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 4*

<b>Q7_ 27 (No lunch box money)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	12	46.15	12	46.15
<b>Yes but mild</b>	3	11.54	15	57.69
<b>Moderately</b>	1	3.85	16	61.54
<b>Much</b>	5	19.23	21	80.77
<b>Extremely</b>	5	19.23	26	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 5*

<b>Q7_ 28 (Lack of school materials)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	1	3.57	1	3.57
<b>Yes but mild</b>	5	17.86	6	21.43
<b>Moderately</b>	2	7.14	8	28.57
<b>Much</b>	10	35.71	18	64.29
<b>Extremely</b>	10	35.71	28	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 3*

<b>Q7_ 29 (Teachers' absenteeism)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	7	26.92	7	26.92
<b>Yes but mild</b>	6	23.08	13	50.00
<b>Much</b>	11	42.31	24	92.31
<b>Extremely</b>	2	7.69	26	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 5*

<b>Q7_ 30 (School corporal punishment)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	5	18.52	5	18.52
<b>Yes but mild</b>	2	7.41	7	25.93
<b>Moderately</b>	9	33.33	16	59.26
<b>Much</b>	6	22.22	22	81.48
<b>Extremely</b>	5	18.52	27	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 4*

<b>Q7_ 31 (Talking in front of others)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	15	60.00	15	60.00
<b>Yes but mild</b>	5	20.00	20	80.00
<b>Much</b>	3	12.00	23	92.00
<b>Extremely</b>	2	8.00	25	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 6*

<b>Q7_ 32 (Repeating a class)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	4	17.39	4	17.39
<b>Yes but mild</b>	1	4.35	5	21.74
<b>Much</b>	7	30.43	12	52.17
<b>Extremely</b>	11	47.83	23	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 8*

<b>Q7_ 33 (Suspension from school)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	1	4.55	1	4.55
<b>Yes but mild</b>	2	9.09	3	13.64
<b>Moderately</b>	1	4.55	4	18.18
<b>Much</b>	5	22.73	9	40.91
<b>Extremely</b>	13	59.09	22	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 9*

<b>Q7_ 34 (Teachers unkind words)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Frequency</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	3	11.11	3	11.11
<b>Yes but mild</b>	5	18.52	8	29.63
<b>Much</b>	6	22.22	14	51.85
<b>Extremely</b>	13	48.15	27	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 4*

The different dimensions of stress in question five were divided as follows:

- Stress of Financial Life (Items 2 and 3)
- Stress of Romantic Relationship (Items 5 and 6)
- Stress of Home Life (Items 7 to 20)
- Stress of School Life (Items 21 to 34)

From Table 3.1, it appears stress of home life and school impact more stress on the adolescents. Most respondents indicated that they feel much and extremely stressed by the stressors from these categories. Reliability of the scales could not be tested since not all the items could be filled in by the respondents. This is because respondents had to skip items that were not applicable to them. As a result, neither factor analysis nor item analysis could be done.

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

In preparation for the data collection, the researcher negotiated with the principals of the sampled schools for the administration of the questionnaire. A period of forty minutes after the school hours was used for responding to the questionnaire. Since the normal school periods were not to be disrupted, permission was granted without any objection in all schools. On getting the permission, the researcher was given a separate room where the sampled respondents were gathered. The questionnaire was then distributed by the researcher for completion. The completion took thirty minutes. Each of the selected schools provided a room where the researcher met the participants. The data collection exercise took six working days. Each school allocated a particular day when the researcher would meet the students. A deviation occurred at one school whereby on the set day students were engaged in an activity which could not be interrupted. In this a case, the principal postponed the date. The researcher distributed the questionnaires independent of any field research assistant.

One of the risks of this study was that respondents could discuss the items on the questionnaire among themselves. In that case, responses would not reflect the personal experience of the adolescents. In order to control the discussion of the items among the respondents, a clear explanation of the purpose of the study was given verbally. This was in addition to the aim included in the introductory part of the questionnaire. For example, researcher explained to the students that the study was for academic purpose. In addition, it was indicated that it aimed at suggesting coping strategies to adolescents who might be experiencing stress. Questionnaires were also handed out when it was convenient for the school concerned and the students, hence enabling the participants to complete it in a relaxed



environment. The pilot study was conducted to identify any ambiguity in the questionnaire. Most importantly the researcher was available when the participants were completing the questionnaire. This was done to enable clarification in cases of confusion. It was also meant to provide constant control over the respondents.

### **3.7 DATA PROCESSING METHODS**

The data analysis was carried out in relation to the research questions and hypothesis formulated. Both statistical and quantitative methods were used. Chi-square tests were used to test the hypothesis formulated at the end of chapter two.

#### **3.7.1 Research Question One**

##### **To what extent do Lesotho adolescents experience stress?**

The data in relation to this question were analysed using simple percentages comparing those who experience stress and those who do not experience stress.

#### **3.7.2 Research Question Two**

##### **What are the major predictors of stress among the adolescents?**

Means were calculated and the predictors of stress were ranked according to importance.

#### **3.7.3 Research Question Three**

##### **Is there any gender and grade difference in the level of stress experienced?**

To determine whether there was a significant gender or grade difference in the level of stress experienced, chi-square tests were conducted.

### **3.7.4 Research Question Four**

#### **How do the adolescents feel when they are stressed?**

Different feelings had been suggested in relation to this question. Respondents had to indicate the kind of feeling they had when they were stressed. The suggested feelings ranged from fearful, shy, angry, resentful, sad, to rejected. Frequencies and percentages of the responses were computed.

### **3.7.5 Research Question Five**

#### **With whom do the adolescents share their stress experiences?**

To analyse this question, adolescents were asked to rate the people they feel free to consult when they are undergoing stress using a five point range scale. The frequencies and percentages were calculated.

### **3.7.6 Research Question Six**

#### **What are the expectations of the adolescents from the people they seek help from in order to minimise stress?**

Data in relation to this study question was analysed using the suggested expectations. The suggested expectations included: understand me; suggest how to cope; encourage me; counsel me; answer my question; sympathise with me; change their approach towards me. Frequencies and percentages were then computed.

### **3.7.7 Research Question Seven**

#### **What stress adoptive coping strategies do the adolescents employ?**

Concerning this research question, data was analysed by categorising the responses into similar criteria to find out the pattern of coping strategies among the adolescents. Frequencies and percentages were then calculated for each category of coping strategies.

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

The chapter outlined the type of investigation that was taken. Research questions to be answered were stated. The justification for the descriptive survey design was given. It was also explained that results of this study cannot be generalised owing to the non-probability method that was used to select the sample. The method of data collection and the procedures for the same were also explained. Mention was made of the steps that were taken to account for validity and reliability. Comment was also made on the limitation of reliability and validity which could not be tested statistically and therefore general scores could not be calculated and used from the scale questions. This is the limitation of the study. Data processing methods were also outlined.

In chapter four data analysis is done in accordance with the formulated questions for the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected through the use of the questionnaire. The data were quantitatively and qualitatively analysed. The data quantitatively analysed were entered by hand onto the computer. The software packages, Microsoft Excel and the Statistical Analysis Systems (SAS) were used to get the results. Each of the research questions was analysed and interpreted. All the results must be interpreted with caution since purposive sampling was used. No generalisation can be made.

#### 4.1 RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

To what extent do Lesotho adolescents experience stress?

Data used to answer this question were derived from responses to the first item of section B of the questionnaire. The item sought to determine the adolescents' stress experiences. To determine the proportion of stress across sex and grade level, the combination of responses from section A and the first items of section B was used. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 show the results:

##### Hypothesis One

It states that:

There will be no significant difference in stress experience between Grade 11 and Grade 9 adolescents.

Table 4.2 shows the results

#### 4.1: Do you experience stress?

Table of stress by Grade			
Stress	Grade		Total
	Grade 11	Grade 9	
Yes	110	159	269
	37.54	54.27	91.81
	40.89	59.11	
	98.21	87.85	
No	2	22	24
	0.68	7.51	8.19
	8.33	91.67	
	1.79	12.15	
Total	112	181	293
	38.23	61.77	100.00
Frequency Missing = 7			

Frequency
Percent
Row Percent
Column Percent

From table 4.1, 229 (98.81%) of the respondents indicated that they experience stress. On the contrary, 24(8.19%) pointed out that they do not experience stress. This shows that most high school students in the sampled schools experience stress.

#### Table 4.2

#### Chi-Square Analysis of Stress Experience between Grade 11 and Grade 9

Statistics	DF	Value	Prob
Chi-Square	1	9.8917	0.0017
Likelihood ratio Chi-Square	1	12.0758	0.0005
Continuity Adj. Chi-Square	1	8.5610	0.0034
Mantel-Haenzel Chi-Square	1	9.8580	0.0017
Phi Coefficient		0.1837	
Contingency Coefficient		0.1807	
Cramer's V		0.1837	

Fisher's Exact Test	
Cell (1,1) Frequency (F)	110
Left-sided Pr <=F	0.9999
Right-sided Pr >=F	7.875E-04
Table Probability (P)	6.957E-04
Two sided Pr <=P	

Table 4.2 indicates that there is a significant difference in experience stress between of adolescents in Grade 9 and Grade 11. This is because the calculated probability value (p-value) of the chi- square test is 0.0017 which is smaller than 0.05. As a result of this, hypothesis three was therefore rejected and the alternative accepted which states that there is a significant difference between the experience of stress between adolescents in Grade 9 and Grade 11. The level of stress among Grade 11 adolescents is 98.21% (110/112) which is much higher than 87.85% (159/181) among Grade 9 adolescents.

### **Hypothesis Two**

The hypothesis states that:

There will be no significant difference in stress experience between male and female adolescents.

The results for the hypothesis are presented in Table 4.3 below:

**Table 4.3**

### **Chi-Square Analysis of Stress Experience between Grade 9 and Grade 11 Adolescents.**

Table of stress by Gender			
Stress	Grade		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	127	137	264
	44.10	47.57	91.67
	48.11	51.89	
	90.71	92.57	
No	13	11	24
	4.51	3.82	8.33
	54.17	45.83	
	9.29	7.43	
Total	140	148	288
	48.61	51.39	100.00
Frequency Missing = 12			

Frequency
Percent
Row Percent
Column Percent

**Statistics for table of stress by gender**

Statistics	DF	Value	Prob
Chi-Square	1	0.3235	0.5695
Likelihood ratio Chi-Square	1	0.3235	0.5695
Continuity Adj. Chi- Square	1	0.1264	0.7222
Mantel-Haenzel Chi-Square	1	0.3224	0.5702
Phi Coefficient		-0.0335	
Contingency Coefficient		0.0335	
Cramer's V		-0.0335	

Fisher's Exact Test	
Cell (1,1) Frequency (F)	127
Left-sided Pr <=F	0.3609
Right-sided Pr >=F	0.7828
Table Probability (P)	0.1437
Two sided Pr <=P	0.6712

***Effective Sample Size = 288***

***Frequency Missing = 12***

Table 4.3 reveals that there is no significant difference in the experience of stress between male and female learners of high schools in Maseru. This is because the calculated p-value of the chi-square test (0.5695) is not statistically significant at a 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated p-value is not statistically significant, the hypothesis is accepted.

## 4.2 RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

What are the major predictors of stress among Lesotho adolescents?

**Table 4.4: Analysis of variance (ANOVA)**

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Minimum	Maximum
Father's death: Q7-8	139	3.9280576	1.4922033	1.0000000	4.0000000
Repeating a class: Q7-32	205	3.9073171	1.3196089	1.0000000	5.0000000
Suspension from school: Q7-33	170	3.8411765	1.3946469	1.0000000	5.0000000
Mother's death: Q7-9	124	3.8387097	1.5533185	1.0000000	5.0000000
Parent's illness: Q7-14	249	3.8313253	1.2872133	1.0000000	5.0000000
Poor performance: Q7-22	234	3.7606838	1.2814261	1.0000000	5.0000000
Teachers unkind words: Q7-34	239	3.7573222	1.4493184	1.0000000	5.0000000
Loss of job by parents: Q7-10	174	3.6781609	1.3471808	1.0000000	5.0000000
Parents fighting: Q7-17	192	3.6614583	1.4234292	1.0000000	5.0000000
Parent sexual abuse:Q7-19	106	3.5943396	1.6548820	1.0000000	5.0000000
Parents separate: Q7-11	141	3.5886525	1.5632883	1.0000000	5.0000000
Lack of school materials: Q7-28	235	3.5148936	1.3661004	1.0000000	5.0000000
Parental divorce: Q7-12	124	3.5000000	1.6255081	1.0000000	5.0000000
Sexual abuse by relative: Q7-20	116	3.4568966	1.5625633	1.0000000	5.0000000
Parent jailed: Q7-16	120	3.4333333	1.6021694	1.0000000	5.0000000
Parent marries step-parent: Q7-13	137	3.3284672	1.5629417	1.0000000	5.0000000
School corporal punishment: Q7-30	213	3.1690141	1.470917	1.0000000	5.0000000
Writing exams: Q7-26	257	3.1634241	1.4485124	1.0000000	5.0000000
Relative hospitalised	217	3.1152074	1.3300651	1.0000000	5.0000000
Being an adopted child: Q7-18	112	3.0625000	1.6400646	1.0000000	5.0000000
No legitimate father: Q7-7	133	2.9323308	1.6751096	1.0000000	5.0000000
Teachers absenteeism: Q7-29	222	2.8648649	1.5397390	1.0000000	5.0000000
Writing tests: Q7-21	239	2.7991632	1.4236299	1.0000000	5.0000000
Breaking up with boy/girl friend:	208	2.7403846	1.6359204	1.0000000	5.0000000
Q7-6	237	2.7130802	1.5021023	1.0000000	5.0000000
Being teased: Q7-4	247	2.6639676	1.4913154	1.0000000	5.0000000
Lack of money: Q7-3	194	2.4639175	1.4721023	1.0000000	5.0000000
Changing a school: Q7-24	273	2.4358974	1.4260293	1.0000000	5.0000000
Personal sickness: Q7- 27	234	2.4358974	1.4165461	1.0000000	5.0000000



No lunch box money	173	2.4335260	1.3392239	1.0000000	5.0000000
Questioning teachers' ability	235	2.2677824	1.4535698	1.0000000	5.0000000
Talking in front of others: Q7 – 31	191	2.2565445	1.4840012	1.0000000	5.0000000
Beginning to date: Q7 – 35	211	2.1658768	1.3993099	1.0000000	5.0000000
Beginning High School: Q7 – 25	245	1.5183673	1.1292812	1.0000000	5.0000000
Having some money: Q7 – 2					

The first ten (10) most stressful items in table 4.4 comprise stress of home life and stress of school life with home life as the most prominent death of a father (mean =3.92). This may imply the significant role fathers play in most families. For example, as sole bread-winners some families, adolescents may feel economically vulnerable as a result of their fathers' death (Kruger 1995:110).

### 4.3 RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

#### Is there any gender and grade difference in the level of stress experienced?

This was already done with tables 4.2 and 4.3.

### 4.4 RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR

How do adolescents feel when stressed?

**Table 4.5: How adolescents feel when stressed**

Feeling	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Fearful	35	10.71	35	12.54
Shy	15	50.58	50	17.92
Angry	88	31.54	138	49.46
Resentful	16	5.73	154	55.20
Sad	91	32.62	245	87.81
Rejected	34	12.19	279	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 3*

When asked how they feel when stressed, 32.62% indicated that they feel sad while 31.54% feel sad. Another group of adolescents indicated that they feel fearful (12.54%), whereas the other one (12.19%) feel rejected. Only 5.73% of adolescents felt resentful, while 5.38% shy. As Howard and Midway (2004:398) put it, adolescents' feeling of anger and sadness is associated with negative view of others and feeling untrusted. They also react so when they feel incapable to handle stressors.

#### 4.5 RESEARCH QUESTION FIVE

With whom do adolescents share their stress experience?

In other to answer this question, the adolescents were asked to indicate the people they feel free to consult when they are undergoing stress. Possibilities were given from where they were to tick. Table 4.6 presents the means for each possibility.

**Table 4.6: The people consulted by adolescents when stressed**

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Minimum	Maximum
Friend	230	1.4043478	0.6386245	1.0000000	4.0000000
Parent	207	1.8212560	0.7955778	1.0000000	5.0000000
Teacher	140	3.3428571	1.1109101	1.0000000	5.0000000
Counsellor	125	3.6400000	0.9367067	1.0000000	5.0000000
Helpline	123	4.3902439	0.8553989	1.0000000	5.0000000

Looking at the individual means, it appears adolescents feel at most liberty to share their stress experience with their friends. This is because friend as a variable has been ranked highest (lowest mean) with a mean of 1.40, which is nearly 1. The seconded ranked category revealed is parents, with the mean of 1.82. The next category revealed that they confide in teachers (3.34), while the other group would choose to consult the counsellor (3.64). The lowest category was the help line with 4.39 mean. This might be due to the process involved before getting solution from the help line: the enquirer has to wait for some time before getting the response. It may not be many adolescents who could be patient to wait.

#### 4.6 RESEARCH QUESTION SIX

**What are the expectations of the adolescents of the people from whom they seek help in order to minimize stress?**

**Table 4.7 Adolescents' expectations of people sought to minimize stress**

Variable	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Encouragement	68	23.61	68	23.61
Counselling	46	15.97	114	39.58
Answer Questions	24	8.33	138	47.92
Understanding	69	23.96	207	71.87
Changing of approach	11	3.82	218	75.69
Sympathy	15	5.21	233	80.90
Suggestion how to cope	55	19.10	288	100.00

*Frequency Missing = 12*

The analysis reveals that 23.96% of adolescents expect undergoing from others during stressful times. Some (23.61%) indicated their preference for encouragement to minimize stress 19.10% solicit for suggestion how to cope when they encounter stressful situations while 15.97% appeal for counseling services to be offered when they are stressed. About 8.33% feel that their questions should be answered as a way of reducing stress. Others (5.21%) would prefer sympathy to be shown to them. Lastly 3.82% require that people offering help should change their approach.

#### 4.5 RESEARCH QUESTION SEVEN

**What stress adaptive coping strategies do the adolescents employ?**

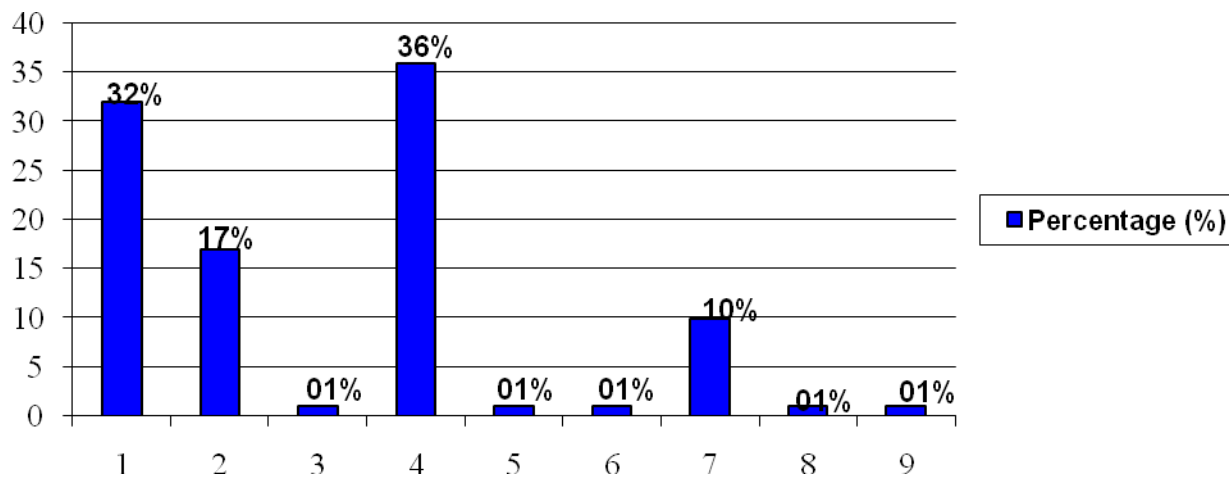
Data in relation to this research question were gathered taken from items nine (9) and twelve (12) in the questionnaire. Those items dealt with the feelings of the adolescents when they are stressed (fig. 4.1) and behaviours which help them manage their stress (Table 4.7 and fig. 4.2)

**Table 4.8: Coping behaviours of adolescents in stressful situations**

1. Relaxation (listen to favourite music, watch TV, play games, exercise, read a magazine/Bible, praying.)
2. Seek comfort and counselling from others (peer, girlfriends, mother, favourable teacher)
3. Involvement in physical activities (homework, jogging, dancing a lot)
4. Avoidance strategies (withdraw from people, lock oneself in room, sleep)
5. Self-defensive strategies (undermining others, blaming others)
6. Harbours negative feelings (planning revenge, thinking suicide, violent feelings)
7. Expressive behaviours (crying all the time, shouting at others, insulting people)
8. Resorting to drugs (drinking beer, heavy smoking)
9. Use of different strategies (buying self a present, looking at the bright side of things, drinking a lot of water, looking for something to calm down)

Figure 4.1 shows the percentage of given categories of coping behaviours used by adolescents in stressful situations.

**Figure 4.1 Categories of stress coping behaviours**



**Categories of coping behaviours of adolescents under stress.**

As can be seen, the most common coping behaviours of the adolescents in the study are those involving avoidance (category 4). These include withdrawing from other people, locking oneself in one's room, and preference for sleep.

The second most common coping strategies are those related to relaxation (category 1) which has some resemblance to avoidance. It appears the majority of the adolescents avoid direct conversation with people when they experience stress. This category of behaviour (category 1) involves listening to favourite music, watching TV, playing games, exercising, reading magazines or the Bible, and praying.

The third ranking category deals with seeking comfort and counselling from other people, primarily friends (category 2). Others indicated that they go to their girlfriends for comfort. On the other hand, there are those who approach their mothers, their fathers or teachers for counselling.

The fourth category (category 7) revealed in the analysis related to expressive behaviours. The adolescents indicated that when they experience stress they often burst into tears as a way of expressing emotion. Others explained that they become very rude to others, shouting at them. At worst, the analysis revealed that others express their rudeness in the form of vulgar language or insults.

The remaining five categories of coping behaviour (3, 5, 6, 8, 9) were relatively insignificant (Category 3) concerns involvement in physical activities such as housework, jogging and dancing a lot. Category 5 has to do with self-defensive strategies. These include undermining others and blaming them. Harboursing negative feeling was categorised sixth. Included in this category are the following: planning revenge, thoughts of suicide, self-hatred, and violent feelings. The eighth category shows that some adolescents resort to drinking alcohol and smoking as a way of managing stress. Other coping behaviours mentioned by the subjects were grouped under category 9. Prominent among such strategies were buying oneself a present, looking at the bright side of things, drinking a lot of water and looking for something to calm down.

## **SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

The findings of the study include among others:

1. Majority (98% Grade 11; 87% Grade 9) of the adolescents in the sample experience stress in Lesotho.
2. There is no significant difference in the experience of stress between female and male adolescents.
3. The adolescents in higher grades experience more stress than the adolescents in lower grades.
4. Home and school factors are major sources of stress among the adolescents.
5. Adolescents in the study mostly feel sad when they are faced with stressful situations.
6. Adolescents expect more from friends in the form of help to minimise their stress. They also share their stressful experiences with parents.
7. Adolescents expect mostly to be understood, and counselled when they experience stress.
8. Most adolescents in the sample prefer to be alone when they are under stress and a few use drugs.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter deals with discussion, conclusion, limitations of the study and suggestions for further study.

#### **5.2 AREAS OF DISCUSSION**

##### **5.2.1 Stress Experience**

It was found out that as is the case with adolescents in any other part of the world, adolescents in Lesotho are not exempted from stress. Most adolescents in the study reported an experience of stress. This finding supports the findings of previous researchers (Armacost 1990, Benson 2002, Kruger 1993, McNamara 2000, Roets & Lewis 2002, Woodbridge 1998). All these researchers found that adolescents stress is universal and inevitable. Thus, as adults experience stress, so do the adolescents. The study revealed that the highest mean (out of 5 point scale) of the respondents ranked pressure at home as the most severely experienced stress factor.

This finding may be attributed to the prevalent pandemic of HIV/AIDS which is affecting many families. Parents suddenly fall sick and eventually die leaving many adolescents orphans. In the present study adolescents indicated severe stress due to the death of a father. Death of a father creates economic strain since it renders the family void of the bread-winner, hence unable to meet the family needs. This has earlier been attested to Kruger (1993: 110). This applies also to single-parent headed families where mothers are bread-winners. Hence, mothers' death was considered second most stressful at home. Parental illness may also pose a threat to adolescents it may ultimately lead to death of same.

Although not all family stressors may appear to contribute significantly to adolescents' stress, parental separation and divorce were found among those that do. As supported by Woodbridge (1998 b: 62), the problem arises due to lack of contact between adolescents, and non-custodial parents. The adaptation to the new family transformation could be stressful. Irritations may result because of alternating between one parent's home and the others. This is the case with children in shared custody. While this allows for

more contact with both parents, adolescents may find it leads to instability in their living environment. It may also lead to their hiding under the cover of being one with of the parents while engaging in antisocial activities.

Misunderstanding with parents could be one of the factors that causes considerable stress to adolescents. This finding echoes the findings of Smetana (1998: 321) and Mates and Allison (1992: 461) who discovered that parent/child intimacy is minimised at adolescence because of contradicting views. At this particular stage adolescents desire autonomy from their parents. Clashes arise when parents try to prove that their adolescents are still under their authority. Hence, parents and adolescents fail to agree on the degree of the autonomy. Other matters that bring parents and adolescents into conflict are concerns about time to get home, type of clothes to wear, and friends.

As alluded to by Hartos, et al. (1997: 385), poor parent/adolescent communication is related to adolescent problem behaviour. This could imply that adolescents with problem behaviour avoid their parents. Some parents are not aware of their adolescents' indulgence in alcohol until when they are summoned to school in that regard. On the other hand, parents may not talk to adolescents who exhibit problem behaviour.

The study indicated that pressure at school ranked second highest. Adolescents indicated the highest level of stress during examination periods, and concern with failure. This corroborates the studies of Heubeck and O'Sullivan (1998: 132), Burnett and Fanshawe (1997: 442), and Woodbridge (1998 b: 62), all of whom found out that inability to cope with school demands can prove stressful. On the basis of this, one can conclude that effective study habits can alleviate school-induced stress. For example, when students employ appropriate methods of studying, they will look forward to the examination period knowing that they are fully prepared. Application of proper study strategies takes care of the problem of failing.

The current education system in Lesotho may also contribute to the adolescents' phobia of tests and examinations. The system generally focuses on rote learning. Hence, students face academic stress due to an inability to recall learned materials (Suman & Gupta, 1990: 8). Hence, adolescents who employ ineffective methods of studying, find examinations very stressful. Harsh approaches of teachers to learners also scare learners away even when they have some difficulties in their studies.

Other factors related to school could be noise in class, and being denied personal study time at home. The reason for the former may be due to over crowding of students per class in school. This finding confirms the work by Burnett and Fanshawe (1997: 422). At times the class becomes so crowded that managing a class becomes problematic for teachers. Apart from that, there are some schools which do not have libraries which students can use for personal study. Lack of library facility can impede the practice of a reading culture. Consequently, adolescents may perform poorly in tests and examinations, an experience which they find stressful.

Academic stress is compounded for adolescents who have no opportunity to study at home as well. Denial of such an opportunity may result from divergent factors. Some parents who are not literate do not see value in their children's study time. Hence, they may feel that time for personal study at home is one of the ways of dodging family chores. The type of housing adolescents live in may deny them an opportunity to study at home. For example, studying in a compound may impede leaning. Some families are extended, and in such cases children share bedrooms and lack a study room in such homes. As a result, a compound may be too noisy to encourage effective personal study. Beer is often brewed and consumed at home. This militates against a calm atmosphere needed for study.

The adolescents indicated high level of stress owing to financial pressure or economic hardship – a parent losing job, and lack of school materials. This is consistent with Hagquist's finding (1998: 250) who discovered that adolescents frequently or constantly worry about their families' finances. As highlighted previously (of 1.2), Lesotho is undergoing a depression due to the increased retrenchment of mine workers in South Africa. This has recently been compounded by the abrupt closure of many Chinese-owned factories which employed many Basotho. The adolescents are severely affected because many parents can no longer provide adequately for their children's needs. Some adolescents drop out of school due to lack of finances to sponsor them any further.

Romantic pressure emerged among predictors of stress. Predominantly adolescents seem to struggle when breaking up with a boy/girl friend. The finding corresponds with other findings in different parts of the world which indicate that adolescence is the time accompanied by the early development of romantic relationship (Mates & Allison 1992: 464; Byrne et al. 2007: 407). In romantic relationships, conflicts may be caused by divergent tastes in clothes, and demands for sexual intercourse. As purported by Mates and Allison (1992: 464), a boyfriend may be more domineering in dictating the type of clothes a girl should wear. If the girl refuses to yield to the tastes of the boyfriend, their friendship is affected. The shaky relationship or a break up may prove stressful to either of them or both.



One of the stressors that affect adolescents happens to be their relationships with the members of the peer group. During adolescence youngsters gain increasing independence from their parents. They develop a sudden interest in friends and peers and their social lives change radically. As purported by Kruger (1995: 75), intimates and intense involvement with the members of both their own and the opposite sex often causes stress. Stressors that are particularly significant happen to be rejection by peers, establishment and maintenance of the relationship (Byrne et al. 2007: 402).

### **5.2.2 Gender and grade difference in stress experience**

The findings of this study have shown that there is no significant difference in the stress experience in male and female respondents in general. Gender therefore, is not a significant factor in the experience of stress among adolescents of selected high schools in Lesotho. This confirms with the findings of De-Anda et al (2000: 450) who found no gender differences in degree of stress or most frequent stressors. However, death of a father as the most stressful factor seemed to impact more on male respondents than females. One possible explanation for this may be death of a father deprives a male child of an identification figure. It may also imply that such a male child would have to get prepared to resume some masculine. This results deviate from prevalent views that female adolescents are particularly more susceptible to stress than their male counterparts (Payne 2000: 272, Geisthardt 1996: 295). The findings of this study could imply that Lesotho male adolescents are relatively less resistant to stressors compared to their counterparts internationally. On the other hand, the implication could be that Lesotho female adolescents may appear faring relatively well in comparison to their counterparts in other parts of the world. Some probable reason for the deviation of the results of this study could be cultural. All of the studies which proposed that female adolescent experience more stress than male adolescents were outside Lesotho and their cultures would undoubtedly be different from that of Basotho. This suggests that adolescent concerns differ according to culture (Hui 2000: 190).

Incidentally, Basotho culture tends to favour males more than females from birth. A male child is given a particular preference than his female counter part. When it comes to the issue of inheritance, male children have the right to their parents' properties whereas this is not the case with females and this may influence the way both genders approach life issues. For example, while males grow up with the mentality of readily available possessions, females grow up with the idea of having to work hard in order to make a living. They grow up knowing that for them to succeed in life, they must overcome

certain obstacles which may be stressors. As a result, this may make them view stressors as motivators instead of inhibitors.

Another reason may be due to the way male adolescents view power as opposed to their female counterparts. Culturally, boys dominate girls physically with the backing of the Basotho tradition. In contrast, girls would want to prove their cognitive abilities especially where both genders are granted equal opportunities. As a high school teacher, the researcher has observed that female adolescents are more readily active in participation than males.

An added speculation could be due to the socialisation of females in Lesotho society towards more affiliative behaviour. Through the socialisation process girls are taught the norms, rules and behaviour that are accepted and valued within the culture. For example, girls grow up knowing that proposing love to a boy is considered a taboo. Therefore, even if a girl is attracted to a certain boy, her culture prohibits her from taking the initiative. Such conformity may reduce stress on the girl's part since they are obliged to wait for the male counterpart to initiate first.

Allocation of duties to the male and the female adolescents in the family also differs significantly. Although both may be of a similar age group, male responsibility is apportioned to females. For example, family chores such as cleaning the house, cooking, dishing out food, collecting wood, and taking care of younger children fall to girls. They are taught and trained to carry out such duties in addition to their academic load. Eventually, this socialisation pattern trains female adolescents to be more driven than their male counterpart. Thus, girls must conform to cultural expectations to maintain their reputation.

In this study, different grade levels represent the difference in school experience between early high school and late high school settings. Research suggests that transitions are linked to high levels of stress (Heubeck & O'Sullivan, 1998: 135). The results of this study echoed with this finding, as Grade 11 were found to experience more stress than their junior counterparts. This is because grade nine students are in the second year of their high school, whereas grade eleven are in their fourth year, nearing completion. This finding differs from that of Griffith et al. (2000: 199) who posited that stress levels decrease as adolescents mature, and Hui (2000: 190) who postulated that adolescent stress is highest among grade nines (14 years). Although grade elevens seemed to experience more stress than grade nines, however, when it came to the question of death of the father as the highest among the respondents, respondents appear to be affected in the same manner. This may be because the

economical consequences of the loss of the father as the bread-winner, as it is the case with many families, affect adolescents irrespective of grade since at these levels they are both equally cared for by the

The reason why junior high school respondents reported less stress may be because at this stage, most of the adolescents have not become fully aware of the implications of being in high school. In the absence of the teacher in class, most classrooms become very noisy suggesting that they may be less conducive to personal study. Such is not the case with senior high school students. With the exception of a few, most compete fiercely with their classmates. This spirit of competition motivates them to serious study. Apart from that, cognitive development levels may make them perceive stressors differently. Adolescents are likely to be concerned about family related issues, academic excellence, possibility of passing to the final year in the high school, chances of obtaining enough credits for tertiary level upon completing final year at high school, and maladjusted behaviour than the younger adolescents.

Lesotho high school students are aware of the demands of obtaining a credit into grade twelve. If a student does not obtain at least a second class pass in grade twelve, with credit in English, entrance into the university is impossible. Hence, students with lower academic capabilities may be concerned about this. This is compounded by the government sponsorship to tertiary education which is also limited to candidates who meet predetermined conditions. Adolescents from low economic backgrounds may suffer more stress especially if they are poor academically as well.

### **5.2.3 The people consulted by adolescents when stressed**

The survey revealed that the adolescents feel more comfortable with their friends in talking about personal problems. Friends were likely to be seen as more accessible by adolescents with high levels of stress than utilising a help line in the newspapers, parents, teachers, and a social worker. The findings echoed with the study of Wadsworth and Compass (2002:247) who found out that assistance from friends and family predicts fewer depressive symptoms. This is because having someone to talk to about perceived problems may serve several important functions. It may help adolescents express their feelings about the problem. It may also help them figure out how to modulate their feeling. It may assist them to decide what they can do about stress events.

The present study has further revealed that some adolescents seek comfort and counselling from other people especially their parents. The finding corroborates that of Ainslie et al. (1996: 922) and

Geisthardt (1996: 288) who found out that provision of emotional sustenance and cognitive guidance by supportive others helps individuals to mobilise their psychological resources. The authors indicated that social support enhances the ability to cope with stress. Soliciting support from other people may suggest adolescents' social competencies and ability to build and maintain friendship. It would be in order, therefore, to conclude that similar to adolescents in other parts of the world, adolescents in this study rely on parental counselling as an alternative way to cope with stress.

The results underscore the role of parents as primary counsellors at home. Since the family is the child's first agent of socialisation where a solid foundation for a normal life can be laid, parents should be aware of the responsibility and power they wield. Adolescents require consistent, wise and loving support from parents in establishing a new identity and to develop a stable set of values. Hence, it behoves parents to maintain effective communication with their children as a coping strategy for stress. Although one cannot live a stress-free life, positive communication assists adolescents.

The dearth of educational counsellors might have a bearing on the adolescents' low consideration for the social worker. This implies that adolescents may not be familiar with, or aware that, social workers can offer some assistance in relation to stress. Apart from that, it could be because some consultation fees might be required of adolescents when visiting private social workers or counsellors. Therefore, only those few who can afford the consultancy fee may attempt visiting the counsellor. From the foregoing discussions, it may be in order to conclude that friends or peers play the most significant role in providing social support to Lesotho adolescents experiencing stress. This is supported by adolescents naming friends most frequently, while parents and teachers were named less frequently; professionals other than school personnel were rarely named.

Help lines in magazines also seem to play a significant role in the lives of adolescents. In the Lesotho context, most of the concerns young people seek counselling about through the media relate to love affairs and involvement in premarital sex. Discussing matters of this nature with elderly people is culturally considered a taboo. This may account for the reason why adolescent discussions with the local help lines are predominantly on sex issues. Why adolescents may feel more comfortable writing to the media than consulting any adult figure may stem from the fact that full details of identification on local help lines are not a prerequisite. Consequently, this allows for more freedom of expression without any fear of being identified. Given that parents and adolescents rarely indicated having discussion on topics such as sexuality, and drugs (Gribble et al. 1993: 507), helpline services are of great help in addressing this area of adolescents' lives.

It raises a concern that teachers could not rank even second among people accessible to adolescents. One expected teachers to be among the primary consultants to stressful adolescents since these adolescents spend much of their time with teachers at school. However, one of the reasons why adolescents do not frequently consult teachers may be because adolescents fail to get expected help from teachers. The fact that none of the faculties of education either in the College of Education or the National University of Lesotho has an academic department of Guidance and Counselling may account for teachers' inability to offer practical counsel to adolescents. Another reason could be that teachers' load of work is so heavy that they are unable to put greater effort into interpersonal skills that would draw their attention to the learners' needs beyond the classroom.

#### **5.2.4 The feeling of adolescents under stress and their expectations of other people**

It was found out that most of the adolescents respond to stress with, sadness, anger and fear. This is consistent with Krugers' work indicating that suppressed anger is one of the mental symptoms of stress (Kruger 1992: 143). This suggests that much of the adolescents' moodiness and withdrawal could be traced to stress experience. Most of the time adults, especially parents and teachers may think that shouting at depressed adolescents may make them change their reaction to stress instantly.

However, findings in this study show that adolescents expect other people to understand their peculiar situation. This conforms to the proposition put forth by McNamara (2000 b: 125) that observation skills are essential in helping adolescents cope with stress. It could be inferred therefore, that it remains the responsibility of every concerned adults to be in a position to discern appropriate moments to intervene in the lives of adolescents. Adults should be able to provide the adolescents who seem sad or upset with positive attention and love. Nevertheless, this does not overrule the necessity of appropriate discipline when necessary.

Parents of adolescents would understand their children better if they could hold discussions with adolescents. Traditionally, Basotho adolescents do not find it easy to disclose some issues to adults. Similarly, there are parents who would rather shift their responsibility of allowing for intimacy with their children to teachers at school, or other adults outside the family setting. Such a culture may need to be challenged if adolescents are to be helped to pass through their transition stage with less negative stressors. Respondents in the current study indicated that they expect their consultants to suggest workable methods to help them cope with stressful events. This requires the categories of people from the immediate and distant environment to be acquainted with the strategies postulated by previous

studies (Roets & Lewis 2000: 211-217, Honig & Wittmer 1999: 19-29, Kruger 1993: 234, McNamara 2000 b: 118-211, Sue & Sue 1997: 213-215). The strategies outlined by the author could be of great help to adolescents if the concerned parties adopt them.

### **5.2.5 Lesotho adolescents coping strategies of stress**

Consistent with the findings of Fanshawe and Burnett (1999: 96), the majority of adolescents in the sample were found to use avoidance as a strategy of coping with stress. Wadsworth and Compas (2002: 247) categorisation of stress coping strategies groups avoidance under disengagement coping subsequent to primary and secondary coping strategies respectively. Primary coping, according to them, consists of strategies used to directly alter a stressful problem, and include problem solving, emotional expression and emotional modulation. On the other hand, secondary control coping includes strategies that reflect on the attempt to adapt oneself to the stressful circumstance. This includes acceptance, cognitive restructuring, distractive and positive thinking. From the findings of this study, it appears a host of adolescents attempt to orient themselves away from stressful circumstances or emotional reactions.

The stress of economic hardship (parents losing jobs or handicapped by illness) and family conflict can be considered factors over which adolescents have little objective control. The condition of low control over the predictors of this nature might have influenced the respondents in this study to adopt an avoidance strategy most significantly. Behavioural avoidance may be useful in coping with conflict in the home, because this strategy can take an adolescent physically away from hurtful interactions with parents. However, this does not overlook the potential harmfulness of this strategy which is repressive in nature. Being repressive might predict emotional outburst or resentment at a later stage.

Wadsworth and Compas (2002: 265) suggested, in consistency with the findings of this study, that when adolescents experience more economic strain and family conflict, they tend not to use primary or secondary control strategies. They instead tend to rely on disengagement strategies. Unfortunately disengagement strategies are those not generally associated with better functioning. These results suggest that those adolescents who are exposed to higher levels of family and economic stress may have fewer coping skills or resources to manage those stressors. Hence, they tend to cope by trying to disengage themselves behaviourally or cognitively, from the stress. This may be due to an inability to mobilise primary and secondary control strategies. Moreover, it may be because adolescents' own actions are unlikely to stop or prevent parental conflict in particular. In cases such as this, the direct

interventions in conflict are likely to be met with frustration and helplessness. Lack of control over the stressor is another possible explanation for this trend found in the present study and elsewhere. Although it might have been expected that experiencing stress would impel an individual to engage in some sort of coping activities, in this study, data suggest that economic strain and family conflict may impel adolescents to use disengagement rather than more helpful, active kinds of coping.

The finding that adolescents use relaxation as a method of coping echoes with that of Woodbridge (1998: 5) and Fanshawe and Burnett (1999: 96). According to the authors, relaxation falls under stress combative strategies. Relaxation basically lowers the arousal of tension without using drugs. It is generally accepted that relaxation plays a major role helping adolescents cope with stress. Mentally, stress gets reduced. At the same time, concentration and memory are improved. Furthermore, it lifts depression and enhances self-confidence. Physically, energy levels are boosted and it improves the quality of sleep. The individual's vitality is enhanced. This form of coping strategy seems accessible to many respondents in the present study. This might be because of different activities that comprise relaxation, most of which do not have financial implications for the adolescents. For example, reading the Bible and praying only require time. Listening to music implies that the necessary equipment is available.

Also of a considerable concern is a lack of established counselling in high schools in Lesotho. If the school is to serve as the stress reduction agency, as Armacost (1990: 109) suggests, there must be a point of access to and for the adolescents. The need for school counsellors becomes more pressing since adolescents are disposed to talking about personal problems. Schools are in a key position to help adolescents learn effective coping skills by offering preventive interventions and coping skills training. Against this background, it is reasonable to conclude that services of educational counsellors are required in all high schools in Lesotho.

The finding of the present study also confirms that of Bosma and Jackson (1990: 95) who indicated that some adolescents manifest expressive behaviours as a way of coping with stress. By the same token, the adolescents in this study appear to use this strategy, which is implemented in other settings. They pointed out that they either shout at others or answer impolitely to some incidents. Although adolescents may feel temporarily relieved after expressing their emotions in this way, this may worsen the stress level owing to the reaction they are likely to get from people they shout at, for example. Therefore, it sounds logical to conclude that expressive behaviour may not be an effective coping strategy.

Often adolescents tend to resort to expressive behaviour unconsciously. This behaviour is typical of people who have suppressed negative feelings for a considerable time (Kruger 1992: 144). Hence, when they cannot suppress it any longer, they burst into verbal or physical aggression. Under normal circumstances people do not make friends by being hostile to them. Such behaviour is socially inappropriate. As a result, adolescents who use expressive behaviour as a means of coping with stress are likely to fail to develop a social network of support. Social support itself has been found among effective moderators of stress (Ainsie et al. 1996: 922). As a result, a coping strategy that alienates from mobilising social assets may prove a potentially harmful strategy.

There are other coping strategies Lesotho adolescents indicated that they utilise. The results are similar to diversionary strategies utilised according to individual's perception and unique experience of stress (Mates & Allison, 1992: 471). This suggests the adolescents concerned do not just remain passive when faced with stressful situation. No matter how effective or efficient the strategy, they do something to deal with the stressors.

From personal experience, the results of the present study on coping strategies reveal deal with the typical nature of Basotho children. (Culturally, children are not encouraged to talk about personal concerns). It is considered insubordination and show a lack of self-acceptance.

Basotho culture could be referred to as a 'culture of silence.' It encourages endurance. Unfortunately, at times it does not differentiate between things that are to be tolerated and endured and those which should not. For example, if a child undergoes a certain problem in the family, such a child is culturally barred from revealing the problem to outsiders. Doing so would imply an inability to keep secrets. This cultural practice may prove potentially harmful in cases of child abuse and other similar extreme circumstances. Therefore, the majority of the adolescents in this survey would rather utilise an avoidance strategy than any other strategy.

When it comes to seeking comfort, mothers play a more significant role in Lesotho. The loss of the mother causes adolescents great stress. At school their performance drops. They withdraw from others' company. An extreme case was of an adolescent girl who had been taking care of her mother until the mother died. The death of the mother was so traumatic that the adolescent girl nearly became insane. Other students would report seeing her frequently talking to herself. Adolescents who lose a parent often start missing school because some became caretakers of their younger siblings.



For adolescents who have strong relationship with peers, their friends become a source of comfort especially when they face frustrations at home. They can share family concerns and encourage one another. In some cases, peers approach teachers explaining the problems of their friends. Experience in teaching service in Lesotho has shown that adolescents rarely approach their teachers when they are facing stressful events. If a teacher does not take the initiative upon sensing a problem, learners can hardly make the first move. This may suggest that such adolescents fail to identify which of the teachers could be of to them since there are no established counselling units in schools. The availability of such services will encourage students to seek help from them.

### **5.2.6 Suggested methods of managing and coping with stress**

The findings have shown that adolescents in the study respond to stress in ways that are appropriate or ways that are unhelpful, unhealthy, or not derived towards problem solution. Based on the notes under section 2.11, the following strategies may be employed by the adolescents when they undergo stressful situations:

- Improving interpersonal and communication skills: this may help them get parents attention so that they can be able to discuss the matters of their concern in a non-offensive way. They could learn to do things with their parents, talking to either of them. In cases where parents have died and adolescents are faced with financial pressure, they may directly seek help from the Ministry of Education through the Department of Social Welfare. The department deals with sponsoring orphans and younger.
- Employing stress reduction techniques such as mental and physical strategies. It is vital for adolescents to recognise stress in their own lives. Thereafter, they should learn to keep thing in perspective avoiding negative attitudes. They should practice the skill of thought stopping when negative erodes their minds. Proper nutrition and eating habits have to be maintained. They should also learn the act of relaxation and exercise in order to reduce the tension in their muscles.
- Applying effective study skills and proper time management. They should be caution with the environment they choose for study and adopt the SQSR study method discussed in 2.11.4.3. The issue of using a personal time table cannot be overemphasised.
- Forming helpful friends: they should learn to be able to recognise which friends will be mutually beneficial to their well being.

- Resisting peer pressure: it is an indispensable quality for the adolescents to be in position to stand up for their individual values, beliefs and conviction in the face of conflicting ideas or practice of peers.
- Self awareness: a clear sense of their identity will form an honest basis for knowing and acknowledging their capabilities and limitations. They must learn to feel good with their aspect such as appearance and abilities. This will help them boost their self esteem.
- Adopting critical and creative thinking in decision making. There is a need for adolescents to develop the ability to innovatively and critically analysed information in order to have an accurate basis for making objective decision and judgment. It is imperative for them to be in a position to know what they individually want and why as they relate with their environment particularly their peers. This will enable them to take necessary steps to achieve what they want.
- In summary, they must learn to take responsibility to recognise stress, its causes and effects and know how to deal with it.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

In general, adolescents' responses have indicated that stress is a universal experience. Primarily adolescents' problems seemed to stem from home and school. Beyond its implication for research and theory, this study has implications for intervention policy. Therefore, in order to be able to empower the adolescents experiencing stress, the following suggestions should be considered:

- Policy makers should recognise the family as a source of stress as well as support for adolescents. Therefore, there should be policies focusing on enhancing resources in Lesotho, including economic resources in the family. This will promote the well-being of family members.
- Parents' workshops should be implemented. Workshops should focus on developmental issues of adolescence and how to reduce family problems. They should also emphasise those aspects aimed at improving parent-child relationships and lessening the discrepancy between parents' expectations and adolescents' performance in academic study. Furthermore, family workshops should focus on enhancing family members' communication, and marital relationships.

Moreover, they should address issues relating to best utilisation of available family resources for a better environment.

- As a matter of urgency, a guidance and counselling course should be introduced into the academic programme of the Lesotho College of Education and the National University of Lesotho. There should be an established academic department of guidance and counselling housed in the Faculty of Education. As the Guidance Counsellors graduate, they should be posted to all high schools in Lesotho for academic and counselling with the students. This will expose adolescents to training in effective coping skills.
- Professional teachers who are willing to undertake studies in Guidance and Counselling should be granted study leave in that regard. The Department of Teaching Service should review their policy that prohibits teachers furthering their studies in Guidance and Counselling. In fact, high schools should identify teachers who can fill this gap.
- Support groups for adolescents should be formed. Resources can include both school personnel and community members. The focus should be helping adolescents improve communication skills, decision-making, and conflict resolution skills as well as how to resolve boyfriend/girlfriend problems and frictions with parents and friends. Churches, schools, recreation centres and other locations where adolescents congregate would be convenient meeting places.

#### **5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study was focused on Grades nine and eleven in five high schools in the Maseru district. This research adopted a descriptive survey to investigate the problem.

When interpreting the findings, the limitation of the present study has to be considered. Firstly, non probability sampling approaches were used. This makes the results non-generalisable. Also, the instrument for data collection was not standardised. Reliability and validity could not be tested on the scale questions.

Another reasonable criticism of the present study is that while there are ten districts in Lesotho, the researcher delimited the investigation to only one district. Apart from that, the country is divided into

four geographical regions: namely, Highlands, Foothills, Senqu Valley and Lowlands yet the study was restricted to the city centre located in the Lowlands. Hence, the results reflect more on urban life. Furthermore, the population used in this study was restricted to the high schools in the Maseru district only, thereby making the results of the study non-generalisable to other districts.

Moreover, no single study can solve all educational problems. In view of the above limitations, it is suggested that further research should be carried out. First, the quantitative effects of stress on adolescents' academic performance should be examined. Second, it might be interesting to find out which stress coping skills are more effective for different categories of adolescents, in terms of gender and grade level. Also, it might be necessary to find out how stress affects other categories of adolescents who are out of school. Another study could find out the effect of parental involvement in the lives of adolescents experiencing stress. Research could also be carried out to determine the severity of stress induced factors among adolescents across the four geographical regions of Lesotho.

## **5.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In preparation for the data collection, ethical aspects were considered. Approval from the sampled schools' principals was sought. Permission to use students to fill up the questionnaire was granted. The letters of attestation were given (Appendix A). In Lesotho context matters relating to students during school hours are entirely attended to by school authorities. This is an implicit, mutual understanding between parents and school. Parents would informally indicate that school authorities must be in a position to their discretion in issues arising concerning the children in their care. It therefore, stands to clarify that researcher in her context needed to secure permission from the principals in respective schools in representation of both the school and the parents. It has hitherto never aroused any threat to parents when high school students provide assistance in anything academic as approved by the school. However, before the random sampling, students' consent was sought. Ultimately, respondents were drawn from those who volunteered to participate in filling the questionnaires with the implicit permission of their parents.

It was then explained to the sampled students that the study only served academic purpose, hence would do them no harm. The respondents were further assured that the information given would be held confidential. To attest to this, the researcher had taken caution to preserve the respondents' anonymity by ensuring that no part of the data was linked to the individual respondents by name.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ainslie, R. C, Shafer, A and Reynolds, J. 1996. Mediators of adolescents' stress in college preparatory environment. *Adolescence*, 31 (12) 913-924.
- Ang, R. P. and Huan, U. S. 2006. Academic expectation stress inventory. *Educational and Psychological Measurements*, 66 (3) 522-539.
- Armocost, R. L. 1990. High school students' stress and the role of the school. *Counsellor*, 38 (2) 105-112.
- Arnett, J. J. 1990. Adolescent storm and stress, reconsidered. *American Psychology*, 54 (5) 317-326
- Arnold, L. E. 1990. *Stress in children and adolescents: introduction and summary*. In: Arnold, L. E. (ed). *Childhood stress*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Benson, H. 2000. Academic performance among middle school after exposure to a relaxation response curriculum. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 33 (3) 156-165.
- Bernd, H. and Carmel, O. 1998. An exploration into the nature, frequency and impact of school hassles in the middle school years. *Australian Psychologist*, 33 (2) 130-137.
- Bowker, A., Bukowski, W. M. and Sippola, L. K. 2000. Coping with daily hassles in the peer group during early adolescence: variations as a function of peer experience. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 10 (2) 211-143.
- Bosma, H. and Jackson, S. (ed). 1990. *Coping and self concept in adolescence*. Berlin: Springer Verlag.
- Burnett, P. C. and Fanshawe, J. O. 1997. Measuring school related stressors in adolescence. *Journal of Adolescence*, 26 (4) 415-428.
- Burns, E. M. and Arnold, L. E. 1990. Biological factors of stress: effects on the developing brain. In: Arnold, L. (ed). *Childhood stress*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Butter, G. and Hope, T. 1995. *The mental fitness guide: manage your mind*. Oxford University Press.
- Byrne, D. G., Davenport S. V. and Mazanov, J. 2007. Profiles of adolescent stress: the development of adolescent stress questionnaire (ASQ). *Journal of Adolescence*, 30 (3) 393-416
- Byrne, D. G. and Mazanov, J. 2002. Sources of stress in Australian Adolescents: factor structure and stability over time. *Stress and Health*, 18, 185-192.
- Chen, E., Langer, D. A., Raphaelson, Y. E. and Mathews, K. A. 2004. Socioeconomic status and health in adolescence: the role of stress interpretation. *Child development*, 75(4) 1039-1052.
- Colliers, J. H. J. 2004. Pastoral counselling to adolescents involved in occultic culture: a pastoral therapeutic approach. Unpublished DTh thesis, University of the Free State, South Africa.
- Compas, B. E. Connor-Smith, J. and Jasar, S. S. 2004. Temperaments, Stress reactivity and coping:

- implications for depression in adolescence and childhood. *Journal of Clinic Child and Adolescence Psychology*, 33(1)21-31
- Copley, B. and Williams, G. 1995. *The teenage year: understanding 18 – 20 years olds*. London: The Tavistock Clinic.
- De-Anda, D., Baroni, S., Boskin, L., Morgan, J. and Ow, J. 2000. Stress, stressors and coping among high school students. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 22 (6) 441-463
- De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Foucher, C. B., Poggenpoel, M., Schurink, E. and Schurink, W. 2002. *Research at grass roots*. Second edition. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Drapeau, S., Samson, C. and Saint, J. 1999. The coping process among children of separated parents. *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, 31 (1) 1-2
- DuMont, K. A., Widom, C. S. and Czaja, S. J. 2007. Predictors of resilience in abused and neglected children: the role of individuals and neighbourhood characteristics. *Child Abuse*, 31, 255-274
- Edwards, D. J. A. and Louw, D. A. 1998. *Psychology: an introduction for students in Southern Africa*. Sandton: Heinemann Higher and Further Education.
- Eshenbeck, H., Kohlmann, C. W. and Lohaus, A. 2007 General difference in coping strategies in children and adolescents. *Journal of Individual Differences* 25(1)18-28.
- Feshbach, S. and Weiner, P. 1991. *Personality. Third edition. University of California: Nightland Day*.
- Frydenberg, E. and Lewis, R. 2004. Adolescents least able to cope: how do they respond to their stress? *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 33(1)25-27
- Frydenberg, E., Lewis, R., Bugalski, K., Cotta., A., McCarthy, C., Luscombe-Smith, N. and Poole, C. 2004. Prevention is better than cure: coping skills training for adolescents at school. *Education Psychology in Practice*, 20(2), 117-134
- Garber, J. 2002. Development trajectories of adolescents depressive symptoms: predictors of change. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 70 (1) 79-95
- Geisthardt, C, and Munch, J. 1996. Coping with stress: a comparison with and without learning disabilities. *Journal of leaning Disabilities*, 29 (3) 287-296.
- Goodyer, I. M. 1990. Family relations, life events and childhood psychopathology. *Journal of Childhood Psychology and Psychiatry*, 31: 161-192.
- Groer, M. W, Thomas S. P, and Shoffer, D. 1992. Adolescent stress, copying strategies and school competition: a longitudinal perspective. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 16 (4) 389-405.
- Grannis, J. C. 1992. Students' stress, distress and achievement in an urban intermediate School. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 12, 14-27
- Griffith, M. A., Dubow, E. F. and Ippolito, M. E. 2000. Developmental and cross situation differences in

- Adolescents' coping strategies. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 29 (2) 183-204
- Hagquist, C. E. I. 1998. Economic stress and perceived health among adolescents in Sweden. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 22 (4) 250-257.
- Hampel, P. and Peterman, F. 2007. Perceived stress, coping and adjustment in adolescence. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 38, 409-415
- Hampton, T. 2006. Effects of stress on children examined. *Journal of American Medical Association*. 295(16), 1188
- Hankin, B; Mermelstein, R. and Roesch, L. 2007. Sex differences in adolescence depression; stress exposure and reactivity models. *Children Development*, 78, 279-295.
- Hartos, J. L. and Power, G.T. 1997. Mothers' awareness of their early childhood stressors: relation between awareness and adolescent adjustment. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 17 (4) 371-389.
- Hess, R. S. and Copeland, E. P. 2001. Students' stress, coping strategies and school completion: a longitudinal perspective. *Psychology Quarterly*, 16(4)389-405
- Heubeck, B. and O' Sullivan, C. 1998. An exploration into the nature, frequency and impact of school hassles in the middle school years. *Australian Psychologist*, 33 (2) 130-137.
- Hoberg, S. M. 2003. The crisis generation: peer influence on adolescent substance abuse. *Educare* 32 (1&2) 240-259.
- Holmbeck, G. N. and Hill, J. P. 1991. Conflictive engagement, positive affect, and menarche in families with seven-grade girls. *Child Development*, 62: 1030-1048.
- Howard, M. S. and Medway, F. G. 2004. Adolescents' attachment and coping with stress. *Psychology in the school* 41(3)391-402
- Honig, A. and Wittmer, D. 1999. Stress: tips and references on how teachers can help children. Unpublished Notes. Syracuse, NY: D E C & Syracuse University.
- Hui, E. K. P. 2000. Personal concerns and their causes: perception of Hong Kong Chinese adolescent students. *Journal of Adolescence*, 23 (2) 189-203
- Jegede, J. O. 1999. *A concise handbook of research methods*. Ibadan: Pope Rising Press.
- Johnson, C. and Wiechers, E. 2003. Intra-psychoic effects of a group intervention programme on adolescents of divorced. *South African Journal of Education*, 22(3), 177-183
- Jose, P. E. and Ratcliffe, V. 2004. Stressor frequency and perceived intensity as predictors of internalising symptoms: gender and age differences in adolescence. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, 33(3) 145-154.
- Kausar, R. and Munir, R. 2004. Pakistani adolescents' coping with stress: effect of loss of a parent and gender of adolescents. *Journal of adolescents*, 27, 599-610.
- Katona, N. and Sizito, R. 2000. Student stress in adolescence. *Curriculum and Teaching*, 15 (2) 49

- Keen, A. W. and Budhia, A. C. 1993. Group work with children to prevent sexual abuse. *Social Work Practice* 1 (93) 5-7
- Kokot, S. J. 1994. *Learning and teaching styles*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Kouzma, N. and Kennedy, G. A. 2004. Self-reported sources of stress in senior high school students. *Psychological Reports* 94, (1) 314-316.
- Knaub, P. K. 1999. Family stressor events, family coping and adolescent adaptation in farm and ranch families. *Adolescence*, 133 (34), 147-168.
- Kraag, G., Zeegers, M. P., Kok, G., Hosman, C. and Abu-Saad, H. H. 2006. School problems targeting stress management in children and adolescents; a meta – analysis. *Journal of school Psychology*, 44(6), 449-472.
- Kruger, A. C. M. 1992. Identification of stress in adolescents. Unpublished D. Ed thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria.
- Kruger, A, C. M. 1995. A proposed model for the identification and handling of stress in adolescents. *Educare*, 24 (2), 70-81.
- Lewis, A. 2001. The issue of perception: some educational implications. *Educare*, 30 (1&2): 272-288.
- Liu, X., Tein, J. and Zhao, Z. 2004. Coping strategies and behavioural/emotional problems among Chinese adolescents. *Psychiatry Research*, 126 (3), 275-285.
- Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. 1991. s.v. “victim”. Longman, Longman Group UK Limited: 1173.
- Mates, D. and Allison, K. R. 1992. Sources of stress and coping responses of high school students. *Adolescence*, 27 (106) 461-474.
- McMillan, J. H. and Schumacher, S. 1993. *Research in education - a conceptual introduction* – third edition. New York. McGraw – Hill.
- McNamara, S. 2000 a. *Stress in young people*. New York: Gromwell Press.
- McNamara, S. 2000 b. *Stress management programme for secondary school students*. London: Routledge.
- Munch, J. and Wampler, R. S. 1993. Ethnic differences in early adolescents’ coping with school stress. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 63(4)633-646.
- Murburg, T. A. and Bru, E. 2004. Social support, negative life event and emotional problems among Norwegian Adolescents. *School Psychology International*, 25(4), 387-403
- Neblett, N. G. and Corlian, K. S. 2006. Adolescents’ thoughts about parents’ jobs and their importance for adolescents’ future orientations. *Journal of Adolescence*, 29, 795-811.
- Newcomb, M. D. 1994. Families, peers and adolescent alcohol abuse: a paradigm to study multiple



- cause, mechanisms and outcomes. *National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Research Monograph*, 26: 157-168.
- Nitz, K ; Ketterlinus, R. D. and Brandt, L. J. 1995. The role of stress, social support, and family environment in mothers' parenting. *Journal of Adolescent Stress*, 10(3)358-382.
- Noller, P. and Callan, V. J. 1990. Adolescents' perception of the nature of their communication with parents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 19: 349-363.
- O'Brien, R. W. and Iannotti, R. J. 1993. Differences in mothers' and children's perception of urban black children stress. *Journal of Youth and Adolescents*, 22: 543-557.
- Paikoff, R. L. and Brooks, G. J. 1991. Do parent-child relationships change during puberty? *Psychological Bulletin*, 110: 47-66.
- Payne, M. A. 2000. Experience of everyday hassle: comparative sense of well-being of adolescents in New Zealand. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 8 (4) 271-286.
- Plunkett, S. W., Henry, C. S. and Knaub, P. K. 1999. Family stressor events family coping and adolescent adaptation in farm and ranch families. *Adolescence*, 133 (34), 147-168.
- Pennal, B. E. 1994. *The company they keep*. Boston: Boston University Press.
- Phatsoane, L. E. 1995. Management of stress among students at the National University of Lesotho. Unpublished M Ed Dissertation, National University of Lesotho, Roma.
- Prinsloo, E. 2003. At society's margin: focus on the youth in South Africa. *Educare*, 32 (1&2) 275-290.
- Printz, B. L., Shermis, M. D. and Webb, P.W. 1999. Stress-buffering factors related to adolescent coping: a path analysis. *Adolescence*, 34 (36) 715-734.
- Public Eye. 1999. Privatisation causes unemployment and poverty in Lesotho. 10-12, September: 6.
- Rajendram, R. and Kaliappan, K. V. 1990. Efficacy of behavioural programme in managing the academic performance. *Journal of Personality and Clinical Studies*, 6 (2) 193-196.
- Ramasar, A. D. 1997. The effects of childhood sexual abuse on adult females. Unpublished M. Ed dissertation, University of South Africa, Pretoria.
- Ratšiu, M. 1997. How gender influences stress due to workload and among secondary and high school teachers in Lesotho. Unpublished M. Ed dissertation, National University of Lesotho, Roma.
- Rende, R. D. and Plomin, R. 1991. Child and parent perception of the upsettingness of major life events. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 32: 35-56.
- Riesch, S. K. 1998. Young adolescents' identification of difficult life events. *Clinical Nursing Research*, 3 (4) 393-413.
- Roets, H. E. and Lewis, A. 2002. Notes on adolescent stress for parents, teachers and educational psychologists. *Educare*, 31 (1&2) 202-217.
- Rugby, K. 1998. Health effects of school bullying. *Professional Reading Guide*, 19 (2) 1-2.

- Sakoane, M. M. 1999. Stress among university students: prevalence, sources and management strategies. Unpublished M. Ed dissertation, National University of Lesotho, Roma.
- Sarmany, S.I. 1994. Load and stress in school: their sources and possibilities of coping with them. *Studia-psychologica*, 36 (1) 41-54.
- Seiffge-Krenke, J. 2004. Adaptive and maladaptive coping style: does intervention change anything. *European Journal of Development Psychology*, 1 (4), 367-382.
- Self development centre. September 2003. *Time management tips*. (on line) available at <http://www.gmu.edu/gmu/personal/time.html>. Accessed on 25/03/2004.
- Sharma, S. and Sud, A.1990. Examination stress and test anxiety: a cross cultural perspective. *Psychology and Developing societies*, 2 (2) 183-201.
- Smetana, J. G. 1998. Adolescents and parents' conceptions of parental authority. *Child Development*, 59: 321-335.
- Spencer, B. Dupree, D; Swanson, D. P. and Cunningham, M. 1998. The influence of physical maturation and hassles on African- American adolescents' learning behaviors. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 29 (1) 189-200.
- Stanley, C. F. 1996. Our teenagers: what's missing? *In Touch Magazine*, 4 (6) 7-13.
- Strom, R. and Griswold, D. 1991. An inside view of parental success in black families. *Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 18: 187-197.
- Sue, D. and Sue, S. 1997. *Understanding abnormal behavior*. Fifth edition. Boston, MA: Houghton Mafflin.
- Suman, V. and Gupta, J. 1990. Some effects of high academic stress and symptoms. *Journal of Personality and Clinic Studies*, 6 (1) 9-12
- Trad, P. V. and Greenblatt, E. 1990. Psychological aspects of childhood stress development and spectrum of coping responses. In L. E. Arnold (ed). *Childhood stress*. New York:John Wiley & Sons. resistance. Berlin: Springer-Verlag
- Tyszkowa, M. 1998. Coping with difficult situations and stress resistance. Berlin: Springer-Verlag.
- Van den Aardweg, E. D. and M. 1993. *Psychology of education: a dictionary for students*. Second edition. Pretoria: E & E Enterprises.
- Villanova University. September 2003. Time Management. (On line). Available at <http://www.pattime.villanova.edu.currentstudent/timemanagement.htm> Accessed on 25/03/2004.
- Wadworth, M. E. and Cornpass, B. E. 2002. Coping with family economic and strain: the adolescent perspective. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 12 (2) 243-274.
- Washburn – Ormachea, J. M.; Hillman, S. B. and Sawilowsky, S. 2004. Gender and gender role

orientation difference on adolescents coping with peer-stressors. *Journal of Youth and Adolescents*, 33 (1), 31

Wiemersma, W. 1991. *Research in education*. Boston: Ellyn and Bacon.

Woodbridge, N. B. 1998 a. Towards a stress management training program for helping adolescents cope with stress: an integrated approach. *Educare*, 27 (1 & 2), 46-57.

Woodbridge, N. B. 1998 b. "SMARTER": a RET-based model to understand and handle stress. *Educare*, 27 (1 & 2). 58-60.

Workshop. 22 October 2002. Crime prevention and gender issue. Maseru, Victoria Hotel.

Workshop. Sensitation of principals on the child protection and welfare bill. Maseru Sun Hotel. 10 July 2007.

Yahaya, A. L. 1998. Severity of stress induced factors among students in tertiary institutions of Ilorin Metropolis. *The Nigerian Journal of Guidance and Counseling*, 6 (1 & 2) 89-103.

Ziiadova, V. 2004. Why does an adolescent commit a crime? *Russian Education and Society*, 46 (2), 23-31.

## LIST OF FIGURES

### Figures

2.1	47
4.1	97

## LIST OF TABLES

### Tables

2.1	20
2.2	31
2.3	39
2.4	43
2.5	47
3.1	77
4.1	90
4.2	90
4.3	91
4.4	93
4.5	94
4.6	95
4.7	96
4.8	97

**APPENDIX**

**RESEARCH INSTRUMENT: QUESTIONNAIRE**

# LESOTHO ADOLESCENTS' EXPERIENCE OF STRESS

Kindly respond to the following items by encircling the appropriate number. For example, if you are a girl then encircle 2. 

M	1	F	2
---	---	---	---

You do not need to write your name. Information on this questionnaire will be treated as strictly confidential.

## SECTION A

### Personal data

#### Office Use

--	--	--

1. Class 

B	1	D	2
---	---	---	---

1

2. Sex 

M	1	F	2
---	---	---	---

2

## SECTION B

### Stress experience

3. Do you ever experience stress? 

Yes	1	No	2
-----	---	----	---

3

4. How do you normally feel when you are stressed?

Fearful 1	Shy 2	Angry 3	Resentful 4	Sad 5	Rejected 6
-----------	-------	---------	-------------	-------	------------

4

5. Whom do you feel free to seek help from when under going stress? Please indicate by ticking from the following possibilities in the appropriate block

- |                                   |                          |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| (a) Friend?                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) Parent                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) Teacher                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (d) Counsellor/social worker      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (e) Helpline service in magazine? | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5

6

7

8

9

6. Please explain the kind of help you appreciate most in helping you to minimise stress.

Please encircle only one number.

Encourage me 1	Counsel me 2	Answer my questions 6	Understand me 4
Change approach towards me 5		Sympathise 3	Suggest how I can cope 7

7. Consider the factors below and state by encircling the appropriate number the extent to which each of them causes stress to you. Skip the items which do not apply to you.

I experience stress:	Not at all stressful	A little stressful	Moderately stressful	Quite stressful	Very stressful	
When I am sick	1	2	3	4	5	11
When I have money	1	2	3	4	5	12
When I do not have money	1	2	3	4	5	13
When others tease me	1	2	3	4	5	14
When beginning to date	1	2	3	4	5	15
When breaking up with a girl/boy friend	1	2	3	4	5	16
When I discover I do not have a legitimate father	1	2	3	4	5	17
When my father is dead	1	2	3	4	5	18
When my mother is dead	1	2	3	4	5	19
When my parents lose their job	1	2	3	4	5	20
When my parents separate	1	2	3	4	5	21
When my parents divorce	1	2	3	4	5	22
When my parent marries a step-parent	1	2	3	4	5	23
When one of my parents is ill	1	2	3	4	5	24
When one of my relatives is in hospital	1	2	3	4	5	25
When my parent is sentenced to jail	1	2	3	4	5	26
When my parents frequently quarrel or fight	1	2	3	4	5	27
When I discover I am an adopted child	1	2	3	4	5	28
When being sexually abused by a parent	1	2	3	4	5	29
When being sexually abused by a relative	1	2	3	4	5	30
When there are tests to write	1	2	3	4	5	31
When I do not perform up to the expected standard	1	2	3	4	5	32
When I question the ability of some teachers	1	2	3	4	5	33
When I change to a different school	1	2	3	4	5	34
When beginning high school	1	2	3	4	5	35
When writing examinations	1	2	3	4	5	36
When I do not have money for lunch box	1	2	3	4	5	37
When I do not have all materials needed at school	1	2	3	4	5	38
When teachers do not come to class	1	2	3	4	5	39
When I am being corporally punished at school	1	2	3	4	5	40
When I have to talk in front of the class	1	2	3	4	5	41
When I have to repeat a class	1	2	3	4	5	42
When I am suspended from school	1	2	3	4	5	43
When teachers speak unkind words to me	1	2	3	4	5	44

8. What coping strategies do you adopt when you are stressed?

---

---

---

---

---

***Thank you for your cooperation***





# ADVENTVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

P.O. Box 14965  
Maseru 100  
Tel.: (09266) 22321941  
E-mail: ahs@email.co.ls

21 August 2007

To whom it may concern

This is to certify that Miss Machela M.I. was once granted permission to pilot test her instrument in the school

She was allowed to use 30 students derived from forms B and D for that exercise.

Yours faithfully

  
J.T. Taeli (MR)  
HEADMASTER





# *MABATHOANA HIGH SCHOOL*

Main South 1 Cathedral Area Maseru 400M From The Main Circle  
P.O.Box 2135 PITSO GROUND 102 Maseru Lesotho Southern Africa

Tel: (09266) 223 171 50  
Fax (09266) 223 171 50

*E-Mail: mabhiah@snim.org.ls*

28 / August / 2007

## TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter serves as a proof that MISS MAPITSO I. MACHELA, was allowed to collect a data from our students for her studies ( MASTER IN EDUCATION ) in 2003.

Thanking you in advance.

*Sister M. Kephato*  
(The Principal )





*P. O. Box 8705  
MASERU 100  
LESOTHO*

*TEL: 22325467 / FAX: 22325467*

21 August 2007

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that 'Mapitso Machela collected data for her MED at the above mentioned school

Sincerely yours

M. MOHLEREPE  
PRINCIPAL



# MASERU ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL

P.O.BOX 1563  
+26622331560

MASERU 100

LESOTHO

Tel:

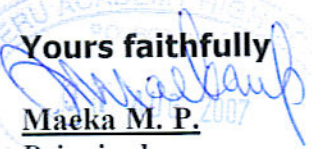
Dear Sir/Madam,

## TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that Miss Mapitso I. Machela was allowed to use the students of this school for the data collection on a Masters' dissertation titled "The Empowerment of Lesotho Adolescents Experience Stress" at the school.

I hope this information serves the purpose it deserves.

Yours faithfully

  
Maeka M. P.  
Principal



---

**CHANGING LIVES----- BUILDING FUTURES**  
**WE LEARN TO SERVE**

---

# MASERU HIGH SCHOOL

P.O Box 476. Maseru 100 . Lesotho. Tel. (O) 313722  
(R) 336198

Principal: Moloantoa Lelimo  
Ref:

August 23, 2007

## *To whom it may concern*

This is to certify that Ms. Mapitso I MachelA requested permission to carry out her research at Maseru High School

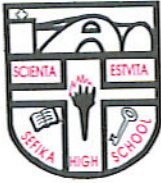
I confirm here that she was granted permission to use students in the school to collect data.

Yours faithfully



**MOLETSANE RANYALI(Mr)**  
Deputy Principal





# SEFIKA HIGH SCHOOL

PO Box 2643 Maseru 102 Lesotho Tel.: (09266) 315053

## TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves to confirm that **Mapitso I. Machela** was given permission to collect her data from the students at the above mentioned school

Yours faithfully

**K. MAHULA (PRINCIPAL)**

