



DATA SHORTS

Relationship of Symptom and Functioning Scale Scores To Hopefulness in Adolescents

For adolescents, resilience is a concept similar to recovery in the adult system. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) defines resilience as “the ability... to cope with adversity and adapt to challenges...” (http://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/dbhis/dbhis_stress_about_resilience.asp). As indicated in a related website (<http://www.samhsa.gov/children/trauma-resilience-definitions.asp>), one element of resilience is “A positive and confident outlook”. Adolescents who participate in the Outcomes Measurement System (OMS) are asked to indicate their degree of agreement with the statement “I am hopeful about my future”, which corresponds with a positive and confident outlook.

Since symptoms and functioning were found to be related to recovery in adults (as presented in the last Data Shorts ,vol. 2, issue 9), the relationship of these to hopefulness in adolescents is investigated here. The first graph shows the results of the hopefulness item for the most recent interview in FY 2013. The overwhelming majority of adolescents (83%) indicate agreement or strong agreement with the item, while only 3% disagree or strongly disagree.

To see how hopefulness and functioning may be related, mean scores on the overall and two subscales of the child symptom instrument were calculated for three groups based on their agreement with the hopefulness item: 1. “Strongly agree” or “Agree”, 2. “Neutral”, and 3. “Disagree” or “Strongly disagree”. The second graph shows a strong relationship between symptoms and hopefulness. The more hopeful that an adolescent is, the fewer and less severe symptoms the individual reports on the overall scale and each subscale. Mean scores for those neutral about hopefulness are between those who view the future with hope and those who view it less positively.

A similar methodology was used to examine the relationship between hopefulness and functioning, a federal measure defined at http://www.nri-inc.org/projects/SDICC/Forms/2012_instructions.pdf, p.21. The results, presented in the third graph, are essentially identical to the results for the symptom scales; adolescents who report being hopeful about their future are more likely to report better functioning. So while the majority of adolescent OMS respondents report being hopeful about their future, those who are neutral or not hopeful report more problems in functioning.

Additional information about resilience as well as helpful resources can be found at the SAMHSA website referenced above. More information specific to Maryland can be found at the Maryland Coalition of Families website, <http://www.mdcoalition.org/>.

