



## Service Priorities and Programmes Electronic Presentations

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### **Does Coping matter? The additional benefit of coping in psychosocial intervention for people with Bipolar Disorder**

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#### **Introduction**

People with bipolar disorder (BD) frequently struggle with the recurrence of affective symptoms. There is increasing recognition that pharmacotherapy alone does not prevent relapses of BD. Researchers have demonstrated the significant impact of life events in causing mood fluctuation. Although coping has been thoroughly studied in the past decade, the focus was only placed on general stressors or prodromes but not life events. Thus, exploration into how individuals with BD cope with life events is thus indicated in the psychosocial interventions.

#### **Objectives**

By integrating the Behavioral Approach System (BAS) dysregulation theory and coping flexibility framework, this study aimed to devise a novel combined model to understand more clearly the mediating and moderating role of coping. The associations between BAS sensitivity level, functioning level, coping flexibility, and mood states among people with BD after encountering BAS activating life events were explored in the study.

#### **Methodology**

Using a cross-sectional study design, 90 participants with BD were recruited. Each individual was presented with four different BAS activating life event scenarios and assessed with regard to their BAS trait sensitivity, functioning level, coping flexibility, and mood states. A hierarchical clustering method was used to identify different styles of coping flexibility. Multiple hierarchical regression analyses were conducted in order to examine the mediating and moderating roles of different components of coping flexibility on mood states.

#### **Result**

Findings showed that a low profile of coping flexibility, matched with low BAS sensitivity and functioning levels should protect people with BD from activating or accentuating mood states when encountering BAS activating life events. Specifically, BAS sensitivity and functioning level may work on different pathways in relation to different dimensions of coping flexibility. Moreover, coping flexibility was demonstrated

to have mediating and moderating effects in explaining and alleviating the effects of BAS sensitivity and functioning level on mood states, respectively. This study can have rich implications for the design or improvement of stress management programs specifically for people with BD. Predicating on individual BAS sensitivity and functioning level, people with BD can learn to deploy appropriate coping strategies to meet with different demands of life stressors.