

Personal Growth, Coping, and Well-Being among College Adults

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BACKGROUND

- Personal growth involves positive self-transformation from a place of hardship to a place of redemption (Pals, 2004)
- Researchers theorize that a focus on positive aspects of life can promote psychological resources (Fredrickson, 2001)
- Personal growth can be measured in autobiographical narratives, such as self-defining memories (Singer, 2004)

In this study, we considered college adults' displays of growth and endorsements of coping and well-being:

- We expected personal growth to be positively associated with coping and well-being.

METHOD

Participants. Two-hundred eighty-eight college adults (M age = 18.43 years, SD = .88; 68.4% women) participated in a broader online study

Procedures. Participants completed questionnaires including reports of coping strategies (Greenglass et al., 1999) at baseline and well-being (Su et al., 2014) at baseline and one-month follow-up.

Participants also completed the Self-Defining Memory task (Singer & Blagov, 2004) at baseline, sharing a *vivid memory that helps define how they understand themselves*.

- These self-defining memories were rated for displays of personal growth—a form of positive autobiographical reasoning (Mansfield et al., 2015). Growth was rated on a 1 to 5 scale, with scores of 5 indicating primarily positive self-evaluations and new insights for the self following the autobiographical event.

RESULTS

- Correlations showed positive correlations between personal growth, coping, and well-being

CORRELATION MATRIX

	1.	2.	3.
1. Personal Growth	--		
2. Coping	.15*	--	
3. Well-Being	.22**	.53**	--

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

DISCUSSION

- Displays of personal growth were positively associated with coping and well-being
- Put another way, Growth was associated with more psychological resources (Fredrickson, 2001, Pals, 2004)
- Given these positive ties between growth and well-being, it would be worthwhile to consider possible **interventions** and ways to promote people's tendencies growth when reflecting on their lives

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