

PREDICTORS OF ADOLESCENT BOYS SEEKING HELP FROM  
THEIR FATHER AND THEIR MOTHER

by

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Bachelor of Arts, University of British Columbia, 2009

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the Graduate Academic Unit of Psychology

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This dissertation is accepted by the  
Dean of Graduate Studies

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

September, 2015

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## ABSTRACT

Previous research has shown that adolescent boys hold less positive views of help seeking and seek help less frequently than adolescent girls (Garland & Zigler, 1994; Raviv et al., 2009; Sears, 2004). However, few studies have focused solely on adolescent boys in order to understand their help-seeking experiences. In addition, few studies have distinguished between adolescents' experiences seeking help from their father and from their mother. Guided by Newman's model of adaptive help seeking (1991, 2000), we examined the frequency with which adolescent boys sought help from their father and their mother; identified markers of social-cognitive skills, affective-motivational resources, and an environmental factor (i.e., parent coaching of help seeking) that predicted boys' help seeking from their father and their mother; and examined whether an environmental factor moderated the relationships between boys' reports of their relationship quality with a parent and help-seeking behaviour from a parent. Two hundred and thirty-two adolescent boys enrolled in a New Brunswick high school (Grades 9-11) completed an anonymous survey at school. Results indicated that boys "sometimes" sought help from their father and their mother. Boys' reports of more self-disclosure to their father and more positive past help-seeking experiences with their father predicted more frequent help seeking from their father. Boys' reports of more self-disclosure to their mother, more positive past help-seeking experiences with their mother, and more coaching by their mother to use help-seeking behaviour predicted more frequent help seeking from their mother. In addition, boys' reports of mother coaching use of help seeking moderated the relationship between boys' reports of negative relationship qualities with their father and help seeking from their father. Supplemental analyses revealed that boys' emotional competence and reports of positive

qualities in the parent-adolescent relationship were also important correlates of boys' help-seeking behaviour from their father and their mother. These findings provide support for applying Newman's model to the family context. Other implications for Newman's model and alternative models of help seeking, as well as for prevention and intervention strategies targeting boys' use of help seeking from their father and their mother are also discussed.

## DEDICATION

For my lifelong helper, mentor, and cheerleader: my dad. We did it coach!

And for the woman whose sensitivity and kindness inspires all of my clinical work: my mom.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The last six years have been a delightful, exhausting, and surprising adventure. I am incredibly appreciative of the support and guidance I have received throughout this journey. First and foremost, I would like to thank the school officials and the principal and staff at Kennebecasis Valley High School who supported this research, and the participants. I am especially grateful to Stephanie Costain and her superhuman efforts to ensure this project was completed. Of course, I would also like to sincerely thank my supervisor, Dr. Heather Sears, for her guidance throughout graduate school. Her vision, diligence, and direction were instrumental in the construction and implementation of this dissertation. I am also extremely grateful for the input and feedback of my departmental committee, Dr. Mary Ann Campbell and Dr. Troy Harker, and my examining committee, Dr. Jose Domene, Dr. Sue O'Donnell, Dr. Mary Ann Campbell, and Dr. Rosanne Menna.

I must also thank my colleagues at the University of New Brunswick and friends in Atlantic Canada. Since orientation day, your assistance, humour, and kindness made this West Coast girl feel at home. I especially would like to extend appreciation to those who assisted during the data collection of the project, including Lyndsay Crump, Heather Dyck, Samantha Fizell, Kirsten Gullickson, and Kathryn Malcom. Special thanks to Sarah Vannier, Nicole McHale, and Julie Werschler for your friendship, unceasing support, and miraculous ability to bring joy to any situation.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family. Thank you to my parents, Bruce and Sharon Robinson, whose wisdom and encouragement gave me the courage to attempt this grand adventure, and whose love and warmth gave me the strength to complete it. Thank you to Spencer Robinson. I am lucky to have such a wonderful,

witty, and reliable big brother. Thank you to my grandmother, Lenora Alexander, whose laughter and love I cherished every visit home. Finally, thank you to my best friend and husband, Matthew Kane, who held my hand and wiped away my tears every step of the way. Thank you for completing this journey with me. I look forward to a lifetime of adventures together.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

#### Overview

Help seeking can be defined as the act of turning to others for advice, assistance, or emotional support (Gourash, 1978; Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). It is generally viewed as a positive coping strategy that consists of three steps (i.e., recognizing a problem, making the decision to seek assistance, and identifying and accessing a specific helper) which can assist individuals with resolving their immediate problems and/or reducing their emotional distress (Newman, 2008); it may also allow them to gain insight into the causes of stressful situations, learn possible skills and strategies for resolving future problems independently, and/or develop feelings of competence and self-efficacy (Losoya, Eisenberg, & Fabes, 1998; Rickwood, 1995; Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). Enactment of help seeking may take the form of a general discussion about a problem or a specific appeal for aid, and it may involve accessing one or more informal (e.g., parent, friend) or formal (e.g., physician, psychologist) sources of assistance (Boldero & Fallon, 1995; Gourash, 1978; Rickwood, Deane, Wilson, & Ciarrochi, 2005). Generally, girls and women have more favourable attitudes towards help seeking than boys and men; they also seek help more frequently and have greater intentions of doing so in the future (Boldero & Fallon, 1995; Garland & Zigler, 1994; Lelong & Zachar, 1999; Mackenzie, Gekoski & Knox, 2006; Raviv, Sills, Raviv, & Willansky, 2000; Sears, 2004).

Although initial research on help seeking focused almost exclusively on the behaviour of adults, over the past 25 years considerable empirical attention has been paid to help seeking by children and adolescents, especially from professionals. Help

seeking during adolescence may be particularly important because it may help buffer the stress that can accompany the multitude of physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes characteristic of this developmental period; it also may help prevent problems from extending into adulthood (Logan & King, 2001; Rickwood et al., 2005). Although it seems likely that adolescents who are feeling distressed would benefit from seeking professional help, only a minority of these youths access such assistance. Rates of adolescent help seeking from professionals (e.g., doctors, mental health workers, teachers) range considerably (e.g., from 7% to 44%) (Boldero & Fallon, 1995; Rickwood & Braithwaite, 1994; Schonert-Reichl & Muller, 1996; Sears, 2004; Zwaanswijk, van der Ende, Verhaak, Bensing, & Verhulst, 2007). Higher rates are found when teachers are included as professional helpers and when clinical, rather than community-based, samples are studied (e.g., Boldero & Fallon 1994; Schonert-Reichl & Muller, 1996; Zwaanswijk et al., 2007).

A variety of demographic and individual characteristics have been associated with an increased likelihood of adolescents seeking help from professionals. For example, adolescents who are older, Caucasian, live in urban areas or in a two-parent family, and/or have a family with a higher socioeconomic status are more likely to seek formal help (Saunders, Resnick, Hoberman, & Blum, 1994; Sears, 2004; Zwaanswijk, Verhaak, Bensing, & Verhulst, 2003). It is unclear, however, whether gender is a key factor in formal help seeking among youths. Some research has found that girls are more likely to seek formal help than boys (e.g., Schonert-Reichl & Muller, 1996), whereas other research has not found this gender difference (e.g., Boldero & Fallon, 1995). Individual characteristics may also play a role. For instance, adolescents and young adults who report a higher level of emotional competence (Ciarrochi & Deane, 2001;

Ciarrochi, Wilson, Deane & Rickwood, 2003) or a lower level of hopelessness (Ciarrochi & Deane, 2001) are more willing to seek formal help. The relationship between mental health problems and help seeking is currently unclear. Some studies have reported that adolescents who experience more serious symptoms of depression and anxiety, suicidal ideation, and behaviour problems are more likely to seek formal help (Raviv et al., 2000; Rickwood & Braithwaite, 1994; Zwaanswijk et al., 2007), whereas other studies have reported that adolescents with these difficulties or lower self-esteem are less likely to see professionals (Saunders et al., 1994; Sawyer et al., 2012; Schonert-Reichl & Muller, 1996). Finally, characteristics of the problem may be important. For instance, children report greater help-seeking intentions from teachers when they perceive problems as being dangerous compared to problems which are not perceived as dangerous (Newman, Murray, & Lussier, 2001).

Research has shown consistently that adolescent boys and girls prefer to access informal helpers, such as parents and friends, rather than professionals to manage problems, and that many of them do so (Raviv et al., 2000; Rickwood & Braithwaite, 1994; Sears, 2004). For example, in one study of youths 12 to 19 years, 61% sought help from friends in the past year and 33% sought help from family, whereas only 7% sought help from a professional (Sears, 2004). Although informal helpers may support adolescents seeking help from formal sources, they may also eliminate the need to access professional assistance by providing emotional support and/or information themselves (Gourash, 1978; Saunders et al., 1994; Sears, Sheppard, & Murphy, 2005). Research has also indicated that friends are usually boys' and girls' first choice for help, especially when they are older or they are dealing with personal or interpersonal problems (Rickwood et al., 2005; Schonert-Reichl & Muller, 1996; Sullivan, Marshall,

& Schonert-Reichl, 2002; Wintre, Hicks, McVey, & Fox, 1988). More recent studies have shown that both boys and girls prefer to seek assistance from their female friends (Murphy, 2008; Poulin & Pedersen, 2007; Sears, Graham, & Campbell, 2009) and that romantic partners are also relied upon for support, particularly for personal problems (Kuttler & La Greca, 2004; Murphy, 2008). Nevertheless, parents continue to act as a key resource for youths throughout adolescence. Parents are more likely to be sought out when youths are younger, when they are experiencing family, academic, or health problems, or when they require expertise to manage a problem (Boldero & Fallon, 1995; Lee, Friesen, Walker, Colman, & Donlan, 2014; Rickwood et al., 2005; Sullivan et al., 2002). Notably, a school-based survey of adolescents found that youths who turned to a family member for help, as opposed to a peer or no one, were the most likely to report obtaining the help they felt was needed (Saunders et al., 1994).

Multiple individual characteristics have been associated with informal help seeking. Adolescent gender is a key factor. For example, boys are less likely to seek help from friends than girls (Boldero & Fallon, 1994; Schonert-Reichl et al., 1995). In contrast, boys are just as likely as girls to seek help from parents and, when they do seek help, girls *and* boys are more likely to access their mother than their father for help, although older boys are more likely to turn to their father (Boldero & Fallon, 1994; Schonert-Reichl & Muller, 1996; Sullivan et al., 2002). Other individual characteristics also have been identified. For example, higher levels of emotional competence and social competence are positively related to more frequent help seeking by adolescent girls from a best friend and a romantic partner (boys were not examined) and to girls' and boys' intentions of seeking help from their friends, romantic partners, and family members (Ciarrochi et al., 2003; Murphy, 2008). Additionally, adolescents with an

internal locus of control are more likely to seek help from mothers, and adolescents who are less self-conscious are more likely to seek help from fathers (Schonert-Reichl & Muller, 1996). Youths who report higher conformity to traditional masculine gender role norms seek help from their male friends and their female friends less often and have lower intentions of doing so in the future (Savoie, 2011; Sears et al., 2009). Adolescents' perceptions of their potential helper also have been related to their help-seeking behaviour. Youths are more likely to seek help from their friends and their parents when these helpers are viewed as being trustworthy, good listeners, and able to maintain confidentiality (Gilchrist & Sullivan, 2006; Grinstein-Weiss, Fishman, & Eisikovits, 2005; Sears et al., 2005; Wilson & Deane, 2001).

Several models and studies describing help-seeking behaviour have now been developed. However, most of them depict the process of adults obtaining assistance from professionals and do not address the more common experience of individuals seeking assistance from informal helpers or the help-seeking experiences of children and adolescents. To address the latter limitation, several researchers (e.g., Costello, Pescosolido, Angold, & Burns 1998; Logan & King, 2001; Srebnik, Cauce, & Baydar, 1996) have modified adult-oriented models to better describe the experiences of young people. Although these more child-friendly models have advanced the help-seeking literature, they are limited in multiple ways and gaps in the adolescent help-seeking literature remain. First, current models and studies of help seeking do not address the marked gender difference in this behaviour during adolescence. Fewer boys than girls seek help from others and boys also have lower intentions than girls of seeking help in the future (Boldero & Fallon, 1995; Raviv et al., 2000; Rickwood & Braitwaite, 1994). Thus, research is needed to better understand boys' unique experiences seeking help.



Second, although these models recognize the central role that informal sources, such as parents, play in the help-seeking process, existing models and studies do not differentiate between help-seeking experiences involving fathers and help-seeking experiences involving mothers. This is surprising given that adolescents report having sought help, and being more likely to seek help in the future, from specific parents at different rates and under different circumstances (Schonert-Reichl & Muller, 1996; Sullivan et al., 2002). Third, much of the existing literature is atheoretical and descriptive. As a result, most studies do not have a systematic approach for examining correlates of help seeking; more complicated relationships between variables also are rarely studied. Given the complexity of help-seeking behaviour, it seems likely that more multifaceted relationships between variables need to be identified (e.g., moderators) in order to generate ways to promote adolescents' use of help seeking. Previous work suggests that analyses of moderators can improve our understanding of adolescent help seeking (e.g., Ciarrochi et al., 2003; Murphy, 2008).

The present study was designed to address those three limitations noted above by focusing on the unique help-seeking experiences of adolescent boys, describing the nature and frequency of adolescent boys' help seeking from their father and their mother, employing a specific framework to explore predictors of boys' help seeking from each parent, and evaluating parent coaching use of help seeking as a potential moderator of various relationships (see below). It was expected that boys, on average, would report turning to their father for help "sometimes," and would report turning to their mother for help "often." Using Newman's model of adaptive help seeking (1991, 2000, 2008), it was also expected that boys with specific social-cognitive skills (i.e., a higher level of emotional competence, a higher tendency to self-disclose), specific

affective-motivational resources (i.e., more positive relationship qualities and fewer negative relationship qualities with their father and their mother, more positive past help-seeking experiences with their father and their mother, lower conformity to the traditional masculine gender role norms emotional control and self-reliance), and specific family environments (i.e., one characterized by more frequent coaching of use of help seeking by their father or their mother) would report seeking help from their father and from their mother more frequently. In addition, it was expected that a parent coaching use of help seeking would moderate the relationship between boys' reports of *positive* relationship qualities with the same parent and the frequency of their help seeking from that *same parent*. It was also expected that a parent coaching use of help seeking would moderate the relationship between boys' reports of *negative* relationship qualities with the other parent and the frequency of their help seeking from that *other parent*.

To set the stage for this research, the first two sections of this chapter describe various conceptual models of help seeking and the help-seeking process, and address the main limitations of these models. Next, a review of the literature on adolescents' relationships with their father and their mother is presented, including information about their help seeking from each parent. This review is followed by a discussion of relevant literature identifying potential predictors of adolescent boys' help seeking from their father and their mother. The selection of this literature was guided by Newman's (1991, 2000) model of adaptive help seeking by self-regulated learners. The rationale for examining the potential moderation created by a parent's coaching use of help seeking in the relationship between boys' reports of relationship qualities with that same/other

parent and the frequency of help seeking from that same/other parent is then discussed.

Finally, the research questions and hypotheses guiding this study are presented.

### **Models of Help-Seeking Behaviour**

The various models which have been proposed to describe help-seeking behaviour have traditionally fallen into one of four categories: (1) cognitive decision-making; (2) medical help seeking; (3) mental health help seeking; and (4) academic/achievement help seeking.

**Cognitive decision-making models.** Cognitive decision-making models emerged from social and cognitive psychology theories related to helping behaviours and bystander interventions (i.e., focus on what factors encourage or inhibit individuals from assisting others in need). These models examine the decision-making processes involved in recognizing a problem and accessing assistance (e.g., the assessment of a problem's severity and whether external assistance is perceived as necessary) (Gross & McMullen, 1983; Wills & DePaulo, 1991). Situational factors (e.g., the helper's skills), personality factors (e.g., low self-esteem), and perceived social and personal costs that may impact these processes are also considered (Wills & DePaulo, 1991).

**Medical models.** Medical models depict help seeking from health professionals/health services for physical and mental health concerns. According to these models, illness profiles, predisposing factors, and enabling conditions interact to facilitate or inhibit access to medical services (Andersen, 1995; Goldsmith, Jackson, & Hough, 1988). An illness profile includes an assessment of the type, severity, duration, visibility, recognisability, and frequency of symptoms, distress, and dysfunction, based on objective and subjective standards. Predisposing factors are established prior to the onset of a specific episode of illness and influence one's readiness to seek help (e.g.,

demographic variables, views of helping professionals). Finally, enabling conditions are concerned with the structure and organization of an individual's environment that facilitate or hinder the help-seeking process (e.g., availability of services, insurance coverage) (Andersen, 1995; Goldsmith et al., 1988).

**Mental health care models.** Mental health care models are similar to medical models in that they also focus on an individual's illness profile (e.g., symptom type and severity), predisposing factors (e.g., attitudes towards seeking help), and enabling factors (e.g., availability of services) to understand help seeking. However, unlike medical models, mental health care models focus exclusively on psychological concerns and consider the importance of cultural and contextual factors (e.g., cultural beliefs about mental illness, stigma, role obligations) for understanding these concerns (Cauce et al., 2002; Goldsmith et al., 1988).

**Academic/achievement models.** Academic models of help seeking were created by developmentally-oriented researchers who studied help-seeking behaviour within the school setting. According to these models, help seeking is an appropriate and effective use of others to aid in learning and goal attainment (Newman, 1994). Self-regulated learners discover that help seeking is an adaptive strategy because of the direct relationship between seeking support and achieving academic goals (Nelson-Le Gall, 1985; Newman, 2000). Importantly, academic/achievement models recognize the significance of developmental changes (i.e., cognitive, social and emotional maturation) for the help-seeking process and the variety of social-cognitive, affective, and motivational competencies and skills necessary to acquire help (Nelson-Le Gall, 1981; Newman, 1994).

**Help-seeking models for children and adolescents.** The original conceptual models of help seeking were developed to reflect the experiences of adults, but some of these models have since been adapted to describe the experiences of children and adolescents (e.g., Costello et al., 1998; Srebnik et al., 1996). These revised models take into account the significant contributions that community and social networks (e.g., parents, peers, school personnel) make to the help-seeking process for young people. For instance, since children and adolescents rarely seek help on their own, parents are recognized as contributing throughout the help-seeking process (Costello et al., 1998; Logan & King, 2001). Other models have been developed to characterize help seeking by children and/or adolescents specifically (Newman, 1991, 2000). Five examples of child-based models will be described.

Srebnik and colleagues (1996) adapted Goldsmith and colleagues' (1988) adult model of help seeking to create one of the first help-seeking models for children. This model describes illness profiles, predisposing characteristics, and barriers/facilitators that affect problem recognition, the decision to seek help, and service utilization by children and adolescents. With respect to illness profiles, the family's and/or child's perceived and assessed need and relational and structural family characteristics (e.g., marital or family conflict, family size) are considered in relation to problem recognition. For example, problem recognition is less likely in families that are large or chaotic or who perceive the problem as being less serious. Predisposing or individual characteristics and barriers/facilitators to help are proposed to influence subsequent stages of the help-seeking pathway (i.e., the decision to seek help and the services accessed). Predisposing characteristics include demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity), and sociocultural values and beliefs of the child and parent/family

(e.g., religion, coping strategies). Barriers and facilitators include community and social networks (e.g., knowledge about and use of services), economic factors (e.g., income, health insurance), service characteristics (e.g., availability, accessibility), and government health-care policies (e.g., eligibility requirements, financing methods).

Similarly, Costello et al.'s (1998) family network-based model emphasized the importance of children's primary caregivers in recognizing problems and accessing services. According to this model, both child characteristics (e.g., age, gender) and family characteristics (e.g., parental psychopathology, parental education) are determinants of help seeking, and parents are particularly likely to recognize a child's problem when parental burden (i.e., the suffering experienced by the parents as a function of the child's problem) is high. Costello et al. also highlighted the importance of the school system as a major social support network for children and as a frequent helper in recognizing and handling children's mental health problems. Other key differences between this model and adult-based models of help seeking are its recognition that children have less power and control than adults and rely more on peers for information and social support. Notably, a recent Canadian study by Shanley, Reid, and Evans (2008) examined how parents navigate mental health services for their children and found support for the network-based model proposed by Costello and colleagues. That is, the majority of parents sought consultation and services from a variety of informal and formal organizations (e.g., friends, school personnel, physicians); this was done in a non-sequential manner and for multiple comorbid problems. Further, since parents did not necessarily stop seeking help once they received treatment, many families were simultaneously at multiple stages of the help-seeking process (Shanley et al., 2008).

Logan and King (2001) also emphasized the important role played by parents in their parent-mediated model of adolescent help seeking. They proposed that parents solicit and obtain mental health services for their children through a variety of stages: gaining an initial understanding of their adolescent's distress and recognizing the psychological and serious nature of the problem; considering various courses of action; and deciding to and obtaining informal or formal services for their adolescent. Along each step of the pathway, parents' predisposing characteristics (e.g., presence of psychopathology), enabling/inhibiting factors (e.g., attitudes towards mental health services), and characteristics of the larger social systems (e.g., availability and quality of services) advance parents toward use of informal or formal services or redirect them toward other outcomes. Notably, after parents act, adolescents' characteristics, attitudes, and behaviours (e.g., feelings towards service use, intensity and frequency of symptoms) typically play a more prominent role in the process and outcome of help seeking.

Recently, Zwaanswijk and colleagues elaborated upon earlier parent-mediated models by developing models that take into account the sequential nature of help seeking, the influence of child, family, and contextual characteristics, and the involvement of multiple actors and service providers to capture children's (Zwaanswijk, van der Ende, Verhaak, Bensing, & Verhulst, 2005) and adolescents' (Zwaanswijk et al., 2007) help-seeking behaviour from both informal and formal sources. In Zwaanswijk et al.'s (2005) analysis of help seeking for children with mental health problems, parents were found to be central in recognizing and obtaining help for their children. School personnel also played an important role in detecting service need, providing help, and referring children to other services, whereas general practitioners had little influence on help seeking. In addition, family characteristics (e.g., family functioning, having a

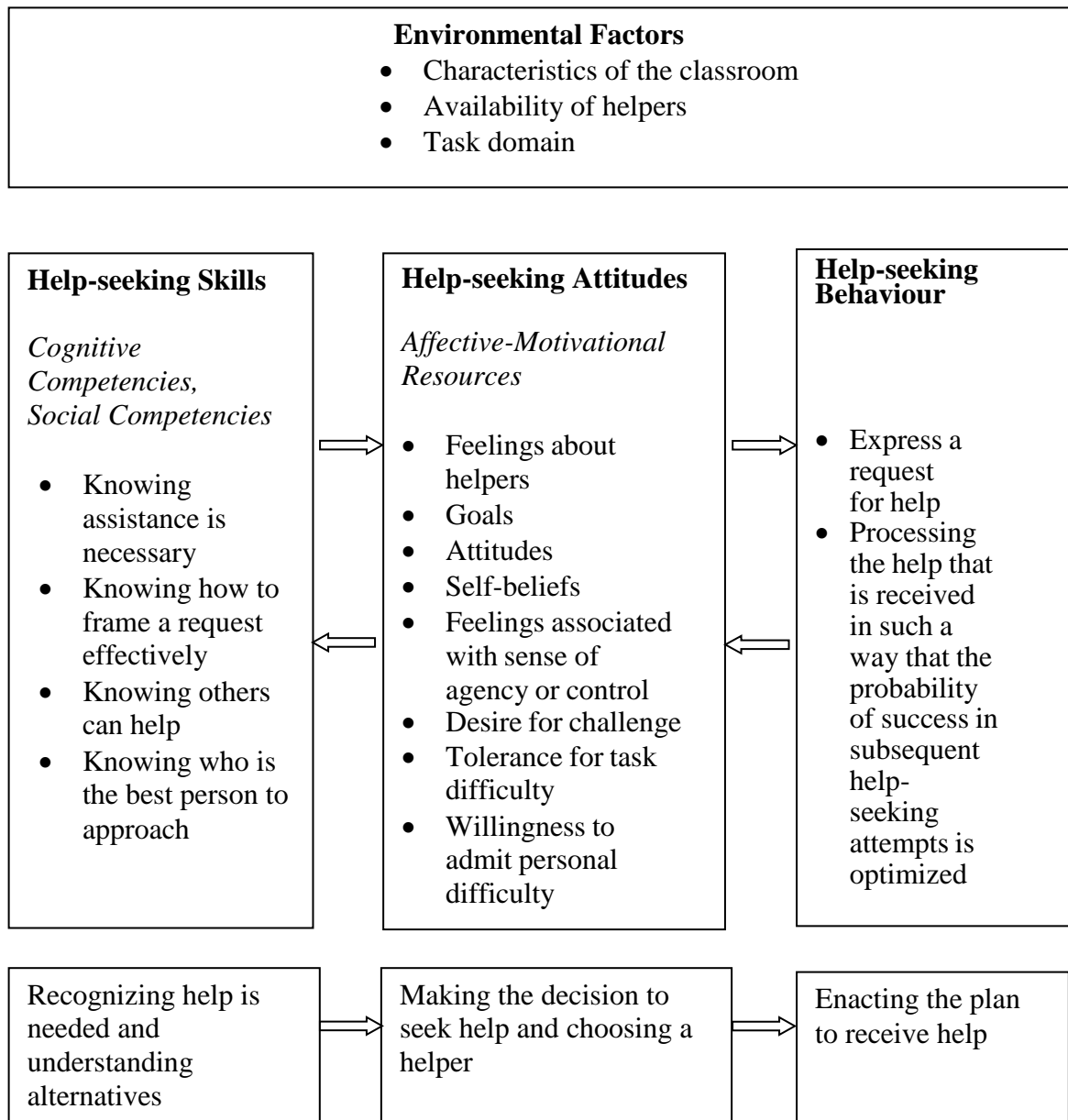
relative with previous experience with mental health services) were more prominent correlates than were specific child characteristics (e.g., gender, age) or socioeconomic factors (e.g., parent education, family income). Finally, use of informal sources of aid preceded use of formal resources, such as mental health services, although only a minority of families accessed formal care. Zwaanswijk et al.'s (2007) analysis of help seeking for adolescents with mental health problems produced somewhat different results. For example, general practitioners played a more active role as gatekeepers to mental health care, whereas teachers' role in this process was limited. Further, both adolescents and their parents contributed to the recognition of problems and to the identification and seeking of services, highlighting the important role adolescents may play in their own help-seeking process.

Finally, Newman (1991, 2000, 2008) described children's help seeking in academic settings as a proactive and adaptive strategy of self-regulated learners. According to his model, self-regulated learners must have cognitive and social skills, as well as affective and motivational resources, to support their help-seeking behaviour. Cognitive competencies include knowing when assistance is required and how to frame a request that will yield the action or information needed. Social competencies include knowing that others can help, who is the best person to approach, and how to carry out a request in a socially acceptable manner. Cognitive and social competencies are theorized to contribute significantly to the early stages of the help-seeking process (e.g., problem recognition; Newman, 1998). Affective and motivational resources include goals, attitudes, self-beliefs, and feelings associated with an individual's sense of agency or control, desire for challenge, tolerance for task difficulty, willingness to admit personal difficulty, and desire for social interactions with potential helpers (Newman, 2000). An



individual's feelings about a potential helper are an important affective factor. For example, Newman and Schwager (1993) found that the perception of a strong personal relationship with a teacher was associated with students' intentions of seeking help from that teacher in Grades 3, 5 and 7. In comparison, social affiliation goals (e.g., the desire to build and maintain positive relationships) are an important motivational factor, and have been related to children's willingness to seek help from peers and teachers when they require academic assistance (Ryan, Hicks & Midgley, 1997). Affective-motivational resources are expected to be significant when individuals are selecting and approaching a specific helper (Newman, 1998). Finally, characteristics of the environment or context in which help seeking may occur are also expected to facilitate or deter this behaviour. For example, characteristics of the classroom, such as the structure and type of activity, and the perceived availability of potential helpers have been identified as important for understanding students' willingness to seek help in this setting (Newman, 1991, 1998).

Newman's framework has been useful for predicting which students are more likely to seek assistance from peers and teachers for a variety of school issues, including academic difficulty, personal safety at school, and peer harassment (Newman, 2008; Newman et al., 2001; Newman & Schwager, 1993). Research has also supported the three main components of his model. For instance, for social-cognitive competencies, Newman and Schwager (1993) found that children's understanding that their teacher can facilitate learning is related to children's intentions of seeking help from their teacher. Similarly, adolescents who are higher on emotional competence (i.e., better at identifying, describing, and coping with their emotions) have higher intentions of seeking help from their parents, friends, and teachers (Ciarrochi, Deane, Wilson &



*Figure 1.* A visual representation of Newman's (1991, 2000, 2008) model of adaptive help seeking

Rickwood, 2002; Ciarrochi et al., 2003). In terms of affective-motivational resources, Newman (1990) found that, at Grades 3 and 5, children's likelihood of seeking help is predicted by their intrinsic preference for challenge, extrinsic dependence on their teacher, and positive attitude regarding the benefits of help seeking. Relationship quality is also important. Adolescents' perceptions of more positive relationship qualities in their mother-adolescent and father-adolescent relationships have been linked to more frequent help seeking from that parent (Sears, 2008a). Research has also supported the significance of environmental factors. For example, in academic settings, children have higher intentions of seeking help from a teacher if they are confronted by a peer who is physically larger (versus smaller) than them (Newman et al., 2001). Children are also more likely to seek help during small-group and individual classroom activities than during large group activities (Nelson-Le Gall & Glor-Scheib, 1985).

Murphy (2008) examined whether markers of these three aspects of Newman's model predicted the frequency with which adolescent girls accessed a female best friend and a male romantic partner as helpers. Murphy's study is significant because it appears to be the first application of Newman's model to adolescent peer relationships outside the classroom, as well as the only study to simultaneously examine all aspects of Newman's model. For social-cognitive skills, Murphy found that both higher levels of emotional competence and social competence were moderately correlated with more frequent help-seeking behaviour by girls, but only social competence contributed uniquely to the prediction of these two dependent measures. For affective-motivational resources, more positive qualities in a friendship and more positive qualities in a romantic relationship were related to more frequent help seeking from a best friend and from a romantic partner, respectively. Moreover, more positive relationship qualities

added to the prediction of girls' help-seeking behaviour, even after accounting for their emotional competence and social competence. The other affective-motivational resource measured, a social affiliation goal related to a desire for emotional support, predicted more frequent help seeking by girls from a best friend. However, none of the three environmental factors Murphy assessed (i.e., peer network size, peer network structure, and romantic relationship involvement) were related to girls' help seeking from a best friend. Peer network size and romantic involvement did show significant positive correlations with help seeking from a romantic partner. In addition, partial support was found for social competence and emotional competence as moderators of the relationship between an emotional support social affiliation goal and girls' help seeking from a best friend. Together, these results demonstrated that Newman's model can be successfully applied to adolescent girls' help-seeking behaviour outside the classroom.

**The help-seeking process.** Despite their differences, the aforementioned models are similar in their attempt to capture the complexity of help seeking. Although help seeking is often portrayed as a single behaviour, it is more accurately described as a fluid process that consists of three main steps that interact and overlap with one another, usually multiple times, before actual help seeking takes place (Goldsmith et al., 1988; Saunders et al., 1994; Srebnik et al., 1996). For example, individuals who encounter one or more barriers at specific steps in the help-seeking process, such as unapproachable family members, inadequate financial resources, or long waiting lists, may revert back to an earlier step (Logan & King, 2001; Srebnik et al., 1996; Zwaanswijk et al., 2007).

Problem recognition is the first step in the help-seeking process. In order for individuals to decide to ultimately seek help, they must first recognize one or more symptoms and define it/them as a problem (Gross & McMullen, 1983). Whether or not

an individual recognizes a situation as a problem is dependent upon a variety of factors. For example, a severe illness profile and situations that are viewed as potentially harmful are more likely to be recognized as problematic (Goldsmith et al., 1988; Gross & McMullen, 1983). Additionally, certain demographic characteristics, such as being female or having a higher socioeconomic status, are associated with higher rates of problem recognition (Gross & McMullen, 1983; Schonert-Reichl, Offer, & Howard, 1995). However, other factors, such as a lack of insight or use of maladaptive coping strategies, may interfere with an individual's recognition of his/her own problem (Gross & McMullen, 1983). Still other factors, such as societal assumptions about the normality of emotional and behavioural problems during adolescence, may hinder adults' recognition of problems in youths (Logan & King, 2001; Zwaanswijk et al., 2007).

Making the decision to seek assistance is the second step in the help-seeking process. During this step, individuals consider the potential social and personal costs of help seeking. Socially, individuals may worry that others will view help-seeking attempts as a sign of dependence (Newman, 2000). This cost may be particularly significant during adolescence to the extent that dependency is regarded as contradicting the developmental goals of establishing autonomy and reducing reliance on adults (Logan & King, 2001). Personally, help seeking can elicit feelings of inadequacy and embarrassment and may threaten the help-seeker's self-esteem (Newman, 1990; Newman & Schwager, 1993). Notably, adolescent boys focus almost exclusively on the potential costs (e.g., feeling embarrassed or vulnerable) of engaging in help seeking, whereas girls consider the potential benefits (e.g., feeling comforted, having the problem solved or reduced) as well as the costs (Sears et al., 2005). Help seeking is most likely to occur when the costs associated with not seeking help outweigh the costs associated with

seeking help (Nelson-Le Gall, 1981). Further, a precipitating event (e.g., the situation worsening) often prompts a final decision to seek assistance (Fischer, Weiner, & Abramowitz, 1983).

Identifying and accessing a specific helper is the third step in the help-seeking process. This step typically involves identifying one or more individuals in an informal support network (e.g., family member, friend) as a potential helper, although it may also involve considering professionals (e.g., teacher, physician), and then deciding which source of aid will be most helpful. A substantial body of research has identified several factors that are associated with an individual's choice of helper, including the type of problem experienced, perceived characteristics of the helper (e.g., trustworthiness, a willingness to help), and the availability and accessibility of formal services (Goldsmith et al., 1988; Nelson-Le Gall & Gumerman, 1984; Sears et al., 2005; Srebnik et al., 1996; Wilson & Deane, 2001). Studies also have shown that youths prefer to access familiar helpers for assistance, such as a family member or a friend, but a helper who is perceived as having expertise is also valued (Sullivan et al., 2002; Wintre et al., 1988).

### **Limitations of the Help-Seeking Literature and Models**

As the previous review indicates, considerable empirical attention has been paid to children's and adolescents' help-seeking behaviour and multiple models and studies have furthered our understanding of their unique help-seeking experiences. However, despite these advances, multiple gaps in our understanding of this behaviour remain. The current study will address three significant limitations.

First, inadequate attention has been paid to the marked gender difference in adolescents' help-seeking behaviour. Although the process of help seeking appears to unfold in similar ways for boys and girls (i.e., the sequence of the steps is the same)

(Sears et al., 2005; Zwaanswijk et al., 2007), boys have less positive views of help seeking than girls, and they are less able to recognize when help is required, less willing to seek help, less willing to refer others for help, and seek help less frequently (Garland & Zigler, 1994; Raviv et al., 2000; Rickwood & Braithwaite, 1994; Saunders et al., 1994; Sears et al., 2005). This pattern is thought to be related, in part, to the differential socialization that boys and girls receive regarding the social roles they are expected to fulfill. From a young age, girls are taught to adopt feminine traits (e.g., dependence on others, emotional expressiveness) that are consistent with help seeking (Buhrmester & Prager, 1995; Mahalik et al., 2005). This behaviour is viewed as so typical of girls that when they do not access others when needed, they may be considered atypical, at least by their peers, and characterized as lonely, insecure, and shy (Sears et al., 2005). In contrast, boys are taught to embody certain masculine characteristics (e.g., self-reliance, stoicism) that are inconsistent with help-seeking behaviour (Mahalik et al., 2003). Related to this view, boys often associate help seeking with more costs (e.g., feeling weird or uncomfortable, feeling as if they are wasting their time) and fewer benefits (e.g., feeling better, feeling connected to others) than other forms of coping, and prefer to handle problems on their own (Newman et al., 2001; Sears et al., 2005). As a result, there is a need for research on help seeking by boys specifically so that we can better understand boys' help-seeking experiences and identify factors unique to boys (e.g., conformity to specific masculine gender role norms) that may promote/deter their behaviour.

Second, no models of adolescents' help-seeking behaviour, and only four studies of adolescents' help-seeking behaviour or help-seeking intentions (i.e., Burke & Weir, 1979; Schonert-Reichl & Muller, 1996; Sears, 2008a, 2008b; Sullivan et al., 2002), have

distinguished between youths' experiences seeking help from their father and their mother. Parents are critical sources of support and advice for their adolescents, and are preferred helpers when adolescents are confronted with family, health, or school/career problems (Laursen & Collins, 2009; Sullivan et al., 2002). However, initial research has shown that adolescents seek help from their father and their mother at different rates and under different circumstances (Schonert-Reichl & Muller, 1996; Sears, 2008a, 2008b). For example, Schonert-Reichl and Muller (1996) found that 59% of adolescents reported having sought help from their mother for an emotional or personal problem in the past year, but only 35% reported having sought help from their father for this type of problem in the same time frame. Sears (2008a, 2008b) found that during their current school year (i.e., over the previous eight months), adolescents reported having sought help from their mother for a family problem, on average, "sometimes" and for a school problem, on average, more than "sometimes". These youths had sought help from their father for a family problem and for a school problem, on average, less often (i.e., less than "sometimes"). Based on this work, more information is needed about the frequency with which adolescents seek help from their father and their mother and whether or not youths find each parent's help beneficial. To address these first two limitations, the first research goal of the current study was to examine the nature of adolescent boys' help seeking from their father and their mother.

A third limitation of current models and studies of children's and adolescents' help-seeking behaviour is that much of this work has been atheoretical and descriptive. As a result, evaluations of correlates have been inconsistent and more complex relationships between variables have been largely neglected, even though they may help account for the considerable variation reported in youths' behaviour. The current study



addressed this limitation with two research goals: (1) to conduct a comprehensive analysis of predictors of boys' help seeking using Newman's model of adaptive help seeking (1991, 2000) as a conceptual framework; and (2) to evaluate parent's coaching use of help seeking as a potential moderator of the relationship between adolescent boys' reports of positive relationship qualities with that parent and help-seeking behaviour from that parent, and of the relationship between adolescent boys' reports of negative relationship qualities with their other parent and help seeking from their other parent.

Newman's model of help seeking (1991, 2000, 2008) may be particularly useful for ensuring a more systematic examination of the correlates of adolescent boys' help seeking from their father and their mother because it considers individual (e.g., cognitive and social skills) and relational (e.g., affective-motivational resources) predictors and also allows for the inclusion of relevant environmental conditions. Although Newman (2000) himself has argued that parents, peers, and teachers are primary social influences on the development of children's help-seeking behaviour, his model has yet to be applied to young people's help seeking from their parents. As such, the current study is the first to examine the extent to which Newman's model, using specific markers of social-cognitive skills, affective-motivational resources, and environmental factors, predicts adolescents seeking help from their parents, specifically, boys seeking help from their father and their mother.

Given that only a few studies have examined more complex relationships among variables to predict adolescents' help-seeking behaviour, we elected to evaluate whether relationships between specific markers of multiple components of Newman's model interact with one another. We were especially interested in whether an environmental factor (i.e., a marker of boys' family context) would moderate proposed relationships

between one marker of boys' affective-motivational resources (i.e., relationship qualities with their father and their mother) and the frequency of their help seeking from their father and their mother. Studies have shown consistently that adolescents' perceptions of their relationship with a potential helper are important for predicting their help-seeking behaviour in relation to that helper (Murphy, 2008; Saunders et al., 1994; Sears, 2008a; Wilson & Deane, 2001). However, it is currently unknown whether variables that describe the family context contribute to the association between youths' perceptions of their relationship with a parent and their help seeking from that parent. We investigated adolescents' perceptions of their parents' coaching use of help seeking because we thought such behaviour creates a family climate that supports adolescents' use of this coping strategy. Coaching by parents, by teachers, and by older siblings also has been related to children's and adolescents' help seeking from these resources (Kliewer et al., 2006; Newman & Schwager, 1993; Vallely, 2012). Specifically, we examined whether coaching use of help seeking from one parent (e.g., father) moderated the relationship between *positive* relationship qualities with that parent (e.g., father) and help seeking from that parent (e.g., father). We also examined whether coaching use of help seeking from one parent (e.g., father) moderated the relationship between *negative* relationship qualities with the other parent (e.g., mother) and help seeking from the other parent (e.g., mother). An overview of characteristics of father-adolescent and mother-adolescent relationships as well as changes that often occur in these relationships during adolescence are reviewed next.

### **Adolescents' Relationships with their Parents**

In keeping with the array of physical, cognitive, and emotional changes that young people experience during adolescence, their relationships with others also

undergo significant transformations. Indeed, youths' relationships with their parents may be the most heavily researched topic in the study of adolescent development. Although it is beyond the scope of this review, considerable empirical attention has been paid to parents' parenting style and its impact on various markers of adolescents' adjustment and development. The most influential and well-known approach classifies parents into four categories based on their levels of responsiveness and demandingness to their adolescent (see Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Spera, 2005). Overall, studies have shown that authoritative parenting, which involves high levels of responsiveness and demandingness, is associated with the most positive outcomes for adolescents (Larzelere, Morris & Harrist, 2013; Spera, 2005; Steinberg, 2001). In contrast, neglectful parenting, which involves low levels of responsiveness and demandingness, is associated with the least positive outcomes for adolescents (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991; Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts, & Dornbusch, 1994). Outcomes for youths of authoritarian parenting (i.e., low levels of responsiveness and high levels of demandingness) and permissive parenting (i.e., high levels of responsiveness and low levels of demandingness) are associated with a mixture of positive and negative outcomes in regard to youth's social, emotional, and behavioural adjustment (Lamborn et al., 1991; Steinberg et al., 1994).

Researchers have also identified multiple changes in the parent-child relationship that occur during adolescence. One of the first and most observable of these changes is a shift in activity patterns. Specifically, the amount of time adolescents spend with parents decreases while the amount of time spent in solitary activities, such as watching television, playing videogames, and studying, and in recreational activities and with friends, increases (Bibby, 2001; Lam, McHale & Crouter, 2012; Larson, Richards,

Moneta, Holmbeck & Duckett, 1996). It is estimated that youths spend twice as much time with their friends in adolescence as they did during childhood; this shift often comes at the expense of time with parents (Bibby, 2001; Larson et al., 1996). Although it is often expected that less time with parents is accompanied by a decline in parents' authority over the everyday details of their adolescents' lives, actually parents continue to significantly influence the most important issues adolescents face (Laursen & Collins, 2009). Although peers are typically consulted when adolescents have interpersonal issues or issues pertaining to sexuality, interests, substance use, or attire, parents are typically preferred when adolescents have issues pertaining to health, school, or careers (Laursen & Collins, 2009; Sullivan et al., 2002). Interestingly, adolescents' activity patterns with their mother and their father differ. Youths report spending more time alone with, and interacting directly with, their mother than their father, in part, because mothers are present during the majority of father-son and father-daughter interactions (Larson & Richards, 1994).

Another important change in the parent-child relationship during adolescence occurs in patterns of decision-making. Although parents generally make decisions unilaterally for their children during childhood, during adolescence, decision-making usually becomes more variable, with some decisions being made unilaterally by parents or by adolescents and other decisions being made jointly by parents and adolescents (Collins, Gleason & Sesma, 1997). In general, joint decision-making is related to more positive adolescent adjustment than is unilateral parent or unilateral adolescent decision-making. However, joint decision-making is not necessarily dominant or beneficial throughout adolescence. Instead, decision-making autonomy optimally develops sequentially through a process of parent-unilateral decision-making in early adolescence,

joint decision-making in middle adolescence, and adolescent-unilateral decision-making in late adolescence (Smetana, Campione-Barr & Daddis, 2004a; Wray-Lake, Crouter & McHale, 2010). High decision-making autonomy in early adolescence has been associated with poorer academic outcomes and psychological adjustment, whereas increased decision-making autonomy in late adolescence becomes more advantageous and predicts less depression and better self-worth (Smetana et al., 2004a).

Significant research attention also has been paid to specific qualities of the parent-adolescent relationship, especially conflict and to a lesser extent warmth or closeness. Studies have shown that the frequency of parent-adolescent conflict increases sharply and peaks in early adolescence, begins to decline in middle adolescence, and then declines further by the end of adolescence (Laursen, Coy, & Collins, 1998; Shanahan, McHale, Osgood, & Crouter, 2007). In terms of intensity, parent-adolescent conflicts tend to be mild to moderate, and conflicts are more intense than they were in childhood (Laursen et al., 1998). The increase in the frequency and in the intensity of conflict between parents and their adolescents is thought to reflect the biological and cognitive changes of adolescence, changing expectations of parents, and adolescents' new focus on developing independence and spending time with peers (Collins & Steinberg, 2006). High levels of conflict are unusual during adolescence, however, with only 5% to 15% of adolescents experiencing extremely conflicted relations with their parents (Laursen & Collins, 2009). The conflict in such situations usually stems from long-standing distressed family systems or mental health problems rather than normative adolescent development.

Typically, conflicts between parents and their adolescents consist of bickering, squabbling, and disagreements over everyday issues (e.g., chores, a clean room, curfew,

homework) and are less likely to focus on moral values, political or religious views, or sexual behaviour (Adams & Laursen, 2001; Smetana, Daddis, & Chuang, 2003).

Disagreements are most common with mothers, particularly girls and their mother, followed by siblings, friends, and romantic partners, and then fathers (Laursen, 1995).

The differential rate of conflict with mothers versus fathers is thought to stem from adolescents spending more time with mothers. A major contributor to parent-adolescent bickering is that adolescents and parents tend to define issues differently. Parents are likely to see an issue one way (e.g., cleaning one's room is a matter of social convention), whereas adolescents are likely to define the same issue in another way (e.g., as a matter of personal choice). As a result, the struggle is often more about who has the authority or whose jurisdiction the issue falls within rather than the issue itself (Smetana et al., 2003).

Many conflicts between parents and their adolescents are resolved by either giving in or disengagement rather than by compromise; compromise is more common with mothers than fathers, whereas disengagement is more common with sons than daughters (Laursen et al., 1998; Smetana et al., 2003). Although giving in and disengagement do not promote adolescents' use of problem-solving skills or positive affect in the parent-adolescent relationship, the tendency for conflicts to focus on more minor issues allows them to serve a positive developmental function: Adolescents can learn to initiate communication about interpersonal issues that require attention, express their points of view, negotiate, problem solve, see another's perspective, and tolerate disagreements with others (Laursen & Collins, 2009; Morman & Whitely, 2012).

Research also has shown that moderate conflict with parents is associated with better adjustment than no conflict or frequent conflict, particularly when conflict is dealt with

in a constructive way and when the parent-adolescent relationship is also characterized by high levels of harmony and cohesion. In such circumstances, adolescents have higher academic achievement, lower anxiety/depression, and fewer problem behaviours, and are better able to resolve conflicts productively with peers (Adams & Laursen, 2001; Smetana, Metzger & Campione-Barr, 2004b).

Closeness (also referred to as warmth or acceptance) between parents and their adolescents has also received research attention. Closeness describes the extent to which two individuals are connected emotionally and behaviourally (Laursen & Collins, 2009). Common indicators include interdependence, communication, and feelings of intimacy, trust, and support. During adolescence, both youths' and parents' feelings of closeness and support decline as do objectively observed assessments of warmth and cohesion in the parent-adolescent relationship (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985, 1992; Shearer, Crouter, & McHale, 2005). However, despite this decline, perceptions of closeness between parents and their adolescents generally remain positive, even during middle adolescence when perceived support and companionship from parents are at their lowest levels (Burhmester & Furman, 1987; Shearer et al., 2005).

Adolescents experience different levels of closeness with their mother and their father; specifically, most adolescents are closer to their mother than their father and they report a lower quality of affect with their father (Bibby, 2001; Larson & Richards, 1994). Fathers are often perceived as playmates with whom their children can engage in recreational or work activities; discussions, however, are usually brief and impersonal (Youniss & Smollar, 1985). Although fathers are typically closer to their sons than their daughters, there is often a "closeness gap" between fathers and sons (Larson & Richards, 1994). By adolescence, sons report that, compared with their mother, their father is less

sensitive to what is going on in their lives and knows them less well than they did earlier in their development. Fathers are usually unaware of this closeness gap and experience themselves as engaged parents who feel warmth and connection with their sons (Larson & Richards, 1994).

In contrast, many mothers and their sons, as well as their daughters, have a close relationship, in part because adolescents engage in more self-disclosure with their mother than their father (Burhmester & Furman, 1987; Larson & Richards, 1994). Adolescents report having more personal conversations with their mother and feel more comfortable talking with them about private matters, like dating and sexual attitudes/information. Although sons may not feel comfortable discussing personal issues with their father, they often value and respect their father's expertise and feel comfortable discussing more objective issues and practical problems. Thus, they are equally likely to discuss impersonal issues, such as schoolwork, future plans, and social issues, with their father and mother (Larson & Richards, 1994; Laursen & Collins, 2009; Smetana, Metzger, Gettman, & Campione-Barr, 2006). These self-disclosure differences with fathers and mothers are likely a function of adolescents spending more time alone and directly interacting with mothers, as well as expectations that mothers are nurturing, supportive, and available to their children (Larson & Richards, 1994; Sullivan et al., 2002). However, many critical moments, including events involving family crises, distance, and conflict, can contribute to whether such closeness between mothers and sons is maintained, increases, or decreases throughout adolescence (Morman & Whitely, 2012).



### **Adolescents' Help-Seeking Behaviour with their Father and their Mother**

As the research on closeness in the parent-adolescent relationship suggests, parents remain important sources of support and advice for their children throughout adolescence. Parents are the adults consulted most frequently by adolescents; this is even more likely when problems arise related to school or health or when the seriousness of the problem exceeds adolescents' concerns about being punished (Sears et al., 2005; Sullivan et al., 2002; Zwaanswijk et al., 2007). Adolescents are also likely to seek help from parents when they perceive a close relationship with them or they perceive a parent as being trustworthy, loyal, understanding, a good listener, or as having needed expertise (Grinstein-Weiss et al., 2005; Sears et al., 2005; Wintre et al., 1988).

Although many studies have examined adolescents' help-seeking behaviour and help-seeking intentions in relation to their parents, only four studies have evaluated adolescents' help seeking separately for their father and their mother. Two of these studies reported on what adolescents would do or how likely they would be to turn to their mother or father for assistance. Burke and Weir (1979) found that adolescents in Grades 9 to 13 thought they would go to their mother "sometimes" with a problem that was making them feel tense and anxious, whereas they would go to their father less often (i.e., less than "sometimes") with this problem. They also reported that adolescents would be more likely to seek help from their mother and their father if they anticipated that each parent would provide concrete support (e.g., advice or suggestions for how to solve the problem) and less likely to seek help if they anticipated that each parent would react in a negative way (e.g., by criticizing or blaming the youth) to the youth's disclosure. Sullivan et al. (2002) found that adolescents in Grades 8 and 11 were more than "likely" to choose their mother as a potential helper for problems with school or

health, “likely” to choose their mother for help with a friend problem, and less than “likely” to choose their mother for help with a parent problem. These adolescents were also “likely” to choose their father for assistance with a school or health problem, and less than “likely” to access him for a problem with a friend or parent. In addition, these authors reported that youths’ expectations of expertise were important for them to identify their father or their mother as a potential helper. One significant gender interaction indicated that mothers’ expertise was a factor for boys, but not for girls, when adolescents were choosing mothers as a helper for a problem with a friend.

Two other studies examined either the proportion of youths who had sought assistance from their mother and their father or the frequency with which assistance from each parent had been accessed. Schonert-Reichl and Muller’s (1996) study revealed that, in the past year, more than 1/2 (59%) of adolescents in Grades 8 through 12 had asked their mother for help with an emotional or personal problem (significantly more girls), whereas only about 1/3 (35%) had asked their father for assistance with this type of problem (no gender difference). In addition, older adolescents were more likely than younger adolescents to have sought help from their father and their mother, and older boys were more likely than younger boys to have sought help from their father. These authors also examined demographic and psychological predictors of adolescents’ help seeking from their father and their mother. Their results showed that a lower level of self-consciousness predicted help seeking from fathers, and being female and having an internal locus of control predicted help seeking from mothers.

Finally, Sears (2008a, 2008b) found that during their current school year (i.e., over the previous eight months), adolescents in Grade 10 or 11 reported having sought help from their mother for a family problem, on average, “sometimes” and for a school

problem, on average, more than “sometimes”. They had sought help from their father for a family problem and for a school problem, on average, less often (i.e., less than “sometimes”). Sears (2008a) also evaluated whether youths’ perceptions of the positive and negative qualities of their relationship with their father and their mother were additive or compensatory in predicting their help seeking from each parent. These results showed that youths who perceived a more positive relationship with their mother or their father sought help from that parent more often, but that neither an additive model nor a compensatory model received clear support. Sears (2008b) showed that adolescents’ positive past experiences seeking help from either parent predicted more frequent help seeking from that parent, after accounting for a positive parent-adolescent relationship. There were no gender differences.

Together, these four studies described above advance our understanding of adolescents’ help seeking by demonstrating that many young people seek assistance from their mother and their father at least some of the time or plan to do so, especially for more normative problems, and that there are few gender differences in their intentions or behaviour. In addition, different individual characteristics may be related to youths’ help seeking from each parent (e.g., Schonert-Reichl & Muller, 1996), whereas youths’ perceptions of each parent as a helper, including the parent’s level of expertise and the quality of the adolescent’s relationship with that person, seem to be important for help seeking from both their father and their mother (Sears, 2008a; Sullivan et al., 2002). The current study contributes to this literature by examining a broader range of correlates of adolescents’ help seeking from their father and from their mother than has been considered previously, by selecting these variables in an organized fashion (i.e., by using Newman’s model of adaptive help seeking (1991, 2000) as a conceptual

framework), and by evaluating how specific variables operate in combination with one another.

### **Predictors of Adolescent Boys Seeking Help from their Father and their Mother**

Currently, many models of children's and adolescents' help-seeking behaviour (e.g., Costello et al., 1998; Logan & King, 2001) focus on illness profiles, characteristics of the child and the family, community networks, and the structure of services to predict who will and who will not ultimately come to the attention of professionals for assistance. However, these models were constructed to reflect the experiences of clinical samples and, as such, their ability to predict help seeking from informal sources in community samples of adolescents is presumably limited. For example, information about the severity of illness profiles and the structure of professional services is not relevant to understanding adolescents' experiences of seeking help from their father and their mother as they struggle with normative problems, such as family conflict or difficulty with school work.

Newman's model of adaptive help seeking by self-regulated learners (1991, 2000) may be more useful for understanding adolescents' help-seeking behaviour from their father and their mother because it is based on normative developmental theory rather than clinical research. As a result, it recognizes that both individual competencies and resources of adolescents (e.g., social and cognitive skills, affective-motivational resources) are involved in shaping their help-seeking behaviour. Markers of these domains have had strong predictive value in previous studies. For instance, Murphy (2008) found that specific social-cognitive skills and affective and motivational resources accounted for over 40% of the variance in each of adolescent girls seeking help from a best friend and a romantic partner. Although Newman's model has been

used extensively to understand help seeking by children and adolescents in academic contexts, its applicability to other situations has been largely untested. Indeed, Murphy's (2008) study was the first application of Newman's model outside an academic setting. The current study applies Newman's model to another non-academic help-seeking context, namely the families of adolescent boys. Specifically, we used Newman's model to evaluate the extent to which adolescent boys' social-cognitive skills, affective-motivational resources, and environmental characteristics predict the frequency with which they have sought help from their father and their mother. Literature in support of these potential predictors is reviewed next.

### **Social-Cognitive Skills**

As discussed earlier, adaptive help-seekers are expected to possess certain social and cognitive competencies. Newman (2000) described these competencies as skills that assist with knowing when assistance is necessary, that others can help, who is the best person to approach, how to formulate questions that will yield the action or information that is required, and how to carry out a request in a socially appropriate manner. In the case of help seeking for normative problems from one's father and one's mother, the current study proposed emotional competence and a tendency to self-disclose as relevant social-cognitive skills.

**Emotional competence.** In the present study, emotional competence was examined as a social-cognitive predictor of the frequency with which adolescents had sought help seeking from their father and their mother. Emotional competence reflects a set of information-processing abilities that enables individuals to identify, describe, understand, and manage emotions in an effective manner, both within themselves and in others (Ciarrochi & Deane, 2001). It has been theorized to consist of four abilities: the

ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Measures of emotional competence are associated with positive mental health, emotional well-being, and adaptive social functioning in children, adolescents, and adults (Cha & Nock, 2009; Rivers et al., 2010; Schutte, Malouff, Thorsteinsson, Bhullar, & Rooke, 2007). In addition, scores on measures of emotional competence are positively related to scores on a variety of cognitive measures, including verbal SAT scores (Brackett, Mayer, & Warner, 2004), the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Third Edition vocabulary subscale (Lopes, Salovey, & Straus, 2003), and the Wonderlic Cognitive Ability Test (Schulte, Ree, & Carretta, 2005). In addition, teacher-reported social and emotional competence for boys in Grade 6 significantly predicted higher scores in math and reading on standardized tests one year later (Oberle, Schonert-Reichl, Hertzman, & Zumbo, 2014). Studies have shown that boys and men generally report lower emotional competence than girls and women (Ciarrochi & Deane, 2001; Ciarrochi et al., 2003).

Initial research has identified emotional competence as an important correlate of help seeking. A series of studies by Ciarrochi and colleagues found consistent links between individuals' emotional competence and their intentions of seeking help from specific sources. Adolescents and young adults who reported higher emotional competence had higher intentions of seeking help from nonprofessional sources (e.g., parents, friends) and lower intentions of seeking help from no one (Ciarrochi & Deane, 2001; Ciarrochi et al., 2002; Ciarrochi et al., 2003). Similarly, Sears and Murphy (2015) found that higher emotional competence was related to adolescent girls' higher intentions of seeking assistance from a female friend, albeit indirectly mediated by more

closeness in their friendship. Higher emotional competence also has been linked to adolescents' reports of seeking support to cope (Mavroveli, Petrides, Rieffe, & Bakker, 2007) and to more frequent help seeking from a best friend and from a romantic partner by adolescent girls (Murphy, 2008).

Although these studies show initial support for the importance of emotional competence in predicting adolescents' help-seeking intentions and behaviour, gaps in the literature remain. For example, neither of these two studies that reported links between adolescents' emotional competence and their help-seeking behaviour (i.e., Mavroveli et al., 2007; Murphy, 2008) examined help seeking from fathers or mothers or even parents. To extend this previous work, the current study evaluated the extent to which boys' level of emotional competence is associated with more frequent help seeking from their father and their mother. Given that an ability to be aware of and respond to one's emotions is expected to facilitate help seeking, in part because it helps youths recognize the presence of a problem and gives them skills to turn to others for assistance (Rickwood et al., 2005), we predicted that adolescent boys who report higher emotional competence would also report more frequent help seeking from their father and from their mother.

**Self-disclosure.** The tendency for adolescent boys to self-disclose to their father and their mother was also proposed to be a key social-cognitive predictor of their help-seeking behaviour from each parent. Self-disclosure is the process by which an individual intentionally reveals his/her private feelings, thoughts, beliefs, or attitudes to another person (Derlega, Metts, Petronio, & Margulis, 1993). Self-disclosure differs from routine disclosure in that it is voluntary, contains private information that the other individual would not know if it had not been disclosed, and includes unessential details

or information (Tilton-Weaver, Marshall, & Darling, 2014). During childhood, children engage in high levels of self-disclosure to their parents. However, during adolescence, self-disclosure to parents decreases whereas self-disclosure to peers increases (Papini, Farmer, Clark, Micka, & Barnett, 1990; Searwright, Thomas, Manley, & Ketterson, 1995). Self-disclosure to parents is more likely when adolescents report more family cohesion and satisfaction with family relationships or when adolescents believe that their parents are trustworthy and accepting, that they may benefit from the disclosure, or that their problems will be revealed eventually anyway (Darling, Cumsille, Caldwell, & Dowdy, 2006; Smetana et al., 2006; Tokić & Pećnik, 2011). Self-disclosure to parents is less likely when adolescents believe that their parents are unavailable, are reluctant to discuss the problem, or are in a negative mood, or when they anticipate that their parents will engage in intrusive questioning, nag or tease them, or express disapproval (Tokić & Pećnik, 2011). Both adolescent boys and girls prefer their mother over their father as a target of self-disclosure (Searwright et al., 1995; Smetana et al., 2006), but boys disclose less than girls (Papini et al., 1990; Rickwood & Braithwaite, 1994). Boys hold more concerns about self-disclosure than girls, including feeling embarrassed, being made fun of, losing power in a relationship, and making the problem worse by talking about it (Rose et al., 2012).

Initial evidence suggests that a tendency or willingness to self-disclose may play an important role in help-seeking behaviour. One survey study with Grade 12 students revealed that adolescents' willingness to self-disclose mental health problems was related to more frequent help seeking from friends and family (Rickwood & Braithwaite, 1994). Research with adolescent girls in high school has also shown that higher perceived competence at self-disclosure was related directly to girls' higher intentions of



seeking help from a female friend, as well as indirectly in that it was mediated by girls' perceptions of more companionship and more closeness in their relationship. In light of these results, the current study evaluated the extent to which boys' tendency to self-disclose with their father and their mother is associated with their help-seeking behaviour from that parent. We expected that boys who report a higher tendency to self-disclose with their father or their mother would also report more frequent help seeking from that parent.

### **Affective-Motivational Resources**

According to Newman's framework (1991, 1998), affective and motivational resources that support adaptive help seeking include goals, attitudes, self-beliefs, and feelings associated with an individual's sense of agency or control, desire for challenge, tolerance for task difficulty, willingness to admit personal struggles, and desire for social interaction. In the case of help seeking for normative problems from one's father and one's mother, perceived relationship quality with each parent, past help-seeking experiences with each parent, and adolescent boys' conformity to specific traditional masculine gender role norms were proposed as relevant affective-motivational resources.

**Parent-adolescent relationship quality.** Parent-adolescent relationship quality was the first affective-motivational resource that was evaluated as a potential predictor of adolescent boys having sought help from their father and their mother. Relationship quality refers to individuals' subjective evaluation of their relationship with another person, and is comprised of both positive (e.g., intimacy) and negative (e.g., conflict) components (Fincham & Rogge, 2010; Furman & Buhrmester, 1985). During adolescence, the quality of adolescents' relationships with their father and their mother

may shift as each relationship is influenced by positive changes (e.g., more discussions in which information and feelings are conveyed, increased involvement in decision-making), as well as negative changes (e.g., less time together, reduced feelings of closeness and intimacy) (Lam et al., 2012; Shearer et al. 2005; Wray-Lake et al., 2010).

The relationship between a help-seeker and a helper has been identified as an important factor in predicting youths' help-seeking behaviour. For example, Wilson and Deane (2001) found that adolescents were more willing to help seek from a variety of helpers (e.g., friends, parents, professionals) if they perceived their relationship with them as being strong and open and not poor or mistrustful. Focusing on peers, adolescent girls' reports of more *positive* relationship qualities were associated with more frequent help seeking from a best friend and a romantic partner, and reports of more *negative* relationship qualities were associated with less frequent help seeking from a best friend (Murphy, 2008). Turning to adult helpers, Newman and Schwager (1993) found that children's perceptions of mutual liking and friendship predicted their willingness to seek help from teachers in a classroom. Similarly, a school-based survey study of adolescents indicated that youths who felt most connected to and cared about by their parents were more likely to obtain help from them (Saunders et al., 1994). Comparable results were found in the Sears (2008a) study that assessed youths' reports for fathers and mothers separately: Youths in Grades 10 and 11 who reported a more positive relationship with their father or their mother sought help more frequently from their father or their mother, respectively. Similarly, youths who reported a more negative relationship with each parent sought help less frequently from that parent.

The present study evaluated the extent to which boys' reports of more positive and negative qualities in their relationship with their father and their mother are

associated with their help-seeking behaviour from that parent. Building on the results from previous research, as well as the expectation that a positive parent-adolescent relationship encourages open and supportive dyadic interactions to occur and a negative parent-adolescent relationship does not, we predicted that boys who report more positive relationship qualities with their father or their mother would report more frequent help seeking from that parent, and that boys who report more negative relationship qualities with their father or their mother would report less frequent help seeking from that parent.

**Past help-seeking experiences with parents.** The quality of adolescents' past experiences seeking help from their father and their mother was also proposed as a key affective-motivational predictor of their help-seeking behaviour from each parent. Positive help-seeking experiences may involve adolescents receiving the support sought, offloading the burden associated with the problem, and/or increasing their family's understanding of the problem (Vollmann et al., 2010). In contrast, negative help-seeking experiences may involve exchanges that the adolescent associates with stigma or receiving insufficient or excessive support, or where the adolescent felt the helper lacked expertise or exacerbated the problem (Newman et al., 2001; Vollman et al., 2010). Negative help-seeking experiences specific to parents may also include situations in which adolescents felt as though they disappointed their parents, made their parents look bad, or felt that their parents did not understand what they were going through (Sears et al., 2005).

Research has found that the quality of adolescents' past help-seeking experiences is related to their help-seeking intentions and behaviour. For instance, adolescents who feel that prior help-seeking attempts with informal (e.g., parent) or formal helpers (e.g., therapist) were successful are more willing to seek assistance from that helper in the

future. Not surprisingly, past help-seeking experiences that are perceived negatively (e.g., feeling like they were not helped or that their problems were not taken seriously) are related to lower intentions of seeking help in the future (Wilson & Deane, 2001). Similarly, adolescents who have positive past experiences seeking help from their female friends or their male friends also report higher intentions of seeking assistance from those friends in the future (MacIntyre & Sears, 2012). Focusing on parents, a survey study examining how often adolescents had sought help from their father and from their mother for a family problem and a school problem revealed similar results: Positive past experiences seeking help from each parent predicted more frequent help seeking from that parent by adolescents for both types of problems, even after accounting for a more positive father-adolescent or mother-adolescent relationship (Sears, 2008b). Together, these studies show initial support for the contribution of adolescents' past help-seeking experiences to their help-seeking intentions and help-seeking behaviour.

The current study sought to replicate these results and extend this pattern specifically to boys seeking help from their father and their mother. Given that more positive past help-seeking experiences between a help-seeker and a helper are expected to encourage further similar dyadic interactions, whereas less positive past help-seeking experiences between a help-seeker and a helper are expected to discourage further similar dyadic interactions, we predicted that boys who report more positive past help-seeking experiences with their father or their mother would report having sought help from that parent more often.

**Conformity to specific traditional masculine gender role norms.** Conformity to traditional masculine gender role norms is a third affective-motivational resource that

was examined as a potential predictor of adolescent boys having sought help from their father and their mother. Gender role norms refer to social and behavioural expectations that a particular culture or society considers appropriate for men and women (Addis & Mahalik, 2003). Traditional masculine gender role norms include being aggressive, dominant, achievement-oriented, self-reliant, and stoic (Mahalik et al., 2003), whereas traditional feminine gender role norms include being modest, nurturing, domestic, relationship-oriented, and concerned with appearance (Mahalik et al., 2005).

Discussions of consistent gender differences in the frequency of help-seeking behaviour (i.e., boys seek help less often than girls) often focus on males and females behaving in ways that are consistent with their respective gender roles (Addis & Mahalik, 2003). Socialization to traditional gender roles begins at a very young age and norms of sex-typed behaviour are likely to contribute to children's help-seeking behaviour as early as kindergarten (Nelson-Le Gall, 1981; Newman, 2000). Time spent with same-sex peers also encourages the development of sex-typed relationship processes, including stress and coping responses (Rose & Rudolph, 2006). Primary elements of help seeking, such as admitting when help is needed and relying on others for assistance, are generally viewed as being contradictory to traditional masculine gender role norms and consistent with traditional feminine gender role norms (Mahalik et al., 2003, 2005). Thus, sex-role stereotypes dictate that, although asking for help is viewed as an appropriate coping strategy for girls, boys are expected to control their emotions and solve their own problems. Adolescents' behaviour appears to be consistent with these sex-role stereotypes. Across multiple studies, adolescent boys have been found to be more likely to minimize their feelings and less likely to discuss their problems and seek help, whereas adolescent girls are more likely to report feeling

distressed, are more comfortable discussing concerns with others, and are more likely to seek help (McNelles & Connolly, 1999; Polce-Lynch, Myers, Kliewer, & Kilmartin, 2001; Schonert-Reichl & Muller, 1996).

Adolescent boys' conformity to the masculine gender role norms of self-reliance (i.e., dependence on one's own abilities) and emotional control (i.e., the tendency to inhibit emotional expressions) may be particularly detrimental to enacting help seeking as a coping strategy (Addis & Mahalik, 2003). For example, in an interview study with adolescent boys, Timlin-Scalera, Ponterotto, Blumberg, and Jackson (2003) identified self-reliance as a primary obstacle to boys seeking help from informal (e.g., parents, friends) or formal (e.g., therapists) sources. In their survey study with adolescent boys, Sears and colleagues (2009) found that boys who reported more conformity to the traditional masculine gender role norm of emotional control indicated lower intentions of seeking help from their male friends and female friends. Similarly, in an interview study with depressed African American adolescent boys, Lindsey and colleagues (2006) found that boys who felt that they should be able to solve their own problems without assistance or felt reluctant to discuss their concerns and emotions with others reported more reluctance to seek help from family, friends, and professionals.

The above research indicates that conformity to masculine gender role norms plays a potentially important role in understanding boys' help-seeking behaviour. We extended this work by examining the relationship between adolescent boys' conformity to the masculine gender role norms self-reliance and emotional control and the frequency with which they sought help from their father and their mother. Specifically, we predicted that boys who report higher conformity to the masculine norms of self-

reliance and emotional control would report less frequent help seeking from their father and their mother.

### **Environmental Factors**

Newman's model of adaptive help seeking (1991, 2000) also proposes that environmental factors contribute to children's and adolescents' use of this coping strategy. In the case of help seeking from a parent, it seems reasonable to expect that characteristics of the family context could contribute to a climate that would encourage or deter adolescents' use of this behaviour. In the current study, a parent coaching use of help seeking was proposed as an environmental factor that is relevant to adolescent boys seeking help from their father and their mother.

**Parent coaching use of help seeking.** Parent coaching use of help seeking was proposed as an environmental factor that may play a primary role in promoting adolescents' use of help seeking from their father and their mother. Coaching involves parents giving their children direct instructions on specific coping strategies they may use to deal with stressful events, including support seeking (Kliewer & Lewis, 1995; Kliewer, Fearnow, & Miller, 1996). Research has shown that such coaching by parents is related to their children's behaviour. For example, studies examining children's coping with medical procedures have found that children are more likely to use distraction techniques when their mother promotes use of such behaviours (Blount et al., 1992; Peterson, Oliver, & Saldana, 1997). Similarly, children were more likely to avoid certain areas or individuals or to behave in an aggressive manner (e.g., using physical violence to deal with community violence) if their parents coached use of these strategies (Kliewer et al., 2006).

With respect to help seeking in particular, Miller, Kliwer, Hepworth, and Sandler (1994) found that mothers' coaching of adolescents to use help seeking was related to their children's use of help seeking over the six-month period following a divorce. Valley and Sears (2009) also found that maternal coaching of help seeking predicted more frequent help seeking from mothers by adolescent girls and boys when the youths were faced with a family problem or a school problem. Similarly, Kliwer and colleagues (1996) revealed that children's coping efforts were associated with parents' coping suggestions, although maternal coaching was more strongly associated with children's coping than paternal coaching. In addition, children's perceptions of their teachers' direct encouragement of questioning predicted their intentions of seeking help from their teacher (Newman & Schwager, 1993). Correspondingly, Valley (2012) found that younger adolescents' perceptions of their older siblings' coaching of help seeking predicted more frequent help seeking from that sibling.

Although these studies identify coaching use of help seeking as an important predictor of help-seeking behaviour, limited attention has been paid to paternal coaching of help seeking (e.g., Kliwer et al., 1996) or to potential differences in the effects of coaching for adolescent boys and girls (e.g., Valley & Sears, 2009). In the present study, we examined the relationships between fathers' and mothers' coaching use of help seeking and adolescent boys' help-seeking behaviour from that parent. We predicted that boys who report more coaching of help seeking by their father or their mother would also report more frequent help seeking from that parent.

### **Parent Coaching Use of Help Seeking as a Moderator**

As presented in the previous section, we expected that a parent coaching use of help seeking would be positively related to the frequency with which boys seek help



from that parent. In addition, we examined whether each parent's coaching of help seeking moderated the relationship between boys' perceptions of a *positive* relationship with their parent and help seeking from that parent and the relationship between boys' perceptions of a *negative* relationship with their other parent and help seeking from that other parent. A moderator is any third variable that affects the direction and/or magnitude of the relationship between one or more predictor variables and a criterion variable (Holmbeck, 1997).

First, we assessed whether each parent's coaching use of help seeking moderated the relationship between boys' reports of a *positive* relationship with that parent and their reports of help seeking from that parent. That is, would boys' views of their father coaching use of help seeking more often interact with their reports of a more positive father-son relationship to predict more frequent help seeking by boys from their father? A parallel question was posed for boys in relation to their mother. When parents coach their children to use a specific coping strategy, such as help seeking, they are also communicating their views of that strategy as one that is both acceptable and useful; their openness to being a source of assistance also may be conveyed. As a result, we believe that they are creating a positive climate within the family for boys to use this behaviour more often. In line with this rationale, we expected that coaching by a parent would strengthen the positive association proposed between boys' reports of more positive parent-adolescent relationship qualities and more frequent help seeking from that parent, such that this relationship would be strongest when boys also perceive more frequent coaching by their parent to use help seeking as a coping strategy.

Second, we examined whether parent coaching help seeking by one parent moderated the relationship between boys' reports of a *negative* relationship with their

other parent and their reports of help seeking from that other parent. That is, would boys' views of their mother coaching use of help seeking more often interact with their reports of a more negative father-son relationship to predict more frequent help seeking by boys from their father? A parallel question was posed for boys in relation to their father coaching of help seeking moderating the relationship between boys' reports of a more negative mother-son relationship and help seeking from their mother. As previously discussed, it was expected that boys who report more negative relationship qualities with a parent (e.g., father) would help seek less frequently from that parent (e.g., father). However, having their other parent (e.g., mother) coach use of help seeking may shift boys' thinking about the negative aspects of their parent-adolescent relationship to how their parent may be of assistance and to the potential benefits of help seeking (e.g., his father may help him solve the problem or figure out what to do). In line with this rationale, we expected that coaching use of help seeking by a mother would modify the association proposed between boys' reports of more negative father-adolescent relationship qualities and less frequent help seeking from their father, such that this relationship would be improved (i.e., boys would engage in more frequent help seeking from their father) when boys perceive more frequent coaching by their mother to use help seeking. A similar pattern was expected for boys seeking help from their mother when their father coached use of help seeking more often.

### **Summary and Research Goals**

Help seeking is viewed as an adaptive coping strategy, which may be particularly useful during adolescence as young people negotiate the many changes characteristic of this developmental period (Laursen & Collins, 2009; Logan & King, 2001). Although a considerable amount of research over the past three decades has examined adolescents'

help-seeking behaviour, multiple gaps in this literature remain. The purpose of the current study was to address specific limitations of this work by examining the frequency with which adolescent boys seek help from their father and their mother and predictors of their behaviour. This research is important because inadequate attention has been paid to the marked gender difference in adolescents' help-seeking behaviour, adolescents seek help from specific parents at different rates and under different circumstances, and much of the existing literature on adolescents' help-seeking behaviour has been atheoretical and descriptive so more complex relationships have been largely neglected. Using Newman's model of adaptive help seeking (1991, 2000) as a conceptual framework, we selected markers of adolescents' social-cognitive skills (i.e., emotional competence; tendency to self-disclose), affective-motivational resources (i.e., positive and negative relationship qualities; past help-seeking experiences; conformity to traditional masculine gender role norms), and an environmental factor (i.e., parent coaching of help seeking) to explore as predictors of adolescents seeking help from their father and their mother. We also evaluated whether multiple components of Newman's model interact by assessing whether specific characteristics of a boy's family environment (i.e., parent coaching use of help seeking by the same parent and by the other parent) interact with the qualities of his relationship with a parent to predict variation in help seeking from that parent. To our knowledge, this research is the first application of Newman's model to the family context.

In summary, the goals of the present study were threefold: (1) to describe the nature of adolescent boys' help seeking from their father and their mother; (2) to identify social-cognitive, affective-motivational, and environmental factors that predict boys' help seeking from their father and their mother; and (3) to evaluate parent coaching use

of help seeking as a potential moderator of the relationship between boys' reports of *positive* relationship qualities and help-seeking behaviour from that same parent and of the relationship between boys' reports of *negative* relationship qualities with the other parent and help-seeking behaviour from the other parent. Five research questions and several hypotheses were formulated.

**Research Question 1: How often do boys report turning to their father and their mother for help, and to what extent do they view their father and their mother as helpful?**

Hypothesis 1: It was expected that boys would report turning to their father for help "sometimes."

Hypothesis 2: It was expected that boys would find their father "a little helpful."

Hypothesis 3: It was expected that boys would report turning to their mother for help "often."

Hypothesis 4: It was expected that boys would find their mother "pretty helpful."

**Research Question 2: Do measures of social-cognitive skills (i.e., emotional competence and self-disclosure), measures of affective-motivational resources (i.e., positive relationship qualities with their father, negative relationship qualities with their father, positive past help-seeking experiences with their father, and conformity to the traditional masculine gender role norms emotional control and self-reliance), and an environmental factor (i.e., father coaching use of help seeking) predict boys' help seeking from their father?**

Hypothesis 5: Social-Cognitive Skills - Boys who score higher on emotional competence and higher on self-disclosure were expected to seek help from their father more often.

Hypothesis 6: Affective-Motivational Resources - Boys who report more positive relationship qualities, fewer negative relationship qualities, and more positive help-seeking experiences with their father, and lower conformity to the traditional masculine gender role norms emotional control and self-reliance were expected to seek help from their father more often.

Hypothesis 7: Environmental Factor - Boys who report more coaching by their father to use help-seeking behaviour were expected to seek help from their father more often.

**Research Question 3: Do measures of social-cognitive skills (i.e., emotional competence and self-disclosure), affective-motivational resources (i.e., positive relationship qualities with their mother, negative relationship qualities with their mother, positive past help-seeking experiences with their mother, and conformity to the traditional masculine gender role norms emotional control and self-reliance), and an environmental factor (i.e., mother coaching use of help seeking) predict boys' help seeking from their mother?**

Hypothesis 8: Social-Cognitive Skills - Boys who score higher on emotional competence and higher on self-disclosure were expected to seek help from their mother more often.

Hypothesis 9: Affective-Motivational Resources - Boys who report more positive relationship qualities, fewer negative relationship qualities, and more positive help-seeking experiences with their mother, and lower conformity to the traditional masculine gender role norms emotional control and self-reliance were expected to seek help from their mother more often.

Hypothesis 10: Environmental Factor - Boys who report more coaching by their mother to use help-seeking behaviour were expected to seek help from their mother more often.

**Research Question 4: Does parent coaching use of help seeking by one parent moderate the relationship between boys' reports of positive relationship qualities and help seeking from that same parent?**

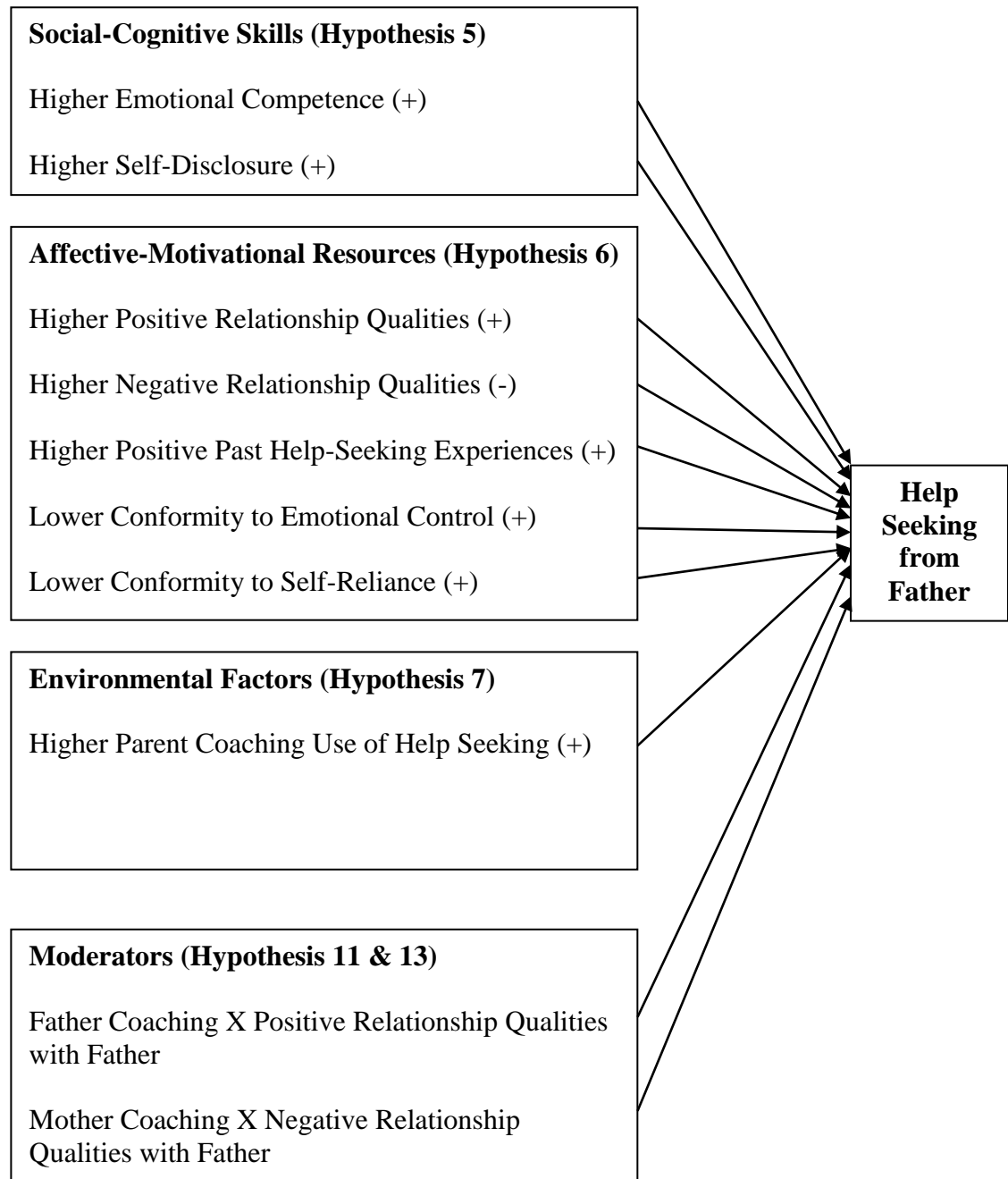
Hypothesis 11: The relationship between boys' reports of positive relationship qualities with their father and help seeking from their father was expected to be moderated by fathers' coaching use of help seeking, such that the relationship between these two variables would be stronger when boys perceive their father as coaching use of help seeking more often.

Hypothesis 12: The relationship between boys' reports of positive relationship qualities with their mother and help seeking from their mother was expected to be moderated by mothers' coaching use of help seeking, such that the relationship between these two variables would be stronger when boys perceive their mother as coaching use of help seeking more often.

**Research Question 5: Does parent coaching use of help seeking by one parent moderate the relationship between boys' reports of negative relationship qualities with their other parent and help seeking from that other parent?**

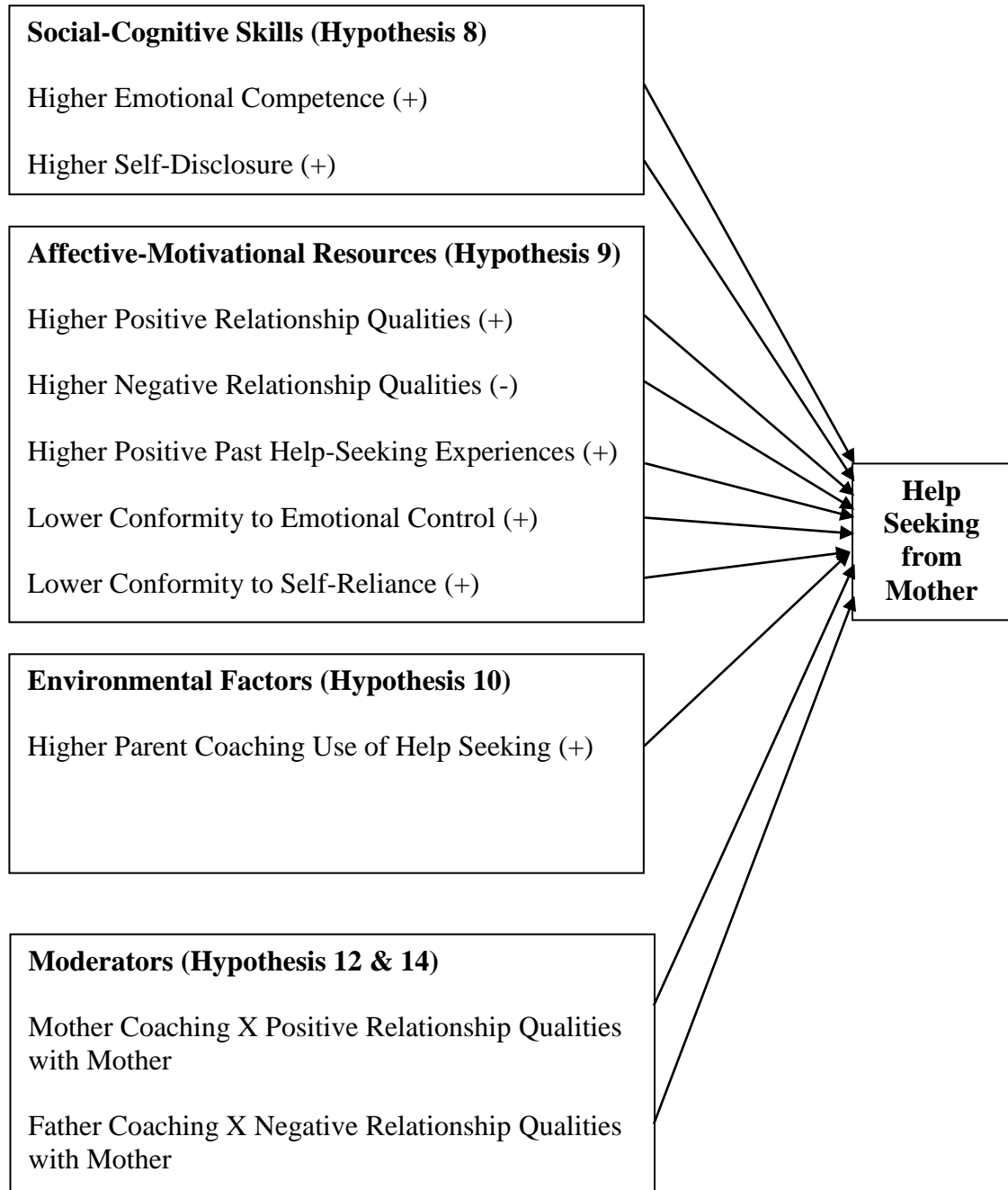
Hypothesis 13: The relationship between boys' reports of negative relationship qualities with their father and help seeking from their father was expected to be moderated by mothers' coaching use of help seeking, such that the relationship between these two variables would be modified when boys' perceive their mother as coaching use of help seeking more often.

Hypothesis 14: The relationship between boys' reports of negative relationship qualities with their mother and help seeking from their mother was expected to be moderated by fathers' coaching use of help seeking, such that the relationship between these two variables would be modified when boys' perceive their father as coaching use of help seeking more often.



*Figure 2.* Proposed relationships between adolescent boys' social-cognitive skills, affective-motivational resources, and an environmental factor, and their help-seeking behaviour from their father.





*Figure 3.* Proposed relationships between adolescent boys' social-cognitive skills, affective-motivational resources, and an environmental factor, and their help-seeking behaviour from their mother.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Method

#### Participants

Participants used in the current study were 232 adolescent boys who were enrolled in Grade 9, 10, or 11 at a public high school in New Brunswick. They ranged in age from 14 to 17 years ( $M = 15.30$ ;  $SD = 1.01$ ). The majority of these students reported living with both parents (73%), whereas 9% were living with their mother half time and their father half time, 8% were living in a remarried family, 8% were living with one parent, and 2% were living with someone other than a parent (e.g., grandparents). According to the boys, 1% of fathers and 1% of mothers had completed elementary school, 16% of fathers and 14% of mothers had completed high school, 25% of fathers and 19% of mothers had completed community college/trade school, and 46% of fathers and 53% of mothers had earned a university degree. In addition, 12% of boys did not know their father's level of education and 13% of boys did not know their mother's level of education. According to the boys, 94% of fathers and 88% of mothers were employed.

#### Procedure

After receiving approval from the Psychology Department Ethics Committee, the University of New Brunswick Research Ethics Board, officials at the school district, and the school principal, a letter describing the study was sent home from school with adolescents (see Appendix A). This letter was distributed to boys and to girls to recruit girls for a separate study. Parents were asked to contact the school or the researchers if they objected to their adolescent's participation (none did). On the day of the scheduled data collection, boys were invited to complete an anonymous survey during one class

period after reading and signing a consent form (see Appendix B). Thus, a passive consent procedure was used with parents and an active consent procedure was used with the adolescents. The demographic information questions, the measure of help-seeking behaviour, and the measure of positive and negative relationship qualities with their father and their mother were presented, in that order, at the beginning of each survey. The section containing measures only about fathers (i.e., self-disclosure to their father, father's coaching use of help seeking, and positive past help-seeking experiences with their father), the section containing measures only about mothers (i.e., self-disclosure to their mother, mother's coaching use of help seeking, and positive past help-seeking experiences with their mother), and the section containing adolescent measures unrelated to fathers or mothers (i.e., emotional competence and conformity to the masculine norms emotional control and self-reliance) were then presented as a block and were counterbalanced according to the following three sequences: Order 1- mother section, father section, adolescent section; Order 2- father section, adolescent section, mother section; and Order 3- adolescent section, mother section, father section. At the end of the class period, each participant received an information sheet that described the study in more detail and provided a list of community resources available to youths (see Appendix C). Once the data collection was completed in each classroom, the boys' consent forms were entered into one of multiple draws for \$10 gift cards.

Based on attendance records for the 25 classrooms that were sampled on the day of the data collection, 269 of a possible 290 boys were available; only two boys who attended class that day declined to participate. The response rate was calculated at 92%. The surveys of 18 boys were excluded because of excessive missing data and the surveys of three boys were excluded because they did not complete the items used to

calculate the dependent variables. Five boys were excluded because they completed the survey about someone other than their father or their mother (e.g., grandparent). In addition, the eight boys in Grade 12 who completed the survey were dropped from the analyses because this number was deemed too small to adequately represent the views and experiences of boys enrolled in this grade. Finally, responses from one boy were dropped because they were identified as a multivariate outlier (see the Results Chapter). The final sample size was 232, with 218 boys having completed the survey about their father and 225 boys having completed the survey about their mother. Thus, analyses involving fathers are based on a sample that overlaps substantially with, but is not identical to, the sample of boys reporting on their mother. A power analysis conducted with G-Power software (Buchner, Erdfelder, & Faul, 1997) showed that a sample size of 160 was required for the four regression analyses with a medium effect size (i.e.,  $f^2 = .15$ ) and an alpha of .05. A medium effect size was chosen given the explanatory nature of this work (Cohen, 1988).

## Measures

**Demographic information.** Boys reported their age, grade, with whom they were living, and each parent's level of education, and employment status (see Appendix D).

**Help-seeking behaviour.** To measure the frequency of their help-seeking behaviour, boys completed the support from mother/father/guardian subscale (four items) of the Children's Coping Strategies Checklist-Revision 2 (CCSC-R2; Ayers, Newton, & Sandler, 2002; Ayers, Sandler, West, & Roosta, 1996). The CCSC (and its revised version) is a dispositional measure of coping behaviour that assesses active, avoidant, distraction, and support seeking strategies (Ayers et al., 1996). It is one of the

few measures which distinguish between support providers (Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2011). In the current study, the four parent items were modified to ask specifically about boys' support seeking from their father and from their mother (see Appendix E). Youths were instructed to respond to statements regarding how they typically solved their problems or made themselves feel better during the past month (i.e., "You told your father about what made you feel the way you did;" "You talked with your mother about what you would like to happen. "). Responses were made on a 4-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 = *never* to 4 = *most of the time*, with higher mean scores reflecting more frequent help seeking from their father or their mother.

The CCSC was cross-validated on two independent samples of children in Grades 4 through 6 and used confirmatory factor analysis to demonstrate that the four latent constructs (active, avoidant, distraction, and support seeking strategies) were invariant across age and gender (Ayers et al., 1996). Moderate to high correlations were found between the CCSC support seeking subscale and a similar measure of situational coping (How I Cope Under Pressure Scale-HICUPS; Ayers et al., 1996; Sandler, Tein & West, 1994). Ayers et al. (2002) revised the support seeking subscale of the original measure to allow respondents to report help seeking from multiple sources, including their mother/father/guardian, other adults, peers, and siblings. Cronbach's alpha for the support from mother/father/guardian subscale was .83 in their sample of 344 children and adolescents (Ayers et al., 2002). Sears (2008a) reported internal consistencies of .95 and .92 for help seeking from fathers and mothers, respectively, in her sample of adolescents. The CCSC-R2's support seeking from mother/father/guardian subscale has been correlated with children's and adolescents' self-reported depression and externalizing symptomatology (Ayers et al., 2002).

In addition to completing the CCSC-R2, boys were asked to how rate how helpful (1 = *not at all*; 4 = *very helpful*) their father and their mother is when they turn to him/her with a problem (see Appendix E).

**Social-cognitive skills: Emotional competence.** Adolescent boys' emotional competence was assessed using the 33-item modified Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS; Schutte et al., 1998; see Appendix F). This measure examines the appraisal and expression of emotions, regulation of emotions, and utilization of emotions in solving problems. Boys were asked to rate statements, such as "I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them," and "I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them," on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. Scores were computed by summing all items, with higher scores indicating higher emotional competence.

A series of studies by Schutte and colleagues (1998) showed that this measure has excellent internal consistency ( $\alpha = .90$ ) and good test-retest reliability over two weeks ( $\alpha = .78$ ). In terms of validity, scores on this measure were correlated with multiple theoretically related constructs (e.g., feelings, clarity of feelings, mood repair, optimism), and were associated with a variety of interpersonal skills (e.g., empathetic perspective taking, self-monitoring in social situations, cooperative responses) in various samples of adults (Schutte et al., 1998, 2001). Other researchers have found that emotional competence is correlated with lower levels of internalizing behaviours (e.g., depression, anxiety, stress) and externalizing behaviours (e.g., aggression, delinquency) and predicts various outcomes, such as mood management behaviour, adaption to stress, persistence after frustration, higher quality relationships, and help-seeking intentions and behaviour (Ciarrochi, Chan, & Bajgar, 2001; Ciarrochi et al., 2002, 2003; Mavroveli

et al., 2007; Sears & Murphy, 2015). Importantly, research also has shown that adolescents can reliably and validly report their emotional competence using this measure (Ciarrochi et al., 2002, 2003; Murphy, 2008; Sears & Murphy, 2015).

**Social-cognitive skills: Self-disclosure.** Adolescent boys' tendency to self-disclose was measured by the Self-Disclosure Index (SDI; Miller, Berg, & Archer, 1983; see Appendix G). The SDI was constructed as a brief alternative to other disclosure measures, such as the widely used 40-item Jourard Self-Disclosure Questionnaire (JSDQ; Jourard, 1964). The SDI consists of 10 items which assess how much an individual self-discloses about a variety of topics (e.g., personal habits, things he/she is proud of, worst fears). Individuals are asked to respond using a 5-point scale ranging from 0 (*discuss not at all*) to 4 (*discuss fully and completely*), and total scores are computed as a sum of the items. The original measure assessed self-disclosure to a stranger and to a friend. In this study, these frames of reference were modified to specify boys' self-disclosure to their father and to their mother.

In their sample of adult men and women, Miller and colleagues (1983) reported high internal consistencies for both the stranger version ( $\alpha = .93$ ) and the friend version ( $\alpha = .87$ ). Similar internal consistencies have been reported in more recent studies (Cross, Bacon, & Morris, 2000; Sprecher & Hendrick, 2004). As expected, levels of self-disclosure for adults on the SDI are highest for romantic partners, followed by same-sex friends and opposite-sex friends, and then strangers (Kito, 2005; Miller et al., 1983). Women and North American students receive higher scores on the SDI than men and Japanese students (Kito, 2005; Miller et al., 1983). The SDI has been correlated with relevant personality and relational measures in adults, such as self-esteem, relationship esteem, and openness (Miller et al., 1983; Sprecher & Hendrick, 2004).

**Affective-motivational resources: Relationship qualities.** Boys' perceptions of the positive and negative qualities of their relationship with their father and with their mother were examined using the widely used Network of Relationships Inventory-Social Provisions Version (NRI-SPV; Furman & Buhrmester, 1985) (see Appendix H). The NRI-SPV includes seven positive relationship qualities (i.e., companionship, affection, reassurance of worth, intimate disclosure, nurturance, instrumental aid, and reliable alliance) and two negative relationship qualities (i.e., conflict and antagonism). Each quality consists of 3 items, for a total of 27 items. Individuals are asked to indicate how much a specific quality occurs in one or more relationships on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*little or none*) to 5 (*the most*), including items such as "How often do you and this person go places and do things together?" (companionship subscale) and "How often do you and this person disagree and quarrel with each other?" (conflict subscale). In the current study, a total positive relationship qualities score and a total negative relationship qualities score were computed separately for adolescent boys' relationship with their father and their relationship with their mother by taking the average of their scores on six positive qualities subscales and the average of their scores on the two negative qualities subscales. In order to keep the measure intact, the instrumental aid subscale was measured, but it was excluded from the computation of the positive relationship qualities score because its items ask specifically about helping in the relationship (e.g., "How much does this person help you when you need to get something done?") and, therefore, are redundant with the two dependent variables.

A principal components analysis revealed three factors for the original NRI-SPV: Support Provisions (i.e., includes the positive qualities subscales), Negative Interactions (i.e., includes the negative qualities subscales) and Relative Power (i.e., the relative



power subscale) (Furman, 1996). The relative power subscale has since been made optional and was not used in the current study. Original findings showed Cronbach's alphas of .80 for scale scores (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985). A recent study of adolescents (Furman & Buhrmester, 2009) using the NRI-SPV intimacy and affection subscales found similar results (Intimacy = .88 for both fathers and mothers; Affection = .89 for mothers and .90 for fathers). The NRI has been validated in several studies that have linked positive and negative interactions among adolescent boys and girls and their family members, same-sex friends, other-sex friends, and romantic partners to various measures of positive and negative adjustment and social competence (Gavin & Furman, 1996; La Greca & Harrison, 2005; Laursen & Mooney, 2008). Studies looking at father-child and mother-child relationships specifically have found significant correlations with adolescents' and college students' school grades, adjustment problems, scholastic competence, behavioural conduct, and emotion management (Laursen & Mooney, 2008; Lopes et al., 2003).

**Affective-motivational resources: Past help-seeking experiences.** This 9-item measure asks youths to report on their past experiences asking for help from their mother and their father and was first used by Sears (2008b) (see Appendix I). Example items include "When I have gone to my father with a problem, he helped me figure out what to do about my problem," and "When I have gone to my mother with a problem, she got angry with me when I told her about my situation". Participants responded using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), with a higher mean score indicating a more positive past help-seeking experience. In the current study, boys completed the measure twice, once about their father and once about their mother. In the original study, Sears (2008b) reported high internal consistencies for

past help seeking from one's father and from one's mother (i.e., .92 and .90, respectively). Adolescents' past help-seeking experiences with their father and their mother were also related to their subsequent help-seeking behaviour from each parent for a family problem and a school problem. Similarly, MacIntyre and Sears (2012) reported internal consistencies of .89 and .91 for adolescents' past help-seeking experiences with female friends and with romantic partners, respectively. Adolescents' past help-seeking experiences with female friends and with romantic partners were also significantly correlated with their intentions of seeking help from each of these peers.

**Affective-motivational resources: Conformity to traditional masculine gender role norms.** Conformity to specific masculine gender role norms was measured using the emotional control (11 items) and self-reliance (6 items) subscales of the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI; Mahalik et al., 2003) (see Appendix J). The CMNI is a 94-item measure designed to assess the extent to which an individual conforms (or does not conform) to the actions, thoughts, and feelings that reflect masculinity norms in North American culture. Factor analysis indicated 11 distinct factors (winning, emotional control, risk-taking, violence, dominance, playboy, self-reliance, primacy of work, power over women, disdain for homosexuality, and pursuit of status). Boys responded to each item on 4-point scale ranging from 0 (*strongly disagree*) to 3 (*strongly agree*), with higher summed scores indicating higher conformity to the emotional control norm (e.g., "It is best to keep your emotions hidden") or the self-reliance norm (e.g., "It bothers me when I have to ask for help").

In a series of four studies examining the reliability and the validity of the CMNI, Mahalik et al. (2003) reported coefficient alphas of .94 for the total CMNI score, and .91 and .85 for the emotional control and self-reliance subscales, respectively. Similar

alphas for these two subscales were also found in a study with adolescent boys (Sears et al., 2009). After two to three weeks, Mahalik et al. (2003) reported test-retest coefficients of .95 for the total CMNI score, .90 for emotional control, and .80 for self-reliance. In addition, men scored significantly higher than women on the CMNI total score and on the emotional control and self-reliance subscales; emotional control was correlated with social dominance and restrictive affectionate behaviour between men; self-reliance was correlated with psychological distress and hostility; and both subscales were correlated with concealing emotions, restrictive emotionality, emotional inexpressiveness, and aggression. Further, both subscales were significantly and negatively correlated with young men's positive attitudes towards seeking professional psychological help (Mahalik et al., 2003). Adolescent boys who scored higher on the emotional control subscale reported lower intentions of seeking help from female friends and male friends and those who scored higher on the self-reliance subscale reported lower intentions of seeking help from female friends only (Sears et al., 2009). A recent study using vignettes to examine the help-seeking behaviours of adult male rodeo cowboys found that men who scored higher on the emotional control and self-reliance subscales of the CMNI reported lower intentions of seeking help from friends or professionals if they experienced a depressive episode (Herbst, Griffith, & Slama, 2014).

**Environmental Factor: Parent coaching use of help seeking.** Adolescent boys' reports of the strategies that their father and their mother typically suggest they use in upsetting situations was assessed using 16 items adapted from the emotion-focused support seeking and the problem-focused support seeking subscales of the Parental Socialization of Coping Questionnaire (PSCQ; Miller et al., 1994). In the original measure, parents are asked to report how much they typically encourage or

discourage their children to use help seeking as a coping strategy using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly discouraged*, 5 = *strongly encouraged*). Example items include “Tell you or your spouse/partner how s/he felt about the problem” and “Talk with a friend about what you would like to have happen.” In the current study, using the same response scale, boys were asked to indicate how much their father and their mother typically encourages or discourages them to use help-seeking strategies to deal with upsetting situations (see Appendix K). Boys completed the measure twice, once with reference to their father and once with reference to their mother. Higher summed scores indicated stronger encouragement of help seeking.

Miller and colleagues (1994) reported internal consistencies of .79 and .80 for the emotion-focused and problem-focused support seeking subscales, respectively. Multiple independent studies have reported similar results. For example, a study conducted with mothers and fathers of elementary school children reported internal consistencies of .77 and .82 on the emotion-focused support seeking subscale, and .88 and .86 on the active or problem-focused support seeking subscale, for fathers and mothers, respectively (Kliewer et al., 1996). Similarly, a Cronbach’s alpha of .85 was reported in a sample of adolescents (14-17 years) who rated maternal coaching of help-seeking behaviour, in which all 16 support seeking from mother items were combined to make one maternal coaching score (Vallely & Sears, 2009). Finally, an internal consistency of .87 was found in Vallely’s (2012) study of younger adolescents’ reports of their older siblings’ coaching of help-seeking behaviour. The PSCQ has been correlated with measures of situational coping, mothers’ reports of their own coping behaviours, and mothers’ reports of their children’s coping (Miller et al., 1994). Mothers’ active coping suggestion scores on the PSCQ have been associated with girls’

use of support seeking (Kliewer et al., 1996), and adolescents' reports of their mother' and their older siblings' coaching behaviour, as measured by the PSCQ, have been related to adolescents' help-seeking behaviour from their mother and their siblings, respectively, for a variety of normative problems (Vallely, 2012; Vallely & Sears, 2009).

## CHAPTER THREE

### Results

#### Data Conditioning

**Missing data.** The data were reviewed for missing data points. None of the variables had more than 4% missing data. Patterns of missing data were examined and found to be missing completely at random. As a result, mean substitution was used to estimate missing values (Cohen et al., 2003). Specifically, for the social-cognitive skills variables, 10 data points were estimated for the emotional competence measure, two data points were estimated for the self-disclosure to father measure, and two data points were estimated for the self-disclosure to mother measure. For the affective-motivational resources variables, no data points were estimated for the positive or negative relationship qualities measures for father or for mother, five data points were estimated for the positive past help-seeking experiences with father measure, six data points were estimated for the positive past help-seeking experiences with mother measure, 11 data points were estimated for the emotional control measure, and 11 data points were estimated for the self-reliance measure. For the environmental factor variables, seven data points were estimated for the father coaching use of help seeking measure, and nine data points were estimated for the mother coaching use of help seeking measure. No data points were estimated for the two dependent variables.

**Normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity.** Variables were screened for normality by examining frequency histograms. Emotional competence, self-disclosure to father, self-disclosure to mother, and self-reliance demonstrated normal distributions. Negative relationship qualities were positively skewed for father, skewness = 1.22 ( $SE = .16$ ), and for mother, skewness = 1.05 ( $SE = .16$ ). A log transformation made each

distribution relatively normal. However, when the multivariate analyses were computed with the original variables and the transformed variables results did not differ. As a result, in accordance with Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), analyses using the original variables are reported. Positive relationship qualities with father were slightly negatively skewed, skewness =  $-.54$  ( $SE = .16$ ), as were positive relationship qualities with mother, skewness =  $-.54$  ( $SE = .16$ ). Positive past help-seeking experiences with father were slightly negatively skewed, skewness =  $-.58$  ( $SE = .17$ ), as were positive past help-seeking experiences with mother, skewness =  $-.65$  ( $SE = .16$ ). Emotional control was also slightly negatively skewed, skewness =  $-.50$  ( $SE = .16$ ). Finally, father coaching use of help-seeking was slightly negatively skewed, skewness =  $-.63$  ( $SE = .17$ ), as was mother coaching use of help seeking, skewness =  $-.60$  ( $SE = .17$ ). Given that the degrees of skewness for these measures were not deemed severe, that these measures were skewed in the same direction to the same moderate extent, and that these measures were skewed in ways that were consistent with theoretically-based predictions of the study, no transformations were applied to these variables. A review of residual scatterplots showed that all of the variables had acceptable linearity and homoscedasticity.

**Univariate and multivariate outliers.** Data were also screened for univariate outliers. One emotional competence score, two positive past help-seeking experiences with father scores, and three positive past help-seeking experiences with mother scores were discontinuous and greater than or less than three standard deviations from the mean for their respective scale. In accordance with Cohen et al. (2003), these six scores were considered univariate outliers and the cases were reassigned a value at three standard deviations from the mean. Mahalanobis and Cook's distances were examined to identify multivariate outliers in each regression analysis (i.e., extreme scores on one or more

variables). Five multivariate outliers were identified. Each multivariate regression was run with and without each of the five multivariate outliers to see if it altered the results. One multivariate outlier had a significant effect on the patterns of results (i.e., it changed the interpretation of which variables were significant). In accordance with Cohen et al. (2003) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), this case was excluded from the analyses. The other four multivariate outliers did not have a significant effect on the pattern of results and, as such, these scores were retained and included in subsequent analyses.

**Multicollinearity and singularity.** Zero-order correlations among all variables were examined for multicollinearity and singularity. Correlations greater than .70 indicate the presence of multicollinearity (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). No variables were found to be multicollinear or singular.

**Centred variables.** Prior to conducting the regression analyses, all continuous predictor variables were centred around their respective means (i.e., standardized) because these analyses included interaction terms (Cohen et al., 2003).

### **Descriptive Statistics**

Descriptive statistics for both dependent variables (i.e., help seeking from father and help seeking from mother) and predictor variables are presented in Table 1. The mean for help seeking from their father fell at the midpoint, indicating that, on average, boys had sought assistance “sometimes” from their father when they experienced a problem. The mean for help seeking from their mother fell just above the midpoint, indicating that, on average, boys had sought assistance slightly more than “sometimes” from their mother when they experienced a problem. In this study, the internal consistency was .91 for fathers and .92 for mothers.



Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics for the Variables*

Variables	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>n</i>
<b>Dependent Variables</b>		
Help Seeking from Father	2.00 <sup>a</sup> (.86)	218
Help Seeking from Mother	2.20 <sup>a</sup> (.89)	225
<b>Social-Cognitive Skills</b>		
Emotional Competence	117.06 <sup>b</sup> (17.73)	232
Self-Disclosure Father	14.29 <sup>c</sup> (10.71)	218
Self-Disclosure Mother	17.18 <sup>c</sup> (10.49)	225
<b>Affective-Motivational Resources</b>		
Positive Relationship Qualities Father	3.30 <sup>d</sup> (.80)	218
Negative Relationship Qualities Father	1.98 <sup>d</sup> (.87)	218
Positive Past Help-Seeking Experiences Father	3.74 <sup>d</sup> (.76)	218
Positive Relationship Qualities Mother	3.30 <sup>d</sup> (.77)	225
Negative Relationship Qualities Mother	2.14 <sup>d</sup> (.94)	225
Positive Past Help-Seeking Experiences Mother	3.77 <sup>d</sup> (.74)	225
Emotional Control	15.38 <sup>e</sup> (5.23)	232
Self-Reliance	7.58 <sup>f</sup> (3.52)	232
<b>Environmental Factor</b>		
Father Coaching Help Seeking	45.19 <sup>g</sup> (10.05)	218
Mother Coaching Help Seeking	46.12 <sup>g</sup> (10.27)	225

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>Possible range = 1-4. <sup>b</sup>Possible range = 33-165. <sup>c</sup>Possible range = 0-40. <sup>d</sup>Possible range = 1-5. <sup>e</sup>Possible range = 0-33. <sup>f</sup>Possible range = 0-18. <sup>g</sup>Possible range = 14-70.

With respect to the social-cognitive skills variables, the mean for emotional competence fell above the midpoint, suggesting that boys viewed themselves as having a moderate level of emotional competence. In this study, the internal consistency was .93. The mean for self-disclosure to their father fell below the midpoint and suggests that boys engaged in some, but not a lot of, self-disclosure to their father about a variety of topics (e.g., personal habits, things he is proud of, worst fears). The mean for self-disclosure to their mother fell close to the midpoint, suggesting that boys generally engaged in a moderate amount of self-disclosure to their mother about a variety of topics. In this study, the internal consistency was .94 for fathers and .93 for mothers.

With respect to the affective-motivational resources variables, the mean for positive relationship qualities with their father fell above the midpoint, indicating that adolescent boys tended to report more positive relationship qualities with their father. In this study, the internal consistency was .95. In keeping with this interpretation, the mean for negative relationship qualities with their father fell below the midpoint. Thus, boys endorsed few negative relationship qualities with their father. In this study, the internal consistency was .92. The mean for positive past help-seeking experiences with their father also fell above the midpoint, indicating that boys generally reported having had positive past experiences seeking help from their father. In this study, the internal consistency was .90. With regard to mothers, the mean for positive relationship qualities fell above the midpoint, indicating that boys generally reported more positive relationship qualities with their mother. In this study, the internal consistency was .94. Similarly, the mean for negative relationship qualities with their mother fell below the midpoint, indicating that boys endorsed few negative relationship qualities with their mother. In this study, the internal consistency was .93. The mean for positive past help-

seeking experiences with their mother fell above the midpoint, which reflects a tendency for boys to report having had positive past experiences seeking help from their mother. In this study, the internal consistency was .90. The means for emotional control and self-reliance both fell slightly below their midpoints, indicating that boys reported fairly low conformity to these two masculine norms overall. Internal consistency was .90 for emotional control and .85 for self-reliance.

Finally, with respect to the environmental factor variables, the means for father's and mother's coaching use of help seeking fell just around their midpoints, indicating that boys tended to view their father and their mother as neither encouraging or discouraging them to seek help. In this study, the internal consistency was .94 for fathers and .94 for mothers.

### **Pearson Correlations**

Intercorrelations among variables measuring boys' help seeking from their father are presented in Table 2. Boys' reports of help seeking from their father were significantly correlated with both social-cognitive skills variables, specifically moderately and positively correlating with emotional competence and strongly and positively correlating with self-disclosure to fathers. Boys' reports of help seeking from their father were also significantly correlated with all affective-motivational resources variables. They were moderately and positively correlated with positive relationship qualities with their father, modestly and negatively correlated with negative relationship qualities with their father, moderately and positively correlated with positive past help-seeking experiences with their father, and moderately and negatively correlated with both emotional control and self-reliance. For the environmental factor variables, boys'

reports of help seeking from their father were moderately and positively correlated with father coaching use of help seeking and mother coaching use of help seeking.

With respect to intercorrelations *within* Newman's (1991, 2000, 2008) proposed categories of predictors of help seeking, for the social-cognitive skills variables, boys' reports of emotional competence were moderately and positively correlated with self-disclosure to their father. For the affective-motivational resources variables, boys' reports of positive relationship qualities with their father were moderately and negatively correlated with negative relationship qualities with their father, strongly and positively correlated with positive past help-seeking experiences with their father, and moderately and negatively correlated with emotional control and with self-reliance. Boys' reports of negative relationship qualities with their father were moderately and negatively correlated with positive past help-seeking experiences with their father. They were not correlated with emotional control or self-reliance. Boys' reports of positive past help-seeking experiences with their father were moderately and negatively correlated with emotional control and self-reliance, whereas emotional control was moderately and positively correlated with self-reliance. Finally, for environmental factor variables, boys' reports of father coaching use of help seeking were strongly and positively correlated with their reports of mother coaching use of help seeking.

With respect to intercorrelations *between* Newman's (1991, 2000, 2008) proposed categories of predictors of help seeking, boys' reports of emotional competence were moderately and positively correlated with positive relationship qualities with their father, modestly and negatively correlated with negative relationship qualities with their father, moderately and positively correlated with positive past help-seeking experiences with their father, and moderately and negatively correlated with

Table 2

*Intercorrelations Among the Variables for Help Seeking from Father*

Variables	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Help Seek from Father	.39***	.70***	.53***	-.16*	.45***	-.35***	-.39***	.44***	.40***
2. Emotional Competence	--	.50***	.43***	-.24***	.44***	-.44***	-.45***	.49***	.51***
3. Self-Disc. to Father		--	.59***	-.22**	.46***	-.55***	-.46***	.48***	.44***
4. Pos. Rel. Qual. Father			--	-.32***	.62***	-.38***	-.40***	.46***	.29***
5. Neg. Rel. Qual. Father				--	-.49***	.08	.11	-.18**	-.04
6. Past Help Seek Father					--	-.31***	-.44***	.49***	.34***
7. Emotional Control						--	.59***	-.38***	-.35***
8. Self-Reliance							--	-.29***	-.31***
9. Coaching Father								--	.67***
10. Coaching Mother									--

Note.  $N = 218$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

emotional control and self-reliance. Boys' reports of self-disclosure to their father were moderately and positively correlated with positive relationship qualities with their father, modestly and negatively correlated with negative relationship qualities with their father, moderately and positively correlated with positive past help-seeking experiences with their father, and moderately and negatively correlated with emotional control and with self-reliance. Emotional control and self-disclosure to their father were both moderately and positively correlated with father coaching use of help seeking and with mother coaching use of help seeking. Boys' reports of positive relationship qualities with their father were moderately and positively correlated with father coaching use of help seeking, and modestly and positively correlated with mother coaching use of help seeking. Boys' reports of negative relationship qualities with their father were modestly and negatively correlated with father coaching use of help seeking, but they were not correlated with mother coaching use of help seeking. Boys' reports of positive past help-seeking experiences with their father were moderately and positively correlated with father coaching use of help seeking and with mother coaching use of help seeking. Finally, boys' reports of emotional control and self-reliance were both moderately and negatively correlated with father coaching use of help seeking and with mother coaching use of help seeking.

Intercorrelations among all variables for help seeking from mothers are presented in Table 3. Boys' reports of help seeking from their mother were significantly correlated with both social-cognitive skills variables, specifically moderately and positively correlated with emotional competence and strongly and positively correlated with self-disclosure to their mother. Boys' reports of help seeking from their mother were also significantly correlated with all of the affective-motivational resources variables. They

were moderately and positively correlated with positive relationship qualities with their mother, modestly and negatively correlated with negative relationship qualities with their mother, moderately and positively correlated with positive past help-seeking experiences with their mother, and moderately and negatively correlated with emotional control and with self-reliance. For the environmental factor variables, boys' reports of help seeking from their mother were moderately and positively correlated with father coaching use of help seeking and with mother coaching use of help seeking.

With respect to intercorrelations *within* Newman's (1991, 2000, 2008) proposed categories of predictors of help seeking, for the social-cognitive skills variables, boys' reports of emotional competence were moderately and positively correlated with self-disclosure to their mother. For the affective-motivational resources variables, boys' reports of positive relationship qualities with their mother were moderately and negatively correlated with negative relationship qualities with their mother, strongly and positively correlated with positive past help-seeking experiences with their mother, and moderately and negatively correlated with emotional control and with self-reliance. Boys' reports of negative relationship qualities with their mother were moderately and negatively correlated with positive past help-seeking experiences with their mother, and were modestly and positively correlated with self-reliance. They were not correlated with emotional control. Boys' reports of positive past help-seeking experiences with their mother were modestly and negatively correlated with emotional control and moderately and negatively correlated with self-reliance, while emotional control was moderately and positively correlated with self-reliance. Finally, for the environmental factor variables, boys' reports of mother coaching use of help seeking were strongly and positively correlated with their reports of father coaching use of help seeking.

Table 3

*Intercorrelations Among the Variables for Help Seeking from Mother*

Variables	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Help Seek from Mother	.41***	.70***	.53***	-.19**	.46***	-.36***	-.39***	.50***	.39***
2. Emotional Competence	--	.52***	.51***	-.30***	.49***	-.44***	-.45***	.51***	.49***
3. Self-Disc. to Mother		--	.63***	-.21**	.47***	-.54***	-.49***	.50***	.40***
4. Pos. Rel. Qual. Mother			--	-.39***	.61***	-.37***	-.47***	.46***	.44***
5. Neg. Rel. Qual. Mother				--	-.48***	.11	.18**	-.26***	-.25***
6. Past Help Seek Mother					--	-.29***	-.45***	.53***	.50***
7. Emotional Control						--	.59***	-.35***	-.38***
8. Self-Reliance							--	-.31***	-.30***
9. Coaching Mother								--	.67***
10. Coaching Father									--

*Note.*  $N = 225$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .



With respect to intercorrelations *between* Newman's (1991, 2000, 2008) proposed categories of predictors of help seeking, boys' reports of emotional competence were moderately and positively correlated with positive relationship qualities with their mother, moderately and negatively correlated with negative relationship qualities with their mother, moderately and positively correlated with positive past help-seeking experiences with their mother, and moderately and negatively correlated with both emotional control and self-reliance. Boys' reports of self-disclosure to their mother were strongly and positively correlated with positive relationship qualities with their mother, modestly and negatively correlated with negative relationship qualities with their mother, moderately and positively correlated with positive past help-seeking experiences with their mother, and moderately and negatively correlated with emotional control and with self-reliance. Emotional control and self-disclosure to their mother were both moderately and positively correlated with mother coaching use of help seeking and with father coaching use of help seeking. Boys' reports of positive relationship qualities with their mother were moderately and positively correlated with mother coaching use of help seeking and father coaching use of help seeking. Boys' reports of negative relationship qualities with their mother were modestly and negatively correlated with mother coaching use of help seeking and with father coaching use of help seeking. Boys' reports of positive past help-seeking experiences with their mother were moderately and positively correlated with mother coaching use of help seeking and with father coaching use of help seeking. Finally, boys' reports of emotional control and self-reliance were both moderately and negatively correlated with mother coaching use of help seeking and with father coaching use of help seeking.

### **Analysis of Potential Covariates**

Correlations and ANOVA analyses (using a criterion of  $p \leq .008$  for statistical significance to adjust for multiple comparisons) were conducted between demographic variables and the two dependent variables to determine whether any demographic variables should be used as a covariate in the hierarchical regression analyses. These demographic variables included boys' age, grade, family status, father's education level and employment status, and mother's education level and employment status.

Correlation results showed that boys' age and grade were not significantly related to the frequency of their help seeking from their father ( $r = .03$  and  $r = .03$ , respectively,  $ps \leq .008$ ) or from their mother ( $r = .03$  and  $r = .06$ , respectively,  $ps \leq .008$ ).

A series of ANOVA analyses showed that boys' family status, father's and mother's level of education, and father's and mother's employment status also were not significantly related to the frequency of boys' help seeking from their father or their mother (see Table 4). The order effect for the counterbalancing of surveys was also examined. Of the usable surveys, 34% were Order 1, 34% were Order 2, and 32% were Order 3. According to the ANOVA analyses, no significant difference in the frequency of boys' help seeking from their father or their mother occurred as a function of the ordering of these measures in the survey (see Table 4). Given this pattern of results, no demographic variables were used as covariates in the multivariate analyses.

### **Research Question 1: Adolescent Boys' Help Seeking from their Father and from their Mother**

The first goal of the current study was to examine the nature of adolescent boys' help seeking from their father and their mother, including how often they have sought assistance from each parent and whether they have found this assistance helpful.

Table 4

*Potential Covariates and Help Seeking from Father and from Mother*

Potential Covariates	Help Seeking from Father		Help Seeking from Mother	
	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>F(df)</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>F(df)</i>
Family Status		1.09 (4, 213)		1.01 (4, 220)
Biological Family	2.06 (.88)		2.24 (.91)	
Father/Mother Half	1.88 (.83)		1.97 (.65)	
Time				
Remarried Parents	1.67 (.57)		2.28 (.94)	
One Parent	1.88 (.94)		2.02 (.98)	
Father's Education		1.53 (3, 187)		1.20 (3, 180)
Elementary School	2.50 (.71)		2.37 (.88)	
High School	1.78 (.60)		2.00 (.83)	
College/Technical	2.08 (.98)		2.25 (.85)	
University	2.13 (.90)		2.34 (.93)	
Father's Employment Status		6.10 (1, 215)		.53 (1, 208)
Employed	2.04 (.87)		2.23 (.88)	
Not Employed	1.46 (.48)		2.05 (.87)	
Mother's Education		4.65 (2, 180)		2.49 (3, 191)
Elementary School	n/a		2.08 (.99)	
High School	1.82 (.77)		1.97 (.84)	
College/Technical	1.83 (.71)		2.07 (.80)	
University	2.23 (.93)		2.38 (.92)	
Mother's Employment Status		.06 (1, 208)		.00 (1, 221)
Employed	2.00 (.83)		2.20 (.87)	
Not Employed	2.04 (.99)		2.20 (.97)	
Order of Measures		.01 (2, 215)		.36 (2, 222)
Order 1	2.01 (.88)		2.17 (.91)	
Order 2	1.99 (.86)		2.27 (.88)	
Order 3	2.01 (.85)		2.16 (.88)	

*Note.* All analyses are non-significant at  $p \leq .008$  (adjusted Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons).

**Fathers.** As described previously (see Table 1), boys tended to report approaching their father for help “sometimes” when they experienced a problem. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported. Regarding the perceived helpfulness of this support, boys reported that assistance provided by their father was “pretty helpful” on average ( $M = 3.08$ ;  $SD = .83$ ). Thus, boys found their father’s assistance to be more beneficial than expected. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was not supported.

**Mothers.** On average, boys reported approaching their mother for help at least “sometimes” when they experienced a problem (see Table 1). Thus, boys sought help from their mother less often than expected. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was not supported. Regarding perceived helpfulness, boys described the assistance provided by their mother as being “pretty helpful” on average ( $M = 3.12$ ;  $SD = .84$ ), providing support for Hypothesis 4.

## **Research Question 2: Relationships Between Adolescent Boys’ Social-Cognitive Skills, Affective-Motivational Resources, and an Environmental Factor and Help Seeking from their Father**

The next goal of the current study was to examine whether adolescent boys’ reports of their social-cognitive skills (i.e., emotional competence and self-disclosure), affective-motivational resources (i.e., positive and negative relationship qualities with their father, positive past help-seeking experiences with their father, conformity to the traditional masculine gender role norms emotional control and self-reliance), and an environmental factor (i.e., father coaching use of help seeking) predicted the frequency with which they sought help from their father. One hierarchical regression analysis was conducted using centered variables (Holmbeck, 1997). Consistent with the steps of help-seeking process (see Figure 1), boys’ social-cognitive skills (i.e., emotional competence,

self-disclosure to their father) were entered on Step 1, boys' affective motivational resources (i.e., positive and negative relationship qualities with their father, positive past help-seeking experiences with their father, conformity to the traditional masculine gender role norms emotional control and self-reliance) were entered on Step 2, and the environmental factor (i.e., father coaching use of help seeking) was entered on Step 3 (see Table 5).

The regression results showed that the block of social-cognitive skills (i.e., emotional competence and self-disclosure to their father) entered on Step 1 was a significant predictor for help seeking from fathers accounting for 49% of the variance in this dependent variable. Unexpectedly, boys' reports of their emotional competence did not significantly predict seeking help from their father more often. However, as expected, boys who were more inclined to self-disclose to their father also reported seeking help from their father more often. Thus, Hypothesis 5 was partially supported. The block of affective-motivational resource variables (i.e., positive and negative relationship qualities with their father, positive past help-seeking experiences with their father, and conformity to the traditional masculine gender role norms emotional control and self-reliance) entered on Step 2 also significantly predicted more frequent help seeking by boys from their father above and beyond Step 1 variables, accounting for another 4% of the variance. As expected, boys who reported more positive past help-seeking experiences with their father were also seeking help from their father more often. However, boys' reports of more positive relationship qualities with their father, fewer negative relationship qualities with their father, and less conformity to the traditional masculine gender role norms emotional control and self-reliance did not significantly predict more frequent help seeking from their father. Thus, Hypothesis 6

Table 5

*Hierarchical Regression Results Predicting Adolescent Boys' Help Seeking from Father*

Predictors	Help Seeking from Father		
	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	<i>sr</i>
Step 1 Social-Cognitive Skills	.49***		
Emotional Competence		.06	.05
Self-Disclosure Father		.67***	.58
Step 2 Affective-Motivational Resources	.04**		
Positive Relationship Qualities Father		.13	.09
Negative Relationship Qualities Father		.08	.07
Positive Past Help Seeking Father		.14*	.10
Conformity to Emotional Control		.10	.07
Conformity to Self-Reliance		-.06	-.05
Step 3 Environmental Factor	.00		
Father Coaching Use of Help Seeking		.08	.06
Step 4 Interaction Term	.01		
Father Coaching X Positive Relationship Qualities with Father		.09	.08
Final Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.52		

*Note.* N = 218. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

was partially supported. Finally, the environmental factor of father coaching use of help seeking, entered on Step 3, did not significantly predict more frequent help seeking by boys from their father. As such, Hypothesis 7 was not supported.

### **Research Question 3: Relationships Between Adolescent Boys' Social-Cognitive Skills, Affective-Motivational Resources, and an Environmental Factor and Help Seeking from their Mother**

The next goal of the current study was to examine whether adolescent boys' reports of their social-cognitive skills (i.e., emotional competence and self-disclosure to their mother), affective-motivational resources (i.e., positive and negative relationship qualities with their mother, positive past help-seeking experiences with their mother, conformity to the traditional masculine gender role norms emotional control and self-reliance), and the environmental factor (i.e., mother coaching use of help seeking) predicted the frequency with which they sought help from their mother. One hierarchical regression analysis was conducted, in which boys' social-cognitive skills (i.e., emotional competence, self-disclosure to their mother) were entered on Step 1, boys' affective motivational resources (i.e., positive and negative relationship qualities with their mother, positive past help-seeking experiences with their mother, conformity to the traditional masculine gender role norms emotional control and self-reliance) were entered on Step 2, and the environmental factor (i.e., mother coaching use of help seeking) was entered on Step 3 (see Table 6).

Results from the regression analysis showed that the block of social-cognitive skills (i.e., emotional competence and self-disclosure to their mother), entered on Step 1, significantly accounted for 49% of the variance in the dependent variable predicting help

Table 6

*Hierarchical Regression Results Predicting Adolescent Boys' Help Seeking from Mother*

Predictors	Help Seeking from Mothers		
	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	<i>sr</i>
Step 1 Social-Cognitive Skills	.49***		
Emotional Competence		.07	.06
Self-Disclosure Mother		.66***	.57
Step 2 Affective-Motivational Resources	.03*		
Positive Relationship Qualities Mother		.10	.07
Negative Relationship Qualities Mother		.08	.07
Positive Past Help Seeking Mother		.17*	.12
Conformity to Emotional Control		.05	.04
Conformity to Self-Reliance		-.02	-.02
Step 3 Environmental Factor	.02*		
Mother Coaching Use of Help Seeking		.16*	.12
Step 4 Interaction Term	.01		
Mother Coaching X Positive Relationship Qualities with Mother		.07	.07
Final Adjusted $R^2$	.52		

*Note.* N = 225. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .



seeking from mothers. As found for father help seeking, boys' reports of their emotional competence did not significantly predict the frequency of their help seeking from their mother either. However, as expected, boys who reported more self-disclosure to their mother also reported seeking help from their mother more often. Thus, Hypothesis 8 was partially supported. The block of boys' affective motivational resource variables (i.e., positive and negative relationship qualities with their mother, positive past help-seeking experiences with their mother, and conformity to the traditional masculine gender role norms emotional control and self-reliance), entered on Step 2, also significantly predicted the frequency of boys' help seeking from their mother, accounting for an additional 3% of the variance (see Table 6). As expected, boys who reported more positive past help-seeking experiences with their mother also described a higher frequency of seeking help from their mother. However, boys' reports of more positive relationship qualities with their mother, fewer negative relationship qualities with their mother, and less conformity to the traditional masculine gender role norms emotional control and self-reliance did not significantly predict more frequent help seeking from their mother. Thus, Hypothesis 9 was partially supported. The environmental factor of mother coaching use of help seeking, entered on Step 3, significantly predicted boys' help seeking from their mother above and beyond variance accounted for in Steps 1 and 2, accounting for 2% of additional variance. Boys who reported experiencing a higher level of coaching by their mother to use help-seeking behaviour also reported more frequently seeking help from their mother, supporting Hypothesis 10.

#### **Research Question 4: Parent Coaching as a Moderator of the Relationship Between Positive Relationship Qualities and Help Seeking from that Same Parent**

The next goal of the current study was to examine whether coaching use of help seeking by one parent moderated the relationship between more or fewer positive relationship qualities and the frequency of help seeking from that same parent.

**Fathers.** In the hierarchical regression analysis predicting help seeking from their father presented in Table 5, the interaction between boys' reports of positive relationship qualities with their father and father coaching use of help seeking was entered in Step 4 of the model. This step was not significant and the interaction term did not significantly predict boys' help seeking from their father. As such, Hypothesis 11 was not supported.

**Mothers.** In the hierarchical regression analysis predicting help seeking from their mother presented in Table 6, the interaction between boys' reports of positive relationship qualities with their mother and mother coaching use of help seeking was entered in Step 4. This step was not significant and the interaction did not significantly predict boys' help seeking from their mother. As such, Hypothesis 12 was not supported.

#### **Research Question 5: Parent Coaching as a Moderator of the Relationship Between Negative Relationship Qualities with their Other Parent and Help Seeking from their Other Parent**

The final goal of the present study was to examine whether parent coaching use of help seeking by one parent moderated the relationship between boys' reports of more or fewer negative relationship qualities with their other parent and the frequency of help seeking from that other parent.

**Fathers.** A second hierarchical regression analysis predicting boys' help seeking from their father was conducted. This analysis was done using the subset of 211 boys who were living with both parents and filled out measures about each parent. As shown in Table 7, the interaction between mother coaching use of help seeking and boys' reports of negative relationship qualities with their father significantly predicted the frequency of adolescent boys' help seeking from their father and accounted for an additional 1% of the variance. A simple slopes analysis (Aiken & West, 1991) showed that, for boys who reported that their mother coached or encouraged them to use help seeking, fewer negative relationship qualities with their father were related to more frequent help seeking from their father ( $\beta = -.33, t = -3.49, p = .001$ ). However, for boys who reported that their mother did not coach or encourage their use of help seeking, boys' reports of negative relationship qualities with their father were not related to the frequency of their help seeking from their father ( $\beta = -.01, t = -.14, p > .05$ ) (see Figure 4). Thus, Hypothesis 13 was supported.

**Mothers.** Similarly, a second hierarchical regression analysis predicting boys' help seeking from their mother was conducted. This analysis was also done on the subset of 211 boys who were living with both parents and filled out measures about each parent. As shown in Table 8, the interaction between father coaching use of help seeking and boys' reports of negative relationship qualities with their mother did not significantly predict the frequency of adolescent boys' help seeking from their mother. Thus, Hypothesis 14 was not supported.

### **Supplemental Analyses**

Given that the pattern of significant predictors of for boys' help seeking from their father and for boys' help seeking from their mother was not consistent with the

Table 7

*Hierarchical Regression Examining Mother Coaching as a Moderator of the Relationship Between Negative Relationship Qualities with their Father and Help Seeking from their Father*

Predictors	Help Seeking from Fathers		
	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	<i>sr</i>
Step 1 Social-Cognitive Skills	.49***		
Emotional Competence		.06	.05
Self-Disclosure Father		.67***	.58
Step 2 Affective-Motivational Resources	.04**		
Positive Relationship Qualities Father		.13	.09
Negative Relationship Qualities Father		.08	.07
Positive Past Help Seeking Father		.14*	.10
Conformity to Emotional Control		.10	.07
Conformity to Self-Reliance		-.06	-.05
Step 3 Environmental Factor	.00		
Father Coaching Use of Help Seeking		.08	.06
Step 4	.00		
Mother Coaching Use of Help Seeking		.11	.06
Step 5 Interaction Term	.01*		
Mother Coaching X Negative Relationship Qualities with Father		-.12*	-.12
Final Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.54		

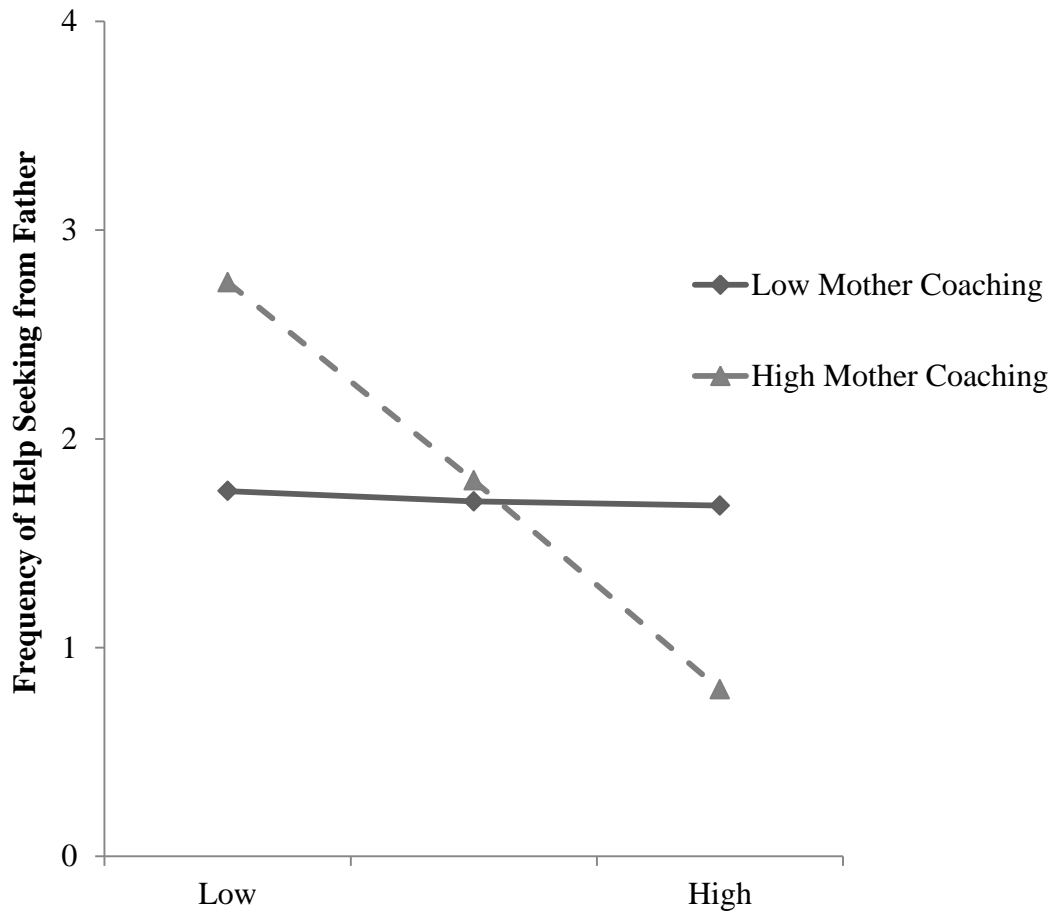
*Note.* N = 211. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table 8

*Hierarchical Regression Examining Father Coaching as a Moderator of the Relationship Between Negative Relationship Qualities with their Mother and Help Seeking from their Mother*

Predictors	Help Seeking from Mothers		
	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	<i>sr</i>
Step 1 Social-Cognitive Skills	.49***		
Emotional Competence		.07	.06
Self-Disclosure Mother		.66***	.57
Step 2 Affective-Motivational Resources	.03*		
Positive Relationship Qualities Mother		.10	.07
Negative Relationship Qualities Mother		.08	.07
Positive Past Help Seeking Mother		.17*	.12
Conformity to Emotional Control		.05	.04
Conformity to Self-Reliance		-.02	-.02
Step 3 Environmental Factor	.02*		
Mother Coaching Use of Help Seeking		.16*	.12
Step 4	.00		
Father Coaching Use of Help Seeking		.10	.08
Step 5 Interaction Term	.00		
Father Coaching X Negative Relationship Qualities with Mother		-.06	-.09
Final Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.52		

*Note.* N = 211. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .



#### Negative Relationship Qualities with Father

*Figure 4.* Mother coaching use of help seeking as a moderator of the relationship between adolescent boys' reports of negative relationship qualities with their father and the frequency of help seeking from their father.

pattern of correlations between the predictors and these two dependent variables, we ran a series of supplemental analyses to better understand these relationships among these variables.

**Social-cognitive skills.** Our first set of supplemental analyses considered the relationships between markers of social-cognitive skills (i.e., emotional competence and self-disclosure) and boys' help-seeking behaviour. Although boys' reports of emotional competence were moderately positively correlated with help seeking from their father and help seeking from their mother (see Tables 2 and 3), they did not significantly predict help-seeking behaviour when entered simultaneously with self-disclosure (i.e., the other social-cognitive skill measured in the current study; see Tables 5 and 6). Boys' reports of emotional competence were moderately and positively correlated with self-disclosure to their father ( $r = .50, p < .001$ ) and with self-disclosure to their mother ( $r = .52, p < .001$ ). In order to better understand relationships between these constructs and boys' help seeking from their father and their mother, we conducted a set of two supplemental hierarchical regression analyses in which emotional competence was entered on Step 1 prior to self-disclosure on Step 2, with boys' help seeking from their father as the dependent variable in one analysis and boys' help seeking from their mother as the dependent variable in the other analysis.

For the supplemental hierarchical regression predicting adolescent boys' help seeking from their father, Step 1 was significant, with emotional competence making a unique and substantial contribution to boys' help seeking from their father, accounting for 15% of the variance ( $\Delta R^2 = .15, F(1, 216) = 39.12, \beta = .39, t(216) = 6.26, sr = .39, p = .00$ ). Step 2 was also significant, with self-disclosure to their father accounting for

34% of the variance in the dependent variable ( $\Delta R^2 = .34$ ,  $F(2, 215) = 143.17$ ,  $\beta = .67$ ,  $t(215) = 11.97$ ,  $sr = .58$ ,  $p = .00$ ).

For the supplemental hierarchical regression predicting adolescent boys' help seeking from their mother, similar results were found. Step 1 was significant, with emotional competence making a unique and substantial contribution to boys' help seeking from their mother, accounting for 16% of the variance ( $\Delta R^2 = .16$ ,  $F(1, 223) = 45.56$ ,  $\beta = .41$ ,  $t(223) = 6.74$ ,  $sr = .41$ ,  $p = .00$ ). Step 2 was also significant, with self-disclosure to their mother accounting for 32% of the variance in the dependent variable ( $\Delta R^2 = .32$ ,  $F(2, 222) = 138.95$ ,  $\beta = .66$ ,  $t(222) = 11.79$ ,  $sr = .57$ ,  $p = .00$ ).

Together, the first set of supplemental analyses clarified the relationships between emotional competence, self-disclosure, and boys' help seeking from their father and their mother. It was revealed that emotional competence, if entered prior to boys' reports of self-disclosure to their father or their mother, did account for significant variance in boys' help-seeking behaviour from their father or their mother, respectively. However, of the two markers of social-cognitive skills, self-disclosure is the dominant predictor. These results, along with our original analyses, reveal that emotional competence is an important correlate of help-seeking behaviour, but does not contribute to the prediction of this variable uniquely in the presence of self-disclosure.

**Affective-motivational resources.** Our second set of supplemental analyses focused on the affective-motivational resource variables, with a particular interest in identifying why positive relationship qualities and positive past help-seeking experiences were both moderately correlated with boys' help seeking from their father and their mother (see Tables 2 and 3), but only positive past help-seeking experiences significantly predicted each of these dependent variables after accounting for the



markers of social-cognitive skills (see Tables 5 and 6). Boys' reports of positive relationship qualities with their father and positive past help-seeking experiences with their father were strongly and positively correlated ( $r = .62, p < .001$ ), as were boys' reports of positive relationship qualities with their mother and positive past help-seeking experiences with their mother ( $r = .61, p < .001$ ). In order to better understand relationships between these constructs and boys' help seeking from their father and their mother, we conducted two sets of supplemental hierarchical regression analyses (two regressions predicting boys' help seeking from their father and two regressions predicting boys' help seeking from their mother).

The first set of supplemental analyses for the affective-motivational resource variables examined whether positive relationship qualities made a unique contribution to the dependent variables if this variable was entered by itself on Step 2, after accounting for social-cognitive skills on Step 1. Thus, for the hierarchical regression analysis predicting boys' help seeking from their father, social-cognitive skills variables (i.e., emotional competence and self-disclosure to father) were entered on Step 1, and boys' reports of positive relationship qualities with their father was entered on Step 2 (see Table 9). Similarly, for the hierarchical regression analysis predicting boys' help seeking from their mother, social-cognitive skills variables (i.e., emotional competence and self-disclosure to mother) were entered on Step 1, and boys' reports of positive relationship qualities with their mother was entered on Step 2 (see Table 10). Results for fathers and mothers were similar (see Tables 9 and 10). For both fathers and mothers, Step 2 was significant, accounting for 2% of the variance in boys' help seeking from their father and 1% of the variance in boys' help seeking from their mother. Thus, when entered by itself, after first accounting for social-cognitive skills, boys' reports of positive

relationship qualities with their father or their mother significantly predicted boys' help-seeking behaviour from that parent.

To determine whether positive relationship qualities remained a significant predictor of help-seeking behaviour when entered simultaneously with positive past help-seeking experiences (i.e., the dominant marker of affective-motivational resources in the original analyses; see Tables 5 and 6), a second set of supplemental analyses for the affective-motivational resource variables were conducted. For the hierarchical regression analysis predicting boys' help seeking from their father, social-cognitive skills variables (i.e., emotional competence and self-disclosure to father) were entered on Step 1, and boys' reports of positive relationship qualities with their father *and* positive past help-seeking experiences with their father were entered on Step 2 (see Table 9). Similarly, for the hierarchical regression analysis predicting boys' help seeking from their mother, social-cognitive skills variables (i.e., emotional competence and self-disclosure to mother) were entered on Step 1, and boys' reports of positive relationship qualities with their mother *and* positive past help-seeking experiences with their mother were entered on Step 2 (see Table 10). Again, results for fathers and mothers were comparable. Although Step 2 was significant in both regressions, accounting for 3% of the variance in help seeking from fathers and 2% of the variance in help seeking from mothers, positive relationship qualities did not emerge as a significant predictor of help seeking in either analysis. This reveals that, although positive relationship qualities is an important correlate of help-seeking behaviour, it does not make a unique contribution to the prediction of boys' help-seeking behaviour in the presence of positive past help-seeking experiences.

Table 9

*Supplemental Analyses Predicting Adolescent Boys' Help Seeking from their Father:  
Affective-Motivational Resources*

Predictors	Help Seeking from Father		
	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	<i>sr</i>
Step 1 Social-Cognitive Skills	.49***		
Emotional Competence		.06	.05
Self-Disclosure Father		.67***	.58
Step 2 Affective-Motivational Resources			
Positive Relationship Qualities Father	.02**	.18**	.14
Step 2 <sup>a</sup> Affective-Motivational Resources	.03**		
Positive Relationship Qualities Father		.09	.07
Positive Past Help Seeking Experiences Father		.13*	.10

*Note.* \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup>. Entered as Step 2 in separate supplemental hierarchical regression.

Table 10

*Supplemental Analyses Predicting Adolescent Boys' Help Seeking from their Mother:  
Affective-Motivational Resources*

Predictors	Help Seeking from Mother		
	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	<i>sr</i>
Step 1 Social-Cognitive Skills	.49***		
Emotional Competence		.07	.06
Self-Disclosure Mother		.66***	.57
Step 2 Affective-Motivational Resources			
Positive Relationship Qualities Mother	.01*	.15*	.11
Step 2 <sup>a</sup> Affective-Motivational Resources	.02**		
Positive Relationship Qualities Mother		.08	.06
Positive Past Help Seeking Experiences Mother		.14*	.11

*Note.* \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

<sup>a</sup> Entered as Step 2 in separate supplemental hierarchical regression.

Together, the supplemental analyses for the markers of affective-motivational resources clarified the relationships between positive relationship qualities, positive past help-seeking experiences, and boys' help seeking from their father and their mother. It was revealed that boys' reports of positive relationship qualities with their father or their mother did account for a significant, albeit a small amount, of variance in boys' help-seeking behaviour from that parent, after first accounting for social-cognitive skills. However, this was only the case if the positive relationship qualities variable was entered in the absence of positive past help-seeking experiences. Together with our original results, it can be concluded that positive relationship qualities is an important correlate of help-seeking behaviour, but it does not contribute uniquely to the prediction of boys' help-seeking behaviour in the presence of positive past help-seeking experiences or in the presence of the other markers of affective-motivational resources included in this study (see original analyses in Tables 5 and 6).

**Affective-motivational resources in relation to social-cognitive skills.** Our third set of supplemental analyses considered the relationships between the markers of affective-motivational resources and social-cognitive skills. Our original analyses showed that affective-motivational resources account for much less variance in boys' help seeking from their father and their mother than social-cognitive skills (see Tables 5 and 6). This is surprising given that help seeking is a dyadic process and that some markers of affective-motivational resources (i.e., positive relationship qualities, positive past help-seeking experience) are perhaps the variables best positioned to capture characteristics of the dyad, such as the quality of their interaction. We wanted to assess whether markers of affective-motivational resources truly account for less variance in boys' help-seeking behaviour than the markers of social-cognitive skills or whether

markers of affective-motivational resources were relatively less important in our original analyses because there was a substantial reduction in the amount of variance to be accounted for once the social-cognitive skills variables were entered. To help distinguish between these two possibilities, markers of affective-motivational resources were entered prior to markers of social-cognitive skills in two additional hierarchical regression analyses, one predicting adolescent boys' help seeking from their father and one predicting boys' help seeking from their mother (see Tables 11 and 12). In each regression, affective-motivational skills variables (i.e., positive and negative relationship qualities with their father or their mother, positive past help-seeking experiences with their father or their mother, and conformity to the traditional masculine gender role norms emotional control and self-reliance) were entered on Step 1, and the social-cognitive skills variables (i.e., emotional competence and self-disclosure to their father or their mother) were entered on Step 2.

Similar results were found for boys' help seeking from their father and their mother. The supplemental hierarchical regression analyses demonstrated that, when the affective-motivational resource variables were entered on Step 1, they significantly predicted the frequency of boys' help seeking, accounting for 34% of the variance in help seeking from fathers and 35% of the variance in help seeking from mothers (see Tables 11 and 12). These amounts are significantly larger than the 4% of variance in help seeking from fathers and 3% of variance in help seeking from mothers accounted for in the original analysis (see Tables 5 and 6). Specifically, when the affective-motivational resource variables were entered on Step 1, boys who reported more positive past help-seeking experiences with their father or with their mother also reported seeking help from that parent more frequently. However, in addition, boys who reported

more *positive relationship qualities* with their father or with their mother also reported seeking help from that parent significantly more often. This finding reveals that, consistent with our expectations, positive relationship qualities do play an important role in predicting boys' help seeking from each parent; however, this contribution was masked in our original hierarchical regression analyses because self-disclosure was entered first and accounted for at least some of the same variance as can be accounted for by positive relationship qualities.

Notably, when the block of social-cognitive skills variables was entered on Step 2, it remained significant, accounting for 19% of the variance in boys' help seeking from their father and 17% of the variance in help seeking from their mother (a decline from 49% in both original analyses). As with the original analyses, boys who scored higher on self-disclosure to their father or their mother reported seeking help from that parent more often. Remarkably, even when self-disclosure was entered after the markers of affective-motivational resources, it still significantly and robustly predicted boys' help-seeking behaviour from their father and their mother.

In summary, our supplemental analyses clarify the relationships between the markers of affective-motivational resources and social-cognitive skills. When the affective-motivational resource variables were entered prior to the social-cognitive skills variables, boys' reports of positive relationship qualities with their father and their mother and positive past help-seeking experiences with their father and their mother were significant predictors of boys' help seeking from that parent. Our supplemental analyses also revealed that self-disclosure continued to contribute uniquely to boys' help-seeking behaviour from each parent even when it was entered after the affective-motivational resources. Thus, it can be concluded that both markers of social-cognitive

Table 11

*Supplemental Analyses Predicting Adolescent Boys' Help Seeking from their Father:  
Affective-Motivational Resources in Relation to Social-Cognitive Skills*

Predictors	Help Seeking from Fathers		
	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	<i>sr</i>
Step 1 Affective-Motivational Resources	.34***		
Positive Relationship Qualities Father		.36***	.27
Negative Relationship Qualities Father		.07	.06
Positive Past Help Seeking Father		.19*	.13
Conformity to Emotional Control		-.10	-.08
Conformity to Self-Reliance		-.11	-.08
Step 2 Social-Cognitive Skills	.19***		
Emotional Competence		.02	.01
Self-Disclosure Father		.60***	.42
Final Adjusted $R^2$	.52		

*Note.* \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .



Table 12

*Supplemental Analyses Predicting Adolescent Boys' Help Seeking from their Mother:  
Affective-Motivational Resources in Relation to Social-Cognitive Skills*

Predictors	Help Seeking from Mothers		
	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	<i>sr</i>
Step 1 Affective-Motivational Resources	.35***		
Positive Relationship Qualities Mother		.36***	.27
Negative Relationship Qualities Mother		.12	.11
Positive Past Help Seeking Mother		.24**	.17
Conformity to Emotional Control		-.13	-.11
Conformity to Self-Reliance		-.06	-.04
Step 2 Social-Cognitive Skills	.17***		
Emotional Competence		.01	.01
Self-Disclosure Mother		.58***	.40
Final $R^2$	.50		

*Note.* \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

skills and markers of affective-motivational resources are important for predicting the frequency with which boys seek help from their father and from their mother.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Discussion

In the current study, we used Newman's model of adaptive help seeking (1991, 2000) as a conceptual framework to explore how selected markers of adolescent boys' social-cognitive skills (i.e., emotional competence, tendency to self-disclose), affective-motivational resources (i.e., positive and negative relationship qualities, positive past help-seeking experiences, conformity to the traditional masculine gender role norms emotional control and self-reliance), and an environmental factor (i.e., parent coaching use of help seeking) shape adolescent boys' help seeking from their father and their mother. Guided by this framework, we developed three research goals: (1) to examine the frequency with which adolescent boys access help from their father and their mother; (2) to identify markers of social-cognitive skills, affective-motivational resources, and an environmental factor that predict boys' help seeking from their father and their mother; and (3) to examine whether parent coaching use of help seeking moderates the relationship between boys' reports of positive relationship qualities and help-seeking behaviour from that same parent, and the relationship between boys' reports of negative relationship qualities with the other parent and help-seeking behaviour from the other parent. This chapter includes a summary of these results for each of these goals followed by a discussion of implications of these findings for Newman's model of adaptive help seeking (1991, 2000) as well as implications for prevention and coping interventions. Finally, limitations of the current study and directions for future research will be discussed.

### **Adolescent Boys Seeking Help from their Father and their Mother**

The first goal of the current study was to assess the nature of adolescent boys' help seeking from their father and their mother, including the frequency with which boys went to each parent for help and the perceived helpfulness of each parent. We hypothesized that, on 4-point scale (1 = *never*, 2 = *sometimes*, 3 = *often*, 4 = *most of the time*), boys would report having sought help from their father "sometimes" (Hypothesis 1) and, on 4-point scale (1 = *not at all helpful*, 2 = *a little helpful*, 3 = *pretty helpful*, 4 = *very helpful*), that they had found this assistance "a little helpful" (Hypothesis 2).

Consistent with Hypothesis 1, boys reported that they had sought help from their father "sometimes" in the past month. Although direct comparisons with previous studies that have distinguished between adolescents' help seeking from their father and their mother are challenging due to methodological and sample differences, it may be argued that the modest amount of help seeking found in the present study is generally consistent with the findings of these previous studies. Focusing on the two studies that evaluated help-seeking intentions, it appears that boys expect to access their father for assistance infrequently (i.e., they are somewhat likely to do so or to do so less than sometimes) (Burke & Weir, 1979; Sullivan et al., 2002). Turning to the two studies that assessed help-seeking behaviour, a similar picture emerges. Schonert-Reichl and Muller (1996) found that 33% of boys aged 13 to 18 had accessed their father for help with an emotional or personal problem in the past year, and Sears (2008a) reported that adolescents in Grades 10 or 11 had sought help from their father less than "sometimes" for a family problem or a school problem. Despite differences in how help-seeking behaviour was measured and some variation in the age ranges of the youths who were included in these previous studies and the current study, these results generally point in a

consistent direction: some boys recognize their father as a potential helper and access him, at least occasionally, when they encounter a problem.

This modest level of help seeking from their father may be explained by boys' access to other helpers, such as their mother and their friends. Boys often seek assistance from these helpers at a higher rate than from their father (Schonert-Reichl & Muller, 1996; Sears, 2008a), indicating that boys, although recognizing and sometimes accessing their father for help, often prefer to access support from other helpers. In addition, boys regularly employ alternative coping strategies, including direct problem-solving, avoidance, and distraction (Ayers et al., 1996; Nicolotti, El-Sheikh, & Whitson, 2003), which may reduce the necessity and likelihood of using help seeking as a coping strategy. Finally, boys may be using help seeking less often to the extent that they are trying to conform to the traditional masculine gender role expectation that they should handle their problems on their own (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Timlin-Scalera et al., 2003).

In contrast to Hypothesis 2, boys found their father's assistance to be more beneficial than we expected, describing it as "pretty helpful." Initially, this was surprising, given that many sons are not comfortable discussing personal issues with their father and may view him as more of a playmate than a confidante (Laursen & Collins, 2009). However, due to access to multiple potential helpers and familiarity with several coping strategies, boys may selectively approach their father for problems for which they believe their father will be most knowledgeable or helpful. For example, boys often value and respect their father's expertise about many practical problems, such as getting schoolwork completed and choosing a career or a job training program (Laursen & Collins, 2009; Smetana et al., 2006). Accessing their father for help for these

types of problems, while accessing alternative helpers or using other coping strategies for other types of problems, presumably increases the likelihood that boys' help-seeking interactions with their father are perceived as helpful.

Turning to mothers, we hypothesized that, on 4-point scale (1 = *never*, 2 = *sometimes*, 3 = *often*, 4 = *most of the time*), boys would report seeking help from their mother "often" (Hypothesis 3) and, on 4-point scale (1 = *not at all helpful*, 2 = *a little helpful*, 3 = *pretty helpful*, 4 = *very helpful*), that they would find this assistance "pretty helpful" (Hypothesis 4). Boys' rate of seeking help from their mother was lower than expected, with boys reporting, on average, that they approached their mother for help at least "sometimes" when they experienced a problem in the past month. As above, direct comparisons with previous studies cannot be made due to differences in measures used and sample characteristics. However, consistent with our results for fathers, it may be argued that the modest amount of boys' help seeking from their mother found in the present study is in line with prior findings. The two studies of adolescents' intentions of seeking help from their mother indicated that boys vary in how likely that are to seek help from their mother or that they would expect to do this sometimes (Burke & Weir, 1979; Sullivan et al., 2002). The two studies of help-seeking behaviour are consistent. Schonert-Reichl and Muller (1996) found that 50% of boys aged 13 to 18 years had accessed their mother for help with an emotional or personal problem in the past year, and Sears (2008a) reported that adolescents had sought help from their mother at least "sometimes" for a family problem and a school problem. Use of different measures and sample differences notwithstanding, together, these studies suggest that many adolescent boys recognize their mother as a potential helper and access her for help at least sometimes when they encounter a problem.

Boys may perceive their mother as a potential source of assistance in general and may be motivated to seek help from her at least sometimes because they often spend time alone and directly interacting with her, they generally report a warm relationship with her, and they may hold expectations of their mother as someone who is nurturing, supportive, and available (Larson & Richards, 1994; Sullivan et al., 2002). In such situations, boys appear to have opportunities to seek help from their mother when they have a problem. Given the presence of these opportunities, it is perhaps surprising that boys seek help from their mother only “sometimes” and not more often. However, as previously mentioned, boys may turn to a parent less often for help with a problem because they have access to multiple other potential helpers and they use range of alternative coping strategies, in part because using help seeking contradicts how they, as boys, are expected to manage problems.

Consistent with Hypothesis 4, we found that boys described the assistance provided by their mother as “pretty helpful.” This finding may stem from the close relationship, often characterized by personal conversations and self-disclosure, which many mothers and sons enjoy (Burhmester & Furman, 1987; Larson & Richards, 1994). Equipped with knowledge about her son, as well as details of a problem, a mother may be well prepared to provide useful advice or support. Alternatively, the feelings of warmth and closeness that many boys have for their mother may increase the likelihood that their mother’s advice is perceived as helpful. In summary, these findings suggest that many adolescent boys perceive seeking assistance from their father and from their mother as a viable coping strategy, and that when such assistance is sought, it is often viewed as having been useful.

## **Boys' Social-Cognitive Skills, Affective-Motivational Resources, and an Environmental Factor and Help-Seeking Behaviour from their Father and from their Mother**

Consistent with the second goal of the current study, Research Question 2 asked whether specific aspects of Newman's model of adaptive help seeking predicted the frequency with which boys had accessed their father and their mother as helpers. Results for these markers of social-cognitive skills, affective-motivational resources, and an environmental factor are discussed below.

### **Social-Cognitive Skills**

**Emotional competence.** It was hypothesised that boys' reports of more emotional competence would predict more frequent help seeking from their father and their mother (Hypotheses 5 and 8). The regression analyses revealed that emotional competence did not significantly predict boys' help-seeking behaviour from their father or from their mother. However, supplementary analyses, inspired by the moderate positive correlations between boys' reports of emotional competence and help seeking from their father and from their mother (see Tables 2 and 3), demonstrated that emotional competence is indeed important for understanding boys' help-seeking behaviour from their parents. These findings are consistent with an ability model perspective (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Boys in our study who reported greater emotional competence were better able to recognize, express, understand, and manage their personal distress, which probably assisted the initiation of the help-seeking process from their father or their mother. Given the adaptive nature of help seeking, boys' personal distress was likely lessened following such help-seeking interactions. Indeed, this is



consistent with research highlighting the positive association between emotional competence and mental wellness (Schutte et al., 2007).

As shown by supplementary analyses, our study did not find a significant relationship between boys' emotional competence and their help-seeking behaviour because emotional competence was simultaneously entered with self-disclosure in the regression analyses. Emotional competence only significantly predicted boys' help seeking from their father and their mother when entered by itself. This contribution of emotional competence to boys' help seeking from each parent was masked when emotional competence and self-disclosure were entered simultaneously in these analyses because emotional competence and self-disclosure account for some of the same variance in help seeking, to the extent that both constructs capture an adolescent's ability to perceive and understand emotions. Indeed, these two constructs were positively and moderately correlated in the current study. However, in addition to this shared variance, self-disclosure also accounts for unique variance in help seeking likely because this construct indicates that an adolescent has the necessary skills and comfort level required to go beyond the first step of the help-seeking process (i.e., problem recognition), and on to the next step in the help-seeking process which includes sharing their problem or distress with another individual.

**Self-disclosure.** It was hypothesised that boys' reports of greater self-disclosure to their father or their mother would predict more frequent help seeking from that parent (Hypotheses 5 and 8). Descriptive analyses showed strong positive correlations between self-disclosure to their father or their mother and boys' help seeking from that parent. These results suggest, as predicted, that this marker of social-cognitive skills is related to more frequent help-seeking behaviour. This expectation was confirmed by regression

analyses which showed that boys' reports of self-disclosure to their father or to their mother was a strong predictor of boys' help seeking from that parent. Moreover, supplemental analyses further supported the idea that self-disclosure is critical in understanding help seeking, showing that even when self-disclosure was entered *after* variance associated with markers of affective-motivational resources, it still significantly predicted boys' help-seeking behaviour from each parent and did so quite strongly (explaining 19% of variance for boys' help seeking from fathers and 17% of variance for boys' help seeking from mothers). Thus, self-disclosure adds predictive power beyond not only that provided by another marker of social-cognitive skills (i.e., emotional competence), but also beyond that provided by markers of affective-motivational resources.

Self-disclosure may be strongly connected to help seeking because it is arguably a part of the final step in the help-seeking process (i.e., expressing the presence of a problem and/or need for help). Self-disclosure to an informal helper (e.g., parent, friend) suggests comfort with interacting, and sharing personal and nonessential information, with that individual (Tilton-Weaver et al., 2014). In the context of informal help seeking, comfort with an individual plays an important role in helper selection, as people are more likely to seek help from others with whom they feel at ease (Rickwood & Braithwaite, 1994; Wilson & Deane, 2001). Boys in our study who reported more self-disclosure to their father or their mother likely felt more comfortable discussing personal topics with that parent and, thus, may have been more likely to identify and access that parent as a helper when they encountered problems for which they required assistance or support.

In summary, social-cognitive skills are important for predicting the frequency with which boys seek help from their father and their mother. Emotional competence facilitates problem recognition, a critical step in initiating the help-seeking process. However, this contribution is masked when emotional competence is entered simultaneously with self-disclosure in analyses predicting help-seeking behaviour because both constructs capture a youth's ability to understand emotions. Self-disclosure, in comparison, is more central to the later stages of the help-seeking process which require that individuals identify and subsequently disclose their need for assistance. As a result, it also accounts for unique variance in boys' help-seeking behaviour.

#### **Affective-Motivational Resources**

**Positive and negative relationship qualities.** As markers of affective-motivational resources, positive relationship qualities and negative relationship qualities were variables of interest. It was predicted that boys' reports of more positive relationship qualities and fewer negative relationship qualities with their father or their mother would predict more frequent help seeking from that parent (Hypotheses 6 and 9).

Despite moderate positive correlations between boys' reports of positive relationship qualities with their father and their mother and boys' reports of help seeking from their father and their mother, respectively (see Tables 2 and 3), regression analyses showed that positive relationship qualities did not significantly predict boys' help seeking from either parent. This was surprising given previous consistent findings in other studies showing children's and adolescents' feelings about a potential helper are an important affective factor in the dyadic interaction of help seeking (Rickwood et al., 2005), and that adolescents' and mothers' perceptions of greater warmth in the parent-

adolescent relationship are linked to more frequent help seeking by adolescents from that parent (Vallely & Sears, 2009). Two sets of supplementary analyses helped clarify this perplexing result.

Given the strong positive relationship between positive relationship qualities and positive past help-seeking experiences, supplementary analyses examining the associations between these two constructs and help seeking were conducted. They revealed that, if positive relationship qualities were entered into a regression analysis in the absence of positive past help-seeking experiences, boys' reports of positive relationship qualities with their father or their mother accounted for significant variance in boys' help-seeking behaviour from that parent, after first accounting for social-cognitive skills. Thus, boys' reports of more positive relationship qualities are an important correlate of their help-seeking behaviour. However, it does not contribute uniquely to the prediction of their help-seeking behaviour in the presence of positive past help-seeking experiences. This pattern may occur because positive relationship qualities is a general construct encompassing a wide array of parent-adolescent interactions, whereas positive past help-seeking experiences is a narrow construct specific to prior help-seeking interactions and therefore more directly relevant to recent help-seeking behaviour.

Supplementary analyses examining the association between positive relationship qualities and a marker of social-cognitive skills (i.e., self-disclosure) furthered our understanding of boys' help-seeking behaviour. Specifically, when positive relationship qualities were entered in regression analyses prior to markers of social-cognitive skills (i.e., self-disclosure), positive relationship qualities significantly did predict adolescent boys' help seeking from their father and their mother (see Tables 9 and 10). The self-

disclosure variable may account for some of the same variance in boys' help-seeking behaviour as the positive relationship qualities variable because boys' self-disclosure to a parent may indicate warmth and closeness in the parent-adolescent relationship. Self-disclosure to parents is more likely when adolescents report greater family cohesion and satisfaction with family relationships, and also when adolescents believe that their parents are accepting and trustworthy (Darling et al., 2006; Smetana et al., 2006; Tokić & Pećnik, 2011). As such, the significance of positive relationship qualities in predicting boys' help seeking from each parent was masked in our original hierarchical regression analyses because the powerful predictor of self-disclosure was entered first and accounted for at least some of the same variance as can be accounted for by positive relationship qualities.

Regarding negative relationship qualities, there were only modest negative correlations between boys' reports of more negative relationship qualities with their father and their mother and boys' reports of help seeking from their father and their mother, respectively (see Tables 2 and 3). Furthermore, regression analyses revealed that negative relationship qualities did not significantly predict boys' help seeking from either parent. It is possible that the negative relationship qualities variable was not a significant predictor of boys' help-seeking behaviour from their father and their mother because boys perceive negative relationship qualities to be normative in a parent-adolescent relationship, at least to a certain extent. As a result, the occurrence of these negative qualities does not disrupt the typical ways in which members of the parent-adolescent dyad interact. For example, mild to moderate conflict over everyday issues (e.g., chores, homework) is common in parent-adolescent relationships (Bibby, 2001; Smetana et al., 2003). It is also possible that boys in this study did not endorse negative

relationship qualities at high enough level to interfere with help-seeking behaviour, especially given boys' higher endorsement of other predictor variables that promote the use of help seeking.

It is notable, however, that our measure of negative relationship qualities (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985) assessed conflict and antagonism only. It may be that aspects of negative relationship qualities not measured in the current study may contribute significantly to typical interactions between boys and their father or their mother and may be associated with help seeking. For example, given that increasing independence is the key developmental task of adolescence and that well-functioning parent-adolescent dyads regularly engage in compromise and negotiation (Adams & Laursen, 2001; Smetana et al., 2004a), the degree of parent dominance could be an important negative relationship quality to measure as it may significantly interfere with adolescent help-seeking.

**Positive past help-seeking experiences.** Boys' positive past help-seeking experiences with their father or mother was also an affective-motivational resource variable of consideration. It was predicted that boys who reported more positive past help-seeking experiences with their father or their mother would report seeking help from that parent more often (Hypotheses 6 and 9). Descriptive analyses showed moderate positive correlations between the variables, and the regression analyses revealed, as expected, that boys' reports of positive past help-seeking experiences with their father or their mother significantly predicted more frequent help seeking from that parent. These results are consistent with earlier studies which demonstrated that adolescents' reports of positive past experiences seeking assistance from particular informal helpers (e.g., father, mother, female friend, male friend) predict their help-

seeking intentions and actual help-seeking behaviour in relation to that helper (MacIntyre & Sears, 2012; Sears, 2008b), and that boys' positive past help-seeking experiences with their father and their mother predicted more frequent help seeking from that parent, even after accounting for a more positive father-adolescent or mother-adolescent relationship (Sears, 2008b). In addition, we found that positive past help-seeking experiences predicted unique variance in both dependent variables beyond that accounted for by the powerful predictor self-disclosure.

The strong association between boys' positive past help-seeking experiences and their reports of help seeking from each parent likely represents boys' expectations and knowledge regarding what will occur during a help-seeking interaction with their parent as a result of their learned experience, as well as what will result from a help-seeking interaction (i.e., to what extent it will be helpful). First, boys who have had previous positive help-seeking experiences with their father or their mother would likely describe their parent as engaging in desirable and approachable (i.e., reinforcing) behaviour (e.g., listened attentively, asked appropriate questions, took the problem seriously) rather than undesirable (i.e., punishing) behaviour (e.g., overreacted, became upset, dismissed the problem). Gaining knowledge about how a parent may react during a help-seeking interaction (i.e., that they would react in desirable ways) likely increases boys' expectations that the interaction will be positive in the future. Thus, the parent with whom they have a history of positive past help-seeking experiences becomes a discriminative stimulus for approaching that parent. Indeed, this argument is in line with previous work which has shown that adolescents' positive and negative expectations about help-seeking interactions facilitate or deter their help-seeking intentions and behaviour (Sullivan et al., 2002; Wilson & Deane, 2001).

Second, boys who reported that their previous experiences seeking help from their father or their mother were more positive may have sought help more often because of possible benefits (i.e., reinforcers) they received during their previous help-seeking interactions. For example, as a result of seeking assistance from their father or their mother, boys may have received valued support, gained relief from off-loading a burden, felt more connected to their parent, and/or obtained useful assistance or advice. In these situations, boys may have gained an increased understanding of the potential benefits of help seeking and may have then extended this understanding to perceive future help-seeking interactions as potentially beneficial. This understanding, in turn, likely promoted more frequent help seeking from their parent. This perspective is consistent with prior work which has found that perceived benefits are strongly linked to children's and adolescents' help-seeking intentions and behaviour (Nelson-Le Gall, 1981; Newman, 1990; Wilson & Deane, 2001).

**Conformity to traditional masculine gender role norms.** Boys' conformity to the traditional masculine gender role norms for emotional control and self-reliance were affective-motivational resource variables of interest. It was predicted that boys who reported lower conformity to these masculine norms would engage in more frequent help seeking from their father and their mother (Hypotheses 6 and 9). Descriptive analyses showed moderate negative correlations between conformity to the masculine norms of emotional control and self-reliance with boys' help seeking from their father and their mother (see Tables 2 and 3). However, regression analyses revealed that, contrary to prediction, boys' endorsement of the emotional control and self-reliance gender role norms did not significantly predict the frequency of their help seeking from either parent.



Initially, it seemed counterintuitive that conformity to the masculine norms of emotional control and self-reliance did not significantly predict less frequent help-seeking behaviour by boys, as many central elements of help seeking (e.g., admitting when help is required, relying on others) are inconsistent with these traditional gender role norms (Mahalik et al., 2003). However, when considering the dyadic nature of the help-seeking interaction (i.e., one individual asking another individual for help), it is possible that variables which capture experiences or qualities created by the dyad itself (e.g., positive relationship qualities, positive past help-seeking experiences) are likely more powerful predictors of help seeking than variables which describe individual qualities (e.g., conformity to masculine norms) that each member brings to the dyad.

Considering boys' level of conformity to the masculine norms of emotional control and self-reliance, as well as the relationship between these two masculine norm variables and how they relate to the other predictor variables, helps to clarify why the masculine norms did not significantly predict boys' help-seeking behaviour. First, boys endorsed the emotional control and self-reliance variables at a relatively low level (i.e., the means of both variables were below the midpoint of the possible range). It is possible that boys in the current study did not endorse the masculine norms emotional control and self-reliance to a sufficiently high enough degree to interfere with their help-seeking behaviour, especially given boys' higher endorsement of other predictor variables that would promote their use of help seeking (e.g., positive past experiences seeking help). It is also possible that emotional control and self-reliance were simply not significant predictors in these regression analyses, despite moderate correlations with the dependent variables, because they have relatively strong relationships with other predictor variables which also are related to their help-seeking behaviour (see Tables 2

and 3). In particular, emotional control and self-reliance were strongly correlated with the social-cognitive variables emotional control and self-disclosure. Because these social-cognitive variables were entered into the regression equation first, they are probably accounting for at least some of the same variance in these dependent variables that the gender role norms would have accounted for if they had had the opportunity to do so. Indeed, additional supplemental analyses revealed that, if they were entered into regression analyses prior to social-cognitive skills variables, then the conformity to the masculine norms emotional control and self-reliance variables both had a negative relationship with boys' help seeking from their father and their mother. Furthermore, both significantly predicted the frequency of boys' help seeking from their father and their mother.

In summary, several of the markers of affective-motivational resources that were examined in the current study are important for understanding and predicting boys' help-seeking behaviour from their father and their mother. Based on initial and supplementary analyses, more positive relationship qualities and more positive past help-seeking experiences emerged as important correlates of the frequency with which boys seek help from their father and their mother likely because they facilitate a supportive and positive environment in which to seek assistance. In contrast, negative relationship qualities did not uniquely predict boys' help-seeking behaviour despite having significant bivariate relationships with the two dependent variables. Although this result may stem from some amount of conflict and antagonism being normative in the parent-child relationship, it is also possible that aspects of negative relationship qualities not measured in this study (e.g., dominance) may play a role in parent-adolescent help seeking. Conformity to the masculine gender norms of emotional control and self-

reliance were also not predictive of the frequency of boys' help seeking from their father or mother, despite moderate correlations with the two dependent variables. While initially surprising, the low endorsement of masculine norms by boys in this study and/or the strong relationship between the masculine norms and the other predictors in this study, particularly the social-cognitive skills variables, may account for these findings.

### **Environmental Factor**

**Coaching use of help seeking.** As markers of adolescent boys' environmental context, father coaching use of help seeking and mother coaching use of help seeking were examined. It was predicted that boys who reported more coaching by their father or their mother to use help-seeking behaviour would seek help from that parent more often (Hypotheses 7 and 10). Descriptive analyses showed moderate positive correlations between father and mother coaching use of help seeking and more frequent help seeking from that parent (see Tables 2 and 3). The regression analysis for fathers revealed that, contrary to prediction, when entered into the regression equation after markers of social-cognitive skills and affective-motivational resources, boys' reports of father coaching use of help seeking did not significantly predict more frequent help seeking from their father. However, the regression analysis for mothers revealed that, as expected, boys' reports of mother coaching use of help seeking did significantly predict more frequent help seeking by boys from their mother even after accounting for variance associated with markers of social-cognitive skills and affective-motivational resources.

It is possible that father coaching use of help seeking did not predict more frequent help-seeking behaviour by boys because many boys may not view their father as having expertise in the area of help seeking. This may be because boys do not view

their father as frequently engaging in help seeking themselves and/or because fathers may coach their sons to seek assistance from their mother, casting her as the expert in providing assistance. However, such an interpretation is somewhat at odds with boys' general responsiveness to their father's coaching and advice across a wide variety of topics (Bibby, 2001; Larson & Richards, 1994), and also is inconsistent with the moderate positive correlations found in the current study between boys' reports of father coaching use of help seeking and boys' help seeking from their father.

To better understand the lack of significant relationship between father coaching use of help seeking and the frequency of boys' help seeking from their father, supplemental analyses were performed. These analyses demonstrated that father coaching use of help seeking made a unique contribution to boys' help seeking from their father when entered by itself in the regression analysis. More remarkably, despite moderate positive correlations with the social-cognitive skills variables (see Table 2), father coaching use of help seeking also made a unique contribution to the dependent variable after controlling for variance associated with social-cognitive skills variables. The point at which father coaching use of help seeking did not account for unique variance in boys' help seeking from their father in the regression analysis was when it was entered on Step 2 along with the affective-motivational resource variables of positive relationship qualities and/or positive past help-seeking experiences. It is not surprising that father coaching use of help seeking, positive relationship qualities, and positive past help-seeking experiences account for overlapping variance in boys' help seeking behaviour given that these constructs all capture, to some extent, positive qualities or interactions in the father-son dyad. Together, these results show that father coaching use of help seeking is indeed important for understanding boys' help-seeking

behaviour from their father, likely because it encourages a family climate that is conducive to help-seeking behaviour and because boys often value their father's advice. However, the contribution of father coaching use of help seeking to the frequency of boys' help seeking from their father was masked in our original analysis because of its substantial overlap with several predictor variables that were entered before it.

Turning to mother coaching use of help seeking, as predicted and consistent with previous research (Miller et al., 1994; Vallely & Sears, 2009), this environmental factor significantly predicted more frequent help seeking by boys from their mother. Mother coaching use of help seeking may facilitate adolescent boys seeking help from their mother by enabling a mother to convey information about this form of coping. Such information could include how to approach a helper and the nature and process of help-seeking interactions. Mother coaching use of help seeking may also predict more frequent help-seeking behaviour by boys as it allows a mother to highlight the potential benefits of help seeking (e.g., reducing distress, solving a problem). Emphasizing the potential benefits of asking for help may be particularly important for adolescent boys because they often focus exclusively on the costs of help seeking and ignore potential benefits (Sears et al., 2005), and because help seeking is most likely to occur when the perceived benefits of seeking help outweigh the perceived costs associated with seeking help (Nelson-Le Gall, 1981). Finally, mother coaching use of help seeking may highlight her as an available and interested helper. This presentation may be consistent with a boy's view of his mother as someone who is likely to have the necessary expertise and skills to be an effective helper.

### **Coaching Use of Help Seeking as a Moderator**

The third goal of the current study was to evaluate parent coaching use of help seeking as a potential moderator of the relationships between parent-adolescent relationship qualities and boys' help seeking from their father and their mother. Two sets of hypotheses were created. First, we hypothesized that the relationship between boys' reports of more positive relationship qualities with their father (or mother) and more frequent help seeking from their father (or mother) would be moderated by their father's (or mother's) coaching use of help seeking, expecting that the relationship between these variables would be stronger when boys perceived their father (or mother) as coaching use of help seeking more often (Hypotheses 11 and 12). Contrary to our hypotheses, parent coaching use of help seeking did not moderate either of these relationships. Initially, this finding was surprising because we expected that parent coaching use of help seeking would create a positive climate within the family that would further enhance the frequency with which sons sought help from a parent, even when help seeking was occurring already as a function of the presence of positive qualities in the relationship between the son and his parent. However, help seeking is a dyadic experience in which the quality of the relationship between these two individuals is found consistently to be fundamental to facilitating help-seeking behaviour (e.g., Newman & Schwager, 1993; Saunders et al., 1994; Sears, 2008a). Thus, it appears that parent coaching use of help seeking is not a sufficiently powerful construct to moderate the already strong relationship between boys' reports of positive relationship qualities with their father and their mother and more frequent help seeking from that parent.

Second, we hypothesized that the relationship between boys' reports of negative relationship qualities with their father (or mother) and help seeking from their father (or

mother) would be moderated by the frequency with which their other parent coached use of help seeking, such that the relationship between the variables would be modified when boys perceived their other parent as coaching use of help seeking more often (Hypotheses 13 and 14). Consistent with Hypothesis 13, mother coaching use of help seeking did moderate the relationship between boys' reports of negative relationship qualities with their father and their frequency of help seeking from their father. As expected, when boys reported that their mothers coached them to use help seeking more often, boys' reports of fewer negative relationship qualities with their father were related to more frequent help seeking from their father. In contrast, when boys reported that their mothers coached them to use help seeking less often, boys' reports of negative relationship qualities with their father were not related to the frequency with which they sought help from their father. More frequent coaching to use help seeking by mothers may have given boys who reported fewer negative relationship qualities with their father the extra nudge they required to seek help from their father. As discussed previously, more frequent coaching use of help seeking by mothers enables them to convey knowledge about help seeking that may facilitate boys' engagement in the behaviour (e.g., strategies for approaching a potential helper, potential benefits of seeking assistance). It also may reduce boys' concerns about the help-seeking process by addressing inaccurate or unhelpful beliefs (e.g., it will be embarrassing to admit to having the problem). In the context of fewer negative relationship qualities with their father, boys may then generalize this knowledge to engage in help seeking from their father.

Contrary to Hypothesis 14, father coaching use of help seeking did not moderate the relationship between boys' reports of negative relationship qualities with their

mother and the frequency of help seeking from their mother. We proposed father coaching use of help seeking as a moderator because, as previously mentioned, fathers regularly engage in coaching or advise their son, and boys are often responsive to such advice (Bibby, 2001; Larson & Richards, 1994). We thought more frequent father coaching use of help seeking may alter the relationship between boys' reports of negative relationship qualities with their mother and the frequency with which boys seek assistance from their mother. However, as shown by our earlier supplemental analyses, although father coaching use of help seeking is an important correlate of boys' help-seeking behaviour, it is not as powerful a variable as those which better capture dyadic qualities in the father-adolescent relationship (i.e., positive relationship qualities, positive past help-seeking experiences). Such reasoning also appears to apply to negative dyadic qualities in the mother-adolescent relationship. It is also possible that, due to traditional gender norms, fathers may have limited familiarity or practice with coaching use of help seeking specifically (Larson & Richards, 1994; Mahalik, Good, & Englar-Carlson, 2003). As such, fathers' coaching of use help seeking may lack the particular expertise required (e.g., coaching that is pleasant, enthusiastic, informative) to significantly modify the relationship between boys' reports of negative relationship qualities with their mother and the frequency of boys' help seeking from their mother.

### **Implications for Newman's Model of Adaptive Help Seeking and Alternative Models of Help Seeking**

Several implications can be drawn from the current study for Newman's model of adaptive help seeking (1991, 2000) and for alternative models of help seeking. Looking first at Newman's model, two aspects of the model (i.e., social-cognitive skills and affective-motivational resources) applied very similarly to the prediction of boys'



help seeking from their father and from their mother. Turning to the first set of predictors, social-cognitive skills, Newman's contention that cognitive competences and social competencies facilitate help-seeking behaviour was supported by our findings that emotional competence, which requires specific cognitive competencies (i.e., recognizing your own thoughts, feelings, and attitudes), and self-disclosure, which requires specific cognitive competencies as well as social competencies (i.e., sharing that information with another individual), were important predictors of the frequency with which boys sought help from their father and their mother. Indeed, in the regression analyses, the block of social-cognitive skills variables emerged as the strongest predictor of boys' help-seeking behaviour, accounting for 49% of the variance in each of the dependent variables. These results highlight that individual variation in boys' ability and willingness to engage in self-reflection regarding emotions and to share their thoughts and feelings with their father and their mother are essential qualities to consider in the context of help seeking from their father and their mother. These results also suggest that because skills, by definition, can be developed and refined, it may be possible to increase the frequency with which boys seek help from their father and their mother through interventions which target specific cognitive and social competencies. Given that emotional competence and self-disclosure are skills that can generalize to a range of situations and individuals, it is likely that such efforts would also contribute to increases in the frequency with which boys would seek help from a variety of informal helpers.

Turning to the second set of predictors, Newman's (1991, 2000) contention that affective-motivational resources (e.g., attitudes, self-beliefs) relate to help-seeking behaviour was also supported in the current study. Specifically, boys' reports of more positive relationship qualities with their father or their mother, and their reports of more

positive past help-seeking experiences with their father or their mother, both predicted more frequent help seeking from that parent. Positive relationship qualities and positive past help-seeking experiences capture several elements of Newman's description of affective-motivational resources, such as boys' feelings about helpers (e.g., "My parent understood") and feelings associated with a sense of agency or control (e.g., "My parent helped me figure out what to do about my problem"). Notably, not all markers of affective-motivational resources examined were significant predictors of boys' help-seeking behaviour. This result, however, does not indicate that affective-motivational resources are trivial to our understanding of adolescents' help-seeking behaviour. Instead, given the amount of variance accounted for in the dependent variables by the social-cognitive skills variables, these results demonstrate how important positive relationship qualities and positive past help-seeking experiences really are for understanding boys' help seeking from their father and their mother. It seems that the frequency with which boys seek help from either parent is best understood by focusing on boys' individual characteristics (i.e., social and cognitive competencies), as well as interactions that currently and previously have taken place between the son and his parent. Moreover, given that help seeking is a dyadic behaviour, it is likely that a help-seeker's social-cognitive skills *and* his/her affective-motivational resources must be considered in all informal help-seeking experiences.

In contrast, the third aspect of Newman's model, environmental factors, did not apply as well to our study of boys' help-seeking behaviour, nor did it apply to the same degree to boys' help seeking from their father versus their mother. Newman's (1991, 2000) notion that characteristics of the environment in which help seeking occurs facilitate or deter help seeking was not supported when we examined boys' help seeking

from their father, but it was supported when we evaluated boys' help seeking from their mother. Regarding fathers, the environmental factor selected to predict boys' help seeking (i.e., father coaching use of help seeking) was not a significant predictor in our original analyses. However, the absence of a significant finding for father coaching use of help seeking may not necessarily imply that the larger context of adolescent boys' help seeking from their father is insignificant. It is possible that another environmental factor would significantly predict boys' help seeking from their father. For example, father modeling use of help seeking (e.g., boys seeing their father ask for assistance when necessary) may be related to their son's help-seeking behaviour. Indeed, research suggests that children and adolescents who watch their father perform particular behaviours are more likely to engage in those behaviours (Kliewer & Lewis, 1995; Kliewer et al., 1996). However, given our earlier supplemental analyses regarding the greater predictive power of markers of affective-motivational resources (i.e., positive relationship qualities, positive past help-seeking experiences) than father coaching use of help seeking, the relationship between father modeling use of help seeking (or any other environmental factor) and the frequency of boys' help seeking from their father would likely have to be very strong to account for unique variance over and above variables which capture dyadic qualities.

Regarding mothers, the environmental factor selected to predict boys' help seeking (i.e., mother coaching use of help seeking) was a significant predictor, demonstrating that environmental factors can contribute to help-seeking behaviour (i.e., more mother coaching use of help seeking predicted boys seeking help more frequently from their mother). However, our moderation analyses also showed that, in the case of help seeking from mothers, mother coaching use of help seeking can moderate the

relationship between an affective-motivational resource variable (i.e., boys' reports of negative relationship qualities with their father) and boys' help seeking from their father. These results inspire the question of whether environmental factors are best conceptualized as a predictor or as a moderator of help-seeking behaviour. In reviewing Newman's (1991, 2000) model (see Figure 1), his discussions of social-cognitive skills and affective-motivational resources are markedly more elaborate and comprehensive than are his discussions of environmental factors. Given the primacy of social-cognitive skills and affective-motivational resources for a help-seeking interaction, this imbalance makes some sense. Although there may be some situations in which environmental factors predict help-seeking behaviour (such as we found in the present study), it may be more fruitful to generally conceptualize environmental markers as moderators of powerful relationships between specific social-cognitive skills or specific affective-motivational resources and help seeking.

To expand upon our initial moderation analyses, it would be interesting to determine whether an environmental variable (e.g., mother coaching use of help seeking) could also moderate the relationship between a marker of social-cognitive skills (e.g., emotional competence) and help-seeking behaviour. For example, it is possible that the positive relationship between boys' reports of emotional competence and the frequency of boys' help seeking from their mother could be further strengthened by boys' experiences of a high level of mother coaching use of help seeking, as the coaching may provide an especially encouraging context within which to seek help. Moderating relationships for fathers are also important to explore. Given that our supplemental analyses showed that father coaching use of help seeking accounted for unique variance in the frequency with which boys' sought help from their father, even

after accounting for social-cognitive skills, it may also be interesting to determine whether father coaching use of help seeking could moderate (i.e., strengthen) the relationship between boys' emotional competence and the frequency with which they have sought help from their father. Other environmental markers for fathers, such as modeling use of help seeking, may also be useful to explore as potential moderators. Alternatively, given parenting style's strong association with many markers of adolescents' adjustment and development (e.g., Lamborn et al., 1991, Steinberg et al., 1994), it may be interesting to explore parenting style as a potential moderator of boys' help-seeking behaviour from either parent.

Overall, due to its adaptive and developmental orientation, Newman's (1991, 2000) model appears to be a useful framework for understanding the help-seeking behaviour of adolescent boys from their father and their mother for normative problems. Unlike many earlier models, which have a clinical focus and assume that underlying pathology or abnormal distress/situations are driving help-seeking behaviour (e.g., Costello et al., 1998; Srebnik et al., 1996), a model with an adaptive focus is useful for examining help seeking for normative problems, such as school transitions and managing peer and romantic relationships, because their origin stems from developmental challenges faced ubiquitously by adolescents. Further, the developmental aspect of Newman's model highlights the importance of considering relational and contextual factors as well as individual characteristics when examining help-seeking behaviour. This approach is very important given that relationship and contextual factors likely play an even larger role in children's and adolescents' help-seeking behaviour than in the help-seeking behaviour of adults because of young people's dependence on their larger social systems. Markers of the domains of Newman's model also are

flexible, so they can be modified to match a youth's developmental level. For example, although we selected mother coaching use of help seeking as an important environmental marker to consider during adolescence, different environmental markers (e.g., access to daycare provider and/or babysitter who children may choose to seek help from instead of or in addition to their parents) may be important to examine in studies with younger children.

Several implications for other models of children's and adolescents' help-seeking behaviour can be drawn from the results of the current study. First, although several existing models of youths' help-seeking process recognize the contributions of predisposing/individual characteristics (e.g., Costello et al., 1998; Srebnik et al., 1996), specific individual characteristics that are likely important across a range of situations (e.g., emotional competence, self-disclosure) have not been identified or evaluated, perhaps because previous models have focused on help seeking for emotional or mental health problems. Our results suggest that emotional competence and self-disclosure are two critical characteristics to consider, given the meaningful contribution they made to our understanding of boys' help seeking from their father and their mother. These results not only indicate that existing models of help seeking would benefit from specifically considering the role of emotional competence and self-disclosure in relation to help-seeking behaviour, but also suggest that there may be other individual characteristics that have yet to be explored which would be helpful in understanding youths' help-seeking behaviour, particularly for normative problems.

Second, existing models of help-seeking behaviour may be enhanced by routinely considering the extent to which, and how, past help-seeking experiences shape subsequent help-seeking behaviour. In the current study, boys who reported more

positive past help-seeking experiences with their father or their mother reported seeking help from that parent more often. This link between past help-seeking experiences and help-seeking behaviour may be particularly important for models of help-seeking behaviour that consider adolescents', as opposed to children's, help-seeking behaviour. By virtue of their older age, adolescents have had time and opportunities to have previous help-seeking experiences and also have access to a wider range of potential helpers. In addition, although it is possible that including past help-seeking experiences in models of help-seeking behaviour may be most beneficial for understanding help seeking from informal sources, it also may be relevant in situations of seeking help from formal sources, particularly if it is not the first time that the help seeker has sought assistance from a professional. How past experiences would compare in importance in relation to seeking help from an informal or formal helper would be interesting to evaluate.

Finally, our results illustrated the importance of separately examining boys' help-seeking behaviour from their father and their mother separately. Although we found many similarities across parents in the significant predictors of boys' help-seeking behaviour (e.g., emotional competence, self-disclosure, positive relationship qualities, positive past help-seeking experiences), we also found a significant difference: mothers' coaching use of help seeking predicted more frequent help-seeking behaviour by boys from mothers, whereas fathers' coaching use of help seeking did not predict boys' help seeking from fathers. In addition, mothers' coaching use of help seeking moderated the association between boys' reports of fewer negative relationship qualities with fathers and more frequent help seeking from fathers, whereas fathers' coaching use of help seeking did not moderate the relationship between these variables for mothers. These

differences would not have been detected if boys' help seeking from parents as a collective group rather than from fathers and from mothers had been examined. This approach is supported by family systems and feminist theories which assert that fathering and mothering are distinct in terms of processes and meanings and, as a result, convergent behavioural measures must be employed for each parent to understand potential differences between them (Palkovitz, Trask, & Adamsons, 2014). Further, even researchers who refute the notion that dimensions of parenting for fathers and mothers should be conceptualized differently (e.g., Fagan, Day, Lamb, & Cabrera, 2014) argue that there are methodological and conceptual advantages to having common parenting measures for both fathers and mothers, such as identifying potential cultural differences in gendered parenting or gender differences in some aspects of parenting but not others. Notably, although there seems to be agreement that parallel measures are advisable for assessing the behavioural aspects of fathering and mothering, disputes remain about how to best assess the cognitive and affective aspects of fathering and mothering (Fagan et al., 2014; Palkovitz et al., 2014).

Overall, the current study revealed that Newman's (1991, 2000) model of adaptive help seeking is suitable and useful for studying evaluations of adolescents' help-seeking behaviour within a family context for normative problems. Results from the current study can be used to inform modifications to existing models, such as highlighting the importance of including key individual characteristics, such as emotional competence and self-disclosure, as predictors of help-seeking behaviour, as well as demonstrating the necessity of considering past help-seeking experiences with a specific helper when predicting help seeking from that helper. In addition, our results show the value of examining youths' help seeking from their father and their mother



separately as this leads to a greater understanding of adolescent boys' help-seeking experiences with both parents and of potentially distinct meanings and processes of fathering and mothering.

### **Implications for Prevention and Coping Interventions**

Findings from the present study also can be used to inform prevention and intervention programs aimed at promoting adolescent boys' use of adaptive help seeking. In order to maximize the prevention of undue distress, it is important to proactively target the coping skills of adolescents before the stress associated with experiencing normative problems increases to a problematic level. Such proactive efforts can be accomplished through universal school programs targeting the development and refinement of adolescents' coping strategies and through efforts by parents at home. There has been a trend towards promoting healthy social and emotional development in all students, resulting in the construction and implementation of several school-based programs focused on fostering healthy adolescent coping behaviours in several countries, including Canada (e.g., FRIENDS for Life, Helping Adolescents Cope, and The Best of Coping) (Barrett, Farrell, Ollendick, & Dadds, 2006; Frydenberg et al., 2004; Hayes & Morgan, 2005). These programs have resulted in increased use of adaptive coping strategies, including help seeking, in clinical and nonclinical samples of adolescents (Carter, 2010; Pisani et al., 2012).

An example of a promising program is the Helping Adolescents Cope program (Hayes & Morgan, 2005). It is a school-based prevention program which utilizes a cognitive-behavioural framework to teach adolescents effective coping strategies for managing stressors. The program consists of 16 sessions that are presented by a school counsellor twice a week for 8 weeks. It was designed to be delivered to a group of 8 to

10 adolescents between the ages of 12 and 14 years. The first 10 sessions consist of psychoeducation and skill-building modules. Topics include normalizing feelings, managing emotions, naming and modifying thoughts, planning fun activities, meeting and making friends, assertiveness, and setting goals. Sessions 11 to 14 are focused on practicing skills like problem-solving and asking trusted others for help, and sessions 15 and 16 focus on relapse prevention by reviewing skills learned and setting realistic expectations for managing stress in the future. This program was found to significantly reduce participants' depressive symptom scores, reliance on unproductive means of coping, and overall level of reported problems. Moreover, the majority of adolescents reported enjoying and benefiting from participating in the program, responses which were echoed by these adolescents' parents (Hayes & Morgan, 2005).

Although the skills being taught in the Helping Adolescents Cope program address some social and cognitive competencies, given our finding regarding the primacy of emotional competence and self-disclosure for predicting help-seeking behaviour, those sessions focusing on normalizing and managing emotions may benefit from being broadened to include sections on the identification of emotions and use of self-disclosure. Boys could be assigned emotional competence and self-disclosure "homework" in which they are asked to monitor and record their emotions and to self-disclose information to a potential helper about an innocuous topic. The following sessions could briefly review and reinforce emotional identification and self-disclosure, address any concerns or issues, and subsequently assign more in-depth self-disclosure homework. Given that parents are a key resource for boys throughout adolescence, programs like Helping Adolescents Cope should position parents as a potential helper during these interventions. To accompany this module, handouts to parents which

instruct them on how to position themselves as an available listener and how to react in a positive and constructive manner when boys talk about emotions and self-disclose information would be beneficial.

Given our findings showing that positive relationship qualities and positive past help-seeking experiences with parents are key to predicting the frequency with which boys seek help from their father and their mother, a supplemental “parent” module for *Helping Adolescents Cope*, attended by fathers and mothers, also would be valuable. This module could inform parents about the link between the quality of an adolescent’s relationship with their parent and their engagement in help seeking from that parent and encourage parents to create and maintain a positive relationship with their adolescent by offering relevant suggestions and psychoeducation (e.g., balancing responsiveness and demandingness; accommodating and supporting adolescents’ increasing need and desire for independence) through teaching, handouts, and role-plays. In addition, the module should encourage and support parents’ attempts to make each help-seeking interaction with their adolescent as positive as possible. This could be done by instructing parents to present themselves as open and caring helpers who take their son’s problem seriously and who are willing to work to reduce his distress and resolve the issue. Parents who struggle with communication skills or active listening in particular may benefit from additional problem-solving communication training or mindful parenting training with an external clinician or counsellor. Such training is associated with lasting positive changes in communication and problem-solving skills for parents and adolescents and decreases the level of conflict between parents and adolescents (Bögels & Restifo, 2014; Soltys & Littlefield, 2008).

Finally, our results found partial support for the importance of parent coaching use of help seeking, which can be used to modify a parent module of Helping Adolescents Cope or alternative community or school programs aimed at increasing adolescents' use of adaptive coping strategies. Program instructors could provide parents with specific instructions on how to coach use of help seeking as well as opportunities to role-play coaching with other group members. Group members could then use these role-plays to discuss what "good" coaching entails (e.g., tone of voice, body posture, encouraging versus demanding language). Given that father coaching use of help seeking was correlated with but not a significant predictor of boys' help-seeking behaviour, additional attention could be focused on ensuring that fathers are providing "good" coaching to their youths (e.g., coaching that is fun, enthusiastic, helpful) with respect to using help seeking as well as providing this information in alternative ways (e.g., modeling help-seeking behaviour).

These results can also help inform psychologists and mental health professionals who work with adolescent boys and wish to increase boys' use of an adaptive coping strategy in an informal context (i.e., help seeking from their parents). Specifically, given our findings regarding the powerful relationship between boys' reports of self-disclosure to a parent and boys' help seeking from that parent, it may be valuable for mental health professionals to coach boys to gradually increase the breadth and depth of their self-disclosure to a parent through gradual exposure. Any maladaptive cognitions boys may hold about help seeking from their father or mother could be explored and addressed through cognitive restructuring techniques. In addition, for boys who express ambivalence regarding seeking assistance from their father or their mother, motivational interviewing techniques could be employed. These techniques may be particularly

important for adolescent boys, given the tendency for boys to focus on costs associated with help seeking and to overlook potential benefits (Sears et al., 2005). In addition, given our findings regarding the significance of emotional competence in predicting the frequency of boys' help seeking from their father and their mother, psychoeducation to facilitate boys' recognition, understanding, and management of emotions presented within a cognitive-behavioural framework may also be beneficial.

In addition to individual intervention with adolescent boys, our findings regarding the primacy of positive relationship qualities, positive past help-seeking experiences, and parent coaching use of help seeking suggest family/parent intervention may also help facilitate boys' help seeking from their father and their mother. Encouraging fathers and mothers to create positive relationships with their son (i.e., relationships characterized by high levels of warmth and structure), be receptive, attentive, and responsive helpers, and explicitly encourage their adolescent to seek help from them when they encounter difficulties would also promote boys' help-seeking behaviour. If an adolescent's father or mother is reluctant to position themselves as a willing and interested helper, despite motivational interviewing techniques, it may be advisable for mental health professionals to explore other potential informal helpers (e.g., grandparents, older siblings) who could help construct positive help-seeking experiences for the adolescent.

### **Limitations**

The findings of the current study must be considered in the context of several limitations. First, our sample consisted of adolescent boys who were predominately Caucasian and attending Grades 9 through 11 in one New Brunswick community. These results may not generalize to boys who are from different cultural backgrounds (e.g.,

collectivistic cultures which emphasize group goals above those of individuals), are younger or older, do not attend a public high school, or are living in large urban areas. For example, for boys growing up in collectivistic cultures, help seeking from their father and from their mother may occur more often than was reported here. Previous work has found that, within various collectivist cultures, seeking assistance outside the family may be viewed as reflecting poorly on the family. As such, every attempt is made to resolve problems within the family before getting outside help (Cauce et al., 2002; Lau & Takeuchi, 2001).

Second, only survey data were collected. Although surveys are regarded as an efficient method of capturing many individuals' perspectives, methodologies which elicit greater depth and individuality in participants' responses (e.g., via face-to-face or telephone interviews, or use of open-ended questions) may provide important qualitative information. For example, interviews with boys may allow for a greater understanding of the current study's somewhat surprising finding regarding boys' low endorsement of conformity to the masculine norms emotional control and self-reliance. Boys could be asked to elaborate on their views of the masculine norms emotional control and self-reliance, including whether or not they view such norms as central to their identity or stage of development (or if they ever have been) as well as how such norms may relate to their help-seeking behaviour. Interviews would also provide boys an opportunity to elaborate on why they choose to seek help from their father or their mother and what factors they view as most relevant to their help-seeking decisions.

Overall, our measures appeared to work well to predict boys' help seeking from their father and their mother, and it is generally appropriate to use parallel measures to assess the parenting behaviours of fathers and mothers (Fagan et al., 2014; Palkovitz et

al., 2014). However, this approach may obscure potentially distinct meanings and processes of fathering and mothering. As a result, our study may have benefited from also assessing affective and cognitive components of boys' experiences with their father and with their mother. For example, although boys reported similar levels of positive past help-seeking experiences with their father and their mother, we do not know whether boys' affective experience of these past interactions with their father and their mother differ. It is possible that, because many boys view their father as a companion or a playmate and their mother as a confidant or regular source of support (Bibby, 2001; Larson & Richards, 1994), positive past help-seeking experiences with a father may be particularly emotionally striking whereas positive past help-seeking experiences with a mother may be viewed as normative and thus have less emotional significance. Correspondingly, although boys reported similar levels of father coaching use of help seeking and mother coaching use of help seeking, we do not know if the boys viewed father coaching and mother coaching use of help seeking as equally effective or well executed. Assessing such cognitive components may have enhanced our understanding of this variable and highlighted potential differences in this aspect of fathering and mothering.

Finally, data were collected from only one member of an exchange that by nature is dyadic. Thus, the views of the fathers and the mothers on whom boys reported were not taken into account. As a result, we do not know whether fathers' and mothers' responses on the predictor variables would be consistent with those reported by boys. For example, perhaps fathers' and mothers' reports of positive relationship qualities would have been higher than those reported by boys. Indeed, previous work regarding the "closeness gap" during adolescence suggests that this may be the case, particularly

for some fathers (Larson & Richards, 1994). If a closeness gap was found, it would be fascinating to examine its relationship to boys' help-seeking behaviour. Thus, collecting data from each parent would have facilitated a richer examination of the dyadic predictor variables and their association with help-seeking behaviour. Collecting data from each parent as well as from their son would also have reduced the risk of common method variance. Our study is vulnerable to this threat, as boys provided both the predictor and the criterion variables and may have strived to provide consistent responses. One outcome may have been that the relationships found between the variables were inflated (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003).

### **Directions for Further Research**

The results of the current study support several directions for further research on the nature and predictors of adolescent boys seeking help from their father and their mother. First, given that self-disclosure was the predictor variable that accounted for the most variance in boys' reports of how often they sought help from their father and from their mother, it is important for future studies to examine this marker of social-cognitive skills with greater specificity. In the current study, self-disclosure was measured by the Self-Disclosure Index (SDI; Miller, Berg, & Archer, 1983), which assesses how much an individual self-discloses about a variety of topics (e.g., personal habits; deepest feelings); however, the SDI does not differentiate between different aspects of self-disclosure (e.g., frequency, breadth, depth). Further exploration of multiple facets of self-disclosure and their relationship to help-seeking behaviour is required. It also would be interesting to evaluate the relative importance of these characteristics to predicting boys' help seeking from their father and their mother. For example, boys may be particularly likely to help seek from their father if they have frequent, but not in-depth,



self-disclosure with him across a broad range of topics, whereas boys may be particularly likely to seek help from their mother if they engage in in-depth self-disclosure with her about topics. Alternatively, perhaps the depth of a youth's self-disclosure is especially important for help seeking from fathers and from mothers given that help seeking often involves individuals revealing personal information that is distressing or problematic (Gourash, 1978; Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). More research is required to examine these possibilities.

Follow-up research regarding the role of gender norms in predicting boys' help-seeking behaviour also would be valuable. Contrary to previous studies (e.g., Sears et al., 2009; Timlin-Scalera et al., 2003), we found that boys' conformity to the masculine norms emotional control and self-reliance did not significantly predict how often they sought help from their father or their mother. As previously mentioned, future research may benefit from interviewing boys about their conformity to the masculine norms emotional control and self-reliance to gain a greater understanding of how boys view masculine norms in relation to themselves and how they view masculine norms in relation to help seeking. Interviews could also shed light on how the methodology used may be associated with boys' endorsement of masculine norms and/or the connection with boys' reports of help seeking. In the current study, it is possible that the use of anonymous surveys reduced boys' need to assert their masculinity. Only interview studies have been used previously to evaluate a connection between boys' help seeking from their parents and their conformity to masculine norms (e.g., Lindsey et al., 2006; Timlin-Scalera et al., 2003). It is possible that high school aged boys may feel pressure to present a masculine image during an interview with a stranger whereas no such pressure is felt when completing an anonymous survey. To assess this possibility, it

would be fascinating to complete a parallel project using interviews, in part to examine whether adolescent boys' conformity to masculine norms would be higher and/or would be significantly associated with their reports of help seeking from their father and their mother.

Observations of adolescent boys and their parents would be helpful to expand upon our findings that mothers' coaching use of help seeking significantly predicted more frequent help-seeking behaviour by boys from their mother whereas fathers' coaching use of help seeking did not significantly predict boys' help-seeking behaviour. For example, observational research in which fathers and mothers are asked to enact scenarios with their sons in which they coach their son's use of help seeking could reveal nuances associated with each parent's behaviour that are particularly important for promoting their son's use of help seeking (e.g., the breadth and depth of information provided about help seeking; how the information is presented). It could be, for example, that due to traditional gender norms, fathers may have limited familiarity or practice with coaching use of help seeking and, as such, father coaching use of help seeking may be observed as lacking critical information or enthusiasm when it is done. In contrast, mothers may have substantial familiarity or practice with coaching use of help seeking. Therefore, mother coaching use of help seeking may be done in a way that is observed to be particularly thorough or supportive. Further studies could also create lab based challenge tasks of increasing difficulty for adolescents, while letting adolescents know that they can discuss approaches to the problem with either parent. Assessing which parent the adolescent selects (if any), why the adolescent selects that parent, and how objectively and subjectively helpful the parent's coaching was for the

adolescent would also expand upon our knowledge of potential differences in father and mother coaching use of help seeking.

Finally, future studies should extend the current research by examining the applicability of Newman's model (1991, 2000) to girls' help-seeking behaviour from their father and their mother. Overall, the model would likely be promising in that regard since it has been used successfully to predict boys' help-seeking behaviour from their father and their mother here and to predict girls' help-seeking behaviour from their best friend and a romantic partner previously (Murphy, 2008). Furthermore, it is likely that these three domains of Newman's model will be useful given the contributions they have made already and given that prior research has identified individual, relational, and contextual variables that are associated with how often girls seek help from their parents (Boldero & Fallon, 1995; Schonert-Reichl & Muller, 1996). Although we would expect there to be many similarities in the predictors of boys' and girls' help-seeking behaviour, it seems likely that some specific markers of these three domains of Newman's model may differ for boys and for girls. For example, negative relationship qualities may significantly predict girls' help-seeking behaviour from parents because girls place a particularly high value on relationships and relationship qualities during adolescence (Brkovic, Keresteš & Levpušček, 2014; Larson & Richards, 1994). In contrast, parent coaching use of help seeking may not predict girls' help-seeking behaviour because girls, unlike boys, often recognize the benefits of help seeking and routinely ask for assistance from many informal helpers (Schonert-Reichl & Muller, 1996; Sears et al., 2005). As a result, external encouragement to engage in help seeking may not further enhance the frequency of girls' behaviour because they are already engaging in this behaviour at such a high level.

## **Conclusion**

Help seeking is a normative coping strategy that involves turning to other individuals for advice, support, or assistance (Gourash, 1978; Rickwood & Brathwaite, 1994). The current study used Newman's (1991, 2000) model of adaptive help seeking as a framework for understanding the frequency with which adolescent boys utilize their father and their mother for assistance and for identifying predictors of this behaviour in relation to fathers and mothers. This study found that adolescent boys sometimes access their father and their mother for help and, when such assistance is sought, it is often perceived as having been useful. Consistent with Newman's model, markers of social-cognitive skills, markers of affective-motivational resources, and an environmental factor were associated with how often boys reported seeking help from each parent. These results demonstrated that multiple markers of Newman's three domains in his model are relevant for predicting adolescent boys' help seeking from their father and from their mother for normative problems, and that some of these factors work in interaction with one another. Finally, the current study also demonstrated that Newman's model of adaptive help seeking which was developed and has been used successfully in research on children's and adolescents' help seeking from peers can be successfully applied to the family context.

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## Appendix A

### Information Letter for Parents and Adolescents

May 7, 2014

Dear Parents and Adolescents:

I am a Ph.D. student studying clinical psychology at the University of New Brunswick. Dr. Heather Sears and I are interested in understanding adolescents' experiences seeking help from their mothers and their fathers. We plan to evaluate several factors that we think will be related to how often youths turn to a parent with a problem. Because we expect that some factors will be the same and other factors will be different for boys and girls, we would like to have both boys *and* girls participate in our research.

For our current project, we are asking adolescents at your school to complete an *anonymous* survey during one class period. The survey contains background information questions (e.g., youth's age, parent's occupation) and questions about how often youths turn to their father and their mother for help, how they view and express emotions, how they see their relationship with each parent, and about the advice their father and their mother gives them to help them manage problems. Boys will also be asked about how often they share information about themselves, how their father and their mother have responded to help seeking in the past, and how important it is that they behave in ways expected of boys. Girls will also be asked about how often they also go to a female friend for help with problems and how they see their relationship with that friend.

Before the surveys are distributed, adolescents will be encouraged to ask questions about the project and they will be asked to read and sign a consent form. Their decision to participate or not in this study will have no effect on their grades or school placement. If they opt to participate, adolescents may refuse to answer any item in the survey and they may withdraw from the study at any time. When the surveys are completed, signed consent forms will be entered into one of multiple draws for a \$10 gift card. The expected chance of winning a gift card is about 1/25. All information collected will be confidential and the background information cannot be used to identify individual participants. Completed surveys will be stored in a locked research room and will be identified only by a code number. Signed consent forms will not be stored with the surveys. A summary of the results will be distributed to the school district, the school principal, and any interested parents and adolescents when it is available.

This research project has been approved by officials at the school district and your school principal; it is also on file with the University of New Brunswick Research Ethics Board (REB#2013-101). If you or your parent(s) has any questions before you decide whether or not to participate in this research, please contact me at b.robinson@unb.ca or Dr. Heather Sears at hsears@unb.ca or (506) 458-7122. You are also welcome to contact Dr. Daniel Voyer, Chair of the Psychology Department Ethics Committee, if you have questions or concerns (506) 453-4974; voyer@unb.ca). If a parent does not wish for

their adolescent to participate in this study, they may use the above contact information to notify me or Dr. Sears, or they may contact your school principal.

Thank you for considering this request. The information gathered will help us identify factors that are important for boys' and girls' decisions to go to their parents for help; some of the data will also be used to complete my Ph.D. thesis.

Sincerely,

Brett Robinson, B.A., Ph.D. Candidate

## Appendix B

### Adolescents' Consent Form

I understand that Brett Robinson and Dr. Heather Sears of the Department of Psychology at the University of New Brunswick are conducting a survey study examining youths' experiences seeking help from their mothers and their fathers and factors that are related to these experiences. If I agree to participate in this research, I understand that I will be asked to complete an *anonymous* survey at school during one class period. The survey contains background information questions and questions about how often youths turn to their father and their mother for help, how adolescents view and express emotions, how adolescents see their relationship with each parent, and about the advice fathers and mothers give to help their adolescents manage problems. Boys will also be asked about how often they share information about themselves, how their fathers and their mothers have responded to help seeking in the past, and how important it is that they behave in ways expected of boys. Girls will also be asked about how often they also go to a female friend for help with problems and how they see their relationship with that friend.

I also understand that my decision to participate or not in this study will have no effect on my grades or school placement; and that if I choose to participate, I may refuse to answer any item in the survey and I can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. After the surveys are collected, I will receive an information sheet that describes the study in more detail, and my consent form will be entered into one of multiple draws for a \$10.00 gift card with an expected chance of winning being about 1/25.

Finally, I understand that all information collected during the study will be confidential, and that the background information cannot be used to identify individual participants. Completed survey booklets will be stored in a locked research room and will be identified only by a code number. Signed consent forms will **not** be stored with the surveys. School district officials and the school principal will receive a summary of the results when available. A summary of the results will also be available to me if I request one below. This summary will report on groups of adolescents only and not on specific individuals.

---

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read and understood the information above and agree to participate in this survey study.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have delivered the Information Letter for Parents and Adolescents to my parent/guardian giving them the opportunity to learn about this research project.

Youth's Name (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Youth's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I wish to receive a copy of the summary of results when it becomes available.

Mailing or E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix C

### Debriefing Form

Turning to others for support and assistance, also known as help seeking, is one of many ways that adolescents manage problems. It can help reduce stress and prevent future difficulties. Despite these benefits, many boys and girls are reluctant to seek help from other people, including their parents. Parents, however, are key sources of support and advice for adolescents, and adolescents are more likely to ask their parents for help when they are experiencing family, school, or health problems, or when they require expertise to manage a problem. Few studies have looked at adolescents' experiences seeking help from their parents separately for their father and their mother. We developed this study to learn about factors that are related to how often adolescent boys and girls seek help from their father and their mother.

We are interested in how often you go to your father and/or your mother for help and what factors predict this behaviour. This research will help us answer multiple questions: (1) How often do boys and girls go to their father and their mother for help with problems? (2) Does how adolescents view and express emotions predict how often boys or girls go to a parent for help? (3) Are positive and negative qualities of the relationship between an adolescent and his/her father (and mother) linked to how often a youth turns to a parent for help? (4) Is a father's or mother's advice about how to solve problems related to how often boys or girls seek help from that parent?

Also, because there are some differences in boys' and girls' experiences seeking help from a parent, we are looking at some unique questions for boys and for girls. For boys, is how their father or their mother responded to their problems in the past related to how often boys ask them for help? And are boys' ideas about how important it is to behave in ways expected of boys related to help seeking? For girls, does help seeking from a best female friend intersect with help seeking from a parent?

We hope that this study will help us understand factors that are related to how often boys and girls seek help from their father and their mother. Thank you for participating in our study and for contributing to our understanding of this topic.

Sometimes adolescents would like to talk to someone about a problem, but they may not know who to approach. The following is a list of services that are available to adolescents who are living in and around your community. If you, a friend, or a family member could use some assistance or would like someone to talk to, one of the resources below may be able to help.

Kids Help Phone: A toll-free, 24-hour, bilingual and anonymous phone counselling, referral and Internet service for children and youth across Canada.

Phone: 1-800-668-6868

Email: [info@kidshelpphone.ca](mailto:info@kidshelpphone.ca)

**CHIMO:** A confidential provincial crisis phone line that is accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to all residents of New Brunswick.

Phone: 1-800-667-5005

Email: [chimo1@nb.aibn.com](mailto:chimo1@nb.aibn.com)

**Saint John Community Mental Health Services:** Mental health services for children, youth and adults, including prevention, assessment, treatment, rehabilitation, crisis intervention, and support.

Phone: 506-658-3737

Website: <http://en.horizonnb.ca/home/facilities-and-services/facilities/saint-john-community-mental-health-services.aspx>

## Appendix D

### Demographic Information

1. I am \_\_\_\_\_ female \_\_\_\_\_ male (Please check one)
2. I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old.
3. What school do you attend? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What grade are you in? \_\_\_\_\_
5. With whom do you live right now (please circle **one**):
  - a. mother and father
  - b. mother and stepfather
  - c. father and stepmother
  - d. mother only
  - e. father only
  - f. mother half the time and father half the time
  - g. mother and mother
  - h. father and father
  - i. someone other than a parent (e.g., a grandparent(s), group home, friend)
  - j. on my own
6. My mother/stepmother completed (circle **one**)
  - a. elementary school
  - b. high school
  - c. community college, technical school
  - d. university
  - e. I don't know
7. Is your mother/stepmother employed right now? **NO    YES**

If **YES**, what job does she do (e.g., cashier, elementary school teacher, lawyer)?  
Please tell us what job she does (e.g., nurse), not where she works (e.g., the hospital).

---
8. My father/stepfather completed (circle **one**)
  - a. elementary school
  - b. high school
  - c. college, technical school
  - d. university
  - e. I don't know

9. Is your father/stepfather employed right now? **NO** **YES**

If **YES**, what job does he do (e.g., scaler, sawyer, high school teacher, accountant)?

Please tell us what job he does (e.g., sales clerk) not where he works (e.g., Canadian Tire).

---

## Appendix E

### Help-Seeking Behaviour (Adapted from Ayers et al., 1996, 2002)

Sometimes teenagers have problems that make them feel stressed or upset. When this happens, they think or do many different things to help make their situation better or to make themselves feel better. Please tell us how much you thought about or did each of the different things listed below to try and make things better or to make yourself feel better when you had a problem during the past month. There are no right or wrong answers, just mark how often *you usually* did each thing in order to solve your problems or make yourself feel better *during the past month*.

**When you had a problem in the past month, you....**

1. FATHER	Never	Sometimes	Often	Most of the Time
told your father about what made you feel the way you did.	1	2	3	4
talked with your father about what you would like to happen.	1	2	3	4
figured out what you could do by talking with your father.	1	2	3	4
talked with your father about your feelings.	1	2	3	4

**Is your father helpful when you turn to him with a problem? (please circle one)**

Not at all helpful      A little helpful      Pretty helpful      Very helpful

**\*Boys completed an identical set of the above items with reference to their mother.**

## Appendix F

### Emotional Competence: The Emotional Intelligence Scale (Schutte et al., 1998)

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>				<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1. I know when to speak about my personal problems to others.	1	2	3	4	5
2. When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I expect that I will do well on most things I try.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Other people find it easy to confide in me.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people.*	1	2	3	4	5
6. Some of the major events in my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important.	1	2	3	4	5
7. When my mood changes, I see new possibilities.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I am aware of my emotions as I experience them.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I expect good things to happen.	1	2	3	4	5

11. I like to share my emotions with others.	1	2	3	4	5
12. When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I arrange events others enjoy.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I seek out activities that make me happy.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others.	1	2	3	4	5
17. When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me.	1	2	3	4	5
18. By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I know why my emotions change.	1	2	3	4	5
20. When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I have control over my emotions.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them.	1	2	3	4	5

23. I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I compliment others when they have done something well.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send.	1	2	3	4	5
26. When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself.	1	2	3	4	5
27. When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
28. When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail.*	1	2	3	4	5
29. I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I help other people feel better when they are down.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles.	1	2	3	4	5
32. I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice.	1	2	3	4	5
33. It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do.*	1	2	3	4	5

\* Item is reverse coded



## Appendix G

### Self-Disclosure: The Self-Disclosure Index (Adapted from Miller et al., 1983)

Please indicate below how much you usually discuss each of the following items with your **FATHER**.

	<b>Discuss not at all</b>				<b>Discuss fully and completely</b>
1. My personal habits	0	1	2	3	4
2. Things I have done which I feel guilty about	0	1	2	3	4
3. Things I wouldn't do in public	0	1	2	3	4
4. My deepest feelings	0	1	2	3	4
5. What I like and dislike about myself	0	1	2	3	4
6. What is important to me in life	0	1	2	3	4
7. What makes me the person I am	0	1	2	3	4
8. My worst fears	0	1	2	3	4
9. Things I have done which I am proud of	0	1	2	3	4
10. My close relationships with other people	0	1	2	3	4

**\*Boys also completed an identical set of the above items with reference to their mother.**

## Appendix H

### Positive and Negative Qualities of the Parent-Adolescent Relationship: Network of Relationships Inventory-Social Provisions Version (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985)

We would like you to answer the following questions about your father and then a second time about your mother. Sometimes the answers for different people may be the same but sometimes they may be different.

1. How much free time do you spend with this person?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

2. How much do you and this person get upset with or mad at each other?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

3. How much does this person teach you how to do things that you don't know?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

4. How much do you and this person get on each other's nerves?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

5. How much do you talk about everything with this person?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

6. How much do you help this person with things she/he can't do by her/himself?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

7. How much does this person like or love you?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

8. How much does this person treat you like you're admired and respected?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

9. How sure are you that this relationship will last no matter what?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

10. How much do you play around and have fun with this person?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

11. How much do you and this person disagree and quarrel?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

12. How much does this person help you figure out or fix things?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

13. How much do you and this person get annoyed with each other's behaviour?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

14. How much do you share your secrets and private feelings with this person?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

15. How much do you protect and look out for this person?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

16. How much does this person really care about you?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

17. How much does this person treat you like you're good at many things?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

18. How sure are you that your relationship will last in spite of fights?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

19. How often do you go places and do enjoyable things with this person?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

20. How much do you and this person argue with each other?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

21. How much does this person help you when you need to get something done?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

22. How much do you and this person hassle or nag one another?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

23. How much do you talk to this person about things that you don't want others to know?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

24. How much do you take care of this person?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

25. How much does this person have a strong feeling of affection (loving or liking) towards you?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

26. How much does this person like or approve of the things you do?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

27. How sure are you that your relationship will continue in the years to come?

	<b>Little or None</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	<b>Extremely Much</b>	<b>The Most</b>
Father	1	2	3	4	5
Mother	1	2	3	4	5

## Appendix I

### Positive Past Help-Seeking Experiences (Adapted from Sears, 2008b)

**Thinking about times when you have turned to YOUR FATHER with a problem,** please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement below. Give the response that most accurately describes your experience when you have gone to **YOUR FATHER** with a problem.

<i>When I have gone to my FATHER with a problem, he...</i>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Disagree Nor Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1. listened to me when I told him how I felt.	SD	D	N	A	SA
2. did not take me seriously when I spoke to him.*	SD	D	N	A	SA
3. helped me figure out what to do about my problem.	SD	D	N	A	SA
4. got angry with me when I told him about my situation.*	SD	D	N	A	SA
5. made fun of me for having the problem.*	SD	D	N	A	SA
6. understood.	SD	D	N	A	SA
7. overreacted; he made the situation a bigger deal than it was.*	SD	D	N	A	SA
8. knew how to help me with the problem.	SD	D	N	A	SA
9. did not say much when I told him about my problem.*	SD	D	N	A	SA

\* Item is reverse coded

**\*Boys completed an identical set of the above items with reference to their mother.**



## Appendix J

### Conformity to Traditional Masculine Gender Role Norms: Emotional Control and Self-Reliance Subscales (Mahalik et al., 2003)

**Thinking about your own actions, feelings and beliefs**, please indicate how much **you personally agree or disagree with each statement** by circling **SD** for "Strongly Disagree", **D** for "Disagree", **A** for "Agree", or **SA** for "Strongly agree" to the left of the statement. There are no right or wrong responses to the statements. You should give the responses that most accurately describe your personal actions, feelings and beliefs. It is best if you respond with your first impression when answering.

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1.	It is best to keep your emotions hidden	SD	D	A	SA
2.	I hate asking for help <sup>a</sup>	SD	D	A	SA
3.	I should take every opportunity to show my feelings*	SD	D	A	SA
4.	Feelings are important to show*	SD	D	A	SA
5.	I love to explore my feelings with others*	SD	D	A	SA
6.	I ask for help when I need it <sup>a*</sup>	SD	D	A	SA
7.	I bring up my feelings when talking to others*	SD	D	A	SA
8.	I never share my feelings	SD	D	A	SA
9.	Asking for help is a sign of failure <sup>a</sup>	SD	D	A	SA
10.	I like to talk about my feelings*	SD	D	A	SA
11.	I never ask for help <sup>a</sup>	SD	D	A	SA
12.	I tend to keep my feelings to myself	SD	D	A	SA
13.	I am not ashamed to ask for help <sup>a*</sup>	SD	D	A	SA
14.	I tend to share my feelings*	SD	D	A	SA
15.	It bothers me when I have to ask for help <sup>a</sup>	SD	D	A	SA
16.	I hate it when people ask me to talk about my feelings	SD	D	A	SA
17.	I prefer to stay unemotional	SD	D	A	SA

<sup>a</sup> Item on self-reliance subscale

\*Item is reverse coded

## Appendix K

### Parent Coaching Use of Help Seeking (Adapted from Miller et al., 1994)

Fathers and mothers suggest many different things to help their children adjust to upsetting situations. Also, the types of things a father or mother recommends depends upon his/her unique knowledge of his/her child and the situation. I would like you to indicate how much **YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER** has **TYPICALLY** discouraged or encouraged **YOU** to use each of the following strategies to adjust in upsetting situations.

How much has **YOUR FATHER TYPICALLY** discouraged or encouraged **YOU** to do the following things when **YOU** are upset?

	<b>Strongly discouraged</b>	<b>Mildly discouraged</b>	<b>Neither discouraged nor encouraged</b>	<b>Mildly encouraged</b>	<b>Strongly encouraged</b>
1. Ask him or your mother for help in figuring out what to do.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Tell him or your mother how you feel about the problem.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Tell an adult other than him or your mother what you want them to do.	1	2	3	4	5

4. Talk about your feelings with an adult other than him or your mother.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Tell him or your mother how he/she could help you solve the problem.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Talk with an adult, other than him or your mother who could help you solve the problem.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Tell a friend about what made you feel the way you did.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Talk with a friend about what you would like to have happen.	1	2	3	4	5

9. Tell him or your mother how you feel.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Talk with an adult other than him or your mother about how you feel.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Figure out what you can do by talking with one of your friends.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Talk with a friend about your feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Talk with him about your feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Talk with him about how to make things better.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Ask him for help in figuring out what to do.	1	2	3	4	5

16. Tell him about what made you feel the way you did.	1	2	3	4	5
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**\*Boys also completed an identical set of the above items with reference to their mother.**

## CURRICULUM VITAE

**Brett Robinson**

### UNIVERSITIES ATTENDED

- 2009 – 2015                      Ph.D., Clinical Psychology\*  
University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, NB  
Supervisor: Heather A. Sears, Ph.D.  
\*Full Accreditation, Canadian Psychological Association
- 2005 - 2009                      B.A., Major Psychology, Minor Family Studies  
University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC

### CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Robinson, B. S., & Sears, H. A. (2015, June). *Predictors of adolescent boys' help seeking from their father and their mother*. Poster presentation at the Canadian Psychological Association Annual Convention, Ottawa, ON.
- Robinson, B. S., Vallely, J., & Sears, H. A. (2014, May). *Young adolescents seeking help from an older sibling*. Poster presentation at Development 2014: A Canadian Conference on Developmental Psychology, Ottawa, ON.
- Robinson, B. S., MacIntyre, L. J., & Sears, H. A. (2014, May). *Adolescents seeking help from specific peers: Who do they choose?* Poster presentation at Development 2014: A Canadian Conference on Developmental, Ottawa, ON.
- Robinson, B. S., Sears, H. A., & Byers, E. S. (2012, March). *Distinguishing young adolescents who do and do not report improvement in sexual communication with their mothers*. Poster presentation at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research on Adolescence, Vancouver, BC.
- Robinson, B. S., Sears, H. A., & Byers, E. S. (2011, June). *Variation in parents' intentions and skills for sexual communication with their young adolescents*. Poster presentation at the Canadian Psychological Association Annual Convention, Toronto, ON.
- Robinson, B. S., Sears, H. A., & Byers, E. S. (2011, March). *Identifying factors that promote young adolescents' willingness to be responsive to sexual communications with mothers*. Poster presentation at the Biennial Meeting of Society of Research on Child Development, Montreal, QC.
- Sears, H. A., Robinson, B. S., & Byers, E. S. (2011, March). *Do direct or indirect interactions with mothers promote young adolescents' willingness to be responsive to sexual communications?* Poster presentation at the Biennial Meeting of Society of Research on Child Development, Montreal, QC.