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LIFESPAN DEVELOPMENT
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PROTECTIVE FACTORS AS PREDICTORS OF LEVELS OF SUICIDAL IDEATION
AND SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR IN THE COLLEGE POPULATION (173 pp.)

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The purpose of this study was to examine whether or not protective factors could predict levels of suicide risk among college students. Additionally, this study aimed to examine if there were differences in protective factors between groups based on demographic characteristics, such as: gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, self-reported cumulative GPA, and undergraduate versus graduate student status. A total of 555 college students (undergraduate and graduate) completed an anonymous, online survey. The survey included a variety of demographic information used to measure group differences and 3 inventories which measured suicidal ideation and behavior, internal protective factors, external protective factors, emotional stability, parent support, peer support, and significant other support.

The analysis of the data resulted in significant findings for each primary research question. For the first research question, peer support and emotional stability were shown to be statistically significant in predicting a person's level of suicide risk; higher levels of emotional stability and peer support predicted lower levels of suicide risk. Regarding the second research question, group differences were found for: gender, sexual orientation, and GPA. For gender, females scored significantly higher on scales measuring external protective factors, significant other support, peer support, internal protective factors, and

emotional stability. For sexual orientation, heterosexual participants reported higher levels of family support. For GPA, significant differences were found on the subscale measuring emotional stability; participants who self-identified in the lowest category of GPA also reported low levels of emotional stability. No significant differences were found between undergraduate and graduate students, or race/ethnicity groupings.