

BRIEF REPORT

The significance of feeling needed and useful to family and friends for psychological well-being during adolescence

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Abstract

Introduction: Social relationships offer the opportunity to provide support and resources to others. Feeling needed and useful to others has been understudied during adolescence, despite being shown to predict health and well-being during adulthood. The current study examined this underappreciated way in which family and peer relationships may shape psychological well-being during adolescence.

Method: A cross-sectional sample of high school students across the United States completed an on-line questionnaire during school hours in the fall of 2020. The sample consisted of 1301 adolescents averaging 15.94 ($SD = 1.24$) years in age in the ninth through twelfth grades, with 48.4% identifying as female, 47.3% as male, and 3.2% reporting either other gender identities or preferring not to answer (1%). Participants identified as Hispanic or Latino (40.2%), European American (19.8%), African American (14.7%), Multiethnic (9.2%), Asian American (7%), Other Ethnicities (7.8%), and 1.3% did not report their ethnicity.

Results: Feeling needed and useful was predicted by both helping and receiving support from others, strongly predicted better psychological well-being, and mediated associations of helping and receiving support with well-being. Males reported feeling more needed by their family as compared to females, and both reported higher levels of being useful to their family than those with other gender identifications.

Conclusions: Like adults, adolescents have a need to contribute and feel needed in their social worlds. Studies of close relationships should incorporate the ways in which youth provide resources and support to others in their lives as well as the sense of feeling needed and useful derived from those activities.

KEYWORDS

family, friends, needed and useful, psychological well-being

As they progress through adolescence, youth increasingly seek ways to have an impact upon their families, friends, and communities. This motivation manifests itself in multiple ways, including adolescents' desire to have more input in decision-making within their families and schools (Eccles et al., 1993), the frequency with which they provide support to close others (Padilla-Walker et al., 2015), and their efforts to improve their communities (Wray-Lake et al., 2016). Having opportunities to offer ideas, resources, and support consistently predicts better psychological well-being and physical health (Schacter & Margolin, 2018; Schreier et al., 2013). As such, some observers have argued that adolescents have a fundamental need to contribute and make a difference in their social worlds (Fuligni, 2019; Hill & Burrow, 2021).

Adolescents' narratives about their life goals often reveal a strong desire to be needed and useful by others (Damon et al., 2003). Yet, this feature of social relationships has rarely been examined in large samples of youth. Studies of midlife and aging populations have identified the power of feeling needed and useful, showing that contributing and feeling needed by others predicts psychological well-being, mental health, and even lower mortality better than the amount of support received by others (Brown et al., 2003). Other concepts typically studied at older ages, such as the generative sense of having an impact

upon the world, have shown their utility earlier in the lifespan through their prediction of adolescents' well-being and adjustment (Lawford & Ramey, 2015). The same may be true for feeling needed and useful. Indeed, a recent study of those aged 18–25 years suggested that feeling needed and useful to family and friends increases during the transition to adulthood, is tied to more social support, and predicts multiple aspects of well-being above and beyond received support from others (Fuligni et al., 2022).

The current study extended research on feeling needed and useful earlier in the lifespan during the high school years. Adolescents in the ninth through twelfth grades completed separate measures of feeling needed and useful by family and friends to account for differences in the developmental trajectories and roles played by each type of relationship (Youniss & Smollar, 1987). A large sample, diverse in ethnic and gender identities, allowed for the examination of variations among groups that may have different traditions regarding the importance of families and peers (e.g., Hernández & Bámaca-Colbert, 2016).

Feeling needed and useful should be enhanced by experiences that enable youth to contribute to others and feel that they are supported and valued. For example, helping the family predicts greater role fulfillment (e.g., feeling like a good son or daughter) among diverse youth (Telzer & Fuligni, 2009). High quality relationships typically involve mutuality, and the prior study of the transition to adulthood found that received support from family and friends predicted feeling needed and useful in those same relationships (Fuligni et al., 2022). The prior study of late adolescents and young adults did not, however, assess the role of actual opportunities to help others and the current study added these as a predictor of feeling needed useful.

Feeling needed and useful by family and friends should predict more positive well-being during adolescence as it has during later periods of the lifespan (Gruenewald et al., 2007). Such associations would demonstrate the importance of feeling needed and useful, as suggested by arguments regarding the fundamental need to contribute during adolescence (Fuligni, 2019). Key aspects of psychological well-being that may be enhanced by feeling needed and useful adolescence include a sense of self-esteem and general mood, both of which can fluctuate during the teenage years (e.g., Maciejewski et al., 2015). The unique connection to others tapped by feeling needed and useful may also predict lower levels of loneliness, a risk factor for the development of depression (Goossens, 2018). A sense of meaning and feelings of generativity have been less frequently studied during adolescence, but they typically have been strongly predicted by a sense of feeling needed during later adulthood and increasingly have been shown to be important for youth (Gruenewald et al., 2007; Hill & Burrow, 2021). Finally, to the extent that assisting and receiving support from others predicts these aspects of psychological well-being, feeling needed and useful may serve as a key mediator of any associations of providing and receiving support with well-being, as suggested by the conceptual model outlined in Figure 1.

The present study addressed three specific questions. First, how much do adolescents feel needed and useful in their relationships with families and friends, and does this vary according to age, gender, and ethnicity? We expected few age and demographic differences consistent with prior research among young adults that found no gender and ethnic variations, as well as no age differences between 18 and 21 years of age (Fuligni et al., 2022). Second, are these feelings predicted by helping and receiving support from parents and friends? Finally, does feeling needed and useful predict multiple aspects of psychological well-being and if so, does this mediate any observed associations of assisting and receiving support with psychological well-being? Consistent with previous work among young adults and suggested by narrative work among adolescents, we expected feeling needed and useful to be predicted by helping and receiving support and to mediate associations of these experiences with psychological well-being (Damon et al., 2003; Fuligni et al., 2022).

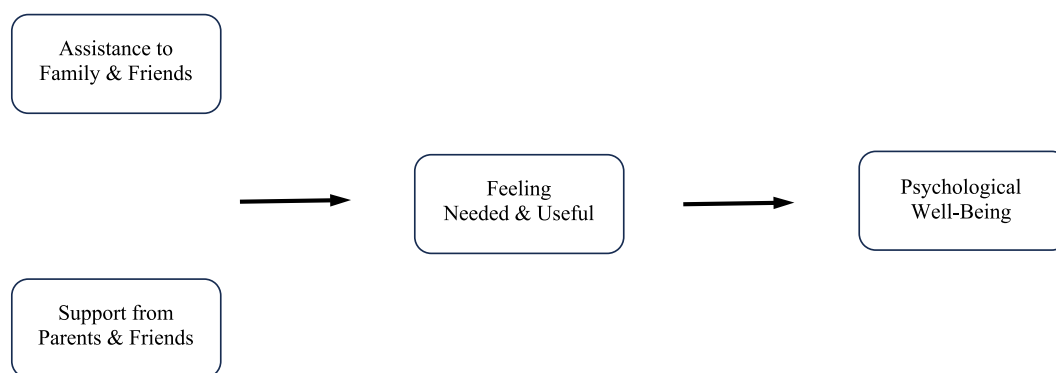


FIGURE 1 Conceptual model of potential mediation of the impact of assistance and support on psychological well-being through feeling needed and useful.

1 | METHOD

1.1 | Sample

High school students completed online questionnaires during school hours in the fall of 2020 as part of a collection of studies associated with the Character Lab Research Network (CLRN), a consortium of schools across the United States working collaboratively with scientists to advance research on student wellbeing.¹ The sample consisted of 1301 adolescents ranging in age from 12 to 20 years of age, with 99% ranging from 14 to 18 years of age [$M(SD) = 15.94 (1.24)$ years]. Roughly 25% of participants were in the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades, respectively. A total of 48.4% identified as female, 47.3% as male, 3.2% reported either other gender identities (e.g., non-binary, genderfluid, genderqueer, transgender) or selected that they preferred not to answer (1%). A large portion of the sample identified as Hispanic or Latino (40.2%), followed by European American (19.8%), African American (14.7%), Multiethnic (9.2%; e.g., Afro-Latino), Asian American (7%), Other Ethnicities (7.8%; e.g., Native American, Caribbean Islander), and 1.3% did not report their ethnicity. Privacy policies of the participating schools prevented the measurement of parental education, income, and immigration status.

1.2 | Measures

1.2.1 | Feeling needed and useful

Participants completed a measure assessing their sense of feeling needed and useful by their family and friends. The measure has shown strong internal consistency among ethnically diverse populations through confirmatory factor analyses (Fuligni et al., 2022). Adolescents responded to two sets of five questions in reference to the *family* and *friends*, respectively, using a 1–5 scale (1 = “Almost never,” 2 = “Once in a while,” 3 = “Sometimes,” 4 = “Frequently,” and 5 = “Almost always”): “I feel useful in my family [among my friends],” “I feel needed in my family [by my friends]” “I feel that my family [friends] can depend upon me,” “I feel that I contribute to my family [friends],” and “I feel that I am a good member of my family [group of friends].” Internal consistency was high (α s: family = .92; friends = .91).

1.2.2 | Assistance to family and friends

In an adaptation of a measure developed by Armstrong-Carter et al. (2020), adolescents used a 5-point scale (1 = “Never,” 2 = “Once,” 3 = “Twice,” 4 = “Several Times a Week,” and 5 = “Every Day”) to report how often they helped their family and friends in four different ways “Listen, give advice, or comfort them,” “Lent them an item or money,” “Helping them with schoolwork,” and “Helped them with chores or errands.” Youth reported these activities separately for family and friends (α s: family = .73; friends = .79).

1.2.3 | Support from parents and peers

Participants completed a modified version of the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987) that included nine-items measuring the extent to which they received support from their parents and peers, respectively. Using a scale that ranged from 1 (“Almost never”) to 5 (“Almost always”), participants responded to items such as “My parents showed that he or she understands me,” and “I could count on my friends when I needed to talk” (α s: parents = .96; friends = .95).

1.2.4 | Psychological well-being

Participants completed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem (RSE) measure (Rosenberg, 1989) in which they used a scale from 1 (“Strongly disagree”) to 4 (“Strongly agree”) to respond to 10 items such as “I feel that I’m a person of worth.” Participants used a 1 (“Almost never”) to 5 (“Almost always”) scale to complete a five-item measure that assessed the presence of meaning in one’s life (e.g., “I understand my life’s meaning”; (Steger et al., 2006), and completed an eight-item measure of positivity

¹The materials and design of this study, along with a broad description of the analytic approach, were registered at <https://osf.io/fsmz7>. The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

(Diener et al., 1985) in which they used a scale from 1 (“*Very slightly or not at all*”) to 5 (“*Extremely*”) to respond to items such as “Happy.” A reduced version of the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell et al., 1980) included 9 items such as “How often do you feel left out?” to which participants responded from 1 (“*Never*”) to 4 (“*Always*”), and participants used a 1 (“*Never Applies to Me*”) to 5 (“*Always Applies to Me*”) scale to complete a reduced, nine-item version of the Loyola Generativity Scale (e.g., “I feel as though I have made a difference to many people.”; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). All measures possessed good levels of internal consistency (α : RSE = .88, Meaning Presence = .88, Positivity = .95, Loneliness = .80, Generativity = .91).

1.3 | Analysis plan

A mixed model analysis of variance (ANOVA) examined differences between feeling needed and useful by family and friends (within-subjects) as well as variations according to age, gender, and ethnicity (between-subjects). Bivariate correlations estimated the associations between the measures of feeling needed and useful, family and friend support and assistance, and psychological well-being. Follow-up analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) with tests of equal slopes tested whether the associations between needed and useful and psychological well-being varied according to ethnicity and gender. Next, multiple regressions were conducted to examine the extent to which feeling needed and useful was predicted by the frequency of helping others and the perceived level of support from family and friends. Finally, multiple regressions estimated the extent to which feeling needed and useful predicted psychological well-being after accounting for perceived support from family and friends. These models were followed by estimates of indirect effects to determine whether feeling needed and useful may serve as a mediator of any observed associations of helping others and perceived support with psychological well-being. To correct for multiple testing in the regressions of well-being and estimates of indirect effects, we utilized a family-wise rate of $p < .05$ for each predictor across the five aspects of psychological being, thereby necessitating a significance level of $p < .01$ for each predictor and indirect effect.

2 | RESULTS

2.1 | Group differences in feeling needed and useful

An ANOVA with feeling needed and useful by relationship (family vs. friends) as a within-subjects effect and age, gender, and ethnicity as between-subjects effects revealed main effects of relationship ($F_{(1, 1238)} = 11.97, p < .001$) and gender ($F_{(2, 1238)} = 5.48, p = .004$), but these were modified a gender $\times$ relationship interaction ($F_{(2, 1238)} = 9.92, p < .001$). As shown in Figure 2, follow-up comparisons indicated that adolescents identifying as male felt significantly more needed and useful by family ($M = 3.90, SE = 0.04$) as compared to both those who identified as female ($M = 3.75, SE = 0.04$) and those who reported other gender identifications ($M = 3.20, SE = 0.16$), Bonferroni corrected $ps < .05$. Those who identified as female, in turn, felt more needed and useful by family as compared to those with other gender identifications, Bonferroni corrected $p < .05$. In contrast, there were no gender differences in feeling needed and useful by friends. Comparisons of relationship within each gender indicated that those with female and other gender identifications felt more useful by friends than family, whereas there was no difference in relationship type among those identifying as male, Bonferroni corrected $p < .05$. There were no main or interaction effects of relationship with age (main: $F_{(1, 1238)} = 0.62, p = .432$; interaction: $F_{(1, 1238)} = 0.41, p = .525$) or ethnicity (main: $F_{(5, 1238)} = 0.79, p = .557$; interaction: $F_{(5, 1238)} = 2.21, p = .052$).

2.2 | Predicting feeling needed and useful

Bivariate correlations shown in Table 1 suggest that adolescents who perceived more support and provided more assistance to family and friends also feel more needed and useful within the same relationship. These associations held up in multiple regression analyses shown in Table 2, with the coefficients for support being substantially greater in magnitude than the coefficients for helping.

2.3 | Predicting psychological well-being

Bivariate correlations in Table 1 showed that feeling needed and useful by family and friends were significantly associated with better psychological well-being across all measures. ANCOVAs with tests of equal slopes indicated no significant differences in these associations across different ethnicities and genders ($ps > .01$).

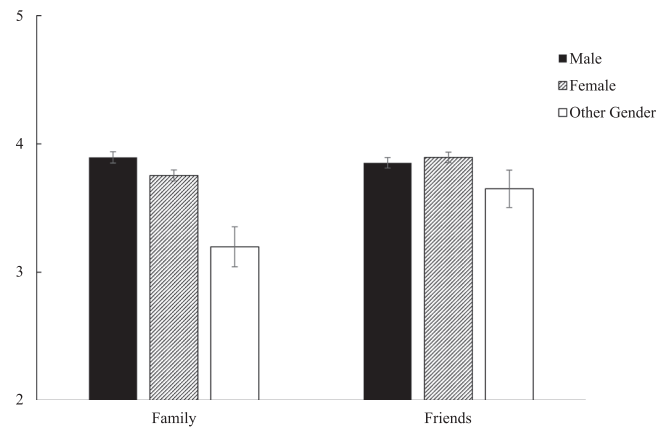


FIGURE 2 Gender differences in feeling needed and useful. Estimated means based on an ANOVA with relationship type as a within-subjects factor and age, gender, and ethnicity as between-subjects factors. $n_{\text{Male}} = 599$; $n_{\text{Female}} = 609$; $n_{\text{Other Gender}} = 39$. Error bars reflect standard errors. ANOVA, analysis of variance.

TABLE 1 Bivariate correlations of feeling needed and useful, support, assistance, and psychological well-being.

	Needed family	Needed friends	Parent support	Peer support	Family assistance	Friend assistance	Self-esteem	Meaning presence	Positivity	Loneliness	Generativity
Needed family		–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Needed friends	0.54**		–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Parent support	0.66**	0.32**		–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Peer support	0.31**	0.63**	0.31**		–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Family assistance	0.38**	0.26**	0.35**	0.22**		–	–	–	–	–	–
Peer assistance	0.17**	0.32**	0.15**	0.31**	0.58**		–	–	–	–	–
Self-esteem	0.60**	0.41**	0.49**	0.26**	0.18**	0.04		–	–	–	–
Meaning presence	0.56**	0.39**	0.51**	0.29**	0.29**	0.17**	0.66**		–	–	–
Positivity	0.49**	0.40**	0.48**	0.37**	0.33**	0.23**	0.52**	0.52**		–	–
Loneliness	–0.52**	–0.53**	–0.50**	–0.50**	–0.25**	–0.18**	–0.55**	–0.53**	–0.57**		–
Generativity	0.53**	0.49**	0.47**	0.35**	0.40**	0.35**	0.48**	0.56**	0.52**	–0.51**	

Note: * $p < .01$, ** $p < .001$.

Linear regressions shown in Table 3 reaffirmed these associations, with adolescents who felt more needed and useful by both family and friends reporting higher levels of self-esteem, meaning presence, positivity, and generativity, and lower levels of loneliness, even after controlling for family and peer support and assistance. The only exception was that the association between positivity and feeling needed by friends was non-significant following the correction for multiple testing. Family support was a significant predictor of better psychological well-being across all measures, with friend support and helping family and friends each being significant for two out of five aspects of well-being. All estimates were positive, except for peer assistance negatively predicting self-esteem.

Follow-up analyses estimated whether feeling needed and useful acted as a mediator of the associations of received support and assistance with well-being, as suggested by the conceptual model presented in Figure 1. Specifically, the indirect effects of family and friend support and assistance on each index of psychological well-being through feeling needed and useful were estimated using PROCESS v.4 in R. Indirect effects were estimated based upon the models presented in Table 3

TABLE 2 Multiple regressions predicting feeling needed and useful.

	Needed family β	Needed friends β
Parent support	.60***	–
Peer support	–	.59***
Family assistance	.16***	–
Friend assistance	–	.14***
Age	.02	.00
Male	–.03	.05*
Other gender	–.05*	–.06*
European American	.01	.05*
Asian American	–.02	–.003
African American	.03	.04
Other Ethnicity	.02	.02
Multithnic	–.01	.02
R^2	.46***	.42***

Note: Estimates are standardized regression coefficients. Gender and ethnicity were dummy-coded with female and Hispanic or Latino as the baseline. * $p < .05$,

** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

TABLE 3 Multiple regressions predicting psychological well-being.

	Self-esteem β	Meaning presence β	Positivity β	Loneliness β	Generativity B
Needed family	.42**	.32**	.19**	–.18**	.21**
Needed friends	.15**	.11*	.08	–.19**	.23**
Parent support	.17**	.24**	.23**	–.22**	.19**
Peer support	.03	.04	.16**	–.28**	.03
Family assistance	–.03	.05	.10*	–.02	.10**
Friend assistance	–.09*	.01	.04	.02	.14**
Age	–.01	–.01	–.003	–.02	.09**
Male	.07*	–.003	.05	–.09**	.01
Other gender	–.05	–.06	–.03	.02	–.001
European American	–.05	–.08*	–.06	–.06	.01
Asian American	–.01	–.003	–.02	–.05	.02
African American	.06	–.04	–.05	.003	.04
Other ethnicity	–.04	–.02	–.02	.02	.04
Multithnic	–.03	–.03	–.05	.02	.04
R^2	.42**	.38**	.35**	.46**	.43**

Note: Estimates are standardized regression coefficients. Gender and ethnicity were dummy-coded with female and Hispanic or Latino as the baseline. A family-wise rate of $p < .05$ for each predictor across the five aspects of psychological being was used, thereby necessitating a significance level of $p < .01$. * $p < .01$, ** $p < .001$. Reference groups: Female, Hispanic or Latino.

and for the measures focused on the same target relationships (e.g., indirect effects of friend support and assistance through feeling needed and useful by friends).

As shown in Table 4, all but two indirect associations were significant, suggesting that a portion of the positive associations of receiving support and helping family and friends with psychological well-being may be attributable to

TABLE 4 Feeling needed and useful as a mediator of the associations of support and assistance with psychological well-being.

Indirect effect	Self-esteem	Positivity	Meaning presence	Loneliness	Generativity
Indirect effects					
Parent support	0.12 [0.09, 0.15]*	0.16 [0.08, 0.26]*	0.16 [0.11, 0.22]*	-0.04 [-0.07, -0.02]*	0.07 [0.04, 0.11]*
Family assistance	0.05 [0.03, 0.07]*	0.06 [0.03, 0.11]*	0.06 [0.04, 0.10]*	-0.02 [-0.03, -0.01]*	0.03 [0.01, 0.05]*
Peer support	0.05 [0.02, 0.07]*	0.07 [-0.02, 0.16]	0.06 [0.007, 0.11]*	-0.05 [-0.07, -0.03]*	0.08 [0.05, 0.12]*
Friend assistance	0.01 [0.004, 0.02]*	0.02 [-0.004, 0.04]	0.01 [0.002, 0.03]*	-0.01 [-0.02, -0.01]*	0.02 [0.01, 0.03]*
Direct effects					
Parent support	0.09 [0.05, 0.13]*	0.34 [0.21, 0.47]*	0.21 [0.14, 0.29]*	-0.10 [-0.14, -0.07]*	0.12 [0.07, 0.16]*
Family assistance	-0.02 [-0.06, 0.03]	0.17 [0.03, 0.31]*	0.05 [-0.03, 0.13]	-0.01 [-0.05, 0.03]	0.07 [0.02, 0.12]*
Peer support	0.02 [-0.03, 0.06]	0.28 [0.14, 0.43]*	0.04 [-0.04, 0.12]	-0.15 [-0.19, -0.11]*	0.02 [-0.03, 0.08]
Friend assistance	-0.05 [-0.08, -0.01]*	0.06 [-0.06, 0.18]	0.01 [-0.06, 0.07]	0.01 [-0.02, 0.04]	0.08 [0.04, 0.13]*
Needed family	0.25 [0.20, 0.31]*	0.36 [0.19, 0.53]*	0.35 [0.25, 0.45]*	-0.10 [-0.14, -0.05]*	0.16 [0.09, 0.22]*
Needed friends	0.10 [0.05, 0.16]*	0.16 [-0.02, 0.34]	0.13 [0.02, 0.23]*	-0.11 [-0.16, -0.07]*	0.18 [0.12, 0.25]*

Note: Unstandardized coefficients are reported. Indirect effects were estimated based upon the models presented in Table 3 and for the measures focused on the same target relationships (e.g., indirect effects of friend support and assistance through feeling needed and useful by friends). Age, gender, and ethnicity controls were included in the models not reported here. A family-wise rate of $p < .05$ for each indirect and direct effect across the five aspects of psychological being was used, thereby necessitating a significance level of $p < .01$, indicated by *. Brackets represent the upper and lower limits of a 99% confidence interval.

adolescents' feeling more needed and useful in those relationships. The only exceptions were peer support and friend assistance for feelings of positivity.

3 | DISCUSSION

Social relationships enable participants to provide support and resources to one another, valuable developmental opportunities that have been understudied during adolescence as compared to other periods of the lifespan. A large and diverse sample of high school students reported moderate to high levels of feeling needed and useful by their family and friends, with relatively few differences according to gender, ethnicity, and age. Feelings of being needed and useful to others depended upon adolescents' opportunities to help others and the degree to which youth perceived support in their relationships. Multiple aspects of positive and negative psychological functioning were strongly predicted by feeling needed and useful across gender and ethnic identities, with such a feeling significantly mediating the associations of helping and receiving support with well-being.

Although adolescents reported generally high levels of feeling needed and useful in both types of relationships, few group differences emerged according to gender, ethnicity, and age. The one notable exception was that those identifying as male reported higher levels of being needed by their family as compared to those identifying as female, with both groups reporting higher levels than those with other gender identities. Relatedly, males reported equal levels of feeling needed and useful by the family and friends, whereas those identifying as female and other gender identities reported feeling less useful by family than friends. The lower level of feeling needed and useful by family among those with other gender identities may reflect the challenges some of these youth face in gaining family acceptance (Grossman et al., 2021). The higher feelings of feeling needed by family among those identifying as male was surprising and not observed in a previous study of young adults (Fuligni et al., 2022). Future studies should test whether this difference is replicable, and if so, the potential causes of such a gender difference.

Providing assistance and receiving support from family and friends significantly predicted feeling needed and useful. More sophisticated social, cognitive, and physical abilities allow youth to assist others in more significant and meaningful ways than during childhood (Fuligni, 2019). Increasing social cognitive skills, in particular, afford youth the ability to intuit and reflect upon the impact of their actions upon others (Crone & Fuligni, 2020), likely producing such feelings of being needed and useful. Supportive relationships, in turn, likely reinforce these feelings by enhancing one's sense of being valued and appreciated. The dual, positive impact of assisting and feeling supported by family and friends is in contrast to difficult and conflictual relational contexts in which higher levels of assistance predict poorer outcomes such as increased substance use (e.g., Telzer et al., 2014).

Feeling more needed and useful predicted multiple aspects of psychological well-being during adolescence, consistent with previous research at other stages of the lifespan (Gruenewald et al., 2007). The breadth of the associations—self-esteem, meaning presence, positivity, loneliness, and generativity—suggests feeling needed and useful is relevant for core aspects of psychological and social functioning during adolescence. Associations with well-being remained even after controlling for the support received from family and friends. Follow-up analyses indicated that feeling needed and useful significantly mediated the associations of helping others and received support with psychological well-being. Although cross-sectional and in need of longitudinal replication, these indirect effects suggest that feeling needed and useful by others may be a key psychological mechanism by which social relationships produce better health and well-being among their members (Fuligni et al., 2022).

Strengths of the current study include a large and diverse sample of youth and the use of multiple, well-established measures of relationships and psychological well-being. Future studies incorporating longitudinal designs could chart the diversity in developmental trajectories of feeling needed and useful, as well as provide tests of mediation across multiple years of adolescence. Expanding the measure of feeling needed and useful to other settings in the lives of youth (e.g., community, school, work) would allow for exploration of the diverse ways in which adolescents may gain a sense of feeling needed by others. The limited number of participants reporting gender identifications other than male or female potentially introduced more error in the estimates of the experiences of these youth.

Finally, it is unknown whether and how the continued COVID-19 pandemic during the fall of 2020 may have influenced the findings obtained in this study. Some youth may have experienced a greater need or opportunity to both provide and receive support in their family and peer relationships (Sweijen et al., 2022), but it is notable that a previous study of young adults reported few differences between samples who completed similar measures both before and during the beginning of the pandemic (Fuligni et al., 2022). Continued research will need to determine the generalizability of the current findings to samples and periods not experiencing the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As with adults at later ages of the lifespan, adolescents have a need to contribute and feel needed in their social worlds. Studies of close relationships across the teenage years should incorporate the ways in which youth may provide resources and support to families, friends, and others in their lives, as well as the sense of feeling needed and useful derived from those activities. Such work could add to the growing body of evidence that highlights how even in societies where youth generally do not provide major economic contributions to their families and communities, they still need other ways to feel needed and useful to others.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The materials and design of this study, along with a broad description of the analytic approach, were registered at <https://osf.io/fsmz7>. The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The study was conducted in compliance with APA ethical standards and the procedures were reviewed and approved under Character Lab Research Network's IRB, provided by Advarra. Parental consent and student assent were obtained for all underage study individuals.

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