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Combining Plato and Jung's Ideas to Help Youth Overcome Maladaptive Responses and Manage Stress

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Abstract. Young people often respond to stress through maladaptive patterns such as self-blame, avoidance, emotional withdrawal, and catastrophic thinking. These responses may provide temporary psychological protection, but they can also weaken emotional regulation, resilience, and interpersonal functioning over time. This study examines how Plato's concept of eudaimonia and Jung's analytical psychology can be integrated to interpret and address maladaptive responses in youth. Using a qualitative conceptual design supported by exploratory survey data, the study develops an interpretive framework that connects Jungian self-awareness with Platonic virtue-based self-regulation. The survey findings indicate that self-critical and avoidant tendencies were common among respondents, suggesting that many participants struggled to manage stress in reflective and constructive ways. In response, the article argues that Jung's emphasis on recognizing hidden emotions and inner conflict can deepen psychological insight, while Plato's emphasis on reason, virtue, and moral formation can guide individuals toward more balanced coping. The study contributes a humanistic framework for youth stress management that links emotional awareness, ethical self-governance, and personal flourishing. It also offers practical implications for educators, counselors, and families seeking more integrative approaches to youth well-being.

Keywords: Analytical Psychology; Coping; Eudaimonia; Maladaptive Responses; Youth Stress.

1. INTRODUCTION

Stress is a normal part of development, but young people do not always respond to it in healthy ways. During late childhood and adolescence, academic pressure, changing friendships, family expectations, and identity formation can make coping difficult. When coping becomes maladaptive, stress is often answered with self-blame, exaggerated fear, avoidance, emotional suppression, or repetitive distraction rather than with reflection and problem solving. Such responses may relieve tension briefly, but they often intensify distress over time (Compas et al., 2001; VandenBos, 2007).

Psychological research defines coping as the cognitive and behavioral efforts used to manage demands perceived as taxing or overwhelming (Schwartzberg, 2016; VandenBos, 2007). Some strategies protect agency, relationships, and realistic judgment, while others undermine adjustment. Maladaptive coping in adolescence has been associated with emotional and behavioral difficulties, and longitudinal work has linked avoidant coping and rumination with later depressive symptoms (Compas et al., 2001; Hampel & Petermann, 2006; Seiffge-Krenke & Klessinger, 2000; Wilkinson et al., 2013). Coping style therefore shapes more than momentary mood. It influences self-concept, resilience, and the ability to flourish.

This study focuses on common patterns reported by young people: overthinking, self-criticism, emotional shutdown, excessive distraction, and expecting the worst. These reactions are important because they are often normalized as personality traits when they are better

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understood as learned and modifiable responses. The problem is not only how to stop them, but how to understand the inner logic that sustains them and how to guide young people toward healthier alternatives.

To address that problem, the article places philosophy and psychology in dialogue. Plato offers a virtue-based account of flourishing, or eudaimonia, in which happiness depends on the ordered life of reason, character, and moral habit (Brown, 2003; Plato & Reeve, 1992). Jung offers a depth-psychological account in which hidden fears, unresolved emotions, and neglected aspects of the self shape outward behavior (Jung, 2012; VandenBos, 2007). Plato asks what kind of person one should become. Jung asks what inner forces prevent that becoming.

The research gap addressed here is the limited integration of these two traditions in discussions of youth stress. Character education often emphasizes discipline, values, and conduct, while psychological approaches emphasize emotional awareness and internal processing. Yet maladaptive responses frequently involve both. A student may procrastinate because of weak self-control, but also because of fear of failure. Another may become sarcastic or withdrawn because painful feelings remain unaddressed. A framework that stresses virtue without emotional understanding risks moralizing distress, while a framework that stresses insight without disciplined action risks leaving young people with awareness but no direction.

The objective of this study is to examine how Plato's eudaimonia and Jung's analytical psychology can be combined to help young people overcome maladaptive responses and manage stress more constructively. The article argues that Plato and Jung are complementary. Plato provides ethical orientation and habit formation, while Jung explains why harmful patterns persist beneath conscious intention. Together, they support a model in which self-awareness leads to moral redirection, and repeated virtuous action stabilizes emotional insight. The study contributes a conceptual synthesis, exploratory survey evidence on common maladaptive patterns, and practical implications for educators, parents, and counselors.

This objective is relevant not only for formal mental health settings but also for ordinary educational life. Many young people who struggle with maladaptive responses will never enter therapy, yet they still encounter daily situations in which coping patterns are formed and reinforced. The classroom after a disappointing grade, the home after conflict, and the peer group during embarrassment are all sites where stress responses take shape. A useful framework for youth therefore needs to be understandable, morally serious, emotionally sensitive, and practical enough to be used in everyday guidance. That requirement makes the Platonic-Jungian dialogue especially promising.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Maladaptive Responses, Coping, and Youth Adjustment

Maladaptive responses are reactions to stress that interfere with effective functioning rather than supporting it. In psychological terms, maladaptation refers to patterns that are counterproductive and that disrupt adjustment to daily demands (Perrotta, 2021; VandenBos, 2007). This is especially important in youth because coping habits formed during childhood and adolescence often shape later emotional regulation, help-seeking, and self-appraisal.

Coping research distinguishes more adaptive strategies, such as problem solving, support seeking, and constructive emotional processing, from less adaptive ones, such as avoidance, denial, self-criticism, and rumination (Compas et al., 2001; Stanisławski, 2019). Because coping involves cognition, emotion, behavior, and environmental response, maladaptive reactions often appear in clusters. A young person may think, "I am incapable," withdraw emotionally, avoid responsibility, and then distract the self through entertainment. The pattern is simultaneously cognitive, emotional, and behavioral.

Empirical work supports the developmental importance of these distinctions. Hampel and Petermann found that perceived stress and maladaptive coping were positively associated with adjustment problems in adolescents, whereas more adaptive coping was linked to fewer emotional and behavioral difficulties (Hampel & Petermann, 2006). Seiffge-Krenke and Klessinger similarly reported that adolescents with avoidant coping styles showed more depressive symptoms over time than those using more approach-oriented strategies (Seiffge-Krenke & Klessinger, 2000). Maladaptive coping is therefore not a neutral preference; when repeated over time, it can become a risk factor.

Two patterns are especially relevant here. The first is self-critical and catastrophic thinking. Rumination predicts later depressive symptomatology in adolescents at elevated risk, and self-critical thinking can turn ordinary disappointment into a generalized conclusion of personal inadequacy (Hankin, 2008; Wilkinson et al., 2013). The second pattern is avoidance, including postponement, emotional shutdown, refusal of responsibility, and excessive distraction. Although avoidance can reduce discomfort in the short term, it often worsens the original problem by leaving the underlying fear unresolved (Compas et al., 2001; Seiffge-Krenke & Klessinger, 2000).

Coping is also shaped by relationships. Social support, family climate, and broader community influence whether stress is processed constructively or maladaptively. Longitudinal evidence indicates that social support, resilience, and self-esteem protect against common mental health problems in early adolescence (Liu et al., 2021). Research on family transmission

further shows that anxiety is passed through direct environmental pathways within families, meaning that young people may learn anxious or avoidant responding from their relational context (Eley et al., 2015). Maladaptive responses are therefore neither purely personal nor purely situational. They emerge at the intersection of inner life and social formation.

Plato's Eudaimonia and Virtue-Based Self-Regulation

Plato's ethics is eudaimonistic. Human flourishing, or eudaimonia, is the highest aim of life, and virtues are the excellences required to attain it (Brown, 2003). A person flourishes not by maximizing comfort, but by ordering the soul through reason, justice, and disciplined desire (Brown, 2003; Plato & Reeve, 1992). This view is relevant to maladaptive coping because such responses often reveal inner disorder: fear overrides judgment, impulse overrides discipline, or comfort overrides what is genuinely good.

In the Republic, Plato describes a well-ordered soul as one in which reason governs rather than being ruled by appetite or agitation (Plato & Reeve, 1992). Applied to youth stress, this means that healthy coping is not just an emotional state but a form of self-governance. Avoidance, denial, and impulsive reaction may offer quick relief, but they do not contribute to flourishing. Plato therefore asks a question highly relevant to coping: not merely what feels better now, but what kind of person a response is shaping.

Plato also emphasizes habit formation. Virtue is not achieved through agreement alone. It requires repeated practice and educational environments that support good action (Brown, 2003; Yacek et al., 2023). A Platonic response to maladaptive coping would therefore replace self-blame with truthful self-examination, avoidance with courage and perseverance, and impulsive reaction with self-control. This makes Plato especially useful for educational contexts, where emotional life and moral habit develop together.

At the same time, Plato's framework has limits. Its emphasis on reason and virtue does not fully explain why people remain trapped in harmful patterns even when they know those patterns are wrong. Fear, shame, grief, and internalized self-criticism can continue to operate beneath conscious intention. For that reason, Plato benefits from a complementary psychological account.

Jung's Analytical Psychology and Emotional Insight

Jung's analytical psychology explains behavior through the interaction of conscious and unconscious processes. Its goal is greater inner balance through recognition and integration of neglected psychic material (Bologna et al., 2020; VandenBos, 2007). This perspective is valuable because maladaptive responses often carry emotional meanings that are not fully visible to the person enacting them.

For Jung, hidden fears, unresolved conflicts, and disowned parts of the self do not disappear when ignored. They reappear indirectly through overreaction, compulsive patterns, symbolic images, and defensive behavior (Jung, 2012). A young person who procrastinates, becomes sarcastic, or shuts down emotionally may therefore be expressing unrecognized shame, fear of failure, loneliness, or anger rather than simply making poor choices.

Jung's concept of the shadow is especially helpful in this context. The shadow includes traits and feelings that the person would rather not acknowledge (Jung, 2012; Jung & Hull, 1973). In practical youth terms, this may mean fear hidden beneath calmness, grief hidden beneath humor, or inadequacy hidden beneath self-blame. Jung's importance lies in showing that symptom-like behaviors can be interpreted as signals from the psyche rather than only as faults.

Jung also stresses symbolic and narrative routes to self-understanding, especially through stories, images, and recurring emotional themes (Jung & Hull, 1973). For young people, this suggests that guided reflection, journaling, and discussion of recurring fears may be developmentally useful ways of accessing emotional insight. His broader idea of individuation, becoming more whole by integrating neglected aspects of the self, also reframes coping as more than symptom reduction. Healthy stress management requires internal integration.

Still, Jung's framework can be abstract, especially for children and younger adolescents. It offers interpretive depth, but not always direct behavioral guidance. This is where Plato becomes useful.

Toward an Integrated Platonic-Jungian Framework

Plato and Jung converge in their insistence that an unexamined life is vulnerable to disorder. Both value self-knowledge and reject the idea that well-being is identical with immediate pleasure or symptom avoidance. Their difference is one of emphasis. Plato is normative and action-guiding. Jung is interpretive and diagnostic. Plato explains what healthier coping should aim at. Jung explains why people resist it.

An integrated framework can therefore address maladaptive responses in sequence. First, the young person recognizes the pattern. Second, Jungian insight helps uncover the fear, shame, or conflict beneath it. Third, Platonic reasoning identifies the virtue or form of right action that should replace it. Fourth, repeated practice turns that insight into habit. In this model, insight without action is incomplete, while action without insight is unstable. That complementarity grounds the present study's central argument.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative conceptual design supported by exploratory descriptive survey evidence. The inquiry was interpretive rather than experimental and aimed to explain how Plato's concept of eudaimonia and Jung's analytical psychology could be integrated into a coherent framework for addressing maladaptive responses among young people. Because the topic involves philosophical concepts, psychological processes, and educational implications, a qualitative approach was appropriate for examining meanings, relationships among ideas, and possible practical applications (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The study combined a literature-based conceptual analysis with a small exploratory questionnaire. The literature component drew on primary and secondary works on coping, youth adjustment, Platonic ethics, and analytical psychology, while the questionnaire provided an illustrative picture of the maladaptive responses that young people reported in everyday stressful situations. The questionnaire was not intended to test causal relationships or to generate statistically generalizable findings. Instead, it served as contextual evidence that enriched the conceptual discussion.

Socratic questioning functioned as the main interpretive strategy in the study. It was used not as a classroom performance but as a disciplined way of clarifying assumptions, testing concepts, and moving from description to deeper analysis (Paul, 1991). The inquiry repeatedly asked questions such as what prevents a young person from coping well even when they know what is right, why self-blame and avoidance persist despite their harmful consequences, what Plato explains about the moral formation of coping habits, what Jung explains about the hidden emotional forces behind these habits, and how the strengths of each thinker might compensate for the limits of the other. These questions guided the interpretation of both the literature and the questionnaire results so that philosophical and psychological ideas were not treated as isolated summaries. The literature was collected and organized around three conceptual pillars, namely maladaptive responses, Plato's eudaimonia, and Jung's analytical psychology, with notes taken on each source's main claims, areas of overlap, and practical relevance for youth coping.

The exploratory questionnaire was distributed online to 20 respondents from different age groups, beginning around age 11 and extending into older adolescence and early adulthood, most of whom were students. The instrument consisted of 12 items with frequency-based or yes-no responses covering tendencies such as self-blame, dwelling on past mistakes, exaggerating negative outcomes, avoiding responsibilities because of feeling incapable, shutting down emotionally, using sarcasm or humor to deflect emotion, and distracting oneself

through media or games. Respondents completed the form voluntarily, and no personally identifying information was analyzed in the study. Because the questionnaire used convenience sampling and a small number of participants, it was treated as exploratory evidence rather than as a basis for diagnosis, subgroup comparison, or broader population claims.

Data analysis occurred in two stages. First, the literature was examined through thematic synthesis, with themes developed around cognitive maladaptive responses, emotional maladaptive responses, behavioral maladaptive responses, virtue formation, self-awareness, unconscious conflict, and relational support. Second, the questionnaire data were examined descriptively through reported frequencies and narrative observations to identify recurring patterns of self-criticism, catastrophizing, avoidance of responsibility, emotional shutdown, and distraction-based coping. These results were not treated as proof of the theoretical model but as illustrative findings that clarified the relevance of the integrated framework for youth stress management.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

Conceptual Results: A Complementary Model of Insight and Virtue

The conceptual analysis indicates that Plato and Jung address the same general problem from different but complementary angles. Both are concerned with forms of inner disorder that prevent fuller human development. In the present study, maladaptive responses emerged as one expression of this disorder. Plato clarifies why maladaptive patterns are ethically and developmentally problematic: they lead the person away from reasoned choice, self-governance, and flourishing. Jung clarifies why such patterns are psychologically persistent: they are often supported by unrecognized fears, conflicts, or symbolic meanings.

The main conceptual result is therefore an integrated four-stage model. The first stage is recognition. The young person learns to identify a maladaptive response as a pattern rather than as an inevitable trait. The second stage is interpretation. Using Jungian insight, the person asks what hidden feeling, fear, or belief the pattern is protecting. The third stage is reorientation. Using Platonic reasoning, the person identifies what virtue or form of right action should replace the maladaptive response. The fourth stage is habituation. The new response is practiced repeatedly in relationships and daily responsibilities until it becomes more stable.

This model suggests that healthy coping requires both depth and discipline. Recognition and interpretation without reorientation can leave the person with insight but no direction. Reorientation without interpretation can become superficial because the hidden emotional logic

of the maladaptive pattern remains unaddressed. Table 1 summarizes this integrated framework by linking common maladaptive responses to their likely underlying dynamics, the relevant Jungian task, the corresponding Platonic redirection, and the expected adaptive movement.

Table 1. Integrated Platonic-Jungian Framework for Common Maladaptive Responses.

Maladaptive Response	Likely Underlying Dynamic	Jungian Task	Platonic Redirection	Expected Adaptive Movement
Self-blame and harsh self-criticism	Shame, fear of failure, internalized inadequacy	Identify hidden fear and the meaning attached to failure	Truthfulness, self-control, and justice toward oneself	Honest self-evaluation without self-condemnation
Catastrophizing and worst-case thinking	Anxiety, insecurity, low tolerance for uncertainty	Make fear conscious and examine its symbolic exaggeration	Rational proportion, courage, and steadiness	More realistic judgment under pressure
Avoidance of responsibility	Fear of exposure, helplessness, anticipated defeat	Recognize the conflict between desire for safety and desire for growth	Courage, perseverance, and disciplined action	Gradual engagement with tasks rather than withdrawal
Emotional shutdown	Fear of vulnerability, unresolved hurt, relational distrust	Name suppressed feelings and acknowledge the shadowed emotion	Temperance, honesty, and relational responsibility	Measured emotional expression and help-seeking
Distraction through entertainment or sarcasm	Temporary escape from distress, fear of direct feeling	Understand the defensive function of humor or distraction	Moderation and purposeful use of attention	Reflection before escape and more intentional coping

Exploratory Survey Results

Table 2. Selected Exploratory Questionnaire Findings.

Questionnaire theme	Response pattern	Interpretation
Self-blame when things go wrong	30% often, 25% always, 25% sometimes	Self-critical coping is common and may intensify stress rather than resolve it
Expecting the worst in stressful situations	25% often, 30% always	Catastrophizing appears frequently in youth stress responses
Avoiding responsibility due to feeling incapable	50% sometimes, 10% often	Feelings of inadequacy may lead to withdrawal and delay
Emotional shutdown	Frequently mentioned in narrative summary	Distress is often contained rather than communicated

As summarized in Table 2, the questionnaire findings illustrated that maladaptive responses were common among respondents. The responses suggested recurring use of distraction-based coping, emotional withdrawal, and self-critical thinking when participants were under stress. Respondents often reported using television, games, or humor to clear their minds or to avoid difficult emotions. Emotional shutdown also appeared frequently in the

narrative summary of the responses, indicating that several young people preferred not to express distress directly.

Two specific frequency patterns were especially notable. First, when asked whether they avoided taking on responsibilities because they felt inadequate or incapable, 10% of respondents selected “often” and 50% selected “sometimes.” This means that 60% acknowledged some recurring tendency to withdraw from responsibility when feeling insufficient. Second, on a question about expecting the worst possible outcome in stressful situations, 30% selected “always” and 25% selected “often,” indicating that 55% of respondents showed a strong tendency toward catastrophic thinking.

A third finding came from a question on self-blame and self-criticism. The item asked whether respondents were highly critical of themselves or blamed themselves when things went wrong. The distribution was as follows: 5% selected “never,” 15% “occasionally,” 25% “sometimes,” 30% “often,” and 25% “always.” Thus, 55% reported engaging in self-blame often or always, while 80% reported doing so at least sometimes. This pattern is significant because self-blame was one of the clearest recurring tendencies in the exploratory data. Figure 1 visualizes this distribution and shows that self-critical coping was one of the most prominent patterns in the exploratory sample.

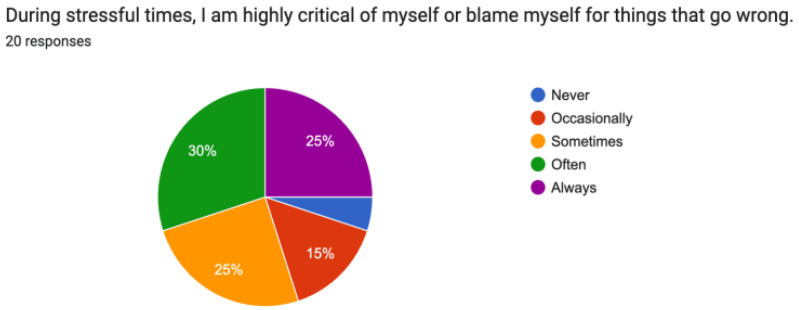

Figure 1. Distribution of Self-Blame and Self-Criticism in Stressful Situations.

Taken together, Table 2 and Figure 1 support the study’s premise that maladaptive responding among young people is not limited to one domain. The patterns reported by respondents included distorted thinking, emotional distancing, and avoidance-based behavior. This multi-dimensional pattern strengthens the case for an equally multi-dimensional response framework.

Discussion

The findings support the argument that maladaptive responses in youth are best understood as patterns involving cognition, emotion, behavior, and moral formation rather than as isolated symptoms. The literature and exploratory survey results converge on a consistent

picture: young people under stress often turn toward self-blame, catastrophic thinking, emotional withdrawal, and distraction-based escape. These patterns match prior coping research showing links between maladaptive responses and poorer adjustment (Compas et al., 2001; Hampel & Petermann, 2006). At the same time, the present study suggests that these reactions cannot be fully addressed through behavioral correction alone because they are often sustained by deeper emotional meanings.

Why Plato Matters

Plato reframes coping as part of the ethical task of becoming a well-ordered person. A response to stress should be evaluated not only by whether it reduces discomfort immediately, but by whether it contributes to flourishing. This is especially relevant to the survey findings on self-blame and avoidance of responsibility. Avoiding tasks because one feels incapable points to a deficit in courage and perseverance. Frequent self-blame may look reflective, but in Platonic terms it distorts judgment because it replaces truthful assessment with emotional excess. Plato therefore helps distinguish self-examination from self-punishment.

This perspective also matters educationally. Character education research suggests that meaningful programs are associated with stronger academic and behavioral outcomes, including self-discipline and prosocial conduct (Jeynes, 2019). Plato's emphasis on habit formation helps explain why healthier coping requires repeated practice. Resilience is not formed by advice alone. It is strengthened through disciplined action under guidance.

Why Jung Matters

The survey also shows why Plato alone is not enough. Many young people know, at least in part, that catastrophizing, sarcasm, or emotional withdrawal are unhelpful, yet they continue to rely on them. Jung helps explain why. Maladaptive responses can function as defenses that protect the self from shame, fear, disappointment, or vulnerability. Self-blame may conceal anger or fear of rejection. Emotional shutdown may guard against exposure. Excessive distraction may keep painful feeling at a distance.

By interpreting these responses as meaningful rather than merely weak, Jung makes change more realistic. He suggests that moral instruction alone cannot transform what remains psychologically unintegrated. For adolescents in particular, this matters because emotional intensity often exceeds emotional vocabulary. Guided reflection, journaling, story-based inquiry, and discussion of recurring fears can help bring hidden material into awareness without requiring full formal Jungian analysis.

Why Their Combination Matters

The central contribution of this study is the claim that Plato and Jung are most useful together. Plato offers direction but less explanation for hidden resistance. Jung offers explanation but less practical moral orientation. Their combination produces a sequence that is especially relevant for youth work: identify the maladaptive pattern, interpret the hidden emotional logic, choose the corresponding virtue, and practice that response repeatedly.

This sequence can be translated into a simple developmental routine. First, the young person pauses long enough to notice the recurring pattern. Second, the pattern is named without immediate judgment, so that fear, shame, or disappointment becomes discussable rather than hidden. Third, the person is asked what a truthful and courageous response would look like in that situation. Finally, the response is practiced in small, repeatable actions, such as completing one avoided task, speaking honestly instead of retreating into sarcasm, or seeking help instead of shutting down. The strength of the model lies in showing that emotional insight and ethical discipline are not separate stages of development but mutually reinforcing practices.

This integrated sequence also helps explain the recurring combination of self-criticism, catastrophizing, and avoidance found in the questionnaire. If interpreted only behaviorally, these patterns may be reduced to laziness or immaturity. If interpreted only psychologically, they may be endlessly explored without demanding change. The Platonic-Jungian model avoids both problems. It treats the symptom as meaningful, but it also insists on redirection toward the good.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, the study shows that ethics and psychology need not compete when youth maladaptive responses are being examined. Plato clarifies the telos of healthier coping, while Jung clarifies the inner barriers to reaching it. Resilience, in this combined view, is not merely endurance. It is the capacity to understand one's inner life and direct it toward virtuous, reality-based, and relationally constructive action.

Practically, the framework can inform schools, families, and counseling settings. In schools, character education and emotional reflection should not be separated too sharply. After setbacks, students can be guided to identify what they felt, what story they told themselves, and what more virtuous response would be truthful and constructive. In families, adult modeling matters because anxious and avoidant styles can be transmitted relationally, while supportive relationships protect adolescent mental health (Eley et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2021). In counseling, the model encourages age-appropriate integration: name the hidden feeling, then translate insight into concrete habits of courage, moderation, honesty, and responsibility.

Limitations and Future Research

The study has several limitations. The questionnaire was small, based on convenience sampling, and descriptive rather than diagnostic. The synthesis of Plato and Jung is interpretive, and alternative readings are possible. The framework also has not yet been tested through a structured intervention. Future research should therefore examine whether programs that combine guided emotional inquiry with virtue practice can reduce self-blame, avoidance, and catastrophic thinking over time. Larger and more diverse samples would also clarify how widely the patterns observed here apply. Further work may also explore how this integrated model relates to contemporary therapies such as cognitive behavioral therapy without losing its distinctive emphasis on character and depth.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study set out to examine how Plato's concept of eudaimonia and Jung's analytical psychology can be combined to address maladaptive responses and stress management in youth. The analysis showed that maladaptive responses such as self-blame, catastrophizing, avoidance, emotional shutdown, and distraction are not random habits. They reflect a combination of distorted judgment, emotional conflict, and underdeveloped coping discipline. Plato helps explain why these patterns block flourishing by drawing the person away from reasoned, virtuous, and well-ordered living. Jung helps explain why the patterns endure by revealing the hidden fears and unintegrated emotions that sustain them.

The exploratory questionnaire supported the relevance of this framework by showing that self-critical and avoidant responses are common among young respondents. These findings reinforce the need for an approach that is both psychologically insightful and practically directive. The central conclusion of the study is that Plato and Jung are strongest when combined. Jungian self-awareness helps young people recognize what is happening beneath the surface of their stress responses. Platonic virtue helps them redirect those responses toward courage, honesty, self-control, and responsible action.

The broader significance of the study lies in its view of youth stress management as a developmental and ethical task, not merely a technical one. Healthy coping depends on the formation of a self that can face difficulty truthfully, interpret emotion wisely, and act with discipline. Although the present study remains conceptual and exploratory, it offers a grounded framework for future educational and counseling practice. By integrating self-understanding with virtue formation, young people may be better equipped not only to reduce maladaptive responses, but also to grow into more resilient and flourishing persons.

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