

Surprising findings on student stress and coping

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Overview

Background



Stress and coping at McGill



Rethinking the transition



Implications for student advising

Background

Stress in University

As student advisors, you know first hand that stress is a problem of increasing concern among university students.



60%

Report experiencing above average to tremendous levels of stress

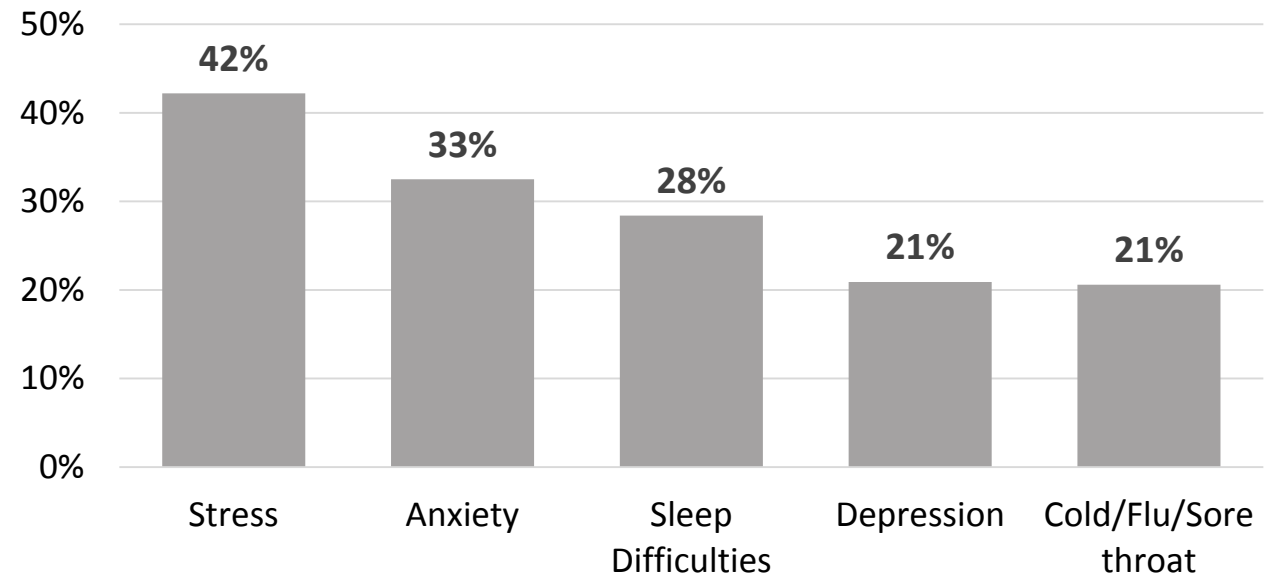
Background (cont'd)

Stress in University

National College Health Assessment Survey (2016)

- 41 Canadian Post-Secondary Institutions
- 43,780 student participants

Students were asked to report factors that impacted their individual academic performance



Background (cont'd)

Well-Being in University

- Less than half, or 45% of university students indicated that their general health could be described as being in *very good* or *excellent* condition.
- Around 30% of students experience clinical levels of depression.
 - 50% report feeling so depressed that they have difficulty functioning.
- Approximately 65% of students reported feeling overwhelming anxiety.



(ACHA, 2016; APA, 2006; Ibrahim et al., 2013)

Background (cont'd)

Well-Being in University

When asked about their feelings over the past 12 months

60%

Reported feeling hopeless at least once during that period

67%

Reported feeling very lonely

90%

Reported feeling overwhelmed and/or mentally exhausted

(ACHA, 2016)

Background (cont'd)

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Background (cont'd)

Notable Trends

- The appearance of early symptoms of many mental health disorders are the most prevalent between the ages of 18-29 years.
- Feelings of loneliness were found to be highest among those under 25 years of age.
- Young adults between the ages of 18-25 are the age group that are most likely to engage in certain unhealthy behaviours such as substance-use.

(Carver et al., 2015; CTADS, 2015; SAMSHA, 2014; Viktor & Yang, 2012)

Stress and Coping at McGill

The UCope Project

- University wide study on student stress and coping



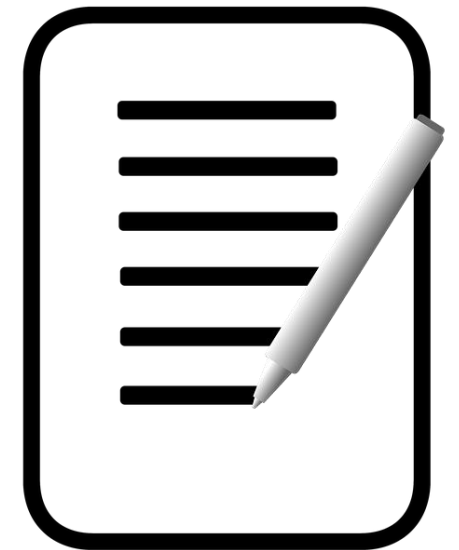
- 5-minute questionnaire completed in class
- Conducted in three separate academic years
 - 2014-15
 - 2015-16
 - 2017-18



Stress and Coping at McGill

The UCope Project: Participants

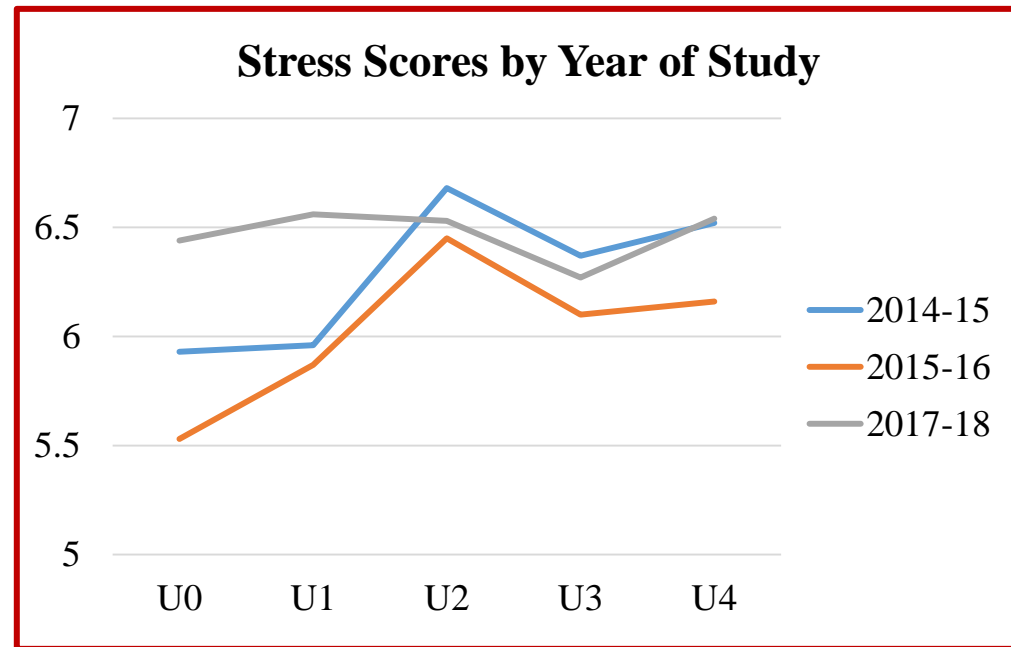
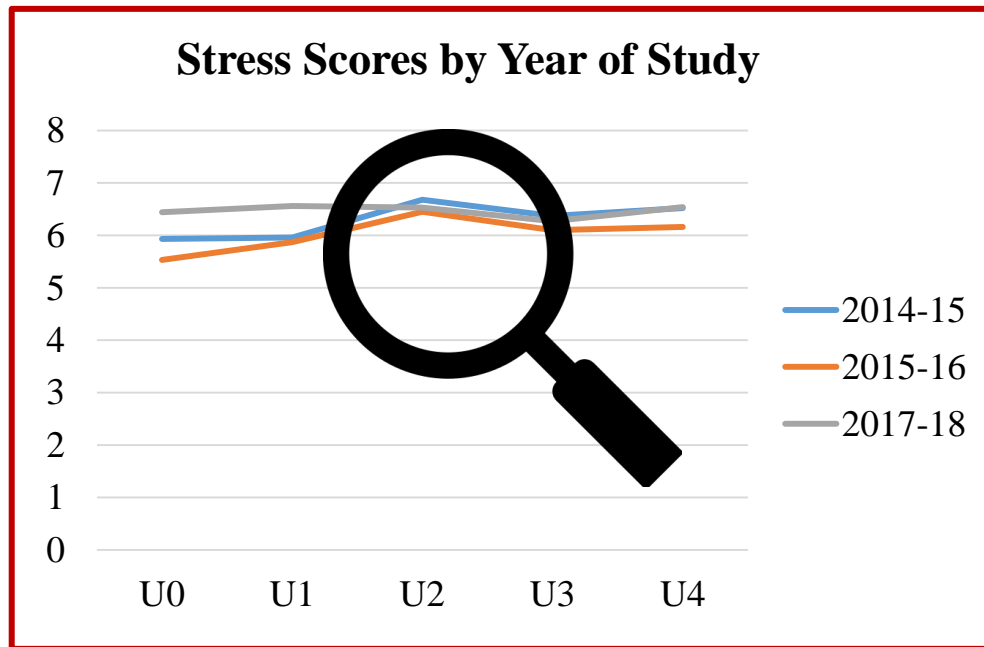
Year	2014-15	2015-16	2017-18
N	3,647	2,508	3,466
% Female	64.6%	65.8%	71.4%
Mean Age (years)	19.4	19.0	19.4
Standard Deviation	1.98	1.74	1.87
% Relocated	66.7%	69.7%	68.6%



Stress and Coping at McGill

The UCope Project: Findings

Stress Patterns

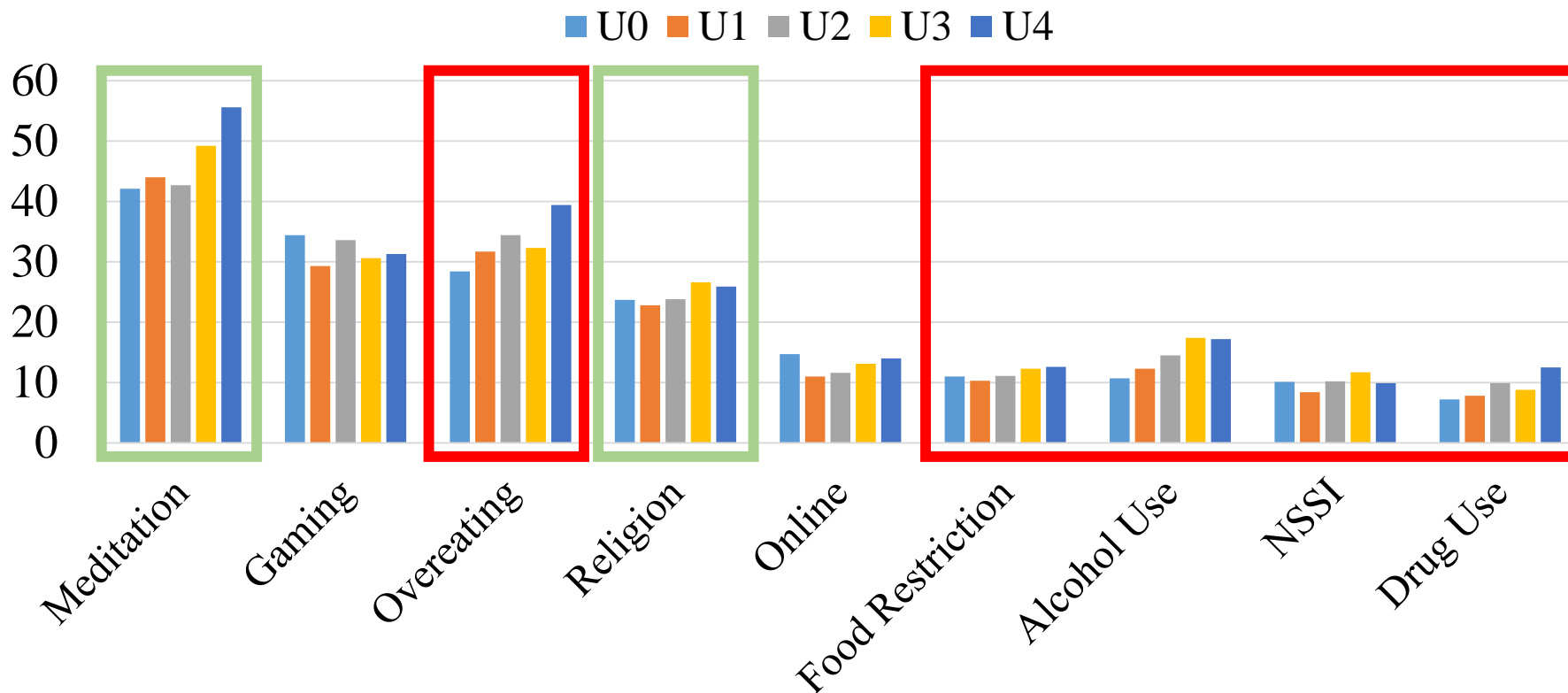


Stress and Coping at McGill

The UCope Project: Findings

Coping Patterns

Coping Behaviours Across Year of Study (2014-15)

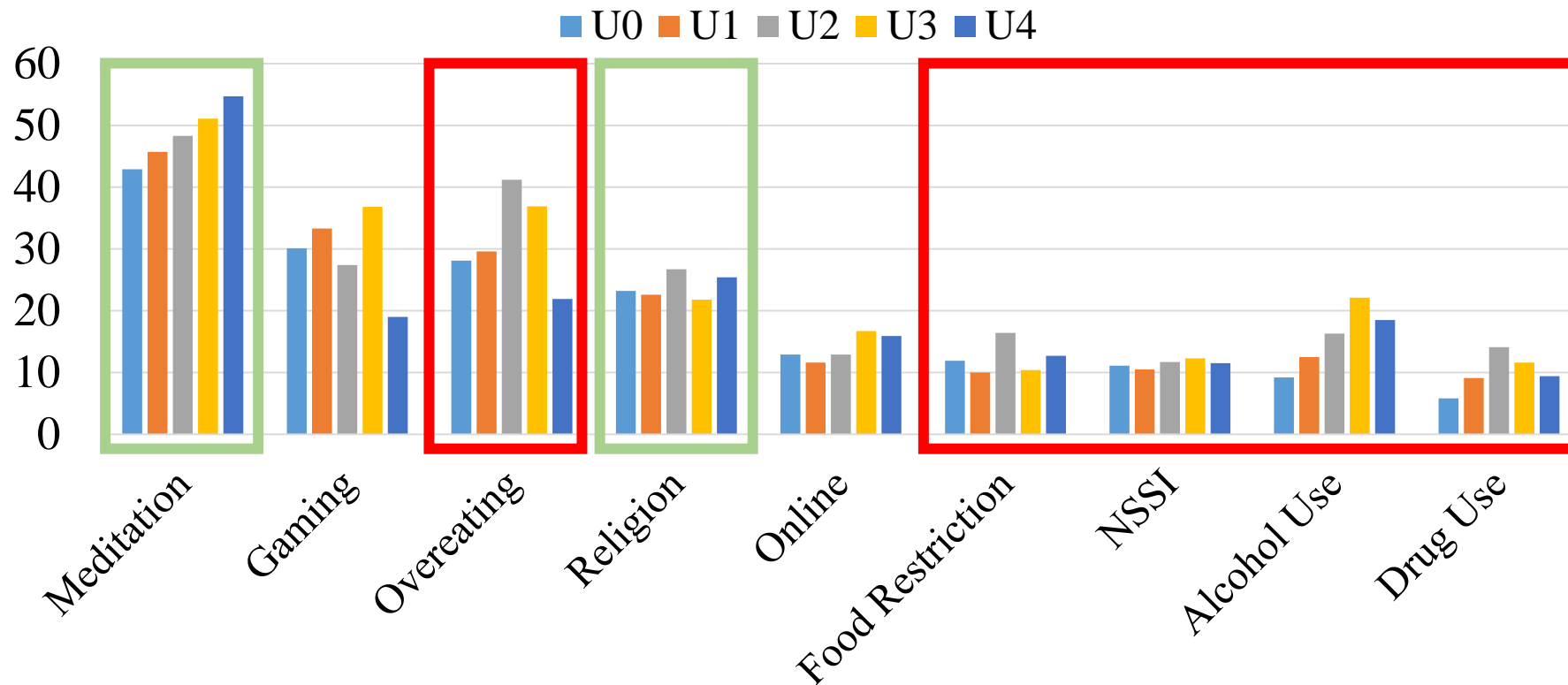


Stress and Coping at McGill

The UCope Project: Findings

Coping Patterns

Coping Behaviours Across Year of Study (2015-16)



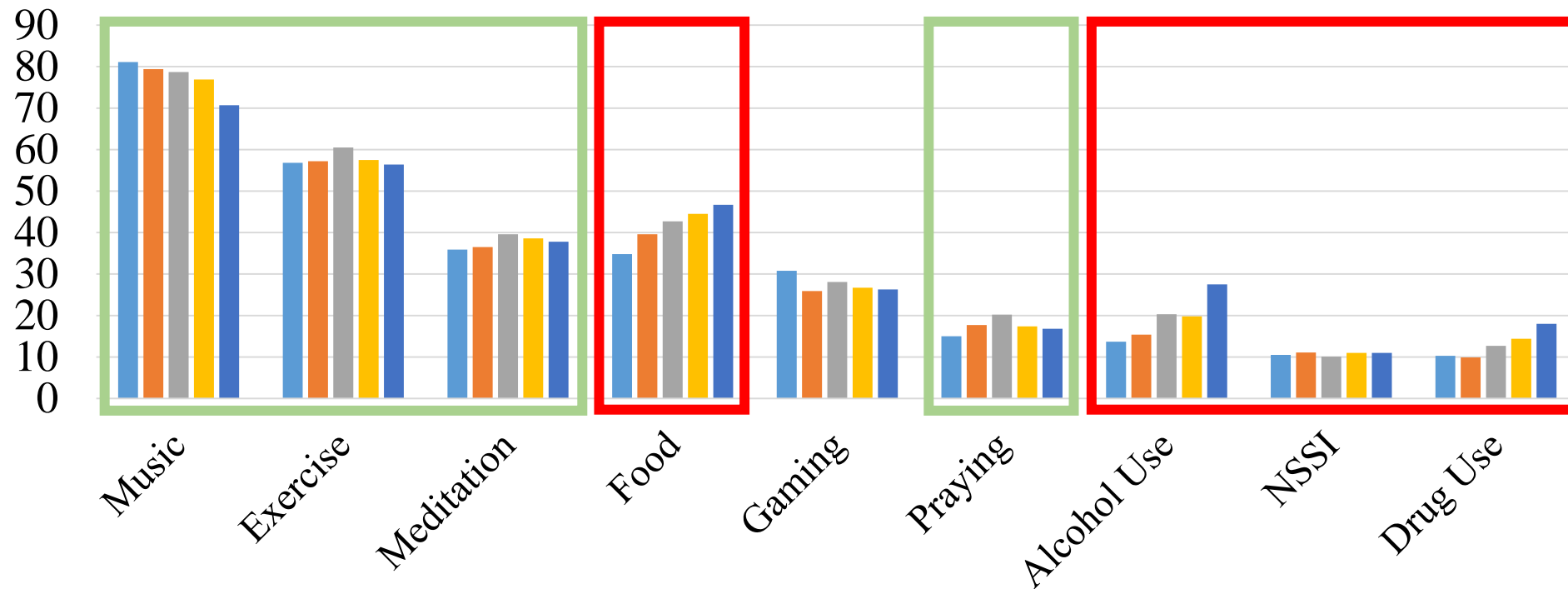
Stress and Coping at McGill

The UCope Project: Findings

Coping Patterns

Coping Behaviours Across Year of Study (2017-18)

■ U0 ■ U1 ■ U2 ■ U3 ■ U4



Rethinking the Transition

Transition into and out of university

- When we mention the university transition, we often think of the transition into university rather than the transition through, or out of, a post-secondary institution.
- This bias is evident in the literature where efforts have focused heavily on understanding the experiences of, or designing interventions for, incoming first year students over the others.

However, recent research shows that students transitioning out of university tend to report more difficulties on measures of mental health and well-being.

Transition into and out of university

Academic Performance Pressure to Succeed Post-Graduation Plans



Transition into and out of university

Pressure to Succeed
Post-Graduation Plans

“All or Nothing”

Pressure to Succeed

Post-Graduation Plans

“All or Nothing”

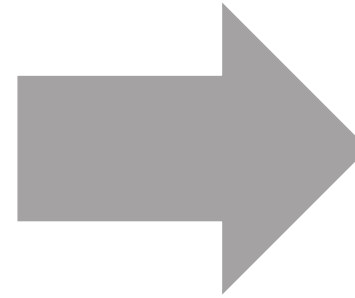


Implications for Student Advising

What does this mean for advisors?

As you know, universities are using new approaches to emphasize student wellness

- ❖ The Rossy Student Wellness Hub (McGill)
- ❖ Flourish (University of Toronto at Scarborough)
- ❖ The Best Practice Network (Nation-wide)



Building
Resilience

Implications for Student Advising

Dr Heath's Recommendations

Recognize the challenges

↳ Building resilience early is key

Encourage creativity in pursuing success

↳ There are multiple ways to succeeding within or outside of university

Emphasize the importance of wellness and self-care

↳ They can't do well if they are not well themselves



Thank you for listening!

Any questions?



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