Resilience Determinants in Women Exposed to Various Degrees of Intimate Partner Violence

by

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Abstract

The experience of intimate partner violence is traumatising for many of the women who are subjected to it; however, many people who experience a traumatic event display little or no psychological distress and there is evidence that some people may even thrive despite these experiences. The aim of the present study was to examine the intrapersonal mechanisms that may promote resilient responses in women exposed to various degrees of intimate partner violence. A community drawn sample of women (N=184), comprising both abused and non-abused participants, completed the survey-based study. Participants completed questionnaires assessing resilience, event cognitions, appraisals, personality, coping, and psychopathology. A series of correlational, ANOVA, and regression analyses were then completed to assess the relationships between these constructs. Overall, the results of the present study suggest that resilience was independent of exposure to abuse and women reporting higher levels of resilience experienced lower levels of negative symptoms (e.g., negative event cognitions, appraisals, and psychopathology). Regression analyses indicated that higher levels of resilience were predicted by personality factors, primarily emotional stability, and coping variables, planning, denial, and positive reframing. Resilience was depleted by self-blame, depression, and negative self-view. Further, the results suggest that resilience may be both a trait and a process. Clinically, this outcome implies that resilient traits (e.g., personality factors) can be translated into resilient processes (e.g., coping style) which can be taught and strengthened within a therapeutic context.
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