

# Childhood trauma and its effects in adulthood

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**Abstract— Background:-** Childhood trauma is an event experienced by a child that evokes fear and is commonly violent, dangerous, or life-threatening. Also sometimes referred to as adverse childhood experiences or ACEs, there are many different experiences that can lead to trauma. Trauma from childhood in adults causes people to be more likely to develop a pattern of victimhood thinking. This ideology can be dangerous, as the way people perceive themselves impacts their words, choices, careers, opportunities, and relationships. Individuals who genuinely think the world is out to get them can be impacted by fear and prevented from following their dreams.

**Objective:-** The objective of this research is to find out the severe effects of childhood trauma when s/he reaches adulthood.

**Methods:-** Ten people participated in this survey type research interview. I used a survey type interview method for noting a brief description about the participant's childhood trauma and what effects they have after reaching adulthood. The age group of people was from 22 years to 50 years of age. Three participants were interviewed on call and seven participants were interviewed face-to-face.

**Results:-** survey clearly shows that when a child experiences any trauma in his/her childhood, it creates a dangerous impression on the brain of the child which makes him go mentally sick after he reaches a certain age

**Discussion:-** Research has consistently shown that some traumatic events are more symptom-producing and cause greater distress and posttraumatic after effects than others. For instance, childhood interpersonal trauma, especially cumulative trauma, is the form of traumatic event that is the most strongly associated with later difficulties because of its effects on psycho-relational health and child development.

## INTRODUCTION

Childhood; The very word draws up images of innocence, joy, optimism and wonder. Childhood is a time of security – being protected and loved. Having stability in knowing you are protected by your family allows you to form solid and safe relationships later

in life. This is the ideal definition and experience of childhood. But children may have many forms of Childhood trauma; some of them are as follows:-

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Witnessing a traumatic event
- Having a severe illness requiring surgery and hospitalization
- Witnessing domestic violence
- Experiencing intense bullying
- Even extreme situations like refugee trauma and experiencing a large-scale natural disaster.

Childhood trauma chips away at a child's stability and sense of self, undermining self-worth and often staying with the child into adulthood. This trauma can also impact a person into adulthood as they experience feelings of shame and guilt, feeling disconnected and unable to relate to others, trouble controlling emotions, heightened anxiety and depression, anger.

According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, strong connections exist between childhood trauma and high-risk behavior such as smoking, having unprotected sex, and experiencing chronic illness such as heart disease and cancer. Individuals who have experienced abuse are likely to experience stress and anxiety later in life. This long-term stress and anxiety can cause physical symptoms as well as emotional issues throughout life.

According to Psychology Today, one of the most devastating impacts of childhood trauma on adults is the effect it has on self-image. Trauma from childhood in adults causes people to be more likely to develop a pattern of victimhood thinking. This ideology can be dangerous, as the way people perceive themselves impacts their words, choices, careers, opportunities, and relationships. Individuals who genuinely think the world is out to get them can be impacted by fear and prevented from following their dreams.

However, it doesn't have to stay like that; therapy or counselling can provide healing techniques from

child trauma in adults. Here are some of the most common symptoms and indicators of depression:

- Insomnia
- Drained energy
- Hopelessness
- Ongoing sadness
- Anxiety
- Lack of appetite
- Poor concentration
- Suicidal thoughts/actions

Factors that determine a child's reaction to trauma include:

- Developmental level: This could mean where the child is age-wise or mentally.
- Ethnicity or cultural factors: This can impact what the child views as a normal response to trauma based on what they have seen from people in their communities or families.
- Previous exposure to trauma: If a child is more accustomed to traumatic events, it could mean that they adapt by learning to control their reactions.
- Available resources: Refers to how socioeconomically connect their family is, as well as their access to their needs on a regular basis.
- Pre-existing child and family problems: This could dictate how supportive your parents are when you tell them that something traumatic happened, or it could mean that some form of abusive trauma is occurring in your immediate family.

#### Childhood Abuse May Impact Adult Relationships

Experiencing trauma in childhood can impact the way that you form attachments in romantic relationships.

One study asked 911 students (492 female and 419 male) about their experiences with trauma as children.

The students that were surveyed that experienced physical, emotional, or sexual abuse were more likely to exhibit attachment styles that were fearful, preoccupied, and dismissive. It also found that students that did not experience childhood trauma were much more likely to have secure attachment styles into adulthood.

Exposure to traumatic events can also cause poor self esteem, depression, self destructive behavior, and even difficulty trusting others. This can become especially problematic with age, as PTSD and traumatic events from childhood can actually result in adverse health effects in adulthood.

According to a Cleveland Clinic podcast, adults who experienced trauma as kids are much more susceptible to depression and mood disorders, as well as thoughts of suicide. They are also likely to abuse alcohol and other substances. Finally, they are more prone to developing chronic illnesses, like diabetes and heart disease, later in life.

#### OBJECTIVES

The objective of this research is to find out the severe effects of childhood trauma when s/he reaches adulthood.

#### METHODS

- Total number of participants  
Ten people participated in this survey type research interview.
- Type of interview  
I used a survey type interview method for noting a brief description about the participant's childhood trauma and what effects they have after reaching adulthood.
- Population Type and Survey  
The age group of people was from 22 years to 50 years of age. Three participants were interviewed on call and seven participants were interviewed face-to-face.  
The participants were from all over India. It was a detailed discussion with the participants by forming a rapport with them; all of them were clearly informed about the confidentiality of their information and was assured about their information being safe with me.
- The Interview Technique  
The participants were first asked about their Age and gender and the place they are currently staying. Then I asked them about one episodic trauma they have experienced in their childhood. After carefully speaking about their trauma and expressing a little sympathy s/he were asked

about the effects they are having due to the childhood trauma.

Some of the effects were known to them and some of them were asked by me if they are experiencing a specific problem; like dependency issues, relationship problems or any work issues.

## RESULTS

Interview	Age	Childhood Trauma	Problem Experiencing In Adulthood
SM(F)	40yrs	Fell from her bicycle due to road construction	Experienced amaxophobia all her life
RK(M)	31yrs	Parental issues and abuse	Led to impotency and constant stress
PM(M)	35yrs	Sudden death of mother with whom he was attached	Led to paralysis and loss of speech whenever any memory triggered.
SK(F)	25yrs	Sexual abuse by own father	Loss of voice, acute depression, mania, co-dependency for everything
DH(F)	32yrs	Parental issues	Hostile towards her husband and child, beat and burn her if did anything wrong
SK(F)	27yrs	Bullying by classmates and ignoring mother	Felt herself incompetent, lack of self-esteem, being a slave to her partner and everyone
AR(F)	37yrs	Alcoholic and abusive father, domestic violence, ignoring mother due to her own issues	Always felt ashamed of herself in making any mistake, non-adjustable with her partner, constant suicidal attempts
RB(M)	47yrs	Domestic violence and physical abuse by father	Shyness, agoraphobic, impotency and lack of self esteem
SS(F)	32yrs	Sexual abuse by stepdad	Crying out in public, shouting when the husband tries to touch, bite and scratch own self
VK(M)	27yrs	Thrown in a dark room as punishment	Developed agoraphobia, claustrophobia, nyctophobia

## RESULTS

The above survey clearly shows that when a child experiences any trauma in his/her childhood, it creates a dangerous impression on the brain of the child which makes him go mentally sick after he

reaches a certain age. Childhood interpersonal trauma can have a detrimental impact on a child's development, especially regarding psychological and interpersonal functioning. Their potentially adverse consequences on the psychological sphere are manifold: increased risk of depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress symptoms, aggression, dissociation, substance use, risky sexual behaviors, as well as borderline, antisocial, schizotypal, avoidant, and schizoid personality disorders. In the long run, these psychological repercussions may take a chronic course and lead to high rates of suicidality and low levels of social functioning.

## DISCUSSION

Research has consistently shown that some traumatic events are more symptom-producing and cause greater distress and posttraumatic after effects than others. For instance, childhood interpersonal trauma, especially cumulative trauma, is the form of traumatic event that is the most strongly associated with later difficulties because of its effects on psycho-relational health and child development. Indeed, childhood interpersonal trauma is associated with increased risk of mental health problems throughout the lifespan, including posttraumatic stress, eating disorders, depression, anxiety, suicidality, and substance use. Ultimately, these psychological problems may take a chronic course and lead to low levels of relational and professional functioning, higher rates of suicidality and less active social participation. Moreover, there appears to be a cumulative effect of exposure to trauma during childhood with the risk of psychological, physical, and relational health problems increasing as the number of different types of victimization experienced increases. Thereby, a clear understanding of the most common forms of psychological impairment in adult survivors of early interpersonal trauma is deemed necessary.

## REFERENCES

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