

A qualitative research proposal exploring post traumatic growth in adolescents who have experienced multiple traumatic events

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Background:

Many adolescents experience ongoing and/ or multiple forms of abuse, neglect, and interpersonal violence, including disruptions in protective caregiving (Van Der Kolk et al., 2009). Although these experiences can be extremely distressing to the lives of those who have experienced them, there is a growing literature which considers the process of Post traumatic Growth (PTG) in adolescents. PTG is defined as a positive psychological change as a result of the difficulties arising from a traumatic event (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999).

Current PTG literature has largely focused on adults and/or specific traumas in children and young people, such as natural disasters, physical illness or bereavement and non-clinical populations. There remains a gap in knowledge around PTG in adolescents who have experienced multiple traumatic events in the UK. This research project would therefore aim to explore experiences of post traumatic growth in the context of recovery for adolescents who have experienced multiple traumatic events, following access to mental health services.



Method:

- 10 young people aged 12 - 18, who have previously accessed and received psychotherapeutic intervention from a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in the UK.
- Participants who have been assessed and identified as having experienced two or more traumatic events.

Results and Conclusion:

Expected themes may be similar to PTG observed in adults, including; positive relationships, personal strength, and recognition of new possibilities. We would expect to conclude that PTG is an important factor in mental health recovery, and may be useful in therapeutic interventions for children and young people.

- Semi-structured interview, adapted from Slade et al., (2019) after 3 months of being discharged from CAMHS.
- Interpretative phenomenological analysis will be used to explore key themes and experiences of PTG.