

The Experience of Spiritual Coping Among Adult Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse

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Outline

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Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

- Definition:

“CSA is the involvement of dependent children and adolescents in sexual activities with an adult or any person older or bigger, where there is a difference in age, size or power, in which the child is used as a sexual object for the gratification of the older person’s needs, or desires, and to which the child is unable to give informed consent due to the imbalance of power or any mental or physical disability” (Sanderson 2006, p. 25)

Prevalence Rates

- Difficulty establishing prevalence rates:
 - **Universal definition of CSA** (Briere & Elliott, 2003; Burke Drauker & Martsof, 2006; Oddone Paolucci, Genuis, & Violato, 2001; Sanderson, 2006; Webster, 2001; Willows, 2009)
 - **Abuse-specific variables** (Sanderson, 2006; Peters, Wyatt, & Finkelhor, 1986)(Finkelhor, Hotaling, Lewis, & Smith, 1990; Willows, 2009)
 - **True differences in prevalence** (Briere & Elliott, 2003; Burke Drauker & Martsof, 2006; Oddone Paolucci et al., 2001; Peters, et al., 1986; Putnam, 2003)
 - **Methodological variations** (Briere & Elliott, 2003; Burke Drauker & Martsof, 2006; Oddone Paolucci et al., 2001; Peters, et al., 1986; Putnam, 2003)
 - **Underreporting** (Bagley & King, 1990; Conte, 1986; Mathews, 1996; Peters, et al., 1986; Sanderson, 2006)
- Prevalence Rates:
 - One in every three children (WHO, 2002)

Sequelae (Long-Term Effects)

- Sequelae:
 - Psychological, psychiatric, physiological, psychosocial, physical, behavioural, and interpersonal (Beitchman et al., 1992; Briere & Elliott, 2003; Bulik, Prescott, & Kendler, 2001; Davis & Petretic-Jackson, 2000; Dinwiddie et al., 2000; Jumper, 1995; Katerndahl, Burge, & Kellogg, 2005; Leserman, 2005; Margolin, 1999; Molnar, Juka, & Kessler, 2001; Neumann, Houskamp, Pollock, & Briere, 1996; Putnam, 2003; Oddone Paolucci et al., 2001; Roberts, Reardon, & Rosenfeld, 1999; Schetky, 1990; Seng, Low, Sparbel, & Killion, 2004; Willows, 2009)
- Diverse Effects:
 - CSA does not inevitably result in adverse or devastating impacts (Dallam et al., 2001; Haaken & Lamb, 2000; Oaksford & Frude, 2003; Oellerich, 2000; Rind et al., 1998)

Coping/Resiliency

- Variability in coping strategies
 - *healthy or adaptive*
 - *problematic or maladaptive*
- Spirituality as a Factor of Resiliency
 - Spirituality or religion has been found to be a positive coping and recovery resource for CSA **survivors** (Bogar & Hulse-Killacky, 2006; Gall et al., 2007; Knapik et al., 2008; Krejci, et al. 2004 ; Miller & Thoresen, 2003; Morrow & Smith, 1995; Oaksford & Frude, 2003; Shaw et al., 2005; Valentine & Feinauer, 1993)

Current State Of The Field

- Spirituality vs. Religion
 - Highly controversial
 - Differentiating between concepts of *religion* and *spirituality* (Hall, Catanzaro, Harrison, & Koenig, 2004a; Hall, Koenig, & Meador, 2004b; Hill et al., 2000; Hill & Pargament, 2003; Pargament, 1999; Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott, 1999; Zinnbauer et al., 1997)
 - No distinction to date among empirical studies (Miller & Thoersen, 2003)
 - Terms are Interchangeable (Dervic, Grunebaum, Burke, Mann, & Oquendo, 2006)

Spiritual Coping

- “The use of spiritual beliefs or behaviours to facilitate problem-solving to prevent or alleviate the negative emotional consequences of stressful life circumstances” (Koenig et al., 1998)
- Reviewed in general areas of health (Gall et al., 2007; Miller & Thoresen, 2003; Narayanasamy, 2004; Seybold & Hill, 2001; Siegel & Schrimshaw, 2002; Thuné-Boyle et al., 2006)
- Emotion-focused coping strategy
 - Relevant for (women) CSA survivors (Sigmon et al., 1996)

Spiritual Coping

- **Patterns of Coping:** (Pargament, Koenig & Perez, 2000)
 - relationship between negative spiritual coping and poorer outcomes for survivors
 - better outcomes for survivors related to positive spiritual coping
- **Spiritual Outcomes**
 - **Inconclusive** (Gall et al., 2007; Davis & Petretic-Jackson, 2000; Kennedy, Davis, & Taylor, 1998; Knapik, Martself, & Drauker, 2008; Murray-Swank & Pargament, 2005)
 - **Positive vs. Negative Spiritual Outcomes**

Gaps in the Literature

- Research needed on:
 - “the nature of spirituality that is relevant to adult survivors of CSA”
 - “both the positive and negative aspects of survivors’ relationship with a higher power and their potential associations with various facets of well-being”

(Gall, Basque, Damasceno-Scott and Vardy 2007)

Methodology

- Interpretivist-Constructivist Paradigm
- Qualitative Research
- Phenomenology
 - Giorgi's Empirical (Descriptive) Phenomenology
 - Goal of understanding lived experiences

Data Generation

- In-depth Interviews
 - Open-ended questions
 - Purposive sampling
 - 3-5 women
 - 1-2 hours in length
- Initial Interview
 - Primary data generation
- Follow-up Interview
 - Member check

Clinical Implications

- Therapy is integral in healing
- Spirituality as a resource in therapy
- Better understanding of the role spirituality plays for survivors
- Better understanding of how to address spirituality in therapy

*Questions?
Comments?*

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