

A positive psychology intervention for women who have experienced childhood sexual abuse: emerging research questions

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 OPTENTIA RESEARCH PROGRAMME



SYNOPSIS

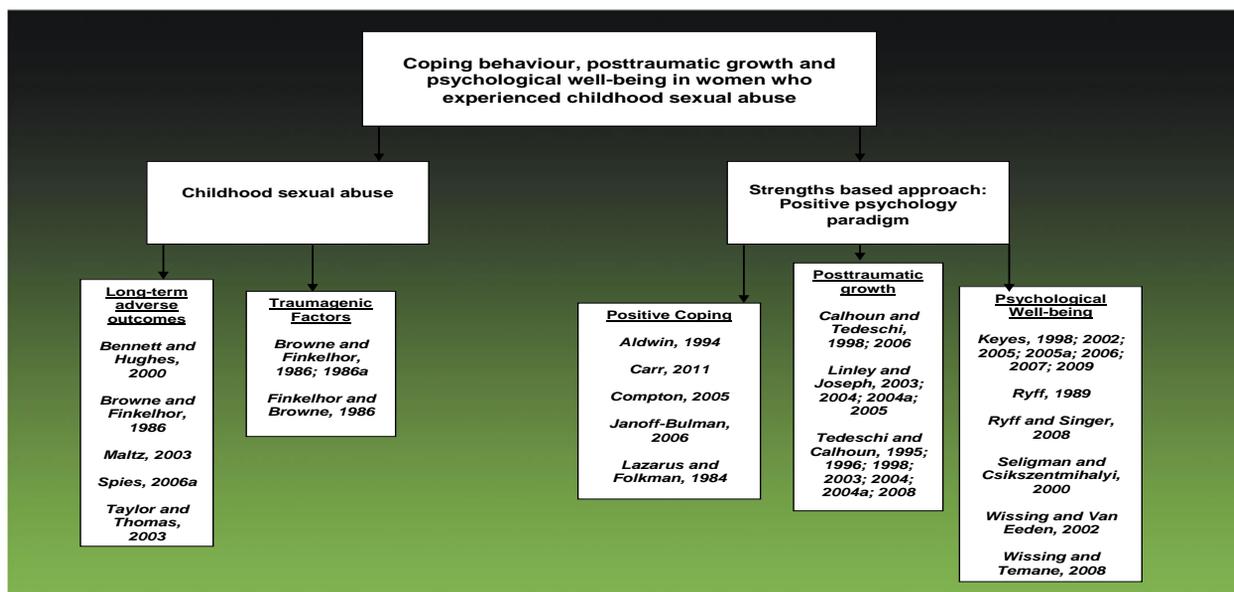


1. Rationale for the study
2. Conceptual framework
3. Research procedure
4. "Survivor to Thriver" (S2T) Intervention
5. Enabling processes
6. Emerging research questions
7. Addressing research questions
8. Key considerations

1. RATIONALE

- CSA contemporary intergenerational societal crisis
- Lack of treatment resources
- Few empirically supported CSA group treatment interventions
- None on promoting PTG in CSA survivors
- GAP = value of PPI for women who experienced CSA
- Doctoral study (Walker-Williams, Van Eeden & Van der Merwe (2012; 2013)
 - developed 15 guidelines
 - based on a trauma intervention model
- These guidelines needed to be evaluated
- During 2013 piloted the S2T intervention
- Research questions emerged for future studies

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



3. RESEARCH PROCEDURE



DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

- Qualitative research approach
- Quasi-experimental one group interrupted time series design
- Group treatment
- Conducted over 6-8 week period (weekly/bi-monthly 2-3 hour sessions)
- Two facilitators
- Sessions audio taped, transcribed & coded

3. RESEARCH PROCEDURE cnt..



DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

- Visual participatory approach
- Draw-and-talk & draw-and-write
- Structured interview
- Transcriptions of group treatment sessions
- Thematic content analysis
- Crystallisation (monologue / narrative)

3. RESEARCH PROCEDURE cnt...



PARTICIPANTS

- Purposive sampling
- Voluntary participation
- Commenced 9 women (4 black, 5 white)
- 7 completed
- 22 – 50 years
- Contact abuse
- Perpetrator known
- Selection criteria (sexually abused prior 18 years, abuse disclosed, individual therapy had taken place/ongoing)

4. S2T INTERVENTION



Positive psychology intervention - Strengths building perspective

- telling the trauma story* (CSA)
- normalising symptoms* (traumagenic dynamics)
- reframing internalisations (PTG)
- meaning-making* (PTG)
- re-telling the story for a change (PTG)
- Benefit finding (PTG)
- emotional well-being (PWB)
- emotion-focused active coping (+COPE)

5. PTG ENABLING PROCESSES



- Emotional awareness: catharsis & introspection
- Decisive action
- Shift from external to internal resources
- Post trauma identity
- Healing group context
- Competent interventionists / facilitators (reflective approach)

6. EMERGING RESEARCH QUESTIONS



1. Pseudo-perpetrator:

- Trauma locked in the experience of a “mock” perpetrator
- Not the “real” perpetrator but a similar experience of trauma

In this regard the women said:

- “...the painful thing about it was not actually the perpetrator but it was the fact that my dad beat me after the experience...” – (Participant 5)
- “She passed away not knowing...and then after that it was like the pain caused was not by the perpetrator as such...but by my Mom...” – (Participant 4)
- “...it’s not my grandfather [perpetrator] that’s my biggest trauma, it’s my Mom....” – (Participant 3)

6. EMERGING RESEARCH QUESTIONS



2. Traumagenic dynamics:

- Traumatic sexualisation / betrayal / stigmatisation / powerlessness
- Effect of these dynamics
- How do women cope with the messages internalised & achieve PTG

In this regard the women said:

- *“To feel that you're good enough, that you are worthy enough...that is something that I've been working so hard on...”* – (Participant 2)
- *“I wasn't at the right space in mind...I've been living according to these negative messages...that was my identity....and to let go...to burn them...it was like...burning my own identity...”* – (Participant 7)

6. EMERGING RESEARCH QUESTIONS



3. Role of loss:

- Multitude of loss
- Complex bereavement
- Domino effect
- Which need to be processed to achieve PTG

In this regard the women said:

- *“...times going through the flashbacks and trauma and avoiding things and, it changes your psyche, your character, your personality...and there is losses you're grieving...through the rebuilding of your lives comes the rebuilding of the losses...”* – (Participant 2)
- *“I couldn't handle that...and I realised now after this group session they were all the losses...I didn't like the losses you know...”* – (Participant 7)

6. EMERGING RESEARCH QUESTIONS



4. Inclusion criteria:

- Influence of individual therapeutic engagement

In this regard the women said:

- *“Because I never shared anything, I was a loner...this support, it’s like wow...”* – (Participant 7)
- *“You were there but almost on the outside...I know exactly what you’re talking about.here we on the inside”* – (Participant 1)

6. EMERGING RESEARCH QUESTIONS



5. Usefulness of S2T over time:

- How do women who experienced CSA maintain being a thriver over time

In this regard the women said:

- *“...but it can also make you very tired because in order to get through this you have to decide everyday...you have to work at it everyday...it is exhausting”* – (Participant 2)
- *“...so I haven’t skipped one day since the group...I must use the tools...”* – (Participant 7)
- *“Although I think it is still an unfinished promise...I can say goodbye...I’ve learned something out of this but I’m moving forward with my life...”* – (Participant 4)

7. ADDRESSING THESE QUESTIONS



- Applied for NRF funding
- Ongoing multi-disciplinary team project – Pathways to resilience & PTG
- Longitudinal research study (January 2014 – February 2017)
- To generate trustworthy data we will compare 3 groups over 3 years, with the same inclusion criteria but in different treatment groups
- Hereafter we want to compare the findings to provide evidence of the effectiveness of the S2T over time

8. KEY CONSIDERATIONS



- Dichotomy of CSA as trauma
- Ethics / code of conduct
- Respectful interventionists
- Culturally congruent
- Development of an intervention sensitive to youth

TOWARDS THRIVING YOUTH

- Prevent intergenerational transmission of CSA
- Development of an intervention sensitive to youth

9. CONCLUSION

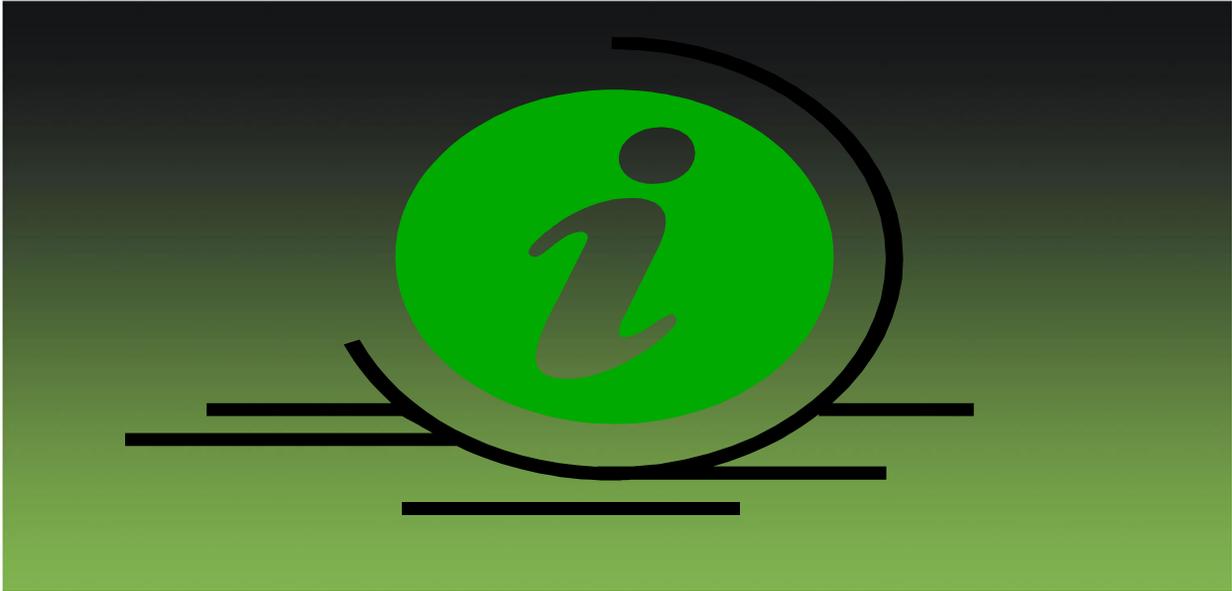


*“Out of the of the shadows into the sun -
from survivor to thriver”*

“The mission of the helping profession is not solely fixing what is broken; it is also the recognition of an individual’s strength and virtues”

(Seligman, 1998 p.2)

QUESTIONS / FEEDBACK



Thank You

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S2T NARRATIVE

“We deal actively with our experience of CSA and refuse to dwell in the past as we are not to blame for the trauma- we were hopeless victims left with numerous losses and so we cannot believe our internalisations or use our destructive coping any longer. Instead we must take a decision to recover and rediscover by recognising and understanding our progress, testing our internalisations, coping positively using self-nurturing techniques and our “strong foot” and looking to the future with forgiveness and hope. We reach out to one another and recognise our progress and access support and make the courageous choice to become self-worthy women, and to live our lives not only as strength filled survivors but also as victorious thrivers – S2T”