Betrayal Trauma Theory (Freyd, 1996)

Betrayal trauma occurs when the people or institutions we depend on for survival violate us in some way. An example of betrayal trauma is childhood physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. Betrayal trauma causes a profound conflict for the dependent victim because of the need to preserve the relationship for survival.

If the betrayed person is a child, and the betrayer is a parent, it is especially stressful for the child does not stop believing in such a way that will inspire attachment. For the child to believe and trust a person who is dependent on for survival violate us in some way. An example it is especially essential the child does not stop behaving in some form of childhood sexual abuse.

Definition of Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are the cumulative effects of stressful or traumatic life events that could cause emotional and physical health problems in adulthood. Some examples of ACEs include:

- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Parental separation/divorce
- Substance abuse
- Household criminal activity
- Mental illness
- Parental depression

Betrayal Trauma Theory: dimensions of trauma lead to different symptoms?

Examples of sexual abuse: 1. forced sexual activity (oral, anal, or vaginal), 2. unwanted, intimate sexual touching, 3. attempted intercourse, 4. fondling, 5. attempted fondling, 6. indecent exposure, 7. attempted exposure, 8. sexual coercion, 9. sexual harassment, 10. being sent home alone or being left with someone you didn’t know, 11. being sent home alone or being left with someone you didn’t know, 12. being hit, slapped, or had something thrown at you.

Impact on mental health

- Increase in the risk of mental health problems
- Decrease in the quality of life
- Increased risk of suicide

Discussion

Support for Betrayal Trauma Theory was demonstrated in the SF-36 scales and in dichotomous mental health symptoms.

Conclusion

High betrayal trauma leads to poorer health among trauma victims.

More work needs to be done to understand the relation between betrayal and health.