

# Psychological Changes Following Trauma: Generating positive outcomes

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# CHANGES IN BEHAVIOUR

- Painful
- Overwhelming
- Difficult to accept
- Alternating vigilance and exhaustion
- Shattered assumptions

# ORGANISMIC VALUING PROCESS (OVP)

- Joseph & Linley (2005)
  - Positive Accommodation
  - Negative Accommodation
  - Assimilation

# ASSIMILATION

- Assumptions threatened
- Refuse to accept change
- Ignore evidence
- Continue as before
- Inhibits processing

# POSITIVE ACCOMMODATION

- Shattered assumptions followed by:
- Acceptance
- Rebuilding cognitive schema
- Effortful struggle for meaning
- Eventual growth through processing

# NEGATIVE ACCOMMODATION

- Shattered assumptions followed by:
- Acceptance
- Rebuilding cognitive schema
- Effortful struggle for meaning
- Ongoing distress through misinterpretation

# Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- Exposure to a traumatic event
  - involving serious injury or death to self or others, and
  - a response of horror, fear or helplessness
    - Intrusions
    - Avoidance
    - Arousal

# POSITIVE CHANGES

- Organismic Valuing Process Theory
  - Automatic actualisation of psychological well-being
  - Accommodate novel trauma-related information
  - Extend cognitive schema
  - Supported by suitable social environment



# Psychological Change

- Eudaimonism vs Hedonism
- Psychological well-being (PWB) vs Subjective well-being (SWB)
- Durkin & Joseph (2009)

*Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 14:228–234, 2009  
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ISSN: 1532-5024 print/1532-5032 online  
DOI: 10.1080/15325020802540561



## **Growth Following Adversity and Its Relation with Subjective Well-Being and Psychological Well-Being**

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*Studies have shown that posttraumatic growth is associated with greater well-being. However, it is not clear whether posttraumatic growth is related to subjective well-being (SWB) or psychological well-being (PWB). Whereas SWB is derived from the hedonistic tradition, PWB is derived from the eudaimonic tradition. In a sample of 125 college students who had experienced a distressing event, we found evidence that growth is related to PWB rather than SWB.*

# NEGATIVE TO POSITIVE

- Verbally accessible memories (VAMs)
- Situationally accessible memories (SAMs)
- Change SAMs to VAMs

# Christopher (2004)

The difference between normal development-inducing stress & pathological stress is determined by:

1. the organism being sufficiently biologically healthy to make use of the resources;
2. whether cognitive schema are available to transform stress and anxiety into learning, meaning, and adaptive behavior; and
3. whether social relationships are complex, responsive, and flexible enough to adequately dampen stress arousal.

# Social Support

- “Information leading to the belief that they are loved, valued and cared for” (Cobb, 1976)
- Perceived social support
- Received social support
- Basic psychological needs (Self Determination Theory, Ryan & Deci, 2000)

# PERCEIVED SUPPORT

- Beliefs in:
  - amount
  - availability
  - accessibility
  - whenever needed

# RECEIVED SUPPORT

- Enacted support
  - Receipt
  - Helpfulness
  - Acceptance

# PhD RESEARCH

- Firefighters and their 'worst' incident
- Perceived support
- Received support
- Negative support
- Associations with distress, not growth



# Basic Psychological Needs

- Autonomy
- Relatedness
- Competence: “needs have to be met to develop optimally” (Deci & Ryan, 2000)

# CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES

- Hobfoll (1988; 1989)
  - Act to preserve what is valued
  - Depletion
  - Restoration

# THE THREE 'R's

- Resistance
- Resilience
- Recovery

# RESISTANCE

- Mild to moderate threats
- Stability and *status-quo*
- Maintain resources
- Hardiness (Kobasa, 1979)

# HARDINESS (Kobasa, 1979)

- Challenge
- Control
- Commitment

# RESILIENCE

- Range of threats
- Coping with instability and impact - bouncing back
- Transactions of resources

# RECOVERY

- No threat
- Stability
- Restoring resources after depletion

# RECOVERY FROM TRAUMA

- Judith Herman (1990)
  - Safety
  - Remembrance and Mourning
  - Reconnection



# SAFETY

- No safety - no recovery
- Physically safe
- No judgement
- Trusted confidant

# REMEMBRANCE & MOURNING

- Telling what actually happened
- Acknowledging the reality of the trauma
- Grieving the loss(es)
- Experiencing emotions

# RECONNECTION

- Taking risks
- Restoring the ordinary
- Evidence of recovery

# Resiliency - Jane McGonigal

- [http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/jane\\_mcgonigal\\_the\\_game\\_that\\_can\\_give\\_you\\_10\\_extra\\_years\\_of\\_life.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/jane_mcgonigal_the_game_that_can_give_you_10_extra_years_of_life.html)

JANE MCGONIGAL	"I'm playing a game to heal my brain"	A life with fewer regrets
..wish I hadn't worked so hard	"even when I was still in pain I stopped suffering"	Physical - do not sit still
..stayed in touch with my friends	stronger	Snap your fingers 50 times
..let myself be happier	braver	Discipline and willpower = not giving up
..had the courage to express my true self	better understood by friends	Baby animals
..lived a life true to myself	Happier, even though they were in pain	Curiosity
..more time with my family	springboard	3 positive vs 1 negative emotion
boosts in mood	My priorities have changed	Gratitude
wanting to die...	I'm not afraid to do what makes me happy	Touch
fear for my life	I'm gonna die or turn it into a game	

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- Resilience
- Recovery

# THE THREE 'R's

- Resistance: Challenge; Control; Commitment
- Resilience: Bouncing back; Resource transaction
- Recovery: Safety, mourning & reconnection; restore resources

# POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- Eudaimonic change (authenticity, engagement, meaning)
- Positive accommodation
  - Basic psychological needs (autonomy, relatedness, competence)
  - Resistance (hardiness)
  - Resilience (transactions of resources)
  - Recovery (restoration of resources)