



UNDERSTANDING RESILIENCE: EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCE OF COMPLEX TRAUMA AND POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH AMONG SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates survivors' experiences of gender-based violence (GBV) through qualitative interviews. Using semi-structured interviews, the study explores survivors' emotional landscapes, coping mechanisms, support systems, resilience, reflections, growth strategies, and feedback. Emphasizing safe, inclusive, and trauma-informed spaces, seven interviews were conducted, lasting 60 to 75 minutes each, prioritizing participant comfort. Through this qualitative inquiry, the study aims to enhance understanding of GBV survivors' experiences and inform the development of support interventions.

METHODS

- Qualitative interviews are central to the research, aiming to capture survivors' nuanced experiences of GBV.
 - Semi-structured interviews allow for deep exploration of survivors' personal narratives.
 - Each interview session lasts 60 to 75 minutes, ensuring comprehensive exploration while prioritizing participant comfort.
 - The interview covers various aspects including emotional landscape, coping mechanisms, support systems, understanding of experiences, resilience, reflections on past and future, growth strategies, and feedback.
 - It begins with introductions and understanding the participant's goals for sharing their story.
 - Questions delve into emotional state, coping strategies, support networks, evolving understanding of experiences, resilience, reflections on past and future aspirations, and growth strategies.
 - The interview concludes with the opportunity for participants to discuss overlooked topics, express interest in additional resources, provide feedback, and consider participation in follow-up surveys or interviews.
- There were seven interviews conducted prior to the production of the poster.

LITERATURE REVIEW 1

- Complex trauma encompasses enduring and diverse psychological and emotional trauma resulting from multiple traumatic events over an extended period, often starting at a young age.
- Gender-based violence (GBV) survivors frequently experience complex trauma due to the nature, intensity, and frequency of violence endured.
- - Research highlights adverse impacts of complex trauma on individuals' life paths and perpetuation of victimization cycles.
- Dramaturgical approaches, like storytelling, show promising effects in overcoming trauma and regaining self-agency, though the link to fostering personal resilience through storytelling for research remains unexplored.

LITERATURE REVIEW 2

The current project, centered on storytelling, fosters personal resilience by honoring research participants' narratives of challenges, resilience, and growth.

- Narrative and storytelling are effective in empowering vicarious trauma survivors, including those of natural disasters, aiding in resilience construction and potentially benefiting other communities facing adversity.
- Semi-structured storytelling practices provide avenues for comprehending, validating, and conveying emotional and psychological abuse experiences, contributing to resilience-building within affected communities.
- Embracing narratives facilitates deeper understanding of survivors' challenges and strengths, fostering empathy, solidarity, and collective resilience-building processes.



RESILIENCE-PORTFOLIO MODEL (HAMBY ET AL., 2018)

- 1. Regulatory Strengths**
 - Endurance (Psychological)
 - Impulse Control
 - Recovering Positive Affect
 - Self-Reliance
- 2. Meaning Making Strengths**
 - Future Orientation
 - Mattering
 - Purpose
 - Relational Motivation
 - Religious Meaning-making
- 3. Interpersonal Strengths**
 - Community Support
 - Compassion
 - Group Connectedness
 - School Climate
 - Social Support Received
 - Social Support Seeking
 - Teacher Engagement
- 4. Adversities**
 - Adverse Life Experiences
 - Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire – Short Form
- 5. Well-being and Other Outcomes**
 - Family Well-being
 - Health Related Quality of Life (HRQOL) (physical well-being)
 - Trauma Symptoms
 - Spiritual Well-being: Theistic
 - Spiritual Well-being: Non-theistic
 - Subjective Well-being

FINDINGS

- **Emotional Challenges and Coping Mechanisms**
- Personal experiences with emotional challenges were shared, indicating the importance of acknowledging and addressing these challenges.
- Supportive environments were emphasized as crucial for coping with emotional difficulties.
- Creative activities, particularly art, were discussed as valuable tools for healing and emotional expression.
- **Art's Role in Emotional Expression**
- The concept of "catharsis" in art, where individuals can release and process emotions through artistic expression, was discussed.
- **Artistic Therapy: A Supportive Environment**
- The therapeutic benefits of engaging in creative arts within a supportive environment were emphasized.
- Personal struggles and experiences were shared, highlighting the importance of fostering supportive environments for survivors.



CONCLUSION

- The research aligns with the Emotional Challenges and Coping Mechanisms aspect of the resilience portfolio model by providing visual representations of coping mechanisms and supportive environments, helping individuals navigate through emotional struggles.
- Addressing the Resilience and Trauma component, the project empowers individuals to confront and overcome traumatic experiences by visually showcasing narratives of resilience and strength, fostering understanding and acceptance of circumstances.
- Additionally, the project promotes Trauma-Informed Teaching: Challenges and Solutions by raising awareness and empathy for trauma survivors within communities, facilitating dialogue and education around trauma-informed approaches through visual storytelling.

FINDINGS

- Resilience was portrayed as the internal strength needed to confront traumatic experiences.
- Understanding and accepting circumstances were emphasized as crucial aspects of resilience-building.
- Strategies for resilience, including regulatory strengths like endurance, impulse control, and self-reliance, as well as meaning-making strengths like future orientation, mattering, and purpose, were discussed.
- **Trauma-Informed Teaching: Challenges and Solutions**
- The challenges of teaching students from traumatic backgrounds were acknowledged.
- Interpersonal strengths such as community support, compassion, and social support seeking were identified as essential for creating a supportive learning environment for students affected by trauma.

