



Forgiveness of self: A link between control and resiliency

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Introduction

HIV leads to numerous health and psychosocial stressors. Resiliency, the ability to cope with stressors, may be an invaluable tool to successfully manage such stressors (Connor & Davidson, 2003). Previous literature suggests control is an important factor in determining resiliency (Baumeister & Exline, 2000). However, forgiveness may be the link in this association (McCullough, 2000). Therefore, a greater understanding of the association between resiliency, control and forgiveness may lead to future interventions that successfully increase resiliency to help those living with HIV cope more effectively.

The purpose of the current study is to investigate the extent to which forgiveness of self mediates the relationship between sense of control and resilience.

Model



Adapted from generic resilience model (Masten, 2001)

Hypotheses

- 1) Overall sense of control is a significant predictor of resilience.
- 2) Overall sense of control is a significant predictor of forgiveness of self.
- 3) Forgiveness of self mediates the relationship between overall sense of control and resilience.

Methods

After IRB approval was received and informed consent was obtained, data were collected. Participants were 63 HIV positive people recruited through HIV/AIDS service organizations in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. Survey protocol included demographic information and several questionnaires related to our variables of interest.

Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale

(CD-RISC; Connor & Davidson, 2003)

- 25-item measure of stress coping ability
- 5 point scale (0 = not true at all, 4 = true nearly all of the time)
- Higher scores indicate greater resilience
- Sample item: "Past success gives confidence for new challenge."
- Published $\alpha = .89$
- The CD-RISC demonstrates convergent validity with the Kobasa hardiness measure and Sheehan Stress Vulnerability Scale.

Shapiro Control Inventory

(SCI; Shapiro, 1994)

- 187-item measure of control with four major content areas (Sense of Control, Modes of Control, Motivation for Control and Agency of Control)
- 6 point scale (1 = never, 6 = very often)
- Higher scores indicate a greater sense of control
- Sense of Control sample item: "I have a positive sense of control in my life."
- Published $\alpha =$ Overall Sense of Control .89
- The SCI demonstrates convergent validity with Gottschalk and Gleser's hostility/anxiety scores.

Heartland Forgiveness Scale

(HFS; Thompson et al., 2005)

- 18-item measure of total dispositional forgiveness with 3 subscales (Self, Other, and Situation)
- 7 point scale (1 = Almost always false of me, 7 = almost always true of me)
- Higher scores indicate a greater degree of forgiveness
- Forgiveness of Self sample item: "Learning from bad things that I've done helps me get over them."
- Published $\alpha =$ Total .87; Forgiveness of Self .75
- The CD-RISC demonstrates convergent validity with Multidimensional Forgiveness Scale.

Results

Demographic Variables					
Sex					
	Male	n=32 (50.8%)	Female	n=31 (49.2%)	
Ethnicity					
			Sexual Orientation		
African American	n=43 (68%)		Gay/Lesbian	n=24 (38%)	
European American	n=16 (25%)		Heterosexual	n=31 (49%)	
Other	n=4 (7%)		Bisexual	n=8 (13%)	
Age in Years			Years of Education		
Mean = 47.89, SD = 9.11, Range = 29-66			Mean = 12.03, SD = 2.75, Range 3-18		

	Correlation Matrix				Univariate Statistics					
	1	2	3	4	Measure	Mean	SD	Possible Range	Actual Range	Calc α
Age	-				SCI (OSC)	71.98	11.67	16-112	45-96	.84
Female	-.10	-			HFS (FoS)	28.43	6.96	6-42	11-42	.72
OSC	.09	-.09	-		CD-RISC	64.86	22.29	0-100	0-100	.96
FoS	.16	.05	.33*	-						
Resilience	.18	.04	.42**	.44**						

Regression 1			Regression 2			Regression 3				
Dependent Variable: Resilience			Dependent Variable: Forgiveness of Self			Dependent Variable: Resilience				
Indep. Variable	B	t	Indep. Variable	B	t	Indep. Variable	B	t	Tol	VIF
OSC	.42	3.59**	OSC	.33	2.28*	OSC	.24	1.74	0.22	2.45
						FoS	.36	2.58**	0.23	2.73
F (1, 61) = 12.86** adjusted R ² = .16			F (1, 44) = 5.19* adjusted R ² = .09			F (2, 43) = 7.06** adjusted R ² = .21				

Note: * = p < .05; ** = p < .01

Discussion

Hypothesis 1: Supported. Results indicate overall sense of control is a significant predictor of resilience.

Hypothesis 2: Supported. Results indicate overall sense of control is a significant predictor of forgiveness of self.

Hypothesis 3: Supported. Results indicate forgiveness of self mediates the relationship between overall sense of control and resiliency. While control may be an important factor in determining resiliency, forgiveness of self is essential to this link.

Clinical Implications & Future Directions

Our findings suggest several beneficial clinical implication. First, interventions that focus on forgiveness of self may potentially increase resiliency enabling people living with HIV to better cope with health and psychosocial stressors associated the virus. Second, our findings inform health professionals about how HIV infected patients may persist with health decisions to which they reportedly commit. Lastly, our study informs health professionals of the importance of forgiveness when treating people living with HIV.

Future research should investigate the most efficient methods of helping people living with HIV achieve forgiveness of self.

Limitations

- 1) Cross sectional correlational design
- 2) Convenience sample
- 3) Use of self-report measures

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References

Please see handout.



