EFFECTS OF TRAUMA INTENSITY ON POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH:

DEPRESSION, SOCIAL SUPPORT, COPING AND GENDER

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TRAUMA

- Study of how events effect people
- National Comorbidity Study (Kessler, Chiu, Demler, & Walters, 2005)
  - 60% of Men
  - 51% of Women
- Aftermath
  - Distress
  - Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
PTSD RELATIONSHIPS

- Common PTSD Correlates:
  - Meta Analysis (Helgeson, Reynolds, & Tomich, 2006)
    - Depression
    - Trauma Severity
    - Female more likely than males

- Lack of Social Support has also been shown to be related to greater levels of PTSD
  (Ozer et. al, 2008; Brewin, Andrews & Valentine, 2000).
**Posttraumatic Growth**

- Positive consequences following trauma

- The ability to thrive after experiencing a traumatic event, with individuals showing an increase in emotional, cognitive and/or psychological resources.
  (Wild & Paivio, 2003)

- Two separate continuums, as opposed to two sides of the same continuum.
  (Borja, Callahan, & Long, 2006)
  - Variables can be correlates of both PTG and PTSD
**CURRENT FINDINGS IN PTG**

- **Depression**
  - Negative relationship, after two years
    (Helgeson, Reynolds, & Tomich, 2006)

- **Coping**
  - Positively related to problem- and emotion-focused coping
    (Linley & Joseph, 2004)

- **Social Support** - Inconsistent results
  - Weiss (2002)- Social support predicts PTG
  - Linley & Joseph (2004)- Does not, but satisfaction with social support does.

- **Gender** - Women are shown to experience more growth
  (Helgeson, Reynolds, & Tomich, 2006)
TRAUMA INTENSITY

- Large amount of variance in the experience of the trauma
  - Literature evaluation of traumatic events
  - Subjective experience of the trauma

- “There is no single profile of a [trauma victim], as the extent and the nature of the impact varies from person to person” (Futa, Nash, Hansen, and Garbin, 2003)
Studies have shown that events perceived as more severe were related to more PTG.

(Helgeson, Reynolds, & Tomich, 2006; Morris et al., 2005)
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- Observe the effect trauma severity has on the relationship between PTG and depression, social support, coping strategies, and gender.

- Clarify the relationships with PTG
METHODS USED

- 598 UNT students were surveyed using an online mass testing experiment through the UNT Psychology Department
  - All students received partial course credit for their participation

- Questionnaires Used
  - Traumatic Events Questionnaire
  - PTSD Checklist
  - Posttraumatic Growth Inventory
  - Brief Cope
  - Quick Inventory of Depressive Symptomatology
  - Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support
 ANALYSIS

- Creating trauma categories
  - Two different splits
- Median Split - Score of 25
- Clinical Value - Score of 44
  (Blanchard, Jones-Alexander, Buckley, & Forneris, 1996)
- Gender - Looked at mean PTGI scores for both genders are each split.
OUR FINDINGS

- Median Split
  - Depression - ↓
  - Coping - ↑
  - Social Support - ↑

- Clinical Split
  - All variables showed even stronger amplification of PTG
OUR FINDINGS (CONT.)

- Gender Differences
  - Median split - no significant differences
  - Clinical split - Low trauma group = **Women** had more PTG
    High trauma group = **Men** had more PTG

![Graph showing PCL scores for different groups and severity levels.](image)
WHAT IT MEANS/CONCLUSIONS

- Subjective trauma severity matters
- Clarification of PTG relationships in the literature
- Implications towards future research
REFERENCES


