

The Interplay of Complex Trauma, Shame and Resilience in Higher Education

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Abstract

Complex trauma, stemming from repeated exposure to adverse experiences, profoundly affects individuals' emotional, cognitive, and social functioning.

Shame, a deeply rooted emotion often tied to feelings of unworthiness, is a frequent byproduct of trauma, potentially exacerbating its effects on mental health. However, resilience-the ability to adapt and recover from adversity- offers a counterbalance, promoting well-being even in the face of significant challenges.

Among college students, who often face additional stressors related to academic demands, the dynamics between these factors are particularly significant. Understanding these interactions can inform targeted interventions to support this vulnerable yet malleable population.

This proposal will present preliminary findings of an ongoing study of the relationships among complex trauma, shame, and resilience in college students, aiming to identify factors that foster recovery and growth despite adverse experiences. In addition, the study's findings will guide the development of faculty trainings on how to foster resilience in their classrooms.

Keywords: complex trauma; higher education; resilience; shame.