What is Betrayal Trauma?

- Any kind of trauma perpetrated by someone whom the victim trusts or depends on for fulfillment of basic needs (Freyd, 1996).
- Includes child maltreatment (e.g., sexual abuse perpetrated by a parent).

Revictimization

- Survivors of childhood sexual abuse are 2.5 to 5.12 times more likely to experience a sexual assault in adulthood than women without an abuse history (Cloitre et al., 1996; Merrill & colleagues, 1999).

Theoretical Explanations

- Imply a mediational model (Arata, 2002)
  - Emotional and behavioral consequences of abuse
  - Increased vulnerability through...
    - Behavior (e.g., substance use)
    - Lifestyle choices (e.g., multiple partners, early consensual sex)
    - Environment (e.g., lack of social support)
    - Emotional response to abuse (e.g., dissociation, PTSD symptoms, alexithymia) (Cloitre, 1998)

Betrayal Trauma Theory

- The child views the perpetrator as the key to his/her physical and psychological survival, and thus finds it advantageous to ignore the betrayal.
- Allows for exploration of impact of betrayal on revictimization risk.
- Predicts awareness of traumatic events will be impaired depending on level of betrayal.
- Predicts cognitive mechanisms are damaged as a result of abuse.
  - Cheater detector mechanism (Zurbriggen & Freyd, 2004)
    - Ability to detect trustworthiness in others
    - Abuse-related dissociation results in inability to label others as untrustworthy.
Present Study: Goals

- Examine revictimization within a betrayal trauma framework
- Exploratory examination of betrayal trauma theoretical claims
  - Betrayal detection
  - Response following a betrayal

Research Questions

- Will high betrayal trauma survivors have higher rates of adolescent and adult victimization?
- Will high betrayal trauma survivors be less accurate in detecting betrayal in interpersonal contexts?
- Will survivors of high betrayal trauma be more likely to report continuing a relationship following an interpersonal betrayal?

Measures

- Brief Betrayal Trauma Survey (Goldberg & Freyd, 2006)
  - Severe trauma history and level of betrayal associated with each trauma (low, medium, high)
  - 3 age categories: <12, 12-17, 18+
- Betrayal Detection Measure (Gobin & Freyd, 2006)
  - Frequency of everyday betrayals (e.g., infidelity, unfulfilled promises, lack of social support)
  - Perpetrated by those close to victim
  - Awareness
  - Reaction to betrayal

Participants

- 271 (177 female, 92 male, 2 unidentified) undergraduates at UO
  - Online
  - No self-selection
- Age
  - 16-57 (M=19.79, SD=3.66)
- Ethnicity
  - 79% Caucasian
  - Other ethnicities represented include: Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Multi-Ethnic, African American, Asian American

Rates of Trauma

- [Pie chart showing rates of trauma]

Rates of High Betrayal

- [Pie chart showing rates of high betrayal]
Rates of Childhood Betrayal Trauma

- 83 participants reported childhood trauma.

Rates of Childhood Betrayal Trauma and Revictimization

- 63 participants experienced childhood trauma.
  - Of these, 46 were revictimized in adolescence or adulthood.

Adolescent Relative Risk Ratios

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Betrayal 12-17</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Betrayal &lt;12</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
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<td>15</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>200</td>
<td>71</td>
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</table>

- 10% of those without a high betrayal trauma history were victimized in adolescence.
- 69% of people who did experience high betrayal during childhood were revictimized.
- Revictimization risk = 4.31

Adult Relative Risk Ratios

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>227</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- 9% of those without a high betrayal childhood trauma history were victimized in adulthood.
- 49% of people who did experience high betrayal during childhood were revictimized in adulthood.
- Revictimization risk = 5.44

Adolescent → Adult Revictimization

<table>
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<td>29</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>44</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- The presence of high betrayal trauma during adolescence was associated with experiencing high betrayal trauma in adulthood, $\chi^2(1) = 42.84, p < .001, \Phi = .40$
- 47% of adolescent high betrayal survivors were revictimized while 7.5% of those without an adolescent trauma history were victimized during adulthood.
- Revictimization risk = 5.43

What about adolescent onset risk?

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- The presence of adolescent onset high betrayal was associated with experiencing high betrayal trauma in adulthood, $\chi^2(1) = 17.58, p < .001, \Phi = 0.28$
- 27% of adolescent high betrayal survivors were revictimized while 5.4% of those without an adolescent trauma history were victimized during adulthood.
- Revictimization risk = 5.00
Exploring Revictimization in a Betrayal Trauma Framework

Betrayal Detection

Betrayal Detection Measure
- Seven interpersonal betrayals
- Three aspects of interpersonal betrayal
  - How many times has this happened to you?
  - Were you aware that you had been betrayed?
  - How did you respond?

Frequency of Experience
- High betrayal trauma survivors experience more everyday betrayals, \( t(269) = 7.21, p < .001, \) Cohen’s \( d = .92 \)
- When they endorse a betrayal, high betrayal trauma survivors tend to experience it more frequently, \( t(244.02) = 4.39, p < .001, \) Cohen’s \( d = .54 \)

Betrayal Experience: Unfaithful Kisser

How many times has this happened?
- You discover your partner has cheated on you by kissing another person.
  - Never
  - One time
  - Two to five times
  - Six to twenty times
  - Twenty-one to one hundred times
  - More than one hundred times

How aware were you that you had been betrayed?
- Completely unaware
- Somewhat unaware
- I could have been aware if I wanted to be
- Somewhat aware
- I was completely aware
What did you do after your partner kissed another person?
- Did not mention it to partner but ended relationship
- Did not mention it to partner and continued relationship
- Confronted partner and ended relationship
- Confronted partner and continued relationship
- Other

Discussion – Part 1 of 2
- Key Findings:
  - Childhood victimization was associated with the experience of high betrayal traumas in adolescence and adulthood.
  - Adolescent onset high betrayal trauma increases risk for adult high betrayal trauma.
  - High betrayal trauma appears to be associated with lower awareness for betrayal.
  - High betrayal trauma appears to be associated with response to betrayal.

Discussion – Part 2 of 2
- Implications:
  - Importance of betrayal
  - Perhaps, reducing revictimization risk is linked to accurate identification of betrayals and the ability to initiate proper self-protective actions.
- Future Directions:
  - Explore trust dynamics using an experimental paradigm
  - Examine revictimization longitudinally
    - Diverse samples

Acknowledgements
- Jennifer Freyd, Ph.D.
- Dynamics Lab
- Family
- Visit [http://dynamic.uoregon.edu/](http://dynamic.uoregon.edu/) for more information on Dynamics Lab research
Selected References


Selected References (continued)