

**Gender Differences in Depression and Anxiety:
The Mediating Role of Betrayal Trauma**

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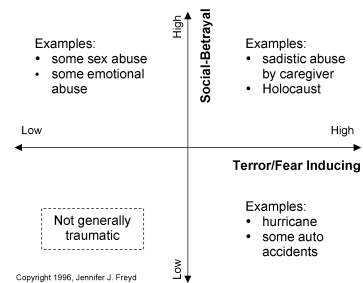
The Puzzle: Gender Differences in Traumatic Experiences

- Men typically report higher overall rates of exposure to traumatic experiences
- Yet women consistently exhibit higher rates of anxiety, PTSD & depression (2:1)

Betrayal trauma theory

- Traumas perpetrated by someone close to the victim are more likely to cause dissociation and unawareness than those perpetrated by someone not close (Freyd, 1994).
- Traumas with high betrayal significantly correlated with number of physical illness, anxiety, dissociation, and depression symptoms (Freyd, Klest, & Allard, 2005; Goldsmith, 2004)

Betrayal Trauma Theory (Freyd, 1994)



Betrayal Trauma Examples

Higher Betrayal: physical, sexual, or emotionally abuse by someone to whom you are close

Lower Betrayal: earthquake, auto accident; physical, sexual, emotional abuse by someone not close

Observed Gender Differences Categorized by Degree of Betrayal

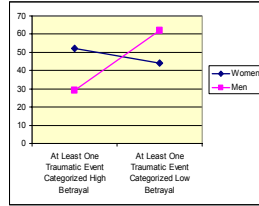
(Goldberg & Freyd, 2006)

	High Betrayal Items (6 items)	Medium Betrayal Items (12 items)	Low Betrayal Items (6 items)
Women Report More of This Trauma (p<.001)	Emotional Abuse Adult*** Close Sex Abuse Child*** Emotional Abuse Child*** Close Sex Abuse Adult***	Not-close Sex Abuse Child*** Not-close Sex Abuse Adult*** Witness someone close attack family member Adult ***	
Men Report More of This Trauma (p<.001)		Not-close Attack Child*** Not-close Attack Adult***	Witnessed Not-close Death Adult*** Accident Adult*** Witness Not-close Attack Child***

Gender, Depression, Anxiety, and Betrayal Trauma

Summary: Some Important Gender Differences (Goldberg & Freyd, 2006)

- The majority of men experience traumas with low betrayal
- The majority of women experience betrayal traumas



Purpose of Study

- Does betrayal trauma mediate the gender difference in severity of anxiety, depression, and dissociation?

Surveys Administered

1. Brief Betrayal Trauma Survey (BBTS; Goldberg & Freyd, in press)
2. Revised Civilian Mississippi PTSD Scale (Norris & Perilla, 1996)
3. Trauma Symptom Checklist
 1. Depression
 2. Anxiety
 3. Dissociation subscales

Demographics (N = 471)

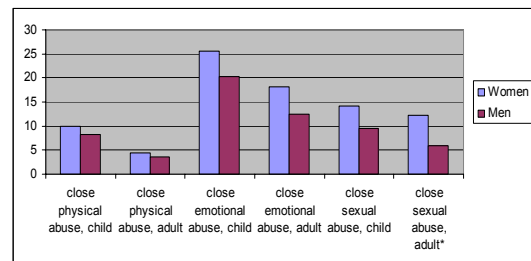
170 Male, 299 Female, 1 'Other'

- Ethnicity**
- European American 372 (79%)
 - Asian/Asian American 39 (8.3%)
 - Latino/a 19 (4%)
 - Native American 9 (1.4%)
 - African American 5 (1.1%)
 - Other 27 (5.1%)
- Age : $M = 19.67$, $sd = 3.30$; Range: 16-54

Mean differences in Symptom Scores by Gender

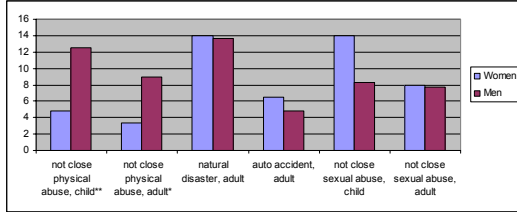
	Male	Female	t	p
Depression	.69 (.48)	.87 (.51)	-3.64	<.01*
Anxiety	.66 (.45)	.79 (.49)	-2.83	<.01*
Dissociation	.74 (.52)	.83 (.54)	-1.83	.07
PTSD	23.82 (6.62)	23.98(5.69)	0.28	.77

High Betrayal by Gender



Gender, Depression, Anxiety, and Betrayal Trauma

Lower Betrayal

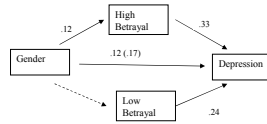


BBTS and symptom scores

	Depression	Anxiety	Dissociation	PTSD
BBTS	.32***	.35***	.39***	.43***
Depression		.78***	.66***	.55***
Anxiety			.72***	.50***
Dissociation				.50***

***p<.0001

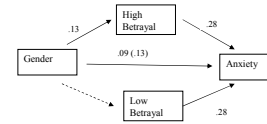
Does betrayal trauma mediate gender difference in depression?



Sobel test = 2.56, p = .01

Tentative Yes!

Does betrayal trauma mediate gender difference in anxiety?



Sobel test = 2.37, p < .05

Tentative Yes!

Limitations

- University sample
- Young age of participants
- Limited ethnic diversity

Conclusions

- Betrayal trauma partially explains the higher rates of depression and anxiety consistently found among women
- Dissociation and PTSD results unclear due to lack of gender difference in this sample
- Future study to include community (non-university) samples, improved measure of PTSD