Psychological Risk & Resiliency: Children’s Adjustment Post-Katrina

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Fourth Annual DHS University Network Summit
March 12, 2010

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Predicting PTSD in Children Post-Katrina: A Longitudinal Analysis

Purpose:
1. To evaluate children and their mothers post-Katrina adjustment over a two year time span.
2. To examine variables impacting children from a family and community perspective.
3. To examine the effect of parent distress and lack of social support on their parenting behavior and children’s PTSD symptom severity.

Method
391 Katrina affected mother-child dyads completed a number of questionnaires at 3-7 months and 12-14 months after Katrina. Children completed questionnaires at their schools; mothers mailed questionnaires.

Predicting PTSD in Children Post-Katrina: A Longitudinal Analysis

Child Measures
1. Hurricane Threat and Loss (HURTE)
2. Community Violence Exposure (SAVE)
3. PTSD (UCLA PTSD Reaction Index)

Mother Measures
1. Negative Coping (Brief Cope)
2. Social Support (ISEL)
3. Global Distress (SCL-90, Global Distress Index)

Parenting Measures
1. Corporal Punishment (Alabama Parenting Questionnaire)
2. Family Routines (Family Routine Questionnaire)
p<.10  
*p < .05  
**p < .01  
***p < .0001  

a All path coefficients are standardized
Results

1. Hurricane and Violence Exposure Predicted Child PTSD.

2. Low Social Support and Negative Coping Predicted Parent Distress.


4. Parents’ Use of Corporal Punishment Predicted Child PTSD at T1 & T2.

5. Children with Severe PTSD Symptoms at T1, 12 times more likely to have severe PTSD at T2.
The Youth Coping Responses Inventory: Development & Initial Validation

Purpose
To develop a comprehensive measure of coping that is psychometrically sound and appropriate for use with diverse samples of youth.

Participants
450 youth, ages 10-16 ($M = 12.58$). 53% African American, 39% Caucasian, 8% other.

Item Generation
Pool of items generated from literature review and variations of items on existing adult and child coping measures. Final pool = 83 items

Item Elimination
16 items eliminated due to low frequency, high inter-item correlations, or poor wording. 23 items eliminated after factor analysis

The Youth Coping Responses Inventory: Development & Initial Validation

Results

44 Remaining Items.

Exploratory factor analysis revealed three coping factors:
- Diversion (through Routines, Family, and Positivity): 20 items, $\alpha = .90$
- Destructive Coping: 13 items, $\alpha = .86$
- Ameliorative Coping: (active problem solving, discussion) 11 items, $\alpha = .85$

Initial Validation

**Diversion** positively related to Personal Adjustment

**Destructive Coping** positively related to Social Stress, Anxiety, Depression;
- negatively related to Personal Adjustment

**Ameliorative Coping** positively related to Social Stress, Anxiety, Depression

Conclusion

YCRI appears to be a reliable, valid measure of youth coping.
Positive Adjustment in Youth Post-Katrina: Impact of Child & Maternal Social Support and Coping

Background
Research on children’s post-disaster positive adjustment understudied.
Positive adjustment: Possessing attributes such as interpersonal skills, self-reliance, and self-esteem
Maternal and child coping and social support related to adjustment in non-disaster literature and buffers against PTSD symptom severity post-disaster

Purpose
To examine possible predictors of positive adjustment post-Katrina emphasizing personal and maternal factors

Positive Adjustment in Youth Post-Katrina: Impact of Child & Maternal Social Support and Coping

Hypotheses

1. Heightened hurricane and violence exposure will predict fewer positive outcomes

2. Children’s positive coping strategies will predict greater positive adjustment; negative coping strategies will predict less positive adjustment.

3. Mothers reporting greater social support will have children with greater positive adjustment

4. Mothers using positive coping strategies will have children with greater positive adjustment
Positive Adjustment in Youth Post-Katrina: Impact of Child and Maternal Social Support and Coping

Participants
142 mother-child dyads from Orleans, Jefferson, and EBR (Mean child age = 11.67 years; 58% female; 59% African American

Procedure:
Youth completed measures of hurricane (HURTE) and community violence exposure (SAVE) 3 – 7 months post-Katrina. Youth completed a measure of social support (SSSC), coping (YCRI), and positive adjustment (BASC-2) 25 – 28 months post-Katrina.

Parents completed measures of social support (ISEL), coping (COPE), and their perception of their children’s positive adjustment (BASC-2) 25 -28 months post-Katrina.
Positive Adjustment in Youth Post-Katrina: Impact of Child and Maternal Social Support and Coping

Results

1. Hurricane-related life-threatening experiences *positively* related to positive adjustment.

2. **Parent-provided social support** was the strongest predictor of child-reported positive adjustment.

3. Coping style using **Diversion** (Re-establishing Routines, Alternate Activities, and Spirituality) was the second strongest predictor of positive adjustment.

4. **Destructive** coping negatively predicted positive adjustment.

5. **Ameliorative** coping was not associated with positive outcomes.
Positive Adjustment in Youth Post-Katrina: Impact of Child and Maternal Social Support and Coping

Conclusions
1. **Parent support** is paramount in youths’ positive adjustment post-disaster

2. Programming should emphasize to parents their **critical role** in determining their children’s long-term adjustment in times of crisis.

3. **Providing children distracting activities** may be integral to post disaster adjustment. **Problem focused** coping may not be helpful to children in situations they cannot control outcome.