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The Role of Trauma

Trauma is an issue that over 60% of the global population are forced to face in just their childhood. Trauma is nothing but a negative psychological effect in our brains that affects the way our personalities are developed. The negative effects of trauma on the psychological human are permanent. Starting off by discussing the different types of trauma people face, I will then dive into how trauma can impact one's personality from all spectrums and from all ages. We will also look through the different ways in which trauma can marinate itself in individuals, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other psychological disorders. The paper will conclude by discussing the various treatment options available for individuals who have experienced trauma and the potential benefits of these treatments.

Trauma is a widespread phenomenon that affects individuals across the globe. Trauma can be defined as a series of events that are experienced or witnessed by an individual as life-threatening and goes in the way of the individual from living their life free from stress. Trauma can result from many different experiences, including natural disasters, accidents, assault, abuse, war, and witnessing or experiencing violence. Traumatic events can occur in many different forms, including natural disasters, accidents, violent crime, and military combat,

among others. Therefore, trauma is a worldwide pandemic that in every set of ten individuals, seven of them are affected by traumatic events.

Trauma is a very broad term to most individuals, however there are several different types of trauma. According to Jocelyn Moreira, in her article about the different types of trauma, there is physical trauma that occurs due to a physical injury, such as a car accident, sports injury, or fall. Physical trauma can lead to various physical and emotional side effects such as pain, disability, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression. Physical trauma can also affect an individual's ability to perform daily activities and impact their quality of life. Sexual trauma is a type of trauma that occurs due to sexual contact that is without consent. There are several side effects that can impact an individual crucially. Such as physical injury, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unwanted pregnancy, PTSD, anxiety, and depression. Emotional trauma is a type of trauma that occurs due to psychological or emotional abuse. This can lead to several emotional and psychological side effects. Such as anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. Natural disaster trauma is a type of trauma that occurs due to natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, or fires. Natural disaster trauma can lead to various physical and emotional consequences, including injury, loss of property, PTSD, anxiety, and depression.

Personality is a very controversial subject especially behind psychological terms. Personality is developed through a series of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that define an individual's unique character. There are many factors that contribute to the development of personality. Such as the environment we surround ourselves with, cultural influences and trauma. On top of this, personality can change over time as people continue to live their life and get to experience new experiences. Therefore, understanding the importance of personality and its

dependence on experiences, such as traumatic events, is essential for both personal growth and for better understanding how individuals interact with the world around them.

Personality disorders are mental health conditions that affect a person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. There are many different types of personality disorders, each with its own set of symptoms and characteristics. To begin with, there is Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD). BPD is when an individual suffers with unstable emotions, impulsive behavior, and a distorted self-image. People with BPD may struggle with coming in terms with their emotions and unfortunately, may result in self harm, or worse, suicide. Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD). NPD is when an individual has no care for anyone in their surroundings, and they are selfish when it comes to having any sort of empathy for others. Individuals with NPD may also have delusional dreams of success and power. Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD). ASPD is when an individual has no regard for the rights of others, as well as no care in the world for taking responsibility for their own actions. People with ASPD are likely to involve themselves with criminal behavior, as well as being compulsive liars. Avoidant Personality Disorder (AvPD). AvPD is when an individual has a fear of rejection or criticism. People with AvPD may avoid social situations and have difficulty forming close relationships. They may also have a low self-esteem and be extremely sensitive to criticism. Obsessive Compulsive Personality Disorder (OCPD). OCPD is when an individual has difficulty constructing tasks onto others and are very tough on themselves when it comes to self-criticism. Then there is Schizotypal Personality Disorder (SPD). SPD is characterized by unusual beliefs or perceptions, and difficulty forming close relationships. People with SPD may also believe in several different supernatural theories. They also struggle with paranoia and suspicious thoughts. Therefore, each type of personality

disorder is different with each one with its own unique set of characteristics. However, each of these characteristics and symptoms can all be treated and taken care of.

Although children are young and naive, once they are exposed to traumatic events, it can impact their personality development in a very negative way. Traumatic experiences in general can cause emotional distress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. When this is exposed to a child, their perspective on life is altered, and this will form their personality almost immediately. For instance, some side effects from this exposure to children may be low self-esteem, trust issues, and difficulty in forming relationships with others. Trauma can also increase the risk of developing personality disorders, such as BPD, ASPD, and NPD. To add on, because they are so young, the chances of children developing PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder) are extremely high. To add on, trauma during one's childhood can lead to effects such as drug use and alcohol consumption later on in their lives. According to Michael D. De Bellis in an article he wrote about the biological effects of childhood trauma, he stated, "Childhood traumas, particularly those that are interpersonal, intentional, and chronic are associated with greater rates of PTSD, PTSS, depression and anxiety, antisocial behaviors and greater risk for alcohol and substance use disorders." Therefore, Michael D. De Berris gave proof of the long term effects that trauma can have on an individual. This goes to show the importance of having to take action on your own mental health in order to get rid of trauma as much as possible. As well as being careful to the children in our society to prevent them from having to experience or witness any sort of action that can lead to be traumatic in their lives.

Although trauma is a constant negative factor in human development, there are a few benefits that trauma can provide throughout any stage of our lives. Trauma can lead to personal growth and transformation. Individuals who have experienced trauma often mention how they

have a new found sense of purpose and a deeper appreciation for life. Trauma can lead individuals to reevaluate their priorities and make significant changes in their lives. For example, trauma survivors may change careers, seek out new hobbies, or become more involved in their communities. Trauma can also lead to the removal of a few personality disorders by creating a deeper sense of empathy and compassion for others, as they understand the pain and suffering that others may be experiencing. According to Terry Levy, in an article he wrote called “The positive side of trauma”, he stated, “The study of posttraumatic growth (PTG) reveals that many people increase in personal strength, appreciation of life, emotional intimacy with partners and family, creativity, sense of spirituality, and life possibilities following traumatic events.” This study went on to prove how individuals who experienced trauma bounced back in life by developing hope, meaning and purpose, positive emotions, social support, acts of kindness and an internal locus of control.

Although trauma can have some positive effects, the negatives far outweigh the positives. That is why during adulthood, the impact trauma can have on an individual can be life threatening. Trauma can lead to chronic stress, which can result in physical health problems. Such as high blood pressure, heart disease, and immune system dysfunction. Chronic stress can also weaken the body's ability to fight off infection and increase the risk of developing chronic diseases, such as cancer. Trauma can also have a profound impact on an individual's mental health, which can result in life-threatening consequences. Trauma can lead to symptoms of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). On the other hand, the impact trauma can have on an adult's personality is disturbing. In an article called “20 Common Personality Traits of Family Trauma Survivors” by Kaytee Gillis, she mentions, “As a result, they develop coping skills and mechanisms to deal with it, which leads to adult pathology.

“Childhood experiences literally impact the biology of the brain.” (Perry, 2021). More therapists now are aware of the link between childhood trauma and adult personality traits.” Kaytee Gillis later goes on to explain the personality traits that these individuals developed as their trauma continued to affect their health. These traits were, people-pleasing behaviors, high achievement/perfectionism, constant comparison of yourself to others, avoiding relationships/getting close to people, jumping from relationship to relationship, or staying in a relationship past its expiration date, too rigid or too loose boundaries, the need to “fix” others, disordered eating, self-medicating with substances or substance misuse, feelings of depression, anxiety, or anger that do not go away, experiences of chronic pain, sensitivity to rejection, not feeling seen or heard, the need to over-explain or make excuses, feelings of shame and guilt, poor self-esteem or self-image, lack of ability to relate to others or being self-conscious, difficulty expressing emotions, fears of social situations and acting in dysfunctional or unhealthy ways towards others.

Trauma and personality disorders are complex and challenging conditions that can have significant impacts on an individual's mental health and well-being. However, although there may not seem to be any way to cure yourself from trauma such as PTSD that to many believe to be a permanent disorder, there are various treatments that one can do to relieve yourselves from. According to the American Psychological Association, you can do either one of the following; Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Cognitive Therapy, Prolonged Exposure, Brief Eclectic Psychotherapy, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) Therapy, Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET) or Medications. However, the sooner you start treatment, the better. Just as Cheyenne Downey mentioned in her article called, “The impact of childhood trauma on children's wellbeing and adult behavior”, she says,

“Early interventions may reduce trauma symptoms alongside sufficient and customized treatment strategies.” Although there are studies done by qualified individuals that state these are treatments for trauma and personality disorders. There is treatment that is available to everyone globally and it is priceless, and that is the word of God. Scripture says that God is present and in control of our suffering. “Count it all joy, my brothers,[a] when you meet trials of various kinds,” (James 1:2).

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- Author links open overlay panelCheyenne Downey a, Downey, C., b, & AbstractBackgroundThis article looks at the impact of childhood trauma on children's wellbeing and adult behavior from the perspective of 9 clinical professionals in Ireland. It exhibits how physical. (2021, June 30). *The impact of childhood trauma on children's wellbeing and adult behavior*. European Journal of Trauma & Dissociation. Retrieved April 29, 2023, from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2468749921000375>
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