

EXPERIENCES OF PERSONAL POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH IN SUICIDE-LOSS SURVIVORS: A SCOPING REVIEW.

Introduction

Despite the evidence that suicide-loss survivors may be at higher risk for trauma-related outcomes, positive psychology recently suggested that suicide bereavement may also promote personal growth, better defined as posttraumatic growth (PTG). Aim of this paper was to provide a scoping review of the literature on PTG in suicide-loss survivors.

Methods

The following combination of terms was searched on PubMed on May, 17th 2019: "(growth OR posttraumatic growth) AND suicid* AND (parent* OR caregiver* OR friend* OR *mate* OR famil*)". Qualitative and quantitative empirical papers and opinion papers were included. Reviews, book chapters, editorials, papers focused on pharmacological treatments and off-topic papers were excluded. Papers were retrieved and included according to PRISMA recommendations.

Results

The search provided 197 results. After study selection and screening, 9 papers were finally included. PTG includes the dynamic process of searching for answer and meaning-making and may be associated with better mental health among survivors. Community support, self-disclosure and time since loss were positively associated with PTG. Suicide-loss survivors with secure attachment style tended to self-disclose more and to perceive greater support from others than did suicide-loss survivors with insecure attachment, thus enhancing their chances of PTG. PTG may be complicated by intense grief, along with preoccupation with the deceased, concurrent brooding and reflective rumination unique to answering the question of "why". Lower education and poor health were significantly associated with lower levels of PTG.

Conclusions

PTG as a role in the process of healing of survivors. Psychoeducational interventions specifically designed to foster self-disclosure could theoretically help suicide-loss survivors to achieve PTG following their traumatic loss, but this hypothesis needs to be tested in appropriate future studies. Psychotherapies aiming to modify internal working models could have a role in enhancing PTG among suicide-loss survivors characterized by insecure attachment styles.

References

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