

Public Abstract

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Graduation Term:FS 2009

Department:Educational & Counseling Psychology

Degree:PhD

Title:The Relationship of Coping Strategies to Psychological Health Among Sexually Victimized Deaf Women

This study examined coping strategies used by a sample of deaf women who self-reported an unwanted sexual experience at any point in their life and assessed the relationship between coping strategies used and their overall psychological health and life satisfaction. The current study modified and extended the Frazier et al. (2005) study by including two additional coping strategies: problem-solving and social support. It was hypothesized that the coping strategies problem avoidance, social withdrawal, problem-solving, cognitive-restructuring, expressing emotions, and social support would predict significant variance in psychological distress at the time of the unwanted sexual experience(s). Specifically, problem avoidance and social withdrawal would positively relate to past psychological distress and problem-solving, cognitive restructuring, expressing emotions and social support would negatively relate to past psychological distress. Also, it was hypothesized that problem avoidance and social withdrawal would positively relate to current psychological distress, while problem-solving, cognitive restructuring, expressing emotions and social support would negatively relate to current psychological distress. Finally, it was hypothesized that problem avoidance and social withdrawal would negatively relate to life satisfaction and problem-solving, cognitive restructuring, expressing emotions and social support would positively relate to life satisfaction. Findings supported all three hypotheses regarding the prediction of the coping strategies on current or past psychological distress and satisfaction with life. However, problem avoidance, problem-solving and social support did not significantly predict psychological distress (past or current) or satisfaction with life. Furthermore, cognitive-restructuring and expressing-emotions did not contribute significant variance in current psychological distress or satisfaction with life.