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Section 01

### **Article with Notes**

**Research Question:** What different common effects can an individual's childhood trauma lead to in early adulthood romantic relationships?

Alison Paradis & Sophie Boucher (2010) Child Maltreatment History and Interpersonal Problems in Adult Couple Relationships, *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 19:2,138-158, DOI: [10.1080/10926770903539433](https://doi.org/10.1080/10926770903539433)

**Major results and key findings:** This study looks at the relationship between interpersonal issues in adult romantic relationships and experiences of maltreatment during childhood. The study sample is 1,728 university students who fill out an online questionnaire. "Victims of maltreatment reported higher levels of couple interpersonal problems. Also, the experience of childhood maltreatment is more strongly associated with couple interpersonal difficulties for males than for females. For females, emotional neglect is more consistently related to couple interpersonal problems, including problems with being nonassertive, distant, and self-sacrificing. For males, physical abuse is significantly associated with the likelihood of being domineering, distant, and self-sacrificing. The issue of how the different forms of maltreatment might

contribute differently to couple interpersonal problems for males and females is addressed and discussed”.

Other information:

The idea that childhood neglect and abuse have a strong lasting effect on how these children will construct their lives and interpersonal relationships as adults is supported by complex trauma theory, as well as attachment theory.

Intimate adult relationships can give the survivor a safe place to heal from the abuse they have experienced.

“Findings have shown an association between a history of sexual abuse and lower satisfaction in intimate relationships (CitationDiLillo & Long, 1999; CitationHunter, 1991), higher symptoms of sexual dysfunctions (CitationHunter, 1991; CitationMullen, Martin, Anderson, Romans, & Herbison, 1994), lower level of trust in their partners, and poorer communication between spouses (CitationDiLillo & Long, 1999). In addition, victims of sexual abuse are more likely than nonvictims to report higher levels of partner violence (CitationBanyard, Arnold, & Smith, 2000; CitationDiLillo, Giuffre, Tremblay, & Peterson, 2001), as well as separation and divorce (CitationColman & Widom, 2004; CitationMullen et al., 1994).” New research is showing that other forms of childhood abuse also have similar negative effects on adult interpersonal relationships.

Nasim, R., & Nadan, Y. (2013, March 18). *Couples therapy with childhood sexual abuse ...* - Wiley Online Library. Wiley Online Library.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12026>

Major results and key findings:

This article proposes clinical therapy for people in romantic relationships who have experienced childhood sexual abuse and their partner. Since relationships in which one partner is a survivor of childhood sexual abuse often face challenges with physical intimacy, sex, trust, and PTSD this study proposes couples therapy as a means to work through this trauma together and to better understand one another.

Other information:

“Sexual abuse in childhood is differentiated from other types of trauma because it takes place in the context of interpersonal relations, and as such is relationally based. Unlike other forms of interpersonal violence, CSA mingles exploitation and assault with what may be evidence of love and affection (Briere, 1989”.

Survivors of CSA often do not have a full memory of what happened to them, particularly if they never told anyone during the time period of abuse, the memories often become fragmented and can be difficult for the survivor to access.

“this process encourages the development and strengthening of preferred narratives of resistance, survival, and strength. This is especially true in cases where both partners have suffered childhood abuse”.

Larsen, C. D., Sandberg, J. G., Harper, J. M., & Bean, R. (2011, September 2). *The effects of childhood abuse on relationship ...* - wiley online library. Wiley Online Library.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2011.00661.x>

Major results and key findings: This research study looked at the relationship between self-reported survivors of childhood abuse (both physical and sexual) and adult romantic relationship quality. The study examined 338 women and 296 men who sought out mental health support through their university. "Results from structural equation modeling indicated that childhood physical abuse influenced relationship quality for both men and women whereas childhood sexual abuse did not have a significant impact on relationship quality for either gender. The results of the study indicated that there may be more gender similarities than differences in experiences of childhood abuse and relationship quality than previous research has shown." The findings suggested that childhood sexual abuse contributed to a lack of trust in others, trouble forming safe and healthy relationships, and feelings of isolation.

Other information:

Childhood abuse has been linked to trouble trusting others and their intentions, specifically within intimate partner relationships.

It is important to study the frequency and extent of the abuse as well.

There is potential for bias here because the study was done only on students who were already seeking help.

Banford Witting, A., & Busby, D. M. (2020, October 13). *The residuum of childhood physical and sexual abuse ...* - sage journals. Sage Journals.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520965972>

Major results and key findings:

There is a significant connection between childhood trauma and lack of resolution in adult romantic relationships. The trauma not only has an effect on the survivor and how they view their relationship but also their partner's perception of the relationship.

Other information:

The effects of PTSD were not measured in this study as much as the direct effects of presence of trauma, while the two go hand and hand they also differ and should be focused on collectively rather than only one or the other.