

CHILD MALTREATMENT, PERSONALITY VULNERABILITY, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF BORDERLINE EXPERIENCE

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INTRODUCTION: Borderline personality disorder (BPD) is a serious mental disorder characterized by an intense and pervasive pattern of instability in interpersonal relationships and identity (Leichsenring et al., 2011; Skodol et al., 2002). It is widely recognized as child maltreatment is a robust predictor of later borderline personality pathology (Zanarini et al., 1997; Infurna et al., 2014). The considerable heterogeneity among patients with BPD makes the psychological assessment and comprehension highly complex (Eaton et al., 2011). Nevertheless, significant progresses were achieved using a dimensional perspective (Fossati et al., 2014), able to highlight the “subjective experience of BPD in terms of problematic themes” (PDM-2, 2017). Blatt proposal of two subtypes (dependency and self-criticism) of borderline experience (Blatt & Luyten, 2009; Kopala-Sibley et al., 2012), may provide important information for the dimensional understanding of the borderline functioning. Based on these considerations, we aim to (1) explore the Blatt’s proposal of different borderline subtypes and (2) examine the link between various forms of maltreatments with different borderline features.

METHOD: Two samples of adolescents, the first recruited from high-school (N = 174), and the second comprising outpatients (N = 67) followed in private and public units, completed the DEQ-A, the CECA.Q, the PDQ-4, and the BPI.

RESULTS: Preliminary results seem partially to suggest the existence of different vulnerabilities related to self-criticism and dependency themes in adolescents with borderline features. The influence of various types of childhood maltreatment on pathological personality styles and specific borderline features will be also analyzed.

CONCLUSIONS: This study may contribute to the literature interested on providing a better understanding of differences between adolescents with borderline features to inform for the development of effective treatments for BPD.