

# Effectiveness of Resilient Focused Psychotherapy on Interpersonal Relationship Among Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse

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**Keywords:** Child Sexual Abuse, Interpersonal Relationship, Resilience, Psychological Intervention.

**Abstract:** The present study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of resilient focused psychotherapy on the Interpersonal Relationship functioning among the adult survivors of CSA. For the purpose, 25 women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse above 18 years of age were randomly selected for the study. Interpersonal Relationship Questionnaire (FIAT – Q) was used to measure the various dimensions of Interpersonal Relationship such as assertion of needs, bi-directional communication, conflict, interpersonal closeness, and emotional expression that contribute to the interpersonal relationship functioning. They underwent 20 psychotherapy sessions which was focussed on resilient training and improving coping skills over a period of 10 weeks. Pre and Post test scores of the samples were statistically analysed using paired sample t-test. The result reveals that the intervention program was significantly effective in improving the Interpersonal Relationship among the CSA survivors. The study suggests that early positive psychological therapeutic intervention will benefit the survivors better.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is a cruel act towards the children. Sexual exploitation in childhood is under-recognized (IOM). The impact of the abuse creates a scar throughout the adulthood. One of the major concerns was found to be interpersonal issues among the survivors as an adult as they develop trust issues, adjustment problems, lack of resilience, etc.

Various research findings says that the survivors of Child Sexual Abuse experiences variety of Interpersonal Issues during their adulthood. These problems predominantly involve hostile emotions, isolation, intimacy issues, and problems in social relationship and maintenance of friendship. Some people also develop problems in their own parenting skills and relationship with their children. Acute and long-term effects of CSA involve various psychological problems like depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, etc. These findings are in line with Famularo et al. (2013).

Courtois (1979) reports that 79% of the survivors of CSA experienced severe to moderate problems in their interpersonal relationship. Fear of Intimacy leads to unsatisfying and destructive relationship.

Several clinical and non-clinical research studies link the Child Sexual Abuse and suicidal ideation.

Resilience is deeply rooted with the Interpersonal Relationship Functioning and self-recognition of an individual which supports the enhancement of self-esteem and self-efficacy especially for those who have survived a traumatic event in life. (Gordon L et al., 2015). Child sexual abuse (CSA) influences adulthood interpersonal functioning and sexual risk through its impact on resiliency resources and psychological distress (Brittain E et al., (2012). There are several evidence based strategies and intervention, especially school based programmes to prevent CSA, through strengthening the family support and community practice (World Health Organization, 2016)

Since the lack of resilient and copying skills were identified as the key factor for the cause of interpersonal relationship problems in the adulthood among the CSA survivors. Present study explores the effectiveness of resilient focused psychotherapies on the interpersonal relationship among the CSA adult survivors. The intervention also focused on establishing the expression of feelings and emotions other than sexual thoughts and memories of the childhood sexual abuse.

### 1.1 Aim of the Study

To assess and improve the interpersonal relationship Functioning of adult women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse through Resilient Focussed Psychotherapy Intervention.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

25 adult women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse aged above 18 years from Chennai city, Tamil Nadu were selected randomly to participate in the intervention program. The level of problems in their Interpersonal Relationship was measured using Interpersonal Relationships Questionnaire (FIAT – Q). Demographic profile schedule is used to collect data about the experience of Child Sexual Abuse and other personal details. All data were analysed using descriptive statistics. Baseline and Final means were compared using paired t-test.

### 2.1 Hypothesis of the Study

1. There will be significant difference between the pre-test and post-test in the level of problems in Interpersonal Relationship functioning among the adult women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.
2. There will be significant difference between the pre-test and post-test in the Assertion of Needs (Identification & Expression) among the adult women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.
3. There will be significant difference between the pre-test and post-test in the Bidirectional Communication (Impact & Feedback) among the adult women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.
4. There will be significant difference between the pre-test and post-test in the level of Conflict among the adult women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.
5. There will be significant difference between the pre-test and post-test in the Disclosure and Interpersonal Closeness the adult women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.
6. There will be significant difference between the pre-test and post-test in the Emotional Experience and Expression among the adult women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.

### 2.2 Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and pairwise comparison of the Interpersonal Relationship Functioning among the adult women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.

| Interpersonal Relationship Functioning | M       | SD     | t      | Sig. |
|--|---------|--------|--------|------|
| Baseline score (pre-test)              | 3.8944  | .31493 | -      | -    |
| Final score (post-test)                | 2.1264  | .23514 | -      | -    |
| Paired Differences (pre & post)        | 1.76800 | .23608 | 37.445 | .000 |

M – Mean, SD – Standard Deviation, N=25

Table 1 shows the mean of Interpersonal Relationship of the respondents has reduced from 3.89 to 2.13 which indicates there are improvement in the Interpersonal Relationship among the adult women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse. t value of paired difference is 37.445 which is significant at 0.01 level as p-value < 0.01. The hypothesis which states there will be significant difference between pre and post scores of Interpersonal Relationship Functioning is accepted. There is significant difference between the pre and post test scores of Assertion of Needs. The resilient focused intervention has significantly improved the Interpersonal Functioning among the adult women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics and pairwise comparison of the Assertion of needs (Identification and Expression) among the adult women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.

| Interpersonal Relationship Functioning | M       | SD     | t      | Sig. |
|--|---------|--------|--------|------|
| Baseline score (pre-test)              | 3.6000  | .76376 | -      | -    |
| Final score (post-test)                | 2.0160  | .54443 | -      | -    |
| Paired Differences (pre & post)        | 1.58400 | .68293 | 11.597 | .000 |

M – Mean, SD – Standard Deviation, N=25

Table 2 shows the mean of Assertion of needs (Identification and Expression) of the respondents has reduced from 3.60 to 2.01 which indicates there are improvement in the Assertion of needs among the adult women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse. t value

of paired difference is 11.597 which is significant at 0.01 level as  $p\text{-value} < 0.01$ . The hypothesis which states there will be significant difference between pre and post scores of the Assertion of needs (Identification and Feedback) is accepted. There is significant difference between the pre and post test scores of Assertion of Needs. The resilient focused intervention has significantly improved the Assertion of needs among the survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics and pairwise comparison of the Bidirectional Communication (Impact and Feedback) among the adult women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.

| Interpersonal Relationship Functioning | M       | SD     | t      | Sig. |
|--|---------|--------|--------|------|
| Baseline score (pre-test)              | 4.3200  | .61914 | -      | -    |
| Final score (post-test)                | 2.3520  | .33803 | -      | -    |
| Paired Differences (pre & post)        | 1.96800 | .43466 | 22.638 | .000 |

M – Mean, SD – Standard Deviation, N=25

Table 3 shows the mean of Bidirectional Communication (Impact and Feedback) of the respondents has reduced from 4.32 to 2.35 which indicates there are improvement in the Bidirectional Communication among the adult women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.  $t$  value of paired difference is 22.638 which is significant at 0.01 level as  $p\text{-value} < 0.01$ . The hypothesis which states there will be significant difference between pre and post scores of the Bidirectional Communication (Impact and Feedback) is accepted. There is significant difference between the pre and post test scores of Bidirectional Communication. The resilient focused intervention has significantly improved the Bidirectional Communication among the survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics and pairwise comparison of the Conflict among the adult women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.

| Interpersonal Relationship Functioning | M       | SD     | t      | Sig. |
|--|---------|--------|--------|------|
| Baseline score (pre-test)              | 3.1680  | .63161 | -      | -    |
| Final score (post-test)                | 1.6480  | .34293 | -      | -    |
| Paired Differences (pre & post)        | 1.52000 | .43970 | 17.285 | .000 |

M – Mean, SD – Standard Deviation, N=25

Table 4 shows the mean Conflict of the respondents has reduced from 3.17 to 1.65 which indicates there are reduction in the Conflict needs among the adult women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.  $t$  value of paired difference is 17.285 which is significant at 0.01 level as  $p\text{-value} < 0.01$ . The hypothesis which states there will be significant difference between pre and post scores of the Conflict is accepted. There is significant difference between the pre and post test scores of Conflict. The resilient focused intervention has significantly reduced the Conflict among the survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics and pairwise comparison of the Disclosure and Interpersonal Closeness among the adult women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.

| Interpersonal Relationship Functioning | M       | SD     | t      | Sig. |
|--|---------|--------|--------|------|
| Baseline score (pre-test)              | 4.1840  | .55952 | -      | -    |
| Final score (post-test)                | 2.4480  | .37541 | -      | -    |
| Paired Differences (pre & post)        | 1.73600 | .43863 | 19.789 | .000 |

M – Mean, SD – Standard Deviation, N=25

Table 5 shows the mean of Disclosure and Interpersonal Closeness of the respondents has reduced from 4.18 to 2.45 which indicates there are improvement in the Disclosure and Interpersonal Closeness among the adult women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.  $t$  value of paired difference is 19.789 which is significant at 0.01 level as  $p\text{-value} < 0.01$ . The hypothesis which states there will be significant difference between pre and post scores of the

Disclosure and Interpersonal Closeness is accepted. There is significant difference between the pre and post test scores of Disclosure and Interpersonal Closeness. The resilient focused intervention has significantly improved the Interpersonal Closeness among the survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics and pairwise comparison of the Emotional Experience and Expression among the adult women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.

| Interpersonal Relationship Functioning | M       | SD     | t      | Sig. |
|--|---------|--------|--------|------|
| Baseline score (pre-test)              | 4.2000  | .38730 | -      | -    |
| Final score (post-test)                | 2.1680  | .33005 | -      | -    |
| Paired Differences (pre & post)        | 2.03200 | .44974 | 22.591 | .000 |

M – Mean, SD – Standard Deviation, N=25

Table 6 shows the mean of Emotional Experience and Expression of the respondents has reduced from 4.20 to 2.17 which indicates there are improvement in the Emotional Experience and Expression among the adult women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse. t value of paired difference is 22.591 which is significant at 0.01 level as p-value < 0.01. The hypothesis which states there will be significant difference between pre and post scores of the Emotional Experience and Expression is accepted. There is significant difference between the pre and post test scores of Emotional Experience and Expression. The resilient focused intervention has significantly improved the Emotional Experience and Expression among the survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.

### 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The therapeutic intervention which focused on enhancing resilience and coping skills had made remarkable improvement in the Interpersonal Relationship Functioning among survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.

### 4 CONCLUSION

The professionals in school like teachers, principals, counsellors, etc. play a substantial role in shaping

children’s social functioning and emotional well-ness with trust. (Mcalinden, 2006). Friendship is a voluntary relationship that can help in times of need, trust and respect for each other. It is very important that we address the psychological well-being in the younger age. It brings a sense of identity in the individual. The study recommends life skill training programs focussing on resilience in schools which will not only serve as an intervention plan but also as a prevention for any form of injustice towards children as it encourages cognitive development and mental strength.

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