

APPLYING ADLERIAN THERAPY TO ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract

Childhood experiences have been documented to influence later life experience of individuals in terms of their intra-and-interpersonal wellbeing. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events that occur before a child gets to the age of 18 as described by the Centre for Disease Control and Protection (CDC). The purpose of the study was to explore the lived experiences, and meanings that university students attached to their ACEs and their effect on their intrapersonal and interpersonal conflict on campus adjustment. Homogeneous purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to sample 15 students from three public universities in the Greater Accra Region. This study aligned to the interpretivist paradigm which informed the use of the hermeneutic phenomenological qualitative design. Using interview and focus groups, findings of the study highlighted some meanings that the participants ascribed to their ACEs as neglect and abuse from parents, indecision and humiliation. It was also found out that these experiences shaped participants intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts, making them have trust issues, suicidal ideation and difficulty in making friends. Although these students have adopted either positive or negative coping strategies to adjust to their campus life, it is recommended that university students be screened by university counsellors to identify those at risk for early intervention.

Keywords: Adverse Childhood Experiences, Intrapersonal conflict, interpersonal conflict, university students, campus adjustment

Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2022) reported that 1 in 5 women and 1 in 13 men report having been sexually abused as a child aged between 0-17 years. More so, approximately, 300 million children that is, 3 in 4 children aged 2–4 years, experience physical or psychological abuse on a regular basis at the hands of their parents and other caregivers of which the lifelong effect can affect a country's economic and social development. This cost Ghana over USD 200 million or 1% of Ghana's GDP to take care of the abused children (UNICEF Ghana, 2015). The UNICEF Ghana report also indicated that, children in Ghana experience frequent and multiple forms of physical, emotional, verbal abuse and violence. In the same report, the Child Protection baseline research indicated that over 57% of children in Ghana (14-17 years of age) reported being beaten as a form of physical discipline at home; while 34% confirmed being beaten in school as a form of physical discipline in both the rural and urban areas. Most of these beatings resulted in the victims sustaining various injuries of which the social welfare and other agencies had to intervene. Some of the affected children later suffered from physical health, absence from school and psychological disorders (UNICEF Ghana, 2015).

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) have been found to significantly influence physical and mental health of individuals (Merrick et al., 2017; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[CDC], 2021). ACEs are traumatic events that occur before a child gets to the age of 18 years. ACEs may include experiencing abuse, or neglect, witnessing violence in the home or community, having a family member who attempted or committed suicide, or growing up in a home where there are substance use problems, mental health problems and instability due to parental separation or household members being in jail or prison. These may threaten a child's sense of safety, stability, and bonding (CDC, 2021). Children who go through ACEs do not only suffer the immediate trauma but may also put these children at higher risk for physical and mental health issues throughout their lifespan (Rosecrance, 2022). Studies have indicated high levels of anxiety and depression among university students who have had ACEs (Watt et al., 2020; Davies et al., 2021).

University students who have experienced traumatic events are more likely to feel anxious and lonely at the university (Kearney et al., 2018), and can obstruct academic work (Davies, et al., 2021). A World Mental Health Survey involving 21 countries discovered that children develop mental health problems before entering university (Auerbach et al., 2016). Literature has proven that university students with lower social support may have experienced high levels of adversity in childhood. This affects their confidence and the ability to confide in someone, seek advice or counselling; hence put such students at increased risk of experiencing depression and anxiety (Watt et al., 2021).

Existing studies on ACEs mainly concentrate on first-year students' anxiety, stress, depression, academic performance, and adjustment, with limited attention to conflicts and adjustment processes. Most research employs quantitative methods, particularly surveys, with a few utilizing qualitative approaches like narrative design, grounded theory, and phenomenology, often in a descriptive/transcendental context. The present study aims to address this gap by employing hermeneutic phenomenology to delve into the experiences of university students, analysing their stories to comprehend their behaviours and adjustment processes. While research in Ghana has investigated factors influencing students' adjustment and childhood experiences' impact on general well-being; few studies have explored ACEs' prevalence and their influence on interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts among university students. To fill these lacunae in research, our study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. How do university students describe their adverse childhood experiences?
2. How do ACEs shape the intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts of university students?
3. How do university students adjust to intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts?

Answers to these questions would inform policy makers, university management, mental health workers in the university, students, and the entire university community to understand how ACEs may influence campus life adjustment of students' intrapersonal and interpersonal conflict. Also stock the Ghanaian context of university students ACEs and the influence on adjustment on their intrapersonal and interpersonal conflict on campus experiences both theoretically and empirically.

Theoretical framing

The study draws on the theory of Alfred Adler. Adler believes that the individual begins to form an approach to life somewhere in the first six years of living. He focused on the person's past as perceived in the present and how an individual's subjective interpretation of reality, a concept described as phenomenological, of early events continued to influence that person's present

behaviour. Hence, Adler looks out for themes running through a person's life (Corey, 2017). According to Adler, behaviour is purposeful and goal-directed and focuses on consciousness. He emphasized on choice and responsibility, meaning in life, and strive for success, completion, and perfection (Adler, 1969; Corey, 2017). Adler referred to people's perceptions, thoughts, feelings, values, beliefs, convictions, and conclusions as their subjective reality which has to do with the meanings people attached to their experiences (Adler, 2013).

Adler believes that individuals who feel belonged will feel love and form healthy, loving bonds with others. But those who feel not loved will act out to express that feeling of inadequacy. A person's inability to compensate for normal feelings of inferiority to develop superiority may result in an inferiority complex. Adler (2013) stated that all children have a feeling of inferiority and inadequacy immediately as they begin to experience the world. The children learn to overcome this inferiority through the nurturing of parents and other interaction within their environment. The strife to overcome weaknesses may result in developing behaviours of compensation, overcompensation or undercompensation. Compensation is a defence mechanism whereby one adopts a healthy way of dealing with their inferiority. Others who are not able to deal with their inferiority adapt a negative way of dealing with the inferiority which can either be undercompensation or overcompensation. Adler made the assumption that birth order had a significant and predictable impact on a child's personality, and their feeling of inferiority. The birth order describes how the family dynamics and home environment influence the personality of a person. He described the birth order in terms of the firstborn child, second child, middle child, youngest child and the only child. Adlers birth order theory is utilized in this research to explain findings generated out of data from students.

Methodology

Research Design

Our interpretivist lens informed the use of the hermeneutic phenomenological design to explore the multiple lived experiences and the meanings that the university students attached to their adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and their effect on their intrapersonal and interpersonal conflict on campus adjustment.

Population and sampling

Fifteen participants (9 females and 6 males) were included in the study which falls within the range of recommended participants for phenomenological studies (McMillan et al., 2010). The study was conducted at three public universities that have counselling centres with professional counsellors that attend to the mental health needs of the students. A combination of homogeneous purposive and snowball sampling techniques was used to sample the participants with the help of a priori thematic and data saturation. Inclusion criteria for selection of participants included the following: being a university student within the institutions selected, self-identify as having experienced ACEs and willingness to participate in the study. The counsellors at the universities' counselling centres using the homogeneous purposive sampling technique helped to identify 6 participants (2 females and 4 males) who had reported their ACE challenges to the counselling centres and were willing to be part of the study.

The snowball sampling technique also featured when participants who were selected through the homogeneous purposive technique also directed the researchers to some of their colleagues who

had also suffered from ACEs to be included in the study. 9 participants (7 females and 2 males) were selected using the snowball technique. Participants answered the Adverse Childhood Experience Questionnaire to ascertain their scores and their eligibility for the study. The scores of the individuals were not analysed further beyond its use for determining who can participate in the study or not. The ACEs questionnaire is a 10-item questionnaire that seeks information about events that happened during a person's childhood before the age of 18. Participants have to answer "Yes" if the question applies to them and "No" if the question doesn't apply to them. When scoring, each Yes answer was given 1 point while No answer was given a 0 point. All the Yes points were tallied together to determine each participant's ACEs score which ranged from 1-10 points. Anyone who indicated a yes on the ACE questionnaire was included in the study.

Data Collection Techniques and Instrument

Ethical clearance was sought from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Professional Studies, Accra with ethical clearance number, ECUPSA –SS-001-2023. Permission was taken from the universities that the data were collected. Consideration was given for anonymity and confidentiality to participate in the study, hence the use of pseudonym names chosen by the participants. Information provided was treated confidential for the intended purpose of the study. Field data was managed under the Data Protection Act, 2012 (Act 843) of Ghana. Qualitative studies are unique in that the investigator is the main instrument for data collection (Patton, 2015).

Individual interview was used to generate data. A semi-structured interview guide was framed using the Interview Question Development Matrix (IQDM) to ensure conformity with the research questions of the study. IQDM is a format used to develop interview questions from the review of literature which focused on ACEs factors in alignment with the research questions of the study (Williams, 2021). Each interview lasted approximately 30 – 40 minutes. The interviews were audio-taped using an electronic recorder and transcribed verbatim by the researchers of the study.

Data Analysis Procedures

The recorded interviews from the field were compiled and sorted for easy identification into a useful order for the database. The recordings were then transcribed. The researcher took time to read, look at and think through the data to get deeper understanding into the insight of the participants' emotional state about the phenomenon. This helped to develop ideas and also scan through the data to make some reductions to prioritize which data will help to meet the research purpose and answer the research questions (Leavy, 2017). The next step was to code the data. Coding helped to reduce and classify the data by assigning words or phrase to sections of the data. The NVivo coding technique was used to code the data. This helped to ensure that the participant's exact language was used.

The study employed the narrative coding which (Saldaña, 2016) said is suitable for exploring intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences and actions of research participants to understand the meanings they ascribe to their experiences. The next step was to categorize similar or related codes together to form relationships and patterns and later themes to tell a story from the data. Themes were formed using the theoretical triangulation since the study is underpinned by theoretical reviews and also uses the interpretivist worldview.

Findings

Background of participants

Among the 15 participants interviewed, 7 reported that their parents are still married while 8 reported to be coming from a broken home. Most of the participants from broken homes reported some adverse experiences that they had with either the stepmother or father; with the exception of two participants who spoke well of their stepparents respectfully. Four of the participants were born out of wedlock and are either staying with stepparents or with their grandmother. The demography of the participants is represented in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants Demographic Information

No.	Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Level of Study	Suicidal Ideation/Thought	Substance Abuse	Being in Relationship	Birth order
1.	Awurasi	20	F	300	Yes	Yes	Yes	Second born child
2.	Lamisi	20	F	300	Yes	No	No	Only child
3.	Yaw	25	M	400	Yes	No	Yes	Lastborn child
4.	Elorm	28	M	300	Yes	No	Yes	Firstborn child
5.	Candice	24	F	400	Yes	Yes	Yes	Firstborn child
6.	Hajia	22	M	400	Yes	No	No	Second born child
7.	Nips	24	F	200	Yes	Yes	Yes	Firstborn child
8.	Tracy	22	F	400	Yes	Yes	Yes	Lastborn child
9.	Abena	24	F	400	No	Yes	Yes	Middle child
10.	Abla	27	F	400	No	No	Yes	Firstborn child
11.	Akua	22	F	400	Yes	Yes	No	Second born child
12.	Nii	27	M	200	No	No	Yes	Second born child
13.	Crystabel	22	F	400	Yes	No	Yes	First born child
14.	Ayitey	22	M	200	Yes	No	Yes	First born child
15.	William	25	M	200	Yes	Yes	Yes	First born child

Research Question 1: How do university students describe their adverse childhood experiences?

(Theme 1: Description of ACEs)

From the analysis under the data described under this theme, the participants' experiences in 6 (six) sub themes as: parental neglect, disregard of child's viewpoint, teasing and humiliation, exhibition of vices by parents, experienced abuse and playing adult roles.

Parental Neglect

In regard to parental neglect, participants expressed their opinions as follows:

Well, I think they had their favorites. Yeah, it feels like you are not wanted, you are sidelined. I will call it sidelined. (Abena)

We stayed with our mother most of the time because my dad was working in another region and used to visit us. It felt like single parenting. They did their best. (Awurasi)

Disregard of a child's viewpoint

This is what some participants had to say about their views not being respected:

Anything I do is wrong to them. Like may be if my older sister does something which is wrong, if I talk back, am seen as the bad one because we live in a society that you don't talk back to your eldest. (Abena)

When there is an issue, my father will call us for discussion to see the best way forward that is suitable for everybody. But I realized that whenever myself or my bothers try to give an input he ignores it and goes ahead to do what he wants. I felt like my opinions didn't matter. (Nips)

Teasing and Humiliation

This is what a participant said:

I was skinny with big a head so most people use to laugh at me because I was skinny with big head. (Lamisi).

Exhibition of Vices by Parents

This is what a participant said:

Hmm my uncle used to drink a lot so when I turned 8, I realized that maybe drinking is not so bad after all so sometimes when he finishes drinking and there is a bit left in the glass I will go and take it and drink it. That was when I started drinking. (Tracy)

I saw how alcohol destroyed my father's life. That's why I vow never to take alcohol. (Nii)

Abuse (physical, verbal, emotional and sexual)

At times after beating you, you will fall sick like three days because of the beating. So, the treatment from my father's side was kind of horrible" (Elorm).

I think during the time I started my menstruation, I didn't know what it was, and I couldn't tell anybody. Unfortunately, my stepmom saw it and she just threw the pad at me and said since I am a spoiled girl, I knew what to do already but I didn't know. I felt very bad because I knew if my mum was around this wasn't how she would have addressed the issue. I wished I could talk to a woman about these issues. (Abla)

I think I was about 6/7 at the time; she lived with us for about a year. She used to sleep in our room so sometimes in the night; she would come and make me touch her in some ways and all that. (Nii)

Playing Adult roles

It wasn't really funny. I am the first child of five children and they turn to use our childhood as junior mothers to your siblings especially if you are the first-born daughter. (Crystabel)

Research Question 2: How do ACEs shape the intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts of university students?

(Theme 2: ACE on intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts)

The analysis revealed six ways through which ACE shaped intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts. These were loss of confidence, suicidal ideation, trust issues/difficulty in sharing problems, image masking, difficult forming and maintaining friendships and relationship with the opposite sex.

Loss of confidence

This is what a participant said:

Because of the teasing due to my skinny stature, I was very shy to go to public places because I knew people would laugh at me. Even now I have insecurity issues. (Lamisi)

Suicidal ideation

This is what a participant said:

I think that's where the suicide attempts come in because at a point, I feel like I am not needed so my absence will do nothing to the people around me so let me just leave this world. Because my mummy used to say on several accounts when she was angry, she used to call me her headache. (Tracy)

Trust issues/difficulty in sharing problems

This is what a participant said:

I cannot trust anyone with my secrets and problems. They will discuss it when they are less busy. Is either I keep it or yeah. (Hajia)

Image masking

This is what a participant shared:

I had to put up a certain image because my parents will always be like "As a pastor's son, how can you be doing this, how can you be doing that. If people saw you like that, what would they say? That kind of thing, I had to live a certain way so that my parents wouldn't have any reason to question me, or no one would have any reason to report me to my parents. I couldn't be myself around people. I always have to put up a certain image so that I will look like a perfect person, and I knew that that was not me. (Nips)

Difficulty forming and maintaining friendships

This is what a participant said:

Because of my childhood experiences, I didn't know how to make friends and how to talk to people. I didn't know how to say the first hi! (Tracy).

Relationship with the opposite sex

This is what a participant said:

Because I have a brother and use to care so much about him, I don't have problems when it comes to the opposite sex. I like being friends with males than females. I can't cope with ladies. Females have so much drama. (Abla)

Research Question 3: How do university students adjust to intrapersonal and interpersonal conflict? (Theme 3: Adjustment)

The participants cited some ways that they have been dealing with their intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts. Affected individuals adopt both positive and negative ways of dealing with their adversities. The positive ways included listening to music, watching movies, meditation and journaling. The negative ways included substance use, self-harming and betting.

Music, Meditate and Journaling

These are what some participants said:

Oh, hmm there are times I listen to music, other times too I lie down and meditate. Doing that allows me to get rid of all the thoughts that bring about anxiety and loneliness. (Elorm)

I journal; is like a brain dump. It just helps me to journal my emotions down into the journal. Is difficult for people to understand me; only my journal does. (Awurasi)

Substance Use, Self-Harming and Betting

These are what some participants said:

When I started drinking, I will buy a bottle of alcohol to dump in my emotions. (Nips)

Sometimes I bit myself until I see a mark or I just use sharp object. (Awurasi)

I bet for two reasons, for the money and also sometimes too I don't have anyone to talk to. (Ayitey)

Discussion

The Adlerian therapy view on subjective reality explains the experiences of the research participants in their social context (family and community) in terms of perceptions, thoughts, feelings, values, beliefs, convictions and conclusions which are evident in the way they described their childhood experiences and the meaning they derived from those experiences. The themes showed that generally university students with ACEs are exposed to certain actions which make an imprint in their lives. The participants in their narration described their ACEs as experiencing parental neglect, disregard of child's viewpoint, teasing and humiliation, exhibition of vices by parents, experiencing abuse and playing adult roles.

The findings support Davis et al., (2017) and Davies et al., (2021) studies on the influence of ACEs on the quality of life and the dimensions that emerging adults describe the self. These dimensions included self-focus, identity exploration, negativity/instability, experimentation and "feeling in between". These descriptions are significant to the developmental process of children as developmental theorist like Adler (1963) assumed that the first six years of an individual's life mark the beginning to form an approach of living. Their focus was on how a person's past informs the individual's subjective interpretation of reality in the present life in respect to significant events in behaviour (Corey, 2017). Adler (1969) believes that behaviour is purposeful and based on people's choices and responsibilities to help make meaning in life and strive for success, hence these descriptions of the participants ACEs in their formative years impacted their behaviour.

For instance, some of the participants in this study described how parents and other caregivers (stepparents) failed to provide some basic needs and emotional support growing up. This has caused the participants not to see any relevance within them (Vandevender, 2014; Cheung et al., 2021) and also susceptible to depression and other mental issues (Riedl et al., 2020; Tošković et al., 2019). According to attachment styles (Credé et al., 2012) children who are trained by authoritarian parents and are not able to form secure attachment with their parents growing up; may lead to timidity and lack of confidence.

Disregard of child's viewpoint can be detrimental for a growing child as it can affect the development of healthy interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships. The interaction between children and their caregivers forms the basis of building self-esteem, self-worth, identity, trustworthiness, empathy, and justice as this help builds on one's intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships (Berkowitz, 2012). Formation of either a secure or insecure attachment with parents in childhood has been proven to affect confidence level (Holt, 2014) and decisiveness in later life (Vandevender, 2014; Rosecrance, 2022). Adler noted two parental influences that may result in dysfunctional ways of living as pampering and neglect. Adler's (2014) concerns about the spoiled/pampered children was that they were not deeply loved and cared for but rather their parents

control them all the time by taking care of everything and liberate them of any tasks or responsibilities. This makes such children not to master the acquired skills necessary to take care of themselves or cooperate with others (Adler, 2014). Nips narrated how his father's disregard for his viewpoint made him coil to himself and then upon getting to the university, he felt some freedom that he had never experienced which made him take certain decisions which affected his academic life.

Teasing and humiliation looked at the participants' childhood experiences where they faced bullying, ridicule, or other forms of humiliation by parents, family, peers or other people in the community. According to Kyei (2015), about 42.7% of children in the capital city of Ghana are faced with teasing and humiliation of different forms everyday of their lives in the home. To affirm to this finding, a participant reported of how the mother used to describe the back of her neck as a deaf and dumb person with hiccup which has made her lost confidence in herself. Other participants also spoke about parents reporting their wrong doings (like bedwetting and stealing) at school for their colleagues to humiliate and also to be beating in front of assembly. These experiences can lead to serious mental challenges particularly when they are committed by trusted or closed individuals such as parents or teachers (Vandevender, 2014; Rosecrance, 2022).

According to Albert Bandura's social learning theory (Corey, 2017), which emphasizes on observing and imitating behaviours on others, the study established that exhibition of vices by parents and other adults has either a positive or negative effect on a child's later life. It has been proven that children who witnessed family members going through some traumatic experiences were negatively affected (Kyei, 2015; Rosecrance, 2022). For instance, in the current study, participants described how they learnt to take alcohol and some aversive behaviours from parents and other significant adults in their lives during childhood. Reason being that they felt the taking in of the alcohol was suppressing the pains and challenges of these adults hence resulted to similar attitudes when they are faced with challenges but later realized the "ecstasy is just for the moment", in the words of one of the participant. Other participants also described their abstinence from alcohol and beating women/ violence in general because they witnessed the negative effect of some of these attitudes in the lives of their parents and other significant adults in their childhood hence their choice to abstain.

Adler's birth order theory provides a vivid explanation to the psychological neglect that some of the participants narrated. Most of the first-born children in the study described how they were made to module an adult life for their younger siblings to learn from. The diminished parental affection makes the first-born children felt that the parents were not paying attention to their needs (Messman-Moore et al., 2007). The birth position of a person has a significant and predictable impact on the personality and feeling of inferiority; hence the first-born child strives to become a model child and bosses over the younger siblings in their bid to play a role as miniature parents in the lives of the siblings (Corey, 2017). Nsamenang (2006) in his concept of social ontogeny stipulated children in Africa at different developmental stages are made to play roles in the cultural and economic life of the family and society. These roles played are earmarked by distinctive developmental tasks established within the structure of the cultural values and maturity level of the child (Nsamenang, 2000; Nsamenang & Lamb, 1995). The African parents and caregivers in child rearing assign chores to children or send them on errands (Ogunaike & Houser, 2002 cited in Nsamenang, 2006) as a way of instilling cognition, values, and productive skills to inculcate knowledge and ensure social integration (Nsamenang, 2006). This put so much expectation on the

first-born child especially to be able to take care of the self and the other siblings as well as to parent them in the absence of the parents (Donagh et al., 2022).

Whereas some of the respondents expressed the experiences helping them to develop positive attitudes like being satisfied and having self-esteem, others developed negative thoughts and feelings which affect their self-esteem and their satisfaction in life. According to Adler (1969), the strife to overcome weaknesses may result in developing behaviours of compensation, overcompensation or complexes. Some of the respondents were able to compensate for the adversity by having a positive look about life to develop confidence and satisfaction about life to the extent of finding meaning in being alone. Whereas other respondents could not overcome their inferiority and hence adapted negative ways like loss of confidence, suicidal ideation, trust issues/difficulty in sharing problems, image masking, difficult forming and maintaining friendships and relationship with the opposite sex. Respondents who have experienced especially sexual abuse have been found to be less likely to begin romantic relationships as adults and to display lower degrees of autonomy in romantic relationships. Men who experienced molestation at childhood might experience emotional difficulties and lack of emotional support as adults (Vandevender, 2014). ACEs can affect an adult's sense of achieving a satisfying and healthy romantic relationship which may make them feel neglected by spouse and children, feel betrayed in a relationship, keep secrets and withdraw from others (Clark et al., 2015).

According to Adler (1969), social interest and community feeling refer to people's awareness of their place in the human community and their sense of belonging. The socialisation process associated with social interest begins in childhood and involves helping children find a place in society to acquire a sense of belonging (Watts, 2021). Individuals who are able to develop healthy ways of dealing with their inferiority feelings are able to adopt positive coping strategies like listening to music, watching movies, meditation, and journaling as stated by some participants. Individuals who are not able to develop a sense of community feeling find it difficult in compensating for their inferiority and adopt negative ways of dealing with them, hence the superiority complex. In this view, the focus of meeting one's goals is over- or under-exaggerated (Gladding, 2009). Some participants cited substance use, self-harming and betting as adopted ways of dealing with their complexes.

Limitation

One major limitation in this study was for the participants to open up on their ACEs. The interviewers used knowledge in counselling and skills to build rapport with the participants and ensure confidentiality. This helped the participants build trust and confidence in the interviewers to open up on certain issues they have never shared with anyone.

Conclusion

According to the results of this study, it is concluded that exposure to ACEs by participants shaped the way participants saw themselves and their relationship with others. These experiences left some of the participants in a state of inferiority and low self-esteem while other participants were able to build grit and resilience to be able to overcome their adversities.

Recommendation

Based upon this conclusion, it is recommended that any effort to address ACEs in university students should include some measure for screening students by counsellors in the university during the admission to identify those at risk for early intervention. Again, actions must be taken by government, mental health agencies, religious groups, social service agencies, schools, and Non-Governmental Agencies (NGOs) to provide education on the detrimental effects of childhood adversities on later life and also information on interventions for victims.

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