Growth After Lockdown: Examining the Role of Basic Psychological Need Support in Facilitating Posttraumatic Growth from COVID-19 Pandemic Trauma

by

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected everyone in the world, however the phenomenon of growth following intense suffering has been well-documented over the past few decades (e.g., Tedeschi et al., 2018). Less research has been able to explain why some experience growth from trauma while others do not. Drawing from Joseph and Linley’s (2005) Organismic Valuing Theory model of posttraumatic growth, we examined the role of the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (during the onset of the pandemic and currently) in fostering posttraumatic growth. Participants (N = 289) completed an online survey assessing the impact of the pandemic, basic psychological needs, and posttraumatic growth. We hypothesized that participants with greater satisfaction of basic psychological needs during the onset of the pandemic and currently would report greater posttraumatic growth. We found that current satisfaction of psychological needs significantly predicted posttraumatic growth (β = .42, p < .001) whereas satisfaction of psychological needs at onset did not. Secondary analyses of the impact of each need (current and at onset) on posttraumatic growth revealed that current autonomy support significantly predicted posttraumatic growth above and beyond the other needs across both time points (β = .29, p < .001). Interpretations of these results are discussed, and implications and limitations of the study are addressed.