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College success is for Foster Children too

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Childhood Trauma, Resilience, and Foster Care Experience in College Students

Ashlyn Kincaid
February, 2020

Agenda

- Overview of Literature - Rational
- Research Questions
- Methodology
- Results
- Qualitative Component
- Discussion
- Implications for Higher Education



Brief Lit. Review

- Up to 75 percent of college students report adverse childhood experiences (Calmes et al., 2013).
- Trauma exposure in children and adolescents can decrease academic functioning (Daignault & Herbert, 2009; Ogata, 2017)
- Traumatic experiences have a negative effect on resilience (Collin-Vezina et al., 2011)
- Less than 12 percent of emancipated foster youth enroll in college and successfully complete a bachelor's degree (“Supporting Success,” 2011) (Morton, 2018)

Research Questions

- Research Question 1: Do college students who score 1 or more on the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) questionnaire have different academic resilience scores (ARS-30) than college students who have a score of 0? .
- Research Question 2: Is there a significant relationship between the students' Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) questionnaire scores and academic resilience scores (ARS-30)?
- Research Question 3: Do foster care students have higher scores on the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) questionnaire than students without a foster care history?



Methodology

Methodology

Participants

- N = 160
- University of Montana Students
- Recruited through SONA

Measures

- Adverse Childhood Experiences Questionnaire (ACE)
- Academic Resilience Scale (ARS-30)
- Foster Care Experience survey (FCE) part 1

Procedure

- Informed consent
- Qualtrics Surveys
- Data analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 26



Results & Analyses

Do college students who score 1 or more on the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) questionnaire have different resilience scores than college students who have a score of 0?

- A one-way ANOVA was conducted
 - Significant, $F(1, 154) = 0.39, p = .003 (N^2 = .057)$
- College students who reported one or more one or more adverse childhood events scored lower on the ARS-30 than the group of college students who reported zero adverse childhood events

| ACE Score | Mean ARS-30 | SD ARS-30 |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| 1+ | 106.20 | 18.49 |
| 0 | 116.30 | 16.41 |

(Cohen, 1969)

Is there a significant relationship between the students' Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) questionnaire scores and resilience scores?

- A Pearson's correlation test was conducted
- When looking at only ACE scores of 1 or more, correlation strength was weak and was not significant, $r(230) = -.234$, $p < .188$
- When looking at the entire sample:
 - Significant negative association between ACE scores and ARS-30 scores, $r(313) = -.239$, $p < .003$
 - As the total ACE scores decreased ($M = 2.38$) the total ARS-30 scores increased ($M = 108.79$)

Do foster care students have higher scores on the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) questionnaire than students without a foster care history?

- A one-way ANOVA was conducted
 - Significant, $F(1, 157) = 6.32, p = .013 (N^2 = .039)$
- Students who reported foster care experience scored higher on the ACE questionnaire than students who had no foster care experience

| Foster Care Experience | Mean ACE | SD ACE |
|------------------------|----------|--------|
| Yes | 4.8 | 2.58 |
| No | 2.28 | 2.18 |

(Cohen, 1969)



Qualitative Component

- Gain information about the struggles and successes of college students who have formerly been in foster care, as well as identify factors that have contributed to or hindered success.

Participants

- N= 5
- Former foster children attending the University of Montana

Measures

- ACE
- ARS-30
- FCE part 1 & 2

Procedure

- Informed consent
- Qualtrics Surveys
- Data analyzed using Nvivo 12

“In relation to your foster care experiences, what three things have been the most challenging in college?”

- Patterns found across data:
 - Social Difficulty (60%)
 - “Feeling alienated”
- Other things mentioned:
 - Deciding to enroll
 - Getting accepted
 - Financial stress
 - Self-confidence
 - Locating resources

“In relation to your foster care experiences, what three things have contributed to your success in life and in college?”

- Patterns found across data:
 - Resilience (40%)
 - Family support (40%)
 - Overcoming past challenges (40%)

- Other things mentioned:
 - Financial state
 - Flexibility
 - Friendships
 - Forgiveness
 - Teacher support
 - School resources

“What advice would you give other foster children who want to attend college?”

- Patterns found across data:
 - Perseverance (60%)
 - “You’ll have hard days in college but it’s important to allow yourself to feel those emotions and continue to see the end of each day,”
 - Reassurance (40%)
 - “You can do and be whatever you want”
 - Life Experience (40%)
 - “Seek some practical life experience before attempting college”



Discussion

- Students with an ACE score of 1 or more had lower academic resilience scores.
- There was a significant correlation between ACE and ARS-30 scores for the entire sample.
- Foster care experience was linked to higher ACE scores
- Results suggest: Having zero adverse childhood experiences leads to higher academic resilience.
- These results are similar to previous research indicating that a single adverse childhood event can be linked to long lasting, treatment resistant, negative effects (D'Andrea et al., 2011).

- A common trait of resilient childhood trauma victims is social support (Machi et al., 2013).
 - 40% listed social support as a success factor
 - 60% listed social support as a challenge
 - 20% listed social support groups as a resources they would like to see on campus
- Creating social support group on campus for students with similar background of abuse, trauma, and foster care could be beneficial to building resilience and boosting social support.



Implications for Higher Education

Implications

- Support groups
- Mentor programs
- Specialized academic advisors
- Housing considerations
- Identification of former foster children enrolled in college

(Dworsky et al., 2010).

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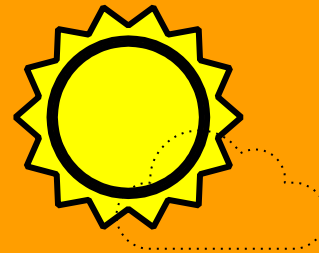
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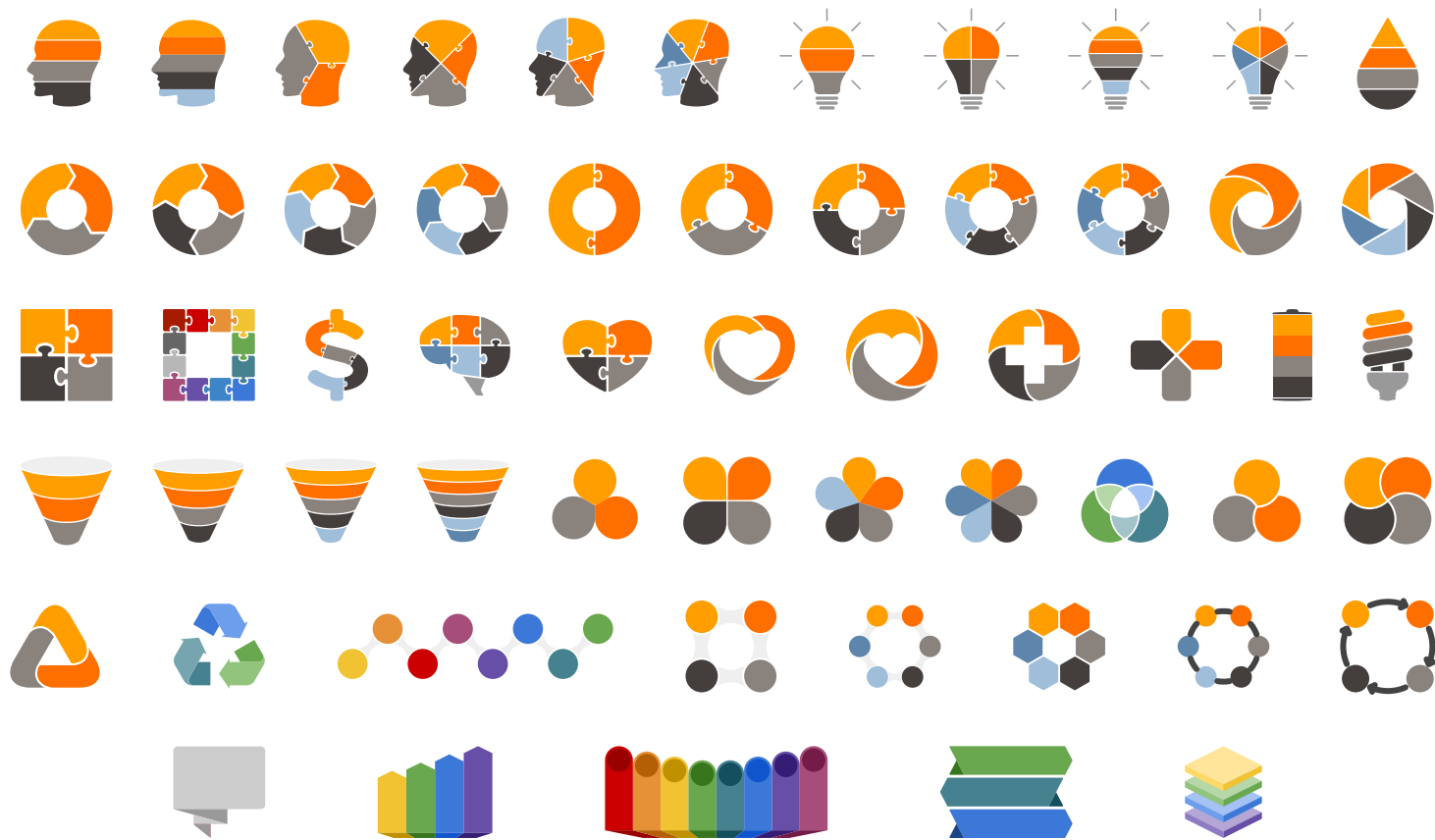
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