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Shame, Dysfunctional Attitudes, and Trauma: An Exploratory Study

Melissa Platt, M.S.
Jennifer J. Freyd, Ph.D
University of Oregon
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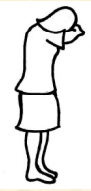
Health Consequences of Shame

- Research by Dickerson and colleagues:
 - Cortisol responsivity
 - Proinflammatory cytokines
 - Social evaluative tasks
 - Shame-specific
 - Promote disengagement
 - Chronic shame predicts suppressed immunity, disease proneness



Definitions

- Shame
 - Feeling that the self is flawed
- Dysfunctional Attitudes
 - Systematic negative biases in thinking
- Trauma:
 - Non-interpersonal
 - Interpersonal: Perpetrator not close vs. close to victim



Dysfunctional Attitudes and Shame

Thoughts
Emotions

If I do not do as well as other people, it means I am an inferior human being.



Research Questions (cont.)

- Question 1: Are people with high **dysfunctional attitudes** more likely to have **trauma history**?
- Question 2: How do **trauma** and **dysfunctional attitudes** affect **baseline shame**?
- Question 3: How do **trauma** and **dysfunctional attitudes** affect **shame following negative feedback**?

Method



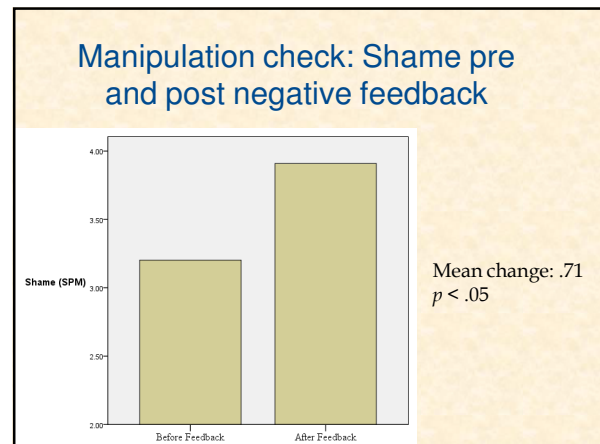
- Participants signed up and completed study via SONA Systems. (N = 307)
- Measures
 - Shame Posture Measure (SPM)
 - Brief Betrayal Trauma Survey (BBTS)
 - Dysfunctional Attitudes Scale (DAS)

Method (Cont.)

Short problem set

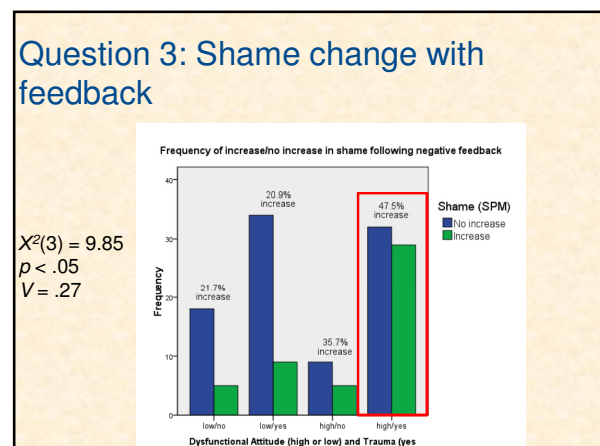
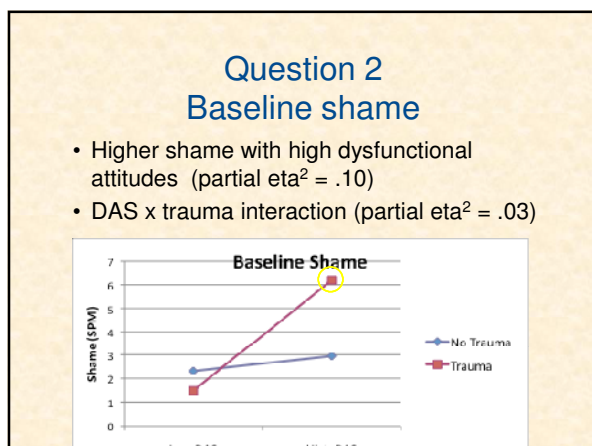
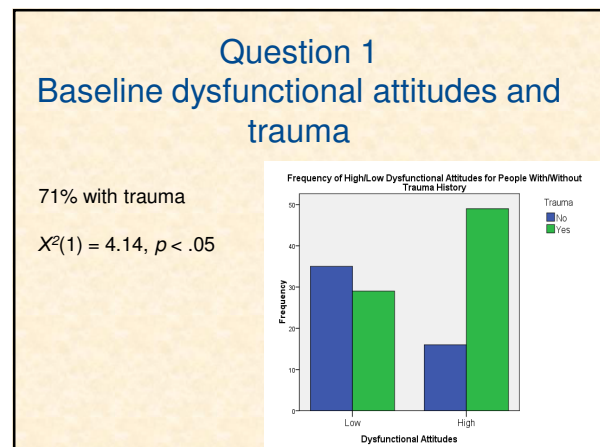
- Feedback
- Shame Posture Measure
- State Shame and Guilt Scale (SSGS)

YOUR WORK NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

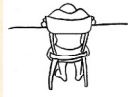


Shame Posture Measure Validation

- SPM and SSGS **shame** subscale ($r = .66$, $p < .001$)
- SPM and SSGS **guilt** subscale ($r = .44$, $p < .001$)
- SPM and SSGS **pride** subscale ($r = -.41$, $p < .001$)

Summary



- Question 1: Trauma and DAS highly related
- Question 2:
 - High DAS associated with higher shame.
 - DAS x trauma interaction
- Question 3:
 - High DAS/trauma group shamed by negative feedback above and beyond already high baseline shame

Future Directions

- Shame and Betrayal
 - Ongoing study
- Multilevel examination of shame
 - Emotion, cognition, behavior, biology
- Longitudinal work for chronic shame effects
- Development of shame-focused protocols



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Thank You

Melissa Platt, M.S.
University of Oregon
mplatt@uoregon.edu

Jennifer J. Freyd, Ph.D.
<http://dynamic.uoregon.edu/>
jjf@uoregon.edu

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