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# Contributions of Emotional Competence to the Link between Childhood Maltreatment and Adult Attachment

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The present study tested a path model that assessed the mechanisms through which childhood maltreatment contributes to insecure adult attachment in a sample of undergraduate students ( $N=244$ ). Variables in the models were assessed through an online protocol in which participants completed 6 self report questionnaires and a writing task that was reliably rated on Depth of Experiencing using an observer rated measure, the Client Experiencing Scale (EXP; Klein, Mathieu, Gendlin, & Kiesler, 1969). Self-report measures included the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ; Bernstein & Fink, 1998), History of Parenting Emotion Socialization-Mother Version (HOPES- MV; Hakim-Larson & Scott, 2013), Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20; Bagby, Parker, & Taylor, 1994; Bagby, Taylor, & Parker, 1994), Resolution Scale (RS; Singh, 1994), Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994), and Relationship Questionnaire (RQ; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). The model that was found to have the closest fit to the data found that the severity of childhood maltreatment (abuse and neglect) covaried with the degree of emotion socialization in childhood. Together, these predicted the severity of alexithymia which, in turn, predicted the degree of insecure adult attachment. These findings were consistent with expectations. Contrary to expectations, however, neither depth of experiencing (EXP) in written narratives nor degree of “unfinished business” (RS) played a significant role in the relationship between childhood maltreatment and adult attachment. Potential explanations for findings pertain to study design and potential issues with measures used in the study.

