

ABSTRACT

Name of the Institution: De La Salle University-Dasmariñas

Address: Dasmariñas, Cavite

Title: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder as Experienced By Sexually Abused Children and Adolescents of Bahay Tuluyan For Girls- Dasmariñas, Cavite and their Outlook In Life

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OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

GENERAL:

The aim of this study is to identify the posttraumatic experiences and outlook in of the sexually abused children and adolescents of Bahay Tuluyan for Girls in Dasmariñas, Cavite.

SCOPE AND DELIMITATION:

The study did not intend to have any formal diagnosis of PTSD, at the same time, there was no formal diagnosis of the disorder coming from the resident psychologist of Bahay Tuluyan instead, a questionnaire called, Trauma Screening Questionnaire was used in determining the posttraumatic experiences of the participants. The researchers were also restricted not to ask questions that might trigger the feelings and thoughts of the participants towards the traumatic event.

Instead of having the fourteen participants interviewed by the researchers regarding their reactions in relation to the abuse they experienced, they resorted to one of the social workers and resident psychologist of the institution. Another important aspect to mention is that the institution became strict in the questions we were to ask. Also, the researchers were just limited to the scheduled interview and follow-up questions were not allowed. As a result, some of the responses made by the participants were very limited and although there were some who properly answered, there were also who did not give enough elaboration in their answers as they chose not to answer or discuss the questions asked to them. Moreover, since the study is concerned with such sensitive cases, their real names and identities were concealed for confidential purposes.

FINDINGS:

1. What is the demographic profile of the participants in terms of:

A. Age?

The participants of this study were under the age of 10-20 years old.

B. Educational Background?

Most of the participants were able to study. In fact, all of the fourteen girls were able to attain an education level at least in elementary and high school though some of them were dropouts

C. Length of stay in the institution?

The participants who were sexually abused have been staying in Bahay Tuluyan for Girls in Dasmariñas, Cavite for less than a month to one year and a half.

D. The person who brought them in the institution?

In most cases, the individuals who usually brought the victims to Bahay Tuluyan were concerned citizens not related to them. Examples of this were the social workers from different institution, which got the highest rate.

E. Case?

Sexual abuse as experienced by the participants from Bahay Tuluyan was divided into three cases: Rape, Incest and Acts of Lasciviousness. Among the three cases, incest has the highest rate of incidents.

2. How was the status of the participants before they were brought to the institution in terms of established relationships?

Generally, most of the participants have a “not so good” relationship with their families before they were brought to the institution. In detail, majority of the answers revealed that their closest family member and who also happens to be their confidante were their siblings. However, though siblings were identified to be the closest and the confidante of most of the participants, still they were identified to be in-conflict with their stepfathers. Being in-conflict with their stepfathers is strong proofs that most of the offenders were the participants’ stepfathers themselves since majority of them were victims of incest. Their relationship with these people appeared to be the very source of conflict in their respective families. On the other hand, the participants’ life in school was quite fine and it does not signify any conflict that affected the life

of the participants .The participants' usual activities before going to the institution included going out with friends and interacting with their surroundings.

3. What were the Posttraumatic experiences of the participants as examined through the following:

- A. Trauma Screening Questionnaire

To be considered as a person having PTSD, based from the Trauma Screening Questionnaire results, an individual must have scored six out of the ten items questionnaire. Based from the TSQ results of the participants, nine out of the fourteen participants is found to possibly have PTSD. These girls had six or more than six answers in "yes" column. Otherwise most of their "yes" answers landed on the items measuring reexperience and their "no" answers fall on the items, which measure arousal.

- B. What were the participants' first reactions when they were brought in the institution?

According to the social workers that were interviewed, most of the children who were brought to Bahay Tuluyan have different reactions. Some were reluctant. Most of the participants were unwilling, only few were willing and usually, children were only willing if they were already aware of the situation.

- C. What are the participants' usual reactions to their offenders?

The participants usually feel hostile feelings towards their offenders. They may forgive them through process because with the aid of guidance and rehabilitation, victims can possibly overcome negative feelings and emotions that affect their perceptions in life.

D. Were the participants' able to establish relationship towards the other individuals in the institution easily?

As mentioned, establishing relationship towards other individuals by the participants really depends on their coping mechanisms. Each child has a different way of coping, there were children and adolescents who can easily establish relationships towards others; however, there were also those who could not. Usually victims of incest have a hard time coping, while victims of Acts of Lasciviousness and Physical Abuse were the ones who can easily cope.

4. How is the status of the participants at present, now that they are in the institution in terms of established relationship?

Most of the participants have a fine relationship with the individuals inside the institution. Their usual activities include cleaning and following schedule, which are very similar in nature. Based from the interview, they feel happy whenever they perform these activities inside the institution.

5. What are the participants' outlooks in life?

Almost all of the participants have a positive outlook in life; these are divided into the two sub themes, self-awareness and self-fulfillment. Further, self-awareness focused on the area of self-fulfillment where all of the participants showed interest in continuing their schooling. Self-fulfillment focused on the areas of ambition, belongingness, forgiveness and reconciliation, helping, and search for identity. Almost all of them have somehow certain plans and dreams for themselves and undeniably, most of them want to be back to their families. On the other hand, few participants manifested negative outlooks in life that focused on uncertainty. This few appeared to be still confused with how they want to relate with their families.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. The participants of this study were children and adolescent victims of sexual abuse. Particularly, they were girls who are presently under rehabilitation at Bahay Tuluyan for Girls in Dasmariñas, Cavite. Most of them were referred by the concerned citizens and social workers from their respective areas within Region IV-A. Before being brought to the institution, all of them were able to study. Their cases of sexual abuse, varies in three, acts of lasciviousness, rape and incest. Among the three, incest has the highest rates.
2. Generally, in terms of familial relationship, majority of the participants were product of broken homes. Most of them have also their stepfamilies

particularly stepsiblings and stepfathers. Upon having the stepfathers, it also appeared that they are the usual family members that the participants were in-conflict with, aside from siblings. It was also found out that most of the perpetrators were their stepfathers. On the lighter side, it was revealed that majority of the participants were very close with their respective siblings even though it was also found out that participants were in-conflict with family members. While in school, generally, they have a harmonious relationship with their classmates and professors though at times petty fights cannot be avoided.

3. It was revealed that majority of the participants were “positive” in the Trauma Screening Questionnaire (TSQ), meaning there is a high probability that they are still in the process of overcoming their past experiences since most of their answers fall on the reexperiencing area of the screen. Upon interviewing the social worker and resident psychologist of the institution, it was discovered, that most of the time, when victims were brought to the institution they reacted negatively. Also, often times, victims have furious feelings towards their offenders; however, forgiveness can still possibly be attained. Victims of incest had the slowest time of recovery while victims of acts of lasciviousness and rape were the fastest to recover.
4. Overall, all of the participants are in good relationship towards the people in the institution and as well as to the institution itself.
5. Generally, most of the participants perceive life optimistically, though some were still uncertain in their feelings for their families and for their future as

well. Most of their plans for their future revolve on the idea of improving their quality of life and helping and being closer to their families.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The future researchers may conduct the same nature of this study where the only difference is by having victims of other forms of abuse such as emotional or psychological and physical as the participants of this study.
2. The staff of institutions like Bahay Tuluyan should continue to focus on improving the lives of their clientele by making them feel that even though they are separated from their families they are cared and secured while they are in the institution. This would help them to lessen the burden of being separated from their families.
3. The counselors and clinicians, and staff of institutions like Bahay Tuluyan should continue to provide assistance and guidance to those people who are in need of their service. Specifically the therapists who would help them overcome their posttraumatic experiences.
4. The staff of institutions like Bahay Tuluyan should maintain the healthy environment inside the institution. This is very helpful for the healing process of their clientele.
5. The families of the victims and other significant people in the lives of the victims must never give up and get tired in helping and aiding their relatives since they play a very important for their recovery. The love and support