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The Role of Social Support in the Relationship between Exposure to Traumatic Stressors and Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms in a Sample of Emergency Care Practitioners

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2007-02-22T12:54:15Z
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/2090

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APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Natascha Basedau, and I am conducting research as part of my Masters degree in Clinical Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. The purpose of the research is to explore the types of incidents you, as an emergency care practitioner, are exposed to and what the consequences of this exposure are.

It would be greatly appreciated if you would complete the attached questionnaire. If you choose to participate in this study, you will further the understanding of the impact of traumatic exposure among emergency care practitioners, as well as assist in refining trauma interventions, such as training and debriefing. Filling in this questionnaire should take approximately 30 minutes of your time.

The questionnaire consists of 6 parts, namely:

1. General information;
2. Social Support Appraisal Scale;
3. Social Support Behaviours Scale;
4. Network Orientation Scale;
5. Revised Paramedic Work Exposure Checklist;
6. Revised Impact of Event Scale.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from it at any time if you wish to do so. Please answer the questionnaire as honestly as possible. Your responses will be treated with complete confidentiality and your anonymity will be maintained at all times. An envelope has been provided, and I ask that you seal your completed questionnaire therein and hand this to your station head. I will personally collect your sealed envelope. No one in your organisation will have access to your completed questionnaire.

I invite you to tear off this information sheet and keep it. If you feel you would like to talk to someone about any of the issues which are dealt with in this questionnaire, whether you choose to participate or not, please do not hesitate to contact me on 083 817 8754 and appropriate arrangements will be made.

Thank you.

Part 1 : General Information

Please fill in the following information by circling the appropriate category.

Gender :	Male	Female	
Home Language :	English	Afrikaans	
	Zulu	Sotho	
	Xhosa	Other	
Age:	18 - 30 yrs	31 - 40 yrs	41- 50 yrs
	51 - 60 yrs		
Marital Status:	Single	Married	
	Living Together	Divorced	
	Widow(Widower)	Separated	

Please fill in the following information by answering in the space provided.

What position do you currently occupy?_____

How long have you been working in the paramedical field?_____

Have you ever received counselling for any traumatic work related experience?_____

If YES, by whom?_____

When?_____

For how long?_____

Part 2 : Social Support Appraisal Scale

Below is a list of statements about your relationships with family and friends. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement as being true.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	My friends respect me				
2	My family cares for me very much				
3	I am not important to others				
4	My family holds me in high esteem				
5	I am well liked				
6	I can rely on my friends				
7	I am really admired by my family				
8	I am respected by other people				
9	I am loved dearly by my family				
10	My friends don't care about my welfare				
11	Members of my family rely on me				
12	I am held in high esteem				
13	I can't rely on my family for support				
14	People admire me				
15	I feel a strong bond with my friends				
16	My friends look out for me				
17	I feel valued by other people				
18	My family really respects me				
19	My friends and I are really important to each other				
20	I feel like I belong				
21	If I died tomorrow, very few people would miss me				
22	I don't feel close to members of my family				
23	My friends and I have done a lot for one another				

Part 3: Network Orientation Scale

Below is a list of statements of your attitude towards support from others. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement as being true.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. It really helps when you are angry to tell a friend what happened				
2. People should keep their problems to themselves				
3. Almost everyone knows someone they can trust with a personal secret				
4. It's okay to ask favours of people				
5. Other people never understand my problems				
6. Even if I need something, I would hesitate borrow it from someone				
7. When a person gets upset they should talk it over with a friend				
8. If you can't figure out your problems, nobody can				
9. Sometimes it's necessary to talk to someone about your problems				
10. Friends often have good advice to give				
11. In the past, friends have really helped me out when I've had a problem				
12. In the past, I have rarely found other people's opinions helpful when I've had a problem				
13. I often get useful information from other people				
14. You can never trust people to keep a secret				
15. You have to be careful to whom you tell personal things				
16. Some things are too personal to talk to anyone about				
17. In the past, I have been hurt by other people in whom I have confided				
18. If you confide in other people, they will take advantage of you				
19. It's fairly easy to tell whom you can trust and whom you can't				
20. It's easy for me to talk about personal and private matters				

Part 4: Social Support Behaviours Scale

People help each other out in a lot of different ways. Suppose you had some kind of problem (were upset about something, needed help with a practical problem, were broke, or needed some advice or guidance), *how likely* would a) a member of your *family*, and b) your *friends* be to help you out in each of the specific ways listed below. We realize that you may rarely need this kind of help, but *if you did* would family and friends help in the ways indicated. Try to base your answers on your past experience with these people. Use the scale below, and tick one number under family, and one under friends, in each row.

1 *no one* would do this
2 *someone might* do this
3 *some* family member/friend would *probably* do this
4 *some* family member/friend would *certainly* do this
5 *most* family members/friends would *certainly* do this

	Family					Friends				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1. Would suggest doing something, just to take my mind off my problems										
2. Would visit with me, or invite me over										
3. Would comfort me if I was upset										
4. Would give me a ride if I needed one										
5. Would have lunch or dinner with me										
6. Would look after my belongings (house, pets, ets) for a while										
7. Would loan me a car if I needed one										
8. Would joke around or suggest doing something to cheer me up										
9. Would go to a movie or concert with me										
10. Would suggest how I could find out more about a situation										
11. Would help me out with a move or other big chore										
12. Would listen if I needed to talk about my feelings										
13. Would have a good time with me										
14. Would pay for my lunch if I was broke										
15. Would suggest a way I might do something										
16. Would give me encouragement to do something different										
17. Would give me advice about what to do										
18. Would chat with me										
19. Would help me figure out what I wanted to do										

	Family					Friends				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
20. Would show me that they understood how I was feeling										
21. Would buy me a drink if I was short of money										
22. Would help me decide what to do										
23. Would give me a hug, or otherwise show me that I was cared about										
24. Would call me just to see how I was doing										
25. Would help me figure out what was going on										
26. Would help me out with some necessary purchase										
27. Would not pass judgment on me										
28. Would tell me who to talk to for help										
29. Would loan me money for an indefinite period										
30. Would be sympathetic if I was upset										
31. Would stick by me in a crunch										
32. Would buy me clothes if I were short of money										
33. Would tell me about available choices and options										
34. Would loan me tools, equipment, or appliances if I needed them										
35. Would give me reasons why I should or should not do something										
36. Would show affection for me										
37. Would show me how to do something I didn't know how to do										
38. Would bring me little presents of things I needed										
39. Would tell me the best way to get something done										
40. Would talk to other people to arrange something for me										
41. Would loan me money and want to "forget about it"										
42. Would tell me what to do										
43. Would offer me a place to stay for a while										
44. Would help me think about a problem										

	Family					Friends				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
45. Would loan me a fairly large sum of money (say the equivalent of a month's rent or bond repayment)										

Part 5: Revised Paramedic Work Exposure Checklist

The following questions ask you about your work experiences as a paramedic/ ambulance worker. Listed below are a number of experiences which you may have gone through.

Firstly, please indicate which of these experiences apply to you by ticking the OCCURRED column. If it does not apply to you, move on to the next question. Secondly, please indicate how you feel the experience has affected you emotionally by ticking one of the following:

-3 = extremely badly
-2 = moderately badly
-1 = slightly badly
0 = no effect
+1 = slightly well
+2 = moderately well
+3 = extremely well

Event	Occurred	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
1. I witnessed the death of a co-worker								
2. I heard about the death of a co-worker								
3. I heard about the suicide of a co-worker								
4. I was seriously harmed or injured								
5. I rendered assistance to someone I knew who was seriously injured								
6. I rendered aid at a sudden infant death syndrome								
7. I was exposed to hazardous chemicals and/or environments								
8. I observed a co-worker being seriously harmed or injured								
9. I heard about a co-worker being seriously harmed or injured								
10. I rendered aid to a seriously abused child								
11. I rendered aid to a seriously injured child								
12. I rendered aid at a paediatric drowning								
13. I rendered aid at an incident with multiple deaths (1-4 deaths)								
14. I rendered aid at an incident with multiple deaths (>4 deaths)								
15. I witnessed people dying								

Event	Occurred	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
16. I rendered assistance to multiple people who were badly injured								
17. I rendered aid to a seriously injured adolescent								
18. I rendered aid to a dangerous psychiatric patient								
19. I rendered assistance to people infected with disease (eg HIV/AIDS and related diseases)								
20. My safety was at risk								
21. My life was threatened								
22. I rendered aid to a person in full cardiac arrest with the family present								
23. I rendered aid to a mutilated adult homicide victim								
24. I rendered assistance to an injured person who resembled myself or someone close to me								
25. I rendered aid to an attempted adult homicide victim								
26. I rendered aid to a sexual assault victim								
27. I rendered aid at a completed suicide								
28. I rendered aid to an adult stabbing victim								
29. I rendered aid to a gunshot victim of gang/criminal violence								
30. I rendered aid to the perpetrator(s) of a fatal accident								
31. I rendered aid to an adult dead on arrival due to multiple wounds and injuries								
32. I saw badly mutilated bodies								
33. I suffered a minor injury (eg muscle strain, back pain, fracture, concussion)								
34. I rendered assistance to a person who died after a long resuscitation								
35. I rendered CPR to a person in cardiac arrest								
36. I was refused permission to render aid to a chronically ill person								
37. I received incorrect or inadequate information when dispatched on a call								

Event	Occurred	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
38. I had to deal with equipment failure or the incompetence of others								
39. I rendered aid to an attempted suicide or drug overdose								
40. I rendered aid to an adult dead on arrival due to natural causes								
41. I have received verbal abuse while rendering assistance								

B. Are there any other traumata which you experienced that have not been included? If yes, please list them and rate their effect on you.

Experience	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							

Part 6: Revised Impact of Event Scale

You may have experienced some very stressful events. The following is a list of comments made by people after stressful life events. Please read each item, and then indicate how often each comment was true for you during the PAST 7 DAYS. Was it NOT AT ALL true, RARELY true, SOMETIMES true, or OFTEN true ?

Experience	Not at all	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
1. I thought about it when I didn't mean to.				
2. I avoided letting myself get upset when I thought about it or was reminded of it.				
3. I had difficulty concentrating.				
4. I tried to remove it from memory.				
5. I had trouble falling asleep or staying asleep because pictures or thoughts about it came into my mind.				
6. I had waves of strong feelings about it.				

Experience	Not at all	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
7. I constantly found myself being "on guard".				
8. I had dreams about it.				
9. I stayed away from reminders of it.				
10. I felt as if it hadn't happened or wasn't real.				
11. I was startled by loud noises or surprises.				
12. I tried not to talk about it.				
13. Pictures about it popped into my mind.				
14. Other things kept making me think about it.				
15. My body reacted when I was in a situation that reminded me of the event.				
16. I was aware that I still had a lot of feelings about it, but I didn't deal with them.				
17. I was more irritable or angry than usual.				
18. I tried not to think about it.				
19. Any reminder brought back feelings about it.				
20. I had trouble sleeping or falling asleep.				
21. My feelings about it were kind of numb.				

Thank you for your participation!!