

A Meta Analysis of the Relationship between Shame and Dissociation

Justine Rudy, BA, Scott McKernan, BA, Nicole Kouri, MA & Wendy D'Andrea, PhD

Introduction:

- Shame and dissociation are related, but the extent and nature are not well explored
- Two competing theories:

Shame Bypass Theory suggests dissociation disrupts painful experiences of shame

Betrayal Trauma Theory states shame and dissociation serve the function of protecting needed relationships

Hypotheses:

- Shame and dissociation are positively correlated
- Gender, clinical status, trauma exposure, publication year, and will moderate the relationship.
- Publishing Author will not moderate the relationship

Method:

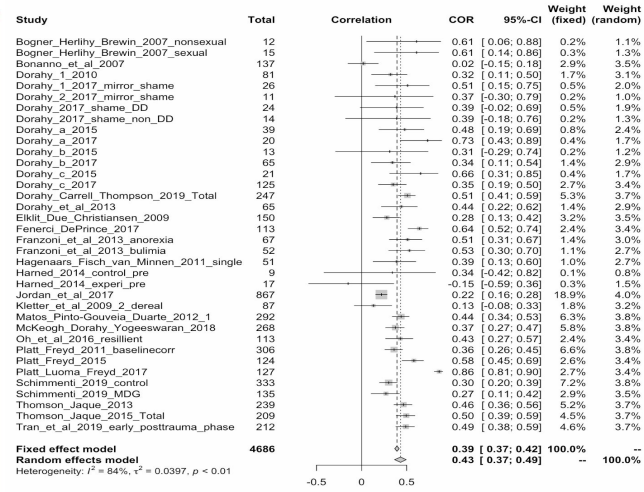
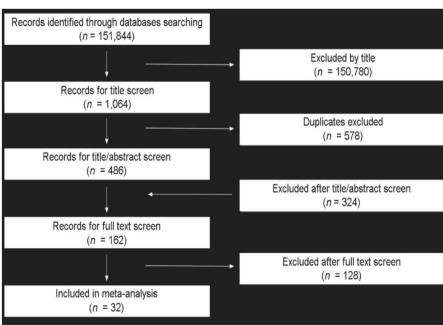
- 6 databases used: Cochrane, CINAHL, PubMed, ProQuest, Medline, and Academic Search Complete
- 151,844 titles funneled down to 32 articles included in analysis, which were further broken down into 36 samples.
- Criteria included: (a) a reported relationship between shame and dissociation; articles published in English; (b) participants were 18 years or older; (c) peer-reviewed articles

Results:

- 25 of the 32 articles looked at trait shame and trait dissociation
- Baseline shame and dissociation are moderately correlated ($r = 0.43$ 95% CI [0.36-0.49] $p < .0001$)
- High heterogeneity ($I^2=84\%$)
- Percent female showed trend-level findings between baseline shame and dissociation ($B=0.173$, $p = 0.0749$)
- Clinical status was a significant predictor for the relationship between trait shame and trait dissociation ($B=-0.135$ $p = 0.0497$)

Commonly used measures:

- Dissociative Experiences Scale ($n = 22$; DES; Waller, Putnam, & Carlson, 1996)
- Experience of Shame Scale ($n = 9$; ESS; Andrews, Qian, & Valentine, 2002)
- Personal Feelings Questionnaire (PFQ) or the PFQ-2 ($n = 7$; Harder & Lewis, 1987)
- Internalized Shame Scale ($n = 5$; ISS; Cook, 1988)



Discussion:

- This study shows an important relationship between shame and dissociation
- Majority of studies were focused on trait shame and dissociation
- More work required on relationship between state shame and dissociation
- More work on how shame can induce dissociation