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## EFFECTS OF CHILD NEGLECT ON PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS IN COLLEGE STUDENTS

Veronica Daniel

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EFFECTS OF CHILD NEGLECT ON PSYCHOLOGICAL  
DISTRESS IN COLLEGE STUDENTS

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A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Social Work

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by  
Veronica Eileen Daniel

June 2018

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Veronica Eileen Daniel  
June 2018

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## ABSTRACT

The current study focuses on exploring the effects of previous child neglect on current psychological distress in college students. By bringing attention to the lasting impact of neglect through adulthood, mental health professionals will see the need for increased services for this population. A convenience sample of 93 Master of Social Work students responded to questions geared towards experience of neglect as a child and current psychological distress. Correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between the two variables. No significant results were found. However, future studies are suggested as alternate versions of this study may support the need for early intervention and treatment services for individuals who have experienced neglect as a child. Recommendations for future studies include using a more diverse population and possibly including a qualitative portion to further explore correlations.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Problem Formulation

Child abuse is a common occurrence that disrupts the lives of children everywhere and its frequency is troubling. Every ten seconds, a child abuse report is made (Child Abuse Statistics and Facts, 2015). Each year more than 3.6 million child abuse referrals are made to agencies to further investigate. Even more startling, each day four to five children die because of abuse or neglect. The United States, in particular, has one of the worst records, losing up to seven children a day from maltreatment. Even so, these numbers have been predicted to be significantly undercounted by 50% or more (Child Abuse Statistics and Facts, 2015). Whereas physical and sexual abuse are many times incident-specific, neglect often occurs chronically and may not be as easily identified (Logan-Greene & Semanchin Jones, 2015).

Although extensive research has studied the topic of child abuse, child neglect, in particular, has been understudied (Straus & Kantor, 2005). The inattention to neglect has been a problem pattern that has continued over many years (Logan-Greene & Semanchin Jones, 2015). The attention that the subcategory of neglect receives has had an inverse relationship to the frequency of occurrence, specifically, sexual abuse has received the most attention, followed by physical abuse, and then neglect (Wilson & Horner, 2005). While

sexual abuse continues to be the focus of child abuse research (Herrenkohl, Klika, Herrenkohl, Russo, & Dee, 2012), neglect remains the most common form of child abuse accounting for 80% of child maltreatment (National Statistics on Child Abuse, 2014). In addition to the alarming rate, the effects of neglect can be just as (or even more) harmful than physical abuse. Children who endure neglect can suffer cognitive, social, emotional, behavioral, and moral development (Chapple & Vaske, 2010; Herrenkohl et al., 2012; Hildyard & Wolfe, 2002; Logan-Greene & Semanchin Jones, 2015; Sneddon, 2003; Wark, Kruczek, & Boley, 2003). Furthermore, the impairments can continue throughout the developmental years as the child grows older (Herrenkohl et al., 2012; Hildyard & Wolfe, 2002; Logan-Greene & Semanchin Jones, 2015).

Horwitz, Widom, McLaughlin, and White (2001) explored the impact of various forms of child maltreatment (including sexual abuse and physical abuse) on mental health twenty years later. Participants were found from records of documented cases of childhood abuse and were interviewed on current mental health functioning. It was found that men who were previously abused as children had higher levels of dysthymia and antisocial personality disorder than adults in the control group. Women who had experienced maltreatment as a child were found to have more symptoms of dysthymia, antisocial personality disorder, and alcohol problems. However, when controlling for stressful life events, childhood maltreatment did not have great impact on mental health outcome. It was then

suggested that further research examine the effects of childhood abuse amidst other life stressors (Horwitz et al., 2001).

As discussed, child neglect as a whole has been highly understudied, but more specifically, the long-term effects found in adulthood are overlooked (Straus & Kantor, 2005). In recent years, the detrimental results of neglect have been focused on early stages of child development (Chapple & Vaske, 2010). While the research concerning the effects of childhood neglect on adults is scarce, it is suspected that early neglect will lead to criminal behavior, personality disorders, substance abuse, and stressful life events at the adult life stage (Hildyard & Wolfe, 2002). With these developments, comes the need for additional resources and services for this population.

### Purpose of the Study

Given the lack of research focused on long-term effects of neglect in adulthood, the purpose of the current study was to focus on the relationship between previous childhood neglect and current psychological distress in the adult population. In the current study, effects of neglect were studied within the Master of Social Work student population at California State University, San Bernardino. Possible relationships between previous childhood neglect, whether it be emotional, medical, academic, or basic needs and an adult's current level of distress was explored using a short quantitative survey that asked participants to rate their answers on a 1-5 scale. Demographics of the sample was also

examined by including questions in the survey concerning age, gender, ethnicity, student status, annual income, and religion. The college student population was a convenient sample and a highly researchable group as many individuals have experienced life challenges of their own and understand the importance of expanding knowledge of various phenomenon. By studying an adult population and their rating of previous neglect along with current distress, a greater knowledge of the need for early intervention was hoped to be obtained.

Through asking individuals to reflect on previous maltreatment and neglect, unsettling feelings may arise. This poses potential emotional harm if a participant feels exposed and vulnerable. Before taking the survey, a disclaimer was provided to advise participants of the potential effects of answering sensitive questions. Additionally, on campus resources for counseling was provided in a debriefing statement for students to discuss any negative after effects they may experience post survey.

#### Significance of the Project for Social Work Practice

The development of this project initially grew from the researcher's interest in raising awareness of the occurrence of child neglect. Expanding from this was the interest in examining the long-term effects found in the many adults who have experienced child neglect in previous years. Initial causes for child neglect have been previously studied along with immediate after effects found during childhood and adolescence, but there is a lack of research for how the neglect

affects an individual long term. By developing a deeper knowledge of the lasting effect of child neglect, those in social work practice can begin to see the larger scope of the issue and the heightened need for early intervention services. As services become more concentrated and available for this population at an earlier stage, social workers may begin to see a decrease in the occurrence.

Alternatively, there may be a focus on understanding the impact of child neglect at the adult level to better develop services post neglect. By becoming more aware of the lasting struggles of individuals who were previously neglected, mental health services for adults can be broadened to account for this component. The findings of this research may contribute to the profession of Licensed Clinical Social Workers, and similar professionals, as they implement therapeutic services to their clients. The understanding of long term impact of child neglect may be used to develop more thorough assessments of individuals. This will then help clinicians to account for this possible risk factor and how it relates to current functioning. To further examine this topic, the current study will be exploring the following question- what are the effects of previous child neglect on current psychological distress in college students?

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

This chapter focuses on further examining the research related to the impact of child neglect including internal versus external challenges and severity versus chronicity. The subsections focus on discussing the impacts of child neglect, the need for intervention, and how attachment theory and the Circumplex Model of marital and family systems relate to the topic of child neglect.

#### Impacts of Child Neglect

One of the major concerns of child neglect is the lasting impact- both short term and long term (Chapple, & Vaske, 2010; Hildyard & Wolfe, 2002; Nelson, Saunders, & Landsman, 1993; Sneddon, 2003; Wark et al., 2003; Wilson, & Horner, 2005). Short term effects of child neglect include severe impact on cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral development. In addition, students who experience neglect at home have shown poorer academic performance compared to their counterparts (Chapple & Vaske, 2010; Hildyard & Wolfe, 2002). These students also present with problems of social withdrawal, limited peer relationships, and many more internalizing problems (Hildyard & Wolfe,

2002). Additionally, neglect has predicted higher levels of psychological distress, lowered self-esteem, and decreased social competence (Wark et al., 2003).

While many studies focus on an individual's internal challenges and behaviors, others studied the possible externalizing effects of neglect. Logan-Greene and Semanchin Jones (2015) found that chronic neglect contributed to later aggression towards peers and delinquency. The guardian's failure to provide basic necessities best predicted an outcome of aggression, specifically stronger for males. In addition, a guardian's continuous failure to provide has an impact on brain development, emotional regulation, and future healthy attachments and secure relationships (Logan-Greene & Semanchin Jones, 2015).

Conflicting research has been found, in regards to chronicity versus severity of maltreatment. Several studies have found that the severity of maltreatment best predicts the level of damage even if it ceases early (Geeraert, Van, Grietens, & Onghena, 2004). While other studies have found that the chronicity of maltreatment better predicts negative outcomes, especially when lasting through various developmental stages (Logan-Greene & Semanchin Jones, 2015). These studies suggest that if neglect lasts for a longer period of time, even if it is in a lesser form, it causes more lasting damage (Logan-Greene & Semanchin Jones, 2015). And because neglect has been found to be the more chronic form of all types of child abuse, it can be expected that children

experiencing neglect are at a higher risk than those experiencing other forms of abuse (Hildyard & Wolfe, 2002).

### Intervention

The need for effective treatment plans and prevention programs is high, however, it remains a low priority for many agencies (Hildyard & Wolfe, 2002). Geeraert et al. (2004), examined the various programs available for this population and their overall successfulness. They found that there are various levels of prevention: primary (aka universal), secondary (aka selective), and tertiary (aka indicated). At the primary level, all efforts are included that address underlying societal causes (e.g. poverty). At the secondary level, specific groups that are at risk for maltreatment are focused on (e.g. individuals with poor parenting skills or socially isolated). At the tertiary level, strategies are aimed at groups where child maltreatment is already occurring (e.g. single parent households). When examining all levels of intervention, it was found that when used, the interventions have an overall positive effect, but were not used very often or were delayed for an extended period of time (Geeraert et al., 2004). It was recommended that these interventions be expanded to be more readily available. By intervening early with families, it is anticipated that the rates of child neglect and other forms of abuse will decrease (Geeraert et al., 2004; Hildyard & Wolfe, 2002; Sneddon, 2003; Straus & Kantor, 2005; Wilson & Horner, 2005).

## Theories Guiding Conceptualization

The topic of child neglect and its effects relate to attachment theory. Attachment can be defined as a deep emotional bond between two individuals over time (Ainsworth, 1991; Bowlby, 1958). It is theorized that attachment begins in early infancy. Infants will begin to form an attachment with caregivers when their needs are met. Bowlby (1958) described this phenomenon in an evolutionary context. All living things need their basic needs met for survival in order to maintain homeostasis (Bowlby, 1958). Bowlby proposes that the attachment continues to develop through a series of stages and leads to the development of an internal working model of either secure, avoidant, or resistant. The long-term consequences of avoidant and resistant models include delinquency, reduced intelligence, increased aggression, and depression (Bowlby, 1958). These characteristics are consistent with the outcomes found in children who were neglected (Chapple & Vaske, 2010; Logan-Greene & Semanchin Jones, 2015). Neglected children who did not have their “evolutionary” basic needs met, can be predicted to have developed avoidant or resistant internal models that later manifest into troublesome behaviors.

The components of child neglect and the family system as a whole can be further explained using the Circumplex Model of marital and family systems by Olson (2000). Olson described two dimensions of this model: adaptability and cohesiveness. Families that are on the extreme ends of the spectrum for these two dimensions are said to be less functional than those that are more balanced

and towards the middle of the spectrum (Olson, 2000). Adaptability is characterized by a family's ability to change roles and rules based on the situation and stress. In families where neglect occurs, it can be predicted that there is low adaptability to situational stress. Olson described neglectful parents as responding to parental demands by avoiding or disengaging, which may lead to chronic neglect (Olson, 2000). Examining long term effects of this in the current study will lead to a deeper understanding of the lasting impact of neglect. The component of cohesiveness focuses on family members engaging with one other in a healthy manner (Olson, 2000). Because neglect often occurs because of a guardian isolating or abandoning the children in the household, there is an extreme lack of cohesiveness in these family systems. With this in mind, it would be crucial to include techniques to increase overall family cohesiveness in prevention programs and interventions for these families.

### Summary

This study will examine the long-term effects of child neglect in graduate students in the Master of Social Work program. The impact of child neglect has been previously studied in young children and adolescents but research in the adult population has been severely lacking. Both internalizing and externalizing effects of neglect have been identified in the literature along with a comparison of severity and chronicity of neglect and how it relates to lasting damage. Approaching this topic with the knowledge of attachment theory along with the

Circumplex Model of marital and family systems will help to develop a more thorough understanding of this issue and the possible steps to take in improving available services. The current study seeks to increase awareness of the severity of this issue and suggest solutions to better address the lasting impacts.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODS

#### Introduction

The current study examined the effects of child neglect on psychological distress in adults. This chapter is focused on discussing how the study was carried out, details concerning the population, and limitations. Sections will include: study design, sampling, data collection and instruments, procedures, and protection of human subjects.

#### Study Design

The purpose of this study was to explore previous child neglect of adults and how it impacts current psychological distress. Due to the limited amount of research concerning long term effects of child neglect, the current study was exploratory in nature. Because the topics are sensitive in nature, a quantitative approach was most feasible. Furthermore, a quantitative form was more appealing for college students with busy schedules to complete. A strength of using the quantitative approach was having set answer choices that can be easily reviewed and quickly entered for statistical analysis. The exploratory nature helped to highlight trends concerning neglect and the effects found in adult years afterwards. Because this is a highly-understudied area of research,

the results found provide support for additional research and creating early interventions.

A limitation to the current study was the use of students as participants. By using only college students as participants, responses may have been made up of only individuals who have adjusted well to previous neglect. This may have left out other individuals who suffered child neglect, and did not adjust well, thereby not attending college. Another limitation is the self-report of neglect. Individuals may have over or under reported the severity of their neglect, skewing the findings.

The current study explored the following question: what are the effects of childhood neglect on adult psychological distress? Exploring the topic of child neglect in the adult population broadens the knowledge of this type of abuse and highlights how it impacts later life stages and the need for further interventions.

### Sampling

A convenience sample was used, made up of 93 Master of Social Work students. The sampling criteria was focused on adults between the ages of 18-59, both male and female, and open to all ethnicities and religions. The age limit was important as the research question is specifically geared towards individuals in young and middle adulthood. The student population at the university is multicultural as it is comprised of various races, ethnicities, social economic

statuses, and family compositions which may have increased generalizability of findings.

### Data Collection and Instruments

Quantitative data was collected in the form of a survey. The survey was provided to participants at the start of one of their scheduled classes via a printed handout that included informed consent, demographic questions, a neglect scale, a distress scale, and a debriefing statement. Demographic information collected included age, gender identification, ethnicity identification, current student status, annual income, and religious identification. To measure an individual's past experience of neglect (the independent variable), the Neglect Scale (NS) was used (Straus, Kinard, & Williams, 1995). The NS measures an individual's experience of previous neglect or lack there-of. The NS includes statements addressing the following areas of neglect: academic, medical, basic needs, and emotional. The NS is a 40-item scale and has been reduced to a 12-item selection for use in this study. Items were condensed by comparing the factor loadings of each of the subscales and 2 questions have been removed based on having the lowest rating (Straus, Kinard, & Williams, 1995). This reduction in items was done to ensure that all dimensions of neglect were accounted for while also having a concise scale to provide to participants.

High internal consistency reliability has been found for the overall scale with a Cronbach's alpha rating of .96 (Harrington, Zuravin, DePanfilis, Ting, &

Dubowitz, 2002). Moderate internal consistency reliability has been found with each subscale with ratings as follows: emotional = .85, physical = .82, cognitive = .78, and supervisory = .81. Additionally, a confirmatory factor analysis was performed and all four subscales were highly correlated with one another with a rating of .97 (Harrington et al., 2002).

Participants were asked to answer questions based on the parent or guardian most present during their upbringing or based on the time of their life that had the most influence. Statements provided describe a category of neglect, i.e. "did not give me enough to eat." Answer choices range from 1-4 with 1 being "strongly agree" and 4 being "strongly disagree" (Straus, Kinard, & Williams, 1995).

To then measure current psychological distress (dependent variable), the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6) was utilized (Kessler et al., 2002). The K6 is a 6-item questionnaire that measures distress by using questions focused on anxiety and depressive symptoms present within the last 30 days. Statements provided describe an individual's emotional state, i.e. "how often do you feel hopeless." Answer choices range from 1-5 with 1 being "all of the time" and 5 being "none of the time." This scale is a commonly used screening instrument by practitioners in clinical settings. The K6 has been found to have a Cronbach's alpha value of .89 for internal consistency reliability. The K6's brevity and consistency across sub samples makes it a preferred scale for measuring an individual's emotional state (Kessler et al., 2002).

## Procedures

To gather participants using convenience sampling, Master of Social Work students were approached while in class. Class visits were arranged and approved of ahead of time by emailing professors to select the best date and time to disperse the surveys in person. Prior to taking the survey, participants were given a brief description of the purpose of the survey and were instructed to read the informed consent. Participants were given 5-10 minutes to complete the survey. After completing the survey, students were thanked for participating and instructed to read the debriefing statement. All surveys were then collected and transported to a safe holding area.

## Protection of Human Subjects

The protection of the participants was crucial in this study. Identity was kept confidential by instructing participants to answer anonymously. No names were recorded. Engagement in this study was completely voluntary and was explained to participants at the time that surveys were dispersed. The front sheet contained an informed consent that briefly explained the purpose of the study and the nature of the questions. Each participant was instructed to read and sign the informed consent (by marking an X) prior to completing the survey. Participants were informed that they had the choice to opt out of completing the survey at any time. Participants were given a debriefing statement at conclusion of the survey which included resources for therapeutic services.

## Data Analysis

Data collected was analyzed with quantitative techniques. A bivariate analysis was conducted as the variables included in the study were the experience of neglect and psychological distress. Both the dependent and the independent variables are interval/ratio measurements and thus correlation analysis was used. By using correlation analysis, connections between the experience of previous neglect and current psychological distress were examined. Nominal descriptive statistics were also collected including age, gender, ethnicity, student status, income, and religion. All responses from participants were anonymous with no identifying information entered.

## Summary

The current study focused on exploring child neglect and the effect it has on the experience of distress in adults. To do this, an exploratory design was used and surveys were given to a convenience sample of Master of Social Work students. Surveys were dispersed in person and contained demographic questions along with self-reports of childhood neglect and current distress. Due to the sensitive nature of the questions, a quantitative approach was most appropriate.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the descriptive statistics of the sample utilized in this research project. A breakdown of the demographics of the population will be described and provided. A correlation analysis was conducted to determine if any significant relationships exist between experience of previous neglect and current psychological distress. The findings of this analysis will be provided below.

#### Presentation of Findings

The participant sample for this project was comprised of 93 Master of Social Work students. As shown in Table 1, the majority of participants were female (81.7%). The average age of participants was 29.53 years (SD = 9.142). The majority of participants identified their ethnicity as Hispanic/Latino (54.8%), followed by White (30.1%). Participants were comprised of MSW students from the 1<sup>st</sup> year part time cohort (19.4%), the 3<sup>rd</sup> year part time cohort (23.7%), the 1<sup>st</sup> year full time cohort (25.8%), and the 2<sup>nd</sup> year full time cohort (31.2%). Most participants identified as Catholic (44.1%), followed by Christian (29%), and Non-religious (18.3%). When asked about annual income, the majority of participants

reported less than \$10,000 (40.9%), followed by \$40,000 to \$69,999 (26.9%), and closely followed by \$10,000 to \$39,999 (25.8%).

Table 1. Participant Demographics

|                                | Frequency | Percent | Standard       |
|--------------------------------|-----------|---------|----------------|
|                                | n         | %       | Mean Deviation |
| <b>Gender</b>                  |           |         |                |
| Male                           | 17        | 18.3    |                |
| Female                         | 76        | 81.7    |                |
| Transgender                    | 0         | 0       |                |
| Other                          |           |         |                |
| <b>Age</b>                     |           |         | 29.53 9.142    |
| <b>Ethnicity</b>               |           |         |                |
| African American               | 8         | 8.6     |                |
| Asian/Pacific Islander         | 4         | 4.3     |                |
| White                          | 28        | 30.1    |                |
| Hispanic/Latino                | 51        | 54.8    |                |
| Other                          | 2         | 2.2     |                |
| <b>Student Status</b>          |           |         |                |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> year part time | 18        | 19.4    |                |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> year part time | 22        | 23.7    |                |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> year part time | 24        | 25.8    |                |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> year part time | 29        | 31.2    |                |

| <b>Religion</b> |    |      |
|-----------------|----|------|
| Christian       | 27 | 29   |
| Catholic        | 41 | 44.1 |
| Non-religious   | 17 | 18.3 |
| Other           | 8  | 8.6  |

  

| <b>Annual Income</b> |    |      |
|----------------------|----|------|
| Less than \$10,000   | 38 | 40.9 |
| \$10,000 to \$39,999 | 24 | 25.8 |
| \$40,000 to \$69,999 | 25 | 26.9 |
| \$70,000 or more     | 6  | 6.5  |

To explore the relationship between experience of previous neglect and current psychological distress in graduate students, a correlation analysis was conducted. A Pearson correlation coefficient indicated no significant relationship between reported neglect and psychological distress,  $r = .14$ ,  $n = 88$ ,  $p = .19$ . To examine other possible relationships between the two variables, the neglect scale was divided into the separate categories of school (questions 3,12), medical (question 5), basic needs (questions 7, 10), and emotional support (questions 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11) and the distress scale was divided into anxiety symptoms (questions 1, 3) and depression related symptoms (questions 2, 4, 5, 6). A correlation analysis was again utilized to explore possible associations between these subcategories, however, no significant relationships were found.

## Summary

When examining the demographics of the sample used, it was found that the majority of the sample was female. Most participants reported their ethnicity as Hispanic and Catholic was the most heavily identified religion. Student statuses were close in number and varied from 1<sup>st</sup> year part time and full time cohorts, 2<sup>nd</sup> year full time cohort, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> year part time cohort in the Master of Social Work program. The majority of participants reported an annual income of \$10,000 and the average age of participants was 29.53 years. A correlation analysis was used to examine all possible relationships between neglect and distress, however, no significant results were found.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

Although no significant relationships were found between previous neglect and current psychological distress in graduate students, further research is needed to determine if there may be possible relationships between these two variables in other populations. Limitations of this study will be discussed as well as recommendations for future studies and Social Work Practice.

#### Discussion

According to the findings, there was no significant relationship between childhood neglect and current psychological distress. This may be due to various limitations of the study. One limitation was the fact that the neglect scale used was shortened, thereby not including all original scale items. This was done to be considerate of participants' time and to increase the likelihood of the participant remaining focused and attentive while completing the survey. Student researcher attempted to address this limitation by selectively choosing the scale items to include through comparing factor loadings. Another limitation was the lack of generalizability of the sample used. As the sample consisted of only Master of Social Work students at one particular university, this may hinder the study from being able to accurately represent adults in other professions or geographic

locations. An option would be to examine the variables used in the study in a different type of adult population, other than students. For example, studying the possible relationship of these variables in a group of participants who are currently receiving (or have previously received) mental health services would introduce an interesting factor to the study. Also, if participants report using mental health services, they may be more forthcoming and honest about their experience of neglect and/or distress. Because data was collected through self-report in the current study, participants may have under or over reported their experiences, thereby skewing the results.

#### Recommendations for Social Work Practice

Literature has indicated a severe lack of research concerning neglect (Logan-Greene & Semanchin Jones, 2015). As previously mentioned, short term effects of neglect have been somewhat studied, but long term effects have received little to no attention (Straus & Kantor, 2005). Because of this, there is a deficiency in preventative intervention and effective treatment plans offered to these victims (Wilson & Horner, 2005). Although the current study did not find any significant results, the area of neglect must continue to be studied in order to enhance knowledge concerning the causes and the effects of neglect and how to better serve the victims of this abuse. A recommendation for future studies is to further study the long term effects of neglect, in adults who are also experiencing other life stressors that may exacerbate their symptoms. This is suggested as it

has been found in a previous study that when controlling for stressful life events, childhood maltreatment did not show effects on mental health (Horwitz et al., 2001). Another possible recommendation could be to add a qualitative portion to the study to explore each participant's responses more thoroughly. This would enhance the exploratory nature of the study.

### Conclusion

The current study did not find any significant results. However, continued research is needed to further investigate the effects of neglect. As the occurrence of neglect continues to remain high and the services offered remain low, it is evident that not enough is known about childhood neglect and the lasting negative impact it can result in. Further research is needed to explore the long term effects neglect can have on various populations. By gaining insight into the impact neglect can have on emotional stability, it is believed that the need for increased early intervention services and post neglect treatment will be recognized.

APPENDIX A  
INFORMED CONSENT



California State University, San Bernardino  
 Social Work Institutional Review Board Sub-Committee  
 APPROVED 5/12/2010 VOID AFTER 5/12/2011  
 IRBS 0163703 CHAIR

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences  
 School of Social Work

**INFORMED CONSENT**

The study in which you are asked to participate is designed to examine the effect of the previous neglect on current psychological distress in college students. The study is being conducted by Veronica Daniel, a graduate student, under the supervision of Dr. Armando Barragán, Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB). The study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board Social Work Sub-committee at CSUSB.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the study is to examine the effect of previous neglect on current psychological distress in college students.

**DESCRIPTION:** Participants will be asked questions focused on their experience of neglect as a child, their current level of psychological distress, and some demographics.

**PARTICIPATION:** Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the study or discontinue your participation at any time without any consequences.

**CONFIDENTIALITY OR ANONYMITY:** Your responses will be anonymous and data will be reported in group form only.

**DURATION:** It will take 5 to 10 minutes to complete the survey.

**RISKS:** Due to the sensitive nature of these topics, negative emotions may surface. Resources are available to help process this and are included on the debriefing statement to be provided following the survey.

**BENEFITS:** There will not be any direct benefits to the participants.

**CONTACT:** If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Barragán at (909) 537-3501 or Armando.Barragan@csusb.edu.

**RESULTS:** Results of the study can be obtained from the Pfau Library ScholarWorks database (<http://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/>) at California State University, San Bernardino after March 2018.

This is to certify that I read the above and I am 18 years or older.

Place an X mark here

Date

909.537.5901

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APPENDIX B  
NEGLECT AND DISTRESS SURVEY

Part 1: Demographics (Developed by Student Researcher)

1. What is your age?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your gender?

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Transgender
- d. Other

3. What is your ethnicity?

- a. African American
- b. Asian/Pacific Islander
- c. Hispanic/Latino
- d. Native American
- e. White
- f. Other

4. What is your current student status at the School of Social Work?

- a. 1<sup>st</sup> Year Part Time
- b. 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Part Time
- c. 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Part Time
- d. 1<sup>st</sup> Year Full Time
- e. 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Full Time

5. What is your current annual income?

- a. Less than \$10,000
- b. \$10,000 to \$39,999
- c. \$40,000 to \$69,999
- d. \$70,000 to \$99,999
- e. \$100,000 or more

6. What is your religion?

- a. Christian
- b. Muslim
- c. Catholic
- d. Buddhist
- e. Atheist
- f. Agnostic
- g. Non-religious
- h. Other

Part II: Neglect Scale (Straus, Kinard, & Williams, 1995)

For each of the following statements, decide how well it describes your life with your parents. "Parents" refers to the person or people who raised you. You should answer for the parent or guardian most present during your upbringing or based on the time of your life that had the most influence.

Circle "1" for Strongly Agree" if it is a very good description of either or both of your parents or a "4" for "Strongly Disagree" if it does not describe either of them at all. Choose "2" for Agree or "3" for Disagree if it falls somewhere in between.

- 1 = Strongly Agree
- 2 = Agree
- 3 = Disagree
- 4 =Strongly Disagree

- |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Did not help me when I had problems.                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. Did not help me to do my best.                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. Did not make sure I went to school.                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. Did not comfort me when I was upset.                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. Did not make sure I saw a doctor when I needed one.   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. Helped me when I had trouble understanding something. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. Did not give me enough clothes to keep me warm.       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. Was not interested in my activities or hobbies.       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. Was not interested in the kind of friends I had.      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. Did not give me enough to eat.                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. Did not praise me.                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. Did not care if I got into trouble in school.        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Part III. Distress Scale (Kessler et al., 2002)

Outside of the stress associated with attending college courses, please rate how you have been feeling during the **past 30 days**.

Read each of the following statements and circle "1" for "**All** of the time," "2" for "**Most** of the time," "3" for "**Some** of the time," "4" for "**A little** of the time," or "5" for "**None** of the time."

- 1 = All of the time
- 2 = Most of the time
- 3 = Some of the time
- 4 = A little of the time
- 5 = None of the time

Answer the following questions based on how you have been feeling the **past 30 days**:

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. How often did you feel nervous?   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. How often did you feel hopeless?  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. How often did you feel restless or fidgety?                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. How often did you feel so depressed that<br>nothing could cheer you up? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. How often did you feel that everything was an effort?                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. How often did you feel worthless?                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

APPENDIX C  
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

The study you have just completed was designed to examine the effect of previous neglect on current psychological distress in college students. We are particularly interested in the relationship between these two variables to see whether experiencing neglect as a child is related to later psychological distress in adults. Due to the sensitive nature of these topics, negative emotions may surface. Resources are available to help process this, including on campus services in the Student Health and Psychological Counseling Center. To make an appointment for counseling services, please call (909) 537-5040.

Thank you for your participation and for not discussing the contents of the study with other students. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact Veronica Daniel or Dr. Armando Barragán at (909) 537-3501. If you would like to obtain a copy of the group results of this study, please contact Dr. Armando Barragán at (909) 537-3501 or [Armando.Barragan@csusb.edu](mailto:Armando.Barragan@csusb.edu) at the end of Spring Quarter of 2018.

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