

Short Communication

A Constructive Narrative Treatment Approach with Adolescents

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Adolescent depression and suicide, adolescent victims of human trafficking, and ways to bolster resilience in LGBTQ youth are major topics addressed in the Melissa Institute for Violence Prevention conferences. The conference Handout materials are available on the Institute's website (www.melissainstitute.org), as well as other related topics.

A common theme to these presentations is the finding that no matter what the cumulative exposure to traumatic and

victimizing experiences, most adolescents will evidence resilience, the ability to bounce back, and the capacity to handle

ongoing adversities. In contrast, some approximately 25% of victimized adolescents will develop PTSD, co-occurring disorders and adjustment difficulties. What distinguishes these two groups is the central focus of the Melissa Institute intervention approach. The treatment implications are considered and how to implement the Core Tasks of Psychotherapy are discussed.

A variety of conference presenters have included their detailed treatment manuals that can be downloaded. A constructive narrative, life-span, culturally-sensitive evidence-based treatment approach is highlighted. It is proposed that adolescents are not only homo-sapiens, but also "homo narrans", or story-tellers. It is the stories that adolescents tell themselves, and tell others that distinguish those who go onto evidence resilience versus those who "get stuck".

How significant others and psychotherapists can help adolescents develop redemptive stories and the accompanying coping skills is discussed. The critical role of the therapeutic alliance and the need to obtain session-by-session treatment-informed feedback is highlighted.