

Reviewer-1

The time is past for such a project that does not use males as the model for human reactions; yes, the generalizability is limited due to the sample of primarily women of color. Important that the discussion included the impediments to people in general, and women of color in particular that lead to minimizing emotional abuse; social work professionals address this often and this project supports further investigation of the experiences of emotional abuse in its many forms; likely beyond the scope of this project, but many of the authors cited in reference list have historically contributed to the literature on the dissociative process, in particular the underlying neurobiology, which, if not operative, may have diminished the minimization of emotional abuse memories plus the shame of it all.

Appreciated the use of literature from past decades, when some pioneers(van der Kolk, Cloitre, Linehan) introduced emotional trauma as significant factor in later psychiatric sx; surprised that B.D. Perry and A.N.Schore were not referenced re: the neurobiology of attachment trauma, but no matter, the citations supported well the discussion throughout. This project actually needs the wisdom of clinicians from the past, including J. Bowlby and John Robinson(a social worker working with Bowlby). I am opposed to limiting references to past 5 years when we have wealth of material that, without the current neurobiology, were writing from their observations clinically and making comments that would later be supported by real-time brain scans, etc. Also, where are the Social Work contributors on the intersection of biology/physiology and trauma, e.g., B. Rothschild, to name one of several?

The clinical usefulness of the focus of the research (women, mostly of color) is obvious for teaching in Social Work programs and supervision of newly degreed Social Workers embarking on their careers. The ACE questions are harsh and often do not elicit much about emotional abuse. However, Social Workers are adept at reconfiguring questions that do not immediately engender defensive minimization due to shame and other pressures; for example, asking about stress rather than buzz words, like trauma, abuse, etc. Though the generalizability of the findings may be limited to the specific demographics of the sample, as a practitioner who teaches and supervises other practitioners (for many decades), I would advocate for utilizing these common-sense research outcomes as lens though which formulate questions that invite rather than stir up defenses for any population, accounting for cultural issues. But, especially for men, who are socialized in the West anyway, be being taught various ways to not admit being maltreated for all the reasons these researchers and any social worker know. Looking forward to sharing this contribution with others in our Social Work profession.