

## Impact Of ACEs and Trauma On The Tendency to Forgive

### Data collection is in progress

Previous research on trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) has clearly shown a profound impact exists for the individuals who have experienced these events. More specifically, trauma and ACE's has been shown negatively influence people psychologically, emotionally, and physically; this also stands true for individuals who struggle with unforgiveness (Balkin et al., 2021; Enright, 1998; Goldmark, 2024; Worthington, 2006). Some of the negative effects of unforgiveness include but are not limited to a decline in physical health (Stackhouse et al., 2014) mental health, and overall well-being (Enright, 1998; Worthington, 2006; Sandage & Jankowski, 2010). Several studies have highlighted the connection between ACEs, trauma, and forgiveness; finding that forgiveness of self as well as situational forgiveness can act as a buffer for depression (Amaranggani & Dewi, 2022; Skolnick et al., 2023). Still, we are learning the depth, impact, and overall value of forgiveness as many gaps still exists in understanding tendency to forgive, specifically, in Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) populations as influenced by different types of experienced trauma and ACEs, at different times of their lives, and at different levels of severity. The purpose of this study is to explore the impact ACEs and trauma has on the tendency to forgive oneself, others, and situations. Another purpose is to explore one's ability to forgive based on the (1) severity of the trauma, (2) age of the trauma, and (3) type of trauma. Lastly, this study also seeks to diversify literature by exploring the BIPOC population, as no research where the BIPOC populations are the majority currently exists. Along with a demographic questionnaire, measures included in the study are (1) Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS) that will assess a person's dispositional forgiveness, (2) traumatic antecedent questionnaire (TAQ), that will assess various trauma experiences across developmental stages, and (3) the Childhood Adverse Experiences (ACEs) measure that will identify experienced childhood adversities.

This study seeks to answer the following research questions

1. Does trauma and ACEs influence the ability to forgive?
2. Does the type, onset, and severity of the trauma influence the ability to forgive?

This hypothesis for this study is as follows:

H1: Participants who reports a **higher number** of ACEs will report low levels in the overall ability to forgive (self, others, and situational)

H1a: Participants who report a **higher number** of traumatic experiences will also report low levels in the overall ability to forgive (self, others, and situational)

H2: Participants who report **earlier** traumatic experiences will report a greater struggle with the ability to forgive

H3: There will be significant difference between types of ACEs (emotional abuse and physical abuse) and tendency to forgive

H3a: There will be significant difference between types of traumas (emotional abuse and physical abuse) and the tendency to forgive

H4: There will be a significant difference between reported severity of the trauma an ability to forgive

H5: There will be a significant difference in reported tendency to forgive between BIPOC and non-BIPOC participants.

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