

Original Paper

Building Resilience: The Invisible Childhood Emotional Neglect

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Received: October 18, 2020 Accepted: October 28, 2020 Online Published: November 26, 2020

doi:10.22158/ct.v3n2p93

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/ct.v3n2p93>

Abstract

Early Emotional Maltreatment (EEM) is a major risk factor for impairments in social functioning and mental health. EEM is one of the emotional neglects and it constitutes a major public health concern with devastating consequences to the individual and society as a whole. Based on this background the study adopted a qualitative approach and data was collected using unstructured interviews. The sample consisted participants from different social economic backgrounds aged between 10 to 46 years old. The study findings established that the emotional neglect occurs as parental rejection, feeling unloved, violence in the family, discrimination, emotionally unavailable parents, discovering the existence of a step family, separation/divorce just to mention a few. The EEM manifest in the individual's daily life though unconsciously as anger outburst, resentment/hatred, bitterness, poor relations with the peers and parents, low self-confidence, cannot handle criticism, rebellion, poor academic performance, loneliness, mistrust, fear, feelings of inadequacy, drug and substance abuse and in extreme cases hopelessness, depression and suicidal tendencies. The study recommends empowerment of the children to accept themselves, express their thoughts and feelings, and create awareness among parents and caregivers to be responsive to children's thoughts and feelings therefore promote holistic growth.

Keywords

EEM, emotional neglect, manifestation, responsiveness

1. Introduction

Resilience is characterized by a positive adaptation to adversity, or a bouncing-back from a negative event (Snyder, Lopez, & Pedrotti, 2010; Theron, 2010). It is, described as an immunization-like effect for dealing with life's barriers (Snyder et al., 2010), or providing "resistance to environmental risk experiences" (Rutter, 2012, p. 34). Resilience is also often regarded as both a process and an outcome. Emotional maltreatment on the other hand can be broadly defined as "a repeated pattern of caregiver's

behavior or extreme incident(s) that convey to children that they are flawed, unloved, unwanted, endangered, or of value only in meeting another's needs" (American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, 1995, p. 2). Researchers have speculated that emotional maltreatment is a core component underlying all forms of child maltreatment that has equivalent, if not greater, developmental consequences than childhood experiences of physical and/or sexual abuse (Chamberland, Fallon, Black, & Trocmé, 2012; Chamberland, Fallon, Black, Nico, & Chabot, 2012;). Despite the high rate of co-occurrence with other forms of child abuse (Bruce, Heimberg, Blanco, Schneier, & Liebowitz, 2012; Vachon, Krueger, Rogosch, Cicchetti, 2015; Waxman, Fenton, Skodol, Grant, & Hasin, 2014), the independent effects of emotional maltreatment on poor mental and physical health outcomes are rarely investigated and not well understood.

Emotional maltreatment encompasses both acts of commission (i.e., emotional abuse) and acts of omission (i.e., emotional neglect). Other potential mediators of the relationship between childhood emotional maltreatment (primarily emotional abuse) and later mental health problems that have received some support in the literature include emotional dysregulation (Coates & Messman-Moore, 2014), immature coping styles and low self-esteem (Finza-Dottan & Karu, 2006), hopelessness (Hamilton et al., 2013), and negative automatic thoughts (Gibb, Benas, Crossett, & Uhrlass, 2007). In contrast, the effects of childhood emotional abuse appeared to manifest across a broad spectrum of mental disorders across the lifespan of the individual affected. This could be evidence for the non-specificity of effects of childhood emotional abuse on adult mental health. While emotional neglect is a more singular construct (e.g., denying emotional responsiveness to the child), emotional maltreatment encompasses a variety of different parental actions (e.g., threats, belittling, degradation, hostility) and it could be that specific types of emotional abuse have specific effects on mental health.

Childhood emotional maltreatment has been linked to depression (Hamilton et al., 2013), anxiety (Bruce et al., 2012; Hamilton et al., 2013; Taillieu & Brownridge, 2013), dissociative symptoms (Ferguson & Dacey, 1997), post-traumatic stress disorder (Gibb, Chelminski et al., 2007), psychotic disorders (Ackner, Skeate, Patterson, & Neal, 2013), substance use problems (Rosenkranz, Muller, & Henderson, 2012), several Axis II personality disorders (Waxman et al., 2014), as well as lower self-esteem (Taillieu & Brownridge, 2013) and decreased quality of life (Bruce et al., 2012). Compared to sexual and physical abuse, emotional childhood maltreatment was less frequently considered in previous research. In order to transfer our research findings into practice, there is a great need for awareness-raising on the issue of emotional neglect to reduce a potentially accompanied mental health burden (Gerkea et al., 2018).

A growing body of research suggests that many otherwise healthy families raise their children with emotional neglect—a failure to value or respond to emotions. According Webb (2016), childhood emotional neglect happens when a parent fails to respond to a child's emotional needs. "It may sound like nothing, and it often looks like nothing", Webb (2016) writes, "But actually, [it] can have as great an impact upon a child as abuse, even though it's not noticeable or memorable like abuse is". Often, that

lack of emotional response doesn't look unhealthy at all; the parents may take great care of the child overall. But something invisible is missing: the parent doesn't validate their child's feelings or respond to their child's emotional needs. And that has consequences. Webb says emotionally neglected children can end up feeling deeply alone. The children feel like their needs aren't important, their feelings don't matter, or that they should never ask for help (because it's perceived as a sign of weakness). When the individual grows up, childhood emotional maltreatment can stick around as unnecessary guilt, self-anger, low self-confidence, or a sense of being deeply personally flawed.

Childhood emotional neglect tends to be (not always, of course) a bit more subtle, a bit more nuanced, a bit harder to pinpoint, and thus a lot hard to recognize and to understand. In a nutshell, emotional neglect is when a parent fails to see, know, or understand their child as they really are, rather than through the lens of what the parent thinks they are or want them to be. It sometimes means a lack of attention and care, at others; it is a lack of boundaries, rules, and structure. Sometimes it is a lack of encouragement and a failure to provide the tools and lessons needed to navigate the world. Other times it is parents who are overly busy and distracted and simply fail to see their child in the way the child needs to be seen. Emotional neglect can be present even when the parent is providing for all of the child's physical needs noted Webb (2018). Emotional neglect can be present in otherwise loving, caring, and well-meaning parents, and has the ability to camouflage unfortunately it has long-lasting impact on the mental health of an individual. The reason why emotional neglect is so rarely discussed is, in part, because it is a product of neglect, i.e., not seeing, not knowing. However, despite its subtle presentation, emotional neglect can have deep and lasting impact on an individual, far into adulthood. More research examining emotional neglect in different setting may help to clarify the relationship between childhood emotional abuse and mental health. Therefore, this study was conceived as researchers and educationists try to shed light on emotional neglect and mental health among the population in Kenya.

2. Method

The study used the Childhood Emotional Neglect Questionnaire (CEN) administered to fifty (50) participants in different settings and varying ages. This CEN questionnaire helped the researchers to identify those who had experienced childhood emotional neglect (appx 1). The respondents had an option of YES or NO. A response of YES meant 1 point while NO meant no score (0). The CEN- SR had twenty-two (22) items and the minimum score was 0 while the maximum score was 22. For interpretation the scores were divided into three (3) categories as follows 0-8 low CEN, 9-15 average CEN and 16-22 high CEN. Those who scored highest were five respondents and they formed the sample for this study. The study used qualitative approach to generate rich, detailed data from the selected respondents. The data allowed the participants' perspectives to remain intact and provide multiple contexts for understanding the emotional negligence. The study was anchored on Social Constructionism which views reality as being socially constructed as noted by Merriam (2014). Social

actors like the participants of this study place many different interpretations on the situations in which they find themselves. These different interpretations are likely to affect their actions and the nature of their social interaction with others.

The study adopted a naturalistic research design where the real-world situations unfold naturally; non-manipulative and non-controlling. The researchers were open to whatever was emerging as the study was being conducted. i.e., there were no predetermined constraints as noted by Hammarberg, Kirkman and De Lacey (2016). Researchers conducted in-depth interviews with participants in a face-to-face setting and a predetermined list of questions which formed the themes of the study while allowing the conversation to evolve based on the participants responses. The in-depth interviews captured direct quotations about the participants' personal perspectives and lived experiences; and they were derived from carefully conducted case studies. The sample was drawn from religious gathering (religious camps), schools, colleges and working environments (offices) where the researchers interacted with the participants. At the conclusion of the study the participants were sent to professional counsellors for debriefings to ensure no psychological harm occurred to the participants during the study.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- 1) What is the participant current stressor?
- 2) Would the participant be able to trace the source of this stressor?
- 3) What coping mechanism have the participant adopted to deal with the current stressor?
- 4) In your opinion are the coping mechanism you are using helped you to positively deal with the stressor?
- 5) In the light of your experience what would you suggest to help children and adults?

The above questions formed the themes under which the results were discussed

3. Result

The participants were self-reporting and the CEN-SR questionnaire score was used to identify those who may have experienced childhood emotional neglect. The study sought to establish the current stressors of the participants and the findings were as follows

3.1 Current Stressor

A participant (*Jane not her real name) a 16-year-old girl when asked what her current stressor was, she had this to say:

Excerpts 1

I am always angry and struggling with anger outbursts and I find myself fighting with everybody around me, in class and even at home with my small brother. I need the slightest provocation and I am all out and I do not know how to control myself. I am also very anxious because my mother is always on me, there is nothing I do right according to my mother she

only sees and speaks negative towards and about me. So, I am fearful and always on edge because I do not know what to expect there however, much I try agraah I am lost.

Another participant (*John not his real name) 23 years who had dropped out of a prestigious university college was asked to describe his current stressor and he had this to say;

Excerpts 2

I went to college but the course I was pursuing was not the course of my choice, though my mother was paying the school fees. I did not have the courage to tell her that I was not interested with the course because I didn't want to disappoint her. So, I reported to college to please her unfortunately I found myself missing out on classes, not taking my assignment seriously and finally failed my exams. Now my current stressor is, what do I do with myself? My dad is just telling my mother that he was right all along; there was no need to waste money on a foolish boy like me. My mum has moved out of our home and I want to go with her because she is the only one who is accommodative and tries to step in when I am desperate. Unfortunately, mum does not seek out my opinion she does what she thinks is best for me which is not always the case. I am feeling so low, empty, ashamed and lost. I do not know where to start again...so stressed.

Another participant 10-year-old (*Dot) not her real name asked was what is really bothering her (Current stressor)? The participant had this to say;

Excerpt 3

I really feel bad that I am living with my mum and my dad is not there for us. He promises so many times that he will visit us, pick us up for an outing or even attend school meeting but does not keep his promises. "I feel so... so bad how can he fail not once but so many times surely why...why"? (Sobbing)...given time to compose herself.

*Mary not her real name was an adult by the time this study was asked to explain what she was going through currently (current stressor) and she responded as follows;

Excerpt 4

I am in a marriage that has not been so good, I have stayed in it for so long and I do not know what to do. My marriage has been very abusive and now I have reached a point where I am asking myself why have I stayed on for this long when I am hurting so bad? I need to get out this situation but still I care so much about my in-laws.

A respondent male *Peter not his real name aged 17 years was asked to describe his current stressor and he had this to say;

Excerpt 5

I am in a family where I strongly feel that no one cares about another's emotions...somebody wrongs you today but the following day he/she acts like nothing happened and I am supposed to continue with life as usual. I am wondering, is this the way people live in families? I am

even afraid to express my emotions because I will be the odd one out. I sincerely do not know what to do.

From the above excerpts the stressors were identified as; not being appreciated by parents which creates fear, anxiety, failure to meet expectations which leads to low self-esteem, feeling unworthy, emptiness, children not able to trust their parents which makes them to mistrust people around them, bitterness and resentment. One feeling that their thoughts and feelings do not matter so they stay in abusive relations. All these are happening within a family setting which should be able to provide a safety net for the individuals concerned.

3.2 Source of Stressor

*Jane the participant was asked to try and trace the source of feelings unappreciated/ unloved and she had this to say:

Excerpts 6

My mum and dad always quarrel over me, on one side my dad blames my mum for all my mistakes and when dad leaves for work and he works very far away my mum turns her anger on me. She never appreciates anything I do! Even when I decide I am not going to do anything; she must pick something negative so that she has a reason to make me feel bad. I know she loves my small brother and She has categorically told me that my brother is her heartbeat. I feel that she hates me and I am lost, I love my mum very much and I desire to have a healthy relationship with her but I do not know where to start". So, I am anxious most times and fearful

The young man (*John) was asked to try and explain the source of his current stressor and he gave a long story from his childhood and it is summarized below:

Excerpts 7

From the time I was a young a child I have never connected with my parents especially my dad. When I turned seven years old, I was taken to live with my paternal aunt and I would only stay with my parents during the school holidays. I was feeling really unwanted and I had the courage as a young boy to ask them why they didn't want me to stay with them and attend school nearby. I was told that there were no good schools in the rural area where we were living and this was to enable me access good schools in town. In standard five I was taken to a boarding school and I hated school the more. All my life I feel that my parents never loved me and they prefer my siblings. I do not experience a sense of belonging in my family I am the odd one out actually a "black sheep". I am not sure I can do much because I have been referred to as a failure especially by my dad. My big sister is working while my young brother is in a national school and here, I am a college drop-out and no idea what I want to do with my life. The feeling of rejection has been quite overwhelming very stressful.

For *Dot when asked to trace when she started feeling unloved by her dad and her response is as stated

below;

Excerpt 8

The fact that my dad and mum are not living together and I know dad has another family. I keep on asking myself what did we do wrong that he abandoned? Can we change for him to come back? When he visits us, he gives us so many promises that he does not honor. I have not been able to express my feeling to mum because I think she does not take time to understand me. I feel bitter about the whole situation and I do not know when it is ever going to come to an end.

Mary* the participant was asked whether she would be able to trace the origin of her current stressor and the summary of the narrative is given in excerpt 9;

Excerpt 9

It is a long story...we met while in college and started a family soon after graduation. I realized he was violent and very controlling man but all along I thought things will change for the better. His family members are so good to me so held on to the marriage. I didn't want my in-laws to know the other side of my family that involved their son. This son is a special child in the family because he is the last born among seven girls while the only brother, he has is the first born. So, he was really pampered by the sisters and I think he wants me to pamper him the same and I am not the sister(s) and according to him I cannot meet the sisters' standards. I have always avoided to express my needs and feelings in this relationship because as a child I was never given that chance. I feel inadequate, I have never believed in myself and other people's needs and feelings will always take precedence. I have always believed my feelings do not matter so long as other people around me are okay and I think this is what it was in my relationship with my husband. Now I am asking myself for how long will I remain in this situation?

According to *Peter his father is the source of his troubles and discomfort in the family.

Excerpt 10

My father is abusive especially physical and verbal abuse. He literally looks for anything to around to either quarrel or beat me. If I do something like cooking, he abuses me if I don't, he still abuses or beats me so I am confused because I do not know what to expect from him. He beats me with this uncontrolled anger that one day I found myself in hospital and my mother lied to the hospital staff about my injuries. It hurts me so much that none of my family members try to stop him including my mother.

The study identified source stressors from the participants' responses as; unloved, rejection, poor or no communication between parents and children, abandonment, violence, no self-confidence and unpredictable parents. The participants' felt that they do not matter to their significant others so they would rather not talk about their thoughts and feelings.

3.3 Coping Strategies Adopted by the Participants

The teenage girl (Jane*) was asked how she dealing with this situation and this is what she had to say;

Excerpts 11

I try to keep the house neat and prepare dinner for the family just to make my mum happy. Unfortunately, this has not worked so I lock myself up in the bedroom and try to do my studies but I am not able to concentrate no wonder my grades are nosediving from bad to worse hence further straining my relationship with my mum.

The participant *John was asked how he is trying to deal with this feeling of rejection by his family.

Excerpts 12

Many times, I have felt so overwhelmed by this feeling of hopelessness that I have found myself using drugs especially alcohol and cigarettes where I am becoming dependent. I also try as much as I can to keep to myself as I have painfully realized that no one seems to understand or cares about me. I take my meals and go to my “simba” (a house built for young men in this community after initiation) and no one knows what happens there. Sometimes I feel so low and hopeless that I have often contemplated suicide.

*Dot was asked this question “When daddy fails to keep his promises how do you deal with the disappointment?”

Excerpt 13

I find myself being so annoyed and many times I burst out on my mum and my big sister who have no idea what is happening to me. I am finding it very difficult to trust anyone and feel betrayed by one person who should be there for me. I suffer loneliness despite being with by sister, mother, classmates and friends.

*Mary “What coping mechanism have you adopted to deal with the current issues of abusive partner?”

*Mary’s response was as follows

Excerpt 14

I have decided to leave this home even if I really contributed towards the building of this home. I have realized this man is capable of killing me as I noted one day, we were watching news and a news item was aired where a man had killed his children and wife, he looked at me and told me the same fate can befall me. Currently I have moved to a house in my place of work my children do not have a problem with my decision because they have witnessed the violence but I do not know what to tell my in laws.

*Peter was asked to explain how he is coping with the situation he is facing and this what he said,

Excerpt 15

One time after a serious physical beating I ran away from home and went to stay with my aunt just to be away from my family that does not care about my wellbeing. I stayed there for a while but I had to come back. Currently I keep myself busy with my phone and I avoid my dad. I ensure we do not meet at all though we live in the same house.

The coping strategies identified were; withdrawal/isolation, suicidal tendencies, avoidance, annoyance/anger, bitterness, drug abuse and making decision but not sure they are the right ones. The coping strategies adopted by an individual can either be helpful or unhelpful and this led the researchers to the next question.

3.4 Helpfulness of the Coping Strategies Used

In your opinion, Is the coping mechanism you are using helpful to you? This is what *Jane's response was;

Excerpt 16

I am talking to you hoping I will find better ways of dealing with my situation. When I withdraw to my bedroom and pretend to be reading and grades are nosediving, I know whatever I am doing is not helping me out. Again, fighting with everybody around me is just making things worse and the stress levels are just increasing day by day. Poor relations with my parents, classmates and schoolmates I have found myself alone with poor grades not a good place to be. So, my coping mechanisms are not helpful currently.

The respondent*John (23 year) said *"I know whatever I have been doing to cope with my emotions has not helped me that's why I am drifting towards drug abuse and many times I feel like life is worthless" (suicidal).*

The 10-year-old participant was asked "When you react like this do you feel better?"

Excerpt 17

No not at all, I just withdraw in my own world and I do not want anybody to interfere. This feeling makes me to have very poor relations with my sister, peers and even my mum" mum believes I am a bitter girl and so my way of dealing with my situation have not made things any better for me.

From *Mary the adult participant

Excerpt 18

The decision to leave an abusive marriage has given me temporary reprieve but I fear meeting my in laws who have always thought all was well with our marriage. So, I am going to keep off from these families until I am sure I have the courage and strength to explain to them my situation and decision.

When *Peter was asked whether the way he is dealing with the situation is helpful he had this to say *"Running away from home was not helping me and even the avoiding my father doesn't help either. I need to face my situation and learn to deal with it in a way that is helpful".*

From the responses the coping strategies the participants have adopted do not seem not helpful as they stated that stress levels are increasing, worsening relations in the family and in school as evidences by fights and drug abuse.

3.5 Suggestions

The participants were asked to give suggestions they think can help mitigate EEM among children, teenagers and adults. *Jane suggested that she would write a letter to her mum and express her thoughts and feelings *“because I have no courage to face my mum and whenever I try to talk to her she does not listen to me and we end up fighting even more”*. This suggestion of one being able to communicate using other means helps the children to bring to the attention of the parents their feelings and emotions they are struggling with. According to this teenager *Jane argued that *“even if my mother does not and act lovingly towards me, at least it is on record that I tried and she is aware of my thoughts and feelings”*.

One of the participants *John suggested that

Excerpt 19

That family’s need to have frequent meeting and let the parents take time to listen to their children and connect emotionally and let the parents understand that children have needs and they are individuals (human beings) not robots may be this will make them to be sensitive to their children emotions.

Another participant *Mary the adult said

Excerpt 20

From today henceforth I will start living my life not for others, I feel like I have cared so much about what other people have so say and at the end of it I have been suffering. I will be true to myself, even when the feelings of inadequacy will get into my mind I will start to encourage and push myself as much as I can (Self-soothing skills). I would suggest to many women who could be going through challenges similar to what I have gone through can draw strength from within themselves. But sincerely speaking women really need encouragement and empowerment in their personal and social life, socio-economic status notwithstanding.

The young participant that is Dot (10 years old) had this to say:

Excerpt 21

I would wish that my dad will keep his word. I do not understand why a grown up should lie I don’t think I would feel as bad if he would be truthful and told me and my sister the truth at least has the courtesy to explain to us why. This would make a whole lot of difference and I would suggest to parents to please be truthful to their children whatever the circumstances and age.

On the other hand, *Peter suggested that *“families need to start being connected emotionally. There is no need to come giving me food when I am hurting so much. Find out how I am feeling first and then we can talk about food. It’s not about provision, because that’s not enough”*.

From the foregoing the suggestions given by the respondents were; using alternative ways of communicating with their parents, parents consulting children as they make decisions that affect them,

parents being truthful to their children, encouragement and empowerment, self-soothing talk to self and connecting emotionally with each other within the family setting.

4. Discussion

Childhood emotional neglect was associated with lifetime diagnoses of specific mental disorders (i.e., major depression, dysthymia, social phobia, as well as schizoid and avoidant personality disorders). As noted by this study the emotional maltreatment disorders seem to suggest social withdrawal and avoidance of, or difficulty interpersonal relationships. The lack of love, affection, and support that characterizes emotional neglect compromises an individual's ability to form a secure attachment with parents, siblings, peers and even the spouse. Therefore, childhood emotional neglect doesn't disappear when one grows up. Adults carry it with them into their lives, and it affects their relationships, their self-image, self-esteem and their mental wellbeing as noted with the adult client *Mary.

The total lifetime economic burden resulting from new cases of fatal and nonfatal child maltreatment in the United States is approximately \$124 billion Fang, Brown, Florence and Mercy (2012). These statistics are not available in Kenya and the ultimate goal should be to stop early life emotional neglect before it starts or gets worse. Strategies that promote safe, stable, and nurturing relationships (SSNRs) and environments for children and families are key to protecting against neglect and other harmful childhood experiences. The prevention strategies include improving parent-child relationships by teaching positive parenting.

Child emotional neglect has a negative effect on mental health. In addition, emotional maltreatment causes stress that can disrupt early brain development (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child 2008). Extreme stress can harm the development of the nervous and immune systems (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child 2008). As a result, children who are abused or neglected are at higher risk for health problems as adults. These problems include alcoholism, depression, drug abuse, eating disorders, obesity, high-risk sexual behaviors, smoking, suicide, and certain chronic diseases. These are the common public issues Kenyan society is grappling with spending so much resources treating people in hospitals, rehabilitation centers or even in prisons. This clearly indicates that beyond health and social consequences of emotional maltreatment there is economic impact in form of hospitalization, mental health treatment and long-term health costs. A satisfactory state of wellness requires achieving a basic level of fulfillment through the synergistic and well-balanced interaction of an individual at the three levels of needs (personal, relational, and collective), and entails more than simply an absence of risk (Prilleltensky, 2010). These three levels of wellness are interdependent and cannot exist, or be addressed, in isolation (Prilleltensky, 2010). The study concurs with this in that the three areas of relationship have to be addressed for resilience to be built among individuals who may have experienced childhood emotional maltreatment.

Webb (2016) says that emotional Neglect is the white space in the family picture; the background rather

than the foreground. It is insidious and overlooked while it does its silent damage to people's lives. Children who are emotionally neglected then grow up to have a particular set of struggles. Because their emotions were not validated as children, they may have difficulty knowing and trusting their own emotions as adults. They have difficulty understanding their own feelings, as well as others'. Because an important part of themselves (their emotional self) has been denied, they find themselves feeling disconnected, unfulfilled or empty. They may have difficulty trusting or relying upon others and this is the experience of the participants in this study. The way an individual was treated emotionally as a child by parents determines how they treat themselves as an adult and others if no intervention mitigates this then the vicious cycle continues.

5. Conclusion

Individuals who receive emotional validation from their parents in childhood are able to provide it automatically to their own children as adults. It is important for a parent to recognize what s/he didn't get and make a conscious effort to learn the missing skills, fill in the blind spots, and give the children what one didn't get and deal with the resentment of the past, which is making many people ill (Mager, 2017). As Webb (2018) opinioned that children in helping relationships are asked by helpers that even if both parents were/are alcoholic, even if they mistreated, confused, exploited, beat, and totally overloaded them, they must forgive. Unfortunately, forgiveness does not resolve latent hatred and self-hatred but rather covers them up in a very dangerous way Webb notes. If one day the secret of childhood were to become no longer a secret, the state would be able to save immense sums that it spends in hospitals, psychiatric clinics and prisons noted Schweigemauer (1990). The possibility of change depends on whether there is a sufficient number of enlightened people (parents, teachers, caregivers and psychologist) to create a safety net for the growing consciousness of those who have experienced childhood emotional neglect, so that they do not fall into darkness of forgetfulness and later emerge as criminals or the mentally ill persons. Guidance and Counseling should be an inherent part of health and educational services where children and adults are empowered and helped to understand and accept themselves. Self-acceptance is an important step towards accepting one's needs as normal and valid. Psychologist's role is "*not just fixing what is broken, it is nurturing what is best*" within others. So, psychologist need to adopt positive psychology in building resilience among individuals helping them to accept that their feelings, needs, and wants matter as much as anyone else's therefore, voice them clearly drawing personal boundaries for emotional health to prevail.

Acknowledgement

The authors are grateful to all the participants in this study who made the collection of narrative data

possible. We also acknowledge the schools and churches that gave the researchers the opportunity to meet the participants.

There is no conflict of interest for the authors.

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