

EAPP Expert Meeting Proposal

Integrating Post-Traumatic Growth and Personality Change

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Recent work has highlighted the value of conceptualizing post-traumatic growth as positive personality change following the experience of adversity (Jayawickreme & Blackie, 2014). However, most work continues to use both methodologically suspect assessments and unsupported theoretical assumptions (Jayawickreme, Rivers, & Rauthmann, 2018). This raises the important question of how personality and clinical psychologists can communicate more successfully in the pursuit of high-quality research on this topic (Hopwood, 2018). Analysis of existing longitudinal datasets from national panel studies could generate significant theoretical and empirical advancements (Anusic & Yap, 2014), but the lack of clarity on how clinical definitions of post-traumatic growth fit into current models of personality change hinders progress. In this proposed expert meeting, we hope to critically discuss important next steps in the study of personality growth that can a) lead to better communication between clinical and personality psychologists, b) improve the quality of research being done in the context of the credibility revolution (Vazire, 2018), and c) advance a coherent research agenda for clinically-minded personality psychologists interested in this question. Questions that we plan to discuss include:

- Can clinical theories of post-traumatic growth be reconciled with prominent personality accounts (e.g. Whole Trait Theory, Social Investment Theory, Five-Factor Theory, TESSERA)?
- How do narrative accounts of personality fit with clinical theories of post-traumatic growth?
- How does post-traumatic growth manifest in daily life?
- What are the event characteristics that determine whether an event leads to personality growth?
- What is the role of reflective vs. automatic processes on personality growth following adversity?
- How can existing longitudinal datasets help in answering key questions on personality growth following adversity?

We expect that this expert meeting will generate a set of articles that can comprise a special issue of EJP (similar to the articles in the special issue of EJP on personality development in 2014).

(300 words)

References

- Anusic, I., & Yap, S. C. (2014). Using Longitudinal Studies to Understand Post-Traumatic Growth. *European Journal of Personality, 28*, 332-361.
- Hopwood, C. J. (2018) Nudging the Weltgeist. *European Journal of Personality*
- Jayawickreme, E., & Blackie, L. E. R. (2014). Post-traumatic growth as positive personality change: Evidence, controversies and future directions. *European Journal of Personality, 28*(4), 312-331.
- Jayawickreme, E., Rivers, J., & Rauthmann, J.R. (in press). Do we know how adversity impacts human development? *Research in Human Development*.
- Vazire, S. (2018). Implications of the credibility revolution for productivity, creativity, and progress. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*.