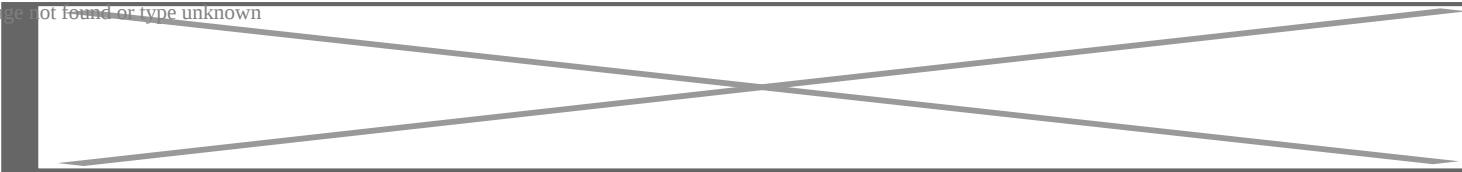

Institutional betrayal trauma

Description

Freyd's (1996) betrayal trauma theory holds that children sexually abused by their caretakers are prone to develop amnesia for their abuse because awareness of abuse would imperil the survival of victims by disrupting their attachment to caretakers on whom they depend for food, shelter, and clothing.

[Institutional betrayal](#) refers to wrongdoings perpetrated when an institution fails to prevent or appropriately respond to wrongdoings by other individuals. In instances when individuals experiencing traumatic events place a great deal of trust in the legal, medical, and mental health systems to address their wrongs they risk disbelief, blame, and refusal of help. Priorities of the institution, such as protecting their reputation, may increase the likelihood that institutions fail to respond appropriately. Institutions may strenuously attempt to prevent knowledge of said assaults from surfacing, which can take the form of attempting to silence the individual. Lack of validation and interpersonal trauma from institutional betrayal can be examined through a BTT lens and have been described as a "second assault," which can exacerbate the effects of the initial trauma incurred.

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Category

1. General

Date Created

30. March 2021

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