



Is Emotional Granularity Important in Vulnerability to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder?

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Dear Editor-in-Chief

Emotional granularity is the ability to distinguish between different emotional states and to recognize them as such. It helps people better control their emotions and respond appropriately to demands made of them in various situations (1). Although many people have experienced trauma at some point in their life, we assume that while exposure to trauma is commonplace worldwide, it does not always result in the development of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (2). In this regard, a variety of elements, particularly emotional and cognitive aspects, are crucial in the development of PTSD in individuals who have experienced trauma (3). In actuality, the feeling of harm is assessed through cognitive and emotional processes prior to being deemed a serious threat, it is evaluated through cognitive and affective processes, and because this process varies across individuals, it appears that various people have varying trauma thresholds (4). Conversely, some persons may be at danger and others may be shielded from clinical signs following exposure to extremely stressful conditions. Lack of emotional awareness

and clarity is a major issue with PTSD, as it increases susceptibility to the disorder and the duration of its symptoms (5). Investigating the impact of emotional granularity in susceptibility to post-traumatic stress disorder is the goal of the current study.

In this cross-sectional study using a convenience sampling method 205 PTSD patients were recruited through an announcement at Roozbeh Hospital, Tabriz, Iran. After selecting the topic and obtaining the necessary permits and the approval of the Ethics Committee of the University of Tabriz (IR. UTBZ. REC. 4563. 1730), the community and the research sample were selected according to the entry and exit criteria of the research. Then the objectives of the study were explained to the sample members and after receiving written consent. It was also explained to the participants that participation in the research is optional. To collect data, the Mississippi scale for post-traumatic stress disorder, positive and Negative affect schedule (PANAS), Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale, and Semantic similarities test.



The results showed that the components of emotional granularity explain 32.7% of PTSD variance (Table 1). Furthermore, among the components of emotional granularity, the components of positive affect ($\beta=-0.312$), semantic similarities ($\beta=-0.379$) had significant and inverse effect ($P<0.01$) on PTSD. Also, components of negative emotion ($\beta=0.304$), lack

of emotional clarity ($\beta=0.382$) and lack of emotional awareness ($\beta=0.362$) had a significant and directly affect ($P<0.01$) on PTSD. Emotional granularity is one of the critical factors in predicting vulnerability to PTSD. Since high emotional granularity is associated with greater clarity, awareness and emotional differentiation.

Table 1: ANOVA results

Model	SS	df	MS	F	P	R	R ²	AdjR ²	SE
Regression	15748.947	5	3149.78	14.207	0.01	0.580	0.337	0.313	14.890
Rituals	31039.710	140	221.712						
Total	46788.658	145							

While low emotional granularity is associated with lack of differentiation and low emotional clarity and as a result expressing emotions in the form of general vocabulary. Developing a person's conceptual understanding of emotions or "becoming more emotionally intelligent" helps a person to manage emotions more effectively (6). The authors also recommended activities such as traveling to new places, trying new foods, watching movies, and especially activities that increase one's vocabulary (such as learning a foreign language or reading books outside one's comfort zone). Therefore, clients can participate in activities that further develop their emotional-semantic knowledge, and subsequently may increase emotional granularity and, in turn, reduce PTSD symptoms (3).

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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