

ABSTRACT

Several decades of research indicated that exposure to violence is associated with substantial risk for maladjustment across development. Recent research however indicated that in spite of stressful situations at risk for negative outcomes, some adolescents who are exposed to violence demonstrate relatively positive adaptation. This study investigated the link between exposure to violence and psychosocial adjustment for 1,305 high school students in Form 1 - 3. Adolescents completed an inventory assessing exposure to violence through witnessing and through direct victimization in different settings, including community/neighborhood, school and home. The Youth Self Report was administered to assess their emotional, social and behavioral functioning. Their average grades were obtained from school records, and other aspects of behavioral adjustment were assessed by teacher ratings ($N = 308$). In addition, emotional and interpersonal related personality traits were examined as potential moderators. Special attention was paid to individual differences in adolescents' responses to violence and the factors that may promote resilient functioning in spite of such exposure. MANOVA results from the group comparison showed that Resilient adolescents had different personality profiles compared to their competent and maladaptive peers. The results of this study imply that emotional and interpersonal related personality traits play crucial roles in buffering the effect of exposure to violence on psychosocial adjustment.