

ENHANCING VICARIOUS POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH INDICATORS IN FRENCH TRAUMA THERAPISTS

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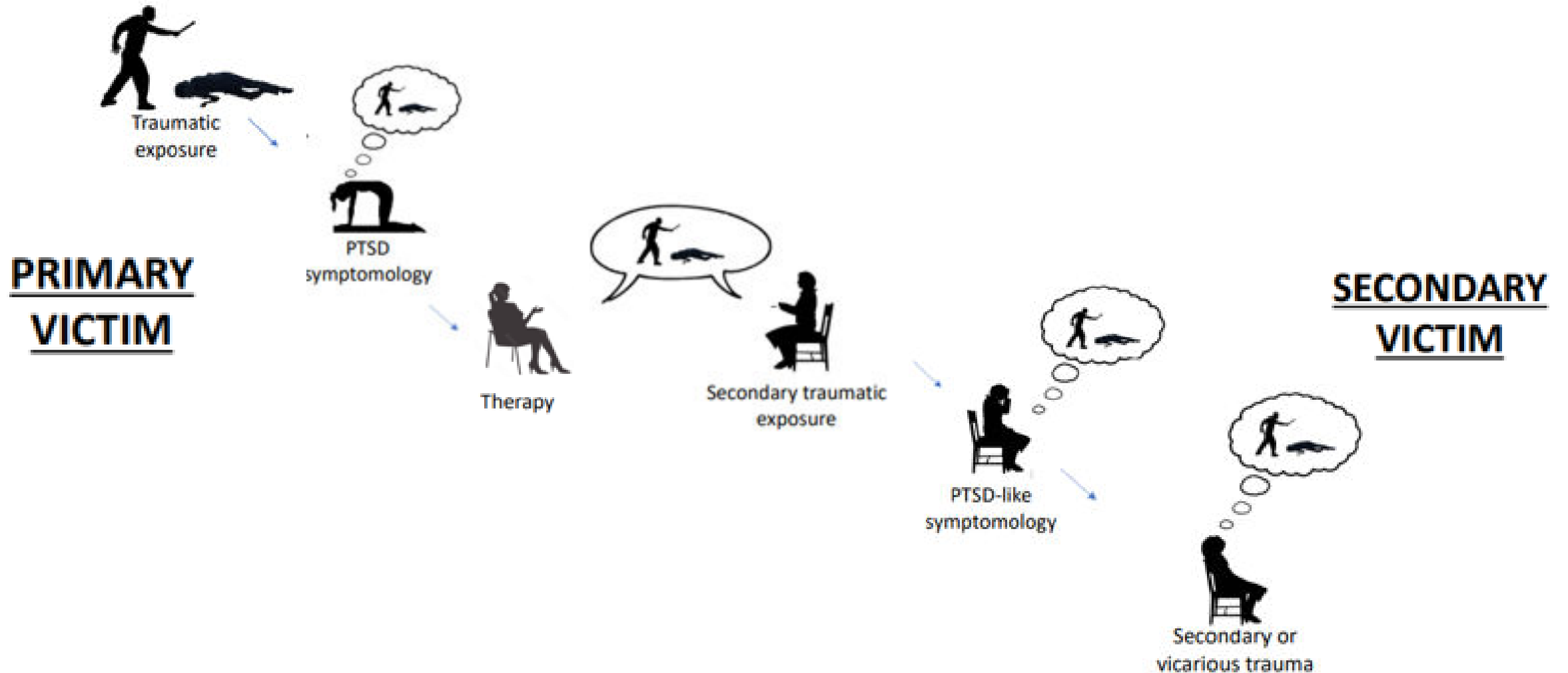
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**A PRE-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY CONDUCTED IN COMPLETION OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE M.A. COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY (CBT)**

IRISH COLLEGE FOR THE HUMANITIES AND APPLIED SCIENCES

ACADEMIC ADVISOR: PROFESSOR DENIS RYAN, ICHAS PRESIDENT

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and vicarious trauma (VT)



Vicarious posttraumatic growth (VPTG)

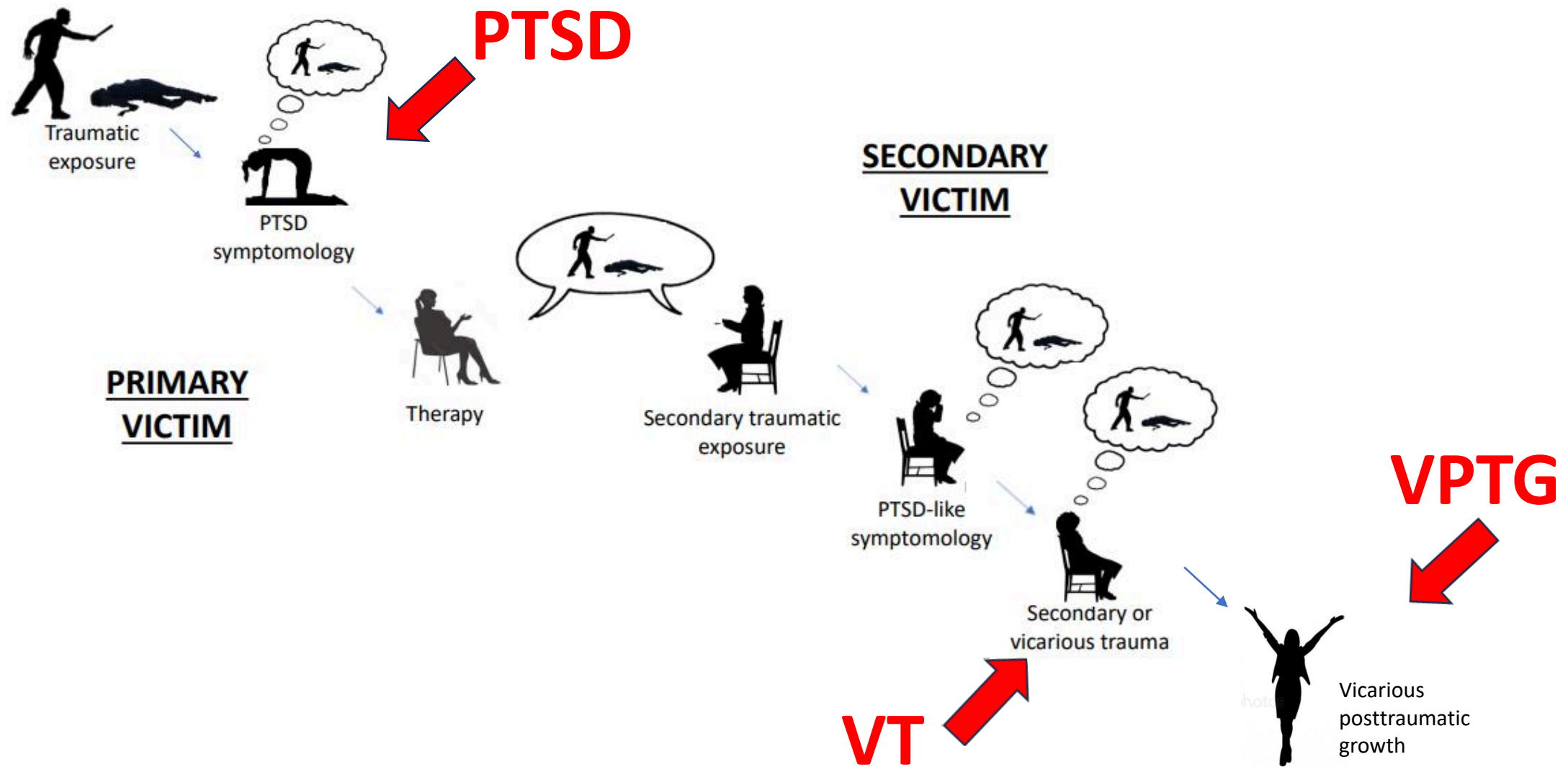
A positive change (posttraumatic growth) may take place in PTSD victims.

- better relations with people
- greater capacity to imagine new possibilities
- greater sense of personal strength
- spiritual growth
- getting more out of life (1)



*In the case of VT, this growth is called vicarious posttraumatic growth, or **VPTG** (2)*

Three terms describing how trauma evolves



The research conducted

1.

A LIT REVIEW



2.

A RESEARCH STUDY



The lit review

What makes VPTG happen in trauma therapists with VT?



Varied work



Being older



Clinic work



Being married



Self-care



Optimism



Spirituality



Empathy (3)



Social support

Thematic analysis conducted, producing...



63 themes of how trauma therapists describe their VPTG experience...

16 could be restated as positive affirmations about the self, producing...

16 potential self-empowering cognitions for trauma therapists.

A trauma therapist with VT and VPTG may...

...say that helping others has become more important.



I'm someone who helps others.

He might say that addressing social issues in his work matters more now (4).



I'm someone who does something about social issues.



Research study hypothesis:



**HYPNOSIS
SCRIPT**



**COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING
(MORE USEFUL COGNITIONS)**



**INCREASED VPTG
LIKELIHOOD IN TRAUMA
THERAPISTS**

The literature revealed...

...evidence that hypnosis helps treat trauma (5)

...evidence that together, cognitive restructuring and imagery modification help treat trauma (6)

...evidence that PTSD victims are especially responsive to hypnosis (7)



Research question

Do hypnotically-enhanced ego-strengthening cognitions impact VPTG indicators in trauma therapists?



Methodology

Quasi-experimental design, quantitative study, positivist framework

Cluster sampling: 39 trauma therapists in 2 child welfare associations in Brittany, France, in 3 locations

Data collection through online questionnaires: empathy (IRI), optimism (LOT) and VPTG indicators (PTGI); also anxiety, depression and stress (DASS) (12)



Each participant...

...participated in an informational meeting presenting the study

...was screened for anxiety, depression and stress (DASS)

...completed questionnaires for data collection (LOT, IRI, PTGI)



...received the self-empowering cognitions under hypnosis in an individual session (auto-permissive hypnosis training, revivification, hypnosis)

...listened to a recording of the hypnosis session three times a week for one month

...completed questionnaires online a second time (DASS, LOT, IRI, PTGI)

Findings for the LOT, IRI, DASS questionnaires



Minor changes in anxiety and stress.

Minor changes in empathy and optimism.



Findings for the PTGI questionnaire

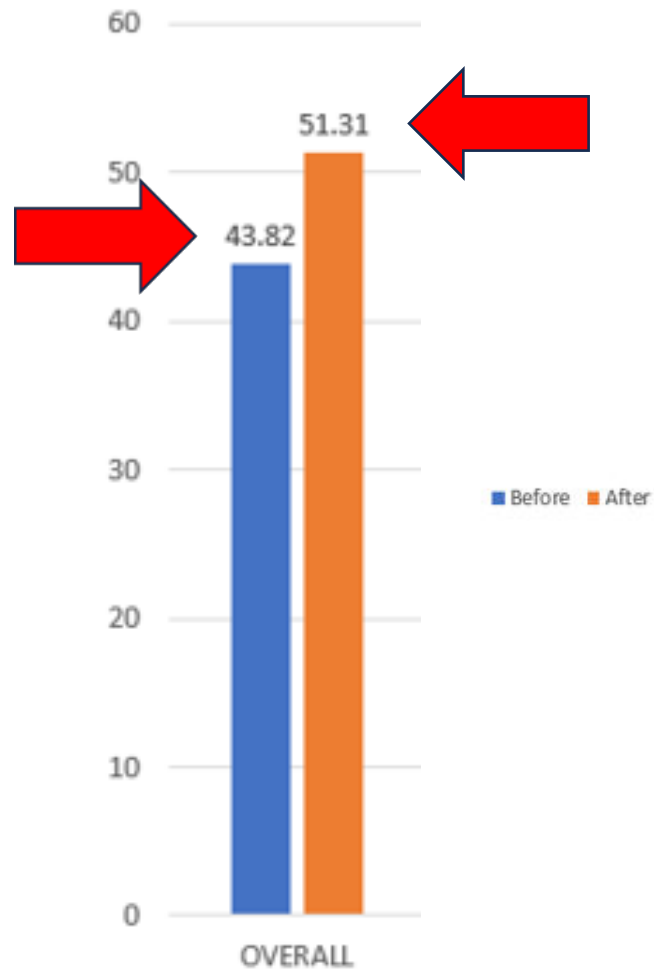
A paired-samples t-test compared the PTG score before and after the hypnotherapy intervention.

Posttraumatic growth scores after the intervention differed by **-7.487 points** on average (95% CI [-12.628, -2.346]).

The difference in PTG overall scores following the intervention was statistically significant: $t(38) = -2.948, p = .005$.

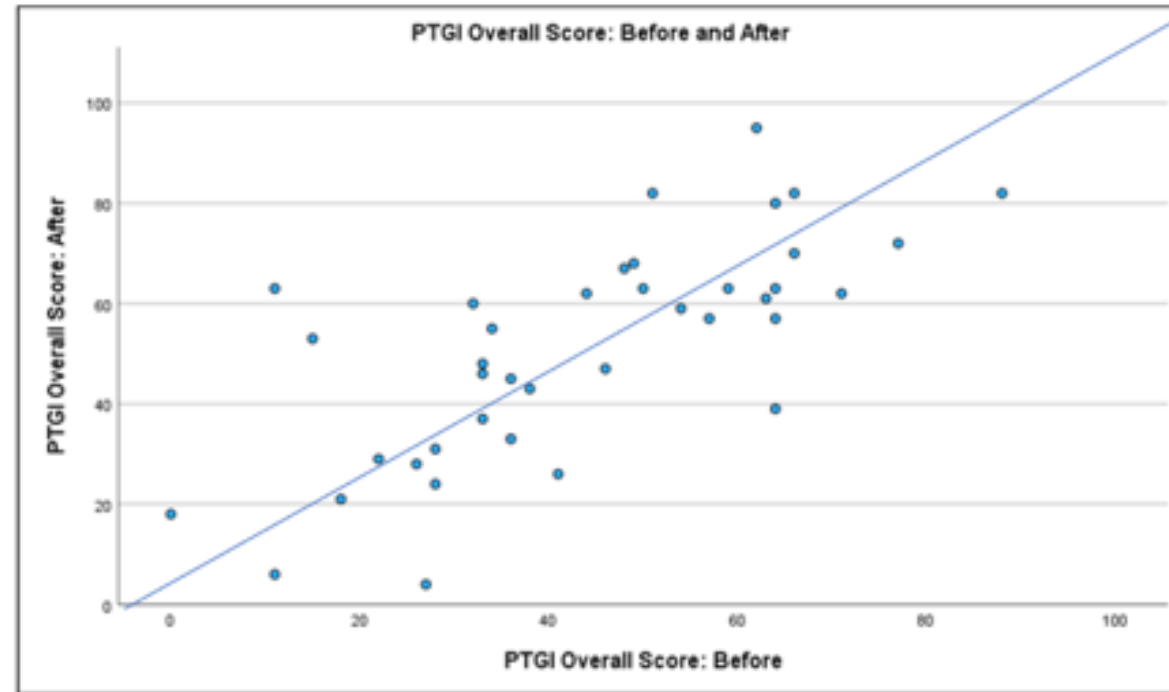


PTGI results



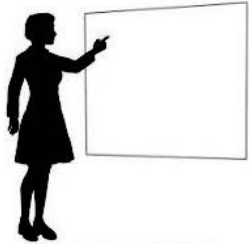
Summary of data analysis results for PTGI

PTGI results



PTGI overall score scatterplot

Why was this research significant?



It contributes to VT and VPTG understanding.

It contributes to awareness of the vicarious trauma public health issue; in France, it is just about unknown (8).



It contributes towards finding help for trauma therapists in VT; in France, that help does exist (9), but it is hard to find (10).

Limitations



Limited time and resources meant...

...limited data analysis – for example, physiological stress data could not be exploited

...limited study design – pre-experimental, so no control group

...limited sample size and scope – difficult to generalize to a national or international scale

Recommendations...



...establishing causality for the hypnotherapy intervention with a randomized controlled trial (RCT)



...exploiting impact of hypnosis on physiological stress data the research couldn't carry out



...comparing participant demographic differences – we know psychologists score higher for VPTG indicators than social workers (13)



...considering posttraumatic growth and depreciation (14) to develop a low-cost, easily-implemented protocol for trauma therapist resilience.

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