



The Danieli Inventory of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma, Part I: Survivors' posttrauma adaptational styles in their children's eyes



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ABSTRACT

A comprehensive valid behavioral measure for assessing multidimensional multigenerational impacts of massive trauma has been missing thus far. We describe the development of the Posttrauma Adaptational Styles questionnaire (Part I of the three-part Danieli Inventory of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma), a self-report questionnaire of Holocaust survivors' children's perceptions of each parent and their own upbringing (60 items per parent). The items were based on literature and cognitive interviewing of 18 survivors' offspring. A web-based convenience sample survey was designed in English and Hebrew and completed by 482 adult children (M age = 59; 67% women) of Holocaust survivors. Exploratory factor analyses were conducted by using maximum likelihood extraction with Geomin rotation to examine the factor structure of the original 70 items for each parent. Conducted hierarchically, the analysis yielded three higher-order factors reflecting intensities of victim, numb, and fighter styles. The 30-item Victim Style Scale ($\alpha = .92-.93$) and 18-item Numb Style Scale ($\alpha = .89$) had excellent internal consistency; the consistency of the 12-item Fighter Style Scale ($\alpha = .69-.70$) was more modest. English-Hebrew analyses suggested good-to-excellent congruence in factor structure ($\phi = .87-.99$). Further research is needed to evaluate the validity of the measure in other samples and populations.

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Multigenerational multidimensional impacts of massive trauma such as the Holocaust and genocide result in significant individual, family and community public health problems (Barel et al., 2010; Danieli, 1998; Dasberg, 1987; Sigal and Rakoff, 1971). Reviews reported varied effects in clinical (Shmotkin and Barilan, 2002) and non-clinical populations (Barel et al., 2010). Some clinical studies of Holocaust survivors' families have reported a wide range of intra-personal and interpersonal difficulties with subsequent transmission to succeeding generations. Intrapersonal impacts included helplessness, difficulty concentrating and sleeping, bodily tensions, guilt, shame, anger, and profound grief. Impacts on relationships

and parenting behaviors included overprotectiveness, rejection, loneliness, failed inter-subjectivity, irritability, anger, and parentification (Dekel and Goldblatt, 2008; Felsen and Erlich, 1990; Kogan, 2002; Leen-Feldner et al., 2013; Levine, 1982; Wiseman, 2008).

Community-based studies typically suggest limited impact except when offspring themselves were exposed to life threatening situations (Bachar et al., 1994; Fridman et al., 2011; Kellermann, 2013; Lambert et al., 2014; Last and Klein, 1984; Levav et al., 1998, 2007; Major, 1996; Solomon et al., 1988; Van Ijzendoorn et al., 2003). Some meta-analyses suggest coexistence of good adaptation and stress-related symptoms among survivors (Barel et al., 2010). In a recent epidemiological study, elderly Holocaust survivors did not differ from comparisons in resilience level, but their mental distress was more intense (Ohana et al., 2014).

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The variability of results is partly due to substantive differences, such as (1) differences in exposure and survival circumstance (lower resilience was found in concentration camp survivors' compared to escapees' children, Baron et al., 1996; surviving alone put the offspring at risk for more anxiety and depression symptoms than surviving in the company of relatives, Aviad-Wilchek et al., 2013), (2) individual differences in the survivors (age, education), (3) passage of time (as the Holocaust's impacts on behavior and health may become apparent only later in life, Danieli, 1997; Krell, 1985; Scharf, 2007; Schwartz et al., 1994), (4) The dimension/s studied (relationships, Baron et al., 1996; Sagi et al., 2002; nature of multigenerational communication about survivors' Holocaust experiences, e.g., Wiseman, 2008; symptomatology and neurobiology, notably Yehuda and Bierer, 2008; Yehuda et al., 2014), and (5) the diverse methods and measures used (parental PTSD can be validly assessed by children of survivors using the Parental PTSD Questionnaire, Yehuda et al., 2006).

For the present study, foremost among the methodological limitations in this research are the extant practices of (a) using available unidimensional measures (b) intended for the population-at-large (c) that might not meaningfully apply to (massively) traumatized cohorts. Recent developments in the field of public mental health (Cuthbert, 2014; Cutberth and Insel, 2013) indeed suggest the necessity of multidimensional approaches (including multidimensional measures) to assess mental health and adaptation to traumatic events. The absence of a theory-informed instrument for assessing such multigenerational multidimensional impacts provided the impetus for this study.

Grounded in clinical and community experience, Danieli (1981b, 1985, 1998) developed a framework describing the complex, multidimensional nature of surviving massive trauma and of adapting to life's challenges in its aftermath. Emphases include (1) the Holocaust and post-Holocaust (trauma) context-derived meanings of survivors' psychosocial, family and parenting behaviors that appear to shape their children's ways of being in the world (see also, Auerhahn and Laub, 1998; Bergman and Jucovy, 1982) and (2) the heterogeneity of adaptation and quality of adjustment (e.g., vulnerability as well as resilience) among survivors. Danieli (1985) conceptualized a typology of at least four differing posttrauma adaptational styles in families of Holocaust survivors: victim, fighter, numb and "those who made it." These styles encompass those intrafamilial and interpersonal psychological, social and behavioral coping, mastery and defense mechanisms the victim/survivor adopted as survival strategies during and after the Holocaust. These styles generalize to a way of life and become an integral part of her/his personality, repertoire of defence or character armour, view of oneself, of others, and of the world. They become a style of being in the world. They often also influence parenting and affect the children's psychosocial development and adaptation, thereby becoming intergenerational (Danieli, 1981a, 1981b, 1985, 1998, 2007). Briefly, victim style includes sadness, worry, mistrust, fear of the outside world and symbiotic clinging within the family; fighter style consists of intense drive to build and achieve, compulsive activity and prohibition of weakness or self-pity; numb style is characterized by pervasive silence and depletion of all emotions, minimal tolerance to stimuli, their children expected to grow up on their own; and "those who made it" style includes denial of the survivor's Holocaust experiences, assimilation and single-minded pursuit of high education, social and political status, fame and/or wealth. This typology is the theoretical framework and one of the sources for developing the comprehensive Danieli Inventory of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma, Part I of which – survivors' Posttrauma Adaptational Styles as perceived by their children – is the subject of this study.

Danieli's typology has guided previous research. In an unpublished dissertation, Rich (1982) developed a questionnaire to test it and compared adult children of Holocaust survivors participating in support groups in San Francisco with their unaffiliated counterparts. Sigal and Weinfeld (1989) and Hantman and colleagues (Hantman and Solomon, 2007; Hantman et al., 2003) extracted and revised items from Rich's measure to study Canadian offspring of survivors and elderly Israeli survivors with cancer, respectively. Independently, Chaitin (2003) suggested two additional styles, life-goes-on and split-family. Notwithstanding overlap in the aims of Rich's pioneering study and our own, important differences include the distinction in our comprehensive questionnaire between children's ratings of their parents, texture of life in/of the family, and upbringing (Part I – the current study) and ratings of themselves (Part II, Danieli et al., 2015); our separate assessment of mother and father in Part I; the inclusion of a four-generation family history and sociodemographic description (Part III); and the recruitment of a large, international sample, in two languages, to yield results of greater generalizability.

We aimed to develop a contextually meaningful measure for use in community samples, applicable, with proper modifications, to offspring of Holocaust survivors worldwide and victim/survivors of other crimes against humanity, including genocide. To yield insights into the experience of adult children of Holocaust survivors, we explored the factor structure of Part I of the Danieli Inventory, which assesses children's perceptions of their parents and upbringing. While Danieli's typology was one of the sources that guided the development of the questionnaire, we were open to finding additional styles based, for example, on Sigal and Weinfeld (1989) and Chaitin (2003). Our goal was thus to see what factors and themes emerge from the data themselves rather than to test an *a priori* model.

1. Methods

1.1. Overview and participants

Participants were adult children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors who volunteered to participate in a web survey. Inclusion criteria were that at least one parent or grandparent had lived in or had to leave one of the countries occupied by or under direct influence of the Nazi regime, for any period of time during 1933–1945 (Bogyeski, 2013). This wide definition increased the potential for natural variability in the severity of the ancestors' exposure and the intensity of their adaptational styles. This variability, in turn, enhanced the study's ability to develop measures that capture the full range of impacts.

The survey consisted of three consecutive parts: questions about the child's perceptions of his/her mother and father and upbringing (Part I, 140 questions total); the child's perceptions of him/herself (Part II, 58 questions); and four-generation family history and sociodemographics (Part III). The first two questions in Part III asked whether the respondent was a (1) child and/or (2) grandchild of survivors.

The welcome page of the website was visited by 7222 individuals, including the merely curious as well as those intending to participate. Of those, 2809 viewed and 789 completed Part I and, of those, 535 (68%) completed all three parts of the survey. The attrition of participants between Part I and Part III is likely attributable to the overall length of the survey. For studying Part I psychometrics, we limited the analysis to the 482 children of survivors. The remaining participants were grandchildren only ($n = 42$) or did not complete Part III, including the questions about whether they were children and/or grandchildren of survivors ($n = 265$).

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