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EFFECTIVENESS OF TALKING CURE THERAPY IN DEALING WITH TRAUMA AMONGST JOURNALISTS IN KENYA

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EFFECTIVENESS OF DEBRIEFING AS A STRATEGY OF DEALING WITH TRAUMA AMONGST THE JOURNALIST IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The objective of study was to evaluate the effectiveness of debriefing as a strategy of dealing with trauma amongst the journalist in Kenya

Methodology: Data was collected using both interviews and questioners. Data collected was cleaned, coded and analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The data was presented using both qualitative and quantitative statistics.

Results: The study found that debriefing had a negative and significant relationship with trauma management.

Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy: The study recommends that journalist should debrief their managers about their traumatic experiences. They should also debrief their relatives and religious leaders. This will make it easier for journalists to deal with traumatic experiences.

Key Words: *Debriefing, Trauma, Journalist*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Research Gap

Exposure to traumatic scenes and sounds is inevitable for journalist since traumatic events occur spontaneously during the course of their duty. Traumatic events in the journalism docket such as fires, calamities, grisly road accidents, terrorist attacks among others are not always predictable and are very frequent and unavoidable for the journalists in their daily career (Dworznik, 2011).

Traumatic stress has no bearing on the time that it affects a person, in that it can affect an individual while watching an event unfold in real time or even months or years later (Dart Centre, 2003). Ochberg (2003) observes that it is important for journalists to anticipate Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), recognize it and report it, so as to enhance the reporter's professionalism and humanitarianism and also so that they can ask better and more sensitive questions, think of better stories as well as write better and more sensitive broadcasts.

Al-Tampkins of the Poyner (2001) states that reporters among others in the media profession like photo journalist, soundmen, field producers work together with emergency workers, the police officers, and firefighters, hence the symptoms of trauma among the journalists are similar to these of the police officers, yet the journalists receive little support after their duties yet the public emergency workers are offered debriefing and counseling after trauma.

Simpson and Handschuh (2003) in their study reported that only 11 % of the employer's informed journalists of the possible effects of undertaking traumatizing assignments, with only 25% offering counseling. According to Dart Center(2003), debriefing and counseling of journalist and soldiers returning from trauma prone assignment is one of the strategies that has been used for a very long time. This is necessary to cushion them from the possible emotional damage caused by being exposed to traumatizing events.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Journalist like the military, health workers; disaster first responders are exposed to trauma in their daily journalism assignments. This exposure may lead certain disorders such as burnout, PTSD, withdrawal, absenteeism and excessive drinking (ISTSS, 2007; Hale, 2007). Research is beginning to show that the effects of covering traumatic events over a long period of time can have negative effects on journalists themselves and in their professional conduct (Dworznik, 2011). This has triggered interest for researchers to empirically understand how journalists are affected by the events they cover in their daily activities. Several studies have tried to understand the effects of traumatic stress on primary victims (Brayne, 2007; Backholm & Björkqvist, 2010; Figley, 1995).

Media houses have put in place interpersonal communication strategies to deal with the consequences of exposure to trauma. Despite these strategies, journalists still continue to suffer from psychological and physiological effects of exposure to trauma (Hale, 2007; Amed, Kay, & Reilly, 2012). Therefore this study intends to evaluate the effectiveness of the interpersonal communication strategies used by media houses in Kenya to help journalists deal with the effects of exposure to traumatic event, in their effort to improve their personal and professional lives.

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1.3 Objective of the Study

The objective of study was to evaluate the effectiveness of debriefing as a strategy of dealing with trauma amongst the journalist in Kenya

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Empirical Studies

Bell (1995) conducted a study on traumatic event debriefing: Service delivery designs and the role of social work. This study presented a scoping review on post-seclusion and/or restraint review in psychiatry to examine existing models and the theoretical foundations on which they rely. The study used a scoping review of academic articles. The study found that post-seclusion and/or restraint review has its origins in the concepts of debriefing in psychology and reflective practice in nursing. The study proposed a typology in terms of the intervention target, including the patient, the health care providers, or both.

The analysis found that the review ought to involve both the patient and the care providers using an approach that fosters reflexivity among all those involved in order to change the practice of seclusion in psychiatric settings.

According to Hanna and Romana (2007) an interesting point about the process of debriefing is how it relates to six “forces of Magnetism.” First, the “quality of nursing leadership” at the executive level must demonstrate compassion for its staff and patients by fostering a spirit of supportive collaboration. Second managers who use the debriefing process appropriately will nurture their staff members with this acceptant intervention. This practice is evidence of a “managerial style” that’s open, malleable, collaborative, and responsive. Third, the internal consultation provided by the psychiatric CNS to the staff provides evidence for the force of Magnetism called “consultation and resources.” Fourth, since all members of the interdisciplinary team were involved in the critical incident, all members were invited to participate in the debriefing sessions. This collaboration supports the “interdisciplinary relationship” element of the force of Magnetism. Fifth, the psychiatric CNS became a teacher to her peers and others during the debriefing sessions about the proxy’s psychological responses, as well as about their own normal reactions. This perspective is evidence for the force of

Magnetism, “nurses as teachers.” Finally, the force of Magnetism called “quality of care” depends on the success of the debriefing process because staff members can’t continue to provide high-quality care if they’re in a state of distress, especially a state of moral distress. **2.2Theoretical Literature**

2.2.1 Transactional Model of Stress and Coping Theory

The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping is a framework used for evaluating the processes of coping with stressful events. The models key assumption is that a potentially stressful event will trigger a process in which an individual assesses the degree of threat to his or her well-being and when an event is perceived as threatening or a challenging a secondary appraisal process is triggered to provide a global assessment of the individual’s coping resources and ability to manage the threat or challenge. Coping responses are initiated after the cognitive appraisals and the eventual psycho physiological experience of this potentially stressful event. The success depends on the effectiveness of one’s cognitive appraisals and coping processes. The stress outcomes the act as a feedback to the cognitive appraisal stages for further actions if required.

It is important to note that the relationship between the primary and secondary appraisals dynamic and the sequence of influence does not always present itself as one being more important than the other or that one will always precedes the other (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Therefore, the key pillar of Lazarus and Folkman’s transactional model is that primary appraisal, secondary appraisal and coping strategies act as the moderator between the stressor and the individual’s stress outcomes. Folkman, 2008; Oatley & Johnson-Laird, 1987; Ortony, Clore & Collins, 1988; Smith & Kirby, 2001: Karasek (1979), states that the experience of stress (stress outcomes) is a consequence of the interaction between the stressor and the individual’s perception of control over the stressor.

This model thus explains why journalists suffer trauma from being exposed to traumatic events while in their line of duty yet in most of these traumatic events they have no control or way of ending the causes of the traumatic events on the scenes and suffers.

Therefore this theory influences this study in that by employing the specific interpersonal communication coping strategies the journalists will be able to deal with the trauma as the assumption to this theory, even after experiencing the traumatic situation first hand.

3.0 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study employed a mixed method design; both qualitative and quantitative but skewed more of qualitative methods. Creswell (2009), states that the mixed method of research is authoritative since it utilizes the strengths of both the qualitative and quantitative research methods. According to Teddlie and Yu (2007) in mixed methods sampling involves combining well established qualitative and quantitative techniques in creative ways to answer research questions posed by mixed method research designs. Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) states that the data produced by the mixed method of research enhances the validity and reliability of research findings, thus the employment of the mixed study in this study assisted in verifying and enhancing findings that was conducted

4.0 RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Data analyzed was summarized in line with the research objective and appropriate frequency tables inserted for presentation.

4.1 Response Rate

The number of questionnaires that were administered was 90. A total of 75 questionnaires were properly filled and returned. This represented an overall successful response rate of 83.33% as shown on Table 1. This agrees with Babbie (2004) who asserted that return rates of 50% are acceptable to analyze and publish, 60% is good and 70% is very good. Based on these assertion 83.33% response rate is adequate for the study.

Table 1: Response Rate

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Returned	75	83.33%
Unreturned	15	16.67%
Total	90	100%

4.2 Effectiveness of Debriefing as a Strategy of Dealing with Trauma amongst the Journalist in Kenya

The first objective of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of debriefing as a strategy of dealing with trauma amongst the journalist in Kenya. The respondents were asked to answer questions in relation to debriefing.

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Table 2: Debriefing

<u>Statement</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Slightly</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>Extremely Influential</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Dev</u>
Does debriefing your manager about your traumatic experience help	10.70%	13.30%	21.30%	54.70%	3.51	0.87
Does debriefing your peers about your traumatic experience help	12.00%	29.30%	8.70%	50.00%	3.57	0.94
Does debriefing your relatives about your experience help	7.00%	8.00%	21.00%	64.00%	3.64	1.14
Does debriefing your spiritual about your experience help	11.30%	15.30%	14.00%	59.30%	3.61	1.13
Does debriefing your fellow survivors about your experience help	18.00%	12.00%	10.00%	60.00%	3.62	1.09
<u>Total</u>					<u>3.57</u>	<u>1.00</u>

4.2.1 Debriefing Managers

The results in table 2 revealed that majority of the respondents who were 54.70% indicated that debriefing their manager about their traumatic experience is extremely influential. In addition 21.30% of the respondents indicated that debriefing their manager about their traumatic experience helps somewhat, 13.3% indicated that it helps slightly while only 10.7% indicated that it does not help at all. These findings agree with that of Hanna and Romana (2007) who found that managers who use the debriefing process appropriately will help their staff to deal with trauma. This implies that most people receive much help when they debrief their managers.

4.2.2 Debriefing Peers

The respondents were further asked to indicate whether debriefing their peers about their traumatic experience helps. The results in table 2 revealed that majority of the respondents who were 50.0% of the respondents indicated that debriefing their peers about their traumatic experience is extremely influential. The results also indicated that 29.3% of the respondents indicated that debriefing their peers about their traumatic experience helps slightly, 12.00% indicated that it does

not help at all while only 12.0% indicated that it helps somewhat. These findings were consistent with that of Clendinneng (2011) who found that debriefing peers is an important strategy used for educating healthcare professionals. McGreevy and This finding were consistent with that of Bell (1995) who found that there is need for peer support in order to engage in a learning experience through post-seclusion debriefing. This implies that most people receive much help when they debrief their peers.

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4.2.3 Debriefing Relatives

The respondents were further asked to indicate whether debriefing their relatives about their traumatic experience helps. The results in table 2 showed that majority of the respondents who were 64.0% of the respondents indicated that debriefing their relatives about their traumatic experience is extremely influential. In addition 21.0% indicated that debriefing their relatives about their traumatic experience helps somewhat, 8% indicated that it helps slightly while only 7.0% indicated that it does not help at all.

These findings agree with that of Dart Center (2007) who concluded that debriefing relatives may be necessary to deal with traumatic experiences. This implies that debriefing relatives helps journalists a lot to solve traumatic experiences.

4.2.4 Debriefing Spiritual Leaders

The respondents were further asked to indicate whether debriefing their spiritual authority about their traumatic experience helps. The results in table 2 revealed that majority of the respondents who were 59.3% of the respondents indicated that debriefing their spiritual leaders about their traumatic experience is extremely influential. In addition the results revealed that 55.3% of the respondents indicated that debriefing their spiritual about their traumatic experience helps slightly, 14.0% indicated that it helps somewhat while only 11.3% indicated that it does not help at all. These findings agree with that of Dart Center (2007) who found that debriefing spiritual leaders helps to deal with trauma. This implies that debriefing spiritual leaders extremely helps journalists to deal with traumatic experiences.

4.2.5 Debriefing Fellow Survivors

The respondents were further asked to indicate whether debriefing their fellow survivors about their traumatic experience helps. The results in table 2 revealed that majority of the respondents who were 60% of the respondents indicated that debriefing their fellow survivors about their traumatic experience is extremely influential. In addition 18% of the respondents indicated that debriefing their fellow survivors about their traumatic experience does not help at all, 12.0% indicated that it helps slightly, while 10% also indicated it helps somewhat. These findings agree with that of Clendinneng (2011) who found that debriefing fellow survivors is one of the strategy to deal with traumatic experiences. This implies that debriefing fellow survivors helps a lot to deal with traumatic experiences.

On a four point scale, the average mean of the responses was 3.57 which means that majority of the respondents were indicated slightly; however the answers were varied as shown by a standard deviation of 1.00. **4.2.6 Debriefing Practices**

The media managers were asked to indicate whether they allow the journalist to debrief them about their experiences. All the media houses indicated yes. These finding were consistent with that of Clendinneng (2011) who also concluded that media managers allows their employees to debrief them about their traumatic experiences.

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The following were the responses:

NTV	<i>'Yes'</i>
CITIZEN	<i>'Yes'</i>
KISS	<i>'Yes'</i>
KTN	<i>'Yes'</i>
K24	<i>'Yes'</i>

The media managers were also asked to indicate whether debriefing make it easier to deal with the effects of traumatic situations faced while in the field. Most of the media houses indicated yes. These findings agree with that of Dart Center (2007) who found that debriefing and counseling may be necessary to deal with traumatic experiences. The following were the responses:

NTV	<i>'Yes'</i>
CITIZEN	<i>'somehow'</i>
KISS	<i>'Yes'</i>
KTN	<i>'Yes'</i>
K24	<i>'Somehow'</i>

4.3 Correlation between Debriefing and Trauma Management

Table 3: Correlation matrix

		Debriefing	Short term experience	Intermediate	Long term experience	Overall experience
Debriefing	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000				
Short term Experience	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-.302** 0.009	1.000			
Intermediate	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-.365** 0.001	.277* 0.015	1.000		
Long term experience	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	-.461** 0.000	.467** 0.000	.609** 0.000	1.000	

Overall experience	Pearson Correlation	-.565**	.452**	.610**	0.323	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.024	0.000	0.000	0.000	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results in table 3 revealed that debriefing practices and short term trauma experiences are significant related ($p=0.009$). These finding were consistent with that of Clendinneng (2011) who found that debriefing is significantly related to trauma management. This implies that debriefing practices are associated with lower short term trauma experiences and hence effective trauma management. The table further indicated that debriefing and intermediate experiences are significantly related ($p=0.001$). These findings agree with that of Kar (2011) who found that debriefing is significantly related to management of trauma. This implies that debriefing practices is associated with lower intermediate term trauma experiences and hence effective trauma management. It was further established that debriefing and long term experiences were significantly related ($p=0.000$). These findings agree with that of Kar (2011) who found that debriefing is significantly related to management of trauma. This implies that debriefing practices are associated with lower long term trauma experiences and hence effective trauma management.

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Overall correlation results indicated that debriefing practices are significantly associated with overall trauma. These finding were consistent with that of Clendinneng (2011) who found that debriefing is significantly related to trauma management. This implies that debriefing practices are associated with reduced trauma and hence effective trauma management.

4.4 Regression between Debriefing and Effective Trauma Management

Table 4: Model Fitness

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
-0.565	0.32	0.31	0.29476

The results presented in table 4 present the fitness of model used of the regression model in explaining the study phenomena. The results revealed that the goodness of fit of the model was satisfactory. This is supported by coefficient of determination also known as the R square of 32.0%. This means that debriefing explain 32.0% of the effective trauma management

Table 5: Analysis of Variance

Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
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Regression	0.445	1	0.445	5.124	.024
Residual	6.342	73	0.087		
Total	6.787	74			

Table 5 provides the results on the analysis of the variance (ANOVA). The results indicate that the overall model was statistically significant as supported by a p value of 0.024 which is lesser than the critical p value of 0.05. These finding were consistent with that of Clendinneng (2011) who found that debriefing is significantly related to trauma management. The $F_{cal}=5.124 > F_{critical}=2.4599$ at $\alpha 0.05$ which imply that debriefing (managers, peers, other managers, relatives, spiritual leaders) are good predictor of the effective trauma management. **Table 6: Regression of Coefficients**

B	Std. Error	t	Sig.	
(Constant)	0.159	0.117	1.358	0.179
Average Debriefing	-0.565	0.047	-12.021	0.000

Regression of coefficients results in table 6 shows that is a significant relationship between debriefing and effective trauma management as supported by beta coefficient of -0.565. These finding were consistent with that of Clendinneng (2011) who found that debriefing is significantly related to trauma management. This was also supported by the t values whereby t

$cal=-12.021 > t_{critical} = -1.96$ at 95 percent confidence level which depicts that we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative.

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This implies that improvement in debriefing would lead to a reduction in overall trauma by 0.565 units. This further implies that debriefing leads to effective trauma management.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Based on the study findings the study concluded that debriefing is a good strategy of dealing with trauma among journalists. The study also concluded that journalists and their supervisors must be aware of the psychological effects of trauma. This will help them to be able to manage trauma.

The study also concluded that debriefing and counseling is necessary to offset the possible emotional damage caused by being a first responder. In addition journalists who report on traumatic incidents require counselling or debriefing after covering traumatic situations

Recommendations

- The study recommends that journalist should debrief their managers about their traumatic experiences. They should also debrief their relatives and religious leaders. This will make it easier for journalists to deal with traumatic experiences.

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