

Trauma Centrality and Posttraumatic Growth in the Chi-Chi Earthquake Survivors: The Serial Mediation of Core Belief Violation and Cognitive Processing

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Background: Trauma centrality (TC) refers to a traumatic event becoming a central position within life experiences and a core component of self-identity (Berntsen & Rubin, 2006). Posttraumatic growth (PTG) refers to individuals experiencing positive transformations and perceived personal benefits as a result of struggling with highly challenging life events (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996, 2004). Numerous studies have revealed that TC is uniquely associated with PTG. According to Tedeschi and Calhoun's revised PTG model (Tedeschi et al., 2018), individuals could attain PTG through a sequence of cognitive processes. After experiencing a potentially disruptive event with a high level of TC, this event challenges individuals' core assumptive beliefs; afterward, individuals undergo intrusive and deliberative rumination processes, ultimately leading to PTG. The present study investigated serial mediation effects of belief violation, intrusive rumination, and deliberative rumination on the association between TC and PTG. **Methods:** Data was part of the 20-year follow-up of the Chi-Chi earthquake, funded by the Ministry of Health and Welfare. Participants were 394 survivors of the Chi-Chi earthquake (65.5% female) who completed questionnaires assessing TC, core belief violation, intrusive rumination, deliberative rumination, and PTG. We analyzed the data using Hayes' PROCESS Model 6, with sex, age, the index of earthquake exposure (i.e., the extent of physical injuries, the extent of damage to your house and your living community), and depressive symptoms being controlled. **Major Findings:** As the figure shows, TC had a significant direct effect on PTG. There were five significant indirect effects from TC to PTG: (1) mediated by core belief violation, (2) mediated by intrusive rumination, (3) mediated by deliberate rumination, (4) mediated by core belief violation and deliberative rumination, and (5) mediated by intrusive rumination and deliberative rumination. **Implications:** Results support posttraumatic cognitive processing proposed in the PTG model. Specifically, survivors who view traumatic events as having a high centrality may develop PTG serially through core belief violation and two types of rumination. Longitudinal studies are needed to replicate the present findings.

Keywords: trauma centrality, belief violation, intrusive rumination, deliberative rumination, posttraumatic growth.

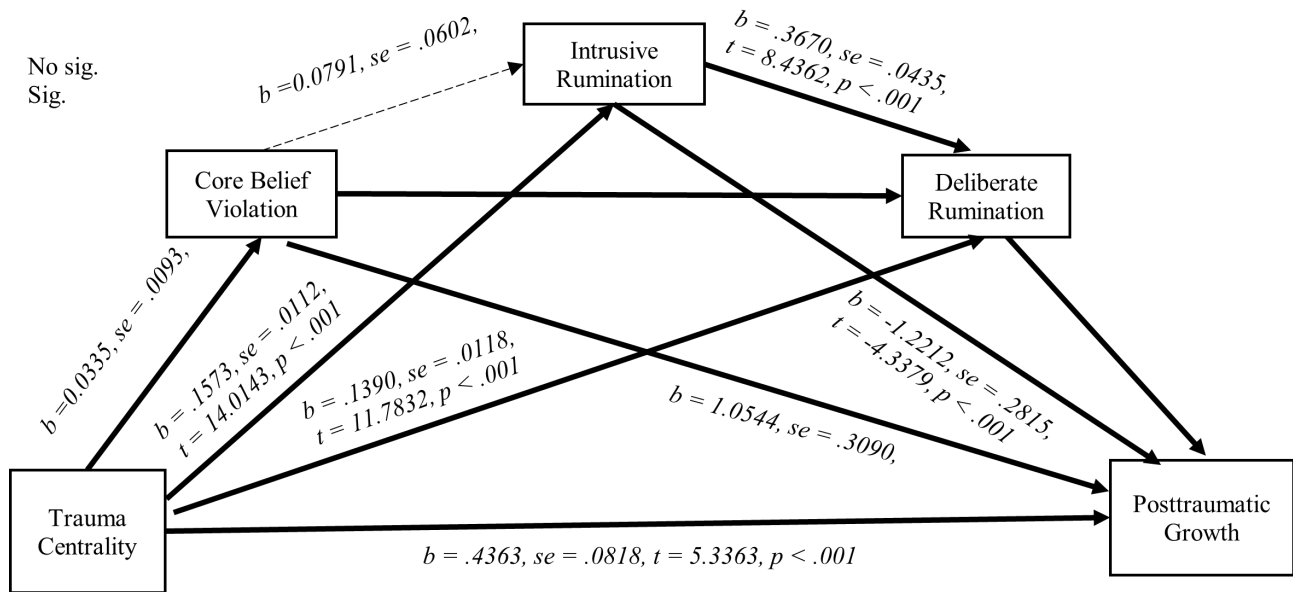


Figure 1. The Serial Mediation of Cognitive Processing on Trauma Centrality and Posttraumatic Growth.

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