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Lived Experiences of Vulnerability in the Childhood of Persons Recovering from Substance Abuse

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The aim of the study was to deepen understanding of the context of vulnerability which is associated with drug-taking behaviour and addiction. The researchers sought to identify recurring psychosocial and environmental factors in the childhood and early adulthood backgrounds of the participants. They further scrutinized the data for pairs or co-occurrences of such risk factors across the target groups. Qualitative methodology was employed, based on in-depth interviews. The participants were accessed in drug rehabilitation centres in Trinidad and in Barbados, bringing a cross-national dimension to the work. The Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) method was used to analyse the data. Findings: It is significant that nearly half of the Trinidad group and two-thirds of the Barbados group reported experience of rejection or abandonment in childhood. A profile of stressful or traumatic experiences was compiled for each participant, from which it was possible to identify co-ocurring pairs of stressors, which suggest inter-relationships between the phenomena. Marked co-occurrence was found between domestic violence and alcoholism; domestic violence in the participants' family background and non-attainment of. Secondary School Certification; non-attainment of Secondary School Certification and rejection; poverty and rejection; domestic violence and rejection. Applications: Case management techniques can benefit from research-generated insights on interrelationships between critical risk-connected phenomena, especially in developing concerted approaches to problems of substance abuse using preventive techniques.