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The domino effect of trauma: Connections between adverse childhood experiences and complex/cumulative posttraumatic stress disorder

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Statement of the problem: "Children are resilient," or so people say but Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) brought on by a parent or caregiver begin earlier than many know, take many overlooked forms and strongly correlate to impaired quality of life from infancy into old age. There is no escape for these children; short of running away or seeking emancipation, they must endure chronic trauma until they have the means to separate themselves from their toxic families. All the while, they are conditioned by society and their family unit to love their families and blame themselves for not being "good kids." This, in turn, leads to complex/cumulative PTSD, an under-researched condition, which I intend to explore in this discussion.

Methodology and Theoretical Orientation: This is an interpretivist discussion combining scientific and sociological literature with my experiences and that of others, aiming to illustrate the gravity of how childhood trauma affects adult life by pairing pre-existing research findings with personal histories in order to humanize and confirm a largely theoretical mental disorder.

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