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**Trauma Profiles and Personality Functioning: A Network Analysis of Narcissistic Traits, Epistemic Trust, Mentalization, and Impairments in Self and Interpersonal Dimensions**

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**Abstract**

**Introduction**

Self and interpersonal impairments are central to understanding personality pathology. Recent literature highlights the importance of narcissistic traits, particularly vulnerability, in offering a more nuanced perspective on personality functioning. These traits are closely linked to mentalization processes and epistemic trust, shaping how individuals interpret and engage with their experiences. Trauma plays a critical role in these dynamics, with its severity influencing the degree of dysregulation and vulnerability. This study adopts a person-centered approach to examine how different trauma profiles relate to these variables.

**Methods**

In a sample of 1,167 emerging adults (72% female, 28% male,  $M = 24.22$  years), we conducted a network analysis to examine the associations between self and interpersonal impairments (LPFS-BF), narcissistic traits (vulnerability and grandiosity) (PNI), epistemic trust (ETMCQ), and mentalization (RFQY-13). Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) identified trauma profiles based on emotional and physical neglect and abuse, as well as sexual abuse. Network comparison tests compared the network structure across trauma profiles.

**Results**

LPA identified three trauma profiles: Low, Mid, and High Trauma. Network analysis showed that narcissistic vulnerability (NV) was central across all profiles. Self-impairment (SELF) and interpersonal dysfunction (INTER) were significantly higher in the high-trauma group, reflecting a progression of

emotional and relational difficulties with increasing trauma severity. Uncertainty of mental states (rfqU) remained central across profiles, while significant differences in certainty of mental states (rfqC) and credulity (CREDULITY) were observed, particularly in the high-trauma group.

### **Discussion**

This study highlights the transdiagnostic role of narcissistic vulnerability in understanding personality functioning, in line with contemporary dimensional frameworks like HITOP. Meanwhile, dysregulation, as in self and interpersonal impairment, appears to be tied to the level of severity. This study underscores the importance of an integrated approach to personality functioning, which considers the complex interplay between vulnerability, mentalization, epistemic trust, and dysregulation. Tailored interventions that account for varying trauma profiles and their specific effects on personality functioning could lead to more personalized and effective treatment strategies.

### **Dati supplementari:**

**Titolo del simposio a cui il contributo fa riferimento:**

**THE MINDS WITHIN: TRAUMA, PERSONALITY, AND CLINICAL INNOVATION  
THROUGH THE LENS OF METACOGNITION AND MENTALIZATION**

### **Proposer**

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