

# Childhood Trauma and levels of Perfectionism, Dysfunctional Attitudes, and Self-compassion in Bipolar disorder

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## Introduction

- Those with Bipolar Disorder (BD) are significantly more likely to have experienced childhood trauma, in particular emotional abuse (Palmier-Claus et al., 2016).
- Childhood trauma influences the clinical presentation of patients with BD with greater suicide risk, more severe mood symptoms, more frequent episodes and rapid cycling (Agnew-Blais et al., 2016; Lebovitz et al., 2021).
- Dysfunctional attitudes and perfectionism are elevated in BD, and self-compassion is lower (Fletcher et al., 2013; Woods et al, 2024).
- Research has examined links between childhood trauma and psychological variables including shame within BD (Fowke et al., 2012).
- However, no research has examined whether self-compassion, dysfunctional attitudes and perfectionism are correlated with childhood trauma in BD.

## Results

### Correlations:

- There was a significant positive correlations between greater levels of childhood trauma and more severe current symptoms of mania and anxiety.
- Greater childhood trauma was significantly correlated with higher dysfunctional attitudes, more severe perfectionism, and lower self-compassion.
- Lower self-compassion and higher dysfunctional attitudes were correlated with more severe symptoms of mania and anxiety.
- More severe perfectionism was correlated with more severe anxiety.

### Mediations:

- Self-compassion significantly mediated the link between childhood trauma and manic mood.
- Dysfunctional attitudes, perfectionism and self-compassion significantly mediated the link between childhood trauma and anxiety.

## Methods

### Design and Participants:

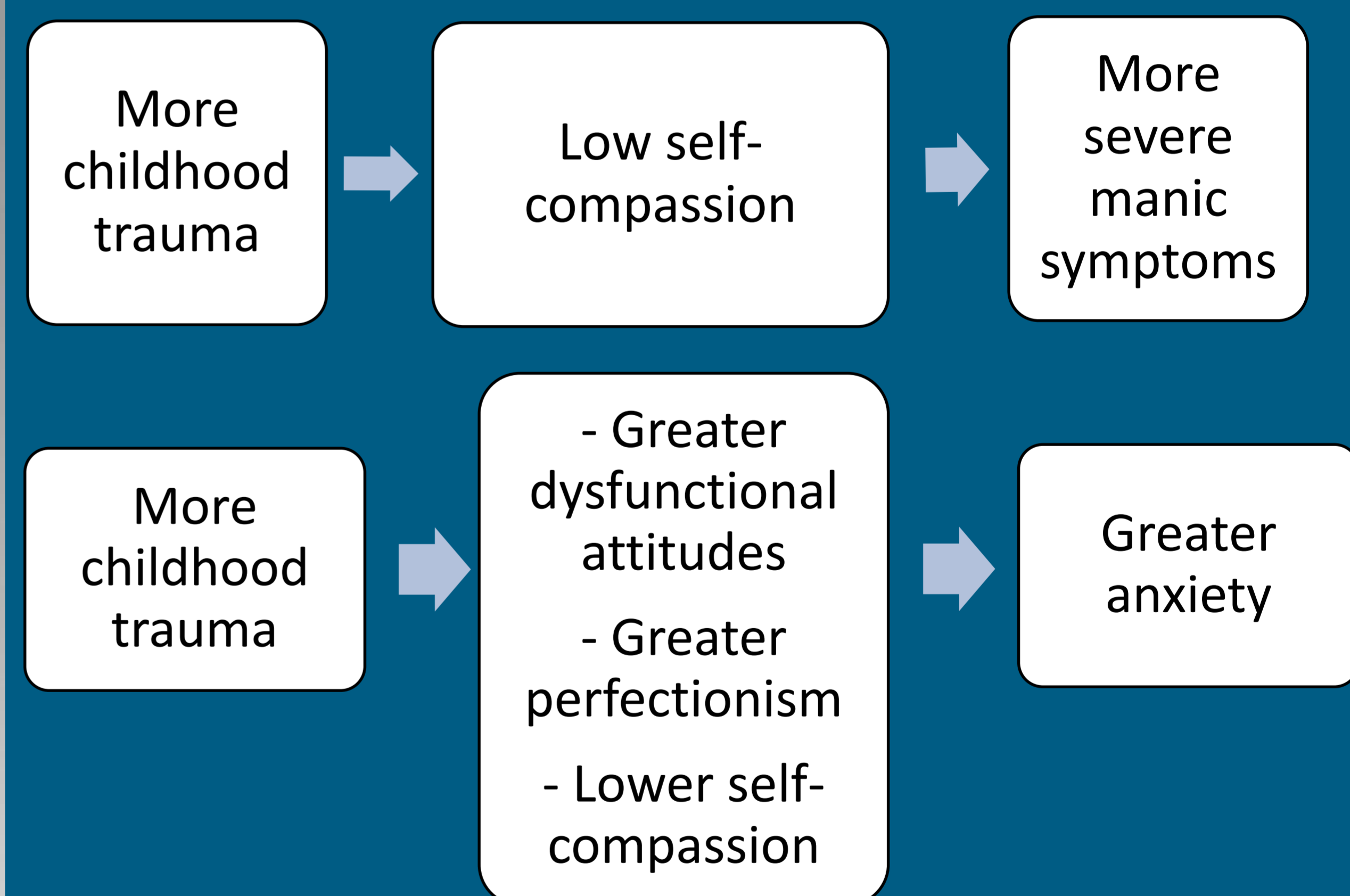
- Cross-sectional online survey.
- 98 adult participants with Bipolar disorder recruited internationally through organizations such as Crest BD and Bipolar UK.

### Questionnaires:

- Childhood Trauma Questionnaire
- Internal States Scale
- GAD-7
- Self-Compassion Scale
- Almost-Perfect Scale Revised

### Statistics:

- Non-parametric correlations and mediation using PROCESS macro for SPSS.



## Conclusion

- The scale for depression here was unreliable so could not be used and correlations with depression symptoms are not known.
- Longitudinal research to examine impact on symptoms change over time is needed.
- This study suggests that childhood trauma impacts mood symptoms severity in BD via its impact on perfectionism, dysfunctional attitudes and self-compassion.
- CBT therapists can use these findings to inform formulation of the impact of childhood trauma on rules for living in those with BD.
- Therapy which targets these psychological mechanisms may mitigate the impact of childhood trauma on current mood.

## References

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