

### **Abstract**

The present study examined the prevalence of posttraumatic growth in college students, whether there was lingering distress related to living through a pandemic, and investigated what factors contributed to the development of posttraumatic growth. Undergraduate college students (n=198) participated in an online survey that aimed to gather information regarding their pandemic experience, and that measured loneliness, social connectedness, family connectedness, social support, distress tolerance, COVID-specific distress, and PTSD symptoms. Participants also completed a series of questions that measured posttraumatic growth experienced directly due to the pandemic, which included 5 subcategories of growth: relating to others, new possibilities, personal strength, spiritual change, and appreciation for life. Individuals that had experienced COVID-19 infection and those that had close personal relationships with individuals that experienced infection received an additional set of questions to measure growth related to the experience of illness. Social connectedness and PTSD symptoms significantly predicted posttraumatic growth in participants. Across all subcategories of posttraumatic growth, participants indicated experiencing growth as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the most growth occurring in the “personal strength” and “appreciation of life” categories.