Abstract

According to Freyd’s Betrayal Trauma Theory (BTT) (Freyd, 1996), betrayal traumas (BTs) are those perpetrated by someone whom the survivor cares for, depends on, or trusts. Prior research suggests traumatic disclosure is influenced by level of betrayal. For instance, a study conducted with a European American sample indicated that high BTs were associated with a greater likelihood of first disclosure years following abuse, if disclosure ever occurred (Foynes, Freyd, Deprince, under review). Using the BTT framework, an online study was conducted with Asian Americans and European Americans (N=301) to examine the relationship between BT and nondisclosure. Results suggest that Asian Values significantly predict nondisclosure of high, but not low, betrayal traumas. By examining the impact of cultural values on this relationship, we hope to contribute to the creation of culturally sensitive trauma interventions.

Results

Descriptors

- Approximately 69% reported experiencing one or more instances of trauma
- AAs: 18.8% physical abuse, 16.9% sexual abuse, 21.4% emotional abuse
- EAs: 20.5% physical abuse, 26.8% sexual abuse, 31.3% emotional abuse
- 31.3% of AAs and 36.9% of EAs experienced at least one high betrayal trauma

Statistical Analyses

- High betrayal trauma significantly correlated with depression (r=.127), suicidal ideation (r=.128), reason for living (r=.227), and Asian Values (r=.153), p<.05
- Low betrayal trauma significantly correlated with ruminating (r=.165), reasons for living (r=.122), anxiety (r=.149), and suicidal ideation (r=.204)
- ANCOVA controlling for age and education revealed a significant main effect of gender, F(1, 199)=7.236, p<.01 (see Figure 1).
- Number of betrayal traumas negatively correlated with nondisclosure, (r=-.441), p<.01
- Asian Values significantly predicted nondisclosure of high betrayal trauma (β=.323, p<.01) (see Figure 2) but not low betrayal trauma (see Figure 3)
- When controlling for Asian values, number of high and low betrayal traumas did not predict nondisclosure

Discussion

Conceptual & Methodological Considerations

- Although the rates of interpersonal trauma were slightly lower in AAs, such estimates are potentially confounded by lower self-reported rates of prior disclosures.
- If participants report high rates of nondisclosure, it is quite likely that they are not disclosing everything in our surveys either.
- Nondisclosure of high betrayal traumas may be more heavily motivated by desires to protect family units and preserve important social relationships.

Future Directions & Clinical Implications

- Other factors that may both vary as a function of ethnicity and impact the effects of disclosure, such as disclosure latency, recipients of disclosure, barriers to disclosure, and the way in which trauma is disclosed (Tang, Freyd, & Wang, in press) must be assessed.
- In order to ensure ethical service delivery, we must first determine how to respond to traumatic disclosure in a culturally-sensitive manner.

References


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