Betrayal Trauma, Acculturation and Historical Grief among Native Americans

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Results

Scatter plot (top) illustrates that High Betrayal Trauma correlates with thoughts of Historical Loss. Scatter plot (bottom) illustrates that level of Acculturation correlates with thoughts of Historical Loss.

Reported Trauma

- 88% reported experiencing at least one trauma.
- 58% reported at least one high Betrayal Trauma (sexual, physical, and/or emotional abuse by someone with whom the participant was very close).

Acculturation and Trauma

- Significant correlations were found between acculturation and reported trauma ($r = .467$, $p < .001$). Low acculturation to Western Society was correlated with high levels of reported trauma. Note: higher numbers on the acculturation scale mean less acculturation to dominant western culture.
- Significant correlations were found between acculturation and high Betrayal Trauma ($r = -.260$, $p < .05$). Low acculturation to Western Society was correlated with high levels of reported Betrayal Trauma.

Historical Loss and Trauma

- Significant correlations were found between historical loss and reported trauma ($r = .270$, $p < .01$). Frequent thoughts of historical loss was correlated with high reports of reported trauma and Betrayal Trauma.

Discussion

- Results are congruent with contemporary literature (Manson, Beals, O’Neill, Piasecki, & Bechtold et al., 1996; McEvoy & Daniluk, 1995; Robin et al., 1996), which indicate that reported trauma is high among Native American people.

High reported trauma is correlated with low acculturation to western society and with frequent thoughts of historical loss.

Future Research

- This study suggests that we have a responsibility to further investigate why particular populations and cultures report higher rates of trauma.
- This study suggests that low acculturation to Western Society and thus, associating more fully with Native American traditional customs and beliefs, is related to higher reports of trauma, including those high in betrayal.
- One way to interpret results is that participants who are aware and willing to report their trauma history are also more aware and in tune with historical trauma of their people.
- The level of acculturation to dominant white society is related to thoughts of historical loss. Lower acculturation is correlated to more frequent thoughts of historical loss.
- This research expects to bring additional recognition and validation that the devastating and ongoing traumas of such events are still present in the minds of many Native Americans.

References

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