

THE INTERGENERATIONAL EXPERIENCE of HISTORICAL TRAUMA

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HISTORICAL TRAUMA

- Learning Objectives:
- How historical trauma effects us today
- The transmission of generational trauma
- Strategies in transcending historical trauma

HISTORICAL TRAUMA

- What is historical trauma?
- It is a type of trauma that is often overlooked
- Most easily described as multigenerational trauma experienced by a specific cultural group

WHO DOES THIS HAPPEN TO?

- Can be experienced by anyone living in families
- Marked by severe levels of trauma, poverty, dislocation, war, hunger,... who are still suffering as a result"(Cutler,n.d.).

THE IMPACT OF THIS TYPE OF TRAUMA

- Is cumulative and collective
- Will manifest itself emotionally and psychologically in members of different cultural groups (Brave Heart,2011).
- Seen as a collective phenomenon
- Those who have never even experienced the traumatic stressors, can still exhibit signs and symptoms of trauma

COMMON GROUPS EXPERIENCING HISTORICAL TRAUMA

- Populations in long term conflicts...
- People of color...
- Exposed to generations of discrimination, racism,, race based segregation and resulting poverty
- Exposed to micro aggressions, defined as "events involving discrimination, racism, and daily hassles...(Michaels,2010).

Examples of Stressors

- Slavery
- Colonialism
- Imperialism

- Current manifestations: Mistrust of police,
- Self-protection(e.g. weapon ownership); feelings of low self worth(Rich and Grey,2005).

Immigrants

- Traumatic experiences may vary by country of origin and from group to group
- Different reasons for immigration: Voluntary, forced relocation, displacement of groups of people
- May be exposed to discrimination, racism, forced assimilation/acculturation, colonization, and genocide

American Indians

- This group has been exposed to generations of violent colonization, assimilation policies, and general loss
- Major stressors: The Americanization of Indian Boarding Schools
- The forced assimilation among their students
- Current Manifestations: High rates of suicide, homicide, violence, child abuse, alcoholism,...

Manifested as:

- Historical unresolved grief that has not been adequately expressed, acknowledged, or unresolved (Johnson, J n.d.).
- Disenfranchised Grief: When loss cannot be voiced publicly or that loss is not openly acknowledged by the public
- Generations of loss due to colonialism, disease, and other factors
- The right to grieve these collective experiences

Manifested as:

- Internalized oppression
- Traumatized people may began to internalize the views of the oppressor
- Perpetuates a cycle of self hatred and aggression
- Self inflict and inflict on members of their own group

Intergenerational Poverty

- Can lead to family stress, child abuse and neglect, substance abuse, health challenges, and domestic violence (Wilson,2010).
- Poor people tend to cluster in certain neighborhoods
- This concentration of poverty results in higher crime rates, under performing public schools, poor housing, and health conditions
- Limited access to private services, jobs...(Kneebone,Nadeau,&Berube,2011).

Other types of Trauma

- 1. Establishment of reservations
- 2. Shifting and forcing the thinking from inclusive and connected(circle) to a linear and disconnected(square)
- 3. Removal of children to Boarding Schools
- 4. removal of children from homes
- 5. Refusal to allow Native Americans to use their own language

Other types of Trauma

- 6. Forced sterilization of women in many tribes
- 7. Frequent systemic violations against Native Americans by the government and law enforcement
- 8. Racism and stereotyping
- 9. Removal of group focus and encouragement of individuality focus

Other types of Trauma

- 10. Lack of trust in others-non native peoples, native peoples in tribal governments, lack of confidentiality in system
- 11. 90% reduction of Native American population since European dominance
- 12. Legally and militarily stopping ceremonies, healing practices, and spirituality

Historical Trauma

- The development as a social theory
- Recognized Leaders
- Maria Yellow Horse Braveheart, PhD.
- Widely regarded as the "mother of historical trauma"

Transcending Historical Trauma

- Verna Bartlett, PhD. Native American elder and sexual abuse survivor
- Judy Bluehorse Skelton, Adjunct Professor at Portland State University's Graduate School of Education
- Lavina Wilkins, M.A. in Education and Counseling
- Woodrow Morrison, JD.

Transcending Historical Trauma

- How do we build a nation from a lost generation?
- We can't give up hope!
- "Our purpose is to heal from the unresolved grief that accompanies trauma".(Maria Yellow Horse Braveheart,PhD.).

The Historical Trauma Intervention Model

- Four major community intervention components
- First is confronting the historical trauma
- Second is understanding the trauma
- Third is releasing the pain of historical trauma
- Fourth is transcending the trauma

Hypotheses for the Intervention Model

- 3 Major hypotheses
- 1. Education increases awareness
- 2. Sharing effects of trauma provides relief
- 3. Grief resolution through collective mourning/healing creates positive group identity and commitment to community

- **BE REALISTIC**
- **DEMAND**
- **THE IMPOSSIBLE!!**
