



Transgenerational Trauma: What you need to know

Ana Marcela Rodriguez, MS, LMFT- FOUNDER
Diana L. Beltran, LCSW- Clinical Operations Director

WWW.THERAPYWORKSCOUNSELING.COM

Learner Outcomes

- ⦿ Gain knowledge about intergenerational and transgenerational trauma
- ⦿ The impact it has on individuals, families, and children
- ⦿ Learn interventions to break cycles of trauma



How Common is Trauma?

- ⦿ Each and every minute, 20 individuals are physically abused by their intimate partner.
- ⦿ Abuse and neglect are a reality for 1 in 7 children.
- ⦿ Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is developed by 4 percent of men and 10 percent of women.
- ⦿ About 5 out of every 100 adults (or 5%) in the U.S. has PTSD in **any given year**. In 2020, about 13 million Americans had PTSD.
- ⦿ And then there is all the sexual violence: 20 percent of men endure sexual violence during their lifetime. For women, the number is nearly 50 percent.

Intergenerational vs Transgenerational Trauma

- Intergenerational Trauma: Occurs when the individual that has experienced the trauma exposes the following generation to PTSD symptoms most commonly in an unspoken manner
- Transgenerational Trauma: Occurs when the offspring from the generation that had been impacted exposes their offspring to PTSD symptoms

Transgenerational Trauma in Hispanic/Latino Communities

Often rooted in immigration trauma-as the immigration process often involves multiple traumatic stages for the family involved, according to 2014 study.

Over 75% of migrants from Latin America to the U.S. report histories of trauma

- ⦿ These include: pre-migration factors such as war, terrorism, political persecution, and natural disasters
- ⦿ exposures during the process of migration, such as theft, kidnapping, rape, extortion, dehydration, and assault
- ⦿ post-migration factors such as neighborhood and domestic violence
- ⦿ generations of immigrants have suffered from the pressure to assimilate as quickly as possible by abandoning their own languages and adopting English
 - “It’s like, we’re not gonna let you speak this language. And if you do you’re less than,”
 - “If you have an accent you’re less than.”

Impacts of Generational Trauma

Generational trauma can go back as much as seven generations

- ⦿ May show up as physical manifestations
- ⦿ Anxiety
- ⦿ Depression
- ⦿ Panic Attacks
- ⦿ Mistrust
- ⦿ Hypervigilance
- ⦿ Feelings of insecurity
- ⦿ Issues with self-esteem and self-confidence

Impacts of Generational Trauma In Youth

- Latina teens choosing to have romantic relationships with males having histories of negative relationships with women.
- These Latina teens also reported high rates of teenage pregnancy and intimate partner violence.
- Substance Abuse
- Academic difficulty

THE MADRIGAL FAMILY TREE



PEDRO
(Grandfather) **ALMA**
(Grandmother)



FELIX
(Uncle) **PEPA**
(Aunt) **BRUNO**
(Uncle) **JULIETA**
(Mother) **AGUSTIN**
(Father)



DOLORES
(Cousin) **CAMILO**
(Cousin) **ANOTNIO**
(Cousin) **LUISA**
(Sister) **MIRABEL**
(Sister) **ISABELA**
(Sister)

ENCANTO

First Generation



Patriarch/Matriarch

- Experienced war
(Colombian Civil War)
- Relocation
- Alma lost her husband
- Asked for a miracle
(religion)

Second Generation



- Experience intergenerational trauma from Alma
- Loss of father shortly after being born (did not have male - father figure)
- Nurturer - Julieta
- Emotional - Pepa
- Black Sheep - Bruno

Third Generation

Experience both transgenerational trauma and intergenerational trauma



Perfect - Isabella

Gossip - Dolores

Strong - Luisa

Black Sheep- Maribel

Distractor - Camilo

Mediator - Antonio

Extended family members



Still can experience the transgenerational trauma.

Agustin - provided protection

Felix - provided comfort

Domestic Violence Ex. of Intergenerational and Transgenerational Trauma

- According to the National Violence Against Women Survey, Hispanic and non-Hispanic women report similar rates of physical assault and stalking
- According to the **National Latin@ Network**, about 1 in 3 Latinas (34.4%) will experience intimate partner violence in her lifetime, and 1 in 12 Latinas have experienced IPV in the past 12 months.
- About 6% of Latina women are abused during pregnancy

Domestic Violence Cont.

Help-Seeking Behaviors:

- Ethnic minority women engage in less help-seeking behavior, other than police contact, than White women
- Latina women underutilize formal helping resources because of language barriers, cultural barriers and differences, and fear and distrust
- Latina women face obstacles to receiving help such as fear of deportation, social isolation, misinformation and lack of knowledge about legal rights, lack of knowledge about law enforcement capabilities and structure, language differences, and limited knowledge of the availability of social services to help

Cultural Constructs Impacting Domestic Violence

- Familiarisimo
 - refers to the central place that the family has in most Latinas' lives. Strong family roles point to the father as the primary breadwinner (although this role is rapidly changing due to economic realities) and to the mother as the person responsible for the well-being and cohesiveness of the family
 - Secret keepers = Loyalty
 - Ex. Would likely not report abuse
 - Loyalty, responsibility to the family, obedience, and solidarity
- The traits associated with machismo and marianismo constructs do not solely or directly cause domestic violence, but rather are part of a complex intersection of cultural, social, and economic factors that contribute to it collectively.

Cultural Constructs Continued

- **Machismo** in DV- considered an innate part of relationships as a culturally accepted rationale for violent and often illegal behavior
- **Marianismo** acceptance of male dominance and aggression play equally significant roles in shaping the culture surrounding domestic violence.
- **Religion** often plays a strong role in Latinas' decisions on how or if - to address IPV.
 - Till Death Do Us Part
 - Honor your mother and father
 - Feelings of shame, guilt, and embarrassment

Treatment and Interventions



Treatment & Interventions

- Gain insight and knowledge that the Hispanic Community Provides in order to create the appropriate interventions
- Psychoeducation is very important
- Hispanics with a higher level of education and born in the US are more likely to be open to mental health services

-



Importance of Psychoeducation

- Using their colloquial language and simple words that they can understand and relate to.
- Be curious - ask questions.
 - People most likely will not tell you that they do not know what you're talking about .
- Sometimes this is all that you can do (no counseling or therapy - just psychoeducation).
 - Repetition creates trust
 - Real life examples (people want to learn about real life stories about people that they can relate to)
- No matter the socio economic status of the person . Psychoeducation is crucial in their treatment process
- Talk about counseling / therapy expectations
 - What is and what is not therapy

Interventions for Generational Trauma

- Family Map: Help the client think about the family they were born into being to identify patterns and relationships among the family members
- Family Life Chronology: Open up a conversation with your parents about their lived experiences and how they coped
- Family Rules: Notice any embedded patterns, attitudes, or narratives from your family that you continue to portray and modification
- Safe conversations
- Recreate a new narrative that you want your children to embody and believe about their family, themselves, and the world.

Boundaries

It's important to understand the cultural context of the person and its family to help them create and establish healthy boundaries.

- Cutting the dysfunctional family might not be the only answer. (“if you cut one you cut them all”)
- Helping client be more firm with their decisions.
 - Specially for latino women it is very hard to say no.
 - Pleasing others is correlated to being a good person, an excellent mother , and what you supposed to do in society.
 - Women are expected to be submissive at home yet assertive and go-getters in the workforce; often referred to as Marianismo.
- Helping create healthy and age appropriate boundaries between parents and their child
 - Parentification
 - Children taking care of siblings

Questions?



GRACIAS

Therapy Works Counseling : Terapia en tu idioma

Bilingual counseling services and Immigration psychological evaluations

- ⦿ Fort Worth, Garland, Frisco, Lancaster y Dallas and Telehealth
- ⦿ 972 695 3421
- ⦿ hola@therapyworkscounseling.com



www.therapyworkscounseling.com

