

Historical Trauma and the Impacts Towards Healing in Pueblo Communities

Jenyce Baca

Northern New Mexico College: BAIS Psychology

INTRODUCTION

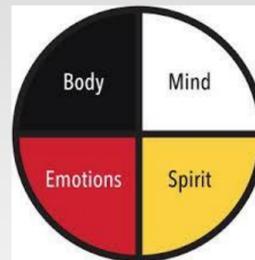
- Indigenous people in the United States have endured a collective history of mass extermination efforts, resulting in cumulative emotional and psychological trauma across generations, known as Historical Trauma.
- The definition of historical trauma is a cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma. Native Americans have, for over many years, endured physical, emotional, social, and spiritual genocide from European and American colonialists.
- What we know about historical trauma in Native American communities is that it is pervasive and enduring, and as such it is both a determining factor in many contemporary conditions and challenges within communities.
- This allowed me to produce my research question of: How do the impacts of Historical Trauma affect an individual's path towards healing?

OBJECTIVE

- My aim is to set the stage for further research and thought about historical trauma within Pueblo communities here in Northern New Mexico. As an Indigenous woman from Santa Clara Pueblo and one of the Eight Northern Pueblos.
- I had found that there has been no research done here with the Pueblos in New Mexico.
- In addition, I want to be able to give back to my community and shed light of coping mechanisms of healing from historical trauma and restoring resilience among Pueblo people in New Mexico.

METHODS

- The use of a qualitative study allowed me to find the results of behavior patterns and actions towards Pueblo members who are struggling with historical trauma.
- An ethnography strategy will become a resource to distinguish a relevant research lenses that can become fundamental to the creation and realization of this study.
- The methods I have used include observations and interviews with advocates and counselors who work in behavioral health with nearby Pueblo members in New Mexico.



RESULTS

During the interviews, both participants had felt confident about sharing information about their job and being a resource towards Pueblo members. I had elaborated on the emerging of themes of historical trauma with the connection of intergenerational trauma, violence, drug, and alcohol abuse. It was important to hear the interviewee's description of HT and how it occurs from the perspective to discuss the suggestions from healing of historical trauma

- **HT is not only a conceptual idea for Indigenous people, it is a terminology to describe experiences.**
"I feel that historical trauma within our Pueblo people comes from disconnection...Disconnection from space, culture, and our ways of life which has been that way for many generations."
"Some of the ways Native people deal with historical trauma is through abuse, alcoholism, drugs, and other hurtful substances that cause harm to our people."
- **HT is caused by the oppression and the ignorance of the effects it has on everyone.**
"It feeds into the idea of not including certain people because of the language, land, culture and blood quantum"
- **One interviewee shares that historical trauma has not stopped in the past but continues into present day society.**
"It is hard to say that this has stopped, and we are here now because it's still ongoing...our land is being stolen and contaminated. Women are getting raped, abused, and murdered. Certain families are struggling financially."
- **Recognition of awareness was mentioned throughout the process of how Pueblo people find positive ways to cope.**
"Awareness has become more open and people are beginning to understand that. We learn to embrace our culture through traditional practices and connecting back to Mother Earth"
"When we incorporate positive mechanisms, I believe we become something different and hopefully that different leads to be strengthen instead of disempowered."
- **As for finding a way towards healing and resilience, both participants shared their thoughts of overcoming struggles and learning the lessons.**
"We have resilience within our DNA because we are here and still thriving. We acknowledge our experiences and challenges we go through everyday. It allows us to channel it and make it productive"
"I believe that we can recover and hopefully take in these lessons of the experiences we have. But at the same time, we don't want to forget the pain and suffering. We want to remember so we don't repeat it."

DISCUSSION

- I feel that it was an essential resource towards presenting my results in a way that helps others understand what I had found within the study.
- My participants' responses are extremely important towards addressing the impacts and the steps we as Pueblo people need to take towards healing.
- The acknowledgement and values with the inter-related of self, land, ancestry, tribe, and community provides the groundwork in the integrated connection. The responses shared among the participants, discusses how to deal with HT with addressing who you are, where you come from, and who you are becoming which acknowledges the wound that has occurred.
- The engaging demonstrates the need and input within the Pueblo community to have courageous conversations towards HT and healing from it.

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