

TSS GROUP NEWS



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Please note: Due to the university holiday closure, our offices at DU will be closed from December 22–January 2. See you in the New Year!



December News Highlights

Anne P. DePrince, Ph.D., TSS Group Director

On behalf of the TSS group, we wish you happy holidays as well as peace in 2013. As we get ready to say goodbye to 2012, the TSS Group is also working diligently to set the stage for a productive and exciting 2013. Hold on to your hats as we walk you through updates for several ongoing and new projects...we hope you will be as excited as we are!

Ongoing: Denver Justice Project. With a small pilot grant from Colorado Campus Compact, the Denver Justice Project seeks to assess the trauma histories and trauma-related needs of women who have experienced domestic human sex trafficking. This project, developed in partnership with the **Denver District Attorney's Office** and Denver Police Department's **Victim Assistance Unit**, seeks to provide information to service providers in Denver about women's trauma-related needs following trafficking cases. We're focusing on trauma-related needs that may have developed following the trafficking as well as previous trauma exposures, such as child abuse. **A flyer for this study appears at the end of this newsletter.** Thank you in advance for your help getting the word out about this important study!

Ongoing: Healthy Adolescent Relationship Project (HARP). In November, we presented preliminary findings from HARP at the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS) annual meeting in Los Angeles CA. As many of you know by now, HARP focused on testing two major models of revictimization risk among female survivors of childhood abuse. First, social learning models focus on relationship and gender role expectancies (e.g., beliefs and attitudes about violence in intimate relationships). Second, risk detection models focus on risk detection abilities (e.g.,

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TSS Group Members Tejas, Jane, and Claire talk with our colleague Stephen Shirk at the Annual Meeting of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies.

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emotional awareness, attention to danger). HARP tested two separate curricula derived from these respective models to address revictimization risk among female adolescents aged 12–19 involved with the child welfare system. Youth violence prevention programs have typically been implemented in school settings, thereby missing high-risk youth in alternative educational settings. Instead, this community-based prevention program was tested with a high-risk and hard-to-reach population.

Participants included 180 ethnically diverse adolescent girls facing considerable life adversity, from poverty and teen parenthood to complex trauma. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two 12-week group prevention curricula. From pre- to post-assessment, participants reported significant declines in dating aggression and mental health symptoms; these gains held at two-month follow-up. Initial analyses suggest that the risk detection curriculum was linked with lower rates of sexual assault reporting relative to the social learning curriculum two months after the intervention ended. In the coming months, we'll be analyzing data in more detail (including results from a six month follow-up assessment) to understand the relative strengths and limitations of each curriculum.

Ongoing: SAFE Extends HARP to Homeless Youth. Our colleague and collaborator, Dr. Kim Bender (Graduate School of Social Work, DU), is spearheading a project designed to extend what we've learned in HARP to work with homeless youth. In particular, Kim led efforts to adapt the risk detection curriculum we developed in HARP to help homeless youth think about safety on the streets. Thanks to a partnership with Urban Peak, the adapted curriculum is now being tested with youth confronting homelessness. We look forward to updating you on this project in the future!

New Project: Study of Older Adult Resources and Stress (SOARS). In collaboration with Dr. Leslie Hasche (Graduate School of Social Work, DU) and partnership with Denver's innovative Justice for Older Adults (an interdisciplinary coalition of legal, adult protective services, intimate partner violence, and senior service agencies), this project will assess risk factors for and consequences of elder maltreatment (i.e., abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation). The Justice Program for Older Adults of Denver has identified specific research needs related to identifying elder maltreatment risk factors and service gaps. Responding to this local need as well as federal calls for research, we will partner with the Justice Program for Older Adults of Denver to recruit 97 older adults to participate in two 1-hour interviews. We will assess previous violence exposure, cognitive capacity, physical and functional dependence, social support, health consequences (i.e., PTSD, depression, and overall physical and mental health well-being), and elder maltreatment (i.e., abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation). We will also examine current service use across health, social, and legal services to identify service gaps. We hope that this research will inform local responses to elder maltreatment. We will begin inviting participants into this study early in 2013 – stay tuned!

New Project: Legal Wrap-Around. In partnership with Rocky Mountain Victim Law Center and an interdisciplinary steering committee of criminal justice and community-based agencies, the TSS Group will lead a needs assessment to identify well-met and un-met legal needs of interpersonal crime victims in the Denver metro area. This multi-stage project will involve gathering perspectives from both service providers and crime victims/survivors to better understand the range of legal needs that victims and survivors face following crimes. Stay tuned for more as this study gets underway because we want to be sure your perspectives are included!

Thank you for making all of this work possible...and for all that you do on behalf of victims and survivors. We look forward to working with you in 2013.



TSS Group Accomplishments

We are pleased to announce recent TSS group presentations:

- Babcock, R., & DePrince, A.P. (2012, October). *Childhood betrayal trauma and dependence: Predictors of ongoing victimization and self-blame among intimate partner abuse survivors*. Paper presented at the 24th Annual Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance (COVA) Annual Conference. Keystone, CO.
- Chu, A. T. & DePrince, A. P. (2012, October). At-risk youth: Perceptions of reporting on trauma history. Talk presented at the 24th Annual Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance Conference. Keystone, CO.
- Matlow, R. B., Shirk, S. R., & DePrince, A. P. (2012, November). *Examining the overlap between trauma exposure and bipolar disorder*. Presentation at the 28th Annual Meeting of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, Los Angeles, CA.
- Srinivas, T. & DePrince, A. (2012, November). *The Relationship Between Treatment by the Police and PTSD Symptom Severity in Survivors of Intimate Partner Abuse (IPA)*. Poster presented at the 28th Annual Meeting of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, Los Angeles, CA.
- Sundermann, J.M., Chu, A.T., & DePrince, A.P. (2012, October). Examining links between cumulative violence exposure, emotional nonacceptance, and mental health symptoms within a community sample of women. Talk presented as part of symposium "Translating Recent Research on Intimate Violence". Symposium presented at the Conference for Victim Advocates (COVA). Keystone, CO.
- Sundermann, J.M., DePrince, A.P., & Chu, A.T. (2012, November). Relationships between Emotion Regulation (ER) Difficulties and Mental Health Symptoms in a Community-Recruited Sample of Maltreated Youth. Talk presented as part of symposium, "Emotion regulation, violence exposure, and trauma-related outcomes in youth and adults exposed to significant life adversity". Symposium presented at the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies Annual Conference. Los Angeles, CA.
- Welton-Mitchell, C. McIntosh, D. & DePrince, A. (2012). Responses to domestic violence public service ads: Memory, attitudes, affect, and individual differences. *Wardenberg Health Center, University of Colorado, Boulder*. Boulder, CO.

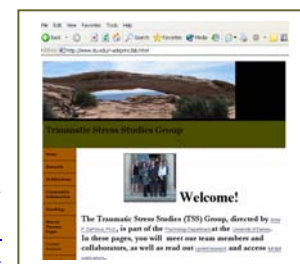
And a new paper:

- Sundermann, J.M., Chu, A.T., & DePrince, A.P. (Published online Aug. 2012). Cumulative Violence Exposure, Emotional Nonacceptance, and Mental Health Symptoms in a Community Sample of Women. *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*. doi: 10.1080/15299732.2012.710186. Available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/fAh5mqFJ8emSVmSVbytl/full>

And a paper in the pipeline; stay tuned to access:

- Gover, A., Welton-Mitchell, C., DePrince, A., & Belknap, J. (in press). Understanding why women initially engaged with the criminal justice system don't report additional incidents of intimate partner abuse. *Journal of Women and Criminal Justice*.

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TSS Group Presents and Learns in Keystone

*Jane Sundermann, MA
4th Year Graduate Student*

This October, several members of the TSS Group traveled to nearby and picturesque Keystone, Colorado to attend the annual Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance (COVA) conference. We were thrilled to have opportunities to both learn from others in attendance and to present our research in a session entitled “Translating Recent Research on Intimate Violence”. We thank you, our community collaborators, for making that TSS group research possible and for those of you who attended our group’s COVA presentation. We also thank the people we were able to meet at the COVA conference, who very willingly and generously shared their own experiences with victim advocacy in Colorado. We are always happy to come away from a conference with new ideas and future directions for TSS group research that is based upon a more in-depth and up-to-date awareness of local community needs.

TSS Group Presents! Our talk to the COVA audience, “Translating Recent Research on Intimate Violence”, synthesized some of the latest TSS group research about the often-complex relationships between exposure to violence and subsequent social and mental health outcomes among female survivors. Presentations by various TSS group members (Babcock, Chu, DePrince, Srinivas, & Sundermann) highlighted the following pieces of data emerging from our group’s projects:

- From the Triage project, data demonstrating that survivors’ perceptions of police responses following IPA incidents contribute in important ways to survivors’ posttraumatic appraisals and levels of distress.
- From the Healthy Adolescent Relationship Project (HARP), data suggesting that female teens with child welfare system involvement generally perceive favorable benefit-cost ratios when participating in research that specifically asks about traumatic experiences
- From the Violence Against Women (VAW) study, data showing that measuring women’s cumulative, lifetime exposures to various types of violence is important. In this sample, women’s cumulative violence exposure predicts women’s tendency to engage in emotional nonacceptance (i.e. avoiding one’s internal experiences of emotions), which in turn predicts more severe symptoms of depression, dissociation, and PTSD.

TSS Group Learns! Of course, COVA also brought extensive opportunities to learn from others in our CO community. I surveyed a few of my fellow TSS group members about their favorite or most exciting take-aways from the COVA experience this year. Tejas Srinivas, a second year doctoral student, enjoyed attending a workshop about how crimes of sexual assault against women may occur within certain isolated religious communities (Authors: *Sam Brower, Laura Chapman, Brenda Lee*). Tejas said that the workshop really engaged her thinking about the ways in which victims’ broader social-ecological context affects mental health and well-being following exposure to violence and/or trauma. Importantly, Tejas commented that the workshop helped her to think about how important it is for victims’ advocates to think about the many ways that religious institutions, for example, could offer either strong support of women’s well-being following trauma or violence exposure or... (as was focused upon more within this particular COVA talk)... unfortunately oppress female victims of trauma even further (e.g., employ fear tactics and misogynistic community rules to silence and alienate women).

We thank COVA for giving us the opportunity to present our group’s research and to learn more about the ongoing efforts of victims’ advocates from all over our Colorado state. As usual, we were thoroughly impressed to hear what members of our local community are doing to support and to advocate for victims of interpersonal violence, and we strongly hope that our research continues to both inform and be well-informed by that advocacy work. If you’re interested in learning more about COVA as an organization or the COVA conference, we of course encourage you to seek more information at COVA’s website @ www.coloradocrimevictims.org. Finally, if you attended our COVA talk or have further questions about the specific research that we presented there, we welcome your ongoing feedback and collaboration.



Denver Justice Project

University of Denver

Women (18 and older) who have been involved in domestic sex trafficking are invited to participate in *The Denver Justice Project*.

What is participating in the study like?

- You will be asked to take part in a *confidential* interview that may take up to 3 hours.
- Everything in the interview is *voluntary* – you are not required to answer any questions.
- You receive \$50.
- Snacks will be provided during the interview.

What are researchers trying to learn?

- We hope to learn what resources women need following trafficking as well as what kinds of experiences women have with the criminal justice system (such as police and prosecutors).

What about transportation?

- Cab fare to and from the interview or parking will be arranged for all participants.

Want more information?

- Confidential phone: 303.871.4103
- Confidential email: harp@du.edu.

This study is conducted by Anne P. DePrince, Ph.D. (Psychology Department, University of Denver). This research was reviewed and received approval by the University of Denver Institutional Review Board on April 5, 2012.