

# TSS GROUP NEWS



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## July News Highlights

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

Spring saw us digging into data analyses from a large study of women recently exposed to intimate partner abuse (IPA), in collaboration with our system- and community-based partners as well as Drs. Joanne Belknap and Angela Gover. We look forward to bringing you highlights from this research in the coming months. In the mean time, we thank our system- and community-based partners who have generously given us feedback on our initial analyses, particularly the Triage Steering Committee.

In collaboration with Dr. Stephen Shirk and Aurora Mental Health Center, we have continued our randomized control study testing the effectiveness of a modified therapy for teens who report depression and previous violence exposure.

### **WE HAVE SEVERAL NEW STUDIES UNDERWAY... WOULD YOU PLEASE HELP US GET THE WORD OUT?**

First, many of you have helped us kick off the **HEALTHY ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIPS PROJECT (HARP)**. HARP is designed for teen girls and young women (ages 12-19) who have had contact with the child welfare system. The project tests two empowerment-oriented approaches to prevention with teens who are at high risk of revictimization because of previous exposure to violence/abuse in childhood. We anticipate that this study will provide critically important information about effective ways to work with young women around revictimization risk. To learn more about HARP (as well as find materials to refer clients to HARP), please visit <http://mysite.du.edu/~adeprinc/harp.html>. Thank you for letting clients and colleagues know about HARP!

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Second, we are delighted to invite **Latina mothers** to participate in the **SALUD DE LA FAMILIA**, a study focused on understanding the impact of acculturative stress and domestic violence on Latina women and their children. In particular, the study focuses on barriers to accessing child mental health services for Latino youth. To learn more, please visit <http://mysite.du.edu/~adeprinc/study.html>; study flyers are available in this newsletter on pages 5-6.

Third, our colleagues at the University of Colorado Boulder are inviting adult women (ages 22-30) to participate in the **CU BRAIN STUDY**, a project examining child abuse exposure in relation to attention and memory performance. This study offers an exciting opportunity to participate in **cutting-edge neuroscience research**. As part of the study, participants are asked to complete tasks while inside an MRI machine that images the brain. For more information on this exciting opportunity, please visit <http://mysite.du.edu/~adeprinc/cubrainstudy.pdf>, email [cubrainstudy@gmail.com](mailto:cubrainstudy@gmail.com), or call (303) 735-5421. A study flyer is available on page 7 of this newsletter.

As always, we also look forward to finding ways to work with you. Thank you for the work you do on behalf of victims and survivors.

Anne P. DePrince, Ph.D.  
Director, TSS Group  
Associate Professor, University of Denver

## Notes from the Classroom

*Anne P. DePrince, Ph.D.*

*TSS Group Director*

In recent years, I've been developing a community-engaged research component to an undergraduate Research Methods course, thanks to the generous partnership of many of you (see our September 2009 issue for a related article <http://mysite.du.edu/~adeprinc/Sept2009news.pdf>).

This year, my class was very fortunate to partner with **Ginger Sherlock** (City Attorney's Office) and **Brooke Ely Milen** (Department of Human Services) to analyze data collected from child protection workers and domestic violence advocates across the state. The class learned about research methods and violence against women simultaneously in order to develop and test hypotheses. At the end of the course, students had an opportunity to present their findings to Ginger and Brooke. Each student then submitted a manuscript describing findings; the best of those manuscripts were then delivered to our partners.

While I hope the student products will be useful to



DU STUDENTS FROM RESEARCH METHODS (PSYC 3050) PRESENT THEIR FINDINGS TO OUR PARTNERS.

service providers, the class project was certainly useful to students. In fact, we evaluated the impact of this partnership on student learning. Students completed several measures at the start and end of the class. Students showed statistically significant gains in their knowledge of research methods *and* violence against women. In addition, students showed significant gains in their beliefs that they could do research that is relevant to community issues. This suggests that traditional, disciplinary courses (such as Research Methods) can provide an avenue to educate students about issues of violence as well as show students that the content from their classes is relevant to making a difference in their communities.

**Thank you to our partners for making this learning possible!**



## TSS Group Achievements

**Courtney Mitchell** received a dissertation fellowship from the University of Denver to support her research on how people process information (such as in public service announcements) about violence. Courtney also presented a poster (with co-authors Dr. D. McIntosh and Anne) at the 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Nebraska Symposium on Motivation, which focused on issues related to memory and trauma.

**Anne DePrince** participated on an expert working panel at the Centers for Disease Control on future directions for research and policy based on the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACES).

**Anne DePrince** and **Susan Buckingham** presented new research from the Triage Project at the National Institute of Justice Conference in June. Look for more on these important findings soon!



ANNE PRESENTS DATA FROM THE TRIAGE PROJECT AT THE NIJ CONFERENCE IN JUNE.

**HOT OFF THE PRESSES:** Our manuscript describing the development of the **Trauma Appraisal Questionnaire** is available online! As some of you may recall, this was one of our first projects in Denver. We interviewed more than 180 adult survivors of diverse traumatic experiences and collected survey data from several hundred participants to develop and refine a measure that assesses 6 posttraumatic reactions (fear, anger, shame, self-blame, betrayal, and alienation). Please check out this article at <http://mysite.du.edu/~adeprinc/pub.html>. Thank you for your support of our early work!





## Factors associated with Revictimization: Updates from the Denver Triage Project.

*Ryan Matlow, MA, 3<sup>rd</sup> year Graduate Student*

Many studies have documented that girls and women exposed to interpersonal violence are at risk for future victimization (Classen, 2005; Marx et al., 2005). However, we know little about the processes that increase this risk. In the TSS Group, we continue to investigate factors that are associated with exposure to multiple incidents of interpersonal violence, a phenomenon known as revictimization.

Improving our understanding of factors linked to multiple exposures of interpersonal violence (versus a single exposure) may be of critical value to intervention and violence prevention efforts. While offenders are always responsible for their abusive actions, understanding more about factors that increase girls' and women's risk for future victimization opens avenues for empowerment-oriented interventions with girls and women.

One of our efforts to understand revictimization risk involves using information gathered from the Triage Project. As part of the Triage Project, women were recruited shortly after exposure to an incident of police-reported intimate partner abuse (IPA) and interviewed three times over a one-year period). Within the Triage Project, we have started to examine factors that contribute to women's decisions to stay or leave abusive relationships. To the extent that staying in an abusive relationship may correspond to additional experiences of abuse and violence, this topic is relevant to the TSS Group's interest in revictimization.

In a paper that will be presented at the upcoming annual convention of the Association of Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (November 2010, San Francisco, CA), we examined the impact of several contextual and individual factors on women's readiness to leave the relationship with their abuser. Readiness to leave a relationship was defined according to the Transtheoretical Model of Stages of Change (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982, 1983) and was assessed one year after women were recruited into the Triage Project.

Preliminary analyses suggest that the number of children that women had in common with the offender was negatively related to readiness to leave the relationship. That is, as the number of children went up, women's reports of readiness to leave the relationships decreased. This finding may suggest that contextual factors involving economic or legal constraints related to having children with the offender increase risk for continued abuse in relationships.

In terms of individual factors, women's appraisals of the original IPA incident were positively associated with readiness to leave the relationship. Specifically, higher levels of reported fear during the original incident were associated with greater readiness to leave the relationships one year later. This finding suggests that cognitive appraisals about IPA (particularly fear) may have an impact on women's decisions to stay or leave an abusive relationship.

Future research in the TSS Group will continue to examine the impact of diverse contextual and individual (e.g., cognitive) factors on women's decisions about relationships. We are currently developing a study which will examine specific attention processes in relation to risk for revictimization. Previous research hypothesizes that specific patterns of attention may be related to revictimization risk (see Marx et al., 2005). For example, if victims/survivors are less likely to identify potentially threatening information as dangerous, they may be at increased risk for revictimization. In this case, an offender who notices that some women attend less to danger cues may be more likely to target those women.

In addition, women who do not detect potential threats in her environment have less information with which to make decisions. Further, attempts to avoid paying attention to negative relationship information may also be related to revictimization, particularly in the context of an ongoing, abusive relationship. In such relationships, women may avoid focusing on negative relationship information,

*Revictimization*, continued p. 4

From *Revictimization*, page 3

instead focus on positive or neutral information, in order to maintain an economically-, legally-, or emotionally- necessary (but abusive) attachment. Indeed, the use of coping strategies involving avoidance is associated with high rates of physical violence in relationships (Mitchell & Hodson, 1983).

In our upcoming study, we will measure attentional patterns relevant to risk detection and avoidance among women with histories of IPA. In collaboration with Dr. Rob Roberts (an attention expert at DU), we will use eye movement monitoring technology to measure attention processes as women view information about male-female relationships. This eye tracking technology allows us to look at how and to what women pay attention as they make decisions about relationship information. Thus, we plan to use a new application of eye tracking technology to measure the risk detection and avoidance processes that are thought to be linked to risk for revictimization.

We hope that the information gathered from this study will be helpful to practitioners working with victims of IPA by improving understanding of the cognitive processes associated with revictimization. With such information, empowerment-oriented interventions can focus on helping IPA victims/survivors to develop strategies for noticing and responding to potential danger.



### References

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## Information on the Healthy Adolescent Relationships Project (HARP)

We are pleased to invite teen girls (ages 12-19) who have come to the attention of the child welfare system to participate in the HARP study.

What are the potential benefits for teens who participate in this study?

- Teens participate in a prevention group at no cost.
- Food will be provided during group meetings.

Are teens compensated for their time?

- Teens receive \$40/research evaluation for up to 4 research evaluations (up to \$160 total).

What about transportation?

- Study activities take place at DU. DU is accessible by light rail and multiple bus routes (e.g., 21,24).
- Teens receive \$10/appointment to offset transportation costs.

For more information:

- Call 303.871.4103 or email [harp@du.edu](mailto:harp@du.edu).
- To download study flyers, please visit: <http://mysite.du.edu/~adeprinc/study.html>

# Family Health Study

For Latina or Hispanic mothers  
with at least one child between  
the ages of 8-12.

We are studying how stress affects Latino families.

The study lasts 2 hours.

You will receive \$20 cash for your participation.

Call (303) 871-7407  
for more information.



*Study conducted in the DU Psychology Department under the direction of Anne P. DePrince, Ph.D. This study was approved by the University of Denver Internal Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects on March 8, 2010.*

# Estudio de la Salud de la Familia

Para las madres latinas o hispanas que tienen por lo menos un hijo/a entre las edades de 8 a 12 años.

Estamos investigando el impacto del estrés en las familias latinas o hispanas.

El estudio dura 2 horas.

Usted recibirá \$20 por su participación.

Llame al (303) 871-7407 para mas información.



*El estudio esta conducido por la Universidad de Denver y dirigido por la Dra. Anne P. DePrince, Ph.D. Este investigación fue aprobado por la Universidad de Denver Internal Review Board para la Protección de los Sujetos Humanos en 8 de Marzo 2010.*

Interested in participating in a study about the brain,  
attention, and memory?

All Participants will be compensated!!



We are conducting a brain imaging study (called  
fMRI) to see how stressful events affect attention  
and memory.

**Contact Kristen Mackiewicz via e-mail @  
cubrainstudy@gmail.com or phone (303) 735-5421**

Female participants aged 22-30 wanted for a study examining brain activity while you pay attention to pictures and words. We are looking for female participants who either have or have not experienced very stressful events in childhood, such as child abuse. The study will take place on the Fitzsimmons campus of the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center in Aurora. The study involves up to 2 sessions (2.5 hours each). Individuals will be paid for their participation. Principal Investigator: Marie Banich, Ph.D., Protocol No. 04-0809

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See <http://mysite.du.edu/~adeprinc/cubrainstudy.pdf> for a copy of this flyer.