

A quarterly newsletter for our community partners

Research Notes



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Hot Off the Presses!

Several papers have been recently published by the TSS Group, which we are pleased to highlight here. As always, please visit our [website](#) to access full-text articles or email anne.deprince@du.edu if you can't find what you're looking for.

Learning more from the Triage Project about intimate partner abuse (IPA):

Building on all we have learned from the Triage Project over the years, Claire Hebenstreit led a team of co-authors to take a close look at women's reports of PTSD symptoms after police-reported intimate partner abuse (IPA). We discovered that women's reports of PTSD symptoms fell into 5 groups: High Hypervigilance (17%); Intermediate Symptom (16%); Intermediate Symptom with High Hypervigilance (11%); and High Symptom (10%). Connecting to other research our team has done on appraisals, we found that women who reported high levels of alienation related to the abuse also reported the most serious PTSD symptoms. It's important to keep in mind that women in this sample were not necessarily seeking counseling for PTSD symptoms; thus, these data give us a picture of PTSD symptoms more generally following police-reported IPA and not specifically when women seek treatment.

Citation: Hebenstreit, C. L., Maguen, S., Koo, K. H., DePrince, A. P. (2015). Latent profiles of PTSD symptoms in women exposed to intimate partner violence. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 180*, 122-128.
doi: <http://0-dx.doi.org.bianca.penlib.du.edu/10.1016/j.jad.2015.03.047>.

From this same Triage Project, Ryan Matlow led efforts to identify factors that predict women's stay-leave decisions following police-reported IPA. Looking closely at the reports of 177 women from the first Triage interview to the last interview (one year later), women varied in their decision making regarding their relationship with the offender. A year later, 20% of women were still in a relationship with the offender and not planning to leave in the next 6 months; 3% were still in a relationship, but considering leaving in the next 6 months; 3% were planning to leave in the next 30 days; 19% had left the relationship in the previous 6 months; and 54% had left the relationship more than 6 months ago. Women who reported greater fear and stalking at the first interview were more likely to be leaving/have left the

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relationship. However, women who reported greater shame and who were more dependent on the offender were less likely to be leaving. This research points to the importance of thinking about psychological factors, such as addressing women's feelings of shame, as well as resources, such as decreasing women's dependence, in considering stay-leave decision-making.

Citation: Matlow, R. B., & DePrince, A. P. (2015). The impact of appraisals and context on readiness to leave relationships following intimate partner abuse. *Violence Against Women, 21*, 1043-1064. doi: 10.1177/1077801215590668.

Learning more about older adults, trauma research, and ethics:

This study built on our research group's focus on the ethics of conducting trauma-focused research. Recognizing the urgent need for trauma-focused research on older adult abuse, neglect, and/or financial exploitation, we assessed older adults' perceptions of the benefits and costs of participating in such research. As we have demonstrated with other trauma-exposed groups (e.g., women exposed to domestic violence, teens from the child welfare system), this study documented positive benefit-to-cost ratios for a research protocol that asked about current and past traumatic experiences.

Gagnon, K., DePrince, A. P., Srinivas, T., & Hasche, L. (2015). Perceptions of participation in trauma research among older adults. *Traumatology, 21*, 237-243. doi: 10.1177/1077801215590668.

Learning more about appraisals of the trauma:

This study built on our research group's focus on appraisals – that is, the ways that people describe their thoughts and feelings following traumas. The Trauma Appraisal Questionnaire (TAQ), which we developed in the TSS Group, was translated into Dutch and administered by Dr. Huntjens to participants diagnosed with Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) or PTSD (as well as participants not exposed to trauma). Building on findings from our group, this study revealed that participants diagnosed with DID reported greater alienation than participants diagnosed with PTSD. These findings suggest that alienation may be particularly important to consider with clients reporting dissociation symptoms.

DePrince, A. P., Huntjens, R. J. C., & Dorahy, M. J. (2015). Alienation appraisals distinguish adults diagnosed with DID from PTSD. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy, 7*, 578-582. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/tra0000069>.

Continuing our group's systematic study of appraisals, Tejas Srinivas led a team of co-authors to examine adolescent girls' appraisals of trauma experiences. Girls who had come to the attention of the child welfare system were recruited into the Healthy Adolescent Relationship Project (HARP). Replicating what we have seen with adults, adolescents' reports of alienation were linked with more severe posttraumatic stress, dissociation, and depression symptoms. Shame was also linked with posttraumatic stress symptoms. These findings point to the importance of the ways adolescents make sense of their trauma experiences for understanding the kinds and severity of mental health symptoms they experience.

Srinivas, T., DePrince, A. P., & Chu, A. T. (2015). Links between posttrauma appraisals and trauma-related distress in adolescent females from the child welfare system. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 47*, 14-23. doi: <http://dx.doi.org.bianca.penlib.du.edu/10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.05.011>.



Anne with Stephanie Schooley, Executive Director of Campus Compact of the Mountain West, at the national Campus Compact conference in March.



Director's Notes

Anne P. DePrince, Ph.D.

What better time for a winter/spring combination newsletter than the snowy days of spring? Here are some updates on ongoing projects:

Women's Health Project. We enrolled 228 women into the Women's Health Project, a research study focused on understanding what kinds of social reactions women receive after sexual assault. Thank you to all who helped get the word out about this project and referred potential participants – along with special thanks to Michelle Spradling and the Sexual Assault Interagency Council (SAIC) for your tireless partnership. Between now and the end of the year, we will finish follow-up interviews with women. Look for findings from this project over the next year or two!

Legal Wrap Around Project. We are continuing our work with our collaborators at [Rocky Mountain Victim Law Center](#) (RMVlc) and the Steering Committee for the Denver Legal Wrap Around Project to research the impact of LINC, the Legal Information Network of Colorado.

Denver Older Adult Research (OAR) Project. Working closely with colleagues from the Denver Forensic Collaborative – particularly in the City Attorney's Office, District Attorney's Office, Denver Police Department, and Adult Protective Services – we continue to invite older adults at risk for abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation to participate in the OAR Project. We hope this research will help identify resources and support that can help older adults.

Campus Sexual Assault. We have started a new project in collaboration with the Title IX Working Group of the Sexual Assault Interagency Council (SAIC). This project examines the development of a multidisciplinary group addressing the complicated landscape for criminal justice and campus-based professionals following campus sexual assault.

We look forward to updating you on new findings in the next issue of this newsletter! As always, thank you for all you do to service victims and survivors as well as for the opportunity to collaborate.

TSS Group Accomplishments

Anne DePrince was presented with the Thomas Ehrlich Civically Engaged Faculty Award by [Campus Compact](#) at their national conference in Boston in March.

Michelle Lee (3rd year) received the Inclusive Excellence Fellowship from the University of Denver.

Tejas Srinivas (6th year) received the Dissertation Fellowship from the University of Denver. She was also selected for the Dalmas A. Taylor Summer Minority Policy Fellowship from the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues.

We are delighted to welcome **Naomi Wright** to our research team next year as a graduate student in the Child Clinical Doctoral Program! Check back in the Fall to meet Naomi!

Two terrific research assistants will be moving on to new academic programs. This fall, **Gemma Wilson** will begin law school at Lewis & Clark University and **Patrick Robinson** will attend a masters program in experimental psychology at Wake Forest University. Congratulations! We thank them for their contributions to our group.