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Masculinity and Masculine Gender Role Stress as Predictors of Trauma Disclosure and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Purpose

- The purpose of this study was to assess the relationship between Masculinity, Masculine Gender Role Stress and Negative Disclosure Expectations as predictors of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- PTSD is an anxiety disorder that can develop following a traumatic event.
- Trauma:
 - Threat of death or physical injury
 - Intense fear, helplessness, horror
- Symptoms:
 - Intrusive Recollection
 - Avoidance/numbing
 - Hyper-arousal
 - More than 1 month
 - Distress/impairment in functioning (occupational, social, etc.)

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- Trauma doesn't usually lead to PTSD
 - Over half the population experiences at least one traumatic event in their lifetime. (Kessler, Sonnega, Bromet, Hughes, & Nelson, 1995).
 - Less than 10% of the population experiences PTSD (National Comorbidity Survey, 2005)

What factors lead to the development of PTSD?

Risk Factors

- Predictors of PTSD:
 - Static/historical: Family psychological history, intelligence, childhood trauma, previous trauma
 - Trauma Severity
 - Psychological processes during and after the trauma
 - **Social support** and stress following event
(Ozer & Weiss, 2004); (Brewin, Andrews, & Valentine, 2000)

Disclosure and Social Support

- Social support and disclosure are strong predictors of resilience to PTSD
 - More positive response to trauma
- Lack of social support and unwillingness to disclose put people at a higher risk for PTSD.

(Frazier et al. , 2011)

Disclosure Expectations

What might inhibit disclosure?

- Lack of social support
- Fear of being misunderstood or blamed
- Traditional masculine gender socialization
 - Less help-seeking
 - Difficulty addressing emotional content
(Lorber, 2010)

Masculine Gender Role Stress (MGRS)

- Stress experienced with violation of masculine gender norms
 - Situations requiring “feminine” behavior
 - Situations where person is unable to cope/behave in traditionally masculine way
- (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987)
- Note: Gender norms can exist irrespective of sex. **Females can experience MGRS** if they identify with masculine characteristics.

Hypothesis

- MGRS will be predictive of negative disclosure expectations.
- MGRS will predict negative disclosure expectations even after trait masculinity is statistically controlled in analyses.

Participants

- UW undergrads – mass testing
- Screened for trauma
- Those who qualified were invited to participate in a second on-line study.
 - 204 qualified, 133 participated
- All participants remained anonymous and signed a consent form.
- All students participated in exchange for course credit.

Participants (continued)

- Of the 133 participants
 - 71.4% female
 - 28.6% male

 - 97% Caucasian
 - 2.3% African American
 - 0.7% "Unknown"

 - mean age was 21.13

Procedure

- In the second-phase study the 133 participants were directed to an anonymous online survey in which they filled out several questionnaires:
 - Matching form (to keep track of participants anonymously)
 - Demographics
 - Depression inventory (PHQ-9)
 - PTSD Check-List (PCL)
 - Disclosure Expectations Inventory (both positive and negative)
 - Post-Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI)
 - Sex Role Inventory (BSRI)
 - Masculine Gender Role Stress Inventory (MGRS)

Methods

- All measures scored
- Zero-order correlations among study variables were calculated
- Hierarchical regressions were conducted to assess the relative contributions of trait masculinity and MGRS in prediction of trauma disclosure expectations

Results: Correlations

	Depression	PTSD	Negative Disclosure Expectations	Post-Traumatic Growth
MGRS				
Correlation	.185*	.175*	.327**	-.044
Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	.044	.000	.612

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Results: Hypothesis 1

Hierarchical Regression of Masculinity Variables on Negative Disclosure				
Variables	B	β	R-squared	Sig.
Trait Masculinity	-2.409	-.183	.028	.052*
MGRS + Masculinity	.139	.327	.141	.000**

Results

- Does MGRS predict negative disclosure expectations?
 - Yes
- Do Masculinity and MGRS predict more negative disclosure expectations?
 - Yes
 - The variance of negative disclosure is accounted for 3% by masculinity alone but 14% with MGRS and masculinity.

Implications

- MGRS and masculinity are predictive of negative disclosure. What do we do with that information?
 - Intervention to deal with MGRS and disclosure apprehension before beginning treatment for PTSD
 - Without these apprehensions, treatment can be more effective.

Limitations

- Sample
 - Undergraduate convenience sample
 - Generalize to clinical samples?