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Examining the Use of Faith Based Therapies to Manage PTSD Symptoms among College Students

Abstract

Lehmann & Steele (2020) report that trauma is connected to physiological, psychological, and interpersonal outcomes. The trauma that transpires can affect one's stance with their religion and spirituality, (Aten et al., 2019).

Literature Review

- College students have been reported to have serious mental challenges during the pandemic due to quarantine (Liao et al., 2020).
- Challenges include Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS) and delayed-onset PTSD (Liao et al., 2020).
- Persons who experience severe distress over a lengthy period (more than a month) from PTS symptoms can develop posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Lehmann & Steele, 2020). One of the groups that have experienced significant life-altering events is college students.



Literature Review

- Sherman, Usset, Voecks, and Harris (2018) conducted a study examining the intersectionality of trauma, spirituality, and the impacts of trauma/PTSD on partners and intimate relationships. They found four core themes including the role of religion/spirituality in veteran coping with trauma/PTSD though a limitation of the study was a lack of comparative research.

Literature Review

Aten et al. Hill (2019) conducted a systematic review to synthesize the existing empirical psychology of religion/spirituality and disaster research and offer a prospectus for future research, (Aten et al., 2019).

The authors found several emerging patterns within their review including a minimum threshold must be reached to access Religion/Spirituality (R/S) resources, religious appraisal varies and is dependent on the level of stress and type of disaster, and R/S brings about positive outcomes for disaster survivors, (Aten et al., 2019).

Literature Review

- Lehman & Steele (2020) conducted a study examining the correlation between PTS and Perceived Posttraumatic Growth (PPTG). Their findings were that Active Surrender, Religious purification/forgiveness, and religious direction/ conversion were all associated positively with decreased PTS.
- Zukerman, Korn, and Fostic (2017) conducted a study utilizing the qualitative self-report method. The authors did this study because they realized that men and women cope differently with regards to their religion. Their findings were that higher levels of negative religious coping were associated with higher levels of PTS symptoms.

Rationale

- The objective of this study is to find out if Active Surrender is the most common coping strategy among college students managing symptoms following a traumatic event. Knowing that it is difficult to understand the depth of religion and spirituality that individuals may use to cope in some way, I chose to conduct in-depth interviews to understand the nuances.
- My second objective is that college students who have some level of PTSD and R/S will have a unique kind of religious appraisal and experience more positive factors due to their faith.

Measures

- PTSD Check List (PCL-5) – used to screen participants selecting those who have moderate to high levels of PTS
- Interview questions will be adapted from the following:
 - World Assumption Scale (WAS) (Kaler et al., 2009)
 - Brief Religious Coping Scale (RCOPE) (Pargament et al., 2011)

Expected Results

I expect to find that participants who report lower PTS symptoms will use Active Surrender as a coping strategy.

I hope to discover a coping strategy not previously stated in the research that is different college students.

Limitations

No control
group

Use of self-
report
questionnaires

References

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