

Attending residential schools among aboriginal people: ptsd



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Psychological Traumas of attending residential schools among aboriginal people

Outline

Introduction:

- Percentage of Indian Residential school students experienced abuse and maltreatment
- Psychological disorder IRS survivors frequently diagnosed with: Post traumatic stress disorder, residential syndrome, and historic trauma.

Body:

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD):

- PTSD affect patients by several aspects: physical, physiological, mental, and spiritual.
- Defense mechanism of PTSD patients
- How the defense mechanism affect their relationship with family and daily life (inability to make decisions)

Residential school syndrome (RSS):

- Definition of RSS
- Symptoms of RSS
- RSS affect intergeneration

Historic trauma

- Definition of HT

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- Symptoms of HT
- Difference between HT and RSS

IRS survivors suffer more pain than other aboriginal people?

- Some IRS survivors did not experience abuse while native people in reserve suffer from no freedom and abuse
- Only little part of IRS survivors did not experience maltreatment, most of them suffer from no freedom, maltreatment and depression.

Conclusion

- Experiences of IRS survivors lead to various mental problems which come with them the lifetime
- Those mental problems would affect intergenerational transmission which would contribute to a vicious cycle
- To heal IRS survivors, first of all, we need to provide an environment with respect and no discrimination

Introduction

Indian Residential schools (IRS) are notoriously known as isolating and assimilating native people in Canada during 1800s to 1996. According to Robertson, a study of IRS attendee in British Columbia in 1991 indicated that 48% of former students had come across sexual abuse, 32% of them refused to answer, only a few of them claimed that they did not experience any abuse (2006). Along with the last residential school closed at 1996, the last cluster of students left the school and the government undertook the responsibilities of IRS, however, what had happened in IRS were irreversible. The experiences undergone in IRS were detrimental to those school

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attendee. The majority of IRS students were enduring psychological problems: post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), residential school syndrome (RSS), and historic trauma (Robertson, 2006).

Post-traumatic stress disorder

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was the most common diagnosis in former IRS students, stood for approximately 64%. Symptoms of PTSD is partially similar to RSS but PTSD would influence not only psychological aspect, but also physically, emotionally, physiologically, and spiritually torture a PTSD patient. According to Sochting, Corrado, et al, the majority of IRS students conformed to the symptoms of complex PTSD: “ impairment in regulating affective impulses, in particular, anger directed at both self and others, chronic self-destructive behaviors, such as self-mutilation, eating disorder, or substance abuse”. Some of IRS survivors also indicated that they had a chronic headache, heart problem, and arthritis (2007). Additionally, they would develop defense mechanisms to protect themselves not to experience the tragedy again, such as suppression, inability to express or acknowledge their feelings, and stopping mechanism. Suppression is a mechanism that would contribute to gap memories and patients would become apartness and inferior; and stopping mechanism is shutting off their feeling or bodily functions related to the experiences in IRS (Chansonneuve, 2005). These mechanisms affect PTSD patients in various ways, for example, their relationship with other: a female IRS survivor elaborated how she hurt her children because of lacking empathy after traumatized, she anticipated her children to be perfect, all the things had to be done in a particular way and time, which was the same way she was used to be taught. One of her <https://assignbuster.com/attending-residential-schools-among-aboriginal-people-ptsd/>

children suffered from anorexia later which is a disorder that people is losing appetency to eat and drink (Grant, 1996). On the other hand, their apartness contributes to their inability to decide as they also did not have a chance to make decisions. Approximately all the IRS students cannot make alternatives except as one of the alternative is good for them straightly.

Residential School Syndrome (RSS)

The Residential School Syndrome (RSS) is the one of the consequence after the feeling of indigenous children had been tried to close off and maltreated. (Grant, 1996). According to Robertson, some expert claimed that RRS was one type of PTSD, but Charles Brasfield defined RSS's standard and recognized several differences between these two disorders. On the other hand, there were not many RRS patients were diagnosed RSS, 6. 3% of former students were diagnosed in a sampling survey in British Columbia. However, the symptoms of RRS is severe.

The symptoms of RSS are as follow:

1. Addiction of drugs or alcohols at an early age and always with anger;
2. depreciation on dominant cultural activities;
3. undergone a panic IRS school experience or related to a person who used to be an IRS student;
4. the attitude to IRS is passive, anxious, angry, and unassisted;
5. Keep dreaming the lives in IRS and tendency to feel the scenario in IRS reappear again;
6. Feel extremely dismayed when stimulate by something or someone can remind them of their memories in IRS (2006).

Besides, the patients' tendency to get angry easily causes much physical abuse, their arousal sometimes lead to family violence. After long-time basis, the violence would affect generation by generation. Their next generation may also suffer from RSS (Robertson, 2006).

Historic Traumas

Historic trauma (HT), is defined as “ spiritual imbalance” and “ cumulative emotional psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generation”. Besides, HT is suggested for indigenous people as they had experienced genocide through IRS (Robertson, 2006). According to Robertson, IRS students diagnosed with HT always with those symptoms: depression, self-destructive behavior, the tendency to suicide, anxiety, inferiority, wage, and lacking emotional intelligence. The historical trauma would deliver to the next generation which is a mechanism of HT as the trauma had been ingrained in the culture and people's memories. And people in the next generation would also underlie the thought of being lessness. On the other hand, some might say that RRS is similar with HT. However, these two are focused on two different aspects: RRS is focused on the individuals' psychological aspect while HT is focused on the how the cultures affect by the trauma and how people in the communities be affected (2006).

IRS students suffering more pain than other aboriginal people?

Some may say other aboriginal people also experienced a tough time in reserve, IRS survivors did not experience more pain than other aboriginal people (Robertson, 2006). Virtually, some of former IRS students were living well without problems and aboriginal people in reserves were also
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undergone abuse and had the tendency to suicide. However, those were a rare part of people that did not experience maltreat or abuse in IRS and aboriginal people in the reserve did not suffer from the chronic stress (Elias et al, 2012). IRS survivors also lost their ability to learn and express feeling, while native people in reserve were not (Grant, 1996).

Conclusion

Indigenous people undergone a tragedy in IRS and these memories contributed to various problems on them, especially mental problems which cannot be erased and like a shadow following with their whole life. Although the IRS era had gone, we still can see the effect of IRS on generations. The majority of IRS survivors had diagnosed more than one psychological disorder, and most of them were alcoholic. Alcoholic parents may make their children feel shame while their children may also suffer from maltreatment. When the children grow up, they would know their culture was not being accepted in nowadays dominant culture and they would start drinking and suffer from historical traumas (Grant, 1996). Obviously, this is a vicious cycle but it is exactly what happening right now in the society. Fortunately, there is various way to heal with IRS survivors, such as their culture, language loss, and their mental health can be fixed but it does take a long time. But in the first place, we need to provide a “safe, confidential environment” with respect and no discrimination (Chansonneuve, 2005).

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