

Peter Christensen Health Center News



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Trauma Can Impact Many Generations Later

July is Minority Mental Health Month. Many factors impact the mental and physical well-being of different groups. Historic and intergenerational trauma can affect families for generations. In other words, something that happened hundreds of years ago could be why you feel a certain way today. The more you know, the more power you have to find culturally-informed sources of support and treatment from your healthcare team.

What You Need To Know*

Historical trauma: The psychological effects of forced relocation, assimilation, and other traumas inflicted on Indigenous People linger today. Indigenous People are confronting the trauma, learning the accurate history, and reconnecting with Indigenous spiritual practices and culture to assist the healing journey—but continuing discrimination and ongoing trauma hinder that progress.

Intergenerational trauma: The intergenerational and unconscious grief from the historical trauma experienced by Indigenous People is passed from generation to generation due to forced relocation, land dispossession, and loss of spiritual practices, language and culture. If not addressed and identified accurately, depression, anxiety, PTSD, and substance use can be outward signs of the intergenerational trauma and unresolved historical grief.

Racism, racial bias, discrimination: Racial and ethnic minority populations, including Indigenous People, often experience negative social factors such as bias and discrimination that contribute to poor physical and mental health.

- Institutional racism limits access to quality education, safe housing, gainful employment, healthcare, and a clean environment.

Racism, racial bias, discrimination *continued*

- Low socioeconomic status (SES): Indigenous People tend to have disproportionately low socioeconomic status, as determined by education, income, and occupation. Low SES has been significantly associated with a higher risk for mental and physical illness.

Geographic challenges: Many Indigenous People live in urban centers. They may have relocated for economic opportunities, but in the process may lose cultural strength that comes from connection to the land. This may contribute to limited resources for healthcare, mental health, education, and employment.

Difficulties integrating traditional and modern lifestyle: Indigenous People may struggle to achieve comfortable balance between tribal traditions and demands of contemporary life.

Lack of culturally appropriate diagnoses and treatments: Diagnoses such as PTSD have been found to be relevant, but inadequate for capturing the scope of responses to historical trauma experienced by Indigenous People. There's a need to develop appropriate culturally-based trauma theory and interventions for Indigenous People.

Please contact your PCHC healthcare team at [\(715\) 588-3371](tel:7155883371) to learn how to access culturally-informed healthcare.

**Source: American Psychiatric Association*