

Explorations – The Journal of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship and Creativity at Wright State

Volume 1

Issue 1 *Summer Undergraduate Research, Scholarship and Creative Activities Issue 2012*

Article 3

2012

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Recommended Citation

Gaige, N., & Bhandari, S. (2012). Coping Strategies Utilized by South Asian Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence, *Explorations – The Journal of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship and Creativity at Wright State*, 1 (1).

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Coping Strategies Utilized By South Asian Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence

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Introduction

This study is based upon South Asian women who have or who are currently suffering from intimate partner violence who now currently live in America. This study focuses on each individual woman's story and is analyzed to find common themes between all the participants to see if there are certain coping strategies used specifically by this particular group. All participants are from South Asian, which includes the countries of India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan.

Participants are from the Greater Cincinnati and Dayton area. Information was given to certain domestic violence shelters in this area, who then ask potential participants that fit the requirements of the study if they would be willing to participate in this study. The area included in finding potential participants is trying to be expanded to specific stores that have a higher population of South Asian immigrant women. This study is currently on going and will hopefully help plan a program or agency that can better provide the services for South Asian women who are involved in intimate partner violence.

Methods

This study starts with first collecting participants one at a time. This comes from agencies that have been recruited throughout the Greater Cincinnati and Dayton area to ask clients there that meet the qualifications for the study if they would like to participate. Once the client agrees that they might be interested in participating the agency asks for the most convenient time would be for the researcher to call them.

Participants go through a one-time interview that can last anywhere between ninety to one hundred and twenty minutes. This is an all inclusive interview. There is an interview guide of questions that need to be covered during the interview, but the interview is free range where the participant can talk about anything they need to talk about during the interview involving their intimate partner violence. The interview covers any significant abuse that occurred during the relationship, important dates including date of marriage, divorce, roughly when the abuse began occurring in the relationship, and births of children (if any) during the relationship.

Interviews can be held either in person or over the telephone. They occur at a time and place that is most convenient for the participant. Before the interview begins, the researcher reads a consent form in the presence of a witness. In the consent form it includes that the interview will be recorded as long as the participant is okay with that occurring. If the participant is not comfortable with the interview being recorded, then the researcher takes extensive notes and tries to put together as much of a transcription from memory as possible. The consent form also talks about confidentiality, which says that anything said in the interview will be kept private and the participants will remain anonymous in publication. When the interview is complete, the recording goes to be transcribed. Transcription is a typed out copy of the recording that can then be taken and analyzed. Once an interview has been transcribed then it is analyzed for possible themes occurring within each individual interview and then between all the interviews as a whole. To transcribe a recording, the use of NCH software is used. The specific name of the NCH software is Express Scribe, which allows the user to speed up or slow down the speech of the recording. This is traditionally done with the use of a foot pedal, but can also be done by typing certain commands into the computer. The use of Express Scribe also allows that when the speed of the speech is changed, the quality of sound stays the same. This function allows for minimal mistakes to be made in the transcribing process, so that the transcription is as accurate as possible before moving to data analysis.

Discussion

With an ongoing study, there is not a huge amount of information that has not been collected yet. There have been issues with this study. The biggest issue with this study is finding the participants. The South Asian immigrant population in the Greater Cincinnati and Dayton area is small. The small population makes it difficult to find people who are willing to participate in this study. Because the population size is so small, the researcher is trying to find a way into expanding the field where to find most potential participants.

Coinciding with this issue is that with the South Asian community, women are raised to be quiet and keep their private lives private. This causes South Asian women who are suffering from intimate partner violence from either never seeking help, meaning they cannot come participant in our study, or even though they have sought help through a shelter or agency, talking about their experiences with intimate

partner violence for a study may not be the best option. They may be afraid, that even though the interview is confidential and no personal information will be published about them, they need to keep everything private and to themselves, minus who they need to speak with to help get them away from their abusive partner.

The slow flow of participants makes the research slow down. Data analysis of the interviews can go only as fast as the flow of participants and interviews that take place. There needs to be a minimum of fifteen participants for this study to be reliable in their results.

Results

Based on the current progress of the research, there are not many results to this study. The study is just beginning analysis on transcriptions of interviews. So far, one common theme seems to be faith, without one particular religion being predominant. There does not appear to be many differences in abuse patterns between love marriages and arranged marriages. The coping strategies between women who have suffered from intimate partner violence in a love marriage tend to differ from those women who have suffered from intimate partner violence in an arranged marriage.

Love marriages appear to focus more on the emotional side of coping strategies for reasons to stay with their partner longer during the abusive relationship. The women who were in love marriages seem to stay and make it through their abuse by focusing on their love for their partner. Women involved in arranged marriages seem to focus on their religion and both their family and their partner's family reaction to if they left their partner. Both appear to use religion as a coping strategy.

If the women have children during their marriage, they seem to use that as a coping strategy as well. They use the children as a reason to stay, because they want a father figure in their child's life.

Sometimes they will have children with their partner because they believe that having a child will end the abuse coming from their partner. Some do not have a choice in having children with their partner or not, because their partner wants them to have children. In this case, the children are usually used as reasons to stay with their partner or their inspiration to eventually leave their partners.

These results are not complete as not all participants have been gathered and interviewed. This study is currently ongoing. More research will be going into this study and more results will be added to this.