

TSS GROUP NEWS



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Director's Welcome

By Anne P. DePrince, Ph.D.

Welcome to our 2007 newsletter series. We anticipate bringing you TSS Group News four times per year to let you know about new research developments.

Over the last year, we have been very grateful for the collaboration and support of our many community partners in the Denver Metro area. We thank you for giving generously of your expertise and assistance. For example, many of you have provided us invaluable feedback on research questions and approaches as well as helped us get the word out about studies.

In the TSS Group, we understand that partnerships are two-way streets. In an effort to give back to our partners, we are very pleased to announce the launching of the **Denver Trauma Pages** – an electronic resource designed to keep professionals working with trauma-related issues

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informed of new research developments. We look forward to your feedback, including ways to make the Pages relevant to your work.

On behalf of the TSS Group, we look forward to finding ways to work with you. And we thank you for all of the work you do on behalf of victims and survivors of traumatic events.

Best regards,
Anne P. DePrince, Ph.D.

Director, TSS Group
Assistant Professor, University of Denver

Denver Trauma Pages Launched

By Anne P. DePrince, Ph.D.

We are delighted to announce the launch of the Denver Trauma Pages www.du.edu/psychology/traumapages, a website intended to serve as a resource for Denver-area professionals working on issues related to trauma and violence.

In 2005, the Traumatic Stress Studies Group www.du.edu/~adeprinc/lab.html partnered with the Victim Services Network www.vs2000.org to receive a grant from the University of Denver

Public Good Fund to support a one-day conference www.du.edu/~adeprinc/events.html and the initial development of a website to build bridges between service providers and researchers. This website is maintained by the TSS under the direction of Dr. Anne DePrince.



THE TSS GROUP WEBSITE HAS A NEW LOOK! PLEASE VISIT US AT:
www.du.edu/~adeprinc/lab.html

Trauma and Dissociation Scholar Visits from Belfast

By Rheena Pineda

Dr. **Martin J. Dorahy** (a Clinical and Research Psychologist at the Trauma Resource Centre and Research Tutor in the School of Psychology at The Queen's University of Belfast in Northern Ireland) recently visited the University of Denver and the TSS Group. Dr. Dorahy has extensive expertise in trauma and dissociation and has been a long-time collaborator and friend of the TSS Group. His visit was made possible with generous support from the DU's Marsico Visiting Scholar Program.

During his public lecture, "Northern Ireland: The History, the players and the hurdles towards a peaceful future", Dr. Dorahy provided the



Dr. Martin Dorahy speaks informally with TSS Group Research Assistants

"The power comes from...collaborations," Dr. Dorahy speaking on the importance of bridging science and practice.

audience with perspectives on the conflict in Northern Ireland through the lens of his role as a psychologist. Dorahy shared his first-hand observations of the impact of prolonged community violence on the mental health and political identity of communities in Belfast.

In an informal meeting with undergraduates working in the TSS Group, Dr. Dorahy emphasized the importance of bridging the gap between science and practice. According to Dr. Dorahy, "the power has come from these collaborations -- people working at different levels of understanding...if you bring them together you get much stronger, greater theories", which may then be applied to develop effective treatment and intervention programs.

TSS Group Achievements

By Rheena Pineda

Aimee Reichmann-Decker successfully defended her dissertation, "Effective Responsiveness and Victimization Status in Women" in November 2006. Dr. Reichmann-Decker will share details about her findings in a future issue of our newsletter.

Ann Chu received 2 graduate student research awards. Ann received the 2006 Student Research Award from the **International Society for Traumatic**

Stress Studies <www.istss.org>. This award is presented to Student Members "who submit proposals judged to have the greatest potential to contribute to the field of traumatic stress". Ann received the award at the ISTSS annual Meeting in Hollywood, California in November. She also received the 2006 David Caul Graduate Research Grant from the **International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation** <www.issd.org>.

Revictimization: Research and Future Directions

By Ann T. Chu, MA (with Introduction by Anne P. DePrince, Ph.D.)

INTRODUCTION: In this article, Ann Chu offers a glimpse into the growing body of research on revictimization. Through the TSS Group, we currently have several projects focused on understanding risk and protective factors in revictimization with the goal of applying this understanding to prevention efforts.

WHAT IS REVICTIMIZATION?

Experiencing multiple victimizations by different perpetrators.

HOW FREQUENT IS REVICTIMIZATION?

- 59% of women with victimization histories report assaults in *both* childhood and adulthood (Cloitre, 1998)
- Women with childhood abuse histories are 2.5 to 3 times more likely than women without childhood abuse histories to be assaulted in adulthood (Cloitre et al., 1996)
- An estimated 7,500 of the 550,000 children in foster care continue to be abused by various individuals in their lives (Roche, 2000)
- 3% of adults were victims of 73% of all the violent crimes in England and Wales (British Crime Survey)
- 5% of youths were victims of 63% of all the assault crimes in the US (United States National Youth Survey)
- When targeting one specific neighborhood, one study found that 43% of domestic violence incidents occurring over a 25-month period involved only ~7% of 1,450 households (National Institute of Justice)

WHY IS REVICTIMIZATION IMPORTANT?

The TSS Group and other researchers have found that revictimization is associated with more severe

and persistent mental health symptoms than single or no victimization. From mental health – as well as social justice perspectives – revictimization poses an incredibly important (and preventable) public health problem.

To improve prevention programs, we need additional information on risk and protective factors.

WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO RISK FOR REVICTIMIZATION??

Researchers have identified several factors that are related to revictimization, particularly in women. However, the correlational nature of most studies creates problems determining which variables actually *cause* increased risk. For example, the younger the child's age at time of first victimization, the greater the risk of revictimization (Office of Crime Victim Advocacy). Other research points to links between revictimization and closeness of the victim-perpetrator relationship in childhood, family factors, sexual attitudes and behaviors, social and interpersonal functioning, and feelings of shame, self blame and powerlessness (for a review, see Classen et al., 2005).

Our research group and others have found that revictimization is associated with changes in how information is processed, particularly information about risk. For example, sexually revictimized women take significantly longer to detect interpersonally threatening stimuli (known as risk detection; e.g., Marx et al., 2001). In order to

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Revictimization from page 3

improve prevention efforts, research on possible mechanisms that increase risk (such as risk detection) is urgently needed.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO PREVENT REVICTIMIZATION??

Several prevention programs have been designed to empower victims. For example, training programs designed to decrease repeated sexual assault have provided (usually female) participants with educational information about sexual assault risk factors and focused on increasing risk recognition and problem solving

skills while instilling confidence in handling risky situations (e.g., Hanson & Gidycz, 1993; Yeates & O'Donohue, 2002). Unfortunately, many programs have not been effective in reducing revictimization rates.

In the TSS Group, we view the disappointing performance of prevention programs as an indicator that additional research is needed. Only with better information about risk and protective factors can we improve prevention programs.

In response to the need to identify risk and protective factors in revictimization, TSS Group Launches a New Study

Electronic Resource Spotlight

By Ann T. Chu, MA and Anne P. DePrince, Ph.D.

We look forward to providing updated electronic resources for trauma and violence-related topics with each newsletter issue.

In light of this issue's focus on revictimization, we are pleased to highlight the **Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs** <www.wcsap.org> **Research and Advocacy Report on Revictimization**. For a copy of this report, see <www.wcsap.org/pdf/RAD%206-3.pdf>.

The Washington Coalition's Research and Advocacy Reports include a series of informative reports on a range of violence-related issues (e.g., sexual harassment, disabilities, run-away youth). For a broader listing of their reports, see <<http://www.wcsap.org/advocacy/ResearchAdvocacyDigest.htm>>

Announcing a New Study of Revictimization

By Ann T. Chu, MA

Beginning March 21, the TSS Group will invite women (ages 18–40) who experienced childhood abuse to participate in a study examining risk and protective factors for revictimization.

Participants will be invited to our research offices at the University of Denver for a 3-hour session. Participants will be asked to answer questionnaires as well as participate in several tasks (e.g., attention and memory games). Participants receive \$35 for participation. Free parking is available. Our offices are accessible by bus and light rail.

For more information, please contact Ann Chu (Project Coordinator) at 303.871.7407 or achu@du.edu.