

EXAMINING THE ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN MULTI-DIMENSIONAL FACETS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE AND POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER AMONG TRAUMA EXPOSED WOMEN

BACKGROUND



- Emotional abuse is the most prevalent form of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)
- Emotional abuse is described as using verbal communication or body language to intentionally control, humiliate, manipulate, or emotionally harm a current or former intimate partner

SUB-FACTORS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Several studies support the idea that emotional abuse is a multidimensional construct, encompassing four sub-factors:

- **Restrictive Engulfment:** directly attempting to isolate one's partner by restricting their social connections and activities outside of the relationship
- **Denigration:** behaviors aimed at humiliating or degrading one's partner
- **Hostile Withdrawal:** emotionally shutting oneself down as a way to punish one's partner
- **Domination/Intimidation:** directly attempting to elicit fear and submission from one's partner through aggressive behavior (e.g., verbal threats of bodily harm, destruction of property)

CURRENT STUDY

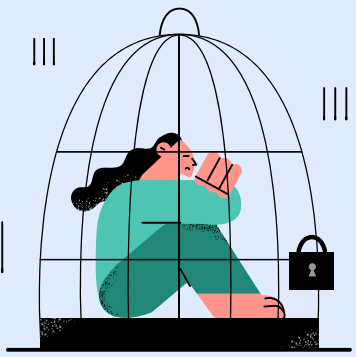
The current study examined the relationship between sub-factors of emotional abuse and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptom severity in the context of women experiencing intimate partner violence (IPV) in their current relationship.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE



- Women were in heterosexual relationships and experiencing IPV (N=141)
- Participants were interviewed about their relationship history
- Participants completed surveys to assess: Emotional abuse victimization & perpetration, PTSD symptom severity, and any type of IPV perpetration

RESULTS



- When statistically controlling for physical abuse, PTSD severity was positively associated with victimization of Restrictive Engulfment, Denigration, and Hostile Withdrawal
- Victimization of Restrictive Engulfment was the strongest predictor of PTSD severity as compared with other forms of emotional abuse
- *Perpetration and not victimization* of Dominance/Intimidation was associated with heightened PTSD severity
- For Hostile Withdrawal and Denigration the positive relationship between victimization and PTSD symptom severity occurred for women who did *not* perpetrate Hostile Withdrawal or Denigration themselves

CONCLUSIONS

- The impact of emotional abuse must be considered along side of physical abuse, and other trauma history
- Individuals who experience Restrictive Engulfment had the strongest association with PTSD symptom severity



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