Understanding Comorbid Depression in the Context of PTSD Through Underlying Dimensions

Date: April 18, 2019
Time: 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Place: Center for Trauma Recovery conference room

Abstract
Depression co-occurs with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder at a high rate, resulting in numerous complications for pathology and treatment. More research is needed regarding variables that may explain this common comorbidity. One possible variable is that of underlying dimensions, latent factors that give rise to these manifestations of psychopathology. This study explored potential underlying mechanisms of comorbid PTSD and depression, including negative affect, rumination, emotion dysregulation, neuroticism, and behavioral inhibition. While previous studies have investigated these dimensions individually, there is a dearth of research that simultaneously investigates multiple dimensions or determines the relative contributions of underlying dimensions to psychopathology. Thus, the current study aimed to analyze more comprehensively how underlying psychological constructs predict PTSD and depression. A sample of 717 adults answered an online questionnaire battery surveying symptoms of PTSD and depression as well as the proposed underlying constructs. The relationships between the underlying dimensions and psychopathology were analyzed using a number of statistical methods. Overall, these psychological and behavioral constructs were shown to be related to PTSD and depression, though the exact nature and strength of the relationship varied depending on psychological test. Negative affect, emotion dysregulation, and neuroticism emerged as the most significant predictors. Limitations and clinical implications are discussed.

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