

Psychological Resilience for South Asian females impacted by childhood sexual abuse



Nalin Bisnath, PhD
Toronto, Canada

Childhood sexual abuse (CSA) represents a pervasive global health and psychological concern. The complexity of CSA stems from variations in defining it, cultural perceptions of what constitutes CSA, and a lack of focused research on the subject, particularly in marginalized communities (Sanjeevi et al., 2018). CSA is deemed as traumatic according to Western psychological frameworks and it is estimated that 70% of individuals will experience a traumatic event. However, only 6% will develop mental health diagnoses, typically PTSD, therefore resilient outcomes are possible (Benjit et al., 2016; Bonanno, 2004).

Methodology: A mixed method intercultural study by Bisnath (2024), explored hope, spirituality/religiosity and community support as factors in the development of resilience for South Asian females impacted by CSA (individuals were from the South Asian diaspora and had immigrated to Ontario, Canada).

Findings: Hope, spirituality/religiosity contributed to the development of resilience and community support was deemed to be both a help and hindrance.

Implications: Since CSA is not geographically bound, identifying and promoting strategies within the individuals' social ecology can help with reducing stigma, encouraging disclosure and help with coping. Since Western centric frameworks tend to focus on individualistic ways of coping with traumatic events, protective factors within the culture can help with developing resilient outcomes (Raghavan & Sandanapitcahi, 2020; Ungar, 2013).

Biography:

Nalin Bisnath is a Registered Psychotherapist in Ontario and owner at Basanti Counseling where she provides psychotherapeutic services for individuals impacted by traumatic events. Her dissertation focused on the development of resilience for South Asian females impacted by childhood sexual abuse. Future research interests include the role of community in developing resilience, Indo-Caribbean perspectives on mental health, and mental health perceptions in the Caribbean and South Asia.