



Traditional Masculinity and Barriers to Help Seeking for Military Men with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

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Introduction

- The purpose of this study was to discover if expectations and attributes of traditional masculinity moderate the relationship between PTSD severity and male veterans' help seeking behavior.

- Research indicates that adherence to traditional masculine socialization shapes men in such a way that leads to barriers to help seeking for their mental health needs [1].

- Restrictive emotionality (RE) and messages taught to males starting from early ages of life encourage emotional control, self reliance, strength, and avoidance of emotions [2].

- These aspects of traditional masculinity are further exacerbated in military culture, an atmosphere associated with hypermasculinity and extreme emotional control [3].

Method

Participants: 42 male veterans with PTSD.

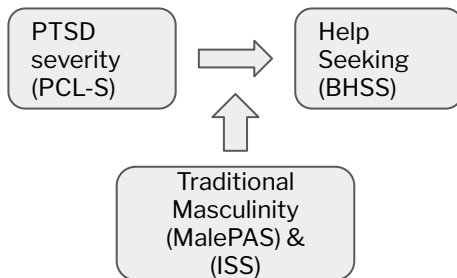
Assessments:

PCL-S: PTSD Checklist Scale; measures PTSD severity.

Male PAS: Measures veterans' desire to receive acceptance from male peers.

ISS: Independent Supportive Spouse Scale; measures perceived spouse support.

BHSS: Barriers to Help-Seeking Scale; measures perceptions of help-seeking barriers.



Results & Discussion

- A regression analysis was used to test the impact of PTSD severity and male peer acceptance on barriers to help-seeking.

- Although the model was significant ($R^2 = 0.255$, $F(3, 37) = 4.21$, $p = 0.012$) this was driven primarily by the relationship between MalePAS and BHSS ($r = 0.475$, $p < 0.01$). PCL-S did not predict BHSS, and there was no significant interaction between PCL and MalePAS on BHSS.

- Results indicate that males who have higher sensitivity to male peer acceptance see more barriers to help-seeking.

- Help-seeking is often perceived as weakness, in which traditional masculinity does not adhere to. Restrictive emotionality and emotional control may explain this relationship, as well as factors such as the hypermasculine nature of military culture, stigma, and likelihood of avoidance that exacerbate this condition.

References: Available upon request.

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