

Exploring the Prevalence of Interpersonal Violence Among Australian Aboriginal Women: In Their Own Words



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Introduction

Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) women are 45 times more likely to experience interpersonal violence (IPV) than non-indigenous women (Korff, 2016). Grounded in the rural city of Wangaratta, the purpose of this research project was to explore ATSI women's perceptions and experiences of IPV through qualitative and narrative-driven research methods. This poster brings forth the voices of these women.

“My older son said to me, ‘I love you, mom, but you did things the wrong way. I feel guilty for leaving dad.’ I never really spoke to [my children] about what really happened. **I feel like I’m to blame for everything.**”

“I wanted to go back up to the Islands for my sister’s sorry business (funeral), but my ex-husband said ‘no.’ I wasn’t allowed to go because he was so jealous and convinced I would cheat [on him]. That’s when I thought to myself, I’m living somebody else’s life. **This is not my life. This is not my culture.**”

Initial Findings & Discussion

Preliminary data analysis reveals themes including shame, guilt, resilience, and a lost connection to culture and ancestral country. In the rural city of Wangaratta, ATSI women face intersectional challenges related to racism, limited access to social services, and a lack of community and social support. Many women identified the need for a gathering space for ATSI women to promote well-being and healing among women in the community. Others identified returning to their ancestral land as the best way to promote healing.

Research Questions

- How do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women perceive interpersonal violence?
- How do experiences of violence intersect with indigenous identity?
- What do individual and collective healing processes look like within the ATSI community?

“**I am Aboriginal. I am a strong woman.** But I need a community to feel happy and even stronger. That’s the one thing that has been missing since I’ve moved to Wangaratta.”

“**This time I am very strong now. I can say ‘no.’ I’m going to go home and nobody’s going to stop me.**”

Methods

- Semi-Structured, Ethnographic Interviews
- Community-Based Participatory Research
- Emergent Design

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