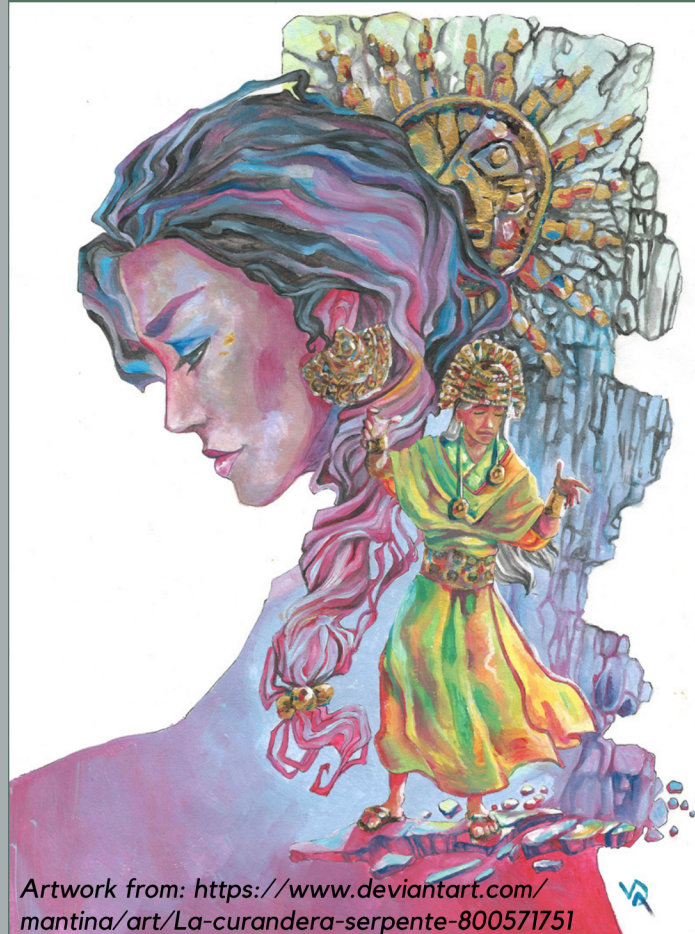


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Addressing Sexual Trauma



Artwork from: <https://www.deviantart.com/mantina/art/La-curandera-serpente-800571751>

with
Latina Survivors

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS A GLOBAL EPIDEMIC

Before diving into some of the unique aspects of addressing sexual trauma with Latin American women, it is important to recognize that there will be many universal experiences of sexual violence shared by Latinas and women of other cultures.

Sexual violence is a global epidemic. Although studies have found that “sexism and sexual violence were tolerated and normalized” in Latin American culture, it is important to note, that “the normalization of sexual violence is not unique to... Latinx people... but rather a national and global phenomenon” (Tummala et al., 2023, p. 402).

This resource is intended to provide additional information that is unique to working Latin American women who have experienced sexual violence. Please use this as a starting point, and check out the reference page for a more in-depth look at these important issues.

MYTHS OF HYPER-SEXUALITY

It is important to be aware that Latin American women may have a more difficult time being believed when reporting sexual violence and/or harassment (Tummala et al., 2023). Many people hold implicit and/or explicit bias that Latin American women are promiscuous, and sexually available.

"Spitfire"

This myth became prevalent in the 1930s when the entertainment industry created the image of the young, "hyper-sexual, emotionally volatile" Latina "spitfire" (Joffrey, 2021, para 1).

The Sexy Latina Maid

Additionally, the media promoted the idea of the "sexy Latina Maid" beginning in the 1960s. This was done to ease anti-immigrant sentiment after U.S. policy created great instability in Latin

America, which led to thousands of immigrants and refugees. It also fueled a harmful hyper-sexual stereotype. (Joffrey, 2021)

WORKING WITH MIGRANTS

Overview

- "Gender violence is... often one of the reasons for migration"
- "Border regions in Latin America are characterized by conflict, violence and high rates of femicide."
- "Migrants face sexual violence,... human trafficking,... xenophobia, and racism."
- "Depending on their immigration status, migrants who suffer domestic violence are often reluctant to report abuse due to the threat of deportation and cultural and language barriers."

(Andrade, 2023, p. 3285)

Farmworkers:

- Sexual harassment and violence is common for female farmworkers (Murphy et al., 2015).
- Approximately 20% of U.S. farmworkers are women.
- Around "68,000 indigenous farmworkers from Mexico currently live in Oregon" (Murphy et al., 2015, p. 1834).
- Language barriers place many Latin American farmworkers in a vulnerable position, especially those who only speak indigenous languages.
- Some compare migrant farmworker conditions to modern day slavery, making this an especially vulnerable population.



HEALING

According to the Tummala et al. (2023) study, 4 themes emerged regarding sources of healing and resilience: 1. connecting with communities and providing support to others, 2. disclosing sexual violence to others, 3. psychotherapy, and 4. spiritual healing practices.

Communities:

Participants reported finding it especially helpful to connect with survivors from the same cultural background. (Tummala et al., 2023)

Spiritual Healing

"I started doing yoga or things that I knew would restore my spirit because it goes so deep" reported one participant (Tummala et al., 2023, p. 401). Although many found psychotherapy helpful, some survivors may find the western model limiting. Indigenous practices rooted in communal healing may be especially helpful for those with intergenerational trauma from colonization.

Curanderismo:

For Mexican American survivors seeking culturally rooted spiritual healing, Curanderismo: "is a type of holistic folk medicine traditionally used in Mexican and Mexican American cultures" (p. 2). It views disease as having both biological and spiritual causes, so curanderos treat on the material, spiritual, and mental level. (Torres & Hicks, 2016)

Artwork from:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ARTE_DE_MUJER_CURANDERA.jpg

