

## Historical Trauma Response (HTR) Features

### Question:

What happens to the group psyche when an entire people group suffers a common trauma? Examples: holocaust survivors, genocide survivors, and their offspring...<sup>1</sup>

Excerpting from *Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart* per on-line article at <http://www.whitebison.org/magazine/2005/volume6/no6.htm>

**Survivor guilt:** ...a lot of our relatives and ancestors are not here with us. So we feel guilt about that...

**Depression and psychic numbing** is another trauma response feature. You shut down all feeling because you are trying to avoid the pain. It helps you get through the immediate crisis and the trauma...

**Fixation to trauma** is another feature...you unconsciously recreate it. The research shows you also remain loyal to the suffering community that you come from...

**Low self esteem,**

**Victim identity,**

**Anger,**

**Self-destructive behavior,**

And **Substance abuse** are also a ways of trying to numb that pain.

**Hypervigilance** ...When you are chronically traumatized, you start reacting to everything in that way. You start staying on guard in all kinds of situations.

**Compensatory fantasies** ... So they live out their lives trying to undo the trauma they had nothing to do with, that they have no control over . . . It is interesting to look at how you are living out your own life and whether you are sort of fixated to the trauma and stuck in it and just trying to make up for it somehow.

**Preoccupation with death, death identity, and loyalty to the ancestral suffering and to the deceased** are other features. That loyalty will cause you to create suffering in your own life. It is not a conscious process.

In **internalization of ancestral suffering** we are carrying the suffering with us. We carry it inside of us. It becomes part of us. Vitality in one's own life is seen as a betrayal of ancestors who suffered so much.

**Internalized oppression** ... as identification with the aggressor...As adults we get into situations where we continue to be abused or we become abusers ourselves...

### Or in other words<sup>2</sup> . . .

Guilt | Depression | Emotional Numbness | Addicted to Drama | Poor Self-Image | Low Self-Esteem | Anger | Rage | Substance Abuse | Self-Destructive Behavior(s) | Multiple Addictions | Victim Identity | PTSD<sup>3</sup> | Dysfunctional Loyalties | Abused Abusers

### Related Terms (per above author's 1995 dissertation)

**(HTR)** *above* [is relative to whole people groups (cultures) who have experienced HT/CT below]

**(CT)** Cumulative Trauma ...compounding...wounding...both over the life span and across generations

**(HT)** Historical Trauma ...CT "emanating from massive group wounding" (alt source, same author)

**Historical Unresolved Grief**...generations of devastating losses that have been disenfranchised...

**Intergenerational Transmission of Grief and Trauma**...transfer of features...across generations

### Question:

As dual diagnosis counselors which, if any, of these above traits are not part of the typical clinical picture we see in our treatment rooms?

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<sup>1</sup> Question posed by Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart in 1995 dissertation material

<sup>2</sup> My rewording for summarizing; interpretations mine (Lance Echo-Hawk, MA)

<sup>3</sup> The above author explains that simple PTSD is not an adequate category to correctly or sufficiently describe HTR