

Research looks at violence against indigenous women

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jhalm@tulane.edu



Catherine Burnette, an assistant professor in the Tulane School of Social Work, recently co-authored an article that is the culmination of all her research into violence against indigenous women and the related health disparities. (Photo provided by Catherine Burnette)

For seven years, Catherine Burnette, an assistant professor in the Tulane School of Social Work, has researched violence against indigenous women and the related health disparities.

Her recently published article, [“Historical Oppression, Resilience, and Transcendence: Can a Holistic Framework Help Explain Violence](#)

Experienced by Indigenous People?”, co-authored with Charles Figley, the Paul Henry Kurzweg Chair in Disaster Mental Health, was published this November in *Social Work*, a journal of the National Association of Social Workers. The article forms a brand new model to help those in need.

“This is a culmination of all the research that I’ve done so far,” said Burnette. “It’s very exciting to get to this point and see a way that we can make a difference in people’s lives.”

Burnette said no research-based framework currently exists to explain why indigenous people experience such high rates of violence, especially against indigenous women.

“This article looks at colonization and how that affects social and health outcomes, and then it also looks at resilience and how people overcome and actually transcend oppression,” she said.

“We also did a follow up study, and ... created a measure of historical oppression and family resilience that predicts outcomes like depression and intimate partner violence. It turns out that broader oppression is related to these mental health and social outcomes.”

This is the first known framework that connects structural causes to social and health outcomes, Burnette said, so after years of research including several previous articles that support the framework, this was the final synthesis of all that information. However, the efforts to help those in need continue.

Ultimately, she hopes to provide an intervention that addresses historical oppression and related health disparities related to violence, substance abuse and mental health among indigenous communities.

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