

Best Practices with Refugees in the Treatment Room

Listening to the Trauma Story

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Who is here??

What is your experience with multicultural clients?

Terms

- ❖ Refugee, Asylee, and Immigrant status
- ❖ Definition of Torture and Trauma
- ❖ Why diaphragmatic breathing is effective



Before

Entering the Treatment Room



Diaphragmatic Breathing:




Let's consider....

Traditional/Folk/ Shaman Healing

- ❖ Intertwined with cultural and religious beliefs, is holistic and focuses on physical, psychological, spiritual and social aspects of people, their families and the community (South African Journal of Complimentary and Alternative Medicine, September 2007)
- ❖ 200,000 healers in S. Africa vs. 25,000 “modern allopathic doctors “
- ❖ 70% - 80% of Africans and Asians use traditional healers

Resources

- ❖ Shamanlinks.net
- ❖ Shamanism: An Encyclopedia of World Beliefs, Practices and Culture by Walter and Friedman
- ❖ Mental Health of Refugees UNHCR/WHO, 1996
- ❖ WHO : Integrative Medicine-Incorporating Traditional Healers into Public Health Delivery System



Naturopathic and Alternative Medicine

- ❖ Cupping
- ❖ Acupuncture
- ❖ Healing herbs
- ❖ Steaming
- ❖ Incantations
- ❖ Fortune Telling
- ❖ Meditation
- ❖ Massage
- ❖ Tai Chi
- ❖ Yoga
- ❖ Qigong
- ❖ Sweat Lodges

Curses, Spirits, Possessions

- ❖ Haitian Voodoo / Cuban Santeria
- ❖ Natural and Traditional Medicine in Cuba: Lessons For U.S. Medical Education: Appelbaum, Kligler, Barrett, Frenkel, Guerrera, Kondwani, Lee, Tattelman, MD, Academic Medicine. 81(12):1098-1103, December 2006).
- ❖ Case Study: Burmese Female, age 32



World Religions

- ❖ What are the religions of your client's culture?
- ❖ What impact has it had on their lives?
- ❖ What part does religion play in healing?

Your next client is a 35 year
old Karen woman from
Burma who has been in
Florida for 3 months



Prepare to Enter

- ❖ Know client's nationality
- ❖ English Competency
- ❖ Preferred language



Enter

The Treatment Room

Interpreters

Interpreters

- ❖ Therapy Using Interpreters: Questions on the Use of Interpreters in Therapeutic Setting for Monolingual Therapist, Steve Hamerdinger and Ben Karlin
- ❖ Live vs. Phone Interpreters
- ❖ Weeding out the great and the good
- ❖ Prep the interpreter
- ❖ Case Study: (Burmese woman, 40 yoa, Poa Karen)
- ❖ Relationship develops between client/therapist/interpreter

Helping Clients C.O.P.E.

Stephen Hayes, PSY D, Director, Behavioral Health Care Services, Lynn, Massachusetts

- ❖ Calm (and Detached)
- ❖ Objective
- ❖ Patient (and Present)
- ❖ Educated

What the client needs

- ❖ To feel safe: this may take a few sessions (breath work/touchstones)
- ❖ Boundaries will be respected (ask permission)
- ❖ They can leave if they like
- ❖ They will not be touched
- ❖ They will be accepted, not judged (believe the unbelievable)
- ❖ IF they talk you will listen and acknowledged their feelings
- ❖ To be left alone



What will happen if you ask??

How do you ask?

Listening to the Story

- ❖ Begin slowly (introduce yourself and what you do)
- ❖ Let the survivor lead : Move into emotional details at her pace
- ❖ Ask questions to show interest and willingness to listen
- ❖ Allow for feelings to emerge: Ask for them
- ❖ BREATH: Look at they sky not the sun
- ❖ Validate and Normalize
- ❖ Focus on body sensations to help nervous system unwind
- ❖ Check that the intensity of the story in not overwhelming, if so shift away from story to regroup
- ❖ Enhance the feeling of safety (breath work and touchstones)
- ❖ Look behind the curtain (Mollica, 2006)

The Silent Story

- ❖ Somatic complaints with no organic etiology
- ❖ Look at trauma or torture methods to explain symptoms
- ❖ Screening Tools (RHS-15, Hopkins 25, HPRT)

Evidenced Based Treatment for Trauma/Torture

- ❖ Interpersonal Counseling
- ❖ Narrative Exposure Therapy
- ❖ EMDR
- ❖ Psychotropic Drugs
- ❖ Encourage: social connection, healthy coping, spirituality, work and altruism




After

The Treatment Room

Self Care

- ❖ Check your Emotional Bank Account (Steven Covey, 1989)
- ❖ Warning: Watch out for the ghosts
- ❖ Importance of Supervision and/or Consultation



Trauma Commonly Experienced by Refugees

- ❖ Uncertainty over the future
- ❖ Disruption of community and social support networks
- ❖ Forced Migration (uprooting from home)
- ❖ Witnessing killings, torture & destruction of homes and possessions (80%)
- ❖ Torture (5 - 30% in U.S; totaling 400,000)
- ❖ Rape
- ❖ Sexual Violence
- ❖ Imprisonment & Harsh Detention
- ❖ Poor conditions of refugee camps