Alternative Healing Practices
To Treat Trauma

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Holistic Approach
- Alternative Healing
- Traditional Healing
- Folk Healing

Folk Healers
- Yerbero (herbalist)
- Sobador (massage therapist)
- Partera (midwife, who also treats problems with young children)
- Espiritualistos(as) (psychic mediums)
- Curandero (healer who may use multiple modalities)

Hierarchy of Lay Healers

Common Folk Illnesses
- Susto: soul loss; literally “fright of the soul”
- Empacho: digestive blockage
- Caida de la moliera, espanto: soul loss
- Mal de ojo: evil eye
- Brujeria: witchcraft / Embrujo: hexed
- Ataque de nervios: nervous distress
- Bilis, colera, muina: rage
- Locura: chronic psychosis

Curanderismo
- From the verb curar, which means “to heal”
- Become healers after long apprenticeships
- Greater emphasis on person’s innate talent to heal, such as gifts from a higher power
- El Dón– Spiritual calling
- Multiple areas of specialties and work on many realms including physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual
Core of Curanderismo

- Spirituality and maintaining harmony and balance with nature
- Common to rely on spiritual paraphernalia (pictures of saints, crosses, and holy water)
- Recognize a duality of “naturally” and “supernaturally” causes of illnesses

(Trotter & Chavira, 2000)

Spiritual Healing

- Alturas (Altars)
- Saints (Specific Roles)
- Los milagritos (Miracles)
- Amuletos (Amulets)
- Mandas/Orendas (Offerings)
- Veladoras (Candles)
- Shaman (High Priest)

(Trotter & Chavira, 2000)

Cleansing

- Limpias or Barridas (cleansing):
  - Bring back the body and spirit
  - Draw out illness and negative forces into the objects used (herbs, branches, or egg)
  - Cleansing prayer brings healing energy into the person to replace this negativity
  - Draw a person's soul back into their body after extreme shock or other intense emotion
  - Used for spiritual imbalance brought on by anything from excess of fright, envy, anger, overexposure to heat or cold or other reasons

- Smudging/Sahumerio/Incensing

(Trotter & Chavira, 2000; Kropwinski-Jimenez, 1993)

Herbal Remedies

- Treatment of minor illnesses
- The retention of a locus of self-control
- Spiritual cleansings
- Used in teas, herbal baths, or poultices
- Imbalances of heat and cold, dry and wet

(Trotter & Chavira, 1997; Neff, N., n.d.)

Energy Balancing

- Hot and cold balance
- Material and Spiritual balance
- Vibrating energy
- Crystals
- Massage/Reiki
- Biofeedback
- Hypnotherapy
- Acupuncture and acupressure

(Trotter & Chavira, 1997; Neff, N., n.d.)

Relaxation

- Meditation
  - Deep breathing
    - Progressive relaxation
  - Visual imagery
- Aromatherapy
- Exercise/Tai Chi/Yoga
- Mindfulness
- Visit with loved ones
- Smile for one minute
Culturally Competent Treatment

- Holistic healing is treating the multidimensional aspects of a person's mind, body, and spirit
- Understanding the client's world view with improved culturally competent healing strategies
- Using alternative healing that can enhance the intervention process and prevent misdiagnosing or incorrect assessments
- Invite the client to openly interact on treatment plan, bringing in important dimensions of their life

References


Encuentro Latino
National Institute on Family Violence

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