Looking at Trauma Through Culturally Diverse Lenses

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Trauma Definition
- Experiencing a serious injury to yourself
- Witnessing a serious injury to or death of someone else
- Facing imminent threats of serious injury or death
- Experiencing a violation of personal physical integrity
- An emotional wound or shock often having long-lasting effects

(The Workgroup on Adapting Latino Services, 2008)

Responses to Trauma
- Immediate Responses to trauma:
  + Terror
  + Shock
  + Fear
  + Horror
  + Helplessness

- Post-traumatic symptoms:
  - Intrusive thoughts
  - Hyperarousal reactions
  - Avoidance and withdrawn reactions

(Cook, Blaustein, Spinazzola, and Van Dr Kolk, 2003)

Children’s Responses to Trauma

Long Term Health and Social Problems
- Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- Depression
- Heart Disease
- Domestic Violence
- Suicide Attempts
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases

(The Workgroup on Adapting Latino Services, 2008)

Cultural Differences in Dealing with Trauma

Trauma occurs across the full spectrum of racial, ethnic, and cultural groups and greatly varies between and within ethnicities and cultures.
Common Values among Latino Groups

- Familismo
- Simpatía
- Respeto
- Personalismo
- Religion/Spirituality
- Machismo/Marianismo

Common Risk Factors for the Latino Population

- Environmental Factors
  - Poverty
  - Inadequate housing
  - Single-parent families
  - Substance abuse problems
  - Stress related to acculturation and discrimination
  - Lower levels of education
  - Cultural history of oppression

Additional Risk Factors

- Immigration Experience
- Anti-Immigration Discrimination
- History of Civil War or Oppressive Dictatorship
- Culture-Related Intergenerational Conflicts

Issues in Utilizing Services

- Lack of health insurance
- Transportation issues
- Lack of bilingual service providers
- Lack of culturally appropriate information
- Unfamiliar with mental health treatment
- Self-consciousness
- Distrust of the system
- Shame and stigma

Cultural Competence

- Cultural Knowledge
- Cultural Awareness
- Cultural Sensitivity
- Cultural Competence
- Linguistically Competent

Treatment Recommendations

- Make a good first impression
- Take acculturation into account
- Conduct a thorough, culturally modified assessment
- Integrate cultural values into the therapeutic process
- Engage families
- Incorporate Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs) to fit the cultural context
Cultural Values: Recommendations

- Become familiar with Latino specific values and the moderating factors that may lead to value differences
- Conduct a Latino value focused assessment and feedback session of the values
- Assist families in understanding how their Latino values shape their perceptions
- Assist families in reframing their perceptions that might hinder them

(The Workgroup on Adapting Latino Services, 2008)

Cultural Values: Recommendations

- Provide assurance to undocumented families
- Ask specific questions to the client’s immigration, acculturation, or assimilation process and/or stressors
- Assess for acculturation differences within the same family
- Familiarize yourself with immigration laws, policies, and resources

(The Workgroup on Adapting Latino Services, 2008)

Culturally Sensitive Service Needs for the Future

- Bilingual and Bicultural Therapists and services
- Additional training for working with Latino clients
- Increased resources
- Increased culturally sensitive assessments, policies, and evidence based practices

(The Workgroup on Adapting Latino Services, 2008; National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2007)

References


Encuentro Latino
National Institute on Family Violence

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