CONTEXTUALLY & CULTURALLY ATTUNING PREVENTION/INTERVENTION STRATEGIES WITH LATINX YOUNG CHILDREN (AGES:0-5) AND THEIR IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

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ECWP: Contextual Approach

- Assesses for interpersonal, community systemic needs
- Dyadic/relational approach
- Affirming practice—dyadic therapy, clinical assertive case management, community engagement, and advocacy.
- Culturally and contextually, and developmentally adapt interventions

Workshop Overview

- Setting Context: impact of multi dimensional trauma on immigrant family systems
- Engagement & Assessment with families
- Interventions/Strategies we can use with families
CONTEXT: Trauma Implications & Immigration Factors

- Pre-migration, migration, and post-migration factors: historical trauma, systemic trauma, community trauma, and intergenerational trauma
- Ambiguous Loss
- Acculturation Factors
- Developmental Trajectory

Pre-migration Factors

- Ayotzinapa

Migration Factors

- La Bestia
Post-Migration Factors

Dehumanizing framing

Developmental Trajectory

- Young children are absorbed within the family contexts of their parents/caregivers.
- Parents/caregivers are the #1 teachers of young children and the home setting is where children learn about social expectations and cultural experiences via food, language, behavior, and values.
- Child/Parent Milestone: Trust, confianza.
- Attachment Style
- Children are like sponges, learning about families' cultural underpinnings and behaviors that are impacted by their context, composed of past and present experiences with the world.
  - Impact of immigration experiences, "adaptation," and social relationships.

Intergenerational Trauma

- Traumas that families experience, especially adults, that stays in their bodies and minds, often unconsciously, being passed down non-verbally and verbally from generation to generation.
- Ghosts in the nursery: Ghosts are visitors from parent's/caregiver's past in which trauma was experienced and are passed down to their children.
- Traumatic episodes that have not been processed and impact interpersonal relationships from generation to generation.

(Lieberman & Van Horn, 2008)
**Historical Trauma**

- Colonization: European & U.S. colonization led to displacement
  - Prioritization of Eurocentric framework.
- Imperialism & Capitalism: U.S. taking over other nations via trades and imports for cheap labor.
  - NAFTA, Maquiladoras, and the Bracero Program, modern day slavery, etc.
- Prioritization of individualistic values
- Prioritization of English

**Systemic Trauma— Living in a Paradox**

- Contradictory immigration Policies: Undocumented immigration policies/laws— their contradictions and paradoxes— Promotes “inclusion” yet at the same time exclusion.
  - EX: DACA & DAPA
- “Crimmigration”— Dehumanizing Laws: Anti-immigration sentiment, promotes control & enforcement
  - EX: SB 4: Allows local law enforcement to carry deportation agenda & racial profiling in Texas

**Community Trauma**

- Structural and interpersonal oppression via racism, xenophobia, classism, sexism, homophobia, bigotry etc.
- Pressures to Assimilate
- Language
- Bullying due to “coming out” process
  - Especially during current political climate
- Family Separation
- Deportation
- Police Brutality
Ambiguous Loss

Type I - Physical absence and psychological presence.
Type II - Physical presence and psychological absence.

- Differs from death loss since with ambiguous loss there is no certainty that the person will come back or return the way they used to be.
- No closure & learning to cope with the ambiguity is important yet challenging.
- Loss that cannot be clarified
- Situations in which loss is unclear
- Often times, this unresolved grief, can be disenfranchised and can lead to complicated grief.
- Ambiguous loss can be traumatic as it may be painful, immobilizing, and confusing, which can lead to difficulty in mobilizing coping mechanisms.

(Boss, 2009; Neimeyer, Harris, Winokuer, & Thornton, 2011)

Acculturation Factors

**Collectivism (Latino Culture)**
- Interdependence
- Views self reflected in others
- Values social cohesion & social solidarity
- Emotional Privacy
- Culture of honor

**Cultural Values**
- Familismo: Emphasis on family social solidarity.
- Respecto: Hierarchal emphasis on parental authority & morality
- Simpatia: Affection & playful teasing
- Culture of Honor: Emphasis on family reputation & gender role differentiation
- Confianza: Importance of friendship & relationships
- Personalismo: Transmitting warmth

**Individualism (US Culture)**
- Independence
- Self-centeredness
- Prioritizes individual needs
- Emotional Expression

**Cultural Intergenerational Conflicts:**
- Conflict between older and younger generations in families due to cultural expectations, values, and behaviors.
- Acculturation stress: Intergenerational conflicts can lead to family stress.
- Acculturation gaps are commonplace in immigrant families.

(Boss, 2009; Dennis, Basanez, & Farahmand, 2010; Alvarez, 2007)

ENGAGEMENT & ASSESSMENT

- Critical Reflexivity
- Cultural humility
- Ecological systems perspective
- Resiliency Framework/ Symptomology
Critical Reflexivity

- On-going process of self-awareness, which places one’s biases, learned thoughts, and behaviors into question and takes action.
- Allows for dichotomous thinking
- Using a dialectical perspective (Both/And)—Therapist perspective, client perspective, family perspective, and environment perspective (community & policy perspective).
- Intersectional Analysis: Being mindful of one’s social location: privileged and marginalized social statuses.
- Being aware of PPP (power dynamics, privilege, perspective)

(Handel, 1999)

From Reflection to Action

- Systemic & Community Traumas
- Cultural Context (Nationalities, language, cultural values, etc.)
- Intergenerational Trauma
- Intersectional Identities
- Ambiguous & Concrete Losses
- Historical Trauma
- Migration Narrative (Pre/Post)

Ecological Systems Perspective: Eco-Map
Cultural Humility

- Cultural Sensitivity: Being curious and open to learning about family’s context and cultural attributes.
- Cultural Naïveté: It is important for therapists to take a step back as a learner and allow the client to teach the therapist about his/her historical and cultural context.
- Assessing for families’ intersectional identities: privileged and marginalized social statuses.
- Cultural Scripts (Collective and Individualistic cultural scripts), cultural values, beliefs, language.

(Bryak & Zayas, 1995)

Berry’s Model of Acculturation

- Adult/Children Diagnosis
- PTSD
- Re-experiencing: flashbacks, nightmares, & frightening thoughts
- Avoidance: staying away from locations, events that trigger memories. Feeling emotionally numb, Repressed emotions.
- Anxiety, Stressed, feeling on “edge”
- Depression: deep sadness, loss of interest in enjoyable activities, loss of appetite/sleep
- Suicidal Thoughts
- Fear
- Panic Attacks
- Intergenerational Trauma: trauma passed down from generation to the next generation
- Grief & Loss—Experiencing Ambiguous losses, disenfranchised grief
- Low Self-esteem and/or Shame

(Symptomology)

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Complexities Beyond Interpersonal Trauma & Developmental Concerns

Resiliency Framework

- Cultural attributes: Strength-based perspective
  - Important role of Collective Cultural Script: Social Cohesion
  - The majority of the Latinx children come from collective cultural underpinnings
  - Interdependence
  - Cognitive perceptions of social connectedness is through collective lens
  - Values social solidarity
  - Cultural values

- Biculturalism/Multiculturalism

- Survivor Narrative
  - Co-constructing a sense of community
  - The importance of group work
  - The importance of knowing their language & stories
  - Importance to be around co-ethnic peers

- Protective Factors: Hope, optimism, reframing, acceptance, social support, cultural values, and spirituality
  - Angels in the nursery: Protective figures in the lives of caregivers that transmit hope and reciprocity, that are passed from generation to generation.

(Cardoso & Thompson, 2010; Lieberman & Van Horn, 2008)

INTERVENTIONS: Using an Affirming & Interdisciplinary Approach to Healing

- Narrative Therapies: CPP and Storytelling
- Third wave behavioral approach:
  - Acceptance & Commitment Therapy and Mindfulness
Assertive Clinical Case Management

- Mobilization of social services
- Access to social provisions
  - Usage of a clinical approach composed of the following
    - Relationship building
    - Critical Reflexivity
    - Unconditional positive regard
    - Cultural humility
    - Intersectional lens

Narrative Therapies

- **Goal:** To invite and honor a family's unique, personal narrative to validate and make meaning of their past, present & future experiences
- **Intervention:** Client/family will share narrative, while therapist will aid in expanding the client's/families' thinking. Client/family and therapist will then find ways to co-construct client strengths & mobilize inner strategies to promote acceptance, hope, and meaning while keeping culture in mind.
- **Therapist Role:** Narrative therapists allow clients to express story via play, keep cultural attunement at the forefront, and offer advocacy for the client.

CPP (Child Parent Psychotherapy)

- **Interventions:** Developmental guidance, development of trauma triangle, meaning making of traumatic experiences, reciprocal play, etc.
- **Therapist role:** CPP therapist is the facilitator of reciprocal play between caregiver and child. Uses ports of entry via interventions to help strengthen the relationship.
CPP Trauma Triangle

Triangle Explanations
- Emotions & behavioral symptomology

Event (stressor, trauma) — Meaning Making (hope & acceptance)

Storytelling
- Migration Stories: Resilience
  - “El Sacrificio”
- Consejos: Advice
  - Important role of family interconnectedness and the extended family.
- Dicho: Folk Stories
- Highlights personalismo
- The role of community and family in coping
- Connecting to one’s culture and celebration of traditions (music, rituals, food, life objects, dancing, singing, theater, art)
- Healing happens through collective action.
- Promotes interpersonal connectedness

(Contreras & Thompson, 2010; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994)

Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT)
- Goal: Aims to increase psychological flexibility by acting according to one’s cultural and contextually bound values, and thus move away from rigid ways of being—avoidance, cognitive fusion, and impulsivity.
- Intervention: Therapist will utilize cognitive defusion to help clients/families see thoughts as merely thoughts. Client and family will explore acceptance of painful emotions. Therapist will help clients connect with a compassionate and non-judgmental sense of self. Using a present-oriented perspective, clients will explore and commit to one’s values.
- Therapist role: Therapist will facilitate present moment awareness in the “here and now” and help families explore values. Values driven questions will be asked—What would they like to be remembered for? What characteristics in role models do they look up to? What actions are consistent with those values?
Psychological Flexibility

(Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 2012)

Mindfulness

- Honoring how different it is to focus on oneself and remain present when one is in basic survival mode
- Using spiritual connection to connect and sanction
- Redefining remaining present & sitting with discomfort as freeing rather than indulgent
- Encouraging mindfulness in real time, in real life through use of senses
- Using practical, concrete touchstones to stay in body & remain present

Group Work

- Mindful Parenting Groups:
  - Exposure for families and children to learn from co-ethnic peers
  - Room for storytelling
  - Seeing yourself reflecting in another
- Family Work
  - Voices come out, the family truth is spoken and meaning is made
- Children’s Groups
  - Social solidarity
Policy & Advocacy

- Collective efficacy: Community involvement
- Opportunity to serve as an advocate for social justice and human right
- Community Outreaching
- Building partnerships with key stakeholders in the community to help impact local policy

Context & Cultural Attunement: Affirming Practice Skillset Takeaway

- Disclaimer: Each experience & narrative is individualized
- Critical Reflection
- Intersectional Analysis
- Cultural Humility
- Resiliency Framework
- Developmental Framework
- Cultural Naïveté
- Create a Brave Space
- Resource Mobilization
- Linguistically appropriate services
- Empathy & Empowerment
- Professional Development
- Room for Research: Cultural & Intersectional adaptations to interventions and organizational work.

References