



Refugee Services
National Partnership
for Community Training

Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services

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Clinical Approaches in Integrative Healthcare

Case Study

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Objectives

- Describe multi-disciplinary team approach to address complicated mental health concerns among refugees
- Connect common physical symptoms that may be associated with a mental health concern and how to identify them
- Share therapeutic considerations for refugees seeking care at integrative healthcare settings

Case Study

- Presentation
- Q&A
- Format Features
 - Dialogue with presenters
 - Network with national colleagues
 - Share best practices

Multi-Disciplinary Team Approach

- Develop cohesive medical and behavioral health (BH) team
 - Team-based approach
 - Communication, Communication, Communication!!!
 - Across multi-disciplinary staff
 - Real time consults and scheduled forums, as necessary
 - Use of “daily huddles”
 - **ONGOING** cultural trainings
- Coordination among all providers:
 - Behavioral health providers (BHPs)
 - Primary care providers (PCPs)
 - Health navigators
- Determine:
 - Which staff can best address which parts of client’s concerns?
 - What elements need to be addressed?
 - Medical
 - Behavioral
 - Cultural
 - Linguistic
 - Social
 - Legal

Multi-Disciplinary Approach (cont.)

- Have BHPs available within medical clinic
 - ***While client is present*** for medical appointment, consult and schedule follow-up (reduces loss to follow-up)
- Screening and Ongoing Services
 - Use of culturally appropriate screening tools
 - Appropriate referrals to BH from medical and vice versa
- Attend to interwoven physical, psychological, and cultural elements
 - Somatization as “idiom of distress”
 - “Culture-bound syndromes”

Identifying Somatic Symptoms

(physical symptoms associated with mental health concerns)

- Stress and trauma may exacerbate physical symptoms, such as diabetes and hypertension (associated with chronic stress)
 - Trauma-informed care
 - Treat both physical symptoms and underlying stress/trauma
- Common physical symptoms, especially if unresponsive to medical intervention, may stem from BH concerns
 - Rule out medical etiology FIRST
 - Examples can include chronic pain, headaches, and gastrointestinal problems
 - Symptom presentations can cut across various cultures
 - Consider all perspectives and consult with others: medical, BH, cultural navigator

Identifying Somatic Symptoms (cont.)

- “Idioms of distress”
 - Somatic symptoms generally viewed as socially acceptable manifestations of distress
 - May be individual symptoms or cluster of symptoms
 - Examples: fainting, apparent seizures, significant memory loss, wandering, disorientation
 - Become familiar with culture-bound syndromes, **and** consider all factors contributing to clinical presentation to avoid stereotyping
- Team-based approach encourages holistic care
 - Leverage PCP’s support to emphasize the importance of BH as part of overall treatment plan
 - Example: Discussing and supporting medication prescriptions specific to BH concerns
 - May be better received if introduced from beginning of care
 - May reduce associated stigma if all patients receive screening are also offered BH services

Therapeutic Considerations

- Cultural adaptations of behavioral health services
 - Cultural humility
 - Systems coordination
 - Flexibility
- Team-based model addressing trauma
 - How to address primary/secondary trauma
 - Communication across disciplines
 - Real time consultation
 - Debriefs with navigators
 - Team meetings (discuss cases and process staff reactions)
- Navigators integral to BH treatment approach
 - Cultural brokers
 - Part of treatment team
 - Increased patient access to care
 - Decreases unnecessary escalation of health issues

Therapeutic Considerations

- Setting
 - Multiethnic, multilingual staff
 - Physical space include culturally appealing aspects
- Engaging clients in BH services given associated stigma
- Use of short-term BH interventions
 - Consider combined focus on physical and mental health
 - May also include:
 - Management of health conditions
 - Promotion of pro-health behaviors
 - Addressing underlying BH contributors
- How to address trauma in screenings and short-term integrated care
 - Trauma-informed care throughout clinic
- Importance of wrap-around services addressing social determinants of health



Contact Information

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Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services

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