Treatment Considerations with Undocumented Children, Adolescents and Families

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Outline

IMMIGRATION, LEGAL STATUS AND FAMILY

MENTAL HEALTH, SERVICES AND UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANT YOUTH

TREATMENT CONSIDERATIONS
SEPARATION
Emotional Trauma and Psychological Stress

- Separation anxiety
- Other Anxiety Disorders
  - PTSD
  - Generalized Anxiety Disorders
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Grief
- Disruptive Behaviors
- Academic difficulties
Therapy Considerations

- Psychosocial issues are big piece of this!
- Legal protection is a big issue!
  - You can imagine why not a lot of research
- Trauma and Stress
- Resiliency over real social and political stressors and barriers
- Family support
- Instilling hope and ameliorating anxiety and fear
Barriers to mental health services for the undocumented

- Low entry and retention in mental health services
- Psychosocial stressors far outnumber psychiatric disorders in Latino mental health clinic (Fortuna and Perez, 2005)
- Addressing psychosocial stressors is primary
- Other economic, language barriers in addition to legal status
FEAR
Stressors/The problems

- IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES
- UNRESOLVED ASYLUM/IMMIGRATION
- FINANCIAL HARDSHIP
- UNEMPLOYMENT
- INADEQUATE HOUSING
- FREQUENT MOVES
- LANGUAGE BARRIERS
- SOCIAL ISOLATION
- RACIAL DISCRIMINATION
- STRESS OF ADAPTING TO A NEW CULTURE
• Understanding family framework and need for support
  ○ There will be protectiveness
  ○ Fear
  ○ Role functioning challenges and reversals
  ○ Economic for both youth and parents
  ○ Explaining the reality to both young and older children
Parenting

- Honest
- Adaptability
- Consistency
- Positive Reinforcement
- Communication
- Supported
Anna’s Story
Identity and Action
Identity and Stress

- Cognitive Behavioral (PTSD, Anxiety, Depression)
- Narrative Therapy
- Peer and Social Support
- Action Planning and Involvement
**5 Steps of CR:**

1. **Situation** – Ask yourself “What happened that made me upset?”
2. **Feeling** - Identify your strongest feeling
3. **Thought** – Ask yourself “What am I thinking that is leading me to feel this way?”
4. **Challenge your thought** – List “Evidence For” & “Evidence Against”; “Is there an alternative way of thinking about this situation?”
5. **Outcome** – Does the evidence support my thought or not?
   A) If NO, what is a more realistic thought?
   B) If YES, develop an action plan
The person is not the problem, the problem is the problem.
A "Narrative Therapist" assists persons to resolve problems by:

- enabling them to deconstruct the meaning of the reality of their lives and relationships;
- to show the difference between the reality and the internalized stories of self.
ACADEMICS and MOTIVATION
• Academic Supports
• Connection and Support with Teachers
• Assisting Parents in Communicating with Schools
• Assisting Parents in Understanding Academic Issues
Opportunities for Success
Future Orientation
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Risk Factors</th>
<th>Protective Factors</th>
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<tr>
<td>Related Trauma</td>
<td>• Multiple Trauma&lt;br&gt;• Severity&lt;br&gt;• Loss of a loved one&lt;br&gt;• Perception of threat&lt;br&gt;• Unknown fate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Characteristics</td>
<td>• Previous Conduct or Mental Health Problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Stressed parental mental health&lt;br&gt;– especially maternal distress&lt;br&gt;– political persecution&lt;br&gt;• Unaccompanied by family members</td>
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We have come from all over the world “and yet know so little about each other”…They always tell us to be happy because we are in this country, but they have not shown the children the way to be happy.”

By working with young people and families to help them “find their way,” (Phuong came to know and work with the circle process). “This has changed my life completely,” “It gave me a new perspective.”
Resources

Undocumented Immigrant Youth: Guide for Advocates and Service Providers
