



Minority Fellowship Program

The National Board for Certified Counselors

Innovations in Counseling: Working with Minority Populations- Part 4 Session 2: Culturally Competent Trauma-Informed Care

Webinar Follow-up Question and Answer Session with Dr. Devika Dibya Choudhuri.

1. **Question from Maria McCabe**

Is resourcing the same as tool box?

Answer

I would say that resourcing is a general term that encompasses developing a tool box—which as you can see is a metaphor that may be useful to a client. The term “resourcing” has come to mean the deliberate enhancement of adaptive adult perspectives or self-affirming adult experiences that will become more readily accessible during trauma work, ultimately helping the client process disturbing memories. “Front-loading” resourcing prior to beginning trauma work includes teaching self-regulation techniques such as relaxation, guided imagery, and breathing. During the trauma work, resourcing that can be used include cognitive interweaves—which consist of adaptive information offered by the counselor representing healthy adult perspectives or missing information. For instance, to a client who experienced child abuse and is self-blaming, to offer during processing, “As you think about four year old boys you might see today, how many are capable for doing those tasks which were required of you perfectly? Would you now, expect them to?” Cognitive interweaves typically address distortions in responsibility, safety, and choice which are leftover and embedded in the trauma that prevent it from being adaptively processed. Resource persons are imaginatively developed by the client to give those aspects of strength and resilience needed to assist. They can serve as assistants, cheerleaders, or witnesses.

2. **Question from Tracy Still**

Do you have a recommendation for mindfulness resources?

Answer

Mindfulness captures a range of resources but what is key is engaging to client to build a mindfulness practice that works for them. A busy housewife might be able to work with mindfully cooking, while she may not be able to find a half hour to sit in meditation. Mindful practices are primarily exercises in attending reflectively to the here and now experience whether it is activity or being. Be creative in engaging the client’s cultural comfort practices to generate arenas in which to be mindful. This also works very well with a range of disabilities, since mindfulness can be as large or as limited as meets the client’s needs.

Body scans where the client who is often numbed out or unaware of carrying strong emotions, are a helpful technique. You invite the client to go inward and starting from the soles of their feet all the way to the top of the head, scan their body for any feelings, sensations, perceptions, or distress that they would like to attend to and just notice out loud what they are experiencing. You can then have them give particular mindful attention to pain, suffocation, or other sensations with a focus on where in the body they are located.

3. **Question from Teodora Tecu**

"Visualizing the bus" technique is a great method to explore the client's resources. Will you please share with us another similar method aiming to develop the resilience?



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Answer

Resource persons are imaginatively developed by the client to give those aspects of strength and resilience needed to assist. They can serve as assistants, cheerleaders, or witnesses. So for a client who is a refugee and feels incredibly isolated, you may have them start by telling you some myths and stories of their culture of origin. I had a client from Nigeria who developed Anansi as his resource figure (a West African god/spirit who often takes on the figure of a spider): clever and tricky—and when he felt stuck in his own resettlement—he would engage Anansi to help him think through how to get around the obstacles rather than batter at them.

4. Question from Nicole Nees

Is the best way to address displays of respect by just having a conversation to address that at the beginning of working with culturally diverse families/people?

Answer

No, in some cultural groups, explicit discussion would be disconcerting. Enquiring the ways people prefer to be addressed, and offering a range of ways in which they can address you is helpful. I prefer not to automatically shake hands because of the range but if a client extends his or her hand I shake it. In some ways, you need to be attending very closely to how the client is relating and striving to mirror that without being overly passive. With clients from many groups, I would initially address and speak with greater formality since I can always become less formal but it is very difficult to move from less formality to greater.

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