



Minority Fellowship Program

The National Board for Certified Counselors

Innovations in Counseling: Working with Minority Populations- Part 4 Session 6: Understanding Military Families: Principles, Culture and Interventions in the Counseling Process

Webinar Follow-up Question and Answer Session with Dr. Edil Torres Rivera.

1. Question from Allen Vosburg

How can networking be structured for a positive progression in the deprogramming of client?

Answer

Networking can be used as a way of systematically remind the client that he/she are back OCONUS or in civilian life. Probably the biggest reminder is that of everyday decisions are now in their hands. Twitter is a great way to deprogram clients. A friend of mine actually uses with students in daily bases with great success – he reminds students of readings and important deadlines. Please remember that this use of technology also comes with some time commitment by the counselor.

2. Question from Paula Franklin

Explain Shame in terms of how it affects the psyche.

Answer

Shame have to do with feelings of weakness, fear, vulnerability, and despair. Thus, the male psyche (warrior) is about having a heroic stance, willpower, action, repression of fear, black and white thinking, etc. Therefore, shame fit perfectly with the warrior psyche or male psyche. Be aware that no every service member fit this psyche profile, but the culture does celebrate it.

3. Question from Allen Vosburg

How can PTSD be made less generalized by the counselor as has become such a predominant diagnosis and focus on the client needs?

Answer

My experience is to concentrate more on life in life terms. That is rather than allow that the PTSD symptoms are the center of the session, that issues of coping with everyday life be the center of focus. Sometimes they overlap, however, the idea is to make the quality of life and enjoying life to be more important than surviving. In fact, this also will serve as a good intervention to work with PTSD symptoms.

4. Question from Merida Valera

How can you reconnect vet and their family if they do not express their feelings?

Answer

My approach is to work with the veteran in a very black and white manner; that is rather than talking about feelings, refer to pain, physical pain and depart from there. It is easier to the veteran to understand and speak of physical pain with others as if they were talking to a regular doctor about a physical injury.



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5. Question from Sylvia Davis

Why are so many soldiers homeless and not able to receive the mental help they need?

Answer

This is more socio-political question than a counseling one, however, if I reframe your question, to why are so many service members with mental health issues end-up homeless. I can give an answer that has to do with trust and betray, as many service members do not trust people that cannot understand their experience and at the same, they feel betray by the same people that they risked their lives to protect.

6. Question from Elisa Niles

How do you address PTSD when its related to military sexual abuse?

Answer

While, there is not an easy solution or answer to this questions, I believe that a good starting point could be to start working with the presenting issue at the time, meaning, if the client brought the sexual about start there and moved slowly into the PTSD as they are interrelated, and it will be impossible to work with one without the other. Nonetheless, the idea is not to traumatize the client again. Remember that you are dealing with two different types of trauma that is one that was a one-time major trauma and another that is it takes place over and over again.

7. Question from Noelle Schappell

Would you explain the role MFLC plays in counseling military members and families? Are military members more open to this than community-based counselors?

Answer

I am assuming that MFLC is to refer to Military & Family Life Counseling program. These programs are designed to help military personnel and their families with the same issues than other mental health services in civilian communities do. I think that always depends on the service member preference and also their experience with the services. That been stated, I also know that many enlisted service members prefer civilian caregivers than anyone tied to the military.

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