

NAVIGATING RAPPORT BUILDING AND THE THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH CULTURALLY DIVERSE CLIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the training, you will be able to...

- Identify the different therapist characteristics that maximize the development and maintenance of a strong therapeutic alliance.
- Identify specific benefits of a strong therapeutic alliance.
- Consider how to identify your own cultural biases, become more mindful of microaggressions, and what to do in case of ruptures in the therapeutic relationship.

DEFINITIONS

- **Rapport**
 - Creating an atmosphere that elicits comfort and trust to talk without judgments/criticism – leads to feeling valued
- **Therapeutic Relationship**
 - Relationship through which therapeutic tasks are undertaken
- **Group Cohesion**
 - The relationships between and among group members with one another and the therapist(s)

(Barker, 1990; Burlingame, McClendong, & Alonso, 2011; Orlinsky, Romstead, & Willutzki, 2004; Sattler, 1998)

BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS

- **Building rapport:**
 - Be warm, empathic, and sensitive
 - Be respectful and responsive
 - Non-escalating mirroring
 - Provide clear information and expectations
 - Elicit questions
 - Bring up obvious cultural issues
 - Take the time to connect
 - Strategies with families/parents
- **Use of translators**

(Cepeda, 2010; Ewens, et al., 2016; Hays, 2008; Sue & Sue, 2015)

DEVELOPING THE THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP/GROUP COHESION

- **It will take time**
 - Cultural factors that impact the TR/GC
 - Get to know the person and the family no conversation is a waste
 - Small talk is not small
 - Rogers (1957) had it right
 - Unconditional positive regard, empathy, and genuineness/congruence
 - Essential, but not sufficient

(Norcross & Lambert, 2011; Sue & Sue, 2015)

POSITIVE REGARD, EMPATHY, AND CONGRUENCE

- **Positive regard**
 - Communicated through respect, care, attitude, **affirmation of inherent worth** – related to positive treatment outcomes
- **Empathy**
 - Understanding client's experience and communicating this understanding – related to treatment success
- **Genuineness/Congruence**
 - Authenticity and honesty in communication, inc. appropriate self disclosure – increases attachment, provides modeling, even more important in group treatment

(Elliot, Bohart, Watson, & Greenberg, 2011; Farber & Doolin, 2011; Kolden, Klein, Wang, & Austin, 2011)

THERAPIST STYLE – WHAT WORKS WITH SEX OFFENDERS

- Empathic, warm, rewarding, directive/reflective
- Use supportive, non-confrontational, challenging
- Supportive and encouraging therapists are more engaging
- Emphasize emotional expression and validate it
- Use appropriate self-disclosure, especially around process
- Use an overall positive and motivational approach
 - Leads to less denial and more engagement in treatment

WHAT IMPACTS THE TR/GC?

- We as clinicians are not free from bias and our biases...
- Impact our ability to empathize cognitively and emotionally
- Impact our ability to help clients, especially around cultural issues or experiences unfamiliar to us
- Raise the risk of committing microaggressions

(Comas-Diaz, 2006; Nelson & Baumgarte, 2004; Sue & Sue, 2015; Vasquez, 2007)

REPAIRING RUPTURES

- **Ruptures in the TR and GC will happen**
 - Microaggressions are fairly common in counseling and have a negative impact
 - Part of “cultural countertransference”
 - Treating cultural issues as cognitive distortions
 - Decreased trust if clinician seen as part of an unjust system
- **Repairing ruptures**
 - Non-defensive stance, validate clients’ experience, accept responsibility, and do not repeat behavior

(Constantine, 2007; Hicks, 2004; Perez Foster, 1998; Safran, Muran, & Eubanks-Carter, 2011)

CONCLUSIONS

THANK YOU
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