

Edson Andrade

The Effective Experiences of Female Therapists Counseling Latino Men

Limited research exists with regard to Latino men who receive counseling. The purpose of this study was to enhance the counseling services provided to Latino men. The increasing gap of female to male therapists, indicates that female therapists will continue to play an important role in providing therapy to this group of men. This study explored the effective approaches and interventions used in counseling Latino male clients through the experiences of female therapists. Four female clinicians with extensive experience counseling Latino men were interviewed. Qualitative analysis revealed seven themes for working with this population: (a) need for cultural awareness, (b) culturally tailored interventions, (c) respect, (d) role models, (e) therapeutic relationship, (f) gender and power differences, and (g) therapist confidence. Results of this study add unique considerations for counselors to successfully engage and connect with Latino male clients. The implications for clinical practice, recommendations for future research, and limitations of the present study were discussed.

Leilani de Castro

After the Diagnosis: Exploring How Counselors Work With Children Affected by Chronic Illness and Their Caregivers

This qualitative study examines counselors' experiences working with chronically ill children and their caregivers. Living with a child diagnosed with a chronic medical condition can have a profound impact on the entire family, not just the child. Three mental health professionals were interviewed through a semi-structured format regarding their experiences working with children affected by chronic illness and their families. Using content analysis of the data gathered from the interviews, four themes emerged: family quality of life, barriers to treatment, therapeutic interventions, and coordination of care. These findings substantiated the results of previous research on chronically ill children and their caregivers.

Amy Cornwall

Healing from Trauma is a Process: Utilizing Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing for a Therapeutic Outcome for Clients with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

Complex Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (CPTSD) is a type of trauma that is repeatedly, prolonged and within specific relationships and circumstances. What makes CPTSD complex is the early childhood/attachment trauma that the client went through with a caregiver or other interpersonal relationship. Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) has been used to treat PTSD, yet the literature is scarce for the efficacy for CPTSD. The present study builds on the foundation of EMDR being a useful therapy for PTSD and for current limited literature to support the usefulness for CPTSD. Four participants were given a semi-structured interview. From the study emerged three themes: (a) effectiveness of EMDR on CPTSD, (b) interventions, and (c) positive outcomes. The results of this study largely confirm the existing literature on PTSD, CPTSD and EMDR, with the participants giving personal positive, success stories of past clients.

Kayla Dean

Utilizing Narrative Therapy to Address Race-Based Trauma Among African American Men

This qualitative study focuses on the ways mental health clinicians address racial trauma with their African American male clients, and explored narrative therapy as an appropriate modality.

Four clinicians were interviewed based on their experience and specialization working with the African American community. Eight major themes emerged in the data: internalized racism, assessment of racial oppression, types of racial incidents, mental health implications of racial trauma, helping clients work through internalized racism, honoring the intersections of identity, therapeutic approaches, and recommendations for clinicians. Results of these findings suggest the effectiveness of narrative therapy when working with African American male clients experiencing racial trauma; however, further research is needed to substantiate this fit. The implications of the research and directions for future research are discussed.

Cristina Diaz

Working with Latino Immigrant Transnational Families During Different Stages of the Migration Process

Many individuals migrate from Latin America to the USA searching for a better life for themselves and their families. During the migration process, Latino immigrant transnational families experience difficult emotions due to prolonged separations, challenging reunifications, discrimination, and possible deportation. The present qualitative study explores techniques, tools, and cultural elements that can assist clinicians as they navigate family therapy with Latino immigrant families. Four clinicians were interviewed to gather information about their experiences working with Latino immigrant families. The interviews were analyzed and six themes emerged including: cultural sensitivity, one size does not fit all, therapeutic tools, identifying underlying feelings, using a strength-based approach, and the impact of the current political climate. The findings provide suggestions for family therapy that may benefit Latino immigrant families, as well as suggestions for future research.

Makenna Engert

Examining How Counselors Use Creativity in Treating Youth Suffering From Post Traumatic Stress

In a qualitative study exploring the use of creativity in treatment, four mental health clinicians were interviewed about their experiences in incorporating creativity into post trauma treatment when working with children and adolescents. Each participant identified with a differing theoretical orientation, such as, art therapy, Gestalt, psychodynamic, and object relations. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded. Five major themes and two subthemes arose from the clinicians shared experiences, including (a) the creative self, (b) a tailored environment, (c) components to recovery, (d) resourcefulness, and (e) avoiding burnout. The participants provided varied definitions of creativity, but unanimously agreed that it not only impactful to integrate creativity into sessions, but also necessary for client and clinician growth. By approaching sessions with unique approaches, participants shared the new levels of depth reached within the therapeutic relationship. Participants emphasized how creativity can be integrated into many components of a successful treatment, some including, using language and metaphors, generating feelings of empowerment, and increasing engagement through the absorption of client's interests. The participants' experiences correlated with the presented literature review while additionally revealing potential areas for future research to further support the ways creativity may impact the therapeutic relationship with the youth population.

Yanet C. Gonzalez

The Uncomfortable Chaos: Understanding How Therapists Use Feminist Approaches to Treat Women with Physical Disabilities Experiencing Intimate Partner Violence

Despite the prominent issue of intimate partner violence in the United States, female survivors with physical disabilities continue to receive limited attention and recognition from mental health researchers. Additionally, there is a crucial disparity of services and accommodations made to this population in comparison to amatory survivors. The present qualitative study explores the ways that therapists conceptualize and work with female survivors with physical disabilities experiencing intimate partner violence. Five mental health professionals were interviewed regarding their experiences related to working with female survivors with physical disabilities utilizing feminist therapeutic approaches. The qualitative data analysis revealed six salient themes within the research: an invisible population, perpetrators viewed as saints, additional barriers, nontraditional forms of abuse, lack of accessibility, and effectiveness of feminist therapeutic approaches. Findings from this study largely confirm the existing body of literature regarding female survivors with physical disabilities experiencing intimate partner violence and offer insight for therapists to conceptualize this population. Implications for therapists working with female survivors with physical disabilities are discussed along with directions for future research.

Marlene Grijalva

Treating Depression as a Family Affair Using Internal Family Systems Theory

Depression affects interpersonal functioning and family relationships in several ways. Symptoms of depression negatively affect the family members of those experiencing depression. When one member of a family is experiencing symptoms of depression there is greater conflict within the family and family members may experience a diminished sense of cohesion and support. When an adult in a family is experiencing depression, there is greater likelihood that other members of the family will experience emotional difficulties. As depression affects the well-being of an external family, this research considers how depression affects the “internal family” of related parts within the human personality according to Internal Family Systems theory. Interventions of acceptance, secure attachment, cognitive reappraisal and self-compassion were identified as effective in treating depression in an external family system. These same interventions were shown to be effective in treating depression as a part of the internal family system.

Kim Kabar

Impact of Social Media on Body Image and Eating Concerns Among Adolescent and Teen Girls

This study explored how social media affects adolescents struggling with eating and body issues. Data were gathered from reviewing research articles and comprehensive interviews with three licensed counselors who specialize in eating disorders. Participants discussed how social media often impacts many of the different underlying issues, such as peer pressure, diet culture, mental illness and family dysfunctions, that often contribute to an individual developing an eating disorder. The therapists reported a strong correlation between the use of social media and the intensification of many of these common underlying issues within food and body issues of adolescents. The participants also shared their current modes of treatment when addressing social media’s impact within their clients’ recoveries and within their overall emotional health. The results of this study suggest that social media use can have a detrimental effect on the recovery

processes of many adolescents and teen girls and continued public awareness of eating disorders and development of social media-specific treatments is necessary.

Jose Limon

The Psychological Impact of Immigration Policies on Latinos

This qualitative study investigates the psychological impact immigration policies have on Latinos and examines possible treatment interventions to apply within this population. Four mental health professionals with experience working within the Latino community were interviewed for the purpose of addressing this issue. Several themes regarding the psychological impact of immigration policies emerged in the data: fear, anxiety, depression, paranoia, alienation and distrust towards the community. The data also revealed three successful treatment interventions: empowering clients by educating them about the immigration process, advocating for clients and helping them find referral sources, and planning and preparing for a potential deportation. Results of this study can give mental health professionals some direction when working with Latinos who come into therapy impacted by anti immigration laws.

Adele Lyman

“Your Place or Mine?” A Midlife Meetup With Regret: How Therapeutic Deepening of the Conversation Helps Women Find a Place of Their Own – With Room to Grow

This qualitative study was conducted to explore the socially contextualized experience of regret as it occurs in midlife adults and women in particular. Bridging youth and old age, midlife offers rich opportunities for growth where converging trajectories of gains and losses meet from across the lifespan. Research on midlife has begun with the large cohort of baby boomers now in their fifties and beyond, yet generalizability is limited to that cohort which came of age during a time of great social change which particularly affected women with its new opportunities. Like midlife, regret bridges past and future and also develops within a particular context. Regret is a common human experience, yet its distress may adversely impact vulnerable individuals. Due to limited research, its development in midlife is not well understood. In the present study, four therapists were interviewed concerning their perspectives on midlife and regret as experienced in their clinical practice and personal lives. Four major themes and twelve minor themes emerged: (a) the midlife experience including themes of mortality, awareness, and evaluation, (b) the social context emphasizing culture and gender, (c) the nature of regret with its distressing backward look encompassing responsibility, judgment, and avoidance, and (d) addressing regret including the midlife therapist, difficulties, and connecting to move forward. Results are discussed within the context of the literature, and clinical implications, areas of future research and limitations of the study are also addressed.

Vi Pham

The Effects of Stigmatizing Persons with Sexual Interests in Children: Exploring Effective Therapeutic Interventions

Persons with sexual interests in children (PSIC) are primarily stigmatized by the public and mental health clinicians due to the various misconceptions and sparse research concerning this population. This qualitative study aims to reduce the stigma toward PSIC, examine factors that influence their interests in children, and gain insight into interventions to treat offending and non-offending PSIC. Six mental health clinicians and one life coach participated in semi-structured interviews either in-person or long-distance, and they shared their experiences

working with non-offending and offending PSIC. After analyzing the data using phenomenological approach, there were seven significant themes including (1) challenges working with PSIC, (2) countertransference issues, (3) re-framing language, (4) developmental factors, (5) therapeutic interventions, (6) misconceptions, and (7) reducing stigma. These results provided valuable data that addressed gaps in the literature review and presented various approaches to treat PSIC.

Evian Mustafa

Surviving War: Developing Culturally Competent Treatment Modalities for Syrian Refugees Experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

This qualitative study examines Syrian refugees suffering with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and the psychological impact from having to flee their war torn homeland and investigates potential treatment interventions to apply when working with this population. Four mental health professionals with diverse backgrounds were interviewed about their experience with the Syrian refugee community. Numerous themes emerged from the data that was noted to be considered when working with Syrian refugees: multiple traumas (e.g. war trauma, acculturation issues), and cultural components (e.g. cultural stigma, gender issues). The data also revealed effective treatment interventions: multiple traumas, cultural components. The data also revealed successful treatment interventions: educating clients on the benefits of mental health, advocating for clients in helping them locate referral sources, and empowering clients by creating a connection and encouraging independence. The results of this study can offer mental health professionals some guidance when working with Syrian refugees who come into therapy after relocating.

Kaitlyn Nguyen

The Cycle of Trauma and EMDR

The cyclical nature of victimization and trauma is apparent when the connection between abuse in early life and sexual offence in adulthood is examined. Furthermore, there is also evidence that raise the concern of offence related trauma among the forensic population. Despite the integrative approaches of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy- Relapse Prevention (CBT-RP) model being commonly adopted within the offender field, there appeared to be mixed views on its efficacy rendering it a controversial subject. Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) is a trauma resolution approach based on the Adaptive Information Processing (AIP) model that has been shown to be effective as an adjunct treatment to the standard sex offender treatment program. A semi-structured qualitative study was done with four licensed clinicians trained in EMDR to examine the efficacy of EMDR treatment with sex offenders. The resulting themes include the reality of working with the population of sex offenders, clinicians' application of EMDR as an adjunct treatment, the importance of the therapeutic alliance, and the challenges facing both clients and treating providers. The clinical implications, gaps, and limitations of the present study are discussed.

Kayleigh Kendrick Soto

The Healing Power of Horses: Exploring How Therapists Use Equine Therapy to Work with Sexually Abused Youth

This study examined the use of equine therapy with sexually abused youth. Five clinicians were interviewed about their experiences regarding using horses as a therapeutic modality when

working with this population. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded; qualitative analysis revealed nine themes and twenty subthemes. The participants expressed that equine therapy appeared to work well with sexually abused youth because it is an experiential, non-traditional approach that is faster, immediate, and more child-friendly than traditional couch therapy. The horses seem to be able to connect well with children and adolescents, they help repair violated boundaries and instincts, teach congruence, fight co-dependency, provide support and safety, allow for use of metaphors and are non-judgmental, insightful and intuitive. The benefits of herd work and the influence of EAGALA are also discussed. The participants' responses correlated with the literature reviewed while also raising possible future areas of research to further support equine therapy when working with this population. This study found that participants felt that horses act as co-therapists and provide an additional layer that therapists cannot. Equine therapy should be further researched, particularly the intuitive nature of horses.

Alexandra Tillapaugh

Treatment Considerations for the Children and Adolescents of Parents with Bipolar Disorder

This study examines treatment considerations and interventions for working with children and adolescents whose parents have Bipolar Disorder (BD). Much of the available research on this population explores the risks, outcomes, and characteristics of these offspring. However, the research is limited in regard to treatment of this population. The available research was reviewed and presented. The review of the literature explored outcomes and risks for the offspring of parents with BD, personal experiences of the offspring, and treatment considerations based on the already available research. In the present qualitative study, four mental health professionals, who have experience in working with this population, were interviewed using a semi-structured format. The data were gathered and analyzed from the participants to identify emerging themes. From the data, nine themes arose: (1) having unconditional positive regard for the client, (2) aiding the client in developing positive relationships, (3) increasing their ability to regulate emotions, (4) increasing their ability to communicate with others in a healthy manner, (5) development of relaxation skills, (6) psychoeducation, (7) empowering and building the client's sense of self, (8) identifying and increasing support for the client, (9) and working with this population's parent and family. The findings from this study may offer insight and be used as a guide for working with this population. Implications for counselors and possible areas for future research are also discussed.

Ngoc Tran

Shadows Over My Rainbow: Exploring How Counselors Treat Immigrant Mothers With History of Pregnancy Loss

The treatment of pregnancy loss has been scarcely addressed and lacking appropriate mental health support services despite its prevalence among women of all ethnicities and its persisting negative effects on women's life quality and emotional health. Women of immigrant backgrounds have been found to have poor outcomes in reproductive health and mental health due to their socioeconomic disadvantages and barriers in accessing mental health services. In the present study, three mental health professionals were interviewed regarding their experiences helping ethnically diverse and socioeconomically disadvantaged women in various mental health issues specifically related to the experience of pregnancy loss. Using qualitative data analysis, 10 major themes emerged from the study, including: (1) loss of the assumptive world; (2) expressions of grief; (3) unspoken messages for rainbow babies; (4) "everyone is on their own

journey with grief”; (5) working with grieving immigrant mothers; (6) isolation, bad company, and good company; (7) counselors’ own process and challenges; (8) counselors’ therapeutic interventions; (9) feel the grief; and (10) “working with dead babies is terrible.” Results from the study support similar findings in current literature while providing important implications for the field of counseling, emphasizing the need of adequate training and cultural competency both in working with immigrant population and in treating women’s grief and loss of a baby. Future research is needed to further establish the efficacy of other therapeutic approaches on immigrant women such as narrative therapy.

Maria Valencia

Childhood Trauma: Using Narrative Therapy with Young Adults

Trauma research has focused on manualized treatment protocols, cognitive-behavioral, exposure and desensitization, diagnosis, and re-traumatization, largely leaving out post-modern Narrative therapy approaches. Narrative therapy has been underutilized as an evidence-based trauma therapy modality, possibly due to qualitative data-gathering and phenomenologically-conscious methodology. Furthermore, existing literature has provided limited data on the specific use of narrative therapy with young adult childhood trauma survivors. The current study examined the qualitatively gathered and coded interviews of four (4) narrative clinicians, elaborating key factors—‘Personal Life Philosophy,’ ‘Co-created Meaning-making Experiences’, a ‘Non-pathologizing Stance’, and ‘Connection’—reported effective in work with young adult childhood trauma survivors.

Trinity Wang

Brave New World: How Mental Health Professionals Help International Students and Immigrant Students with their Acculturation Journey

Students are often under stress related to their interpersonal relationship and academic performances; however, international students and immigrant students have additional stressors that they have to manage. This qualitative study explores how mental health clinicians assist both international students and immigrant students in the United States on their acculturative process. Previous studies mostly focus on the correlations between each acculturative stressors and depressive symptoms, yet rarely discuss the approaches and interventions when working with such population. Five mental health clinicians, including one Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT), two Marriage and Family Therapists Intern (MFTi), one School Counselor, and one Licensed Social Worker, who work closely with international students and immigrant students were interviewed. Nine salient themes appear from the semi-structured interviews and they are divided into 3 areas: common presenting concerns (language barrier, value conflicts, and social support), variations in students’ experiences (demographic variables, and attachment styles), and intervention and approach (psychoeducation, therapeutic roles, acts as a bridge, and current trend). Current study also provides insights into what a mental health clinician can do to reach out and provide counseling to international students and immigrant students.

Brittany Webb

Family Interventions in Hospice and End of Life Care

This study explores the use of a Family Systems approach with hospice families. A review of relevant literature was conducted, and three mental health clinicians were interviewed for their experience in working with hospice families. This study utilized a semi-structured interview

format, where participants were asked open-ended questions that were informed by the review of the literature. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and subjected to data analysis. The themes that emerged included: the conceptualization of death, prognosis effects, family and patient grief process, application of family systems, client directed therapy, spirituality, meaning, and counter transference and therapist values. Implications for therapy and discussion of future research were addressed.

Summer Yoast

A Return to the Roots: The Use of Nature in Therapeutic Practice with Inner-City Populations

Abstract: This project examines how counselors implement nature-based interventions with clients from inner city and highly urbanized populations in an attempt to understand how nature might be harnessed as a clinical resource. With rising rates of trauma and daily experiences of systemic pressures and stress, results are interpreted in regard to the potential of utilizing nature as an intervention. Relevant literature on nature as an intervention, and inner-city inhabitants as a population is reviewed and results of the present study are discussed in the context current practice and future research. The characteristics of nature-based interventions, first-hand observations and experience, and implications with specific populations are analyzed.