

COUN 597 Spring 2017

Abigail Abraham Jones

A Harm Reduction Approach: Pragmatism and Addiction Treatment

The disease model conceptualization of addiction has dictated addiction treatment interventions for the past few decades. Twelve-step programs and other widespread abstinence-based treatment protocols are the dominant interventions in the field currently. This study explores the use of non-abstinence based interventions for addiction. Three mental health professionals were interviewed regarding their experience using harm reduction approaches. Using qualitative data analysis, the following themes emerged from the data: the need for a holistic approach to addiction treatment, the power of honesty in shame reduction, an addiction is an addiction is an addiction, coinciding trauma, the *synthetic mother theory*, empathy and understanding of self as important counselor traits, and evolving and changing beliefs about addiction as a disease. Recommendations for treatment and future research were discussed calling for the need for an individualized approach to addiction treatment and a greater understanding of the recovery process of addictive disorders.

Christina Boontanond

The Struggles of 2nd Generation Southeast Asian Americans: Examining the Use of Yoga and Mindfulness.

Concerns in mental health disparities among second generation Southeast Asian American are present in the rise of psychological stress and disorders. The present qualitative study examines cultural barriers and their respective challenges through the use of yoga and mindfulness as a component to therapy. Four therapist adept in multicultural counseling participated in semi-structured interviews. Data was analyzed using a phenomenological approach and revealed four major themes. The major themes that emerged were: (1) barriers and challenges (2) psychoeducation (3) therapist role and (4) yoga and mindfulness.

Megan Katherine Bless Bonyng

“You’re Not Going Crazy, You’re Going Sane” : Treating Dissociative Identity Disorder with Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing

Treating Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) is a complex, difficult process. Treatment as usual includes using trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy and stage-based treatment. Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) has been used to treat DID, though the research on this topic is sparse, consisting mainly of editorials and case studies. The present study seeks to answer the question of how expert clinicians experience treating DID through EMDR, their advice, how they treat dissociative clients, what they find to be efficacious, and what they advise against. Five participants were given a semi-structured interview, either in person or via video chat. The transcripts were then transcribed and coded by two independent coders. From the study emerged five main themes having to do with the nature of DID, how EMDR can help, the importance of safety, the therapist’s approach, and factors relating to the client. The results of this study largely confirm the existing body of literature on both DID and EMDR, with the participants giving details and personal accounts of cases previously treated. The implications of this study are exciting; these clinicians find EMDR to be a faster, more

effective, less invasive way of treating the complex condition of DID. Future studies may wish to fill the need for randomized controlled trials comparing EMDR to TF-CBT in short-term treatment or symptom reduction of DID, as well as additional longitudinal studies of EMDR treatment of DID.

Caitlin Bourgaize

There's Safety in Numbers: Exploring the Efficacy of School-Based Group Therapy Interventions for Adolescent Males with Externalizing Behaviors

Challenging externalized behaviors have been commonly observed within the school context, yet there is little research pertaining to the benefits of school-based group therapeutic interventions to support adolescent males displaying challenging externalized behaviors. Additionally, there has been a lack of focus on the qualitative experiences of clinicians working within the school context. This qualitative study was done to determine the efficacy and potential uses of school-based group therapeutic interventions for this population by conducting qualitative interviews with 4 clinicians within a school district. Each interview provided qualitative information regarding clinicians' experiences working directly with this population utilizing group therapy, as well as working within the school system. 5 major themes were discovered, including (a) student experiences with externalizing behaviors, (b) counselor process, (c) group therapy process in schools, (d) family, and (e) working within the school system. Results from the present study both agreed with and contradicted current research, and provided implications for continued research and clinical work.

Lisa Catanzaro

Building Rapport with the Uninvolved Parent: Adlerian Therapy Interventions

The present study looked at the importance of building rapport with uninvolved parents whose child is in therapy, with the utilization of Adlerian therapy interventions. A review of the literature outlined the impact uninvolved parents have on the child in psychotherapy and the process itself, the importance of empathizing and building rapport, and the inclusion of Adlerian therapy interventions to engage parents. The present study used a semi-structured qualitative interview format, interviewing three licensed therapists on their experiences working with uninvolved parents. Six major themes emerged from the data: (a) creating rapport, (b) significance of collaboration, (c) importance of parental involvement, (d) incorporating theory, (e) therapeutic setting, and (f) advocacy and additional support. The findings from the present study seemed to be supportive of the data that was reviewed from the literature. There were correlations in respect to the importance of building rapport with parents, as well as the need for collaboration throughout treatment. Furthermore, there were similarities regarding the absence of parental involvement and the negative impacts not only on the treatment process itself, but the parent-child relationship as well. Implications for the field of counseling, areas of future research, and limitations are discussed.

Christopher Chanes-Mets

Opening the Birdcage: How Couples Therapy Can Help Gay Men Navigate Nonmonogamous Relationships

Historically, little research has examined how clinicians can support gay men navigating nonmonogamous relationships. Given the commonality of such relationships in the gay community as well as its appearance in others, clinicians need to be prepared to manage discussions about this topic. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four mental health professionals with extensive experience in conducting couples therapy with gay men navigating nonmonogamous relationships. Interviews were then transcribed and analyzed for major themes and sub-themes. Five major themes emerged from the data: features of nonmonogamous relationships, the creation and implication of a gay male identity, therapeutic modalities, the importance of ethnicity, and the therapist's own bias. These findings provide important implications about how clinicians can sensitively support gay men navigating nonmonogamous relationships.

Gina Clemente

Exploring the Process of Addressing Severe Emotion Dysregulation with College Students

This qualitative study explores the process of addressing severe emotion dysregulation with college students in therapy. College students with severe mental health issues are becoming more prevalently treated in college counseling centers. It is challenging to address these issues as counseling centers only have a limited amount of resources available and often enforce session limitations. Four clinicians were interviewed based on their experience in working with severe emotion dysregulation in a college setting. Five major themes emerged from the participants: (a) features and challenges pertaining to the college student population, (b) importance of the therapeutic relationship, (c) interventions, (d) unique diagnostic considerations of borderline personality disorder (BPD), and (e) exploring culture. While the results indicated that various modalities were considered to be effective in working with this population, including cognitive behavioral therapy, dialectical behavioral therapy, and mindfulness-based therapy, all of the participants agreed that the therapeutic relationship plays an essential role in treatment. Additionally, there are implications that the stigma associated with BPD may impact treatment outcomes. Furthermore, suggestions for clinicians, areas for future research, and limitations are discussed.

Omar De La Vega

Examining the Assessment of Cultural Differences in Intercultural Couples with Narrative Therapy

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to examine the assessment of intercultural couples using narrative theory in treatment. The study provided a cultural framework for clinicians to use while helping intercultural couples cope with cultural differences. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five practicing clinicians. Data was analyzed using a phenomenological approach to synthesize emerging themes. Results indicated that intercultural couples may decrease relationship problems by examining their respective cultures. Four primary themes were identified: (a) the template of upbringing, (b) exposing culture sensitively, (c) common ground, and (d) guidelines for therapists. These findings were supported by previous research in the field of intercultural couple relationships.

Elizabeth Deweese*An Exploration of Family Therapy with LGBTQ Adolescents and their Parents/Caregivers*

Current research on LGBTQ adolescents supports the fact that people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and questioning (LGBTQ) are at a higher risk for depression, suicide, suicidal ideation and substance abuse. These risk factors have been shown to be exacerbated during the coming out process because of many factors including minority stress, victimization and rejection from their communities and families. Such research implies a need for family based interventions with LGBTQ youth. Because there is currently a lack of research in this area, the current study aims to explore the process of family therapy with LGBTQ youth during the coming out process. The researchers aimed to do this by interviewing 4 counselors and psychologists who had experience working with LGBTQ individuals and their families. The interview followed a semi-structured format and each participant was asked the same series of open-ended questions. The themes that emerged from the interviews were as follows: (a) minimal experiences with coming out in family settings, (b) qualities of the therapist, (c) specific ethical and legal issues, (d) psychoeducation and (e) culture. These findings provide implications for counselors in the field as well as counselor educators and supervisors. Further research is needed in this area to substantiate findings from this study.

Sylvana Elali*Counselors' Experience Working with Second Generation Arab-Americans Struggling with Adjustment*

The purpose of this study is to further enhance counselors' cultural competency in working with Arab Americans and in utilizing culturally sensitive approaches in counseling this population. Qualitative interviews were conducted with four marriage and family therapists who are experienced in working with diverse Arab and Arab-American clients in the community. Results yielded to main themes of: (a) Difficulty in Identity Formation, (b), Assimilation versus Integration, (c) Psychoeducation, (d) Pushing Against Stigma, and (e) Person-Centered Approach/Seeking Curiosity. Further research is needed toward Arab refugees dealing with trauma and aiming to culturally adjust into mainstream American society and to contribute to the current research and enable counselors to obtain therapeutic tools to counsel clients.

Chelsea Givran*Exploring the Generational Characteristics of Millennial Couples Dealing with Infidelity: EFT Therapists' Perspectives*

Each generation is raised in an environmental context that impacts romantic relationships. Infidelity in relationships has been identified as a source of interpersonal trauma. Considering the prevalence of infidelity, technological communication, and changing views of marriage, it is relevant to inquire about the unique characteristics of the millennial generation regarding romantic relationships. This qualitative study focuses on emotionally focused therapy (EFT) clinicians' experiences with millennial couples dealing with infidelity and how they provide therapy from an EFT orientation. Five therapists were interviewed about their experiences and perspectives. Themes that emerged from data were (a) getting millennial couples into therapy, (b) coupling issues of

the millennial generation, (c) shame preventing progression in the relationship, (d) emotion regulation, and (e) couples who make it. Results indicate that millennials often experience different challenges around coupling compared to those of previous generations. Limitations and suggestions for future research are also discussed.

Riley Harper

Clinical Perspectives on Addressing Sexual Difficulties in Mormon Couples with culturally Competent Interventions

Sex is a basic biological drive, like thirst and hunger, experienced by all living animals. Except for humans, sex is more complicated. A litany of psychological, societal, and relational factors affect individuals' sexual drives, appetites, and behaviors in a variety of ways. With so many complex and interweaving factors, people's sex lives are subject to difficulty, dysfunction, and dissatisfaction. Even though all humankind is subject to these difficulties, culture affects the context in which these difficulties are experienced, manifested, and treated. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, with their distinct history and belief system, have formed a unique culture all their own. This qualitative study explored the different ways that this culture both influences sexual difficulties in the targeted population of Mormon couples and contributes to their treatment. Furthermore, the study discussed different culturally competent modalities that might be effective in treatment with this population. The conclusion was drawn that although Cognitive Behavioral Therapy could be considered as a standard of treatment for the LDS (Latter-Day Saints, or Mormon) population at large, Emotion Focused Therapy appears to be the most culturally effective method in treating Mormon couples experiencing sexual difficulties. The data were gathered and conclusions drawn from a review of the published research literature regarding Mormons and sexuality as well as from interviews with four clinician participants who work with Mormon couples experiencing sexual difficulties.

Aaron Hatcher

Developing Parenting Skills of Childhood Sexual Abuse Survivors

Childhood sexual abuse has been shown through research to have long lasting repercussions on both men and women. Research suggests that childhood sexual abuse will affect an individual's parenting capabilities later in life. There is a small body of research that examines the process of a childhood sexual abuse survivor entering therapy and the individual experiencing a diminishment in parenting capabilities due to abuse reminders and the uncovering of repressed trauma. This project explores how an individual's parenting capabilities can be maintained and strengthened throughout the course of therapy for childhood sexual abuse. Four therapists were interviewed in this study in order to understand their methodology of working with parents and childhood sexual abuse survivors. The present study explores the theories, interventions, and opinions of therapists working with this population. Some of the participants presented with integrative approaches to the therapeutic process, while others held more strictly to a particular theory.

Casey Kohn

Breaking the Silence: Effective Treatment for Individuals and Couples Struggling with Infertility

The present study explored counselors' experiences in counseling infertile clients. A review of the literature outlined the impact of infertility on various life domains, coping strategies employed by infertile individuals, cultural influences on the infertility experience, evidence-based treatments, and gender differences. A semi-structured interview protocol was utilized to interview four clinicians on their experiences counseling infertile clients. Phenomenological reduction was used and six major themes emerged from the data: (a) client characteristics, (b) personal experience of the clinician, (c) psychological and emotional challenges, (d) impact on relationships, (e) gender differences, and (f) treatment. Implications for the field of counseling, areas of future research, and limitations are discussed.

Jessica Leone

Therapist's Experience of Treating Depression within the Contexts of Aging and Gender through Narrative Therapy Technique

This qualitative study examines the counselor's experience in working with older adults suffering from depression. More specifically, gender and narrative therapy techniques were also key components that were considered as areas of focus. Current literature, in addition to data from four semi-structured interviews, was utilized to reach multiple conclusions. From these interviews with mental health providers who specialize in working with aging and older adults, an understanding of mental health concerns with micro and macro levels of ageism, this population's need for expression, the process of story telling, and counselor's attitudes and choice of intervention was gained. This project provides insight into the influence of age-and-gender-based cultural beliefs on mental health and the unique experiences of professionals that work with the older adult population in southern California and treat these concerns.

Nicole Nishimura

A Double Bind: Examining the Cultural Aspects of Social Anxiety Disorder in Asian Americans

This qualitative study explores the nexus between mental health diagnosis and treatment of Asian Americans with social anxiety disorder, with specific focus on culturally adapted cognitive behavioral therapy (CA-CBT) as a potentially effective therapeutic intervention. Participants in this study were selected based on their interest and use of multicultural counseling with Asian Americans. Three licensed clinicians were interviewed using a semi-structured interview format. Six major themes emerged from this research, including: (1) Asian Americans' negative perception of mental health counseling, (2) consideration of the therapist-client ethnic match, (3) conflicting ideas about a directive therapeutic approach, (4) the importance of recognizing generational status of clients, (5) effects of cultural misunderstandings, and (6) the role of parental expectations in contributing to symptoms. Results from this study may assist mental health professionals in their efforts to recognize the cultural considerations affecting Asian Americans who are diagnosed with social anxiety disorder and may help inform the treatment modality used by clinicians when working with this population. More broadly, the insights gathered from this study have the potential to create a greater

understanding of the value framework of Asian Americans and their perception and use of mental health services.

Ines Osorio

Treating Addiction to Marijuana or Alcohol among Latinos and Hispanics using Motivational Interviewing

The Latino/a and Hispanic population in the United States keeps growing. With the increase of this population, more clinical issues rise to the surface. One of these clinical issues is the treatment of addictions. There is limited research on the treatment of addiction to marijuana or alcohol among the Latino/a and Hispanic population. This qualitative study explores the use of *motivational interviewing* (MI) to treat addiction to marijuana or alcohol among Latinos/as and Hispanics. There are many Latinos/as and Hispanics who struggle with addiction to marijuana or alcohol and this focus was important to gather information on treating this population using a treatment modality that adheres to the cultural values of Latinos/as and Hispanics. Four clinicians were interviewed to gather information about their experience using MI to treat addiction among Latinos/as and Hispanics. Five major themes were analyzed in the data: (a) drive behind addiction, (b) culture, (c) motivation, (d) participant's use of MI, and (e) integration. The results demonstrated that MI is an effective way to treat addiction to marijuana or alcohol among Latinos/as and Hispanics because this treatment modality adheres to the cultural implications in treatment of this population and suggests alternative ways to treat addiction to marijuana or alcohol. The results of this study suggest further research to better understand addiction among this population and better understand the efficacy of MI.

Reina Peterson

Childhood Emotional Abuse: A Proactive Approach to Treatment in the Family

When compared to childhood physical and sexual abuse, emotional abuse is a fairly new research topic with relation to long-term effects and consequences. However, the research that has been done has shown that emotionally abusive words can have long-lasting damaging effects on the child who receives them. Research regarding therapeutic treatment of childhood emotional abuse has highlighted how therapists can work with individuals who experienced childhood emotional abuse as they get older; yet, little research was found with respect to providing therapy for the family as a whole when emotional abuse is occurring. Four licensed clinicians with practice in family therapy were interviewed regarding their experience working with families when parent-to-child emotional abuse is present. While each therapist had a unique experience in working with families, several themes were found to be consistent with the research including the subjectivity of defining emotional abuse and noticeable effects of emotional abuse. Themes found in this study, but not identified in the research, were related to how therapists can help families come together and improve their relationships in the hopes of decreasing emotional abuse. Overall, results from this study provide implications for how therapists can conduct family therapy when emotional abuse is present with suggestions for future research on this topic.

Chiara M. Polzonetti

Exploring the Use of Family Therapy with the Aging Family

The present study explored the experience of mental health practitioners working with families and grandparents. Some literature on family therapy and grandparents in the caregivers' role report on the effects of aging and an increase in family diversity. Still, little is known about how practitioners work with the specific needs of this population. The purpose of this preliminary qualitative study was to explore how mental health practitioners experience families with grandparents-caregivers, how they conceptualize the families and grandparents they meet, how they navigate the different needs across generations, and how they choose culturally sensitive interventions. Five Participants were interviewed. The collected data was transcribed and analyzed to identify main themes and secondary themes. The results show the following themes and subthemes (in parenthesis): features unique to working with families and grandparents (acculturation); challenges of the grandparents to grandparents-caregivers' role-change (grief and loss; ambivalence); patterns of behaviors across generations; the trauma of the missing generation (ambivalence); the grandparents-grandchild relationship (generativity); intergenerational differences; evidence-based interventions. Implications for the field of counseling, limitations, and future research are discussed.

Cesar Rauda Rodriguez

Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT)/Dog Training Programs in Correctional Facilities with Inmates to Reduce Recidivism Rates

This study explores AAT/ dog training programs at correctional facilities with inmates to reduce recidivism rates. Past and current research was examined, and three mental health care practitioner were interviewed that use AAT and equine-assisted therapy (EAT). These mental health care practitioners expressed the profound effects of AAT with their clients. There were a few themes that transpired across the research and the interviews. The evidence of the findings support AAT as an effective treatment with this population and other populations. In addition, this project provides insight into the benefits of therapist who use therapy dogs.

Franco Romauldez

Bipolar Disorder and Trauma through a Psychoanalytic Lens

Individuals with bipolar disorder often experience various early childhood traumas. These mental health issues are not typically addressed in unison. Today, treatment for both rely heavily on the medical model. For some, the medical model, with its companioned interventions often fall short of bringing the individual to a level where he or she feels is optimal. For some, a grater and deeper level of healing required. As a result, this study aims to elucidate how psychoanalytic conceptions and interventions can bring greater healing to these individuals, especially in cases where depressive states are prolific and increasingly intense. Counselors who were interviewed in the process of conducting this essay expressed their belief that the therapeutic alliance, especially where the clinician and client are exploring early childhood trauma, can be healing in that it allows the individual to practice emotional regulation skills. Here, the client is able to feel acknowledged and respected without shame, which in the belief of other analysts, can make the individual whole.

Melissa Smith*Treating Children and Adolescents: The Intersection of Socioeconomic and Family Systems*

This project explores the relationship between socioeconomic status, mental illness, and family factors for children and adolescents in order to identify what constitutes effective and competent care for low-income children and adolescents suffering from mental illness. A review of the literature concerning mental health treatment for this population explores the relationship between socioeconomic status and mental health, the significance of family systems in children's development and well-being, and what constitutes competent care for children and adolescents as well as low-income clients. Three clinicians experienced in working with low-income children and adolescents and their families were interviewed. Their interviews were then analyzed to identify common themes regarding characteristics of this population as well as factors that contribute to competent and effective treatment. The results of this study align with previous research and also add to our understanding of how best to help low-income children and adolescents suffering from mental illness.

Jessica Wellins*Exploring the Use of Sandtray Treatment for Anxiety in Hispanic Children*

This study was conducted in order to understand the experience of anxiety in children of the southern California Hispanic community, as well as how a clinician may consider these cultural implications in psychotherapy treatment. The more recent divided political climate and greater American cultural shifts between social progress and minority discrimination have provided opportunities to recognize the importance of children's mental health. It is ethically responsible to provide culturally effective therapy in order to address the needs of a growing population of young individuals, often unvoiced until behavioral issues arise. Sandtray therapy may be utilized as an effective nonverbal means of processing difficult and non-linear psychological material, making it the creative therapeutic modality of choice for many therapists and clients. After reviewing literature and interviewing professionals in the field, the research suggests a client-treatment fit for this modality.

Bree Wells*Examining How Therapists Work With Childbirth Trauma in Postpartum Women*

The effect of childbirth trauma in postpartum women is emerging as an important area for clinical study. The literature suggested that there has been an increase in the study of effective diagnosis and timely treatment over the past 20 years, but the clinical population has yet to receive the full benefit of these studies. Based on the current research, postpartum women receive limited care and few clients are presenting for therapy. Four therapists were selected for their experience in working with women during the postpartum period. The most common modalities used were cognitive behavioral therapy and eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy. This study focused on six major themes (a) increasing awareness of PPD/P-PTSD (b) features unique to working with the population (c) internal risk factors (d) barriers to treatment (e) treatment and (f) vicarious trauma. The findings suggest that changes in the medical model women might include increased mental health screenings after childbirth, better awareness among

medical providers of the risk factors for the development of P-PTSD, educating women about the benefits of postpartum counseling, and better training of obstetric healthcare providers could improve outcomes for women who experience trauma during childbirth.

Yuki Yoshida

Defining and Exploring Asian Americans' Experiences with Death and Non-Death Loss Through Group Process Therapy

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and gain an understanding of how mental health practitioners utilize group process therapy in order to assist Asian Americans in coping with the effects and impacts of death and non-death loss. Current literature regarding Asian Americans, their experiences with loss as well as group therapy were reviewed. For this study, five participants that work have worked with Asian Americans in a group therapy setting where loss has come up in some capacity were interviewed through a semi-structured questionnaire regarding their experiences. The interviews were transcribed by the researcher. After the data was analyzed by a data analysis team, four major themes and thirteen minor themes were revealed. This included: (1) Asian cultural values encompassing family, shame and guilt, and emotional expression (2) the therapist and their roles, connections with the population and utilization of psychoeducation to normalize therapy (3) process group therapy and group members' dynamics emphasizing elements of group cohesion, intra-ethnic and intergenerational differences, interactions and communication styles (4) death and non-death loss in defining it, finding connection as well as disconnection after loss and the coping styles Asian Americans implement. The study concludes with clinical implications, directions for future research as well as limitations of the study.

Christina J. Zehnder

One Size Does Not Fit All: Exploring Psychotherapy for Adults with BED

It is estimated that binge eating disorder (BED) affects 1-5% percent of the population, making it the most common eating disorder in the United States (Hudson, Hiripi, & Pope, 2007). Despite its prevalence, it remains a stigmatized and misunderstood mental health diagnosis. The purpose of the present study is to explore the ways in which psychotherapy is used to treat adults with BED. Using a semi-structured interview procedure, 4 licensed clinicians were interviewed on their experiences treating adults with BED. A qualitative analysis of the data yielded 7 major themes: (a) features unique to the population, (b) risk factors, (c) emotional dysregulation, (d) diet mentality, (e) treatment process, (f) age, and (g) eating disorder commonalities. Results are compared to current literature, while clinical implications, areas for future research, and limitations of the study are also discussed. Findings from this study may add to our knowledge of developing more suitable and sensitive approaches to working with this population.