Intergenerational Trauma and Parenting: Parenting through Trauma

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Personal/Professional Background

- Family Therapy
- Parent Group
- Systems/Symptoms
Literature Review:
Parenting Through Trauma
“How does trauma impact parenting?”

- What disruptions does trauma cause to parenting?
- What are some of the parenting outcomes when the parent is dealing with unresolved trauma?
- What are potential outcomes for children (behavioral, emotional, etc.)?
- How does unresolved trauma impact family functioning?
Themes

Parent’s Mental Health

Parent’s History of Childhood Abuse

Parenting in a War Zone
Parental Mental Health

- Parent’s Level of Functioning
- Attachment Styles
- Pressures on Child
- Externalizing/Internalizing Behaviors
Parental History of Childhood Abuse

- Unpredictability and Chaos
- Role Reversal
- Emotional Dysregulation
- Repeating Cycles of Abuse
Parenting in a War Zone

Survival Mode

Authoritarian Parenting Style

Self-Doubt as a Parent

Communication
Refugees and Secondary Traumatization

- Trauma of Refugee Camp
- Feelings of Isolation
- Language Barrier
- American Ethno-Racial Hierarchy
Family Separation

- Vulnerable Populations
- Forced Removal
- Breaking Bonds
- Psychological/Emotional Impact
Application: Parenting through Trauma
Questions:

• How might you proceed with this client?
• What themes from the literature seem most salient?
• What questions seem important to ask?
• How might your work differ for this client given their background? How might it remain the same?
Case Vignette #1

- Maya is a 35 y/o mother of two who was recently diagnosed with depression. Her diagnosis occurred around the same time that her husband was deported. She has been feeling more tired lately, has withdrawn from family/friends and cries more often. She reports finding herself more irritable with the children and yelling at them for the smallest of things. She reports having panic attacks which leave her feeling drained. Maya reports that her oldest child has begun checking in on her to make sure she’s okay. Maya feels guilty about the undue responsibility her child has taken and worries about how her own mental health is impacting her children.
Case Vignette #2

• Monica tells you that she was contacted by the guidance counselor at her daughter’s school after a teacher expressed concern that her daughter Nia always seems exhausted in class. Upon further discussion Monica shared that she feels guilty because she frequently wakes her daughter up night to talk and feels like she needs her support, but now Nia’s grades are slipping. Monica is worried that it’s her fault. You know from earlier sessions that Monica is a survivor of childhood sexual abuse.
Case Vignette #3

- In your counseling session, Anya tells you that her mother is strict with her. Even though she is in high school, her mother waits by the door for her to return. Her mother becomes anxious and upset if Anya is even a couple of minutes late coming home. She doesn’t let her spend time with friends or join any extracurricular activities. Based on your history of working with Anya, you know that they’ve been in the country for a little over a year. You are aware that they lived in a country that had a civil war but are unsure of how much they were exposed to while back home.
Case Vignette #4

- Mr. Patel was referred to you by his primary care provider. Per his provider, Mr. Patel has reported somatic symptoms such as headache, fatigue and stomach pain. Mr. Patel reports these symptoms started after he moved out of his son’s home. Mr. Patel is new to the country and had been living with his son and his family. Recently, his son and wife told him they would like their space and Mr. Patel moved out. When asked about his previous living situation, Mr. Patel shared that he lived with his wife, kids, and grandkids in his house in India.
Case Vignette #5

Your client, Catalina, was referred to your practice after concerns from her case worker and foster mother. Catalina has been having outbursts at school and showing aggression at home. On the referral form, you were given this brief summary of Catalina’s background:

Catalina and her father, Carlos, came to the California border after fleeing from Guatemala. Carlos reported being extorted and threatened by local gang members. Upon arriving in California, Carlos was arrested for entering the country illegally and placed in a detention center in California. Catalina was taken to a foster family in New York. Carlos was not told of his daughter’s whereabouts and was not allowed to speak with her. A month later, the father was returned to Guatemala without his daughter.
Final Reflections

- Resilience
- Awareness
- Community
- Support
Thank You!
References:

References:


