Case Conceptualization Series

Culturally Informed therapy for Schizophrenia (CIT-S): A Family Focused Intervention

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Culturally Informed Therapy for Schizophrenia (CIT-S)

1) Family Collectivism

2) Education

3) Spiritual Coping

4) Communication Training

5) Problem-Solving Skills Training

Case 3 -Spirituality

Noor is a 55 y/o, married Sunni Muslim Pakistani woman on disability, diagnosed with schizophrenia. She is attending CIT-S with her husband Hashim. Outside of three relapses triggered by big life changes, Noor mostly struggles with negative symptoms (e.g., asociality, low motivation). Noor scheduled a mental health appointment because she has been struggling to get out of bed. She explains, "What is keeping me in bed is a jinn holding me down. It stops me from doing my prayers and makes me lazy. I should do my wudhu and pray, but once I get out of practice, I feel guilty and avoid it." Her husband is becoming increasingly annoyed with her because she no longer helps around the house with the cooking and cleaning and does not seem interested in communicating with their adult children when they call on the phone and visit.

Thoughts about this case? Anything you will want to especially explore in this module?

Phase Three

Spiritual Coping

Spiritual Coping

- Helps tap into spiritual/existential beliefs
  - Spiritual history in which discuss:
    - Beliefs about God, morality, meaning or purpose of life
    - Participation in religious communities
    - Spiritual supports they have or would like to have
    - Spiritual practices, such as forgiveness

Handout 9:
Religion & Spirituality

Religion and Spirituality

The following are questions to help guide discussion on religion and spirituality.

Religious/Spiritual Background

- In which religious tradition were you raised?
- Is religion or spirituality important to you?
- What do these terms mean to you?

Current Religious/Spiritual Views

- What is your concept of God or a higher power?
- What is your main religious or spiritual identity?
- What effect does religion/spirituality have on you today?
- What is the role of prayer or meditation in your life?
- What is the primary content of your prayers or your main thoughts during meditation?
- What religious/spiritual beliefs and values are important to you? How are they applied in your daily life?
- What religious rituals and practices are important to you?
- Do your religious and spiritual beliefs influence the way you look at problems, such as mental illness, and the way you think about your health?
- What religious or spiritual issues, if any, have caused problems in your relationships?
- If resolved, how did you resolve them?

Potential Pitfalls

- What if participants don't believe in God? (10%)

Handout 10:
Philosophical Beliefs

Existential and Philosophical Beliefs

The following are questions to help guide discussion on existential and philosophical beliefs.

Existential/Philosophical Background

- Were you raised in any spiritual tradition?
- What are your guiding existential or philosophical beliefs (e.g., Are human beings basically good or bad? What is the purpose or meaning of life?)
- Are there any supreme beings? What is your concept of a higher power?

Current Existential/Philosophical Views

- Which of your values are most important to you?
- What are your ideas about morality and the concepts of right and wrong?
- Do you have any rituals or practices that are important to you (e.g., meditation, yoga)?
- Do your existential/philosophical beliefs influence the way you look at problems, such as mental illness, and the way you think about your health?
- Have any of your existential/philosophical beliefs caused problems in your relationships?
- If resolved, how did you resolve them?

Potential Pitfalls

- What if family members don't share beliefs?
    - Ground rule for therapy: Respect others' beliefs.
    - Can refer to Collectivism skills
- What if patient has religious delusions?
    - Focus on philosophical/existential protocol
    - Can refer to Education Module skills

Handout 11:

Spiritual Coping

Spiritual Methods of Coping

The following handout will be used to guide the discussion of spiritual/religious or philosophical/existential beliefs, behaviors, and values thought to improve coping and mental and emotional well-being.

Develop Emotional Awareness

- Foster positive attitudes such as forgiveness, gratitude, and generosity (these are at the heart of most major world religions)
- Cultivate positive emotions such as love, empathy, and compassion
- Master and reduce toxic and painful emotions such as intense anger, fear, hatred, and resentment

Develop a Calm Mind

- Practice prayer, yoga, contemplation, and/or meditation
- Take walks in nature
- Engage in spiritual/philosophical readings
- Participate at church, temple, mosque, or other organized groups
- Consult with priests, rabbis, imams, scholars, or other health healers for advice on managing illness or psychological distress
- Engage your values (e.g., giving back through volunteering)
- Engage in other soothing rituals (e.g., chanting or singing hymns, lighting incense or candles, aromatherapy)

Homework

- Engaging in spiritual practices together when relevant (e.g., prayer, attending service)

- Bibliotherapy (e.g., reading spiritual/philosophical books).

- Bringing in spiritual writings relevant to coping

- Begin new practice outside of session or increase the frequency of a coping strategy already in use (e.g., daily prayer, mindful walk, gratefulness journal).

- Have family reflect on the role of forgiveness, appreciation, and or empathy in healing. Ideally have family engage in these practices at home, starting with "smaller" instances.

Phase Four

Communication Training

Case 4- Communication Training

Doug is a 60 y/o White retired male veteran, diagnosed with schizophrenia, who lives with his long-term girlfriend (Margaret). Over the past year, he has struggled to keep up with his chores and relies on his girlfriend to make most of his meals. This has led to fights that escalate into his girlfriend threatening to leave him due to his "laziness, lack of caring, and craziness." Doug feels like a burden on his girlfriend and is also afraid to tell others in his life how much he struggles with his mental health. "I always prided myself, especially with my veteran's group, that I was dependable and logical. If I admit to them that I have heard voices and had to go to the hospital, I would have to admit I am a screwed-up person."

Thoughts about this case? Anything you will want to especially explore in this module?

Communication Training

- Teach family members skills that will enable them to communicate and provide support to one another more effectively

- Specific CT Skills
    - Expressing warmth
    - Giving positive feedback
    - Active listening
    - Making positive requests for change

Handout 12:
Communication & Culture

Communication and Culture

Communication can be more effective when we try to be understanding of cultural norms.

- Norms of communication vary by culture and sometimes even within cultures.
- Norms of communication can also vary based on gender, age, generation, and type of relationship (e.g., parent/child vs. siblings).
- Communication can be misinterpreted when we are unaware of the norms of the other person's culture.
- Note that the exercises provided in this module for effective communication are just guidelines. They may need to be modified for your particular needs based on your culture and the types of relationships among members of your family.

Here are some guiding questions to help you think about communication in your family.

In your culture and family,

1. Do you place a stronger value on direct or indirect patterns of communication?
2. How are communication difficulties raised and addressed?
3. Are there norms that dictate who (e.g., men, elders) and when different members should speak up or remain silent?
4. What areas are important to communicate about directly?
5. Are there topics or circumstances that are off limits for discussion?

Handout 13:

Expressing Positive Feelings

Expressing Positive Feelings

The following handout is on expressing positive feelings.

1. Be specific about what the person did that pleased you.
2. Say how that action made you feel.

Telling others specifically *what* they did and *how* it made you feel is more effective than making general statements of appreciation. This gives others a clearer sense of how to please you again in the future.

Example	
How do these responses make you feel? Do you have a preference for one? Why?	
"Thanks for helping out today. You did a lot of hard work."	"I really appreciate that you pitched in and cleaned the bathrooms today. It made me feel like you care about our home, and that made me feel so grateful."

Handout 14:
Active Listening

Listening Attentively

Effective communication lessens stress levels among those involved by reducing ambiguity, particularly when stressful situations could give rise to ineffective communication.

1. Acknowledge the speaker.
   - Often this means looking directly at them or offering another form of appropriate eye contact.
2. Show you are interested by
   - Paraphrasing what the person has said.
   - Asking questions to help clarify misunderstandings, and show that you are paying attention.
   - Using exclamations, such as "uh-huh" or "I see."
   - Using nonverbal cues such as nodding your head, leaning in, or moving closer to the speaker.

Example
Imagine you had a difficult day at work and want to convey this to a family member. You say, "Today was very stressful. My boss criticized me in front of my colleagues." How does each of these patterns of response make you feel? Do you have a preference for one? Why?

While walking away from you, the listener says, "I had a difficult day too; maybe you should get another job."	While looking at you, the listener says, "Oh gosh, sounds like you had a really tough day. I'm sorry to hear that. What exactly did your boss say that upset you?"

Handout 15:

Positive Request

Making a Positive Request

The following handout provides a guideline for how to make a positive request.

Be specific and

1. Say exactly what you would like to happen.
2. Tell them how you think you would feel, if they complied with your request.

For example, you could say

1. I would really appreciate it if you (*did X thing*).
2. I think I would feel more (*feeling*).

Example	
Which one is more likely to get positive results? Why?	
"I would really appreciate it if in the future, you could tell me where you are going and when you will be back. Instead of feeling jumpy and anxious, I think I would feel much calmer, knowing that you were safe."	"You are so inconsiderate. You didn't even bother to tell me you were going out or when you would be back. You prefer to just let me stew and worry about you. You clearly don't care about my feelings."

Handout 16:

Expressing Negative Feelings

Expressing Specific Negative Feelings and Suggesting a Behavioral Change

The following handout is largely about expressing negative feelings.

Expressing Negative Feelings

1. Say exactly what the person did that upset you.
2. Tell them how it made you feel.
3. Offer future direction.
4. Provide potential strategies that you and the person might do to help prevent similar events from happening in the future.

Example
Which response is most likely to get a positive result? Why?
"Last night we had agreed to watch a program on TV together at 7. When you arrived late, it hurt my feelings. It made me feel like you don't respect my time and feelings. Moving forward, can we briefly discuss our daily plans in the morning, so we have a realistic timeframe for our evening plans?" · "I can't believe you got home late last night again, after we had agreed to watch a program on TV together at 7. You only care about yourself. You don't care about my plans. Next time, I'll start the show without you, because you clearly don't care anyway."

Phase Five

Problem-Solving Skills Training

Case 5 – Problem-Solving

- Maria is 36 y/o old Sephardic Jewish woman. She moved to the US seven years ago from Spain to be with her then girlfriend (now wife) Seo-Jun, age 44 year. The couple met when Seo-Jun, a Catholic, Korean American, was studying Spanish in Madrid. Maria's first psychotic break with schizophrenia occurred at age 20 but she had been well managed on medication until 2 years ago, when Seo-Jun says she began arguing with imaginary neighbors in the yard, expressing fears about people poisoning her food at work (day care provider), and hiding things, such as Seo-Jun's bible in erratic places.

Thoughts about this case? Anything you will want to especially explore in this module?

Problem-Solving

- Teaches family members techniques to enhance their problem solving capacities.

- Often utilizes all the techniques from the previous four modules.

Steps:

1. Agree on the problem.
2. Brainstorm possible solutions.
3. Discuss pros and cons, and agree on the best solution.
4. Plan and carry out the best solution.
5. Praise efforts, and review effectiveness.

Handouts: Problem-Solving

Problem-Solving and Culture

Effective problem solving is an important life skill. To hone problem-solving skills, it is helpful to begin by examining how you and your family and/or other groups in which you frequently interact typically solve problems. It is then useful to reflect on which of these strategies have been effective and which could be improved.

- How do you typically solve problems? For example, do you generally turn to your faith? Do you tend to focus on one aspect of the problem, which may unintentionally cloud your view on other features of the problem?
- Are there "rules" in your family or culture that guide whether a problem should be talked about openly versus kept hidden?
- How do your values influence what is viewed as a major problem that *must* be solved directly versus a minor one that you may be willing to *let go of* or ignore altogether?

The following are some guiding questions to help you examine problem-solving in your family and culture:

1. How do you decide whether a problem is within or outside your control?
2. How do you decide what problems are or are not worth your time and energy?
3. How do you feel when you've solved a problem? Are there core features to your approach that lead to a successful resolution?
4. How do you feel when the problem you thought you had solved, remains a problem? What, if anything, do you do to follow up?

Handout 18:
Problem-Solving Overview

Problem-Solving Overview

This handout focuses on how to solve problems as a family. It is helpful to try out this strategy with a relatively simple problem first to learn the steps, before moving on to solving more complex problems.

It is important to do these steps one by one, especially as you begin to learn this process.

1. Agree on the problem.
   - How do you decide on whether a problem is worthwhile to solve?
   - Problems may be things that make you feel stressed out or have been counterproductive.
   - Try to ensure you are accurately identifying the core problem, rather than a superficial one.
   - Do all members of the family view the problem in the same way?
2. Suggest several possible solutions.
   - Brainstorming "outside-the-box" solutions can also help generate ones that may be useful.
3. Discuss pros and cons and agree on the best solutions.
   - You may find that you care more about a particular pro than a con.
4. Plan and carry out the best solution(s).
   - This can be more than one solution or can incorporate parts of more than one solution.
5. Praise efforts and review effectiveness.
   - The result will likely not be perfect, but praising your effort, and the efforts of your family members, is important.

Handout 19:
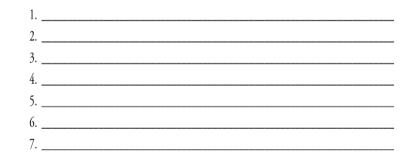## Guide Problem-Solving (1/3)

Guided Problem-Solving

This handout presents a step-by-step guide to structure the problem-solving process.

Step 1

- Define the problem in your own words and describe why you think it is a problem. What family values or goals does this problem violate or interfere with?
- Use the communication skills you've learned to get everybody's input.

Step 2

As a family, brainstorm several possible solutions, including out-of-the-box ones. Do not evaluate (judge) any of the solutions at this stage.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Handout 19:
Guide Problem-Solving (2/3)

Step 3

As a family, discuss each possible solution and list the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Advantages	Disadvantages
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7

Step 4

- Remind yourselves of the agreed upon problem and choose which solution, *or* solutions, you agree would work best to alleviate the problem?

Step 5

- How will you carry out the chosen solution(s), *and* when will you do so?
- Make a plan.
  A. Who will do what? List.

    - _____
    - _____
    - _____
    - _____

  B. What will you need? How will you get what you need?

    - _____
    - _____
    - _____

Handout 19:

Guide Problem-Solving (3/3)

C. Make another plan for things that might go wrong. Specifically, if things do go wrong, how will you move ahead?

- _____
- _____
- _____

D. Implement the plan.

Step 6

Review. Was everyone able to complete their part of the solution? How did it go?

Step 7

If the problem is not resolved, go back to Step 1, and try to understand the problem better. Perhaps the problem needs to be broken into smaller, more easily solved, segments. Do not become discouraged and do try again.

Culturally Informed Therapy for Schizophrenia

A Family-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Approach

CLINICIAN GUIDE

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- Thank you!

- Questions?