

MIFGASH

JOURNAL OF SOCIAL-EDUCATIONAL WORK

Special Issue

Culture-Sensitive Education and Treatment

- › Review and suggestions for new discussions
- › Belief in reincarnation among the Druze
- › Intervention program for Arab early childhood educators
- › Leadership, equality and gender rights among Arab female students
- › Occupational rehabilitation for ultra-Orthodox women
- › A culturally sensitive academia
- › The education system regarding Ethiopian immigrants
- › Psychodynamic culturally sensitive psychotherapy with the homeless



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Culture-Sensitive Education and Treatment

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ABSTRACTS

Culture-sensitive education and treatment: Review and suggestions for new discussions

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This review examines the main contemporary academic literature dealing with issues of culture-sensitive education and treatment. This review is important in light of the specific cultural sources of psychoanalysis, psychology, social work, and education. These disciplines are Western, secular, and class-oriented (in the sense that they were developed by intellectuals, who populate the upper socio-economic classes, and promote an ideal subjectivity appropriate to these classes). Moreover, it is pertinent in light of recent empirical reports on discursive clashes that accompany intercultural encounters between therapists and patients, and educators and students, who populate different structural-social locations. Along with a description of research concepts and orientations in the study of culture-sensitive education and treatment, and for a complex understanding of the prevailing research on education and culture-sensitive treatment, the article also discusses five recent studies concerning: education and cultural capital; culture-relevant pedagogy; emotional capital, potential space, and culture-sensitive psychotherapy among Ethiopian patients in Israel; support groups for prisoners' wives in Israel – ethnicity, class and discursive clashes; idioms of distress, post-trauma and the therapeutic qualities of forgetfulness in Cambodia; culture, schizophrenia and culture-sensitive treatment. Alongside these research descriptions, the article proffers six key proposals for future research on culture-sensitive education and treatment: a phenomenological and ethnographic study of multicultural educational and therapeutic spaces; the study of mediation and cultural translation; psycho-social research of intercultural navigation; the study of academic socialization and educational and clinical training; the study of programs for the development of critical consciousness; and normative discussions about cultural-sensitive treatment and education.

Key words: culture sensitive treatment, culture sensitive education, culture-relevant pedagogy, cultural mediation, minority groups, social exclusion, idioms of distress

Belief in reincarnation among the Druze in Israel: The clinical and the social discourses

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Belief in reincarnation is a central and important belief in the Druze community. Associated with this belief is a phenomenon called Notq which means remembering and talking about the previous incarnation. Notq can be viewed as a cultural idiom that is an integral part of the social discourse in the Druze community. Notq usually occurs in childhood. Children who experience Notq sometimes show emotional or behavioral difficulties. Parents of these children can respond in various ways ranging from accepting and encouraging the Notq to attempting to silence or ignore the story. Regardless of the different reactions, it is an explanatory model for various phenomena in the local discourse. This phenomenological study deals with Druze therapists (psychologists and social workers) who are considered minority therapists and their handling of Notq in the clinic according to academic training based on Western psychological knowledge. In addition, this study seeks to understand the personal and social narratives and therapeutic aspects of Notq through interviews with people who have experienced this phenomenon and by distinguishing between “solved” stories in which the person located his/her family from the previous incarnation and “open” stories in which the previous family could not be identified. Through the Notq phenomenon we deal with the encounter between Western-secular psychology and ethno-psychology, its significance in the treatment of cultural idioms in the clinical context versus the social context and the implications for culturally sensitive therapy.

Key words: Druze, reincarnation, Notq, cultural idioms, minority therapists, ethnopsychology, cultural sensitivity

Cultural adaptation of the ‘Learning to Live Together’ intervention program for Arab early childhood educators in Israel

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The study focuses on the challenges of cultural adaptation of “Learning to Live Together”, a violence-prevention program aimed at enhancing socio-emotional competence of children during early childhood. The original intervention program was revised by 12 Arab early childhood professionals, in order to create a culturally-sensitive program compatible with the values and socializing-practices of the Arab society in Israel. The study examines the connotations ascribed to 'cultural adaptation' and delineates the unique dilemmas and challenges of intervention with Arab early childhood educators. It analyzes data collected at two points in time: documentation of the cultural-adaptation process (2006-2009); group interview with the Arab professionals ten years later (2018). The findings highlight three themes: issues of conflict between traditional and modern-Western attitudes; the importance of emphasizing notions of the child as an individual; connotations of cultural-adaptation relevant to the Arab society. Based on the findings, a mediation-strategy for cultural-adaptation of intervention programs is discussed.

Key words: early childhood, educators, intervention programs, culturally-sensitive adaptation, Arab society in Israel

Social positioning of Arab female students in a culturally homogeneous space in the context of leadership, equality and gender rights

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This article examines the positioning of the identity of Arab female students, future teachers as an agency for change and social leadership. The premise of this article is that higher education will affect the formation of the social positioning of Arab female students. Ninety personal diaries were analyzed in the study by means of verbal and visual content analysis. The research findings reflected in the written and the visual texts yielded four key themes: gender; religion; family, and nationality. The findings

show that the students did not address the burning social, political, and economic issues that Israeli Arabs are confronted with. Also, they did not address their professional identity and socialization. To explain this, the article uses Foucault's theoretical descriptions of utopia and heterotopia. We believe that Arab female students have created a utopian space for themselves. Namely, a space of semi-illusion that is relatively detached from their social reality and that of Arab society, and more or less detached from the professional aspects and socialization processes they undergo. These findings raise several fundamental questions about the life skills that Arab students receive in Israel's formal education system and about the identities that the system imparts to them.

Key words: positioning, Arabs in Israel, Arab female students, women's status

Intercultural encounters in an occupational rehabilitation group for ultra-Orthodox women

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This article deals with the encounter of a group of ultra-orthodox women from a low socio-economical background, seeking to integrate or advance in the employment market in a high quality and optimal way, and a third sector organization that runs occupational rehabilitation programs and specializes in promoting and integrating low-income populations into the employment market. The group ethnography exposes the cross-cultural encounter between women who come from an ultra-Orthodox society that produces and cultivates a collectivist self and discourse, and an organization that holds self-realization as its core value, and operates from a neo-liberal worldview that nurtures an individual-self, separateness and financial and emotional independence. Furthermore, the ethnographies reveal the phenomenological coping strategies and solutions which the participants construct to settle the intercultural gaps which they encounter in the process of building their employment-self. The discussion dwells on the implications of these strategies and offers research and practical insights into culturally sensitive occupational rehabilitation among disadvantaged populations.

Key words: occupational self, ultra-Orthodox, people with limited opportunities, occupational rehabilitation, group training, group dynamics

Behind the enclosure: A culturally sensitive academia

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This study tells the story of ultra-Orthodox students' dropout, focusing on the educational-cultural encounter between the original society of ultra-Orthodox students and the culture of the higher education host institutions. Similar to immigrants, these first-generation higher education students are exposed not only to new knowledge, but also to strange and novel ideas and patterns of thought. In-depth-interviews with 65 students revealed the ideological, cultural and social barriers involved in their acculturation. The qualitative analysis showed that the ultra-Orthodox students struggled to adapt to the requirements of the institutions, while trying to preserve their identity, demonstrating a high prevalence of collective discourse. The interviews indicated a recurring framing of the experience as involving a sense of alienation, because the institutions have not adapted in order to address these students' cultural needs. It appears that certain conditions are required to establish a culturally-sensitive academia, which includes: early preparation and arrangements to help reduce academic cultural shock; expression of sensitivity towards students' cultural backgrounds; and deepening the sense of belonging while preserving a 'student identity'.

Key words: ultra-Orthodox students, dropout, culture-sensitive academy, social identity

We and them: Perceptions of members of the education system regarding Ethiopian immigrants

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This qualitative study, based on a context-informed approach, examined perceptions of members of the educational system regarding the risk of

Ethiopian children in Israel. The study is based on 15 in-depth interviews with various professionals. The findings of the study show that the interviewees' perceptions focus on parents as a major risk factor for their children, with regard to the various contexts such as the parents' relationship with their children, and the relationship with the teachers, the educational institution and the general society. Another risk factor was attributed to culture. The interviewees referred to the culture of Ethiopian immigrants as a poor and dangerous culture, arguing that parents attribute excessive weight to racism and are unwilling and incapable of assimilating. According to most of the interviewees, the parents are unable to work together with the educational system and consequently the educators focus on the child. Ambivalence was found regarding the use of translators and mediators. A counter-argument was provided by an Ethiopian mediator who regards culture, faith, and roots as a source of resilience, which encourages investment in parents. The participants expressed the need for cultural competence training. The article discusses the implications for practice and recommendations for training and further research

Key words: educators, stereotypes, Ethiopian immigrants, risk, resilience

On the difficulty to reside: Psychodynamic culturally sensitive psychotherapy with the homeless

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Homeless people are a vulnerable and delicate population both physically and emotionally. They deal with a dangerous, harsh and demanding reality in many aspects. Prolonged life on the streets has health, psychiatric, psychological, social and economic consequences. Many of the homeless suffer traumatic life events, exclusion, alienation and despair. Mental illness, personality disorders and substance abuse are common. The majority do not receive appropriate social care, and some do not receive the medical and psychiatric care they need. Psychotherapy in general and especially psychodynamic treatment are rare.

The current paper deals with some aspects of psychodynamic culturally sensitive long-term treatment in an analytic orientation with homeless patients. The importance, characterization and challenges of this treatment are discussed as well as the significance of cultural sensitivity to the dual cultures of the homeless patients: their original culture versus their current culture of homelessness and street-life.

The “difficulty to reside” concept is introduced as an immanent emotional difficulty of many homeless people to bear the notion of a residence. This is not only the difficulty of bearing a home in the physical sense, but the difficulty of being within the envelope of a close relationship, and even the failure of the individual to be close to himself. The paper elaborates on some of the main psychic dynamics of him/herself patients who came to an outpatient psychiatric public clinic. The paper circles death drive and the longing for breakdown amongst the homeless and describes the soul of the therapist as a substitute metaphoric residence for the homeless patient. The benefits of supportive-psychodynamic treatment are discussed. Modes of intervention are suggested through two clinical case studies.

Key words: culturally sensitive psychotherapy, homeless, Difficulty-to-Reside, psychodynamic-psychotherapy, death drive