History of Middle East

The Middle East lies at the juncture of Eurasia & Africa & of the Mediterranean Sea & the Indian Ocean. It is the birthplace & spiritual center of Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Yezidi, & in Iran, Mithraism, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism & the Bahá’í Faith. Throughout its history the Middle East has been a strategically, economically, politically, culturally, & religiously sensitive area. In the 20th century, the region's significant stocks of crude oil gave it new strategic & economic importance. Mass production of oil began around 1945, with Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait, Iraq, & the United Arab Emirates having large quantities of oil. Throughout the 20th & into the 21st century, the region has experienced both periods of relative peace & tolerance & periods of conflict & war. Current issues include the US Occupation of Iraq & the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Islam, Christianity, & Judaism were all founded in or near areas that are now Arab League countries. Consequently, the majority of the Arab League's citizens are either Muslims, Christians or Jews. The countries of the Arab League host several holy cities & other religiously significant locations, including Alexandria, Mecca, Medina, Kirkuk, Arbil, & Baghdad. Sunni Muslims make up the Majority of the Arab League's citizens. However, large numbers of Shi'a Muslims make up the majority in areas of Lebanon, Iraq, & Bahrain. Christianity is the second largest religion in the League, with over 20 million Christians living in countries such as Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, Sudan, Syria, & Jordan. There are smaller Jewish populations living mainly in the western part of the Arab league. Places such as Morocco, Algeria, & Tunisia, all have Jewish populations. However, most Arab Jews emigrated from the Arab states to Israel after its founding in 1948. Other minor religions such as the Bahá’í Faith are practiced on a much smaller scale.
Fundamentals of treating children in Middle Eastern families

Steps to Providing Culturally Competent Services

1. **Cultural Self-Awareness**
   - Cultural Self-Awareness = the understanding a person has of his or her specific culture/ethnicity that influences his or her psychological, social, & emotional attributes (Brown, Parham, & Yonker, 1996).
   - Reflect on your own existence, including your own traits, feelings, & behaviors. Consider the impact of your culture & cultural identity on your traits, feelings, & behaviors
   - Develop a personal understanding of the very core of your own cultural identity
   - Answer the question: WHO AM I?
   - Cultural self-awareness is essential in ALL practice, not just cross-cultural / culturally competent practice & is a life-long process

2. **Understanding Client’s Culture**
   - Learn how the client defines their culture
     - Ask/Probe the client to define their culture
     - Identify intricate characteristics, idiosyncrasies, & basic principles of the client’s culture
     - Ask the client about the music they listen to & like, music that is traditional to their culture/ethnicity, & music that is customarily played in the household/community
     - Discuss the appropriate hierarchy in their culture/ethnicity, family, and community
     - Discuss traditional practices within the client’s culture/ethnicity, family, and/or community

3. **Understanding the Client’s Social & Family History**
   - Gather information from the client & from other sources (family members, past medical, health, and mental health files; family members, friends; colleagues; other practitioners/providers)

4. **Understanding the Client’s Range of Assimilation**
   - Range of Assimilation - the extent of social integration into the host culture (Fellin, 2000). The process of assimilation involves constructing a new culture including aspects of both the native & the host culture simultaneously.
Determine the client’s range of assimilation & the extent to which the client wants or intends to assimilate
  o Ask/Probe the client to determine their intent/desire to assimilate
  o Guide the client in defining their new culture

5. Understanding the Client’s Route to Services

Consider the route to services which may induce positive AND/OR negative impressions of mental health services

6. Research

Use various resources at your disposal to learn as much as possible about client’s culture/ethnicity

7. Allowing Cultural Self-determination

Cultural Self-determination - a dynamic, active process, whether conscious or unconscious, in which the client is empowered to utilize his or her culture to make decisions about his or her treatment (Kraft & BrintzenhofeSzoc, n.d.).

Discuss with the client how they would like to incorporate aspects of their culture into treatment

8. Implementing Innovations (include measures)

Implement the treatment modalities agreed upon by you & the client
Activate the measurement methods
Make measuring client’s behavior/symptoms as simple as possible
Allow treatment to run its course as designed by you & the client

9. Evaluate & Resume (either continue original implementation or regroup & attempt new implementation)

Analyze the results of the measures taken during the treatment process
Determine if the behavior / symptoms improved, remained the same, or needs more treatment
Continue current treatment, adjust, or move on to another aspect of client’s presenting need

10. Reflect

Review, Review, Review
Consider each aspect of the treatment process
Make note of changes in the client’s presenting problem(s) & symptoms