

CARING FOR OLDER CAMBODIAN SURVIVORS OF TORTURE (SOT)

ORR Services for Survivors of Torture (SOT) Program
Virtual Town Meeting
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Overview

- Cambodian refugees in the U.S.
- Access issues in the care of older Cambodian SOTs
- Clinical issues in the care of older Cambodian SOTs



Background

- 1975-1979: Khmer Rouge kill nearly 2 million Cambodians
- 1979-1989: nearly 150,000 Cambodian refugees resettle in the U.S., including in Massachusetts
- 2024: Cambodian Americans represent approximately 21% of the population of Lowell, MA



Not allowed to (could be killed if):
 Tell about the past
 Have a boy/girlfriend
 Visit family members
 Wear own clothes
 Find or eat your own food
 Sing unauthorized songs
 Complain in any way
 Make own decisions

Lack of food, shelter, medical care
 Forced:
 to leave home and belongings
 hard labor
 to take homemade medication/diary
 separation from family
 marriage
 to witness atrocities
 to work as animals

Brutal beating
 Threats of death, intimidation
 Interrogation
 Imprisonment/confinement
 Brainwashing
 Rape, sexual abuse
 Pollution

Diffing own grave
 Seeing others taken away
 to be killed
 Being taken away to be killed
 Seeing on bearing (e.g., screams) others being killed
 Suffocation by plastic bags

LOWELL HEALTH CENTER

Metta Health Center

- Founded by the Southeast Asian refugee community in Lowell
- Provides multidisciplinary services, including primary care and mental health services
- Located within a larger Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC)

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Caring for older Cambodian SOTs – Access Issues

- Language Access
- Technology
- SARS-CoV2 pandemic effects
- Trust and self-advocacy

EXAM ROOM 4

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Caring for older Cambodian SOTs – Clinical Issues

- Views on treatment/adherence
- Impact of role changes and job loss
- Social isolation
- Complex trauma presentations



Thank You

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