


**IBHC for Refugees:
A Qualitative Inquiry**

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The
CENTER for
VICTIMS of
TORTURE
Restoring the Dignity of
the Human Spirit

HEALING HEARTS HISTORY

**Primary Care Lobby Study (n=53)
Barriers to Communication about Trauma
Histories
(Shannon et al, 2012)**

1) Does your doctor ask how you've been affected by political violence in your home country?
68% - No

2) Do you want to talk about it if it would be helpful to your health?
74% - Yes

Recommendation: Doctors should ask.

HEALING HEARTS HISTORY

**Prevalence of Primary and Secondary
Torture and War Trauma (N = 179)**

	Yes	N
Primary Torture Survivor*	27.4%	48
Secondary Torture Survivor*	51.4%	92
War Trauma Survivor	86.0%	154
Secondary War Trauma Survivor	83.8%	150

* U.S. and UN Definitions of Torture

HEALING HEARTS HISTORY

- Are CVT treatment services (psychotherapy + case management) generating cost savings when compared to treatment as usual at the clinic?
- Is this treatment more effective in terms of reducing symptoms?
- Is this treatment model financially viable, replicable, and sustainable?

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

- Prevalence of torture
- Consequences of torture
- Access to care

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

- Increase in consultations
- Improves access
- Primary care practice
- Provider satisfaction
- Cost
- Access barriers
- Trust and rapport
- Stigma
- holistic care

WHAT DON'T WE KNOW?

- Effectiveness in symptom reduction
- Refugee populations
- Client perspective
- "Active ingredients"

HEALING HEARTS INTERVENTION

- **unspecified** treatment modalities
- **targeted** at a specific population
- **small scale & co-located**

METHODS

SAMPLE

- 24 Karen refugees, ages 24-61, enrolled in CVT's Healing Hearts program.
- 3 Healing Hearts clinicians (10 interviews)

INTERVIEWS

- In-depth, semi-structured format.
- **Client interviews** focus on experiences of distress and the impact of the intervention.
- **Clinician interviews** focus on the benefits and challenges of IBHC.

QUESTION

How does **integrated behavioral health care (IBHC)** meet the specific **health and psychosocial needs of refugees and torture survivors?**

CHALLENGES

- Survivors **lack awareness** of mental health and social support services.
- Survivors come with **complex health conditions**.
- Patients have **limited time with the PCP**.
- Refugees live in a **climate of ongoing stress**.

BE WHERE THEY ARE


“The first few times I met with [the psychologist,] I thought she was going to prescribe me medications. Then, later she said, no, her job was to talk to me about my problems and to make me feel better...

So [now] whenever I need help, I will always come here to [the primary care clinic], even if I need help with my letter or food stamps or Medicaid. ... Some people, when they need help with their paperwork or anything, they go to another office but for me, I don't know where those places are, I just come here and it is beneficial to me.”

FINDING #1

Challenge: Lack of awareness

What works?
Be where they already go




"We don't need to be looking for help. The help came to us."

FINDING #2

Challenge: Complex health conditions

What works?
Immediate access/consultation
Holistic approach




"The heart and body have to work together because they are attached together."

FINDING #3

Challenge: Limited time with PCPs

What works?
Help clients understand illness
Post-appointment work



"When our doctors are busy, we can come through here...we can talk to you."

FINDING #4

Challenge: Unique climate of ongoing stress

What works?
Psychotherapy within the IBHC model expands the therapeutic frame, meeting clients where they are.

"They explain about health and bad experience, how to live the whole life."

PROJECT MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE


Hosted environment: space, control, competing demands, co-located vs. integrated.

Fast pace of medicine

Balance between clinical and research lens

CLINICAL PERSPECTIVE

Life is like a seed. Some seeds fall on a soft soil; they grow big without any trouble. Other seeds fall on a rock; they have a harder time growing. They need a helpful hand to give them water. I feel like I am a seed that fell on a rock. My teachers (psychotherapist and case manager) gave me helpful hands. I grow so big. I extend my branches so wide that my children can fall on a soft soil. My root will eventually penetrate the rock and reach the soil.



Thank you!



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HEART IDIOMS

Heavy heart, tired heart, thirsty heart, burning heart,
 dizzy heart, weak heart, shaky heart.

“like my heart was going to explode”

“something hiding in my heart”

“beat down in my heart”

“squished heart”

“can’t control my heart,”

“warm heart” or “cold heart”

“swinging heart”
