National Capacity Building Webinar Series

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The Value of Integrating Primary Medical Care into the Treatment of Survivors of Torture

August 21, 2013
Objective 1

• Describe one medical approach to treating survivors with comorbid conditions
Objective 2

• Recognize the importance of documenting a survivor’s comprehensive medical history
Objective 3

- Identify an approach to integrating continued medical care, including preventative care, into a holistic treatment plan.
Objective 4

- Explain how a torture rehabilitation team can help to prepare survivors for medical care, especially concerning treatment for sexual trauma
Medical approach to treating survivors with co-morbid conditions

• Getting a complete history in a sensitive manner
  • Assessing for TBI
  • Assessing for H. Pylori bacteria
  • Assessing for sexual assault

• Working closely with Torture Treatment Centers
For clients with persistent symptoms (like back pain, headache, etc.) what interventions have been helpful to relieve these symptoms?
Have you found complementary and alternative therapies to be helpful?

If so, which therapies?
A Quick Word About Strength-based Treatment

• Initial focus of healing process is on the clients strengths
• The survivor controls the pace and direction of all goals and services provided
• The healing relationship is one of collaboration and partnership—THEY ARE THE EXPERTS
• Extremely effective when working with torture survivors. Helps restore a sense of efficacy and empowerment
• Role of case manager is to often help organize clients long term goals into short term ACHIEVABLE goals. Early successes are very important
Integrating preventive care with the torture treatment program

- Common chronic illnesses of Torture survivors
- Screening for Hep A, B, and C
- HIV and STD testing
- PAPS!!!! and birth control
How a torture rehabilitation team can help to prepare survivors for medical care

- Comprehensive referrals
  - Brief history, clear description of complaint
- Find a form of communication that works for both of you
  - Email? Phone? Formal intake sheet?
- Importance of ongoing communication
  - Ex: 2 case studies
Importance of Integrated Care

• Finding culturally competent specialists is vital! Especially psychiatrists, gynecologists, physical therapists, gastroenterologists, cardiologists

• Plus other service providers
  Example: case managers, organizations providing transportation, etc.

• Talking to other torture treatment centers and other PCP’s

• Advocacy groups to ensure health care access for our most vulnerable clients
Resources

From the August 15, 2013 New England Journal of Medicine


Together
WE
Heal
Survivors!