

INTEGRATED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE FOR KAREN REFUGEES

HEALING HEARTS CASE STUDY 1

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CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- Male, late 40s
- Lost his right leg to a landmine explosion
- Had witnessed torture
- Served as a security guard in a refugee camp

PRESENTING PROBLEMS

At the beginning of treatment, this client was suffering from PTSD, hyperarousal, brain injury, headaches, chronic pain, sleep disturbance, and nightmares. The move to the United States was challenging and his chronic health issues kept him socially isolated.

COURSE OF TREATMENT

Over the course of treatment, our clinicians were able to encourage this client to disclose his health concerns. The client revealed that he was experiencing severe pain in his leg at the point where it met the prosthesis. We also learned that the prosthetic leg was too short. This forced him to walk with an uneven gait, which in turn caused severe back pain. Upon learning of these issues, the Healing Hearts psychotherapist immediately coordinated with the primary care doctor to schedule an appointment with a physical therapist and a prosthetic specialist to address the reported issues.

As our psychotherapist worked with the client's primary care doctor, the Healing Hearts social worker learned that the client's paperwork for the physical therapy appointment had not been completed. She spent substantial time working with the doctor and his nurse to get the paperwork completed. This ensured that the client would receive the care he needed to correct these issues.

GREAT SUCCESS

The client was fit for a new prosthetic leg, and he and his care team have hopes that this will help alleviate his back pain, increase his everyday comfort, and help him get out of his house more. This case demonstrates the value of: close collaboration between doctors and clinicians, a holistic approach to care, and team-based support for the tremendous amount of paperwork involved in effective multidisciplinary client care.