

# MEDICAL SERVICES

## Lesson Summary

### Roles of Medical Provider



#### Identify if a Survivor

- Is there history of civil war, military or totalitarian regimes in home country?
- Ask about life/dangerous situations in home country
- Are they refugees or asylum seekers?
- Is physical/psychological trauma evident?



#### Establish Safety

- Ensure adequate time
- Share careful explanations about purpose and goals
- Give survivor control to interrupt process
- Reassure confidentiality
- Discuss informed consent
- May take multiple sessions before patient is comfortable



#### Assess impact of Torture

- Lesions/scars
- Ongoing disability
- Sexual dysfunction
- Chronic physical symptoms
- Traumatic brain injury
- Chronic pain (often associated with PTSD, depression)



#### Screenings to Include

- Standard guidelines for immigrant medical screening:
- Screen for infectious diseases depending on origin: TB, parasites, syphilis, HIV, hepatitis B
  - Vitamin D deficiency
  - Heart disease
  - Other: dental, nutritional, age and gender screenings



#### Coordinate Holistic Care Plan

Holistic health includes:

- physical
- psychological
- social
- spiritual



#### Modalities to Reducing Pain

- Physical therapy
- Pharmacological therapy
- Body oriented therapies
- Psychological therapy
- Trigger point injections
- Physical activity
- Relaxation techniques
- CAM

#### Complimentary & Alternative Medicine (CAM) includes:

1. Biological Based Practices (vitamins, supplements, diet)
2. Mind-Body Medicine (movement therapies, meditation, art therapy, biofeedback)
3. Manipulative & Body-based Practices (massage, acupuncture, chiropractic)
4. Energy Medicine (religious/spiritual healing, qigong, reiki, therapeutic touch)



#### Provider

##### Role as Provider

- Patient comfort
  - Atmosphere of safety
  - Rapport and trust are essential
- Earn trust through:
- attentive listening
  - communication
  - empathy and respect
  - attention to nonverbal cues

##### Provider Challenges

- First priority is meeting basic needs
- Survivors may mistrust you; doctors may have been part of torture
- Survivors may fear being touched
- Survivors have culturally-based reasons for illness
- Language barrier and interpreters
- Complicated health care system
- Lack of knowing/accepting western health services
- Lack of transportation and childcare



#### Suggestions for Success

- Identify needs and make referrals to other members of care team
- Direct appropriate evaluation of symptoms; avoid workup
- Understand torture experience may impact health and recovery of medical illnesses
- Provide education about connection between symptoms and stressors
- Increase knowledge and awareness of torture
- Provide forensic documentation and oral testimony corroborating survivor's allegations of torture