FOSTERING FAMILY RESILIENCY AFTER A FAILED SUICIDE ATTEMPT

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

• IDENTIFY CLINICIAN BELIEFS AND DISCOMFORT REGARDING SUICIDE AND HOW THESE IMPEDE THE THERAPEUTIC PROCESS

• EXPLORE FAMILY SYSTEM FEELINGS ASSOCIATED WITH THE AFTERMATH OF A FAILED SUICIDE ATTEMPT

• LEARN METHODS TO HELP FAMILIES FOSTER RECONNECTION AND RESILIENCY AFTER A FAILED SUICIDE ATTEMPT
WHAT ARE YOUR BELIEFS ABOUT DEATH AND SUICIDE?
SOCIAL STIGMAS
WHAT ARE YOUR BELIEFS ABOUT DEATH AND SUICIDE WITHIN A CLINICAL SETTING?
FAMILIES AND SUICIDE

1.) FACTS & STATISTICS

2.) TYPE OF ATTEMPT

3.) SOCIAL IMPACT

(L. Frey & Q. Hunt, 2018)
(J. Cerel et al., 2016)
(CDC, 2015)
COMMON MYTHS ABOUT SUICIDE AND THE FAMILY SYSTEM:

1.) SUICIDE OCCURS WITHOUT ANY WARNING SIGNS

2.) “IF I MENTION SUICIDE TO MY LOVED ONE THEN THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO COMMIT SUICIDE”

3.) PEOPLE WHO ATTEMPT SUICIDE WILL NOT CROSS THAT THRESHOLD AGAIN

(American Association of Suicidology)
COMMON MYTHS ABOUT SUICIDE AND THE FAMILY SYSTEM:

4.) WHEN PEOPLE START TO APPEAR THAT THEY FEEL BETTER, AFTER FEELING SUICIDAL, THEY ARE NOT SUICIDAL ANYMORE.

5.) IF SOMEONE IS SUICIDAL, THERE IS NO STOPPING THEM

(American Association of Suicidology)
STIGMAS RELATED TO FAMILY MEMBERS DEALING WITH A FAILED SUICIDE ATTEMPT

• SHUNNED
• JUDGED
• REACTIONS
• BEHAVIORAL ACTIONS
• BLAMING

ahcmedia.com

(J. Cerel et al., 2016)
THE IMPACT OF SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR/ATTEMPTS ON FAMILY SYSTEMS (PART 1)

• NEW PHENOMENON
• ASSESSING EMOTIONAL COPING SKILLS
• EXAMINATION OF SURVIVORS

It's Not Easy to Detect
DISTRESS

“WOMEN WHOSE HUSBANDS HAD DIED BY SUICIDE EXPERIENCED MORE GUILT AND BLAMING IN THEIR FAMILIES THAN WIDOWS WHO LOST A HUSBAND IN AN ACCIDENT” (J. CEREL ET. AL., 2008)
EMOTIONAL REACTIONS TO A SUICIDE ATTEMPT

kitriandtheanimals.wordpress.com
EMOTIONAL REACTIONS TO A SUICIDE ATTEMPT

Guilt

andrewgablehere.wordpress.com
EMOTIONAL REACTIONS TO A SUICIDE ATTEMPT

lost-winterborn.deviantart.com
RESILIENCY

• WHAT IS RESILIENCY?
• INFLUENCES ON RESILIENCE
• RESILIENCY AND FLOURISHING UNDER STRESS

(S. Southwick & P. Watson, 2015)
FOSTERING RESILIENCY IN THE FAMILY SYSTEM

THERAPIST ROLE

• BEING PRESENT WITH THE FAMILY SYSTEM
• VALIDATION
• UNCONDITIONAL POSITIVE REGARD
• IMITATING STRENGTH
• OFFERING RESOURCES
• REFRAME FROM NEGATIVE TO POSITIVE
INTAKE

• EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE ATTEMPT
• FIRST OR MULTIPLE ATTEMPTS
• HOW WAS THE ATTEMPT DIVERTED
• FAMILY MEMBER ROLE (PARENT VS. CHILD)
• FAMILY STAGE
ASSESSMENT

• SAFETY
• INDIVIDUAL THERAPY
• FAMILY TOXICITY AND THE SYSTEMS CAPACITY TO TOLERATE VULNERABILITY
• SYSTEM REGULATION
Life is not the way it's supposed to be. It's the way it is. The way you cope with it is what makes the difference.

- Virginia Satir
EXERCISE:

1: HAVE EACH PARTNER WRITE DOWN THE CORE ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED ON INDIVIDUAL STRIPS OF PAPER AND PLACE IN A CONTAINER THAT STAYS IN THE THERAPIST OFFICE

2: CHOOSE ONE ISSUE WEEKLY THE COUPLE IS READY TO ADDRESS OR PROCESS
1: COUPLE TO SIT FACE TO FACE WITH KNEES TOUCHING AND MAKING EYE CONTACT

2: 1\textsuperscript{ST} PERSON SAYS “I FEEL…”, 2\textsuperscript{ND} PERSON SAYS “I HEAR YOU.” AND REPEATS FOR 60 SECONDS. EXCHANGE ROLES.

3: FOLLOW WITH ADDITIONAL PROMPTS
   EX. “I NEED…”, “I’M SORRY I…”, “MY FEAR IS…”

4: FACILITATE EMOTIONAL REACTIONS
ATTACHMENT-BASED PLAY THERAPY
FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

• THERAPLAY
  • ENGAGEMENT
  • NURTURING
  • STRUCTURE
  • CHALLENGE

• TRUST-BASED RELATIONAL INTERVENTION
FAMILY SCULPTING

• SCULPT YOUR FAMILY…
  …BEFORE THE ATTEMPT
  …FINDING OUT ABOUT THE ATTEMPT
  …IN ITS CURRENT STATE
  …WHEN THESE ISSUES ARE RESOLVED
QUESTIONS?
CONTACT

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RESOURCES

• RECOMMENDED READ FOR ATTEMPTERS: LIVE THROUGH THIS: A NATIONAL SERIES OF PORTRAITS OF ATTEMPT SURVIVORS, BY DIVISION MEMBER DESE'RAE STAGE
• AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SUICIDIOTOLOGY WEBSITE
• SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCE CENTER WEBSITE
• FAMILY QUALITY REACTION SCALE
REFERENCES

• BOB EDELSTEIN. DEC/JAN 2011 EDITION OF PERSPECTIVE. THE ASSOCIATION FOR HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY. A BAKER’S DOZEN: PROPOSED THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS OF AN EXISTENTIAL-HUMANISTIC PSYCHOTHERAPIST.


