

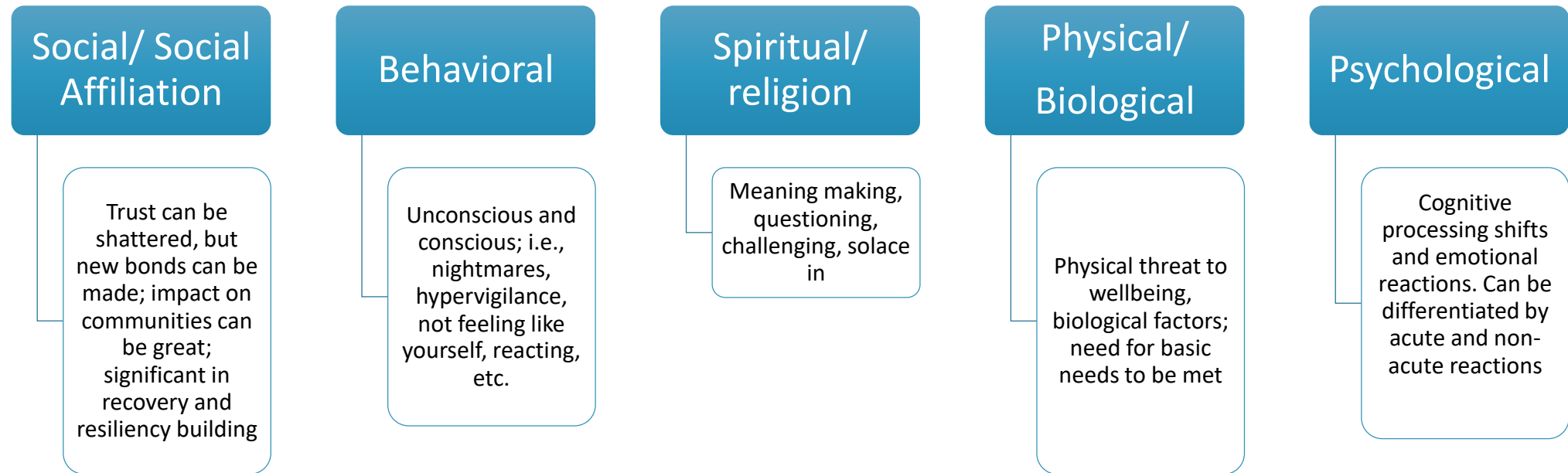
Prior Learning Assessment and Refugees and Displaced Populations



Validation Skills for Students
Jenny Mincin



Experience of Crisis and Conflict



Miller, 2012; Sapolsky, 2012

RAI Intervention Models

Basic Needs

Provision of food, water, shelter, health care and information etc.
Advocacy for basic services that are safe, socially appropriate and protect dignity

Family & Community Support
Community groups and networks, community centers, traditional and religious rituals. Education.

Focused Support/Non-Specialist
Case management, structured group therapy, basic emotional support

Specialized Services

Mental health specialist care such as, psychology, psychiatry, provision of medication, etc.)

Employment and Education
Community Integration

Social Services

Social Services

- Employment – tied to self-sufficiency and education
- Housing – immediate need; basic human right. Without housing, employment and education become near impossible
- Healthcare – includes physical and mental health; necessary for employment and education
- Education - necessary for mental health and career/employment development/skills-building

Validation

- Can the very nature of a refugee's journey be captured as a learning experience?
- Focus on what they did before migration and/or after relocation/resettlement such as:
 - volunteer work and/or employment
 - trainings done in camps or other environments
 - framing out migration experience as it relates to skills utilized on the journey.
 - education

Self-Sufficiency

- Approaches to a sense of self-sufficiency and self-determination can be linked to hope for the future for RAIs:
 - Identified as key to career growth and long-term job security.
 - Seen as helping with immediate educational needs and employment.
 - Redirection for refugees with degrees etc.
 - Desire for obtaining a higher education degree
 - Importance of vocational training in achieving self-sufficiency
 - Validation and empowerment.
- And yet education can be out of reach because of money, resource, lack of social integration, a sense of not belonging, and other barriers.

Integration and Validation

- Integrated approach to working with RAIs: to be aware of the types of experiences, traditions, ethnic and religious beliefs and dimensions of who they are as individuals and a part of a community (Bragin et al., 2014; Wurzer & Bragin, 2009).
- Multi-dimensional approach: allows for a more solution-oriented approach for RAIs and the community (Mincin et al., 2021; Bragin et al., 2014; Wurzer & Bragin, 2009).
- Community needs should be incorporated and services should extend to people in the community.
- Separateness leads to isolation, misunderstanding, fear and resentment.
- *Education is an important part of integration. Integration is an important part of civic engagement.*

Things to Consider

- Better funding for resettlement/secondary location services and evidence and best-practice programs implemented.
- Adult education access
 - Online, in-person, virtual classes
 - Funding
 - Resources and support
 - Support for students
 - Links and networking to potential jobs and community services
 - Language
 - Inclusive university policies
- Faculty Support: this is a time-intensive process; administration needs to be aware of this and act accordingly.



Three Pronged Approach

Exploration and Acknowledgement

- How do they learn?
- What are the ethnic, cultural, language, contextual, etc. considerations?
- What did they do in their country of origin? During their migration? Once resettled?
- What are the goals of the student?
- How do we acknowledge what they have learned through life experiences while honing in on what is feasible as a PLA?

Formulation and Application

- Once PLA topics identified, focus the student on writing the essay as both an exploration and validation of skills learned along the way.
- The writing process can be a self-actualizing process but it also needs to link to goals, strengthening of writing and analytic skills, and a deeper understanding of what the student learned.
- Link education and validation to jobs and career goals.

Execution and Ownership

- Once PLAs are complete, encourage the student to have ownership of where they came from and where they are now.
- Ownership and reframing of experiences viz a vis the academic process can empower and contribute to resiliency, but practically help with completing a degree and seeking further employment.



Thank You!
Go raibh maith agat!
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