Using a Supportive Community Group Process to Cope with the Trauma of Social Fragmentation and Promote Re-Socialization in the Bahamas

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Introduction

• Social Fragmentation related to:
  • Widespread cocaine epidemic of the 1980’s
  • High Unemployment
• Social Fragmentation manifested by:
  • ↑ murder & violent crime rates
  • Widespread domestic violence
  • Formation of violent youth gangs
Homicides in the Bahamas (1963–2015)

Source – Quality Control Section, C.D.U.
The Family: People Helping People Project

• 2008 – community-based intervention designed by Dr. David Allen
• Supportive group process
  • storytelling, reflection, self-examination, transformation
• Healing bond produced ~ Family
• Prgm. offered in 24 marginalized Bahamian communities and select pop.
• Avg. of 350 participants per week

“Change your mind, change your life, change your world!”
-Sir John Templeton
Thesis

• **Self Hatred Aimed at M.E.**

• Shame is a multi-faceted emotion which is hidden in nature
  1. Abandonment
  2. Rejection
  3. Humiliation

• Social Fragmentation is caused by the negativity of shame

• Re-socialization – liberation of the person from the negativity of shame to experience positive emotions (love, forgiveness, gratitude) resulting in ↑ self-esteem and the development of community.
Methodology

• Therapist writes a praxis report after each group session
  • Interaction
  • Overt Themes
  • Covert Themes
  • Reflection
• Themes of Family group sessions (N = 776) analyzed from Oct. 2013 – Nov. 2014
• Total # of themes >776 b/c session may have more than one theme
Testimonial Evidence

- ↑ in overall functioning and coping abilities
- ↓ depression
- ↑ tolerance
- ↓ tendency to seek revenge

- ↑ anger management & conflict resolution
- ↓ involvement in abusive relationships
- ↑ contentment
- (+) outlook on life
Qualitative Results

- Anger: 150
- Violence: 137
- Grief: 117
- Relationships: 112
- Abuse: 59
- Suicide & Depression: 48
- Infidelity & D.V.: 39
- Addiction: 36

N Group Therapy Sessions = 776
Anger

E.g. Student said that when a school mate came into the classroom and verbally abused her, she retaliated by throwing a chair.

Family participants’ test results proved:
- ↓ anger toward others (t=2.83, p=.0142, Cohen’s d=.756)
- ↓ desire for vengeance (t=3.32, p=.0061, Cohen’s d=.922)
- ↓ thoughts of revenge (t=2.28, p=.0437, Cohen’s d=.658)
Violence & Trauma

- Shame is a precursor to violence – James Gilligan
- When a shamed person is threatened, it breaks down their shame defense, causing them to enter the violent destructive tunnel – Dr. David Allen
  - ↓ I.Q.
  - Ethical fragmentation
  - Compulsive, repetitive desire for destruction
- Rage at self = suicide (masochistic)
- Rage at others = homicide (sadistic)
Grief

How many people do you know who have been killed violently?

“It’s as if I lost me. I became someone else - enraged, living recklessly. Life was never the same.”

-Adolescent Family member
Relationships

• Dysfunctional relationships common
  • Males share they feel manipulated by females’ expectations
  • Females share difficulty in expressing feelings to distant males
• “The people we love deeply make us most angry” – Dr. David Allen
• Learning to love takes TIME.

I felt very angry with some of the people in my life (1-5)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before joining the Family</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After joining the Family</td>
<td>2.6</td>
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Abuse

• Case Vignette
  • Young worker molested & abused as a child
  • Abandoned by both parents
  • Despaired of living
  • Suicide attempt 2 yrs. ago

Before joining the Family (Q34)
- 74.8% 2,3,4: Yes (physical, sexual, emotional)
- 25.2% 1: No

Currently (Q46)
- 89.3%
- 10.7%

p = .0015*

Before joining the Family, were you in an abusive relationship?
Conclusion

• ‘The Family’ developed as a safe space to help people work through shame

• “I am my problem, therefore I am my solution”

-Dr. David Allen

• Thematic analysis indicates:
  a) Depth of the negativity of shame
  b) Hope for re-socialization
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References