HIV: A View From the Couch

Building Therapeutic Relationships with HIV+ Clients
What’s It all about??

**Relationship is Everything**
Objectives

- Establish a few Psychosocial Frameworks as Lens through which to conceptualize clients

- Identify some of the Mental Health Issues for HIV+ folks

- Learn approaches for encouraging Engagement in Care and Relationship Building
My Therapist Cheat Sheet

- Breathe. Tune into my body. Be still.
- Seek first to Understand. Let go of what I think I know.
- Savor the Good.
- Remember: It’s the RELATIONSHIP!!
  (OMG I’m so repetitive.)
Mary

- AA Female 60s

- Trouble hearing/stroke hx/wheelchair bound/disability
- Loss/trauma/remote addiction hx/violent crime victim
- Stressors-dangerous neighborhood/daughter in prison
- VL suppressed
- Loved/likeable
Frameworks/Theories

- Interpersonal Neurobiology
- Existential Therapy
- Humanistic Therapy
- Psychoanalytic Theory
- CBT/TF-CBT
- Narrative Therapy
- Milieu Therapy
- Motivational Interviewing
- Attachment Theory/Stages of Development
- DBT/Radical Acceptance
- Couples Therapy/Gottman Method
- MBSR/Somatic Experiencing
- Queer Theory
Needs of Children

- To Be Seen—perceived deeply empathically
- To Be Safe—avoid actions/situations that scare/hurt
- To Be Soothed—Helped to manage emotions/situations
- To Be secure—internal sense of well being

- Dr. Daniel Siegal —”Mindsight” Neurobiologist
Needs of Adults

- To have meaning/purpose/value
- To have connection/community

“Life is never made unbearable by circumstances but only by lack of meaning and purpose.”

- Viktor Frankl “Man’s Search for Meaning” Existential/logo therapy
Frankl Quotations

“Abnormal reaction to an abnormal situation is normal behavior.”

“ Forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation.”
Humanistic Therapy

- Carl Rogers

- Real self vs. Ideal self---- incongruence when not aligned

- **UNCONDITIONAL POSITIVE REGARD**
  love and acceptance is not withdrawn

- “As no one else can know how we perceive, we are the best experts on ourselves.”
Psychoanalytic Theory

- Freud/Jung
- Transference and Countertransference
CBT
Cognitive Behavior Therapy

- Aaron Beck/ Albert Ellis
- Problems from Cognitive deficiencies and Cognitive/Thinking errors
- Change your thinking—can change your feelings
- ANTS-automatic negative thoughts
- Irrational assumptions
- Bring awareness and develop more positive/accurate thoughts
Typical Cognitive Errors/Typical Irrational Beliefs

- All/Nothing Thinking
- Magnification/Catastrophizing
- Overgeneralizing-always/never
- Personalization

- “I have no control over my own happiness.”
- “There is a perfect solution to my problem, and it’s a disaster if I can’t find it.”
Examples of ANTs (Automatic Negative Thoughts)

- Nothing ever works out for me.
- Something is very wrong with me. I’m damaged.
- I can’t trust anyone. Everyone always lets me down.
- I’m stupid. I’m useless. I’m alone. It’s all my fault.
- No one cares.
- People use me.
Narrative Therapy

- Michael White/David Epston

- Separate Person from problem. **Externalize the problem.**

  *Ex-*” When that HIV (or depression etc.) wants to ruin your day, what can you say to it?“

- Telling your story is healing. You can rewrite your story.
Milieu Therapy

- P. Pineal
- Psychiatric Living Community
- Create safe environment/staff active and appreciative of the clients/interdisciplinary
- Every interaction is an opportunity to be beneficial and improve functioning

*This concept is so helpful for clinics/health departments.*
Motivational Interviewing and Stages of Change

- Miller/ Rollnick
- Reasons to Change vs. Reasons Not to change=
  Explore/Respect both
- Conversation about change-dancing not wrestling
- Resolve ambivalence to change/collaborative/strengths based
- Where you are vs. where you want to be
Attachment Theory

- John Bowlby
- Children are programmed for attachment
- Secure attachment = positive and loving caregivers
- Insecure attachment = angry/confused/ambivalent/rejecting caregivers

* Impacts future relationships
Stages of Development

- Erik Erikson
- Trust vs. Mistrust  ages 0-1.5 yrs.
- Autonomy vs. Shame   1.5-3 yrs.
- Intimacy vs. Isolation  18-40 yrs.
- Generativity vs. Stagnation  40-65 yrs.
DBT
Dialectical Behavior Therapy

- Marsha Linehan
- Helpful-suicidal/self harm/intense emotions/BPD
- Mindfulness/Zen Buddhist – here and now
- Skills for distress tolerance
- **Holding both acceptance and change**
Couples Therapy

- Drs. John and Julie Gottman: build affection/kindness/ don’t miss your partner’s bids for connection
- Gary Chapman “The 5 Love Languages”: ways you receive love
- Polyamory/Open Relationships/Sexuality
Body/Mind Focused Work

- Jon Kabat-Zinn: MBSR (mindfulness based stress reduction)
- Bessel van der Kolk –”The Body Keeps Score” Trauma’s impact on Brain aroused vs. numbed out
- Dr. Peter Levine: Somatic Experiencing –emotion dysregulation shows up in the body
Queer/Gay Theory

- Challenge Heteronormative Thinking/Not all LGBT want to assimilate/Gender/Orientation are more fluid/Think non-binary= concepts

- Adam Blum:
  Self esteem issues/What you didn’t get


- Gershon Kaufman/Lev Raphael- “Coming Out of Shame.”
Who’s on my Couch?

- Newly dx w/HIV
- Transitioning Peds to Adult care
- Trauma hx/PTSD/Multiple ACEs
- Depression/Anxiety/Panic/BAD/Schizoaffective/Adhd/ASD/LD/ID/Body Dysmorphia/Personality d/o
Who’s on my Couch?

- Life Stage Transitions/Crisis:
  - pregnancy, death, divorce, move, transitioning genders, hospitalization, new disability, suicidality, relapse, existential crisis, loss, release from prison

- Immigrants/Refugees

- Substance use/abuse
Additional STRESSORS

- **Stressors:**
  - Poverty
  - Institutional Racism
  - Relationships w/family, coworkers, boss, partners, self, god, children, doctors, etc.
  - Spiritual dilemmas
  - Poor access to resources
  - Chronic disease – how to pay for meds, talk to providers
  - Rejection

- **Values Dilemmas:**
  - i.e. Helping Family vs. Protecting self from toxic relationships
When HIV is Added to the Mix

- Higher prevalence of many Mental Health issues
- Survivor Guilt
- **STIGMA**
  discrimination/outcast/otherness/disgrace/exclusion
- **SHAME**
  unaccepted/secrets/hidden
  self/closeted/inauthentic/STIs/HIV/sex/anal sex/gender
  identity/orientation/culture/internalized
  homophobia/ethnicity/race/marginalized
Case Study # 1

- 22 yr. AA Male from DC identifies as Gay
- VL suppressed quickly, keeps appts
- Duke Undergrad
- Vanderbilt Grad student
- DX HIV at 19 yrs.

- PP: lonely, low motivation, isolation, procrastination, poor sleep, sexual promiscuity
Your Thoughts?

- Strengths:

- Concerns:
Some thoughts:

- Supportive family
- Smart/some insight
- Hard working
- Health

- Depression, low self worth, denial, shame, anxiety, some adhd sx, risky behaviors

Case Study # 2

- 23 yr. AA Female identifies as Straight
- HIV dx at age 15 yr. (10 “sexual partners” by age 13 yr.)
- Never achieved Viral Suppression
- IQ 70 Borderline Intellectual Functioning
- Major Depressive D/O, PTSD
- Premature w/cocaine/Foster care/Homeless
- Referrals to 15+ Community Agencies
- Became Pregnant at 21 yr. delivered healthy baby
Thoughts

- **Strengths:**
  loved her baby/activated people/some insight

- **Issues:**
  educational/health literacy/trust and safety/basic needs/poor emotion regulation, insecure attachments/too many to list!!

- **Underlying Needs:**
  to be valued/respected/held/re-parented/have reparative experiences
Therapist Internal Work

- Content--listen to the narrative-what client says
- Process—think of hx, patterns, strengths, defenses
- Free Flow—Loosen linear thoughts —so creative/intuitive interventions can occur
Difficult Client

- Think of your most difficult/resistant client.
- Think of someone you love-person/pet. Remember the idea of UPR.
- Think of applying it to your client.

- What are they doing right? Who do they want to be? What keeps them going? When have they felt Valued?
Practice/Prescriptions

- Think Multiple Intelligences: Draw/Use metaphors (i.e. from Black to Sparkle Sheep)/AV/role play
- Ask clients for feedback –what works/how have I messed up/what have I missed
- Give fun homework (baths, delicious meals, hikes, talk to a friend, savor the good)
- Exercise/Eat/Sleep/Talk/Community/Sensory
- Volunteer/Give back
Messages

- We are so glad you are here.
- You are never in trouble with us.
- You are worthy and lovable right now.
- I’ve never met a person who used a condom every time.
- No one deserves to be… abused/hated/betrayed/cast out, etc..
- Bad things have happened to you. You are not bad.
- You are Not alone.
- You are resilient. You have handled harder stuff than this.
Self Care

- Be part of a Team
- Laugh/snack/space out/say thank you
- Exercise/listen to music/any and all forms of water/hugs/nature/pets
- Learn and try new things
Questions/Comments?

Thanks so much for attending!