

Approaching Grief with Cultural Humility

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PRESENTATION FORMAT: 15 minute oral presentation

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Social Service Agencies serving Asian immigrants

ABSTRACT: Oregon has a high number of Asian immigrants, many of whom are older adults and who face barriers to care. Studies show that up to twenty percent of older adults face a complicated grieving process. Immigrants also face a grieving process as part of the losses and challenges imposed by their migration event. Having multiple losses or pre-existing depression or other mental illness will predispose a person to complicated grief. All of these factors contribute to a high risk of unaddressed complicated grief in the Asian Immigrant population. We spoke with older Asian immigrant adults experiencing grief, interviewed mental health professionals to seek culturally appropriate ways to assist patients with complicated grief, and conducted a literature review of the subject. It was found that although there are cultural rituals and expectations regarding loss of a loved one, a person's reaction to the event is highly personal. It is necessary to interact with the individual using Cultural Humility in order to fully understand their complicated grief since each person will carry a unique perspective on their native culture, assimilation process, gender roles, inner resources, and religious beliefs. The Migratory Grief Questionnaire (MGQ) and Complicated Grief Therapy (CGT) have been found to be effective tools. CGT can be performed in individual counseling and in groups. The MGQ can be used along with depression screening to assess this additional risk factor.

OBJECTIVE(S): Describe the concept of Cultural Humility and how it can be used to approach older adult immigrants experiencing complicated grief. Identify two tools, Complicated Grief Therapy and Migratory Grief Questionnaire, which can be used when working with older adults and immigrants experiencing complicated grief.

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