Pursuit of Wholeness

Effective Outreach and Use of Spirituality with Cambodians

Pisey Sok, MDiv., MS MFT
Integrated Network for Cambodians (INC)

- PACS was funded by DMH to Provide:
  - Medical Services
  - Behavioral Health
  - Substance Abuse

- Services for Cambodians in LB
- INC Partners:
  - The Children’s Clinic (Medical)
  - PACS (Behavioral)
  - AADAP (Substance Abuse)
  - CAA, KGA, FiGH, UCC (Outreach)
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Finding the Right Staff

- Culturally Informed / Bilingual
- Connection in the Community
- Support the role of Spirituality in Healing Practices
Consider the Context

- History: Genocide
- Status: Refugees / Immigrants
- Worldview: Animism / Brahmanism / Buddhism / Chinese Folk Religion
- Belief in the Law of Karma
  - Astrology, Fortune Telling, Numerology, Ancestor Veneration

Spirituality permeates all levels of Cambodian life.
Language Shapes Perception

- **Lumbak** – Stressors
- **Pañha** – Problems
- **Vibath** – Crisis
- **Chomngu** – Illness, Disease
- **Saipeasat** – Psychiatric Problem
- **Chkuot** – Crazy
Role of Spirituality

- Source of Inspiration
- Source of Meaning
- Source of Healing

Spirituality permeates all levels of Cambodian life.
Integrated Healing

- Recognizing the Pieces
  - Trauma
  - Acculturation
  - Legacy
  - Worldview

- Mind, Body, Spirit
  - Blessing Ceremony
  - Passion for Cooking Class
  - Mindfulness Meditation
  - Empowerment Group
Recapturing Wonder

The older you get the more it takes to fill your hearts with imagination and wonder.

“Healing is rediscovering the extraordinary within the ordinary.”
Blessing Ceremony
Why Context Matters

FEBRUARY 13 ប្រការីប្រាប់កិត្តិថ្លេជីវិត

BLESSING CEREMONY ប្រការីប្រាប់កិត្តិថ្លេជីវិត

Join INC for our 3rd Blessing Ceremony

INC is the Integrated Network for Cambodians. Every 3 months, we host a Blessing Ceremony for the community to sit together and chant with head monks coming from different temples. People of all ages may join. There will also be translations in English.

SAKOR BOREI TEMPLE
3229 Lewis Ave.
Long Beach, CA 90805
Tel: (562) 598-8978

Occurs every 3 months at different temples.

JANUARY 21 ប្រការីប្រាប់កិត្តិថ្លេជីវិត

BLESSING CEREMONY ប្រការីប្រាប់កិត្តិថ្លេជីវិត

Join INC for our 6th Blessing Ceremony

INC is the Integrated Network for Cambodians. Every 3 months, we host a Blessing Ceremony for the community to sit together and chant with head monks coming from different temples. People of all ages may join. There will also be translations in English.

SAKOR BOREI TEMPLE
3229 Lewis Ave.
Long Beach, CA 90805
Tel: (562) 598-8978

Occurs every 3 months at different temples.

WAT SOMONKUSAL TEMPLE
1009 E. South St.
Long Beach, CA 90805

Occurs every 3 months at different temples.
Mindfulness Meditation

- Cultivate Awareness of the Present
- Cultivate Acceptance
- Cultivate Understanding
- Cultivate Empathy
Empowerment Group
Passion for Cooking
Capturing Effectiveness

- Surveys for Evaluation
  - Pre- and Post-Surveys
- Before and After the Ceremony
- High client satisfaction with the ceremony:
  - Better appetite, sleep and physical health.
  - Social isolation issues were helped by this, too.
  - At the same time 50% reported no change or improvements while the other 50% did feel better.
Blessing Ceremony

• Questions:
  • I have no expectations
  • I would like to feel better about myself
  • I would like to feel calmer and more balanced
  • I would like to feel better with family and friends
  • I think this will be helpful and supportive
  • I think this will help me have a better appetite
  • I think this will help me sleep better
  • I think this will Help me feel better physically

Note: Significant expectations that the Blessing Ceremony will be helpful.
**Blessing Ceremony**

- Questions:
  - I feel better about myself
  - I feel calmer and more balanced
  - I like this type of service
  - I feel better when I’m with family and friends
  - I have a better appetite
  - I sleep better
  - I feel better physically
  - I feel more comfortable around other people
  - I feel the same, no changes or improvements
  - I found the services helpful and supportive

Note: High client satisfaction with the ceremony and clients note better appetite, sleep and physical health. Social isolation issues were helped by this, too. At the same time 50% reported no change or improvements while the other 50% did feel better.
The Happiness Scale comes from the first question on the pre- and post-surveys about the Blessing Ceremony.

Note: On the pre-survey, many Cambodians scored a “5.” We think it is because Cambodians do not express negative or sad feelings when directly asked. Our older clients felt that their lives are not that bad compared to what they suffered under the Khmer Rouge. In the post-survey, there were significant jumps to “10 - feeling very good.”

1. **On a scale of 1 to 10, how are you feeling?**  
   - 1 = feeling bad  
   - 5 = feeling OK  
   - 10 = feeling very good
“Don’t Concentrate on the Finger”
Unexpected Blessings

- Understanding the soul of a community unlocks the wisdom and strength of the healing traditions that is already present.

- The ceremony has a deeper significance to the clients. It awakens in them the realization that they are not only paying back the past but also giving them an opportunity to create their future.

- Being blessed is not simply ending one’s own suffering rather it is to empower one to end the suffering of others.

“Healing is rediscovering the extraordinary within the ordinary.”
INTEGRATED NETWORK FOR CAMBODIANS

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