Community Defined Practice: Emotional Emancipation Circles

CIBHS Evidence-Based Practices Symposium
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Objectives

• Define Community Defined Practices (CDPs) and rationale for design within cultural context, including implementation using the community development team model (CDT)

• Critically discuss the core components of Emotional Emancipation Circles and effectiveness in fostering self-awareness and empowerment.

• Examine a sample of the consciousness-raising activities, historical references, and selected inspirational and mindfulness activities.
Community Defined Evidence Definition

• “A set of practices that communities have used and determined to yield positive results as determined by community consensus over time, and which may or may not have been measured empirically but have reached a level of acceptance by the community.”
  – (Martinez, Callejas, & Hernandez, 2010)
Community Defined Practice
Definition - Paraphrased

Practices used by a group with a common heritage and shared interests and who see themselves as distinct, that have been found by members of that group to have good results based on information they have gathered, and they have a common general agreement about those good results, to the point that the group in general approves of the practice and believes in it.
Examples of CDP Interventions and Therapies

Types of practices derived from a specific cultural tradition and targeted to members of that community:

- Rites of Passage
- Drumming
- Dance Therapy
- Spirituality/Faith-based healing
- Healing Circles or Talking Circles
- Spoken Word
- Community Healers
- Emotional Emancipation Circles
Rationale - Why Focus on CDPs?

• Concern about how well EBPs fit clients from various different cultural and linguistic backgrounds

• Power of focusing on indigenous practices and strengths of the community
Cultural Context

Services that are designed and improved with attention to community needs and desires are more likely to be used by patients/consumers, thus leading to more acceptable, responsive, efficient, and effective care (CLAS Final Report).
EEC-CPI Background

• CIBHS Capacity Building Project
• Community Development Team Model
• Emotional Emancipation Circles – California Professional Initiative
Community Development Team Model

• Community Development Teams are a training and technical assistance process to promote adoption of a practice

• Can often consist of a team of agencies committed to adopting a practice in common

• Combines four features
  – Training
  – Administrative supports
  – Site specific planning
  – Peer-to-peer assistance
The EEC-CPI Collaboration

The California Institute for Behavioral Health Solutions (CIBHS) has entered into a collaboration with Community Healing Network, Inc. (CHN) and The Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi) to support the implementation of a community defined practice utilizing the Community Development Team model for achieving model adherent, sustainable implementation of a practice designed by and for people of African ancestry…

*Emotional Emancipation Circle*SM (EEC*SM*)
California Reducing Disparities Project, is focused on five populations:

- African Americans
- Asian/Pacific Islanders
- Latinos
- Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Questioning (LGBTQ)
- Native Americans
So what exactly are EECs? A Community Based Self-Affirming Curriculum
A Word about Culture

They come bathed in the concepts their community holds about (the developing person) just as surely as they come bathed in amniotic fluid. (Cole, 1996, p.184)
Relational Legacy of Historical Trauma
Types of Oppression (Racism)

• Individualized
• Institutional or Systematic
• Internalized
• Cultural

*Denies Our Humanity and Adversely Informs Our Reality!*

• Intersectionality of social difference with systematic oppression
Institutional Oppression: Collective Professional History

- **Drapetomania**
  - The urge to escape from slavery
  - Medical intervention was to removal of the big toes
- **Dysaesthesi Aethiopica**
  - Being prone to laziness
  - More among free Negroes living in clusters
- **Cure:** "whipping the devil out of them"
  (Cartwright, 1851)
The essence of trauma is the loss of faith that there is order and continuity in life. A traumatic experience impacts the entire person…
• We must return and claim our past in order to move toward our future
• Understanding who we were frees us to embrace who we are to become
• The nature of this work is such that each group first must see to their own healing
• No group can do another’s work

(Leary, 2005)
Afrikan Trauma Cycle

MAAT
WHOLENESS

MAAFA
FRACTURING
SPLINTERING
SHATTERING

SANKOFA
MENDING
RETURNING TO OUR
OWN FORMS
REDEFINING CIVILIZATION
EECs℠ provide persons of African ancestry with…

• A place to:
  – Reduce isolation,
  – Confront old or fresh personal and racial wounds,
  – Be emotional if they need to,
  – Share,
  – See themselves in the stories of others,
  – Laugh, cry, hug, and gain solace,
  – Become more self and context aware,
  – Decrease racial stress
Community Development Team Features

• Training and consultation provided by CHN and ABPsi
  – 3 Day Facilitator/Participant Training & 1 day Booster Session
  – Monthly Consultation Calls
  – Online Portal

• Implementation planning and administrative supports provided by CIBHS
  – Introductory and Pre-Planning Meetings/Webinars
  – Monthly Administrator Conference Calls
  – Outcome evaluation support (analysis and reporting)

• Channels of communication to support peer-to-peer assistance
EEC Target Population

• Persons of African ancestry
  – Cultural shift
    • Differs from Western models of an identified population with clinical problems warranting intervention (treating the identified patient)

• Rationale
  – Assumption that the *Myth of Black Inferiority and White Supremacy* has impacted all globally
    • Manifests itself differently depending on location and culturally-specific history in relation to colonization
African-centered Perspectives

• Represent the fact that as human beings, people of African ancestry have the right and responsibility to ‘center’ themselves in their own subjective possibilities and potential

• And through the re-centering process reproduce and refine the best of themselves. (Nobles, 1990)

ONE’S ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND BLACK REALITY IS LIMITED IF THE INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSIS OF THE REALITY IS BASED ON ASSUMPTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH NON-BLACK REALITY. (Clark, 1972)
African-centered Perspectives

How we re-member and re-claim that what we know.

- Basic Tenets
  - CHILD-CENTERED
  - ONENESS OF BEING
  - SURVIVAL OF THE TRIBE

Collectivism-Individualism
RESILIENCE

The capacity of a (person) to deal effectively with...

• stress and pressure
• cope with everyday challenges
• rebound from disappointments, mistakes trauma, and adversity
• develop clear and realistic goals
• solve problems
• interact comfortably with others
• hear oneself and others with respect and dignity

(Brooks, 2005)
EEC and Relational Well-being

- Ubuntu: *The essence of being human…*
- Communalism/community-centered
- Support (emotional and practical)
- Affection
- Bonding
- Cohesion
- Collaboration
- Respect for diversity of
  - Opinion
  - Insight and awareness
- Democratic participation
African-Centered Principles

- African language – use of proverbs, spoken word, wit, oral tradition, etc.
- Music
- People orientation – communal emphasis
- Kinship Patterns
- Interaction vs. reaction
- African thought (significance of intuition/hunches)
- Spontaneity
- Respect for elders
- Generosity
- Cooperativeness/Mutual Help
- Community
- Centrality of Spirit and the Divine
The 7 Keys

• Are affirmations of the work needed
• Provide conscious reminders of
  – what we must understand,
  – what we must tell ourselves,
  – what we must seek out, and
  – what we must do to free ourselves.
• Serve as sources of support in moments of challenge
The Elements of an EE Circle

① There are 5 core sections or segments to every EE Circle
   a. Setting the Stage
   b. The Opening
   c. The Activity
   d. The Closing
   e. Evaluation

② These are explained in the Leader’s Guide and are accompanied by leader instructions and participant handouts
1. Setting the Stage
   A. Outreach
   B. Facilitation Preparation
   C. Preparing the EEC Space
   D. Welcome Attendees (10 minutes)

2. The Opening (20 minutes)
   A. Background Music
   B. Call to Order -- Play song “People Get Ready” as the sign the EEC is starting
   C. Official Welcome/Introductions
   D. Group Recitation of the 7 Keys to Emotional Emancipation
   E. Review the EEC Ground Rules

3. The Activity (60 minutes)
   A. Focus on an EEC Key (Excluding Initial launch sessions)
   B. Relate Key to an Activity/Information/Sharing
   C. Relate Key to a Mindfulness Skill

4. The Closing (20 minutes)
   A. Take Away Sharing Exercise
   B. Closing Recitation
   C. Closing Song/Dance
   D. Invitation to Return Next Time and “Each One, Bring One”

5. Evaluation (5 minutes)
   A. Attendees Complete EEC Evaluation Form
Experiencing the EECs℠
Emerging Questions

Context: That the lie has impacted all persons of African ancestry yet may not necessarily consistently manifest as a ‘problem’ according to Western perspectives warranting intervention.

• How to measure the benefits of EECs if limited by current evidence-based tools that are more problem-focused (quantitative)?

• How can we shift to documenting the outcome of EECs based on persons’ experiences & cultural-congruency (qualitative)?
Reaching out…

• Community Healing Network, Inc. (CHN): http://www.communityhealingnet.org/

• The Association of Black Psychologists, Inc. (ABPsi): www.abpsi.org

• California Institute for Behavioral Health Solutions (CIBHS): www.cibhs.org
Questions/Comments?
Thank you!