

Wounded I am More Awake

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Resettlement Trauma

- Low social and economic status (**poverty**)
- **Legal** status or secure status issues
- **Language & cultural** barriers / isolation
- Transportation, service barriers
- Loss of identity, roles
- Bad news from home/refugee camps
- Unmet expectations & un/under-employment
- Racial/ethnic/religious discrimination

Resettlement Trauma

- **Re-traumatization**
- Inadequate, dangerous housing
- Repeated relocation/migration
- **Fear of authority / police / uniforms**
- Family separation/reunification
- Unresolved losses/disappearances
- **Conflict:** internal, marital, multigenerational, community
- Shock of new climate, geography, **systems**

The Meaning of Trust in Healing from Trauma

- As a refugee and torture survivor, I understand the loss of meaning in life.
 - In a personal communication, **Robert J. Lifton** told me, **“I only hope you are using your own experience in helping your patients with trauma.”**
 - Torture victims with PTSD have difficulty: trusting family or friends and have damaged self-esteem.
 - In my current work as a psychiatrist I integrate these lessons into my practice.
 - Transformation from a victim to a survivor
- “Most people who are tortured don’t get any treatment and most people recover” Judith Herman**

AFGHANISTAN: THE TRAUMA CONTINUES



PERSPECTIVES

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Cultural Sensitivity and Humility

10 Microaggressions to Ignore with
Newly Settled Afghans

Dr. Nura Sedique



1. Don't call them Afghans.
2. Don't ask about their tribal background.
3. Just because they speak with an accent, doesn't mean they think with one.
4. Don't ask them what their political views are on America.
5. Don't ask if they are Shia or Sunni.
6. Don't bring nationalism and racism into a discussion with them.
7. Don't assume one individual is representative of every Afghan and every Afghan's experience.
8. Don't expect them to immediately feel comfortable with you or trust you.
9. Don't assume a woman is oppressed because she wears a hijab.
10. Do not make fun of the attire they choose to wear.
11. Do not expect a personal thanks from them.
12. Do not preach religious perspectives to them.
13. Do not assume they will celebrate all American holidays.
14. Do not feel the need to give them a crash course on America.

Considerations with Afghan Families

- Children do not look adults in the eye as a sign of respect.
- Nodding does not necessarily mean agreement.
- Silence does not mean understanding
 - Parents may not know they are entitled to clarification or to ask questions
- Be sensitive when asking for immediate decisions from female members of the family
 - They may feel the need to consult with male elder
- Be sensitive regarding male-female interactions
 - Dad meeting with female teacher

**Culturally & Linguistically
Appropriate Services for Afghans**
A Practical Handbook for
Clinical & Educational Settings

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