GROUP INTERVENTIONS FOR TREATMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

MODULE 5:
AN OVERVIEW OF EVIDENCE-BASED GROUP APPROACHES TO TRAUMA WITH CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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WILLIAM SALTZMAN, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist specializing in child and family trauma. A staff member of the National Center for Child Traumatic Stress at UCLA, Dr. Saltzman is also an Associate Professor at California State University, Long Beach. Over the past decade, he has co-developed and implemented group therapy protocols for children and adolescents exposed to trauma and loss in post-war Bosnia, in New York after the 9/11 attacks, and in numerous schools and school districts.

I.   RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

A.   This module is designed to provide group therapists and mental health clinicians with information about the use of groups for youth who have experienced overwhelming stressful life experiences. It will include:

1.   An overview of the common symptomatology seen in youth who have been exposed to a traumatic event.

2.   Information on the rates of comorbidity, various symptom presentations, and types of impairment.

3.   A discussion of the therapist qualifications, themes and goals, and specific advantages of group therapy.

4.   An overview of the literature on evidence-based group trauma treatments.

5.   A description of the common CBT trauma treatment components.

B.   The objectives are:

1.   To learn to recognize the wide range of symptoms and impairments that may result after a trauma in youth populations.

2.   To learn to identify the situations for which group interventions for trauma are indicated, and the special skill sets therapists need to master.

3.   To learn what the current literature is on group treatments for trauma and what populations they may be specifically designed for.

4.   To learn the basic components of CBT trauma treatment for youth.

II.   FORMAT OF THE MODULE

A.   Didactic

B.   Audience Participation

C.   Question-and-Answer Periods

D.   Sharing of Work

E.   Group Exercises

III.   INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

   A.   Define Trauma (overview of DSM-IV-TR criteria)

   B.   List Various Traumatic Experiences Youth May Experience

   C.   Prevalence of Trauma in Youth Populations.

   D.   Psychosocial Effects of Trauma

      1.   Symptomatology in youth populations is very diverse and affected by developmental stage.

      2.   Response to trauma is affected by a variety of factors.

   E.   Diagnoses Often Associated with the Aftermath of Trauma

      1.   Acute Stress Disorder

      2.   PTSD

      3.   Major Depression

      4.   Substance Abuse Disorders

      5.   Externalizing Disorders

      6.   Comorbid Conditions

   F.   Trauma Response Pattern

      1.   Discussion of the Multiple Trauma Response Pattern

      2.   Review of Developmental Considerations

   G.   Questions and Answers

IV.   RATIONALE FOR GROUP THERAPY FOR TRAUMA

   A.   Review Distinction Between Crisis Counseling and Intensive Therapy

   B.   Therapist Qualifications for Intensive Group Trauma Therapy

   C.   Review Specific Advantages of Group Therapy

1. School-based location

2. Use of peer group to help with therapeutic goals

D. Review of Therapeutic Themes and Goals of Group Trauma Therapy: Contrast group dynamic goals with that of individual therapy.

E. Discuss Basic Principles of Trauma-Focused Group Psychotherapy

1. Group Composition

2. Inclusion Criteria

3. Exclusion Criteria

V. LITERATURE REVIEW OF EVIDENCE-BASED GROUP TRAUMA TREATMENTS

A. Overview of Child-Focused Interventions

B. Overview of Adolescent-Focused Interventions

C. Discuss Differences Across Manuals in Relation to Developmental Abilities and Special Symptom Clusters

1. Typically adolescent manuals have more extensive cognitive work.

2. Certain manuals may be more focused on specific symptom reduction, such as externalizing behaviors or safety planning.

D. Overview of Common CBT Trauma Treatment Components: Discuss similarities/differences across manuals.

VI. CBT TRAUMA TREATMENT COMPONENTS

A. Building Therapeutic Alliance

1. Establishing rules and structure of the group

2. Cohesion building

B. Psychoeducation

1. Theoretical underpinnings

2. Therapeutic goals

3. Application: Demonstration and/or role-play

C. Affective Education/Regulation

1. Theoretical underpinnings

2. Therapeutic goals

3. Application: Demonstration and/or role-play

D. Stress Inoculation/Relaxation

1. Theoretical underpinnings

2. Therapeutic goals

3. Application: Demonstration and/or role-play

E. Cognitive Coping

1. Theoretical underpinnings

2. Therapeutic goals

3. Application: Demonstration and/or role-play

F. Exposure/Trauma Narrative

1. Theoretical underpinnings

2. Therapeutic goals

3. Therapist's role

4. Role of group members

5. Application: Demonstration and/or role-play

G. Skill Building

1. Theoretical underpinnings

2. Therapeutic goals

3. Application: Demonstration and/or role-play

H. Looking to the Future

1. Theoretical underpinnings

2. Therapeutic goals

3. Application: Demonstration and/or role-play

VII. TROUBLE SHOOTING

A. Review Situations That Are Challenging

1. Difficult members

2. Variations in self-disclosure

3. Therapist reactions

4. Premature terminations

B. Variations of the Model

C. Outcome Studies

D. Question and Answer

VIII. GROUP EXERCISES

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