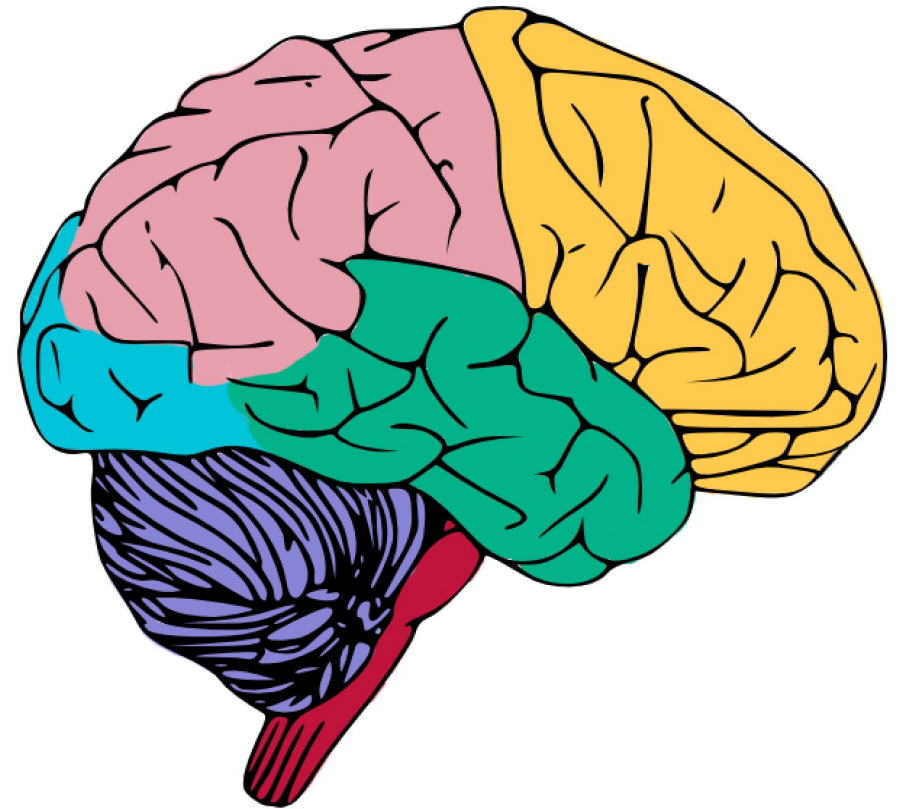


# Trauma Informed Social Work

## Module 5: Class 9 Cross-cultural and Ecological Perspectives on Trauma and The Impact of Western Theoretical Models on Social Work Practice

---



# Agenda

---

- Cross-cultural and ecological perspectives on Trauma
- Western models to understand trauma and applicability across cross-cultural contexts
- Medicalization of trauma and its impact across cultural settings



---

# Cross-Cultural Approaches to Trauma

---

# Cross-Cultural Approaches to Trauma

## Individual's reactions to PTSD will vary across cultures

- What are the criteria presented in the DSM-5 for PTSD?
- Will they hold true for individuals who have experienced trauma across cultures?

## Idioms of distress

- “Culturally relevant reactions that are locally shaped and culturally recognizable forms of suffering.”

## Explanatory models of illness

- Refers to the clients' or cultural groups' perceptions of the nature of their illness and its causes, and ways to address the issue through help-seeking

---

# Western Models Used to Understand Trauma

---

# Western Models Used to Understand Trauma

- Individually focused and does not account for collectivist traditions
- Medical/Pharmacological approaches to trauma intervention
  - Does not account for contextual factors (e.g., community resources, culture) in trauma recovery
  - Use of medication in trauma treatment
- Diagnoses based on the DSM
  - Does not account for variation in expression of trauma and coping strategies by non-Westernized individuals
  - Increased number of diagnoses due to a lack of cultural and ecological understanding
- Does not examine the role of cultural and ecological factors (e.g., collective efficacy; neighborhood cohesion; community competence) in understanding trauma
- Use of assessment measures that are not cross-culturally validated in understanding trauma
- Lack of systematically validated ecological assessment instruments

---

# Perspectives Used to Enhance Cross-Cultural Understanding of Trauma

---

# Ecological Perspective

- Highlights the importance of assessing family, other social institutions, and community and cultural settings as ecological systems that plays a role in traumatic experiences and its developmental sequelae
- Ecological approach can be useful in the prevention of and response to trauma
  - Assessment of ecological assets in relation to community capacity building and resilience
    - **Psychological sense of community**
      - Refers to “feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together.” (McMillan & Chavis, 1986)
    - **Neighborhood/community resilience**
      - “Is the sustained ability of communities to withstand, adapt to, and recover from adversity” (Plough et al. 2013)
    - **Community competence**
      - Refers to the “organized action of people, communities and institutions to prevent, manage and learn from crises” or adversities (Carpenter, 2013, p.1)
    - **Political and ecological resilience**
      - Political resilience – the ability to recover from political adversities
      - Ecological resilience – the amount of disturbance that an ecosystem could withstand without changing self-organized processes and structures (Holling, 1973 as cited in Gunderson, 2000, p. 1)



# Cultural - Ecological Perspectives

Methodological pluralism and the use of multimethod approaches for research and assessment.

Elucidates that approaches to trauma assessment should not only be done clinically at the individual level or by excluding normative judgement and social values

# Human Security Framework

- Provides an understanding of traumatogenic factors, human vulnerability and ecological risks
- Allows practitioners to utilize multidisciplinary knowledge in addressing issues (e.g., violence and abuse, natural disasters, genocide, human rights violation and discrimination) at the micro and macro levels
- Allows for clarification of values important to the well-being and civil society, in addition to what constitutes ecological threats that involves cultural collapse and the violation of human rights
- Allows for a broadened discussion on trauma and its relationship with civil society as an ecological guarantor of optimal human condition
- Assessment of threats to cultural and structural integrity of society should be accompanied by the assessment of ecological assets for sustaining human security with focus extending beyond physical infrastructure to include human infrastructure

---

# Cultural - Ecological Perspectives Assessment Approaches

---



# Cultural - Ecological Perspectives Assessment Approaches


---

- Combining use of psychometric approaches with clinical interviews, field-based community interviews, and other ethnographic and action research methods in ecological settings
- Examination of the efficacy and adequacy of ecological resources and culture specific forms of coping as a result of trauma
- Need for differentiation of collectivist coping strategies associated with collectivist values and ones that draws on group as communal resources in cultural assessments.
- Need for cultural sensitivity and humility in the assessment of trauma.

---

# Limitations of Psychometric Approaches in Cross-Cultural Context

---



# Limitations of Psychometric Approaches in Cross-Cultural Context

- 
- Linguistic equivalence
  - Response bias
  - Cultural validity issues
    - Lack of validity using cross-cultural populations
  - Instruments focused on traumatic experiences and symptoms and does not include cultural and ecological factors
  - Lack of cross-cultural data on self reported measures of resilience
    - Single self report instrument of resilience is not consistent with ecological conceptions of resilience

---

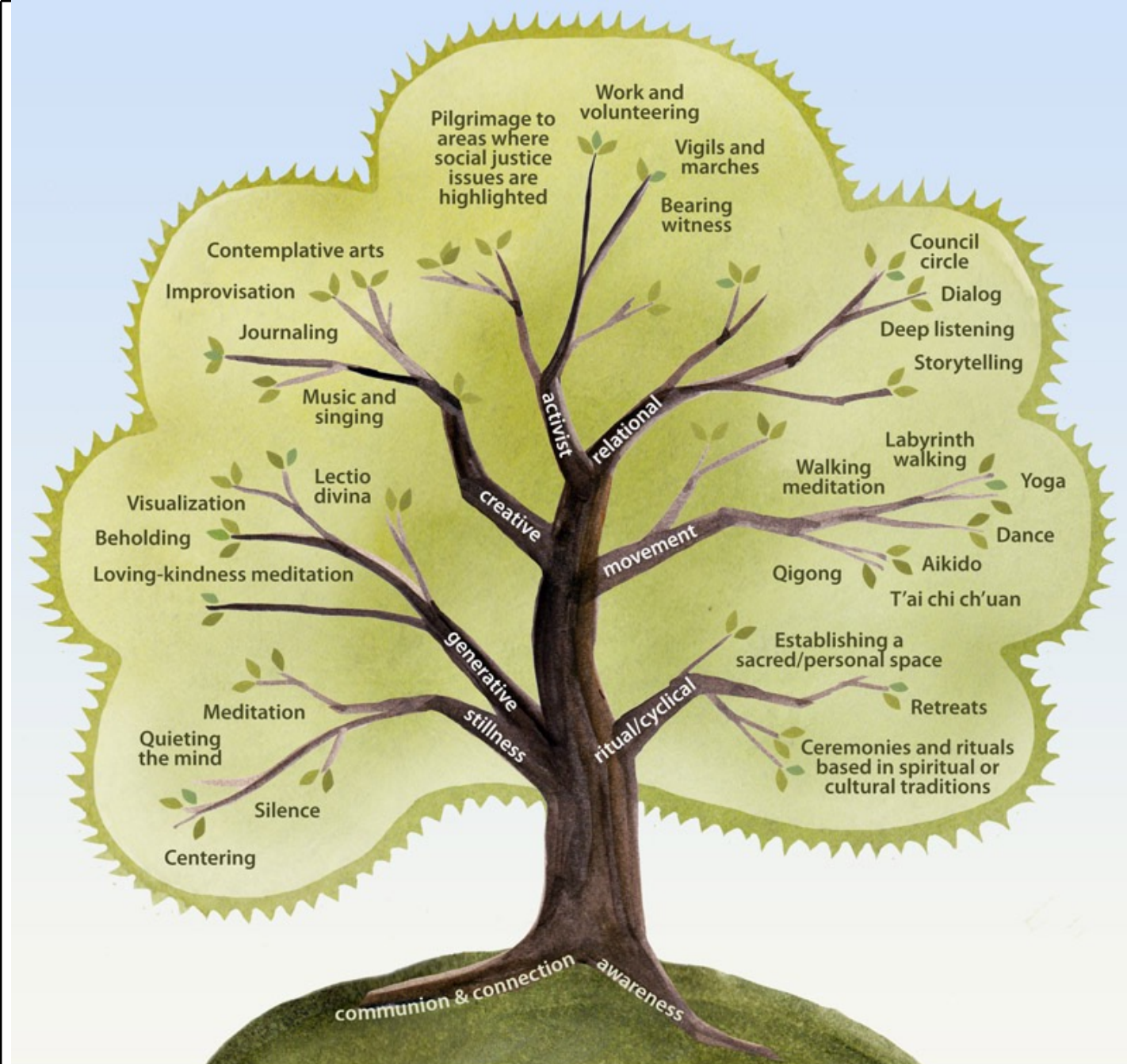
# Traditional & Contemplative Healing Practices

---



# Tree of Contemplative Practice

- Incorporates practices from other cultures & traditions
- Spirituality
- Practices that improve relationship with self, other, and the world
- Not an exhaustive list



The Tree of Contemplative Practices

[www.contemplativemind.org](http://www.contemplativemind.org)



# Contemplative Practices

## Activist Practices

- Pilgrimage to areas where social justice issues are highlighted
- Work and Volunteering
- Vigils and Marches
- Bearing Witness

## Creative Practices

- Contemplative Arts
- Improvisation
- Music and Singing
- Journaling

## Generative Practices

- Lectio Divina
- Visualization
- Beholding
- Loving-Kindness Meditation

## Movement Practices

- Labyrinth Walking
- Walking Meditation
- Yoga
- Dance
- Qigong
- Aikido
- Tai Chi Chu'an

## Relational Practices

- Council Circle
- Dialog
- Deep Listening
- Storytelling

## Ritual/Cyclical Practices

- Ceremonies and Rituals based in Spiritual or Cultural Traditions
- Establishing a Sacred/Personal Space
- Retreats

## Stillness Practices

- Meditation
- Quieting the Mind
- Silence
- Centering

---

# Key Takeaways

---



# Ways to Enhance Applicability of Models to Understand Trauma Across Cultural Contexts

---

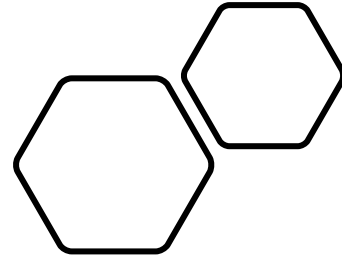
1. Use of culturally validated assessment tools
2. Assessment of contextual data
3. Psychological adaptation and sustainability of cultural and community supports
4. Use of practice models that reflect cultural ecological considerations in the assessment of trauma and associated interventions
5. Use of protocols and evaluation measures that include cultural factors
6. Ecological awareness and knowledge
7. Ecological approaches should be **process oriented** and involve **collaboration with external stakeholder** who have knowledge of ecological systems



## Small Group Activity (30 minutes)

In your small group, you are required to read the case and answer the associated questions.

# Food For Thought



“People who experience trauma do not only exist as individuals, but as a part of a family, neighborhood, community, and society. They all have varied cultural backgrounds, values, and norms that are important to their overall well-being. Be patient, be kind, but most important, be aware and knowledgeable of, and sensitive to their cultural and ecological backgrounds.”