KESHER SHALOM PROJECTS

BRIDGING WORLDS:
Identity, Culture, and Countertransference in Mental Health
Presented by Malka Shaw, LCSW & Jodi Taub, LCSW

WHY CULTURAL COMPETENCY MATTERS

- Cultural Values & Norms
- Historical & Intergenerational Trauma (1)
- Religion, Faith, and Ritual (2)
- Cultural Pride & Contributions
- Correcting Cultural Misattributions
- Language & Communication Styles
- Ideologies & Values
- Countertransference Awareness & Implicit Bias in the Workplace

Practicing Accountability and Care:
- Power Dynamics
- Acknowledge harm without defensiveness
- Exploration of intention
- Utilize these moments of bias for teaching and education
- Commit to ongoing learning about cultural competency
- Make room in supervision and team spaces for complexity and discomfort
- Center humility over certainty
- Remain open, curious, and willing to grow

TO UNDERSTAND THE CLIENT'S WORLD, WE MUST FIRST EXAMINE THE LENS WE USE TO SEE IT

JEWISH CULTURAL COMPETENCY

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT?

- Helping others know what It means to be Jewish
- contextual Awareness (3)
- Recognizing Subtle Antisemitism
- Combating Stereotypes
- Sensitivity and Respect (2)
- Effective Support
- Building Trust
- moral and ethical obligations (6)
- Education on how Rationalization is used to justify antisemitism (10)

- Who are the Jews?- More than religion: Ethnicity and Peoplehood
- Overview of History(3)
- Basic TENETS of the religion
- Ways of Practicing Judaism
- Jewish Values
- Accomplishments and Contributions to Society
- Statistics
- Define Antisemitism (7)
- What are the factors that make Jews a target
- Manifestations of Antisemitism(2)
- Understanding the real meaning of Zionism
- Understanding of "The Chosen People"
- Jewish connection to Israel

HOW ANTISEMITISM AND CULTURAL BIAS SHOW UP IN PROFESSIONAL SPACES

- Minimized understanding of historical and intergenerational trauma from antisemitism (8)
- Exclusion of Jewish identity in DEI and cultural competency trainings (4)
- Assumptions of privilege or ignorance of Jewish culture
- Supervisory bias)
- Peer dynamics
- Professional spaces: conferences, panels, and trainings
- Social media discourse (9)
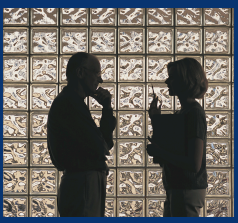
BRIDGING WORLDS

To practice ethically and effectively in mental health, we must move beyond general frameworks and attune to how identity, history, and unconscious bias surface in our work.

WHAT IS JEWISH TRAUMA?

- Individual / Personal Trauma
- Intergenerational Trauma
- Identity Destabilization vs Preservation of Legacy & Nationhood
- Post 10/7 and Rise of Antisemitism

CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS:

- SHAME/DOUBT
- SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY & DEPRESSION (2,14)
- LOSS/GRIEF (8)
- FEARS ABOUT PERSONAL SAFETY (14)
- LOSS OF TRUST- FEELINGS OF BETRAYAL(2)
- RUPTURES IN RELATIONSHIPS AND LOSS OF FORMER SAFE SPACES AND COMMUNITIES (5)
- FEELINGS OF IRRITABILITY AND FRUSTRATION
- ANGER/RAGE (14)
- NERVOUS SYSTEM IMPACT/TRAUMA RESPONSE

WHAT MAKES ANTISEMITISM UNIQUE IN COUNTERTRANSFERENCE

- Jewish cultural competence and Jewish trauma are often overlooked or dismissed in mental health education.
- Clinicians may unconsciously view Jewish clients as universally privileged, reducing sensitivity to their pain or marginalization.
- Stereotypes, conspiracy tropes, or unease around Jewish identity and history, and comparative suffering may shape countertransference.
- Without reflection, these dynamics can lead to invalidation, alliance rupture, or exclusion within clinical teams and workplaces, causing therapeutic and profession ruptures.

Address clients with a sense of empathy and provide a safe place for one to address their personal feelings, effects and reactions to their experiences of antisemitism.

ANTISEMITISM OF IDENITY DESTABALIZATION

The psychological impact and effects resulting from **deliberate defamation** of Jewish individuals, institutions and communities for purposes of undermining their credibility and disrupting sense of self. **Causing:**

- Internal Conflicts and Confusion
- Insecurity and Alienation
- Distrust and Betrayal
- Emotional Distress
- Increased Risk of PTSD
- Damaged Reputation
- Ultimately leading to hostile environments.

DUAL IMPACT OF GASLIGHTING & MACROGASLIGHTING

- Traumatic Invalidation
- Cultural and Ethnic Destabilization
- Creating a Common Enemy
- From Micro to Macro
- Existential Threat
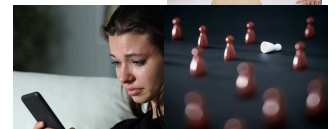
Practical Tools for Accountability in Professional spaces

- Differentiate intent from impact
- Consult when unsure
- Use inclusive tools
- Include Jewish case examples
- Debrief antisemitism-related ruptures
- Acknowledge comparative suffering
- Challenge systemic bias

OUR MORAL AND ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY

The importance of promoting education, awareness, and fostering a culture of tolerance and inclusivity. What is our responsibility in terms of protection of the rights and well-being of our Jewish clients?
Combating prejudice requires a collective effort from individuals, communities, and institutions.

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