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Stronger through diversity

Caroline Verheijde-Zeijl¹, Anna de Voogt²

¹Emergis, GOES, The Netherlands

²Private Practice, AMSTERDAM, The Netherlands

Learning Goal:

Learning and applying concepts and methods from transcultural systemic psychotherapy

Ingredients of transcultural systemic therapy

Genogram and timeline

The transition model of migration

Protective wrapping (enveloppement)

Abstract Text:

Transcultural Systemic Psychotherapy (TSP) is based on concepts of anthropology and systemic psychotherapy. This approach is suitable for patients from diverse cultural backgrounds and empowers them (and their families) by turning diversity into strength. Other themes are circularity of interactions (vs linear causality), collectivism vs individualism, inclusion and exclusion, and the formation of a third culture by bicultural families.

The incidence of psychosis is higher under migrants, and we think that transcultural systemic psychotherapy is a way to support families and patients who are going through a psychotic episode.

TSP applies the “transition model” of cultural anthropology, viewing migration as an important life-cycle transition, comprising a separation stage, a liminal stage and a reintegration stage. The liminal stage is a vulnerable period. Migration can be seen as a vulnerable stage for families. A psychotic episode can also be seen as a transition, as a vulnerable stage. “Protective wrapping” helps families to get through this difficult stage. Protective wrapping is a verb and a noun. It stems from the French ethno-psychiatric concept of enveloppement: it means to re-embed a person or persons in one’s culture or social group, in everything from the left behind past. This may include the landscape, the smells and tastes, the traditions and rituals, the history, the music.

By constructing a “life-line” with the patient or family, we visualize important lifecycle transitions and make transparent how liminal stages get staggered and may lead to prolonged periods of vulnerability and imbalance. A genogram helps to identify figures of authority and wisdom, and sources of support in the family. These tools help the family to develop adequate protective wrapping(s).

**ON THE HEALING POWER
OF HUMAN RECONNECTION**