

An Informed Application of Emotionally Focused Therapy with Immigrant Couples

Authors : Reihaneh Mahdavisahri

Abstract : This paper provides a brief introduction to emotionally focused therapy (EFT) and its culturally sensitive and informed application when working with immigrant couples. EFT's grounding in humanistic psychology prioritizes a non-pathologizing and empathic understanding of individuals' experiences, creating a safe space for couples to explore and create new experiences without imposing judgment or prescribing the couple "the right way of interacting" with one another. EFT's emphasis on attachment, bonding, emotions, and corrective emotional experiences makes it a fitting approach to work with multicultural couples, allowing for the corrective emotional experience to be shaped and informed by the couples' unique cultural background. This paper highlights the challenges faced by immigrant couples and explores how immigration adds a complex layer to each partner's sense of self, their attachment bond, and their sense of safety and security within their relationships. Navigating a new culture, creating a shared sense of purpose, and re-establishing emotional bonds can be daunting for immigrant couples, often leading to a deep sense of disconnection and vulnerability. Reestablishing and fostering secure attachment between the partners in the safety of the therapeutic space can be a protective factor for these couples.

Keywords : attachment, culturally informed care, emotionally focused therapy, immigration

Conference Title : ICAAR 2024 : International Conference on Attachment and Adult Relationships

Conference Location : Rome, Italy

Conference Dates : March 04-05, 2024