Narrative in Psychiatry

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Narrative

- Any report of connected events presented in a sequence of written or spoken words.
Frameworks for eliciting a narrative

- DSM IV Cultural Formulation
- Kleinman’s Eight Questions
- The ADDRESSING framework
Arthur Kleinman’s Eight questions:

1. What do you think caused your problem?
2. Why do you think it started when it did?
3. What does your sickness do to you? How does it work?
4. How severe is your sickness? How long do you expect it to last?
5. What problems has your sickness caused you?
6. What do you fear about your sickness?
7. What kind of treatment do you think you should receive?
8. What are the most important results you hope to receive from this treatment?
Cultural Formulation

- Cultural Identity
  - country of origin
  - migration history
  - ethnic or cultural reference groups
  - degree of involvement with culture of origin/ host culture
  - language abilities
Cultural Formulation

- Cultural Explanations of Illness
  - idioms of distress through which symptoms are communicated
  - meaning of symptoms to pt
  - perceived severity
  - explanatory model pt/family using to explain illness
Cultural Formulation

- Cultural Factors related to Psychosocial Environment and Level of Functioning
  - available social supports
  - level of functioning/ disability
  - role of religion/ kin networks
Primary goals

- Who is this individual?
- Information to be able to formulate diagnosis
- Build connection/relationship
Cultural Formulation

• Cultural elements of individual/clinician relationship
  - difference in cultural and social status
  - problems these differences might cause in diagnosis and treatment
Cultural Formulation

• Overall cultural assessment for diagnosis and care
  - how cultural considerations influence comprehensive diagnosis and care
Cultural Narratives

• Expanding beyond the idea of “narrative-singular”, to “narratives- plural”.
Our narratives/threads

- Group exercise
Are there hidden narratives?

- When the story doesn’t hang together
- When the pt isn’t taking their meds
- When you feel distanced from pt
- When you feel stuck with a pt
Possible to have power over one narrative, but not another?

"Those who do not have power over the story that dominates their lives, the power to retell it, rethink it, deconstruct it . . . and change it as times change, truly are powerless because they cannot think new thoughts."

•-Salman Rushdie