Case Study exploring the Impact of Wraparound Santa Cruz on a Probation Youth with Immigrant Background

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Learning Objectives

• Learn new tools, assessments and technologies to support all aspects of WRAP
• Learn effective strategies for engaging diverse families and youths in WRAP
• Learn how to ensure participation in WRAP
• Learn how to focus on natural and community supports as well as team work
Statement of the Problem

- Youths with an immigrant background are still over-represented in the juvenile justice systems
- There is a continued need for research on alternatives to incarceration such as wraparound
- Wraparound is a strength-based family-centered intervention model that uses a multidisciplinary team of professionals, family members and community support to help families to achieve their own goals
- Although there is sound research showing positive results of the use of wraparound programs, there is still a lack of information regarding the participant’s experiences during the wraparound process and its impact
Significance of the Research

- "Counseling professionals can no longer afford to be ethnocentric and unilateral. ... A linear and monocultural perspective of psychology and counseling cannot adequately respond to mental health challenges, ... which are global in size and impact" (Leung, Clawson, Norsworthy, Tena, Szilagyi, & Rogers, 2009, p. 111)

- This study developed the holistic lens to investigate the wraparound process, and to address how WRAP impacts the youth and how the team works to support 'Rey', the participant, and his family

- Intensive typical case: 'Rey' turned 16 at the beginning of data collection; had an extensive criminal record, the parents were monolingual Spanish speakers from Mexico; working seasonally in the strawberry fields; older brother and Rey involved in a criminal street gang; history of alcoholism, poverty, and domestic violence in the family; data collection began after about a year in WRAP

Research Questions

- How does WRAP impact the experience of a probation youth with immigrant background in Santa Cruz County?

Secondary questions:
- Which experiences shaped this youth?
- Who were the people involved in his life?
- What themes of response emerged during the time of research?
- What theoretical constructs helped understand this youth’s responses to his life circumstances?
- How does the application of a holistic lens affect the participant’s experience of treatment?
- How does the holistic view affect the work of the clinician and the participant, as it is a circular process?
- How does the better understanding of a youth with immigrant background in Santa Cruz County who is participating in WRAP, increase the knowledge about WRAP’s impact?
In order to examine the systemic context and the complex experiences of Rey during WRAP a single theory proved too limited. Therefore a holistic theoretical framework was applied for this research.

- Community psychology (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2006)
- Wraparound model (Rauso & Vermillion, 2012; Burns et. al, 2000; VandenBerg et. al, 2008)
- Trauma and sensorimotor psychotherapeutic approaches (Herman, 1993; Van der Kolk, 2007; Ogden, 2006, Fisher, 2009)
- Tonal model of connectedness (Arredondo, 2010)
- HeartMath theory of coherence (McCraty & Childre, 2010)
- UN-Habitat’s (2012) work on youth participation
Method

- In order to investigate WRAP's impact on Rey's experience, I chose the single case study design to explore this typical but intensive case with a holistic view of the process
- Reviewed archival materials from Rey's case file
- Collected data during 3 months of WRAP activities with Rey
- Conducted WRAP questionnaires with all team members
- Analyzed data which yielded themes of the responses

Data Collection

- Observations
- Trauma Assessment
- Wrap Questionnaires
- Tonal Connectedness Map
- HeartMath

Archival Reports, Case Notes

Field Diary

Case Notes

Analysis

Reports/Documents

Techniques/Instruments

from Literature Review
I Holistic Concept with Focus on Assessment of Problem Areas and Interventions
Results and Analysis

Defense
• Defense is triggered by a sense of threat, and according to Ogden (2006) frequently over-used by traumatized individuals. Defense reactions are hard-wired first responses to ensure survival, and therefore override other responses when a lack of safety is perceived.
Rey had a significant history of traumatic and distressing events (List) His defense activation consisted of mobilization responses (teacher complains about noise in front of her door- "I don't see your f..ing name on the door"), and responses characterized by immobilization (closet)

Receiving support
• Wraparound philosophy encourages giving support through focusing on family's needs, and hence depends on a youth's and family's ability to receive the support for positive change (Burns et. al, 2000, and Rauso & Vermillion, 2012). When Rey asked for support it reflected his increased involvement in the WRAP process. (He defined WRAP's support in court as turning point)
Results and Analysis

**Connectedness**
- Early caregiver relationships strongly influence the patterns of all future relationships and form the responses to experiences in the socio-cultural context (Ogden, 2006).
  (During WRAP Rey moved from getting in trouble for smacking his lips, whistling, and 'not caring', to telling girls “you look nice tonight” and “you caught my eye, you know”)

**Participation**
- Significant in determining if the involved youth is a “passive or mere token,” or if he is actively taking part in the process unfolding (UN-Habitat, 2012, p. 36). WRAP encouraged Rey to take increased responsibility and control in areas of family, culture, and community.
  (The more Rey was active at the bike co-op, rock-climbing, school and outings, the less he engaged with the gang)

**Exploring**
- Base for developing new behaviors by inspiring curiosity, investigating, and seeking new sensations. One of the aspects of exploration in this study is play, which combines pleasure and joy with the experience of exploring (Ogden 2006).
  (Rey was initially shy and insecure in stores, restaurants or different places. As WRAP unfolded he shopped with confidence and liked exploring new places)

**Emotion regulation**
- Base for what Ogden (2006) calls “a functional sense of self” (p. 42), which keeps “the level of arousal within the window of tolerance,” and allows for the use of alternatives to defense responses (p. 115). This is consistent with research (Eisenberg, Hover, and Vaughan, 2007) which points out that by being able to either self-regulate, regulate emotions interactively or externally, a person can create a space between experience and reaction, where behavior change is possible.
  (Rey used the gang culture to externally regulate, in the sphere community he started to revise statements: “I don't care if they expel me from school” after some reflecting: “but this is my school!”)
Tonal Connectedness Map

HeartMath: Emotion Regulation
Many of the following concerns are common for youths with immigrant background in the criminal justice systems worldwide:

1. Dealing with social injustice
2. Communities often harbor a history of violent inter-cultural encounters reaching back as far as global colonization which has normalized violence within expectations of cultural adaptation
3. Poverty in the immigrant community
4. The quest for cultural identity
5. The vulnerability to trauma due to decreased caretaker availability to protect and parent
6. Lack of access to services due to bi-cultural illiteracy and racism
7. Lack of options to engage in the main stream culture and community
8. Criminal gangs are influential across borders, and target youths needing social solidarity

This study provides an overview of the complex systemic manner in which the wraparound model serves a specific client population

The spheres and themes simplify the complex context in which consumers and their families live

A flexible holistic model, rather than a fixed, curriculum-based approach

Vast possibilities of interventions

Supports team constellations with skills ranging throughout the spheres

Training with focus on increasing impact in the different themes

Spheres and themes for needs-assessment, to track impact, and for planning interventions

Taught me to tolerate ‘not knowing’ instead of fast use of clinical interpretations (I observed Rey re-think things: “I don’t chase them – I replace them” turned into “when I see her I’ll say whatsup” after trouble)
Implications for Children’s Mental Health
Research and Policies

The risks to the mental health of children and adolescents are currently a “concern of global significance” (Stevens & Gielen 2007, p. 11-33). There are drastic worldwide mental health consequences, stemming from children’s and adolescents’ experience, and/or witnessing of “extreme violence” and “acculturative stress” (p.26-27)

• Importance of considering complex trauma’s impact on defense activation and on criminal/violent behavior
• Inhibiting effect of a perceived lack of safety
  Capacity to establish the sense of safety and wellbeing necessary to engage in responses appropriate for every-day non threatening life (Ogden, 2006)
• The importance of emotion regulation, in order to achieve a sense of safety, control, and functioning within a specific social context
• Factors that further engagement in criminal gangs
• Discrimination and “pseudo racism” (Hall, 2002) as mobilization defenses against stigmatization and outsider status
• Approaching culture as an external orientation system and a collective level of emotion regulation

Limitations of the Study

• “The real business of case study is particularization, not generalization” (Stake, 1995, p. 8)
• Likelihood for researcher bias: “Anything the participant-observer does or does not do will have some effect on what’s being observed; it’s simply inevitable” (Babbie, 2010, p. 300) All interpretations were based on this researcher’s views and conclusions
• Cultural assumptions are present on all levels of theory.
  For example, in this study the lens of family therapy implies that “the quality of the marital relationship is key to overall family functioning” Rothbaum, Rosen, Tatso & Nobuko, 2002, p. 330). Attachment theory and family systems theory assign “pejorative labels [such as] ‘over-involved’, ‘enmeshed’, ‘undifferentiated’, ‘overly dependent’, and ‘symbiotic’” (p. 330). In regards to Ogden’s (2006) and Van der Kolk’s (2007) work, Craps (2005) maintains that “despite a stated commitment to the promotion of cross-cultural solidarity, trauma studies … retain a firmly Eurocentric perspective”
Further Research

- Qualitative and quantitative measures focused on WRAP’s impact and outcome, and on exploring which aspects of the study could be generalized
- Development of an assessment tool for the wellbeing of a person, family, group, or micro-culture using the themes and spheres
- Holistic integrated community planning with focus on increasing safety using themes and spheres
- Development of more individualized and indigenized interventions that target the themes and spheres
- Research on how team dynamics influence wraparound
- "Best practices for implementing and administering wraparound" are continuously evolving (Bickman et. al, 2003, p. 137).
- Focus on youth participation in the community
- International comparison studies
- Methodologies co-created by native or migrant populations
References