



Wounded Spirits, Ailing Hearts 4 Cultural Formulation Written Video Transcript

Mr. (Star), thank you for coming today.

Glad to be here.

Could you share with me what you think it's important for me to know about you?

I'm just a very I guess normal person struggling with an abnormal [00:00.20.00] event in my life I guess. And that's being a Vietnam veteran. It would be nice if people could understand me [00:00.40.00] as a Vietnam vet.

Could you share with me a little bit about where you lived, how you grew up?

Yeah. As they say, born and raised on the Pine Ridge reservation which is located in South Dakota. And I was raised [00:01.00.00] basically raised by women, my grandmother, my aunt and my mother. I still speak my native language fluently. I've also learned to speak English too. [laughs] [00:01.20.00] So, I speak two languages. I am I guess taken part in the Sun Dance, a lot of their ceremonies.

You speak English and? [00:01.40.00]

Lakota, yeah. More popularly known as Sioux.

Which language did you first speak?

Lakota. I went to school speaking my English I think vocabulary was [00:02.00.00] yes and no, and if any more English than that [laughs] I was lost.

Next, the cultural explanation of the individual's illness. Consider the prominent idioms of distress. How does the veteran express his or her symptoms [00:02.20.00] or need for social support in terms of somatic complaints, inexplicable misfortune, spiritual imbalance or perhaps disharmony. Attempt to discover the meaning and perceived severity of symptoms in relation to norms of the cultural reference group. For example, ask about the causes that the veteran perceives [00:02.40.00] underlying the illness. Also inquire about his or her preferences for care and what kind of experience the veteran has had with professional and popular sources of treatment.

You've been speaking earlier about your experiences with Vietnam and returning and the challenges that that's posed for you. [00:03.00.00]



Mm-hmm.

You've also indicated that you weren't sure for a long time what it was that was dogging your heels, if you will, that was troubling you. Before you found out or heard it called PTSD, what did you think it was? [00:03.20.00] What does—what did your family wonder? What do people in your community how do they talk about those kinds of experiences?

Family and community, they didn't talk about it at all. [00:03.40.00] Perhaps it was because of the lack of awareness of what was going on with Vietnam vets. I'm not sure. But no one talked about it. Certainly I didn't.

As you had these symptoms, [00:04.00.00] as you were struggling with the problems that they created in your life what kinds of things, since you didn't associate them with Vietnam, did you think caused them?

I can say this and this and this and that now. But at the time [00:04.20.00] I just never really thought about it, given it any thought. Just lived with the thing. But now, you know, I can look back on it and say, you know, this is why, this is why, this is why. But [00:04.40.00] the awareness, my awareness of the whole situation is only recent.

These experiences you've had for which you had no explanation, about which you didn't talk to other people about but they were troubling for you, once you came [00:05.00.00] to see them as being part of PTSD did that help make sense?

Yeah. Very much so. You know, quite a lot of puzzling, [00:05.20.00] you know, situations, a lot of questions that were unanswered.

The next element is cultural factors related to psychosocial environment and levels of functioning. Note culturally relevant interpretations of social stressors, available social supports and levels of functioning [00:05.40.00] and disability. This includes stresses in the local environment and the role of religion and kin networks in providing emotional instrumental and informational support.

You indicated that you Sun Dance.

Mm-hmm.

When did you first start Sun Dancing? What does that mean to you in your life?

First time I danced [00:06.00.00] I think I was there just because I wanted to know what it was about. Curiosity. And it was kind of like challenge tog et out there and prove myself I guess. I was thinking all wrong at that time. [00:06.20.00] This was in the early '70s. And so the first four years didn't really mean anything. Then I sobered up and life changed. So, I went back but this time very slowly and under the guidance [00:06.40.00]



of a spiritual leader. And I ended up finishing my fourth year last year. And it was, it was just I can't describe it. It was totally different experience.

Through the Sun Dance[00:07.00.00] =

Yeah.

= and spirituality it sounds as if you're on a journey back.

Yeah, yeah, definitely.

Fourth, be aware of the cultural elements of the relationship of the individual and clinician. Consider differences in cultural and social status between the veteran and yourself. Evaluate the challenges [00:07.20.00] they may pose for diagnosis and treatment. For example, question the difficulty posed for the veteran by communicating in other than his or her first language. all of the Native veterans you see will speak English but with varying proficiency that may not be immediately evident. How might that affect [00:07.40.00] eliciting symptoms or understanding cultural significance? How will you determine whether behavior is normative or pathologic? What other cultural factors might influence establishing a therapeutic alliance?

How'd you feel when you walked through the door at the vet center in Farmington for the first time and what kind of expectations did you have? [00:08.00.00]

I was kind of afraid they would just confine me in some facility. He suggested a PTSD treatment center in [00:08.20.00] California. And he said it took three months. And I said [8:27] three months, boy that's a long time.

Finally, consider an overall cultural assessment for diagnosis and care. The outline for cultural formulation concludes with a discussion of how [00:08.40.00] cultural considerations influence comprehensive diagnosis and care.

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