

Introduction

Shulamith Lala Ashenberg Straussner ·
Miriam Schiff

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This special issue of the *Clinical Social Work Journal* focuses on the topic of trauma through the life cycle. The origin of this topic and the articles was an international conference on *Trauma Through The Lifecycle From A Strengths Perspective: An International Dialogue* held in January, 2012 in Jerusalem and co-sponsored by the Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare at Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Silver School of Social Work at New York University. Eight out of the ten articles in this issue are based on the presentations made at this 2 days conference, while two of the articles, by Hui-Ching Wu and Itzhak Lander, were submitted outside the conference and are included to enrich the topics presented.

This special issue begins with an overview of the topic of trauma through the life cycle by Straussner and Calnan. This article provides a historical background to the concept of trauma and the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder and discusses some of the issues involved in assessment and empirically-based interventions for traumatized populations ranging from young children to older adults. It is followed by a description of a program and an outcome study by Cohen, Pat-Horenczyk and Haar-Shamir of a preventive group intervention for toddlers and their mothers who were exposed to recurrent missile attacks. Next, Schiff and Pat-Horenczyk explore the need for

psychosocial services among Israeli mothers of young children, both Jewish and Arab, in the aftermath of war. Their finding that both ethnic minority status and low-income played a role in the perceived need for services by the mothers of young children has important policy and training implications.

Of course, trauma is not always caused by war and conflict—Wu looks at the protective factors in the adaptation of indigenous adolescents who survived a devastating typhoon in Taiwan, while a study of adolescents by Braun-Lewensohn explores the impact of cultural cohesion on Israeli Jewish, Arab and Druze boys and girls a year after a highly destructive fire on Mount Carmel-Haifa, which resulted in many deaths. Utilizing the concept of “sense of coherence,” the author found that personal coping resources were the strongest predictors of dealing with stress reactions, while community sense of coherence was important when the adolescent lived in a collectivistic culture, such as that of the Druze.

Moving from adolescents to adults, Horesh, Cohen-Zrihen, Ein Dor and Solomon examine the role of attachment and stressful life events across the life span of young adult soldiers who experienced combat trauma, while Drumm and her colleagues explored the role of spiritual coping strategies among women who belong to the Seventh Day Adventist religious group and who self-identified as survivors of intimate partner violence. The next article by Lander focuses on the cross-cultural application of forgiveness therapy using the case example of an Israeli Bedouin-Arab woman being treated by an Israeli Jewish therapist. This multi-level exploration of cultural and personal trauma and the use of forgiveness therapy makes an important contribution to the social work literature.

Moving from trauma research and its treatment to education on this topic, Abrams and Shapiro discuss the use of

S. L. A. Straussner (✉)
New York University Silver School of Social Work,
1 Washington Sq. North, New York, NY 10003, USA
e-mail: sls1@nyu.edu

M. Schiff
Paul Baerwald School of Social Work and Social Welfare, The
Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mt Scopus, 91905 Jerusalem,
Israel
e-mail: miriam.schiff@mail.huji.ac.il

clinically-focused, case-based, method in the teaching of trauma theory and practice to social work students in a MSW program. This special issue ends with a personal account by Nesbeda, a second-year MSW student, of her experience witnessing the events of September 11, 2001 as an undergraduate student in New York City.

We hope that this special life-cycle issue will be an important addition to the vast literature on trauma and its impact on different age and cultural groups. Despite efforts to include an article on trauma and older adults, we could not find an appropriate manuscript given the time frame for this publication. We are aware that the articles included in this issue focus more on pathology and interventions rather than on prevention and resilience of the populations studied and that there is a greater need for comparison studies across different nations using the same standardized scales, and for longitudinal studies addressing individuals coping with trauma throughout their own life cycle. We hope that future issues of this Journal will include such publications.

Unfortunately, it does not look like the topic of trauma, which crosses nations and cultures, will become irrelevant in our lifetime.

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