

Symposium | Psychotherapy : [Symposium 93] Cultural Perspectives in Psychotherapy: Integrating Traditional and Modern Approaches

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[Symposium 93] Cultural Perspectives in Psychotherapy: Integrating Traditional and Modern Approaches

Moderator: Itsuo Asai (Heart Clinic Medical Corporation), Yukie Kurumiya (The Chicago School)

[SY-93-03] Cultural Family Therapy: 40 Years of Integrating Cultural Psychiatry into Clinical Practice

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Keywords : family therapy、 culture、 threshold people、 migrants、 culture change

The author presents Cultural Family Therapy (CFT), a synthesis of two approaches pioneered at McGill University where he trained: family therapy and transcultural psychiatry. In numerous publications and international workshops over the last 40 years, Di Nicola has elaborated his model of CFT, first outlined in *Transcultural Psychiatry* (Di Nicola, 1985) and presented in depth in *A Stranger in the Family: Culture, Families, and Therapy* (Di Nicola, 1997), updated in *Letters to a Young Therapist* (2011), and contextualized as a psychiatry of meaning and with the Social Determinants of Health.

CFT weaves together *family stories* that express mental, relational and social suffering with *clinical tools* for conducting therapy. CFT updates notions of “family” and “therapy,” on one hand, and “culture” and “psychiatry,” on the other. CFT deals with “threshold people” undergoing rapid cultural change.

Three basic principles and processes for CFT are reviewed:

- 1) parallels between notions of “family” and “culture”;
- 2) each family bears larger culture(s) while creating its own culture, making the family the vehicle for intergenerational cultural transmission, coherence, and adaptation;
- 3) systemic family theory and sociocultural psychiatry employ relational psychology, inverting theory from self to society, redefining the notions of identity and belonging through relations.

CFT is responsive to working with “threshold people” – families undergoing culture change within/across cultures. With global flows of migrants and refugees, CFT provides clinical tools to understand and treat families experiencing severe stress due to rapid culture change.

CFT examines families in different cultures and social circumstances, from invisible minorities to undocumented migrants and refugees. Current challenges for CFT are to articulate a relational psychology and a theory of change based on the philosophy of the Event in order to construct a new model of Evental Therapy.

