Trauma and Dissociation in Nicaragua

Presented by:
Benjamin B. Keyes, PhD, EdD
Merrill Reese, PhD
Regent University

Presented at:
International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation
28th Annual Conference
November 5-7, 2011
Benjamin B. Keyes, PhD, EdD
757-352-4284
bkeyes@regent.edu

Merrill Reese, PhD
757-352-4733
mreese@regent.edu

Regent University
1000 Regent University Drive
Virginia Beach, VA
Nicaragua

• 2\textsuperscript{nd} poorest country in the Western Hemisphere
• One of the newest Democracies
Daniel Ortega

- Ex bank robber
- Veteran Sandinista Leader
- President of Nicaragua
Government – New Democracy

4 Branches

• **Executive** – President & Vice President
• **Judicial** – Supreme court oversees appeals, district and local courts, labor and administrative tribunals.
• **Legislative** – 90 representatives, former presidents and defeated presidential candidates with enough votes are guaranteed lifetime seats
• **Consejo Supremio Nacional** – runs elections and supervises campaign period, unique to Nicaragua.
The Pact

- Arnaldo Aleman – Embezzled $100 million
- Daniel Ortega – Sexual Abuse
- Immunity for ex-presidents and guaranteed seats in the Assembly. More rules re: political parties
Economy

- High unemployment 50-70%
- Agricultural labor - $1/day
- 600,000 malnourished and starving
- Exports – coffee, beef, sugar, bananas, shellfish esp. lobster, and tobacco
- 1.6 billion in national debt
Agriculture

- Employs 45% of the workforce, most for domestic consumption
- Subsistence farming – rice & beans
- Coffee 10-20% of agricultural workforce, some of the best in the world
- Coffee needs to stay single family owned to continue to reseed
Industry

- Mostly export, plastics, petroleum, cement
- Sweatshops – pay by piece, not by the hour, many problems, (see p. 403, Moon)
Population

- Near 6 million
- Ethnic groups
  1. Mestizos
  2. Creoles
  3. Miskitos
  4. The Kukra
  5. The Garafuna
  6. The Mazangna
  7. The Roma
Culture, Customs & More

• Despite the bluntness, Nicaraguans are prone to circuitous, indirect behavior to “save face”. When asked something they don’t know, they make up an answer to avoid embarrassment.
Family

- Considered the most basic and strongest support structure of society and often large. Average number of children are 4-6 and 12 or more is not uncommon.
Religion

- Catholic majority
- 9-15% Protestant
- < .1% Jewish

Language

- Spanish 96%
- Indigenous Languages 3%
- African origin 1%
Diseases

- Malaria
- Dengue fever
- Diarrhea
- Dysentery
- Cholera
- Bites/stings
- Leptospirosis
- Rabies
- TB
- Hepatitis B
- Chagas’ Disease
Crime

- Especially on the Atlantic Coast – those involved in the drug trade: smugglers, mafia, dealers, crackheads
- Pickpockets especially in crowds or public transportation
- Keep flashy jewelry, expensive sunglasses at home
- Keep cash divided in two or more places
- Refuse drugs
- Prostitution, though illegal, is widespread
Trauma Team 2011
Trauma Team Leaders
Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Nightly Debriefings
Areas Addressed

1. Schools – Teachers & Students
2. Nursing Homes – Residents & Staff
3. National Police
4. Jails and Prisons
5. Families
6. Churches
7. Missionaries
8. Self Care
Schools

- 36.5% of school-aged children do not attend school due to poverty. 6 times higher in poor households.
- 18.7% illiteracy rate nationwide.
- 30.8 net enrollment in preschool.
- 82.6% not enrolled in primary school.
- 40.1% not enrolled in secondary school.
School Presentations & Groups - Students

- Self Esteem
- Conflict Management
- Communication Skills
- Healthy Relationships
- Drug Abuse
- Alcohol Abuse/Dependency
School Presentations & Groups - Teachers

- Positive behavior in classroom mgt.
- Classroom management
- Why children act out
- How the lens of trauma effects education
Nursing Homes - Patients

- Reminiscence Therapy
- Quality of Life Presentations
- Group Process
- Individual Counseling
Nursing Homes - Staff

- Compassion Fatigue
- Dignity & Quality of Life
- Healthy Self-Esteem
- Group Process
- Individual Counseling
  - Domestic Violence
  - Murder
  - Sexual Abuse
National Police, Leon Nicaragua
Trainings & Group

• Psychological First Aid – overview
• Treating Traumatized Families & Children
• Treating Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
• Green Cross: 6 Step debriefing model for crisis situations
Violent Crime – Prisons & Jails

• Rape – High level of Trafficking and Prostitution, 40% under age of 18. 28% raped initially.

• Sexual Perpetration – 80% older men – younger women

• Domestic Violence – 32% of households nationwide
Violent Crime – Prisons & Jails

- GLBT – Marginalized at best, discriminated and often beaten, even by police
- Disasters – Increase mental health issues especially after Hurricane Mitch (1998). 39% of all families were affected. 72% had house partially or completely destroyed
Counseling with Families

- Loss
- Sexual Trauma
- GLBT
- Domestic Violence
- Alcohol/Drugs
- Behavioral Acting-Out – Adolescents
- Poverty
- Divorce
- Premarital Issues
Families

- Mental health disorders – 28% in Leon men; 30.8% in women after the war in 1987, especially PTSD
- Less than 25% of population has access to mental health services
Families

- Disabilities – 15% have, especially physical/psychological trauma.
- Poverty – 2nd poorest country in Latin America,
  - 48.3% of the country live in poverty,
  - 17.2% in extreme poverty
  - In Leon, 76.8% are living in poverty.
Families

- AIDS/HIV – Less than 1% (low), 9% of the homosexual population
- Drugs – 13% of the clinical population
- Alcohol – 22% of the population clinically, especially in the 15-25 age group
Families

- Sexual Trauma – significant incidence of rape and molestation
  - In a study of prostitutes, 56% were sexually active at age 12
- Domestic Violence – 32% of households
- Suicide – rate has consistently gone up over the last 20 years for both men and women
Churches – Training & Groups

- Domestic Violence
- Compassion Fatigue
- Communication Skills
- Assertion Skills
- Healthy Self Esteem
Churches – Training & Groups

- Treating Trauma with Families and Children
- Modified Sand Tray with Children & Adolescents
- Conflict Resolution
- Healthy Relationships
Modified Sand Tray
Modified Sand Tray
Missionaries - Training

• Compassion Fatigue
• Critical Incident Stress Debriefing
• Modified Sand Tray with Adults
Fun & Self Care

• Volcano Surfing
Shopping
Leon & Surrounding Area
Churches
Iguana & Soup
Nourishment & Rest
Bird
Busch Gardens