

Beyond the Dreidel: Insights for Working with Jewish Clients

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Introduction

Background

Factors

Strategies

References

Introduction

- Going beyond the bio - I am Jewish, but my experiences should not be taken to represent everyone who identifies as Jewish. Also, I will not be offended by any question you may have - lets have an open dialogue.
- Objectives:
 - Expand cultural competence by developing a wider understanding of the Jewish community
 - Understand cultural and generational factors that can contribute to the development of gambling disorder
 - Strategies to increase engagement with Jewish clients or family members

Background

Very little research on Jews and gambling

- Modern Israeli Jews as research subjects (focused on local population, not a cultural/religious factor); research done in "Ultra Orthodox," socially isolated communities to separate the behaviors from possible social influence

So, if not a separate evidence base, what context would be helpful?

Common
Values

Trauma

Judaism

Race/ethnicity?

Culture

Religion

Three main branches:

- Orthodox
- Conservative
- Reform

Like other religions, there are other subgroups

Clergy:

- Rabbi
- Cantor
- Emphasis on lay leadership

Basic life events:

- Bris/baby naming
- Consecration
- Bar/bat mitzvah
- Confirmation
- Wedding
- Funeral

Race vs Ethnicity

Identify as an ethnicity - shared culture, background, experiences etc.

We do not identify as a race - Nuremberg Race Laws (1935 - Aryan race)

Approximately 5.8 million adults identified as Jewish (2.4% of the adult population)

92% Identified as White, non-Hispanic

66% Identified as Ashkenazic, 3% Sephardic, 1% Mizrahi (6% combination, 17% no identity, 7% did not answer)

• Pew Research Center, 2020

Cultural

Many aspects of Judaic culture! Some may identify as "culturally Jewish" which usually indicates a distinction from the religion.

- Yiddish
- Hebrew
- Klezmer
- Chants/
tropes
- Values
- Politics
- Food
 - Traditional
 - Israeli
 - Modern
- Symbols
- Jewelry/clothing
- Media portrayal
 - stereotypes

Common Values

Tikkun olam - repairing the world

Tzedek - pursuit of justice

Derekh erez - treat all with dignity and respect

Pikuach nefesh - preservation of life

L'dor v'ador - generation to generation

Kehila - commitment to community

Trauma

Be aware of the role of both generational trauma and current...

- Holocaust or other conflicts either wiping out family trees, forcing immigration, or altering/destroying records
- Rise in anti-Semitic violence in all scales
- micro-aggressions
- political conflict (human rights issues, abortion, Israel)
- stereotypes

Factors

Let's talk about the dreidel! Is it gambling?

- Game was created to hide their studies from the Greeks
- Nun - take nothing
- Gimel - take everything
- Hay - take half
- Shin- put in

Generational impact:

- Generational trauma (coping, family culture)
- History of exclusion from clubs (prestige)
- Emphasis on finances (stereotype?)
- Significance of the number 18
 - 8th and 10th letters of the alephbet spell the word chai (life)

Strategies

- If/when it is disclosed, invite them to share what is significant to them - be prepared for defensiveness or redirection.
- Explore co-occurring alcohol/substance use
- Do not make assumptions, and be transparent with your level of competence
- Be aware of the term "shylock" (*Merchant of Venice* villain, Jewish moneylender)
- May feel shame related to parents or other generations. Take family engagement slowly
- May have conflict with partners/family members with other traditions
- May not want to engage to any traditional 12 step approach (there is Jewish specific lit)

References

- Pew Research Center. 5/11/2021. Jewish Americans in 2020. <http://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/05/11/jewish-americans-in-2020/>

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