



ECAS7010 Week 2

Cultural Models of Mental Health: Understanding diverse perceptions of mental wellbeing

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Overview of Cultural Models in Mental Health

Western Biomedical Model

Focuses on individual pathology using standardised diagnostic criteria like DSM and ICD to treat mental illness.

Spiritual and Holistic Models

Non-Western cultures often view mental health through spiritual, communal, or holistic frameworks.

Traditional Chinese and Ayurvedic Views

Chinese medicine links mental health to Yin and Yang imbalance; Ayurveda connects it to doshas and karma.

Importance of Cultural Competence

Understanding diverse cultural models improves mental health care in multicultural societies.



Cultural Influences on Help-Seeking

Cultural Stigma and Beliefs

Cultural norms and stigma greatly influence mental health help-seeking behaviours across different societies.

Traditional vs Formal Help

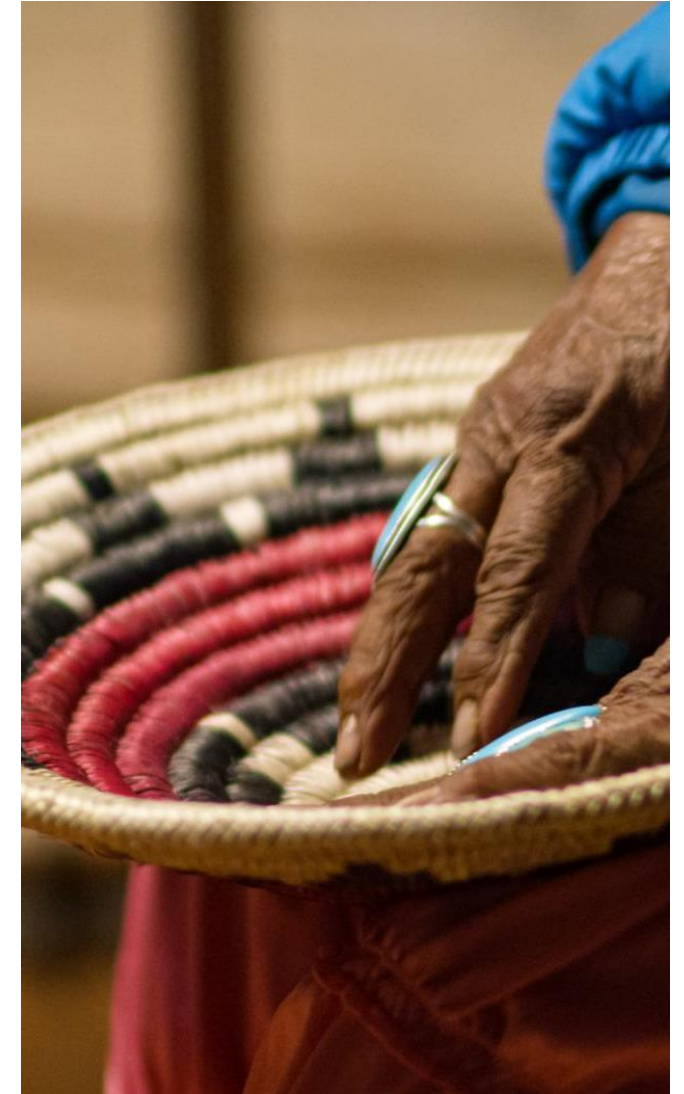
Many cultures prefer traditional or religious healing methods over formal mental health treatment due to stigma and beliefs.

Impact of Acculturation

Acculturation affects willingness to seek mainstream mental health services depending on cultural identity retention.

Role of Digital Support

Digital engagement offers anonymous, culturally sensitive mental health support that can reduce stigma effects.



Culture-Bound Syndromes

Certain mental health conditions are recognised only within specific cultural contexts.

Examples include 'Ataque de Nervios' in Latin America and 'Taijin Kyofusho' in Japan.



CASE STUDIES

Burmese Refugees

Psychological Distress and Somatisation

Burmese refugees experience high rates of PTSD, anxiety, and depression, often expressing distress through physical symptoms.

Cultural Beliefs and Stigma

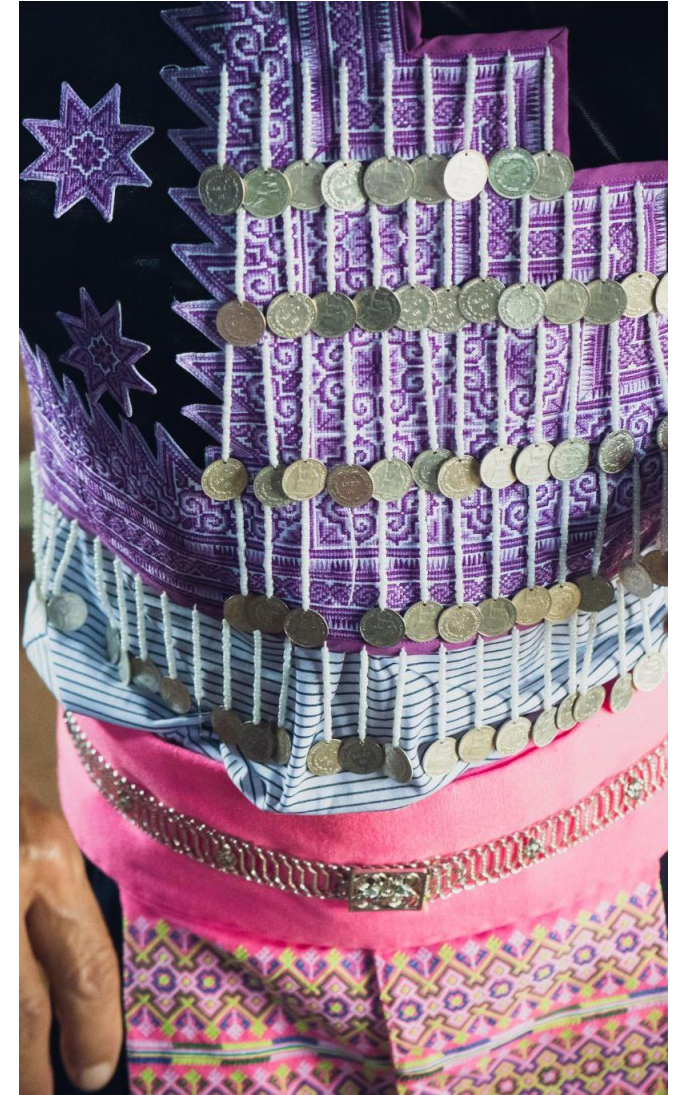
Cultural views attribute mental illness to spiritual causes or personal failure, leading to stigma and fear of social shame.

Barriers to Help-Seeking

Limited mental health knowledge, linguistic challenges, and generational differences hinder seeking psychological help.

Culturally Adapted Interventions

Community psychoeducation and tailored mental health services improve understanding and service utilisation among refugees.



Muslim Populations

Religious Interpretations of Mental Illness

Mental illness is often seen as a spiritual test or imbalance in Muslim populations, influencing coping methods.

Barriers to Mental Health Services

Stigma, mistrust, and lack of culturally sensitive care limit mental health service usage among Muslim communities.

Culturally Sensitive Interventions

Interventions must integrate Islamic teachings and involve community and religious leaders for effectiveness.

Clinician Training Importance

Training clinicians in Islamic psychology and cultural competence is essential to improve care access and outcomes.





Cultural determinants and psychiatric variation

Cultural Impact on Mental Illness

Mental health symptoms and severity vary significantly depending on cultural context and determinants.

Role of Cultural Psychiatry

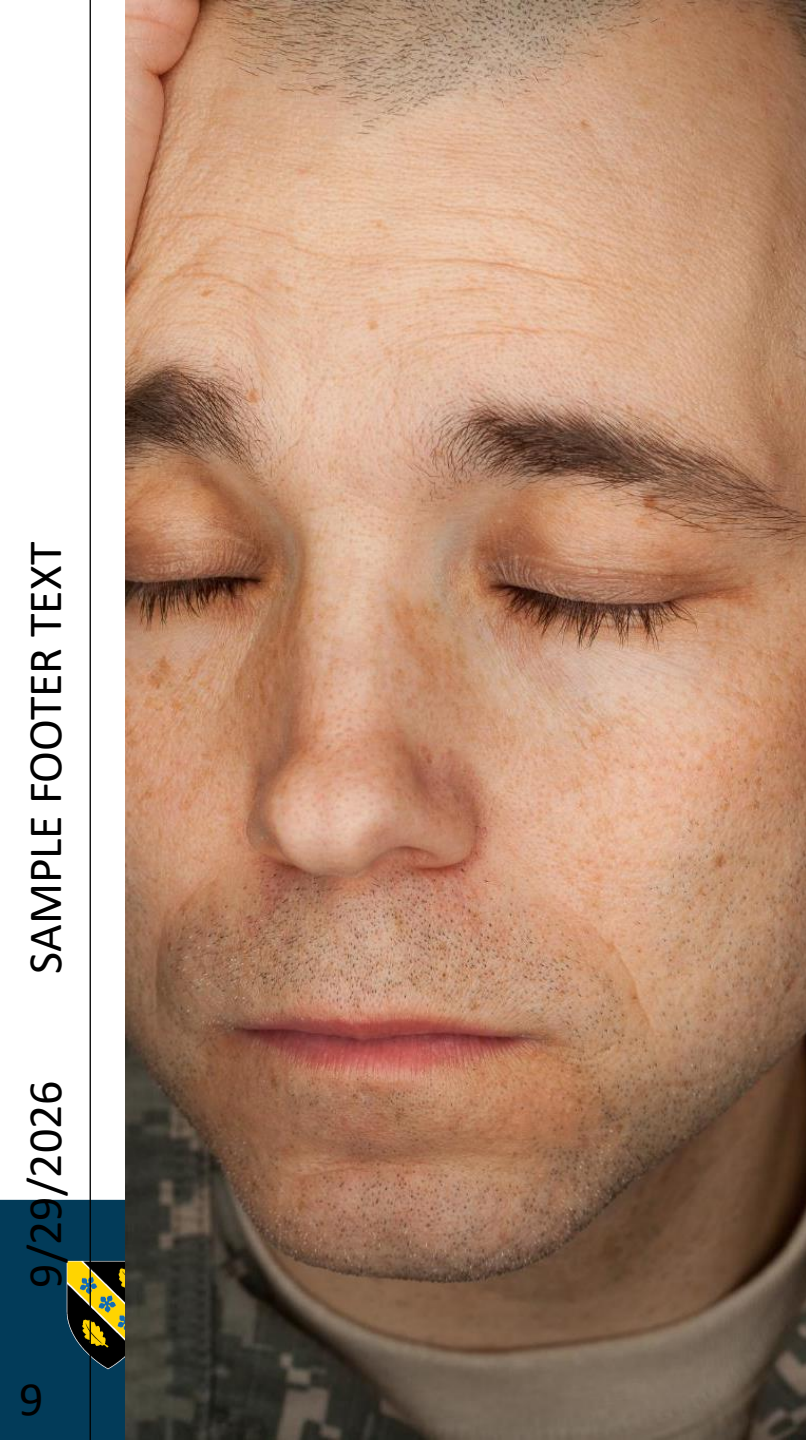
Cultural psychiatry studies how cultural capital shapes mental health interpretation and help-seeking behaviours.

Help-Seeking Behaviours

Individuals often seek help first from personal, folk, or social sectors before professional healthcare.

Challenges and Recommendations

Geopolitical and societal changes complicate mental health, requiring culturally tailored interventions.



Mental Health Challenges in the Military

Combat and Trauma Exposure

Military service involves exposure to combat and trauma leading to significant mental health issues such as PTSD and depression.

Mental Health Diagnosis Statistics

In 2019, 8.4% of service members were formally diagnosed with mental health conditions, reflecting high prevalence.

Suicide Epidemic

Suicide rates among active-duty military are alarmingly high, with a death every 30.5 hours.

Stigma and Undiagnosed Cases

Stigma and underreporting prevent many soldiers from seeking help, making psychological wounds invisible and untreated.



Impact of Military Culture on Mental Health

Dual Effects of Military Culture

Military culture fosters resilience but can also discourage voluntary mental health help-seeking.

Risk of Self-Stigma

Moderate identification with military culture may increase self-stigma and suicidal thoughts.

Need for Culturally Sensitive Support

Culturally sensitive mental health services are vital to address stigma and improve outcomes.



Culturally Competent Care

Integrating Cultural Frameworks

Clinicians must recognise diverse cultural beliefs and expressions of distress to adapt mental health interventions effectively.

Collaborative and Adapted Strategies

Using explanatory model interviews, collaborating with traditional healers, and culturally adapted therapies improves care.

Addressing Systemic Barriers

Clinicians should tackle stigma, language barriers, and service access issues to improve mental health support.

Community Engagement and Technology

Psychoeducation, community involvement, and digital tools enhance help-seeking and provide sensitive support options.



Summary and Implications

Cultural Influence on Mental Health

Cultural models shape how mental illness is perceived and experienced across different communities worldwide.

Western vs Non-Western Models

Western biomedical approaches are effective but may miss holistic and spiritual aspects emphasised by non-Western models.

Explanatory Models and Help-Seeking

Patients' beliefs and stigma influence help-seeking behaviours, requiring culturally sensitive and tailored mental health interventions.

Cultural Competence in Practice

Mental health professionals must adapt approaches to diverse populations to improve inclusivity and outcomes globally.



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