**Week 8 Brief Article Analysis #2**

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**Referenced Article :**

Heath MA, Cutrer‐Párraga EA. Healing after traumatic events: Aligning interventions with cultural background and religious and spiritual beliefs. *Psychol Schs*. 2020;57: 718–734.

**Value Identification**

Traumatic events are a source of psychological and physiological distress and finding the best possible way to help victims and provide the most appropriate disaster response beyond the primary focus of basic physical survival and safety is a key component for a healthy recovery and to regain a certain psychological wellbeing and achieve reach post-traumatic growth (Heath & Cutrer-Parraga, 2018). If current best approaches exist in the treatment and responses provided by counselors and consultants in traumatic events like mass shootings, the holistic consideration of all influences and contextualization of where the trauma happened and what are all the needs of the victims is often fragmented and elements like cultural background, diversity and spirituality is set aside or considered without the humility and understanding of the diverse expressions of grief in the larger religious and spiritual perspective (Heath & Cutrer-Parraga, 2018 ; Bancalari et al., 2022). These pre-cited elements are major ingredients in human diversity and keys to establish a connection and a therapeutic relationship – or alliance - , the corner stone of therapy (Sue et al., 2019 ; Correa & Sandage, 2018). Regarding the school mass shootings, this article provides a clear understanding that victims can be found at different degrees of immediacy – not only the direct survivors but an entire community – and how diverse the experience is depending on the social, economical, political, spiritual and cultural diversity encountered (Heath & Cutrer-Parraga, 2018 ; Correa & Sandage, 2018 ; Novotney, 2018). This connects to the reality of both gun violence and access towards mental health care that is rarely available in underserved population such as minorities, low socio-economical communities or rural communities (Bhuyian et al., 2022 ; Sue et al., 2019, Bancalari et al., 2021 ; Heath & Cutrer-Parraga, 2018). Often those communities where traumatic events happen are underserved too and therefore to understand how spirituality could benefit and provide a relief is a supplementary tool for a practitioner to be considered and used with all the caution, sensitivity, respect, humility and self-awareness that is required as it affects regulation, exploration of common sense and coherence and the construction of a worldview (Correa & Sandage, 2018 ). Belief and Behaviors are relational and setting them into a personal or community context allows for recovery and processing the different stages towards recovery in a less clinically perceived perspective and makes it easier to be embraced by a younger population or a larger group (Correa & Sandage, 2018 ; Heath & Cutrer-Parraga, 2018 ). Direct and indirect victims, survivors and communities are the ones to get the benefits of approaches including spirituality in the healing process and provide a deeper sense of reconstruction of a meaning or a general sense to irrational events, by allowing the connect at each level to their needs through the multiple options offered to grief and process the event individually and collectively.**Critique**

If the overall concept seems like a very effective one and offers a clear collaboration path between the mental health care practitioner and a religious / spiritual leader to help a community and / or specifically children to express feelings in a less impressive or shameful / guilt inducing perceived way (“I have to talk with a psychologist something must be really wrong or I am not used to it”), we could argue that as “America being the nation that supports religious freedom for all is amongst the one showing the highest levels of interreligious tension and violence” (Heath & Cutrer-Parraga, 2018), such approach is part of a larger political or religious agenda where beliefs should be incorporated to the emotional support and dismiss the idea of a holistic perspective by changing it into a suspicious collaboration. The details shared about the memorials for Columbine, the tensions around the situation in Russia regarding two different religious perspectives or the immediate financial support for the Nickel Mines in Pennsylvania show how these situations are sensitive and need to be carefully monitored. The mention of certain books is a great help as much as it could be seen as the opposite of the sensitive, respectful and humble cultural approach that is promoted earlier in the article. Finally, the lack of connection with the mechanisms of our discipline and the solely focus on major mass shooting made me research more articles regarding how to exactly connect spirituality with therapy (CBT in this case), and about the specifics of gun violence in general in order to define – as mentioned earlier regarding the first question – what victims, populations and beliefs details need to be outlined, as for instance some victims having had a strong sense of spirituality might encounter a different struggle towards life coherence, or that urban low income adolescent male from minorities are statistically more confronted to community gun violence with the similar psychological effects as the victims of mass shootings but never have access to any mental health care (Starnino & Sullivan, 2016 ; Bancalari et al., 2021 ; Novotney, 2018 ; Turner et al., 2019).

**Developmental Application**

If most survivors show resilience, a certain number of direct and indirect young victims will present ongoing mental health problems, exhibit post-traumatic stress, depression, guilt, shame, anxiety, hypervigilence, desensitization to violence, academic difficulties and develop coping mechanisms including substance abuse and addictions (Novotney, 2018 ; Wong et al., 2021 ; Siegel, 2020 ; Bancalari et al., 2021 ). Another angle of mass shooting is community gun violence; preschool children witnessing such violence suffer from internalizing symptoms such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and when being direct victims or survivors tend to demonstrate externalizing problems such as aggression, conduct disorder and impulsivity, while adolescent experience more helplessness, fatalism and when connected to a non optimal fucnitoning, lead to some even more risk-taking behaviors and marginalization (Bancalari et al., 2021 ; Wong et al., 2020). When considered in a broader developmental perspective, such trauma will neurologically impact the growth of a youth brain because of the toxic hormonal stress and create an allostatic load that impacts the healthy growth of the neural, neuroendocrine and eventually immune system, specifically preventing a harmonious integration in both brain hemispheres, preventing the sense of coherence in the left and overinvesting the emotional processing of the right, corrupting the *FACES* optimal integrative flow and pushing the individual towards a more often simultaneous (re)activation of sympathetic and parasympathetic autonomic branches with the chaotic response it provides (Siegel, 2020 ; Bancalari et al., 2021). Depending on the developmental phase a child is in, a major traumatic event such as a mass shooting happening during middle childhood can massively impact the ability to develop social skills and lead to avoidance and withdrawal, dissociation, or in a psychosocial perspective and depending the age lead towards mistrust, shame, doubt about coherence and justice, confusion about fitting in the world and to question the overall moral development and concepts related to preconventional or conventional stages where conformity, being good and positive / adaptive rewards conceptualization constructions are destroyed by the incidence of an inexplicable and irrational traumatic event (Wong et al., 2021). It is interesting to note that a repeated exposure to a traumatic event could be forcing the development of a youth into a maladaptive pattern and lead to the perpetration of a similar trauma later on because of the influence over the moral and psychosocial development and desensitization (Wong et al., 2021 ; Siegel, 2020) ; in the case of gun violence, it often becomes one of the elements of polyvictimization on top of bullying or extreme social anxiety and loops back to the perpetration of similar acts of violence later on, if no contextual support , a stable caregiver (providing a secure attachment style) or school services help are being provided to the child or adolescent (Turner et al., 2019 ; Bancalari et al., 2022).

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