Counseling East Asian Indian Immigrants/Americans

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Where is East Asia?

Mongolia                         Japan                      China
Hong Kong                  North Korea           South Korea

* India and Nepal are also sometimes included
East Asian Indian Immigrants/Americans
Indian Cultural Practices

- Religion
- Caste System
- Families and Collectivism
- Marriage/Divorce/Infidelity

*In India, there are hundreds of different ethnic subgroups that have distinct languages, cultural practices, and customs. See slide on Caste Systems for more info.*
Religion

- The largest religious affiliation in India is Hinduism (83%).
- Oldest organized religion ever known. 2,500 years old.
- Polytheistic
- Figure Heads of Hinduism
  - Brahman (supreme spirit)
  - Brahma (creator)
  - Vishnu (preserver)
  - Shiva (destroyer)
Brief Introduction to Hinduism

https://youtu.be/tHw5kstT3fo
The Caste System

- **Brahmin**: priests
- **Kshatriya**: warriors, kings
- **Vaishya**: merchants, landowners
- **Sudra**: commoners, peasants, servants

Untouchable, outcaste, out of caste: street sweepers, latrine cleaners
The Indian Family System

- Story of Lord Ganesh and Kumar
  - [http://www.ted.com/talks/devdutt_pattanaik#t-75913](http://www.ted.com/talks/devdutt_pattanaik#t-75913)
- Gender roles
- Grandparents
- Parents
- Children
- In-Laws
Marriage/Divorce/Infidelity

Marriage

- Marriage is one of the most important institutions in India
- Union of families, as well as Individuals
- Dharma
- Arranged marriages are very common
- Caste
Divorce

- Very uncommon
- Neglect/abuse
- Divorce is changing
  - women fighting for rights.
- Death of husband
  - Sati System (Dharma practice)

https://youtu.be/c664PH7Csk0
Infidelity

- Very little research
- Usually husband
  - Culturally more acceptable
- Women have harsher consequences
- Suicide
East Asian Indian Americans

- Immigration
- Assimilation Challenges
- Counseling Techniques
- Resources
  - Cultural
  - Religious
When Did Indians First Start Coming to the USA?

- U.S. Immigration Act of 1965
- Many students
- People who were already here could sponsor family members
- View America as a safer place to live
  - Jobs
  - Education
  - Money
  - Respect
  - opportunity (for self, and family)
Assimilation Challenges

- Eastern VS Western
- Family Structure
- School
- Work
- Holidays
- Minority Status

**Eastern**
- Respect for the hierarchy is inherent.
- Open debate and confrontation are avoided.
- Collectivistic. Duty towards others is highly regarded. Success is measured collectively.
- Success is conquering yourself. Success is spiritual.
- Silent leadership. Walk behind people.

**Western**
- Respect is earned.
- Open debate is encouraged
- Individualistic. Following personal desires and dreams is valued. Success is measured individually.
- Success is conquering your goals. Success is material.
- Vocal leadership. Walk in front of people.
Counseling Techniques

- Evaluate Appropriateness of Theories
- Understand Level of Acculturation
- Common Behavior Characteristics
  - Handout!!
- Models of Counseling Interventions
Namaste!
Questions?
References


Notes for Marriage/Divorce/Infidelity slide

Depending on where the family lives, marriage can happen at very young ages, especially for girls. According to Hinduism, the main purpose of marriage is the performance of dharma (dharma is a responsibility or duty). Arranged marriages are very common, and often it is not the bride and groom who decide to marry each other, it is the families decisions. Marriage is often viewed as an adherence to cultural traditions, rather than being based on spousal love and intimacy. Procreation is related to marriage ‘duties’ rather than feelings of love and intimacy.

Note for Divorce slide

Divorce is very uncommon, but it can happen in cases of neglect or abuse. Even though the divorce might be in reaction to physical or mental danger, the divorce is still highly stigmatized, and it reflects badly on the family. It usually reflects badly on the girls family, as the divorced wife is looked at as being the reason why the marriage did not work. She is blamed for the problems in the marriage, and so is her family. It is easier for men to remarry, and usually very hard for the woman to remarry. Even when a husband dies, women typically do not remarry. (see video on Sati System!)