



The New H⁵ Model for Trauma Informed Care

Richard F. Mollica, MD, MAR

Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School

Director, Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma

Director, Cambodian and Refugee Clinic, Lynn Community Health Center

September 24, 2014



The New H⁵ Model

The H⁵ Model has received widespread acclaim since it is one of the 1st models to address from a theoretical perspective the major source of risk and vulnerability affecting highly traumatized patients and communities. Because of its comprehensive holistic scientific and culture-based approach it is found to be highly relevant and useful to those providers serving mainstream populations using a trauma-informed care model.

Core Elements of the H⁵ Model



Elements of the Trauma Story (TSAT*)

- 1. Factual accounting of events**
- 2. Cultural meaning of trauma**
- 3. Looking behind the curtain (revelations from the trauma experience)**
- 4. Listener – storyteller relationship**

**Trauma Story Assessment and Therapy (TSAT): Therapist Journal for Field and Clinic*

H.1 Human Rights

All violent acts are human rights violations. Therapists need to build upon the UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

H.2 Humiliation

- **The goal of violent acts, regardless of their intensity, is the same – to create the emotional state of humiliation...**
- **“During acts of violence there is a complete absence of love, affection, and empathy. In trauma stories of extreme violence, the feeling of humiliation is fully revealed, allowing us to achieve a complete appreciation of all its dimensions...**

H.2 Humiliation

...Humiliation is a very complex human emotion because it is primarily linked to how people believe the world is viewing them. It is not a clear-cut emotion like fear, but rather a state of being, characterized by feelings of physical and mental inferiority, of uncleanness and shame, of spiritual worthlessness and guilt, and of moral repulsiveness to others, including a god or higher being. ”

Mollica, Richard F. (2006). *Healing invisible wounds: Paths to hope and recovery in a violent world*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press (p. 72).

H.3 Healing (Self-care)

Definition: “The healing of the emotional wounds inflicted on mind and spirit by severe violence is also a natural process. Mind and body are powerfully linked, from the molecular level up to the thoughts and social behaviors of a person. Mind and body are similarly interrelated in their potent curative influence. After violence occurs, a self-healing process is immediately activated, transforming, through physical and mental responses, the damage that has occurred to the psychological and social self.”

- Mollica, Richard F. (2006). *Healing invisible wounds: Paths to hope and recovery in a violent world*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press.

Social Instruments of Healing

- **Altruism**
- **Work/school**
- **Spirituality**

H.4 Health Promotion

- **There is emerging evidence that persons in post-conflict countries and those impacted by conflict have increased levels of long-term chronic health illnesses attributable to their traumatic experiences and high levels of distress. Research demonstrates that persons who experience trauma are more likely to die younger of all causes, develop chronic illnesses (e.g. ischemic heart disease, diabetes), and severe disabilities. They have poorer behavioral health, smoke more, use alcohol and drugs more, exercise less and have poorer eating habits resulting in obesity and metabolic syndrome. All of the latter are risk factors for the development of chronic disease. In other words, trauma generates chronic disease through direct and indirect effects through mental illness (PTSD & Depression) and impaired lifestyle. This connection between trauma and poor physical health demands a new focus on health promotion.**

From: Mollica, R., Brooks, R., Ekblad, S., & McDonald, L. (In press). The new H5 model of refugee trauma and recovery. In J. Lindert & I. Levav (Eds.), *Violence and Mental Health*. New York, New York: Springer Publishing Company.

H.5 Habitat

- **The word “habitat” is derived from the Latin “habitare” and in the ancient world meant the total environment in which a person or an organism dwelled. And there was a belief that a reciprocal relationship existed between the physical and natural environment and those living organisms who lived and prospered within these environments.**

Recommendations for Trauma Informed Care Based Upon the H⁵ Model

- 1. Once trust is established, try to conduct a Trauma Story interview reviewing the 4 dimensions of the Trauma Story. A diary that can be used called the Trauma Story Assessment and Therapy (TSAT) is available at www.lulu.com**
- 2. Once trust is established try to understand the nature and scope of the survivor's experienced human rights violation. This will help you understand the abuse, plus recommend the appropriate medical, psychological, and social support.**

Recommendations

- 3. Evaluate the survivor's self-healing response. This interview is also available in the TSAT Diary: www.lulu.com**
- 4. All survivors need to be in a health promotion program.**
- 5. Extensively explore the living environment of the survivor. Make this a priority.**

Recommendations

- **In conclusion, it is hoped that the H⁵ Model will provide you with the new insights and tools in assisting the traumatized person in all environments.**

Resources

- **Mollica, Richard F. (2006). *Healing Invisible Wounds: Paths to Hope and Recovery in a Violent World*. Orlando, Florida: Harcourt.**
- **TSAT – www.lulu.com**
- **Felitti VJ et al. Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 1998;14: 245-258.**
- **Mollica, R., Brooks, R., Ekblad, S., McDonald, L. (in press). The new H5 model of refugee trauma and recovery. In J. Lindert & I. Levav (Eds.), *Violence and Mental Health*. New York, NY: Springer.**



www.hpirt-cambridge.org