Courage and the Effective Practice of Psychotherapy Across Cultures

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Structured Discussion Group

The primary aim of our proposed structured discussion group is to stimulate lively conversations about the theoretical, clinical, pedagogic and research value of distinguishing between three conceptually and experientially distinguishable forms of courage--bravery, boldness, and fortitude--across different cultures. Towards this end, Drs. Geller, Farber, and Iwakabe will briefly present a set of operational definitions and interrelated ideas about these three components of courage, incorporating the results of three studies that are investigating the ways in which therapists experience, understand, and express bravery, boldness, and fortitude in their relationships with their patients. Our hope is that our introductory remarks will set the stage for productive discussions that are relevant to the work of therapists of all persuasions. The participants will discuss the following questions: (a) What forms of courage are prized and valued in your culture?; (b) Are there differences in the ways in which men and women experience, understand, and express courage in your culture?; (c) How are bravery, boldness, and fortitude manifested in therapeutic relationships in different cultures?; (d) What kinds of clinical phenomena are most likely to mandate the need for therapeutic courage?；(e) How should therapists be educated to conduct therapy courageously?; (f) Does courage or its absence mediate client improvement in therapy?; and (g) What kind of research is needed to understand the origins, nature, and effects of therapeutic courage?