

Promoting Safety with our Clients

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Learning Objectives

After this session, participants will:

1. Have increased understanding of actual and perceived threats to safety of survivors of torture (SOT)
2. Have increased understanding of the strengths and challenges that SOTs have in analyzing and understanding risks for them and their families
3. Gain new psychosocial and immigration-related strategies for working with clients who have concerns about safety
4. Learn about supportive resources and ways to locate and develop community resources

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Let's Start with Us

- What do you need to be/feel safe?
[What is missing when you feel unsafe?]
- How have past unsafe experiences better equipped you for subsequent unsafe experiences?
- How have past unsafe experiences challenged you in subsequent unsafe experiences?
- Recall a time when you thought you were safe, then learned that you might not be. What was this experience like?

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Safety is a state in which hazards and conditions leading to physical, psychological or material harm are controlled in order to preserve the health and well-being of individuals and the community. It is an essential resource for everyday life that an individual and a community need in order to realise their aspirations.

Maurice P. et al (1998). *Safety and Safety Promotion: Conceptual and Operational Aspects.*

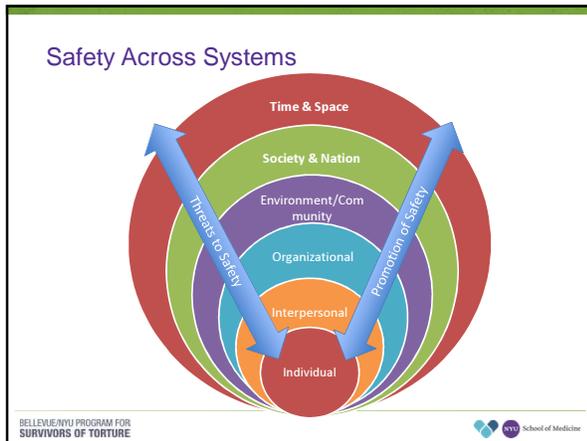
Safety

- A basic human need and human right
- "hazards are controlled"
- Physical, psychological, social, environmental, spiritual
- Subjective
- The first stage of mental health first aid, trauma-informed care and evidence-based models of care for traumatic stress

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Safety promotion is the process used at a local, national and international level by individuals, communities, governments and others, including enterprises and non governmental organisations, to develop and sustain safety. This process includes all efforts agreed upon to modify the environment and structures as well as the attitudes and behaviours related to safety. It is based on a multisectorial approach and includes community enabling activities.

Maurice P. et al (1998). *Safety and Safety Promotion: Conceptual and Operational Aspects.*



“I would like to learn the difference between feeling safe and unsafe. I know the difference in my head but not in my heart. I’m always scared.”

Seeking Safety Manual, p. 94

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- ### Threats to Safety: Individual
-
- Historical and current
 - Actual and perceived
 - Increased vulnerability
 - Self and family/community
 - Post-traumatic stress reactions
 - Trauma triggers
 - View of the world and self
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- ### Promotion of Safety: Individual
-
- Psychosocial
- Safety within oneself
 - Emotions, cognitions, physical sensations, behaviors
 - Normalize, do not minimize
 - Psycho-education
 - Anticipating & preparing
 - Resilience - What has helped before?
 - Skills development
 - Safety planning
 - Character vs. circumstance
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- ### Promotion of Safety: Individual
-
- Legal
- Rights education
 - Encourage and empower clients
 - Encourage truthfulness with legal representatives
 - Work with other service providers
 - Survivor in treatment vs. victim in the justice system
 - Working with non-attorneys/Accredited Representatives
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I didn’t know who to trust anymore. My closest friends turned me in to the police. I never feel totally safe with anyone.

PSOT Client

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Threats to Safety: Interpersonal

- Historical and current
- Violations of trust
- Risks of communication with home community
- Power differentials
- Loss of support system

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Promotion of Safety: Interpersonal

Psychosocial

- Safety in relationship with service providers
- Reparative role of relationship with service providers
- Safety planning
- Healthy relationships
- Group work

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Promotion of Safety: Interpersonal

Legal

- Misinformation in the community
- Engaging with government officials at home, on the street, and in the police station

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In the beginning, I would reach the parking garage across the street, turn around and go back to the train. I knew that if I came inside, I would talk about difficult things.

PSOT Therapy Client

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Threats to Safety: Organizational

- Historical and current
- Targeted for membership
- Exploitation
- Trauma reminders
- Asking for help



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Promotion of Safety: Organizational

Psychosocial

- Safety within the organization
- Acknowledge limitations
- Predict challenges
- Membership
- Peer support and mentorship

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Promotion of Safety: Organizational 

Legal

- Post and Provide Legal Hotline Numbers and Pro-Bono List of Legal Representatives
- Distribute Know-Your-Rights Cards
- Provide legal orientation to new clients

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I canceled my plans to travel outside New York state because I'm concerned about what could happen to me

PSOT Client, December 2016

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Threats to Safety: Environment 

- Historical and current
- Discrimination, marginalization, and threat
- Lack of choice and control
- Trauma reminders
- Media



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Promotion of Safety: Environment 

Psychosocial

- Safety in one's environment
- Education & safety planning
- Resource development
- Risks vs. benefits
- Become agents of change

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Promotion of Safety: Environment 

Legal

- Know rights within agencies and government (local and federal)

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[Aggressive and threatening] language brings back very real reminders of his lack of rights and due process in his homeland

PSOT therapist speaking of therapy client, December 2016

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Society & Nation 

Threats to Safety: Society & Nation

- Historical and current
- Loss of nation
- Lengthy immigration processes
- Current laws and policies
- Proposed elimination of protective policies
- Proposed development of exclusionary policies
- Mis-information in the community

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Society & Nation 

Promoting Safety: Society & Nation

Psychosocial

- Psycho-education with up-to-date information
- Support in tolerating the unknown
- Community resources
- Education & advocacy

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Society & Nation 

Promoting Safety: Society & Nation

Legal

- Identity Cards
- Asylee now traveling overseas as a permanent resident
- Jury duty/Selective Service
- Language barriers – right to interpreter
- Engaging with government officials

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“I have asylum now. I don’t need to be scared anymore, but I don’t know how to not be scared. I have been scared every day for the past 7 years.”

PSOT client, 2012

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Time & Space 

Threats to Safety: Time & Space

- Multiple threats over time
- Multiple threats across settings
- Ongoing threats
- Past threats experienced as current



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Time & Space 

Promotion of Safety: Time & Space

Psychosocial & Legal

- Talk about safety
- Acknowledge chronicity
- History as resilience and resource-building
- Draw from past experiences
- Immediate and long-term safety planning

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Opportunities for Intervention and Collaboration

- Survivor Groups
- Health Care Settings
- Schools & Universities
- Community Organizations
- Refugee Resettlement Agencies
- Legal & Immigration Support Settings
- Torture Treatment, DV, Anti-Trafficking Programs
- Child Protective Services
- Many More!

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Additional Safety Strategies: Agency Level

- Workshops & trainings for all personnel
- Safety planning (develop, document, disseminate) for personnel and clients
- Agency website, hallway signage, office setup
- Community partnerships
- Listservs

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Additional Safety Strategies: Client Level

- Incorporate safety into all encounters
- Safety in assessment forms, treatment plans, and interventions
- Workshops & trainings
- Know your Rights Cards

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Safety Strategy: MY/OUR SAFETY STRATEGIES

Individual	<input type="text"/>
Interpersonal	<input type="text"/>
Organizational	<input type="text"/>
Environment/Community	<input type="text"/>
Society & Nation	<input type="text"/>
Time & Space	<input type="text"/>

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Safety Strategy: SAFE SPACE*

- Post statements in your office that remind patients that your office is a safe and respectful space where threatening behavior is not tolerated.
- Discuss steps that staff may take in the case that they witness or become victim to bullying or threats in your office.
- Reassure interpreters that come to your clinic that this is a safe place and ask them to let you or your clinic manager know if they witness threatening behavior.

*Healthcare Provider Resources for Refugees, Immigrants, and Asylum Seekers. (Nov 27 2016) NW Refugee and Immigrant Health Coalition.

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Safety Strategy: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS CARDS

- I do not wish to speak with you, answer your questions, or sign or hand you any documentation based on my 5th Amendment rights under the U.S. Constitution.
- I do not give you permission to enter my home based on my 4th Amendment rights under the U.S. Constitution unless you have a warrant to enter, signed by a judge or magistrate with my name on it that you slide under the door. I do not give you permission to search any of my belongings. I choose to exercise my constitutional rights.

I do not wish to speak with you, answer your questions, or sign or hand you any documentation based on my 5th Amendment rights under the United States Constitution.

I do not give you permission to enter my home based on my 4th Amendment rights under the United States Constitution unless you have a warrant to enter, signed by a judge or magistrate with my name on it that you slide under the door. I do not give you permission to search any of my belongings. I choose to exercise my constitutional rights.

I choose to exercise my constitutional rights.

These cards are available in various languages and sizes.

• Immigrant Legal Resource Center: <https://www.ilrc.org/need-cards>

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ILRC “Know Your Rights” Red Card

I do not wish to speak with you, answer your questions, or sign or hand you any documents based on my 5th Amendment rights under the United States Constitution.

I do not give you permission to enter my home based on my 4th Amendment rights under the United States Constitution unless you have a warrant to enter, signed by a judge or magistrate with my name on it that you slide under the door. I do not give you permission to search any of my belongings based on my 4th Amendment rights.

I choose to exercise my constitutional rights.

These cards are available to citizens and noncitizens alike.

Immigrant Legal Resource Center; <https://www.ilrc.org/red-cards>

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A Return to Us

- Impact on Services Providers
- Shared Trauma/Community Trauma
- What safety promotion strategies do you implement for yourself?

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Your Action Steps

- Write down 1 client who has expressed safety concerns whom you will reach out to by next Wednesday for a check-in
- Write down 2 safety-related strategies you will integrate into your own practice by February 1st
- Write down 3 safety-related strategies you will suggest your agency consider integrating into its policies or practice.

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Promoting Safety with our Clients: E-Consultation

- January 25, 2017
- Please Join Us!
- Click on this link to register:
<https://join.onstreammedia.com/register/alundberg@cv.t.org/jan2017W>

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