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Harmony Restoration Therapy as a Framework for Culturally Responsive Trauma Care among Conflict-Affected Populations in Nigeria

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Abstract

Conflict-related trauma in Nigeria is often discussed through clinical categories such as post-traumatic stress, depression, anxiety and grief. While these categories remain important for assessment and intervention, they do not always fully capture how conflict-affected persons interpret suffering, survival and recovery within their cultural worlds. This conceptual article examines Harmony Restoration Therapy as a culturally relevant framework for trauma care among conflict-affected populations in Nigeria, particularly internally displaced persons and communities exposed to insurgency, communal violence, banditry and social dislocation. Drawing on cross-cultural mental health literature, the article argues that trauma should be understood not only as an individual psychological injury but also as a disruption of harmony across the self, family, community, spirituality, livelihood and belonging. Harmony Restoration Therapy provides an African indigenous lens for understanding healing as the restoration of balance within relational, communal and existential domains. The paper does not reject psychiatric diagnosis or evidence-based psychological intervention. Rather, it argues that trauma care becomes more ethical, acceptable and clinically meaningful when symptoms are interpreted alongside cultural meanings, local idioms of distress, help-seeking pathways and community structures. The article concludes that culturally responsive trauma care in Nigeria should integrate clinical assessment, community-sensitive intervention, stigma reduction, religious and communal support, and restoration of dignity for conflict-affected populations.

Keywords: Conflict-Affected Populations; Cross-Cultural Mental Health; Harmony Restoration Therapy; Nigeria; Trauma Care