

**Psychotherapy and Supervision as  
Multicultural Encounters:  
A Multidimensional Framework for  
Culturally and Socially Responsive  
Practices**

**Celia Jaes Falicov, Ph.D.**  
Southern Counties Regional Partnership  
Webinar 6/11/2020  
cfalicov@ucsd.edu

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An early experience with a  
Latino family in a hospital  
setting was an impetus to  
bring culture and context into  
clinical settings

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**Multiculturalism includes:**

**CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

Values, beliefs and meaning differences  
(ethnicity, religion, nationality)  
RESPONSIVENESS

**SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Contextual Stressors tied to power differences  
(gender, race, class) EMPOWERMENT

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**Approaches to Culture and Therapy**

- **UNIVERSALIST**
- **PARTICULARIST**
- **ETHNIC- SPECIFIC**

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### Cultural Competence Courses

Often equated with ethnic values such as:

- *Machismo* or male dominance (Latinos)
- *Expressing emotionality or conflict* (Italians)
- *Obedience* for elders (Asians)
- *Religion and Spirituality* (African-Americans)

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### Culture as Ethnic Values only

- They may **perpetuate stereotypes** because Values:
- are In Flux  
are Contextual (class, education, nationality, urban-rural)
- Latinos come from many different countries & generations
- Many Asians, Latinos, African-Americans have bicultural or multicultural identities
- Similar values exist in many patriarchal cultures

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### Approaches to Culture and Therapy

- **UNIVERSALIST**
- **PARTICULARIST**
- **ETHNIC- SPECIFIC**
- **MECA: Multidimensional Ecological Comparative Approach**

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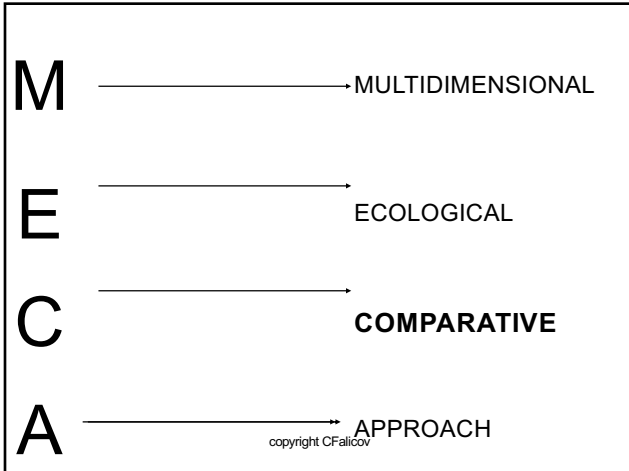
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### The Place of Culture

POSITIONS	MULTICULTURAL SUPERVISION
<b>Universalist</b>	• No use
<b>Particularist</b>	• No use
<b>Ethnic-Focused</b>	• Course/lecture with specific ethnic group content
<b>Multidimensional Ecological Comparative</b>	• Diversity in four systems domains • Comparative maps

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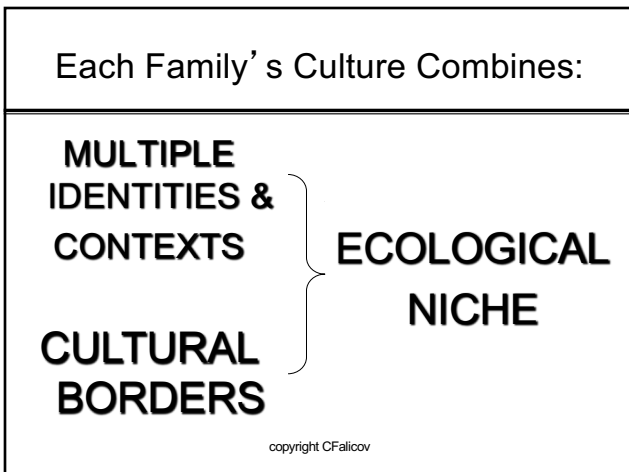
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<b>CULTURE in MECA</b> <i>Multiple Identities and Social Locations</i>		
-Language	-Education	-Religion
-Region (urban, rural)	-Occupation	-Political Ideology
-Race	-Age & Cohort	-Migration/ Acculturation
-Social Class	-Gender	-Disability
-Ethnicity	-Sexual Orientation	
	Variance Identity	<i>Falicov (1983, 1988, 95,98,2003,2014)</i>

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I also wanted to integrate:

*Migration-Specific Competencies—*

*often applicable to many cultural groups  
but the impact of immigration is not  
generally included in cultural competence  
courses*

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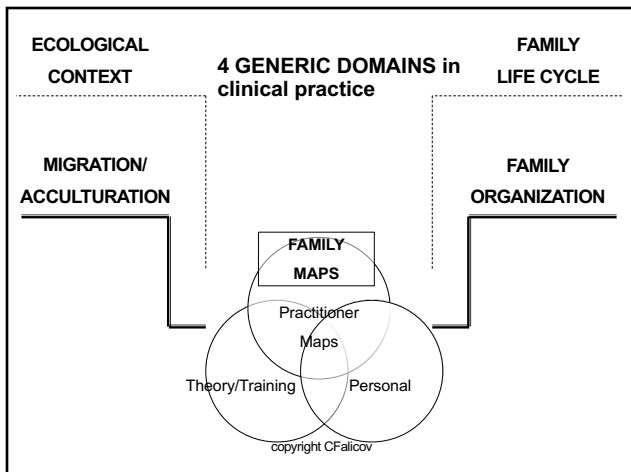
### MECA: a Culturally and Socially Responsive Approach

Integrates Culture, Context and Migration-Specific Competencies by asking:

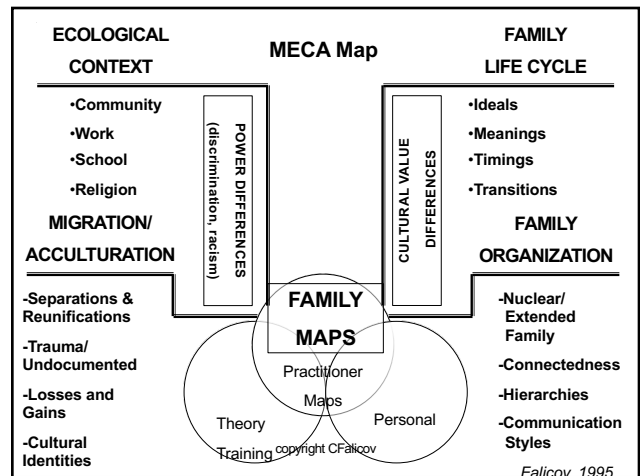
*What differences make a difference  
for understanding various ethnic and  
minority groups in a non-stereotypical  
manner?*

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## MECA practices

### CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Theory Transformation

Culture- Specific Adaptations

Curiosity and Respect for cultural preferences and strengths

### SOCIAL JUSTICE

Honor Local Knowledge

Empowerment/Advocacy

Resistance to Discrimination

Address Oppressive Practices

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## FAMILY MECA-MAP

A tool for integrating the four dimensions of culturally-attuned assessment

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## Template for a MECA FAMILY MECA MAP

### Ecological Context



### Family Life Cycle



### Migration/Acculturation

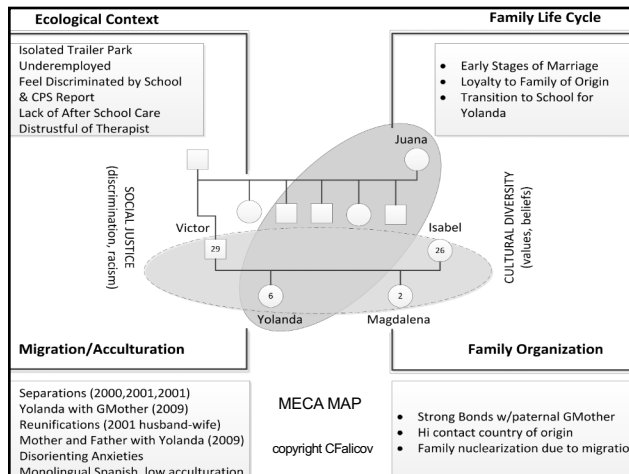


### Family Organization



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## Salient MECA Issues about the family

- Migration
- Ecological Context
- Family Life Cycle
- Family Organization

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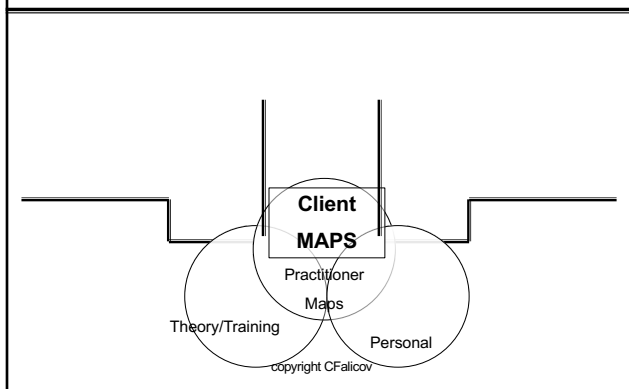
Use the 4 domains of MECA in Practice and in Supervision

1. To conduct an exploratory inquiry of each domain (family & therapist & supervisor)
2. To identify stressors and strengths in each domain
3. To develop some sense of what are the areas clients may need help or may be tied to the presenting problem

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## The Practice Encounter is not Culturally Neutral



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## Cultural Competence or “Cultural Humility”?

Practitioner’s self- reflection about **her or his own culture, race, class, beliefs and values**

Clients as Experts

**on their culture and context**  
Practitioners become aware of power dynamics in the relationship with clients

*(Tervalon and Murray-Garcia, 1998)*

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## Applying MECA to Clinical Practice and to Supervision

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## Cultural Supervision

- MECA Map for Family
- MECA Maps of Therapist
- MECA Maps of Supervisor

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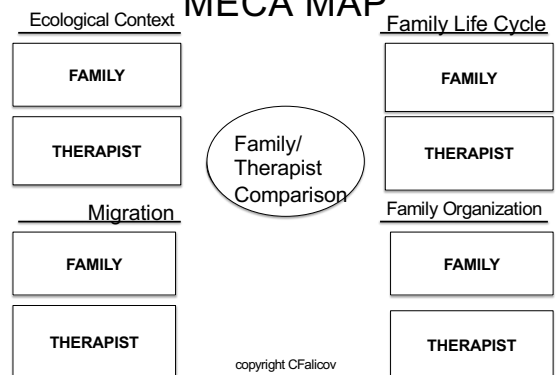
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## THERAPIST MECA MAP

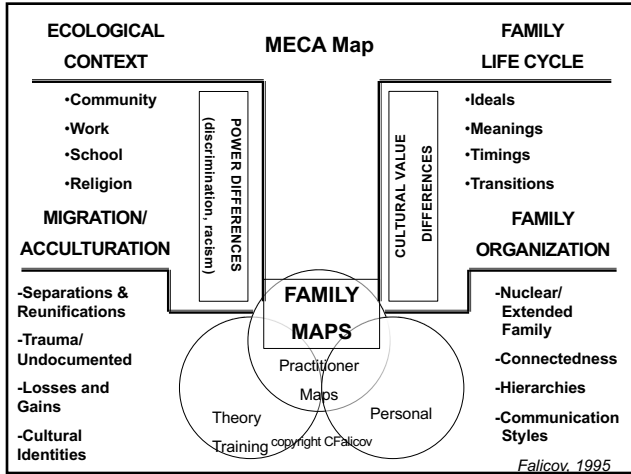
Comparing Family and Practitioner's Maps

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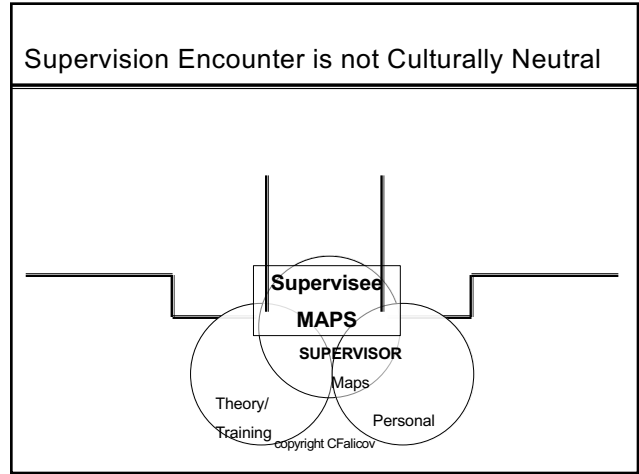
## Template for a Therapist/Family MECA MAP



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**“Cultural Humility” in Supervision**

Supervisor’s self- reflection about **her or his own culture, race, class, beliefs and values**

Supervisee as Experts **on their culture and context**

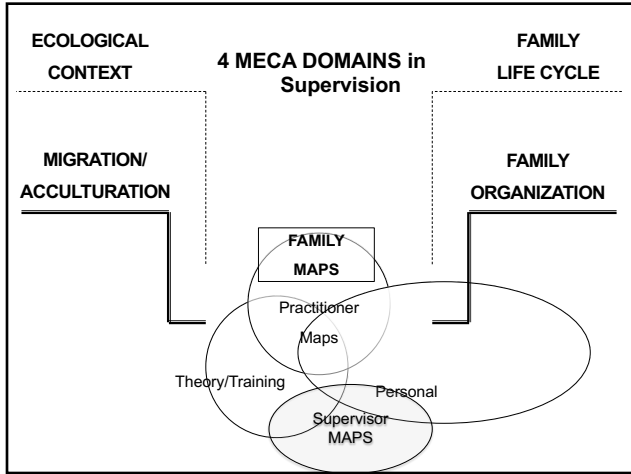
Supervisors are aware of power dynamics in the relationship with supervisees

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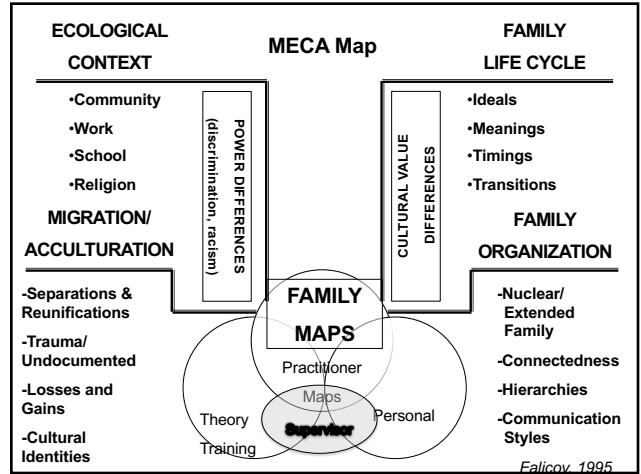
- ECOLOGICAL NICHE for Supervisor**
- Language
  - Region
  - Race
  - Social Class
  - -Ethnicity
  - Education
  - Occupation
  - Age & Marital Status
  - Gender
  - -Sexual orientation
  - Sexual Variance
  - Sexual identity
  - Parenthood
  - Disability
  - Migration
  - Nationality
  - Political Ideology
- Falicov (1983, 1988, 95,98,2003,2014)*

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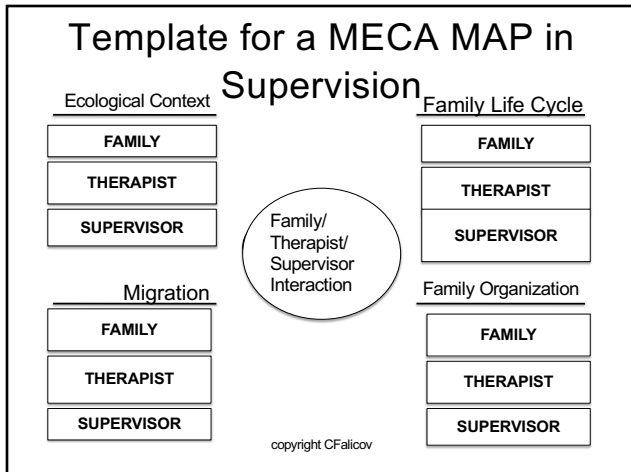




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**In Supervision**

Once we look at family's MECA together I generally ask therapist to make some guesses as to where the focus of work needs to be.

There is no right or wrong here, no judgement. The issue is what may be a useful way to approach the problem.

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## Therapist's had 3 guesses

1. The parents were not sufficiently bonded to the girl because of the crucial years of separation
2. The father had a "pathological" attachment to his mother and could not separate from her
3. The wife was too subservient and needed to become more assertive

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## WHAT PARTS OF MECA DO THESE 3 HYPOTHESES FALL INTO?

Migration?

Ecological Context?

Family Life Cycle?

or Family Organization?

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## Encourage Sociological Imagination

### MIGRATION

Supervisee was asked to imagine the couple and their families' state of mind when the son departed, came back, got married and left again with wife. Came back after having the baby, but couple left again without baby. Came back to take the baby but did not and coming back again and now took the baby. Further, I asked her if thinking about her parents as young immigrants may be of some help in her understanding of this family.

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## Sociological Imagination

- About each Family Member and discuss with each
- 1. Mother
- 2. Father
- 3. Child (new immigrant with many losses and new adaptations)
- 4. Ask about Grandmother

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## Trauma events in reunited children

Pre-migration

During the separation (in home country)

During the migration, in transit

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## Possible Trauma after Reunification

Is there a risk of child physical abuse?

It is possible that harsh discipline increases because of parent frustration with rebellion, precisely at a time when nurturing the child is needed to rebuild or repair the bond.

Child Protective Service workers may see physical discipline as a cultural trait and do not integrate migration specific competencies

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## Information in each MECA domain

It is how we arrive at ideas on how to conceptualize what may be going on

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## Migration (M)

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FORMS of SEPARATIONS and REUNIFICATIONS
<p>1. MIGRATION</p> <p>a. Detention</p> <p>b. Deportation</p> <p>2. FOSTER CARE</p> <p>a. Abuse (physical or sexual)</p> <p>b. Neglect</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><small>copyright CFalicov</small></p>

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Forms of SEPARATIONS and REUNIFICATIONS
<p>3. INCARCERATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substance abuse,</li> <li>• Crime,</li> <li>• Violence</li> <li>• Mental illness</li> <li>• Unfair accusation</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><small>copyright CFalicov</small></p>

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MIGRATION RELATIONAL STRESS	EXAMPLES OF CLINICAL PRACTICES
Separations & Reunifications	⇒ Catching-Up Life Narratives; Reunion Celebrations
Coaxed, Unprepared Migrations	⇒ "As-if" Preparations Rebalancing Contracts
Marital Polarizations (to stay/ to go back)	⇒ Oscillation Rituals (odd days/ even days)
Life-Cycle Intersections (divorce, death, illness)	⇒ Healing Rituals
Traumatic Passages	⇒ Testimony Rituals

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**IMMIGRATION SEPARATIONS**  
**in the past:**

---

**Grandparents and some  
Extended Family together**

**Father alone**

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New forms of SEPARATIONS and  
REUNIFICATIONS

• **Father and Mother**

**Mother (*Feminization of Migration*)**

Ratio of Latina and Filipina women to men is  
very high—equal or higher to men now

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One or More Children left behind in  
care of relatives

Children traveling alone mostly  
motivated by reunification

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**ICT:**  
**Information**

**Communication**

**Technologies**

Offer some **Repair in the midst  
of Relational Ruptures  
Barriers into Bridges**

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**The power of  
connection in the  
midst of separation  
and suffering**

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### Latinos, African American, Asians and Whites and Technologies of Communication

All use Mobile Phones almost equally, but may pay with different programs and use it for family transnational communication

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### Latinx and Technologies of Communication

Latinx Who Own any Cell Phone

97% total =

77% smartphone

20% cell phone but not smartphone

(Pew Center Fact Sheets, Feb 2018)  
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### Why use ICT at Reunification?

Because there will be **new separations**, often from the caretakers

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### Immigrants are part of a large relationship system

1. Those Who Left to Come Here
2. **Those Who Stayed Behind**
3. Those Who Come and Go

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## Clinical Presentations in Parent-Child Separations and Reunifications

### During Separation

Depressed solo mothers may be treated with medication or support. We do not know how the children do.

### During Reunification

A depressed, resentful, rebellious child is referred with a mother who may lack experience, empathy or ability to set limits

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## Clinician's Practices

- Practices during Separation
- Practices during Reunification

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## Practices for Children's Care During Separation

### Children in Kinship Foster Care

*(Minuchin, Colapinto, Minuchin, 2007)*

- Maintain Connections between Mother, Caregiver and Child
- Quality of Relationships (shift Negative **Triangles** to Positive ones)
- Explore Family Approval for the separated Mother or Father

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## Practices of Reunification

### When children and parents reunite, it is important to:

- Make Meaning Out of the Separation
- Repair the Bond
- Restore a Strength-Based Family Story
- Restore Role Clarity
- Explore trauma (*pre-, during or post-migration*)
- Acknowledge fears of future separation

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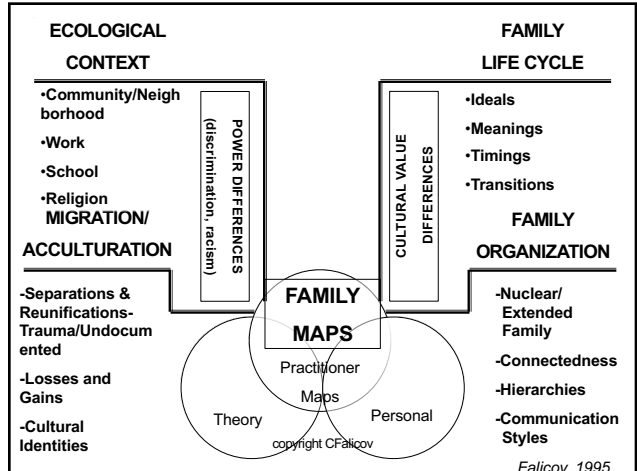
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### Specialized Practices for Reunifications

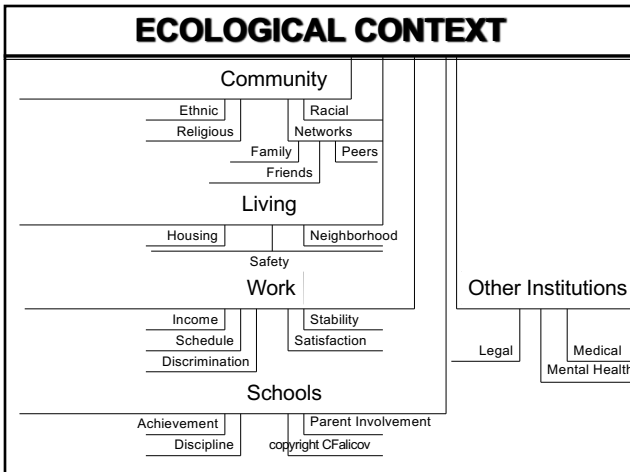
- “Catching-Up Life Narrative” (story book, theatre play)
- Celebration of the Reunification/honoring Grandmother
- Narrative “Certificate of Legitimization” of the mother or father’s right to parent (This introduces a Sociopolitical Frame)

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### Social Justice

**Connection Between Personal and Social Stresses**

- Race/Colorism, Social Class, Gender, Sexual Orientation
- Discrimination and Prejudice cause Stress

Institutional Racism  
Exclusion, Marginalization, Micro- Aggressions

**Mental Health Correlates**

- Internalization of Negative Expectations
- Learned Helplessness, Depression, Hi Blood Pressure
- Elevated or Poor Self-Concept, Anger

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## Supervision as Live Consultation

Advantages and Disadvantages

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## LIVE SUPERVISION

- IN THE ROOM
- One-Way Mirror
- TECHNOLOGY
- Audiotape
- Videotape (self supervision, choose segment)
- Telephone, bug in ear
- Knocking door
- Coming in

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## Re-building Communities

Increases social capital, cultural retention and protects against:

- depression in women,
- alcohol abuse in men and
- gang involvement in youth.

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## Questions about Social Supports

- If you need help, do you have somebody you would turn to for advice? or just to talk to somebody?
- Who helps you with lending money, babysitting, a ride to an appointment, a place to live...
- Who do you keep in touch with back home besides your immediate family? (friends, church)

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## Family Organization (FO)

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## Clinician's and Supervisor Conceptual Maps

How do we think about separated families?

Are they broken families?

Do we think that the ruptures between  
parents and children have irreparable  
developmental consequences?

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## Cultural Diversity

Meaning and Belief  
differences tied to

- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Nationality
- Profession
- Political Ideology
- Family Composition

Clinical  
Approaches

- Curiosity & Respect
- Culture-Attuned  
Therapies
- Transformations of  
Theory (attachment,  
individuation)

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## Extended Family Ties

- Mexicans and Puerto Rican have higher rates of co- residence and proximate living situations than Whites
- They have more contact with extended family face to face, by phone or letter, give child care—kin support of all kinds.

*(Sarkisian, Gerena and Gerstel, 2006)*

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## About Grandmothers

- ◆ They are often “Other-Mothers”
- ◆ Are integral to the lives of minority youth
- ◆ We need to inquire and include grandchild-grandparent relationships

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## Family Size & Practitioner’s Ideals

	<u>SMALL FAMILIES</u>	(LARGE FAMILIES)
<b>PARENTHOOD</b>	Intensive	Extensive
<b>INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION</b>	High	Limited
<b>CONTROL</b>	Democratic	Authoritarian
<b>KIN NETWORK</b>	Exclusion	Inclusion
<b>SIBLINGS</b>	Small Independent	Large Involved
<b>PROBLEMS</b>	Magnified	Minimized
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## Family Life Cycle (FLC)

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## Life Cycle Values

### INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD CHILD REARING

TRADITIONAL VS MODERN  
(minority/mainstream)

Good Manners and Consideration of Others  
Relational focus, aggression control and shaming;  
well educated, obedient, control rebelliousness.

- vs. Autonomy and Self-Maximization Individual focus, assertiveness, permissiveness, accept rebelliousness and use explaining

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## Life Cycle: Adolescence

Generational Conflicts linked to different expectations:

The children of minority families grow up observing the individualistic democratic values of small families while their parents may have grown up with the collectivistic hierarchical values of large families

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## CEFSA

3 issues relevant to Adolescent/Parent Conflict:

**C:** Cultural Value Differences

**EF:** Ecological Fears

**SA:** Separation Anxiety

(and fears of losing children to a “different mentality”; language, life style)

(Pumariega and Rothe, 2010; Parra-Cardona et al. 2009, Smith, 2006)

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## MECA: SYSTEMIC AND POSTMODERN FOUNDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

- A Multidimensional Definition Of Culture
- Ecological Niche: Multiple Contexts and Cultural Borderlands
- Beyond Cultural Stereotypes
- Knowing and Not Knowing
- A Strength Based Orientation
- A Self- Reflective Culturally Humble Stance

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Training in MECA tools and reflections for the supervision encounter

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## What is the Nature of the S-S relationship?

- Inevitably Hierarchical?
- Teacher/Student?
- Expert Case Consultant?
- Mentor/Mentee?
- Collaborators with different expertise?

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## **SUPERVISION**

EXPERT

HIERARCHICAL

DIRECTIVE

PRESCRIPTIVE

## **CO-VISION**

CURIOSITY

RESPECT

TRANSPARENCY

of Culture and

Social Location

CO-CONSTRUCTION

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## Supervisees and Supervisors

**In A GROUP      OR      Between 2 INDIVIDUALS**

- Share your First and Last Names and the origin of the name

as your first doors to

Your ECOLOGICAL Niche

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## **Comparing Names**

When you look at your name, what does it evoke in terms of your origins?

And your supervisee's name? And your supervisor's name?

What do you think the other is going to think when they see your name? What does it mean to you to be perceived that way? Shame or pride?

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## GENOGRAMS IN SUPERVISION

- SUPERVISEE brings Client Family and his/her own Genogram
- SUPERVISOR Shares own genogram
- Simple comparisons:
- History of Migration
- Size of Sibling group
- Deaths, Illnesses, Divorces
- Risks and Strengths

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## Theoretical Orientation Niche

### SUPERVISEE

- Profession
- Schools of Therapy
- Populations of Clients
- Attitudes towards Self-Disclosure

### SUPERVISOR

- Profession
- Schools of Therapy
- Populations of Clients
- Attitudes about Self-Disclosure

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## Consonant or Dissonant?

- Very important for supervisor and supervisee
- A. to become aware of your own position regarding cultural diversity and social justice
- B. to discuss in advance these views rather than wait until there are problems

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## How we may be perceived culturally

The supervisees (and supervisors) formulate ideas of how they may be perceived by their clients (or by supervisors) or supervisees in terms of consonance/dissonance and weaknesses and strengths.

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## Including Culture in Supervision

- Supervision is critical to a practitioner's development of cross-cultural practice
- Supervisors must be an active part of the process of learning about culture
  - They must become comfortable with disclosing cultural and social location about themselves

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## Supervisor's comfort with cultural discussions

- If supervisors can model cultural self-awareness, then supervisees may begin to examine their own
- If supervisors are open to discussions about culture diversity and social justice, the practitioner will likely be more open to having similar discussions with clients

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## MECA: a systematic comparative way

- Supervisors and supervisees need a systematic non-stereotyped way of approaching culture and context in therapy
- With MECA, supervisor and supervisee explore how culture and power impact their own views and the ramifications for the relationship with clients

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## With Multistressed Families

Therapy can cast about in many directions, dealing with a new crises each session, overwhelming clients, practitioners and supervisors.

A systematic approach for cultural assessment and supervision, such as MECA helps to anchor explorations while finding hope for positive change

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## REFERENCES for content and diagrams

**Falicov, C. J. (2014)** *Latino families in therapy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. New York: Guilford Press. Chapters 1 and 4

**Falicov, C.J. (2014)** Psychotherapy and Supervision as Cultural Encounters. Chapters 2 &5. In Falender, C., Shafranske, E. and Falicov, C. (Eds) *Multiculturalism and Diversity in Clinical Supervision*. APA: Washington, DC

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