Modifying Seeking Safety

Teresa Lathrop, M.S.
“...Seeking Safety differs from existing treatments in its **combination of theory** (i.e., safety as the target goal), its emphasis on **humanistic themes** (e.g. safety, compassion, honesty), its attempt to make **CBT accessible** and interesting to patients who may be difficult to reach, its strong focus on case management, its format (e.g., the use of quotations), its provision of **detailed therapist and patient materials** for each topic, and its attention to process issues.” (Seeking Safety, p. 19)
Seeking Safety for Group Treatment

- Adolescent groups- easily modified for “topic of the week” in group homes or residential treatment facilities.
- One lesson can be used in two session or more sessions, when the group is young, immature or just for emphasis.
- After a lesson has been covered, it can serve as a jumping off point to remind residents of better coping.
- Enhance a trauma informed milieu for living- in group homes to intentionally pursue healthy life skills (such as coping skills banners/posters, grounding exercises when adolescents/children are stuck in a negative cycle, positive quotations for daily focus, daily “check –ins” on progress etc.)
Where alcohol/drug abuse is a part of the problem presentation

With “blaming family systems”

With forgiveness issues

With anger issues/couples in constant conflict

When one or both have some other type addiction: pornography, shopping, need to control, or any patterned response that is utilized in unhealthy coping

When both have come from traumatic histories
When one of the partners has a trauma history
When one or both have some type anxiety disorder or one or more anxiety traits such as constant worry
When one or both have some type depressive disorder or depressive traits such as negative ruminations or irritable/angry mood
Use in Family Therapy

- For chaotic families in need of structures
- For rigid controlling families
- For families in need of basic tools for handling stressors
- For families recovering from abusive relationships. Safety must always be the primary issue and reinforced. *Seeking Safety* can be a great tool for this focus.
The therapist must tailor the material to the clientele. This calls for some preparation/creativity (especially with children).

“Seeking Safety will not be as effective if the therapist is not able to relate the material to current and specific problems in patients’ lives.” (Seeking Safety p. 37)

Therapist must have the skill necessary to “Show it rather than say it,” meaning find a way to have the patients rehearse a new skill rather than abstractly talk about it. (Seeking Safety, p. 38)
Seeking Safety is geared for making people safe and is clearly not an in-depth psychodynamic model. The lessons are simple and direct, but address many human dysfunctional patterns.