Adapting INSIGHTS Into Children's Temperament for Haredi Jewish Cultures Using the Core Cultural Assumptions Method

Robyn Koslowitz, Ph.D.
The Targeted Parenting Institute
Lakewood, NJ

Symposium Presentation November 9, 2014

Parenting And Culture

Parenting is socialization

Parents attempt to instill instrumental competence in their children

A parenting intervention that does not take culture into account is doomed to fail.

This is particularly true for a contra-acculturationist culture.

Who are the Haredi Jews?

Haredi Jewish Community

AKA: Ultra-Orthodox Jewish Community

"Ultra-Orthodox" is considered derogatory.
Technically correct term is "Haredi"

Haredi = Those Who Tremble Before G-d.
Ironically, coined as a derogatory term

Community adopted "Haredi" as its own designation, proud to "Tremble Before G-d"

Who are the Haredi Jews?

- Fundamentalist form of Judaism.
- “Fundamentalist” in the sense of believing in the literal truth of the Bible.
- Beliefs:
  - Covenant with God that was sealed during the revelation at Sinai more than 3,000 years ago.
  - Religious system instituted at Mt. Sinai known as the “Torah”
  - System of religious and social laws and infrastructure.
  - There is virtually no purview of life that is not governed by religious law, from minutia like what to eat and how to dress to big decisions like whom to marry
  - Rabbis interpret, but do not create religious law.

Sociology of the communities

Two streams of Haredi Judaism



Hassidic

Yeshivishe



Charismatic leader known as a “Rebbe”

Leader known as “Rosh Yeshiva” or Dean of Rabbinical College

Named for town originating in. Satmar = Satu Mare

Named for Yeshiva affiliation.

- Contra-Acculturationist
- Follow Jewish Law (Halacha)

Hassidic (Chassidic) Jews











Types of Cultural Modifications

Surface Structure Modifications

Face Validity

- **Modifying exemplars**
- **Language of delivery**
- **Brands, foods, locations, clothing etc.**
- **Feasibility and fit of the intervention**

Deep Structure Modifications

Context Validity

- **Relational orientation**
- **Time orientation**
- **Human nature orientation**
- **Activity orientation**
- **Man/nature orientation**
- **Gender**
- **Sociopolitical context**

Deep-Structure Core Cultural Value	Question
Role of Family	Authoritarian parenting, . authoritative parenting vs. permissive or laissez faire parenting
Gender Norms	Who takes care of children? Who supports the family?

Deep-Structure Core Cultural Value	Question
Relational Orientation	What is the nature of relationships? Are people equal and independent or integrate parts of hierarchal, interdependent social relationships? What is emphasized in the culture: rights of the individual or of the group? What if someone does not fit in? Role religion plays in everyday life?
Activity Orientation	What is most important?

Deep-Structure Core Cultural Value	Question
Construction of Human Nature	Does parent need to help child individuate or to become part of larger community? Are people essentially good, bad or neutral?
Time Orientation	Is the focus on the child's future or the needs of here and now? Does the culture focus on more than one time orientation?

Using Core Cultural Assumptions to Modify INSIGHTS

Data Sought

Core cultural assumptions underlying INSIGHTS

Data Collection Method

Review of INSIGHTS curriculum and all materials

Discussions between intervention developer and the researcher

Using Core Cultural Assumptions to Modify INSIGHTS

Data Sought

Core cultural assumptions underlying Haredi parenting

Data Collection Method

Review of literature

Interviews with parenting professionals

First focus group session with Haredi mothers

Using Core Cultural Assumptions to Modify INSIGHTS

Data Sought

Potential areas of resonance and dissonance between INSIGHTS and Haredi culture

Data Collection Method

A focus group of mothers participated in the INSIGHTS intervention. Duration was once a week for eight weeks.

After each two hour INSIGHTS session, mothers participated in a thirty minute focus group about cultural resonance and dissonance of material taught

Using Core Cultural Assumptions to Modify INSIGHTS

Data Sought

Cultural resonance and dissonance of each lesson taught during the INSIGHTS intervention

Data Collection Method

After the intervention was complete, mothers attended a final two hour focus group discussing:

- Cultural relevance and dissonance
- Their recommendations for modifying dissonant material
- The utility of the intervention
- Information they would like added to the intervention

Cultural Modification Of *INSIGHTS*

Surface Structure Modifications

Videotaped Vignettes

- **Modest clothes**
- **Modest speech**
- **No cross-gendered socializing and touch**
- **Restraint in parental interactions**
- **Haredi entertainment norms**

Interesting Finding

INSIGHTS Resonance With Haredi Culture

Deep Structure Resonance

Overall INSIGHTS Intervention

- **Intervention developer is a nurse**
- **Intervention developer is a parent**
- **Temperament based parenting**
- **Matching parenting style to child's needs**

Deep Structure Resonance

Specific INSIGHTS Sessions

- **Parental Responses**
- **Expressing Warmth**
- **Parents are People, too**

Types of Cultural Modifications

Deep Structure Dissonance

Specific INSIGHTS Session:
Disciplining School-Age Children

- ❑ Concept of disciplinary strategies leading up to "The Big One" viewed as undermining parental authority

- ❑ INSIGHTS sees parents as authority figures. The parental choice to be flexible and less harsh is still parental choice. Parent retains authority. State this explicitly during session.

Deep Structure Dissonance

Specific INSIGHTS Session:
Various Sessions

- ❑ Term "unique" seen as promoting immodesty (Lack of tznius)

- ❑ Use term "special" instead.
- ❑ Discuss in terms of honoring the special creation of the Creator, a child's unique temperament.

Types of Cultural Modifications

Deep Structure Dissonance

Specific INSIGHTS Vignette:
"Life Is Not Fair"

- ❑ The words "life is not fair" are considered heretical in Haredi Judaism because G-d is seen as planning everything

- ❑ Take out the term and discuss the content of the session in terms of dealing with disappointment. "Sometimes, things do not work out as planned…."

Deep Structure Dissonance

Specific INSIGHTS Session:
Fostering Independence

- ❑ Concept of adolescents choosing their own values, Haredi parent's nightmare
- ❑ Devaluation of "parental tapes"

- ❑ Reframe in terms of "do you want an externally compliant teen or one who has internalized your values?"
- ❑ Provide children with positive parental tapes

Parenting And Culture

Parenting is socialization

The Core Cultural Assumptions Method can help modify any intervention for any culture.

A parenting intervention that does not take culture into account is doomed to fail.

Due to the preliminary work done with INSIGHTS, it is particularly amenable to cultural modification.