

Traumatic Experiences of immigrants in America - Macro and Micro/Clinical Approaches

Martha Vallejo, MSW, LCSW

Martha Vallejo is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a Certified Traumatologist who has completed three post-masters' certificate programs with the Harvard Global Mental Health Trauma and Recovery Program. Martha is the National Association of Social Workers FL Immigration Justice Task Force Chair. The main purpose of this Task Force is to create awareness and to promote social change through education and advocacy regarding human rights and social justice issues for immigrants seeking asylum. Martha has been a voice in South Florida of the imperative need to provide therapeutic services to immigrant families and unaccompanied children who have fled violence and must retell their traumatic stories of sexual assault and persecution in immigration and deportation proceedings.

Martha has developed a storytelling client-centered therapeutic process of elaborating trauma-informed and resilience-base evaluations to support asylum seekers' immigration process. The main therapeutic intention of this process is to help asylum seekers reconnect to their values while they strengthen their inner humanity and spirituality. Additionally, Martha has established partnerships to develop community healing practices. Clinicians' self-care and wellness are a vital component in all her lectures.

Martha has been an Adjunct Faculty at Barry's Graduate School of Social Work since 2013. Moreover, Martha provided trauma-informed consultation and training to the Home Project in Greece during the process of creating the first shelters for unaccompanied refugee girls and boys. During this process Martha developed psychoeducation groups for staff and children of different cultures.

She was granted the 2013 Humanitarian Award by Americans for Immigrants Justice and the 2015 Miami-Dade Social Worker of the Year Award.

Vicki Rosenthal, MSW

As a macro practice social worker, in 2018 I started my own social impact / human rights art business, VickiRosenthal.art. Advocating for marginalized and oppressed populations, I am continuing my life's work through visual art highlighting human rights issues creating conversations for change.

Additionally, I participate in direct activism through contacting legislators, protests, and volunteering. Presently, I volunteer for an organization that assists asylum seekers locked up in detention under zero-tolerance immigration policies. Even in the midst of COVID-19, the U.S. Government continues to break national and international laws for asylum-seekers. Volunteer opportunities allow me to generate my commitment to social justice by providing dignity and worth to all people.

Shimon Cohen, MSW, LCSW

Shimon Cohen began his social work career as a street outreach worker for a drop-in center for homeless youth. He later co-founded and served as director of Nuestro Lugar/Our Place Teen Center for low-income, multicultural and/or at-risk youth in Eugene, Oregon, now a program of Youth ERA.

Mr. Cohen has over 15 years of experience working with diverse populations in community-based agencies, public schools and hospital-based psychiatric outpatient clinics in Eugene, Oregon; Bronx, New York; the Dominican Republic; and Miami, Florida. He currently oversees the BSSW field program and teaches practicum seminar courses at the BSSW and MSW levels. He enjoys working with students on their path to becoming social workers, with an emphasis on critical thinking, cultural competence and social justice.

In March 2018, Mr. Cohen launched a social work-related podcast, entitled Doin' The Work: Frontline Stories of Social Change, where he serves as host and producer. The podcast highlights people working for social change through interviews with social workers and those in related fields, educators and activists about their work and personal stories of how they got into this work. Doin' The Work is available on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Stitcher, Spotify and other podcast listening apps, or through the website: www.dointhework.com. Mr. Cohen created an **Educator Resource** for the Council on Social Work Education Center for Diversity and Social & Economic Justice, focusing on how to use the podcast Doin' The Work: Frontline Stories of Social Change as a teaching tool. The resource is organized by topic and includes questions that can be used for written assignments and/or classroom discussion.