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Clinical Social Work Practice III with Groups

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In this week's group session, participants were all survivors of war trauma. Some participants were refugees from the Liberian Civil War, Iraq, and El Salvador. Participants' experiences varied based on where they fled from and how long it has been since they experienced the trauma. However, many are experiencing similar symptoms. Many have experienced flashbacks and inability to fulfill responsibilities at work and in the home.

The social worker began by having individuals introduce themselves one by one and share why they are here. The first participant shared that his daughter died in the war in Iraq, and that although he is grateful to be in America, he cannot help but feel like he left his daughter behind and failed her. He stated that he has been written up at work for not completing tasks on time. He also stated that he experiences flashbacks to the day his daughter died a few times a month. The facilitator thanked him for sharing and told him it was very brave to come tonight and share his loss with the group. She also expressed how much courage it takes for someone to leave their home country in order to find safety. She shared that she admires the bravery and resilience of each of the participants.

Other participants shared that they also are having trouble at work or keeping a job. They stated that they keep thinking about what happened and feel stuck. The facilitator validated that feeling by stating that after experiencing something traumatic, our brains try to process what

happened in an effort to explain them. She asked the members to describe their ideal future. The common thread between the participants' answers were peace, happiness, stability, and closeness with family and friends. The social worker asked the members if they enjoyed imagining that type of future. They agreed they did. The social worker then asked the participants what steps it would take to get to that. One participant stated that he would have to forgive himself for the past. Another participant shared that she would need to look forward and stop looking back. The social worker asked the group what actions could be taken to focus on the future ahead and let go of guilt about the past. One participant shared that he could look for a job he enjoys. Another shared that she could apply to a certificate program in a field she is interested in. The social worker agreed that those were positive steps they can take.