

Working with Arab American Sexual Minorities: Considerations for Increasing Competence

Treating Arab/Middle Eastern populations in the United States has recently become of interest within the field of clinical psychology because of increased immigration of these groups over the last decade. Many Arabs have immigrated to benefit from financial and occupational opportunities; however, others have left their countries of origin in the pursuit of greater freedom and to flee from persecution. Arab sexual minorities are among these groups. This seminar will provide a brief description of Arab populations with regard to ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. It will also explore the experiences of Arabs with same-sex attractions and the impact of familial, cultural, and religious values on the expression of sexuality and identity. Finally, recommendations will be presented to assist clinicians who seek to increase cultural competence working with this unique population.

Target Audience

Psychologists Social Workers Counselors
Therapists Psychiatrists Nurses

Course Level: Advanced

Learning Objectives

- At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to:
- 1. Delineate cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds of Arab populations living in the USA.
- 2. Describe factors impacting acculturation and ethnic identity formation for Arab populations
- 3. Describe the challenges faced by Arabs with same-sex attraction in their cultural and religious contexts and as part of the acculturation process in America.
- 4. Identify cultural factors that could impact clinical treatment of Arab individuals in the USA.
- 5. Identify additional clinical consideration when working with Arab sexual minorities.

Seminar Schedule

The webinar outline is attached. See the Live Webinar page for the start and end times.

Outline

- Begin 10 AM ET
- Characteristics of Arab Immigrants
- Acculturation Patterns
- Cultural and Religious Values
- Break 11:30-11:45 AM ET
- Challenges faced by Arab Sexual Minorities
- Clinical Considerations for Treatment
- End 1:15 PM ET

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The Presenter

Dr. Mary N. Iskarous began mental health service in her home country of Egypt where she served as Director of the Drug Proofing Your Kids program in Cairo, Egypt. During her service, she witnessed the impact of stigma, prejudice, and isolation of those suffering from mental illness, substance abuse, and sexual identity concerns. She felt compelled to seek additional education that would enable her to help preserve the dignity of these vulnerable populations as an advocate and mental health professional. Dr. Iskarous sought graduate education in the United States and graduated with her Doctorate in Clinical Psychology from Regent University in 2013. In line with her passion for Arab populations, her graduate research explored the experiences of Arab Americans with same sex attraction and highlighted the challenges this group faces as they develop an integrated sexual and ethnic identity. Her interest in working with ethnic and sexual minorities has led to ongoing efforts to provide education to clinicians interested in working with Arabic speaking persons. Additionally, Dr. Iskarous has pursued opportunities to provide care for individuals with severe mental illness and those with comorbid disorders. She currently works at as a licensed clinical psychologist at an inpatient psychiatric hospital in Virginia, where she provides services as part of a recovery-oriented and trauma-informed treatment program.

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This seminar has been reviewed and approved by Keith Hannan, Ph.D., Laura Davie, LICSW, Tina Jenkins, Psy.D., and Loreen Yearick, MSN, RN. This approval expires on March 1, 2028.

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