

**OBSTACLES,  
COMPLEXITIES AND  
BARRIERS WHEN WORKING  
WITH CHILD AND ADULT  
SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL  
ABUSE**

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# BANKSTOWN WOMEN HEALTH CENTRE

- Services at the centre include:
  - Counselling
  - Child-CSA
  - Health promotion
  - Case management
  - A variety of groups
  - Medical
  - Naturopathy and massage
  - Vietnamese counsellor
  - Psychologists

# THE ADULT CSA CLIENT

CSA clients come with a diverse range of trauma. Often multiple trauma's which has shaped the client in many ways and often impacts the course of therapy. This includes:

- **Lack of affect regulation-** Client finds it difficulty to stay on topic or is completely withdrawn and struggles to maintain contact.

# THE ADULT CSA CLIENT

- **Clients irregular attendance-** When there is irregular attendance there is difficulty in maintaining a flow of the therapy.
- **Client readiness-** Client may only want some sort of assistance in the area of court or written letter. Client may minimise the CSA and not think it is currently impacting them.

# THE ADULT CSA CLIENT

- **Disability-** Clients with an intellectual delay often struggle to process their emotions around the sexual abuse and the therapy often needs to be quite concrete and pragmatic.
- **Domestic violence-** The client may still be living in DV so it may be difficult to allow the client to unravel in the room when they are not going home to a safe place.

# THE ADULT CSA CLIENT

- **Co-morbidity**- Often there are number of co-occurring mental health issues and client identifies with label and feels they have no capacity to change.
- **Cultural and religious beliefs** - That can be reinforced in a way that is quite silencing and harmful to the client.

# WORKING WITH THE OBSTACLES

- As therapist some of our goals is to:
  - Build rapport.
  - Build safety in the room.
  - Take as long as needed and go at clients pace.
  - Work relationally- attachment and counter transference.
  - Mindfulness what we may represent to the client and really thinking into how we do things with the client.

# SUPERVISION AND PEER SUPPORT

- Using supervision and peer support to get support with:
  - Time boundaries
  - Dealing with non-attendance
  - Assessing clients readiness
  - Counter transference
  - Vicarious trauma and self-care



# KEY THEMES- WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN

- Legal
- Gender
- Family
- Different agendas - sharing information
- Access to resources
- Trust