

MENTALITY OF KAZAKHSTANI PEOPLE THROUGH THE EYES OF THE METHOD OF POSITIVE AND TRANSCULTURAL PSYCHOTHERAPY



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Abstract

The article provides the reflection of Kazakh culture and mentality in the context of Positive psychotherapy. The author is a Kazakh woman who was born and grew up in a traditional Kazakh family, is also a Basic consultant in Positive psychotherapy, lived and studied offline in Turkey, Finland, South Korea and Russia. Positive psychotherapy is the method that is based on a transcultural view. It covers both eastern and western cultures. The mentality of Kazakh people, values, culture, and tradition are reflected in the article by using the Conflict model, the Balance model, primary and secondary capabilities, and a family treatment model of Positive psychotherapy. The key conflict for most Kazakh people is in being polite and not telling about their true feelings and thoughts. The concept that "talking a lot is bad" is widespread among Kazakhs. An example of a general conflict model of Kazakh people is presented in the article.

Keywords: positive and transcultural psychotherapy, Kazakh mentality, Kazakh history, Balance model, Conflict model

Introduction

Republic of Kazakhstan originated in 1465 when Zhanibek and Kerei khans united the clans throughout the Kazakhstan territory into one country and called it "Kazakh khandygy". The Kazakh nation had a nomadic life style before the Soviet Union came to Kazakhstan. Therefore, most of the Kazakh traditional life depends on cattle breeding. The Kazakh mentality is closer to the Eastern way of thinking than to the Western. However, globalisation is having its effect on the youth of the country. There are no barriers between cultures for Kazakh people. At the same time, youth tend to be patriotic and to modernise old Kazakh culture. Today the manner of

appearance, clothing with old Kazakh images is trending, for example.

Positive psychotherapy is the method that is based on a transcultural view. It covers both eastern and western cultures of the world. As the author Nossrat Peseschkian says himself, it is better to use eastern wisdom and western rationalism. He uses oriental stories in his psychotherapies as a tool for healing patients.

As the mentality of the Kazakhstani population comes from the eastern culture, the oriental stories are very widely used to teach and explain anything to everyone from children to elders. If we look at the methods in this transcultural psychotherapy, through the balance model, Kazakh people tend to place greater value on the spheres of contacts and future.

In the late 8th century, when the Islamic lifestyle came to the Kazakh land, people used to write in the Arabic alphabet and in the 13th century the alphabet used changed into Latin letters. From the 1940s until now the Cyrillic alphabet has been used. During all these changes, it has been hard for people to master a new type or alphabet. They tend to learn everything by heart and pass on knowledge by reading poems, proverbs, storytelling and singing songs. The Kazakh nation has many writers, poets, singers and orators. One of the main reasons why I was impressed by this method of using oriental stories in psychotherapy is this. We have grown up on stories. Even when a Kazakh mother is trying to explain to her child that he has done something bad, she uses Kazakh proverbs and stories.

Methodology

The transculturality of the method also points out the values of a person and his family. I will try to show this for the population. This is the reflection of Kazakh culture and mentality in the context of positive psychotherapy. I am a Kazakh woman who was born and grew up in a Kazakh family with all the traditions and mentality. Also, I am a basic consultant of positive psychotherapy who has lived and studied offline in places such as Turkey, Finland, South Korea and Moscow.

I will try to reflect the mentality of Kazakh people, their values, culture, and tradition by using the conflict model, the balance model, primary and secondary capabilities, and the family treatment model of the positive psychotherapy method.

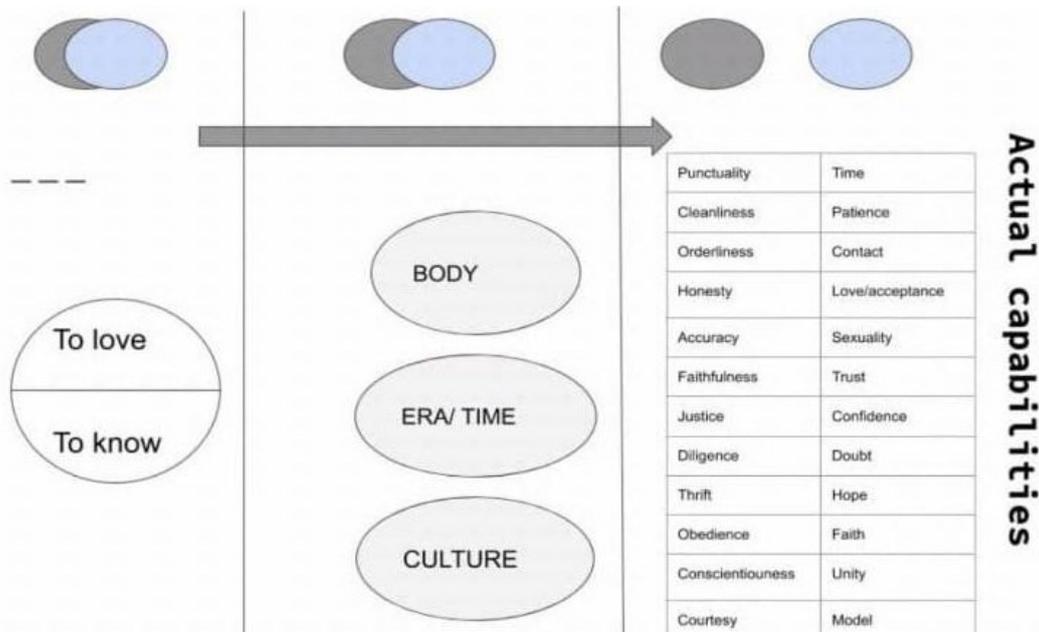


Figure 1. Actual capacities (based on Peseschkian, 2016)

Positive psychotherapy offers to consider two main categories of capabilities of a person (Fig. 1.), they are love and perception. If we look into how babies are nurtured in a culture, we can see which is more important for that nation. Babies are lying in the cradle in a shelter in order to protect them from other people who are not family. Because Kazakh people have lots of guests in their homes, here we can accentuate “Courtesy” as one of the main factors in describing Kazakhs. But, a newlywed mother is also limited somehow, she cannot hold her baby every moment, because the baby is tied in his/her cradle. The mother is raising

the child without taking him/her in her arms. The baby is hearing everything, smelling Mom but lying in an independent place. Kazakh children are not physically attached to their mothers and family, since they are independent from birth. However, they are very patriotic and always attached to their families in a moral way. For example, they can easily study abroad or in another city far from home, as they are very adaptable, but never cut their ties with their family, country and nation. It all starts from “the cradle”, actually.

As for Kazakh parents, they see their children as a mission and are very afraid to pamper them, so they generally give their first children to their own parents to raise. Thus, the first baby of the family is generally brought up by the grandmother. That is why parents cannot easily curse the firstborn, and the oldest child is greatly respected in the eyes of younger ones. One of the main values for Kazakh people is “respecting elders”, which is comparable to the secondary capability of “Obedience” in positive psychotherapy. The eldest child has his own duties toward the youngest ones, Kazakhs call them “the frontest wheels of a carriage”, they wish each other to have a firm “front wheels”, because rear wheels will follow them anyway. Another capability of the method is “Responsibility”.

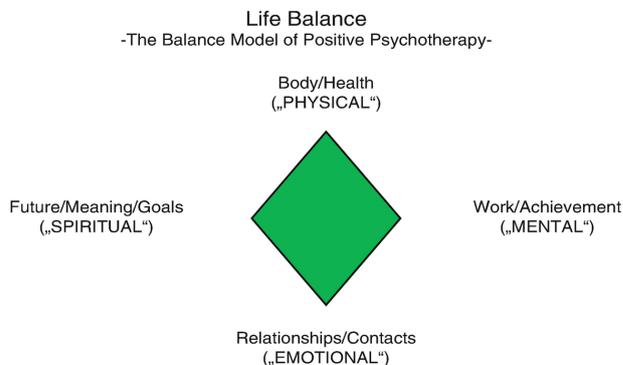


Figure 2. Balance model (Peseschkian, 2016)

The Kazakh nation is more spiritual and emotional than Western nations. (Fig. 2). The lifestyle is more focused on contacts and meaning. However, the Kazakh people tend to work hard, they easily get bored or like to "ease the shore." That's why this people mostly call themselves lazy. Most Kazakhstani working people are brilliant in “thinking professions’ rather than doing, executing. They are good ideologists. In the context of the physical sphere of life, the lifestyle has nomadic roots, cattle breeding rules and there was no time or energy to tend to the needs of the body. For example, while sheep breeding a person is horseback riding. When one wears a Kazakh

national outfit and accessories it holds the spinal cord straight and the belly tight. Hunters kept their eyes, arms, and legs healthy by archery and eagle launching. Kazakh people eat cow, sheep and horse meat. They believe that meat improves muscle, drinking soup helps to improve skin. For that reason, there are many boxers and sportsmen from Kazakhstan. We have many boxers but a very few football players.

In the workplace, the sphere of achievement, most Kazakh professionals do not work for money but for power and title. Therefore, they may have a very low salary but a high title. Being a teacher, a doctor, a scientist, a minister is more honourable than being a freelancer or a businessman.

Although being rational is preferable for Kazakh people, we are an emotional nation. That is why we have a lot of artistic professionals, famous artists, poets, writers, dancers, singers, and composers.

Lastly, about “Spirituality”, the Kazakh nation is very superstitious. There are lots of traditions that no one knows the reason for but can list thousands of profits. One of them is “karma”, and that is the reason for the importance of the capability of “Justice”.

Most Kazakh people used to live exactly as their parents and families did, so most conflicts are between parents and children. Although conflicts take place, most people have great difficulty with changes in their lifestyle. Once I was lecturing a seminar about raising a child and how to have good communication with Kazakh teenagers. A father of a primary-school student advocated not telling them about foreign literature. He said: “no one died because their father had beaten them in childhood or none of the women sitting there as mothers became bad persons”. Actually, we were talking about the same thing with this father, but in different ways. This is the story of how I started to explain about the positive psychotherapy method as not being foreign-based but transcultural. A general example of the conflict model with Kazakh people is given in Fig. 4.

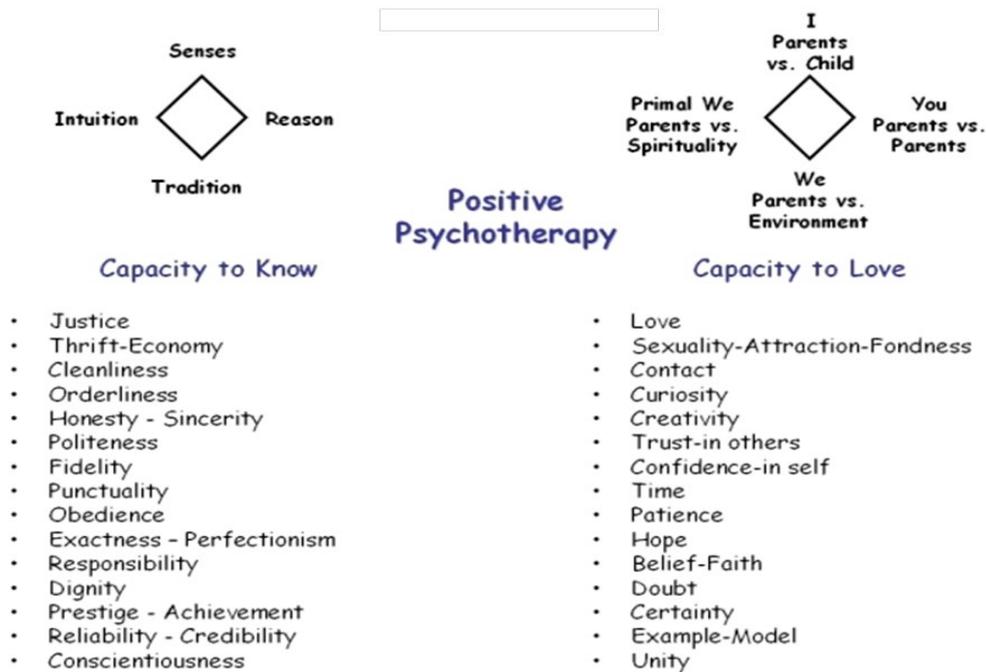


Figure 3. Main PPT concepts and models (based on Peseschkian, 2016)

For the Fig. 4, imagine any middle-aged or even young Kazakh man or woman. He/she may be married or not, it doesn't matter. In both situations, they may have issues with their parents. Most of them have chronic health problems, especially those that appear when one cannot express one's feelings and emotions verbally. This happens because there is no place for such words in our mentality. We love talking, we are sociable but not about our feelings. That is not so good in Kazakh culture. People cope with it mostly through Sublimation. They sing songs, they draw pictures, they write poems, novels, and books. Back in the past, daughters could not visit their parents' houses after marriage and could not tell them anything, so they sewed carpets for their parents to express their feelings. Kazakh culture is described by only a musical instrument called Dombra, they played 'kuis' on dombra, and it was music without words. Especially "bad news" was expressed to people by these 'kuis'. There is a story about a 'khan' (emperor) who felt the approaching death of his son who had gone to war. He threatened to kill any person who would bring him this "bad news". The messenger passed the news through this "kui" (music without words), of course

it sounds very dramatic, also expressing how the emperor's son died. This is another example of the lack of the capability of "Sincerity" among Kazakh people.

If they want to be sincere, it will be accepted as being disobedient, disrespectful. So, most of the psychosomatic cases among Kazakhs are Asthma, Chronic coughs, Allergies, Skin problems (Lack of sensitive Love), thyroid problems.

The Model of Conflict among Kazakhs shown above illustrates that the Conflict in the Sphere of Contacts affects the body through psychosomatic expression and also goes to the Sphere of Future. This is young people's fear of living the same life as their parents and they escape to the Sphere of Achievement. They mostly become nervous, fearful and aggressive after any actual conflict with parents. In order to cope with this, they work hard and mostly become successful. They fulfil their relationship with their parents by making them proud of being successful, rich, or famous. The problem starts when they have to separate from their parents, either by the parents' death or by living far from them because their life has been built on receiving acknowledgement from their parents.

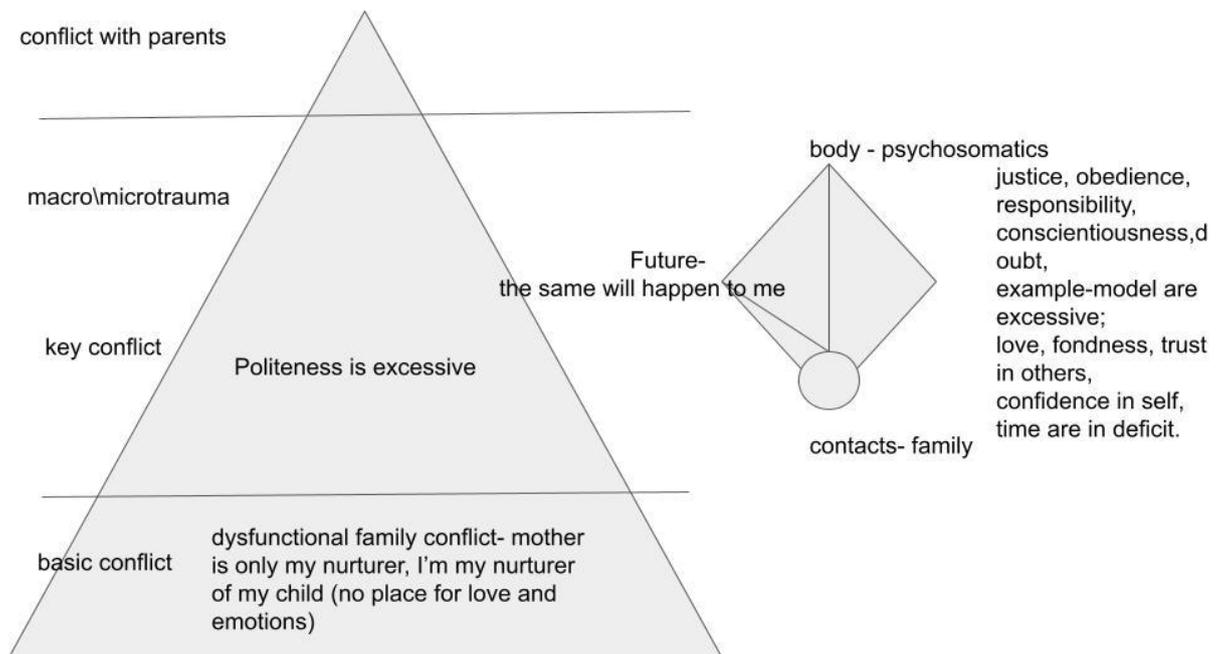


Figure 4. Conflict model of Kazakh people (based on Peseschkian, 2016)

Discussion

The Kazakh nation focuses on Perception rather than Love. Their lifestyle accentuates the /Spheres of Contacts and Spirituality. Their conflicts happen mostly in the Sphere of Contacts and in processing in the Emotional and Body spheres. The capabilities in deficit are love, fondness, trust in others, confidence in self, time and honesty; excessive capabilities are justice, obedience, responsibility, conscientiousness, doubt and being a model/ example for others. The key conflict here is being polite and not telling one's true feelings and thoughts. Basic conflict appears to be as "being afraid of experiencing the same thing as your parents" or " what you do to parents will happen to you" in the "I" sphere, which is built on an interaction of your parents with you. Chances are that Kazakh people's' need for Love is not satisfied. On the other hand, all their success was built on satisfying needs of Perception.

Conclusions

Although my reflection needs further study, I have tried to analyse it by using my own culture and my knowledge about positive psychotherapy, also I used my experience of counselling. The Kazakh nation is not widely known in other

countries except the bordering neighbours of Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tadjikistan, Uzbekistan, China, Turkey from Europe, and Mongolia. That is the main reason I tried to write this reflection. I want to help this method to be used widely in Kazakhstan as well.

The Kazakh nation is very open to learning new things, as there are many people who wish to improve and develop. As I have said above, Kazakh people are focused on a capability of perception. They work hard, read books, do science, and study throughout their whole lives. This is more like escape to Achievement because of the great deficiency of the Capability of Love. This is the greatest need which the therapy sessions treat.

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