

Osama Training Guide for Counseling Diverse Populations

Linda J. M. Holloway*

Associate Professor, Program Coordinator of Counseling Education Programs, Department of Instructional Support Programs, Alabama State University, Montgomery, Alabama, USA

***Corresponding Author:** Linda J. M. Holloway, Associate Professor, Program Coordinator of Counseling Education Programs, Department of Instructional Support Programs, Alabama State University, Montgomery, Alabama, USA.

Received: October 25, 2019; **Published:** February 18, 2020

Trying to find the most appropriate movie to show in my Counseling Diverse Populations class is always very exciting. There are times when I have a magnitude of movies to choose from. The selection process become simple once I decide as a professor what movie actually captures what the students need to learn for that portion of the curriculum. Additionally, I want to make sure the movie coincides with the student learning outcomes for this class. I am not just looking for a “feel good” assignment.

I spent over 27 years in the United States Army Reserves. I had the honor and duty to spend some time in Iraq and Afghanistan. Both cultures left me with an appetite for wanting to understand at a greater depth about each of them. I was elated to learn all I could to be able to share that knowledge with my students.

I had the honor to serve my country in Afghanistan as a Civil Affair Officer. I was the Project Director of the Female Engagement Team where I had the opportunity to train service members about the Afghanistan culture and what to expect when they would go into the local village. Osama was one of the movies I used as a training aid. The Female Engagement Teams found this movie to be very enlightening. So, it was an easy transition for me to make this movie a part of my Counseling Diverse Populations class.

I enjoy movies, therefore using them as a teaching technique is only natural. When I first learned about the concept cinemotherapy, I thought what a great idea! After reading and studying about this concept, I was motivated to teach my student’s cinemotherapy as a counseling technique to add to their repertoire of counseling skills. Although cinemotherapy and cinema-teaching or two totally different concepts, I have managed to merge the two.

I began this work with what I consider a great way to make class more intriguing and that is to integrate movies into the classroom. I then decided to do a series of articles to share with readers the movies I have used in my class when teaching Counseling Diverse Populations to graduate students in training on becoming a professional counselor.

Students really look forward to each semester to see what movie I will have for them that will demonstrate counseling concepts they have learned in class, their textbook, and assigned articles they are required to read.

The movie project is an excellent way to develop your students’ critical thinking skills, research, writing, and technology skills. The curriculum guides I created are not simply questions from just watching the movie. The students really have to research the questions and give thoughts to what is being asked of them. For example, a movie related to the culture of Afghanistan is outside of most students realm of knowledge, therefore critical thinking is a crucial component to the answering the questions. This particular movie assignment stretches the students to move outside of their comfort zone about a particular culture and country they have limited knowledge about.

Osama is a movie about a young girl who grew up in Afghanistan during the era of the Taliban and found herself being compelled by her mother to live a life as a boy only to be discovered by the other children and authority figures in the schools she is actually a girl. Her life takes a turn in the movie at that point.

Note: Please be advised, the author does not have the copyrights to the clip arts used in this article.

Below is the curriculum guide I use in my class. I hope you find it helpful.

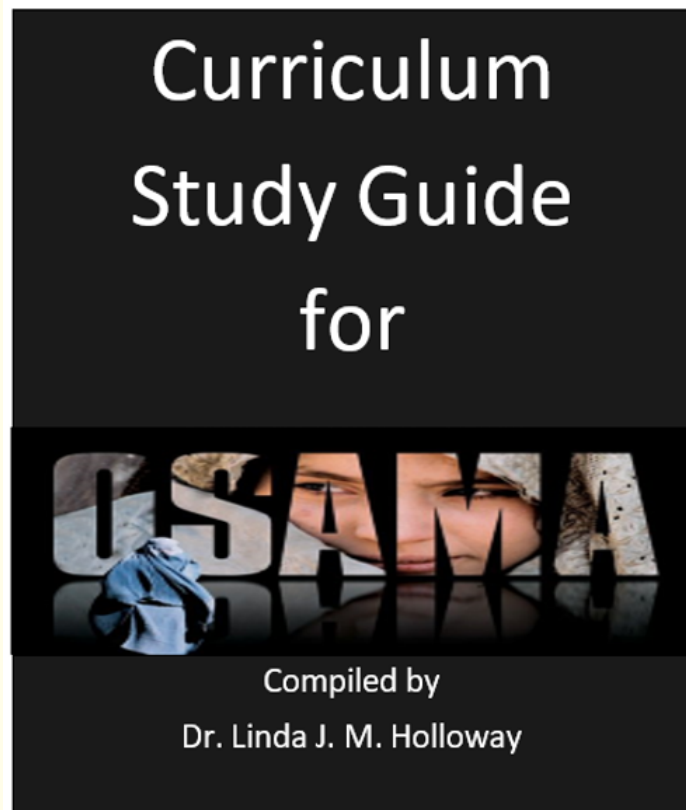


Figure 1

Group 1



Figure 2

1. Conduct a brief country profile of Afghanistan and share your findings with the class (i.e. the religion, foods, government, role of women).
2. Who are the Taliban?
3. What were your thoughts and feelings at the beginning of the movie when the women were having a demonstration and the Taliban attacked them?
 - What were some of the things the women expressed they wanted? How is what the women were asking for any different than what they are asking for now?
4. What was the real motivation of both the mother and grandmother for wanting to have OSAMA, who was a girl, to be presented to the world as boy?
5. Prior to making this decision for OSAMA's change in identity, what was life like for this family? Explain it from the perspective of the mother, grandmother, and OSAMA's life.
6. What were some of the statements the mother stated to the grandmother prior to OSAMA's transformation?
7. I know the main character in the movie was "OSAMA", but I would like you to pick at least three other characters in the movie that had an impact on you. Who were they and what impact did they have?
8. What happen to OSAMA's father?
9. How would you describe her relationship with her mother and grandmother?
10. Develop a treatment plan for OSAMA's mother. Be sure to prepare a psychosocial history on your client. Explain your theoretical orientation. Role play your counseling session.



Figure 3

Group 2



Figure 4

1. What kind of impact do you think the transformation of OSAMA having to be born into the world as a girl, but told in order for her and family to survive she must be presented to the world as a boy? Explain the emotional, mental, psychological, and socio-logical impacts.
2. Why do you think the author of the movie would often show "OSAMA" jumping rope? What do you think that was symbolic of?
3. Draw a critical developmental time line of "OSAMA's" life and list all the critical impacts that happened in her life. Explain how and why you think these events had a very profound impact on her life emotionally.
4. OSAMA, after waking up and realizing her hair had been cut, took her braid and planted it in a pot. What did that symbolize to her?
5. When OSAMA had to go to the all boys' school, what was it about her that made the other boys think that she was a girl?
6. Prepare a counseling session for OSAMA's grandmother. Please provide a psychosocial history along with a treatment plan. Explain your theoretical orientation. Role play your counseling session.
7. What stereotypes did you notice through this movie?
8. What forms of microaggressions did you witness?
9. Would you want to live in Afghanistan? Why or why not?
10. What type of support would you recommend for the women of Afghanistan? Explain your answer in term of social justice counseling.



Figure 5

Group 3



Figure 6

1. What did the men in charge do to prove OSAMA was either a girl or boy? How did you feel about this? Do you think anything could have been done differently? If so, what and why?
2. What impact did all this have on the little boy in the movie who tried very desperately to be OSAMA's ally? What can we learn from this situation as a counselor who reaches out to help others?
3. What would you say was the toughest part of the movie for you? Please explain.
4. What was OSAMA's punishment for pretending to be a boy, when in reality she was a girl?
5. What were your feelings toward the Mullah who purchased OSAMA as his bride?
6. Explain what is meant by a "young girl bride" in developing countries? Please provide statistics and examples of a "young girl bride".
7. Explain what is meant by Social Justice Counseling and how would you apply it in this situation.
8. OSAMA is seeking therapy from your agency. Please provide a psychosocial history for her along with your treatment plan. What theoretical framework would you use and why? Role plan your counseling session.
9. What is Mullah? What role do they serve in the community?
10. What are your thoughts about justice when it comes to women in this country? Please provide historical and current facts to support your answer.



Figure 7

Recommended Readings

1. Hershey John W and Hesley Jan G. "Two Films and Let's Talk in the Morning: Using Popular Movies in Psychotherapy 2nd edition". John Wiley and Son, Inc. New York (2001).
2. Peske Nancy and West Beverly. "Cinema Therapy for Soul: The Girls Guide to finding inspiration one move at a time". Bantam Dell, New York, New York (2004).
3. Peske Nancy and West Beverly. Cinema Therapy for lovers: The Girls Guide to finding True Love One Movie at a Time: Bantam Dell, New York, New York (1999).
4. Peske Nancy and West Beverly. "Advanced Cinema Therapy: The Girl's Guide to finding Happiness One Movie at a time". Dell Publishing. New York, New York (2002).
5. Solomon Gary. "Real Therapy: How Movies Inspire You to Overcome Life's Problems". Aslan publishing Fairfield, CT (2001).
6. Solomon Gary. "The Motion Picture Prescription: Watching This Movie and Call me in the Morning". Aslan Publishing Santa Rosa, California (1995).
7. Ulus Fuat. "Movie Therapy, Moving Therapy". Trafford Publishing St, Victoria Canada (2000).
8. Wedding, *et al.* "Movies and Mental Illness: Using Films to Understand Psychopathology 3rd edition". Hogrefe Cambridge, Massachusetts (2009).
9. Wotz Birgit. "Emotion, Picture Music, A Movie Lovers Guide: To Healing and Transformation (2005)". Glenbridge Publishing centennial Colorado (2005).

Volume SP1 Issue 5 March 2020

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