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Abstract Submission: *Track 4: Counselling & Psychotherapy*
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Title: Analyzing Stressful Encounters Using Transactional Analysis: The Dynamic Of Being A Rescuer, Victim, and Persecutor.

Abstract: Game theory, drawn from the influential counselling theory Transactional Analysis, indicates that in times of stressful interpersonal encounters we tend to adopt one or more psychological roles to cope with distressing situation: Victim, Persecutor, or Rescuer. Misunderstandings may entrench the interplay of these roles. To promote awareness of healthy communication patterns, a series of simple diagrams will be used to highlight how these three roles form a psychological game called the drama triangle. Understanding this intriguing game and learning how to avoid this dynamic may be valuable in promoting workplace wellness and in helping clients cope with stressful situations.

Objectives:

1. Articulate the function of each psychological role on the drama triangle.
2. Explain the interplay between each role on the drama triangle that would increase distress (decrease well-being).
3. Identify one strategy to sidestep the drama triangle dynamic thereby encouraging wellness and healthy communication patterns even when experiencing a stressful situation.

Background: Transactional Analysis though developed in the USA (Berne, 1961) has numerous cultural adaptions suitable for a variety of workplace dynamics, including nursing (Whitley-Hunter, 2014). This engaging theory of human personality explains interpersonal relationships in easy to understand, visually appealing, ways. Transactional Analysis analyzes transactions between people and uses the label games to refer to a set pattern of behaviours that repeat in interpersonal exchanges, e.g., cultural clashes. One such game is the Drama Triangle (L'Abate, 2009). This game has the potential to demystify complex encounters and uses everyday language to promote a deeper understanding of communication nuances and options to promote wellness.

Activities:

- Present and explain a series of simple diagrams to illustrate interpersonal clashes that can emerge during stressful encounters from three psychological roles: Rescuer, Victim, and Persecutor.
- Facilitate a discussion on how these three roles form a game called the drama triangle.

Evaluation/Outcome:

- Participants can list three examples from their workplace/client experiences in which the drama triangle may exist.
- If permitted, participants will be given a link to complete online, anonymous, evaluation feedback slip on the presentation.