



Immigration and Identity: Turmoil, Treatment, and Transformation

Salman Akhtar

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Why do people migrate from one country to another? What is the difference between an immigrant and an exile? What determines the psychological outcome of immigration? Can one ever mourn the loss of one's country? What are the defensive functions of nostalgia? Are there specific guidelines for psychotherapy and psychoanalysis for immigrant patients? How can the therapist disentangle the patient's cultural rationalizations from underlying intrapsychic conflicts?

In this unique book, psychoanalyst and poet Salman Akhtar provides answers to such questions. He notes that migration from one country to another has lasting effects on an individual's identity. Such identity change involves the dimensions of drives and affects, psychic space, temporality, and social affiliation. Dr. Akhtar addresses the immigrant's idealization and devaluation, closeness and distance, hope and nostalgia, transitional area of the mind, superego change, and linguistic transformation. With poignant clinical vignettes, he illustrates the implications of these ideas for the therapeutic process where the therapist, the patient, or both, are immigrants. *Immigration and Identity*, replete with poetry and personal letters from immigrant colleagues from many nations, conveys its message with irony, wit, laughter, pain, sadness, empathy, and, above all, clinical and human wisdom.

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