

BRIDGING THE GAP

How to adapt western psychology in treating non-western refugees

Wednesday, 8 October 2014, 15.00-18.00

Background

Treatment forms such as psychotherapy, psychology and psychiatry have developed in a primarily western context, which among other promotes individuality, choices and boundaries. But many health care professionals in Denmark have patients, who originate from cultures very different from the western; cultures that might promote collectiveness, family and duty and who understand and deal with mental health issues in other ways.

So what happens when you use western psychology in treating non-western refugees?

At this DIGNITY seminar we will look into the challenges of using western forms of therapy in treating non-western refugees, and discuss how we can adapt the western psychology to our patients in order to reach better results. We will look into the cultural aspects that might stand in the way of progress, the different ways of understanding and treating mental health issues in non-western societies and get the newest research and insights on what works in the Middle East.

Speakers

Issam Smeir

A clinical psychologist specialized in treating victims of organized violence. He holds a doctorate degree from Northern Illinois University and has worked with refugees and victims of torture from over 30 countries. He is the national clinical consultant for World Relief and teaches as an adjunct professor at Judson University in the US. He is an expert on the Narrative Exposure Therapy approach and he currently trains and supervises Arab mental health professionals in the MENA region to master this technique under Dignity's MENA project.

Rabih El Chammay

MD, Psychiatrist, Master in Mental Health Policy and Services.

A Lebanese psychiatrist working mainly in Lebanon and the MENA region with a focus on Refugees' Mental Health. Currently director of the national mental health program at the Ministry of Public Health Lebanon.

Peter Polatin

M.D., M.P.H., Professor of Psychiatry and Director of Global Mental Health Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences George Washington University Washington, D.C.

A psychiatrist and public health expert who specializes in the identification and treatment of torture survivors, social recovery in post conflict and post disaster zones, and community mental health in regions of limited resources. In his clinical work he does both general psychiatry and subspecialize in pain management.

Mona Zaghroun Hodaly

MA

Since 1989 she has been working nationally and internationally in the field of trauma and psychosocial approaches to the support of people suffering from the physical and psychological impact of trauma,

including imprisonment and torture. Work has included counseling, supervision, consultation, teaching and training.

An EMDR Accredited Trainer, Consultant and Facilitator providing training, consultation and supervision nationally and internationally. Newly she was selected by Dr Francine Shapiro, originator of EMDR, to be a trainer of trainers for the middle east and the Arab world.)

Programme

14.30-15.00	Arrival and coffee
15.00-15.10	Welcome and introduction
15.10-15.30	<i>The role of culture in the counseling process & how to adapt it in treating non-western clients; Issam Smeir</i>
15.30-15.50	<i>Global Mental Health Policy: Evolution in Response to Understanding of Culture and Context; Peter Polatin</i>
15.50-16.00	Break
16.00-16.20	<i>Trauma in Palestine – what treatment forms are effective in a Middle Eastern context? Mona Zaghroun Hodaly</i>
16.20-16.40	<i>The Syrian crisis & mental health reform in Lebanon; Rabih El Chammay</i>
16.40-16.50	Break
16.50-17.30	Roundtable discussion with the speakers
17.30-18.00	Summary & Goodbye

Address

DIGNITY – Danish Institute against Torture

Bryggervangen 55

2100 København Ø

Location: Canteen – Ground Floor (through the Documentation Center)

Practical information

The programme is tentative – changes may occur.

The seminar will be held in English.