


CONFER

in collaboration with the
Department of Psychology at the University of Surrey

Cultural Identities and Psychological Therapies



2 day conference and workshops

Friday 4th and Saturday 5th April 2008

London

Introduction

One in every three people who live in London was born in another country and almost every mental health worker in the metropolis will be working with someone who has, in some way, been displaced from their cultural roots. In addition, most psychotherapists and psychologists will work with people who were born in this country yet who feel excluded from the mainstream culture because of skin colour, religion, language or culture. Some patients, such as refugees from war zones, may also have experienced depths of trauma that in themselves separate them from mainstream culture.

Beneath the positive benefits of diversity (that creativity, affinity and enterprise flourish along the line where different cultures fuse) there is not just a sense of difference but significant suffering in the experience of being an 'outsider'. This often involves a persistent, subtle and demoralising sense of being alien, unaccepted or at risk. Defensive psychological strategies are then required to protect that person's psyche and working sensitively with the patient's experience of being Black or from a minority ethnic group is a crucial part of any therapist's repertoire. This conference is about collectively identifying the clinical tools that every therapist needs to effectively support the client who feels isolated as the result of a perceived ethnic difference.

We will address the macro themes of psychological stresses that these communities face, and the importance of distinguishing the subtle meanings of mental health and illness in different cultural contexts. We will then progress towards micro themes such as culturally-specific mental health assessment, the ways in which a sense of self may be impinged upon by social and cultural conditions, good therapeutic practice with patients or clients who face issues of isolation, depression or anxiety in relation to their cultural or ethnic identity. We will develop a deepened insight into best practice in intercultural therapeutic relationships.

The conference brings together an exceptional list of UK speakers and workshop leaders with an interest in Black and Minority Ethnic well-being, refugee work and theories of identity. Live music and good food promise to make this an especially enjoyable conference.

"An intercultural approach to psychotherapy and counselling recognises that for many people, questions of belonging, identity and culture are at the forefront of our experiences of the world."

Nadina Al-Jarrah



Programme

Friday 4 April 2008

17.15 Registration, bookstall and tea

18.0 Professor S. P. Sashidharan

Mapping the territory: mental health services and ethnic equality reviewed

Ethnic inequalities in mental health services are persisting and, if anything, they are getting worse. The reasons for this are explored. Current strategies and thinking in this area are reviewed. There is relatively much less attention being paid to the mental health of people from black and minority ethnic communities. In this presentation the salient themes in this area will be identified and the importances of social, cultural and psychological factors that have a bearing on mental health of cultural minorities are discussed. The implications for clinical practice and the need for social action are addressed briefly.

19.0 Choice of Workshops

1. Shahnawaz Haque

Psychotherapeutic work within the Muslim community in London

What specific factors and considerations exist in working psychotherapeutically with Muslim clients? This workshop is an exploration of this and other questions concerning the Muslim community in London through the experience of a practising Muslim who is a trained psychoanalytic psychotherapist and an honorary Imam.

2. Zack Eleftheriadou

Developing guidelines for good cross-cultural therapeutic practice

This workshop will look at some of the important ingredients of good cross-cultural therapeutic practice, and how our clients can be made to feel safe to explore their most private worlds alongside their cultural context. We will look at issues of training and supervision and what recommendations are necessary for potential training organisations.

3. Aida Alayarian

Trauma, resilience, creativity and psychoanalysis; the experience of refugees

Working with refugees who experienced trauma, we inevitably encounter their resilience or lack of it. Some individuals are able to build a safe intra-psycho space in which they live and talk to themselves internally to regulate pain. This unbreakable part of the self protects one from emotional collapse when the external world is dangerous, unpredictable and life-threatening. Looking at psychoanalytical ideas this workshop aims to address characteristics commonly associated with trauma and with resilience: creation of an intra-psycho and secure state of mind; relevance between being resilient and psychological health or lack of it.

4. Carmen Joanne Ablack

The inhabiting of identity

This workshop offers opportunity to explore - through breath, movement and words - your social and functional identities, your relational habits and the narratives you use to express to yourself and others. The questions posed are: when I inhabit an identity who do I become and how do I relate to another from that place? How does this engage or inhibit my ability to relate to myself? If you are willing to explore how you use your body and your senses, and have the imagination to go beyond habit, this is the workshop for you.

5. Nadina Al-Jarrah

Inside Out or Outside In

To what extent does our external cultural and racial experience of the world help to develop and determine the internal language we use to think about and understand ourselves? And how big a part do these concepts play in the way that we perceive our own inclusion or exclusion? In this experiential discussion group, workshop participants will share their own experiences and perceptions of their cultural selves and have an opportunity to think about the impact that cultural and racial experience plays in our sense of well-being and mental health.

6. Dr Aileen Alleyne

Present day manifestations of internalised racial oppression

In this workshop we will identify aspects of this cultural phenomenon and its impact, and discuss effective psychotherapeutic interventions that can be made in reframing this negative internal process.

7. Bernadette Hawkes

Reluctant clients

The workshop will explore the issues involved in helping people who have suffered trauma to look at their experiences when their cultural background does not use the concept of counselling/psychotherapy and considers it a treatment option for those who are 'mad' or 'bad'. The workshop is based on the experience of two psychotherapists who offered a therapeutic space for Somali women.

8. Eugene Ellis

Engaging Black and Asian people in thinking about their mental health in ways they have not done before.

The stories we tell ourselves around our mental health and self development are vitally important. Ben Okri, in his book *A Way of Being Free* says, "It is easy to forget how mysterious and mighty stories are. They do their work in silence, invisibly... Beware the stories you read or tell; subtly, at night, beneath the waters of consciousness they are altering our world." What are the stories being told about our mental health and well being? How can we tell more of the stories that inspire and heal? There will be some participation.

9. Film and discussion: Altered Egos

Two half-brothers - one black, one white - struggle to individuate after a girlfriend declares they are indistinguishable. This playful film, which explores where we locate our sense of identity, will be used as a basis for discussion on 'what exactly gives us our sense of self'.

10. Rika Higashikaze

Developing pre-linguistic, bodily modes of communication and empathy with clients from other cultures

This workshop will explore how language is attached to both cultural and spiritual traditions and presents complex and subtle meanings. We will consider the therapist's need to create pre-linguistic, bodily modes of communication and empathy with clients from other cultures and languages in order to be fully aware the communications that occur. We will consider whether non-verbal communications offer a universal language that can transcend cultural barriers and biases. The presentation will be illustrated with examples from case studies.

20.30 Reception and live music from Basistry, and eclectic mix of world music

Programme

Saturday 5 April 2008

9.30 am Registration and Coffee: small groups to hang up posters from previous evening meetings

10.0 Dr Phil Mollon

Negative and positive constructions of identity and self: a developmental model

In furthering our discussion on how the sense of self can be undermined or restricted in a socio-cultural climate that offers a very limited range of positive identities for the individual, we will examine how identity is constructed in the psyche. In the light of a developmental perspective we will consider possible therapeutic approaches that allow recognition of society's constraints on the core self, and effective psychotherapeutic interventions that can help social impingements to be worked through. This paper offers a theory of construction of identity that is not specific to any particular cultural group but common to all.

10.45 Dr Farkondeh Farsimadan, Dr Addila Khan and Dr Riccardo Draghi-Lorenz

Effects of ethnic matching/mismatching on process and outcome of therapy and the need to deal with difference

We present quantitative and qualitative data from four UK studies indicating that the process of therapy, and as a result its outcome, can be significantly better in ethnically matched than in non-matched therapist-client dyads. It appears in particular that the effects of ethnic mismatching can be difficult to deal with as they affect the therapeutic alliance and therapist perceived credibility from the beginning. Our results also suggest that in ethnically mismatched therapy positive outcome may still be achieved by paying special attention to the therapeutic alliance, culture-specific values/differences, and both own and clients' assumptions and projections. Age, gender and length of therapy appear un-influential, but consideration of the political context may be paramount. We conclude that whilst there is hope for ethnically mismatched therapy more matching needs to be on offer.

11.40 Coffee

12.10 pm Zack Eleftheriadou

The Migration experience: psychological journeys and meanings

Through psychotherapeutic case examples, this talk will examine the psychological experience of migration and the meanings constructed out of these experiences. The whole psychological journey will be discussed, from the initial stages of thinking of moving to a new country, to the actual 'settling experience'. All migrants report profound emotional experiences during the different stages of the migration process, but often need the appropriate setting to make sense of them.

13.0 Lunch

14.0 pm Dr. Aileen Alleyne

The internal oppressor and black identity wounding

In this presentation, we will consider the concept of the *internal oppressor*. This is a deep-seated, long-established aspect of black identity which operates alongside current experiences of racial oppression. It is to be distinguished from internalised oppression and can be viewed as the enemy within or internal adversary. How we work psychotherapeutically with the internal oppressor will be addressed.

14.45 Colin Lago

On developing our empathic capacities to work inter-culturally and inter-ethnically: attempting a map for personal and professional development

A set of key recommendations outlining 'multicultural counselling competencies' was published in 1992 in the United States (Sue et al, 1992). The political and symbolic significance of this paper was made evident by its simultaneous publication in two of the principle therapy journals within that country, thus communicating the urgency and seriousness of the challenges facing the whole psychotherapy profession in relation to working with clients who were culturally, racially and ethnically 'different'. Inspired by the foresight, integrity and commitment of this original paper, I hope to offer some ideas on how we, in the therapy profession within the U.K., might seek to improve our therapeutic capacity with those with whom we don't share common origins, beliefs, affiliations.

15.30 Tea

16.0 Carmen Joanne Ablack

Relational dilemmas and endeavours in working with diversity

"Recognizing the Other as an Equivalent Centre of Experience" (Benjamin 1988).

The multiplicity we each embody holds meaning, conflict and resonance for our intra- and inter-psychic relationships. How can we understand our body-mind as the key resource to our sense of identification and dis-identification in relationship? The dilemmas and endeavours to inhabit an appreciation of self, other and of self and other, are a dance full of tension, anxiety, withdrawal or over-engagement and with glimpses of the places beyond all this. By drawing on client material I will explore the challenges arising from recognising and working with the other as an equivalent centre of experience with a specific emphasis on working with diversity in the psychotherapeutic relationship.

16.45 Panel discussion

17.15 Lennox Thomas

Summing up and Vote of Thanks

17.30 End of conference

Carmen Joanne Ablack is an Integrative Body Psychotherapist. She presents seminars on diversity and other aspects of relational body psychotherapy, including somatic trauma work. Her publications include *Introduction to Body Psychotherapy and Body Psychotherapy, Trauma and the Black Woman Client*. She created the Centre for Integral-Relational Learning (www.cirl.org.uk) and offers clinical and non-managerial supervision, training, coaching and mentoring in the field of diversity. Carmen is Chair of the Standards Board of the UKCP.

Dr Aida Alayarian a Chartered Psychologist, a member of the Clinical Psychology Forum, Professional Member of Nafsiyat, and the Forum for Independent Psychotherapists, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine, an Elected Council member of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims and an associate of Psychotherapists and Counsellors for Social Responsibility. She is the co-founder and current Clinical Director of the Refugee Therapy Centre. She edited a book, *Resilience, Creativity and Psychoanalysis* (Kamac, 2007).

Nadina Al-Jarrah is a UKCP registered psychodynamic psychotherapist and a BACP Senior Accredited counsellor. For the past twenty five years she has primarily worked in public sector organisations as well as the voluntary sector including NAFSIYAT, the NHS, Local Authorities and Education. Currently working in a university as a therapist, trainer, and supervisor, she has developed an interest and specialism in working with international students. She has a private practice in North London and offers clinical supervision.

Dr. Aileen Alleyne is a registered psychodynamic psychotherapist, clinical supervisor and researcher, a visiting lecturer and consultant on issues of race and diversity in workplace settings. Her clinical research, examining black workers' experiences in institutional settings highlights the concept of 'the internal oppressor' and offers ways of deepening understanding of black psychological reactions to the negative impact of racism. Aileen is the author of several book-chapters and articles, exploring themes on black/white dynamics, shame, and black identity wounding.

Dr Riccardo Draghi-Lorenz is a Chartered Counselling Psychologist and a Developmental Psychologist. He is Director of the Doctorate Course in Counselling and Psychotherapeutic Psychology at the University of Surrey and runs a private practice in London. He and co-researchers have accumulated empirical data on the effects of ethnicity on therapy, to which he brings ideas on the developmental nature of the capacity to be aware of self and others, functional and non-verbal communication, and the importance of socially aware emotions in both early infancy and the therapeutic relationship.

Zack Eleftheriadou is a Developmental Psychologist and Cross-cultural Psychologist. She is currently a visiting lecturer at the Tavistock Clinic working with refugees. She lectures and has published widely in the field of cross-cultural psychology and therapy, including the book *Transcultural Counselling*. She has acted as a cross-cultural trainer for Goldsmiths College, University of London, University of East London, The Anna Freud Centre, B.A.P. ChildLine and Uniliver. She has a private practice in North London working and is currently Patron of MotherTongue, a multi-ethnic counselling service in Reading.

Eugene Ellis is an Integrative Arts Psychotherapist and the founder of Black and Asian Therapists Online (BAATO), a network of therapists passionately engaged in addressing the psychological needs of Black and Asian people in Britain, and in raising positive awareness of counselling and psychotherapy within the Black and Asian community. He has worked for many years as a child, adult and family therapist, currently for Family Futures and in private practice. He has a special interest in facilitating a dialogue around race and culture in organisations and psychotherapy training institutes.

Dr Farkhondeh Farsimadan is a chartered counselling psychologist. She obtained her Doctorate in Psychotherapeutic and Counselling Psychology from the University of Surrey. Currently she works in a Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit with clients with severe and enduring mental health problems. She has a great deal of experience working with ethnic minority clients in the UK. Her research interests include the process and outcome of therapy in ethnically similar and dissimilar therapeutic dyads, and the experiences of ethnic minority clients in therapy.

Shahnawaz Haque qualified as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist with the London Centre for Psychotherapy. He is an honorary Imam and has a private practice as an Islamic therapist working with individuals and couples in psychotherapy and counselling informed both by his psychotherapy training and by Islamic concepts. He also works for Respond providing psychotherapy for people with learning disabilities who have experienced sexual trauma. He is a consultant psychotherapist at the Clinic for Dissociative Studies.

Bernadette Hawkes is a Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist and the Clinical Services Manager for the Mapesbury Clinic for People in Exile. Her interests are in the areas of intercultural and forensic therapy and the use of African Caribbean literature in psychotherapy. She is the former Book Reviews Editor of the International Journal of Psychotherapy and has published several articles including *Resilience, Suffering and Creativity: the Work of the Refugee Centre, Hearing the Unhearable, Speaking the Unspeakable: original wounds, trauma, and the asylum seeker*.

Rika Higashikaze is a counsellor and clinical psychologist who has worked with children with autism, adolescents and adults in hospital and private settings in Japan and England for 20 years. She has studied cognitive behavioural therapy, transactional analysis, hypnotherapy and psychoanalysis (at the Tavistock Centre), psychosynthesis and psychotherapy (PET). She also works for an overseas students' bureau in London, where she brings an Eastern awareness to communication and the exchange of energies between therapist and client.

Dr Addila Khan is a chartered counselling psychologist working for Ethnic Alcohol Counselling in Hounslow. She manages three major projects, namely: alcohol and drugs, domestic violence and trauma and mental health. In addition, she specialises in working with children and adults with challenging behaviour, including those that fall under the autistic spectrum. Her research interest has been to further understand south-Asian upbringing and the difficulties faced by this client group that may hinder therapy.

Colin Lago was Director of the Counselling Service at the University of Sheffield from 1987 to 2003. He now works as an independent counsellor, trainer, supervisor and consultant. He is a Fellow of the BACP, an accredited counsellor and trainer. Deeply committed to transcultural concerns he has had articles, videos and books published, including *Race, Culture and Counselling: The Ongoing Challenge*, and *Carl Rogers Counsels a Black Client – Race and Culture in Person Centred Counselling* (Eds. Moodley R. & Talahite.A. 2004).

Dr Phil Mollon is a psychoanalyst, psychotherapist and clinical psychologist. He is the author of a number of books on trauma, dissociation, shame, and self psychology. In recent years his focus has been upon integrating the emerging field of energy psychology with more traditional psychoanalytic understanding – developing an approach that he terms Psychoanalytic Energy Psychotherapy. He has developed a particular theory of the construction of self and identity in a social context.

Professor S. Sashidharan is a Consultant Psychiatrist, Honorary Professor at the University of Warwick Medical School, co-director the National Centre for Research in Ethnicity and Mental Health, formerly the Medical Director of North Birmingham Mental Health Trust. Previously he worked at the University of Edinburgh and was Professor of Community Psychiatry in Birmingham until 2000. For over 30 years he has been researching and campaigning to resolve ethnic inequalities in mental health services in England. He also works as a consultant to the World Health Organisation.

Lennox Thomas is a former Co Director of the MSc Course in Intercultural Therapy at University College London, a former Clinical Director of the NAFSIYAT Intercultural Therapy Centre, a member of the British Association of Psychotherapists and of the Institute of Family Therapy. He is an author, trainer and supervisor in Intercultural Therapy.

