



14TH ANNUAL NCTTP RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

***TORTURE TREATMENT:
Context, Rationale and Challenges
in Creating Therapeutic
Interventions***

Monday, March 7, 2022

DEDICATION

***Dr June Caridad
Pagaduan-
Lopez***



In memory of Dr June Caridad Pagaduan-Lopez: founding member of the Philippines Medical Action Group; founding member of the IRCT; Professor of Psychiatry at the University of the Philippines; member of the UN Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture; 2005 Nobel Peace Prize nominee.

Announcements

NCTTP MEMBERSHIP

NCTTP Membership The National Consortium of Torture Treatment Programs (NCTTP) exists to advance the knowledge, technical capacity, and resources devoted to the care of torture survivors living in the United States and to act collectively for the purpose of preventing torture worldwide.

Interested in joining NCTTP?

Contact NCTTP membership chairperson, Celia VanDeGraaf, at director@cstnet.org

SOCIAL MEDIA

Visit our new website at ncttp.org

Members, create an account in order to gain access to research documents and other important files

MAILING LIST

Interested in getting more correspondence from NCTTP?

Email madeline.cohodes@nyulangone.org to be added to the mailing list.

CONTINUING EDUCATION (CES)

4.5 Social Work CE's are being provided by the National Association of Social Workers, Oregon Chapter.

In order to receive Social Work CEs, please use your full name as you participate in the Zoom Webinar.

At the conclusion of the symposium, complete the Oregon NASW evaluation. You will not be able to receive a CE certificate without submitting a completed evaluation.

Psychologists and counselors may be able to receive continuing education credits through a Certificate of Attendance, which is being made available to any participant.

Please contact your state licensing organization if you are unsure if this certification will be accepted for credit if you are unsure if this certification will be accepted for credit.

Schedule of Events

12:00 INTRODUCTION

*Jose Quiroga, MD
NCTTP Symposium Founder and Organizer*

*Amelia Roeschlein DSW, MA, LMFT
National Council for Mental
Wellbeing*

*Hawthorne Smith, PhD
Executive Director PSOT, President, NCTTP*

12:05 KEYNOTE

The Istanbul Protocol – Overview of updates on psychological aspects.

*Felicitas Treue, MA
Co-founder and former General
Coordinator of the Colectivo Contra la
Tortura y la Impunidad (CCTI) in Mexico.*

1:05 INKESHAGITARAMO

Interactive dancing from Rwanda

1:25 KEYNOTE

Family-Based Mental Health Promotion for Refugees Resettled in the US: Community Partnerships and the Role of Implementation Science

*Theresa S. Betancourt, ScD, MA
Salem Professor in Global Practice,
Director, Research Program on Children
and Adversity*

*Rilwan Osman, MSW
Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services*

*Lila K. Chamlagai, MPH Candidate
Brown University School of Public
Health*

2:25 5 MINUTE BREAK

2:30 POSTER PRESENTATION

National Consortium of Torture Treatment Programs' Data Project: Status Report and Future Directions

*Megan Berthold, PhD LSCW
Chair of NCTTP Research and Data Committee*

*Brian MacMillan, MSc
Bellevue Program for Survivors of Torture*

*Martin Hill, PhD
Heartland Alliance Marjorie Kovler Center*

2:45 IRCT RESEARCH UPDATE

Global Data Collection and Upcoming Research Themes

Lisa Henry, IRCT Secretary-General

3:00 ORAL PRESENTATION

Covid-19 Effects among Refugee and Asylum Seekers in Treatment: A Qualitative Study

*Lin Piwowarczyk, MD, MPH
Boston Center for Refugee
Health and Human Rights*

3:20 ORAL PRESENTATION

The Experiences of Asylum Seekers to the United States During the Covid-19 Pandemic

*Dustin Kee, BA Medical Student
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai*

*Mahalya Gogerly-Moragoda, BS
Medical Student, Icahn School of
Medicine at Mount Sinai*

*Kevin Molyneux, MD Chief Resident
Emergency Medicine, Mount Sinai
Morningside*

3:40 20 MINUTE BREAK

4:00 ORAL PRESENTATION

**Thriving: Predictors of thriving
among war-trauma survivors**

*Jennifer J Esala, PhD
Center for Victims of Torture*

*Kathleen O'Donnell
Burrows, MSW, MPP, LICSW
Center for Victims of Torture*

*Sabrina Roowala, MPH
Center for Victims of
Torture*

4:20 POSTER PRESENTATION

**Reclaiming Dignity and Reconstructing
Social Networks Through a Personal &
Collective Lens; The Transformative
Impact of Photovoice Groups with
Survivors of Torture.**

*Mary Black
Heartland Alliance Marjorie Kovler Center*

4:35 CHAIR DANCE

4:40 ORAL PRESENTATION

**Clinical Sharebacks of SOT Treatment
Progress: A Novel Therapeutic
Intervention Approach**

*Meghan Colpas, M.A., Graduate
Student Clinician
University of Denver*

5:00 ORAL PRESENTATION

**Individual vs. Interpersonal: Widening the
Lens of Mental Health to Accommodate
Non-Western Models in Torture Treatment.**

*Paul Witte, LPD
St. Louis Partnership for Survivors for
Torture and War Trauma*

*Abigail MacDonald, LCSW
St. Louis Partnership for Survivors for
Torture and War Trauma*

5:20 POSTER PRESENTATION

**Impacts of Traveling Through the
Darién Gap on Torture Survivors**

*Madeline L. Cohodes,
BA-MPH Candidate at New York University*

*Brian MacMillan, MSc
Research and Data Manager PSOT*

5:35 ORAL PRESENTATION

**Utilization of group psychosocial support
to increase transnational caregiver
wellbeing**

*Emily S. Ledesma, LCSW
Heartland Alliance Marjorie Kovler Center*

*Dr. Martin Hill, PhD
Heartland Alliance Marjorie Kovler Center*

*Rihab Yako, MAPS, MSW
Heartland Alliance Marjorie Kovler Center*

5:55 CONCLUSION

*Hawthorne Smith, PhD
Executive Director PSOT, President, NCTTP*

Presenter Bios and Abstracts

12:00 INTRODUCTION

*Jose Quiroga, M.D.
NCTTP Symposium Founder and Organizer*

*Amelia Roeschlein DSW, MA, LMFT
National Council for Mental
Wellbeing*

José Quiroga, MD is the former medical director and co-founder of the Program for Torture Victims in Los Angeles. An authority on torture and trauma issues, he has worked in the rehabilitation of torture victims for more than 45 years. Arriving in America after the Pinochet military coup in Chile forced him to flee his native country, Dr. Quiroga has been assistant professor at UCLA in the School of Medicine and Public Health, has served as associate director of Preventive Cardiology at UCLA and is former vice president of the International Rehabilitation Council for Victims of Torture based in Copenhagen. Dr. Quiroga currently serves on the Local and National Board of the Physicians for Social Responsibility, Los Angeles. Dr. Quiroga has published on public health, human rights and torture. He has been a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of Torture Journal since 2002 and he has been a member of the International Forensic Expert Group (IFEG) of International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) since 2005.

Amelia Roeschlein, DSW, MA, LMFT is a licensed clinician who has led behavioral health programs and trained behavioral health providers for the past twenty years. She is currently a consultant at the National Council for Mental Well Being with her portfolio in Resilience Oriented Trauma Informed Care and Integrated Health. She completed her doctorate at USC with a focus on innovation and creating large scale social change through transdisciplinary training of mental health practitioners, and a fellowship in Leadership, Equity Advancement and Diversity. Dr. Roeschlein

has published research and has expertise on the subject of harm reduction in re-entry and incarcerated populations, interpersonal violence including healing families and survivors of domestic violence, personality disorders, co-occurring disorders, trauma-informed care, compassion cultivation, clinical supervision, adaptive leadership and integrated team-based healthcare.

Dr. Hawthorne Smith, PhD is a licensed psychologist and the Director of the Bellevue Program for Survivors of Torture. He is also an Associate Clinical Professor at the NYU School of Medicine in the Department of Psychiatry. Dr. Smith received his doctorate in Counseling Psychology (with distinction) from Teachers College; Columbia University. Dr. Smith had previously earned a Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service from the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, an advanced certificate in African Studies from Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, Senegal, as well as a Masters in International Affairs from the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs. Among his clinical duties, Dr. Smith has facilitated a support group for French-speaking African survivors of torture for the past 25 years. He also speaks extensively at professional conferences and seminars on providing clinical services for survivors of socio-political violence, and enhancing cross-cultural clinical skills among therapeutic service providers.

12:05 KEYNOTE

The Istanbul Protocol – Overview of Updates on Psychological Aspects.



Felicitas Treue, MA
Co-founder and former General Coordinator of the Colectivo Contra la Tortura y la Impunidad (CCTI) in Mexico.

Felicitas Treue, MA holds a Master's degree in psychology and a specialization in cognitive behavioural therapy. She has worked in the field of rehabilitation of torture survivors and psychosocial interventions in the context of political violence since 1998 and has trained professionals in documentation of torture in various countries. She is Co-founder and former General Coordinator of the Colectivo Contra la Tortura y la Impunidad (CCTI) in Mexico.

She was a Council member of the International Rehabilitation Council of Torture Victims (IRCT) 2012 - 2015 and is a member of the International Forensic Expert Group (IFEG) of the IRCT. She has participated in the update of the Istanbul Protocol as primary drafter for the chapter on psychological consequences of torture.

1:05 INTERACTIVE DANCING FROM RWANDA

INKESHAGITARAMO

Among many African communities, dancing and

drumming are used as a healing instrument or to build a sense of community. This session will feature traditional dancing predominantly from Rwanda

1:25 KEYNOTE

Family-Based Mental Health Promotion for Refugees Resettled in the US: Community Partnerships and the Role of Implementation Science

ABSTRACT:

Background: Compared to other youth in the United States, refugee youth are at increased risk for developing mental health problems. Family functioning and positive parenting interactions are closely linked to youth well-being. Community partnerships with Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services and Jewish Family Services have informed the adaptation of a family strengthening intervention [FSI] for implementation in Somali Bantu and Bhutanese refugee communities in the Greater Boston and Springfield, Massachusetts areas.

Methods: Through collaborating with community, academic, and social service providers, researchers administered an evidence-based, home-visiting intervention to 102 refugee families for a feasibility and acceptability pilot study randomized to treatment (N=53, 52%) and control (N=49, 48%) conditions. The sample is comprised of 41 Somali Bantu families (40.2%), and 61 Bhutanese families (59.8%), with 148 adults and 206 children/youths' participants. The mean age is 40.42 (SD=9.11) for adults and 11.94 (SD=3.00) for children/youths, with an average household size of 5.5 members. At baseline, statistically significant relationships between PTSD symptoms and trauma exposure were found in adults and youths (10-17 y/o). Significant associations were also found between mental health (HSCL- 25) and daily hardships in adults, with the Somali Bantu participants reporting higher rates of trauma prevalence compared to Bhutanese participants.

Interpretations: The intervention was feasible and

acceptable as delivered by refugees, for refugees in community settings. Implementation barriers addressed using the Collaborative Team Approach included literacy/within-family language barriers, intense case management needs, and challenges scheduling home visits. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, provider challenges include barriers to home-visiting. Technology was used to enhance supervision of community health workers and access to FSI-R despite the inability to visit home directly. In addition, to better respond the service needs and to better facilitate the service delivery, we are in the process of developing a digital application for the family strengthening intervention and a participatory process to adapt the intervention for resettling Afghan families in the US.

Principal Conclusions: Findings from this study are being used to adapt and improve the Family Strengthening Intervention for Refugees and include tools to support remote delivery due to challenges brought by the Covid-19 pandemic and to respond to the recent Afghan resettlement. Analyses will investigate impact of mental health outcomes as well as measuring behavioral change to improve provider training delivery of the intervention, and increase the reach of the FSI interventions amongst a wide range of resettling refugee families in the US.

Key words: Youth & adolescents, evidence-based intervention, community-based participatory research, Refugees

BIOS:



Theresa S. Betancourt, ScD, MA is the inaugural Salem Professor in Global Practice at the Boston College School of Social Work and Director of the Research Program on Children and Adversity (RPCA). Her primary research interest is to understand the protective processes that contribute to risk and resilience in the mental health and development of children and adolescents facing adversity in a variety of cultures and settings. Dr. Betancourt has led several initiatives to adapt and test evidence-based behavioral and parenting interventions for children, youth, and families facing adversity due to poverty, illness, and violence. Dr. Betancourt additionally focuses on strategies for scaling out these interventions using implementation science approaches. Currently, Dr. Betancourt leads an intergenerational study of war/prospective longitudinal study of war-affected youth in Sierra Leone; a home-visiting early childhood development (ECD) intervention to promote enriched parent-child relationships and prevent violence that can be integrated within poverty reduction/social protection initiatives in Rwanda; and community-based participatory research on family-based prevention of emotional and behavioral problems in refugee children and adolescents resettled in the U.S. through the collaborative development and evaluation of parenting programs led by refugees for refugees that can be linked to prevention services involving refugee community health workers. Dr. Betancourt served on the advisory board for the 2021 UNICEF State of the World's Children report, advised the 2021 Amnesty International on a key advocacy report on mental health in Sierra Leone, serves on a high-level World Health Organization Mental Health Gap Topic Expert Group (TEG), the Lancet Commission on Gender Based Violence and Maltreatment of Young People, and serves as a thematic advisor for the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) for a series of workshops on Violent Extremist Disengagement, Reconciliation, Trauma Recovery.



Rilwan Osman, MSW was born in Somalia and lived in a refugee camp in Kenya for more than 10 years prior to arriving to the U.S in 2004. Rilwan earned his high school diploma through the Job Corps program, studied at Central Maine Community College, earned his Bachelor's from the University of Maine at Augusta and MSW from the University of New England. In 2008, Rilwan formed an organization to educate and empower Somali Bantus in the Lewiston-Auburn area. It started with providing youth programs like soccer, academic support, and juvenile justice workshops but expanded to educating parents with literacy and citizenship programs. Rilwan's organization, now called Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services, offers behavioral health services and helps resettle Afghans in the state of Maine.



Lila K. Chamlagai BA was born and raised in a Bhutanese refugee camp in eastern Nepal. In the early 1990s, the Bhutanese regime expelled his parents and 100,000 other Nepali-speaking southern Bhutanese. Lila's parents ended up in makeshift bamboo and plastic huts in the Goldhap refugee camp. After living in the camp

for almost 17 years, Lila and his family were resettled in Springfield, MA, in 2011. Lila graduated from Springfield Central High School with a prestigious Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's: Gates Millennium Scholarship (GMS), a full-ride college scholarship. In addition, Lila is also the recipient of the Asian and Pacific Islander Scholarship (APIA), Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts Scholarship, and Elmira College Trustee Award. Currently, he serves as a Youth Community Advisory Board (CAB) member for the Refugee Behavioral Program at the Research Program on Children and Adversity at Boston College School of Social Work and an interviewer/ translator with the documentary project, "An untold story of Bhutanese American." Lila's Op-Ed articles and commentaries have appeared in several media. He received his Bachelor's of Science from Elmira College in 2019 and is currently a second-year Masters in Public Health candidate at the Brown University School of Public Health. Lila's Impact on the presentation could focus more on the History and Background of both Somali/ Bhutanese refugees' populations. He will also touch on his experience of working as a CAB member.

2:25 5 MINUTE BREAK

2:30 POSTER PRESENTATION

National Consortium of Torture Treatment Programs' Data Project: Status Report and Future Directions

ABSTRACT:

The NCTTP is conducting a chart review of data collected for treatment and funding report purposes by NCTTP member centers on a non-probability sample of torture survivors. We will share a status report of the project, highlighting major developments such as establishing new Institutional Review Board oversight and moving our existing data to its new location. We will discuss future e directions of the project and the how the data may be used to inform programmatic and policy decisions as well as advocacy efforts.

Key words: NCTTP, torture, data, functional outcomes

Objectives:

- a. Describe at least two major developments to the NCTTP Research and Data Project over the last year.
- b. Characterize the survivors served by the NCTTP.
- c. Identify next steps in the ongoing work of the NCTTP Research and Data Project.

BIOS:

Megan Berthold, PhD, LCSW is an Associate Professor at UConn's School of Social Work, a research collaborator with Khmer Health Advocates, and Chair of NCTTP's Research & Data Committee. She has worked with torture survivors since 1987 in the US and Asia and has testified extensively in U.S. Immigration Court. She served as a therapist from 1998 to 2011, and later Director of Research and Evaluation, with the Program for Torture Victims. She has conducted National Institute of Mental Health- funded research examining the prevalence of mental and physical health consequences among Cambodian survivors and has published widely. She has served on the Torture Journal's Editorial Advisory Board since 2016. The National Association of Social Workers selected Dr. Berthold as the 2009 National Social Worker of the Year.

Brian MacMillan, MSc is the Research and Data Manager for the Bellevue Hospital Program for Survivors of Torture and is managing the data and IRB for the NCTTP's Research and Data Project. He has over thirty years of experience doing research, analytics and data-related advocacy work in areas including the neurobiology of leadership, male sexual assault, and fixed income derivatives trading. He is currently working on applying machine learning algorithms to outcomes assessments of torture survivors.

Martin Hill, PhD is Associate Director, Research and Evaluation at Heartland Alliance Marjorie

Kovler Center and President of his own research and consulting firm, VIP Research and Evaluation. He has over thirty years of applied research experience within government, academia, non-profit, and for-profit settings conducting program evaluation, needs assessment, and survey research. Prior to coming to Kovler Center, Dr. Hill was Director of the Carl Frost Center for Social Science Research at Hope College. He received post-graduate research training with the U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons where he worked on a national longitudinal study evaluating drug treatment programs in the federal prison system. Dr. Hill holds a PhD from Western Michigan University in sociology, specializing in medical sociology and applied research and evaluation.

2:45 IRCT RESEARCH UPDATE

Global Data Collection And Upcoming Research Themes

Lisa Henry
IRCT Secretary-General

Lisa is responsible for visionary leadership of the IRCT global secretariat team as they support the 160 member centers in the implementation and achievement of the strategic objective of the IRCT: Life after torture: improved quality of life for torture victims worldwide. Lisa's responsibilities include ensuring financial sustainability, strong membership engagement and results and a well-run organization with good staff welfare. Lisa is primary liaison with the Executive Committee of the IRCT. Before coming to IRCT Lisa had a distinguished career that started as a US Peace Corps Volunteer in Niger and includes more than 20 years as a manager of humanitarian response. Her major focus areas have been the humanitarian principles and transparent accountability to stakeholders. She has a Bachelor of Arts from University of Michigan and a Master of Science, Non-Profit Management, from the Graduate School of Management and Urban Policy at the New School for Social Research in New York City. Lisa is mom to 4 children and married to Hans.

3:00 ORAL PRESENTATION

Covid-19 Effects among Refugee and Asylum Seekers in Treatment: A Qualitative Study

*Lin Piwowarczyk, MD, MPH,
Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights
Immigrant and Refugee Health Center,
Boston Medical Center, Department of Psychiatry,
Boston Medical Center*

*Tanjeena Pachway, MPH
Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights*

*Lay Htee Hai
Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights*

*Houda Chergui, MPH
Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights,
Immigrant and Refugee Health Center,
Boston Medical Center*

*Tithi Baul
Department of Psychiatry, Boston Medical Center*

BIO:

Dr. Lin Piwowarczyk, MD, MPH, Co-Founder and Director of the Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights (BCRHHR), is a psychiatrist at Boston Medical Center, board certified in Psychiatry and Internal Medicine. She first began working with refugees in 1993. Dr. Piwowarczyk served on the Executive Committee of the National Consortium of Torture Treatment Programs between 2002 and 2021, and is its immediate past President. In 2009, she was awarded the Sarah Haley Memorial Award for Clinical Excellence from the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies. She is also a recipient of the Local Legends Award from the National Library of Medicine that honors female physicians and with BCRHHR colleagues, the Kenneth B. Schwartz Compassionate Caregiver Award Honorable Mention. A Distinguished Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, she has presented on the topic of torture, locally, nationally, and

internationally and has published several articles in various medical journals.

ABSTRACT:

Background: Covid-19 has disproportionately affected BIPOC and immigrant communities. Less known is its impact on asylum seekers and refugees. Our goal was to identify concerns related to Covid-19 given societal distress.

Methods: 97 patients, mostly torture survivors seen between 3/11/2020 and 4/21/2020 at the Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights were systematically asked four structured qualitative questions during clinical treatment: (1) Are you worried? (2) How are you dealing with it? (3) Did you worry when you came to your appointment? (4) Did it remind you of something? We conducted an inductive thematic analysis and identified themes using NVivo.

Results: Patients were from 22 countries, ages 27-92, and 66% were female. Prominent themes included: major fears and worries, forms of prevention and avoidance, coping mechanisms, reminders of the past, the role of the news and the appreciation of telehealth.

Conclusion: Refugees and asylum seekers face enhanced risks in part related to service industry occupations. These stressors are further compounded by reliance on public transportation, fear for family at home, traumatic memories, and previous epidemics. Also notable are the role of faith in coping, and family concerns from home for what was happening in the USA.

Keywords: COVID-19, refugees, asylum seekers, torture

Objectives

- a. Identify concerns related to Covid-19 of asylum seekers and refugees within an urban trauma and torture mental health treatment center
- b. Describe prevention strategies against contracting Covid-19 and coping mechanisms

among asylum seekers and refugees within an urban trauma and torture mental health treatment center

c. Describe stressors for asylum seekers and refugees related to distance from their families and support systems, and traumatic memories of war and previous epidemics in their home countries

3:20 ORAL PRESENTATION

The Experiences of Asylum Seekers to The United States During The COVID-19 Pandemic

*Dustin Kee, BA Medical Student
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai*

*Mahalya Gogerly-Moragoda, BA Medical Student,
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai*

*Kevin Molyneux, BA
Chief Resident, Emergency
Medicine, Mount Sinai Morningside*

ABSTRACT:

Background: Significant barriers to accessing healthcare and social services which asylum seekers to the United States previously faced were exacerbated by the pandemic. This study aimed to uncover the impact of the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic on asylum seekers including socio-economic stressors and access to medical information, healthcare, and testing.

Method: We conducted 15 semi-structured, in-depth interviews with adult asylum seekers to the U.S. and systematically analyzed the resulting transcripts using a consensual qualitative research approach.

Results: The data yielded six domains: (1) knowledge and understanding of COVID-19; (2) attitudes and practices relating to COVID-19 precautions; (3) experience of COVID-19 symptoms; (4) current physical and mental health; (5) access to and interaction with health

care; (6) discrimination based on asylum status.

Conclusion: Although participants had knowledge about COVID-19's communicability and regularly use masks, their living conditions frequently hindered their ability to quarantine and isolate and their lack of insurance was often a deterrent to them seeking medical care. Notably, immigration status was not a factor discouraging participants from seeking care during the pandemic. The findings build on existing knowledge about this community and may help define areas where support and services can be expanded in the current and future pandemics.

Key Words: COVID-19, asylum seeker, health disparities, healthcare

BIOS:

Dustin Kee, BA is a third-year medical student at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. He previously served as Co-Lead for the ACCESS team of the Mount Sinai Human Rights Program, helping connect clients to social services and healthcare. He received a Bachelor's degree in Biology and Anthropology from Washington University in St. Louis and spent a gap year before medical school interning under the Medical Director of a community health center.

Mahalya Gogerly-Moragoda, BS is a second-year medical student at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai where she served as Co-Lead Clinic Manager for the Mount Sinai Human Rights Program for a year. She received her Bachelor's degree in Microbiology from the University of Vermont and spent two years working as a Clinical Research Coordinator for cancer clinical trials prior to medical school.

Kevin Molyneux, MD is a PGY-3 chief resident in emergency medicine at Mount Sinai Morningside / West. He has an interest in health disparities affecting migrants from Latin America that was developed after working in the border town of Chaparral, New Mexico before medical school at Jefferson. Next year, he will begin a fellowship in Global Emergency Medicine at Columbia.

4:00 ORAL PRESENTATION

Thriving: Predictors of Thriving Among War-trauma Survivors

*Jennifer J Esala, PhD
Center for Victims of Torture*

*Kathleen O'Donnell Burrows, MSW, MPP, LICSW,
Center for Victims of Torture*

*Sabrina Roowala, MPH
Center for Victims of Torture*

ABSTRACT:

The right to rehabilitation as envisaged in the Convention against Torture describes the restoration of “physical, mental, social and vocational ability and full inclusion and participation in society”. However, research on treatment efficacy has tended to focus on deficit-based clinical outcomes of what individuals lack or need (e.g., PTSD symptoms, depression symptoms, etc.) to the exclusion of strengths-based outcomes (e.g., quality of life and thriving). Drawing on multivariate analyses of data from a clinical sample of 218 adult, Karen refugees resettled in Minnesota from a randomized controlled trial on an integrated care intervention, we attempt to identify individual and social factors that predict greater quality of life and the capacity to thrive (e.g., engaging in activities for pleasure and seeking personal growth opportunities). Based on our findings we offer suggestions as to how strengths-based clinical outcome indicators might be more intentionally and systematically included in intervention planning and clinical outcome research.

Key words: Quality of Life, Thriving, Quantitative, Resilience

Objectives:

- a. Understand key measures and indicators of resilience and thriving
- b. Become familiar with factors that

support and foster thriving

- c. Consider ways to support thriving among client populations

BIOS:

Jennifer J Esala, PhD is a Research and Evaluation Lead at the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT). She received her Ph.D. in medical sociology from the University of New Hampshire in 2012. Her dissertation traced the life course of anxiety disorders, from initial symptomology to ongoing treatment and recovery. Jennifer currently leads evaluation and research for CVT's U.S. based services and leads an advocacy evaluation project. Previously at CVT, she provided evaluation and research capacity building support to torture treatment center in the U.S. and internationally. She has held other research positions at the Carsey School of Public Policy (formerly the Carsey Institute), the OMNI Institute, and The University of Colorado's Clinical Translational Science Institute.

Kathleen O'Donnell Burrows, MSW, MPP, LICSW manages two mental health programs serving refugee survivors of torture and/or war trauma in partnership with primary care clinics and providers. Her responsibilities include overseeing the delivery of mental health case management and psychotherapy services, managing staff members, managing program budgets, contributing to program development, overseeing the monitoring and evaluation of program outcomes, and developing partnerships in the community.

Sabrina Roowala, MPH is a program evaluation specialist for Center for Victims of Torture. She provides monitoring and evaluation support to domestic programs in St. Paul, St. Cloud, and Atlanta. Sabrina's experience extends to reporting, data visualization, and culturally responsive evaluation methods. Sabrina's interests specifically intersect with how we can incorporate equity and inclusion in our evaluative practices. Sabrina's research prior to joining CVT related to mental health, stigma, and identity within Muslim American populations.

4:20 POSTER PRESENTATION

Reclaiming dignity and reconstructing social networks through a personal & collective lens; The transformative impact of Photovoice groups with survivors of torture.

Mary Black
Heartland Alliance Marjorie Kovler Center

ABSTRACT:

Introduction: This presentation will share Photovoice methodology, images, and narratives created within a participant self-named “Forced Migration Photovoice Project”. Incorporating Judith Herman’s healing model, the project highlights use of safe community- based spaces for survivors to connect and co-create opportunities for personal and social transformation.

Methods: Since 2014, over 50 Heartland Alliance participants have met in weekly Photovoice summer sessions. In each summer module, cameras and tutorials were provided, followed by sessions sharing and discussing photos. Ultimately each participant selected one photo, composing an accompanying narrative for an end of season exhibition at the Chicago Public Library (CPL). This event, other community venues and an online CPL gallery were offered to the local community. Participant focus groups, conducted with external evaluators at the Kovler Center provided data to assess and inform the adaptation of the project as it moves forward, particularly during COVID. Findings: Samples of thematic analysis from focus groups include themes of belonging, respite from “thinking too much”, a sense of family, pride, connection, personal and social impact. Interpretations/Conclusions: Community- based Photovoice methods can provide survivors transformative experiences which contribute to healing and belonging. Photovoice’s longstanding tradition with community-based participatory research make it a good fit for future research endeavors.

Key words: Community-based interventions, Photovoice, Survivor Voices, Social Networks

Objectives:

- a. Objective 2: Identify elements of collaborating with community partners and survivors to create safespaces for meaningful engagement
- b. Objective 3: Articulate and reflect on the qualitative feedback from survivors to inform future directions and explore research possibilities.

BIO:

Mary Black is an Occupational Therapist with over 20 years of experience working at the Heartland Alliance Marjorie Kovler Center. Mary is primarily responsible for assessing the everyday skills, experiences, strengths, and interest’s survivors bring from their home countries, mindful of the ongoing occupational deprivation and adaptations needed to perform everyday life roles and activities in these new and challenging environments. Individual and group Occupational Therapy (OT) interventions are designed to maximize the existing survivor skills, roles and interests while supporting re-establishment of safety, dignity, and social networks, promoting collective cultural, as well as individual self-expression. OT interventions include individual pre-vocational and varied daily life skills support, International Cooking Group, Community Gardening, Community-based Photovoice Groups and seasonal collaborations with Angelic Organics, a rural biodynamic farm.

4:40 ORAL PRESENTATION

Clinical Sharebacks of SOT Treatment Progress: A Novel Therapeutic Intervention Approach

*Meghan Colpas, MA, Graduate Student Clinician
University of Denver*

*Maria M. Vukovich, PhD,
Assistant Research Professor
University of Denver*

*Tiamo Katsonga-Phiri, PhD,
Clinical Assistant Professor
University of Denver*

*Gwen V. Mitchell, PsyD, Associate Professor
University of Denver*

ABSTRACT:

This presentation will share a novel direct services approach that incorporates clinical Sharebacks of assessment data and treatment progress between the clinician and the survivor of torture (SoT). Therapeutic assessment feedback has been found to have positive, clinically meaningful effects on treatment (Poston & Hanson, 2010). While several programs track SoT symptom progress throughout treatment (McFarlane & Kaplan, 2012), there is little to no research on clinical programs for SoT that include Sharebacks of assessment data and treatment progress directly with the SoT client. Through a partnership between the University of Denver and the International Rescue Committee, SoT clients are assessed at baseline and throughout clinical treatment and the clinical progress data is shared with the SoT client by their treating clinician to facilitate therapeutic intervention, the client's perspective, and treatment goals. Methods of data Sharebacks will be discussed, including the semi-structured approach that provides a framework for the treating clinician and flexibility to adapt the Shareback to the SoT client's needs. Recording of clinical Sharebacks are analyzed to discuss themes of SoT client's reflections of treatment and clinical Sharebacks, and themes related to safety, stability, immigration, health, and posttraumatic growth will be explored.

Key words: SOT direct services;
Psychotherapy; Assessment Feedback

BIO:

Meghan Colpas, MA is a doctoral student in clinical psychology at the University of Denver. She is a graduate student clinician in partnership with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Survivor of Torture Project in Denver, CO.

5:00 ORAL PRESENTATION

Individual vs. Interpersonal: Widening the Lens of Mental Health to Accommodate Non-Western Models in Torture Treatment

Paul Witte, LPC, St. Louis Partnership for Survivors for Torture and War Trauma

Abigail MacDonald, LCSW, St. Louis Partnership for Survivors for Torture and War Trauma

ABSTRACT:

Mental health treatment of torture survivors resettled in the United States has necessitated the adaptation of western models of health to treat populations from widely differing backgrounds. Cross-cultural research into mental health globalization trends has identified several areas of misalignment with other systems of health (Fernando, S., 2014; Watters, E., 2010). In order to better facilitate the adaptation of Western mental health systems to the broadest base, this paper proposes the use of communications theories (Buzzanell, P.M., 2017) and the interpersonal methodology of Harry Stack Sullivan (1953) combined with research into emotional validation (Musser et al., 2018) and expression (Ekman et al., 1987) to better treat torture survivors from a multitude of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. While still needing empirical research, observations and applications of this approach by therapists of the St. Louis Partnership for Survivors of Torture and War Trauma provide context and insight.

Key Words: Globalization, torture survivors, cross-cultural therapy,

Learning Objectives:

- a. Identify points of friction between western (allopathic) mental health models and other global models of holistic health.
- b. Outline a framework of mental health which maybe more acceptable to clients with non-western backgrounds.
- c. Propose an adjustment to existing therapy interventions to accommodate the implications of the framework. proposed above.

BIOS:

Paul Witte, LPC earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Literature and Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Truman State University in 2010. He earned his Masters Degree in Mental Health Counseling from Southern Oregon University in 2013 and began work that year with the Center for Survivors of Torture and War Trauma in St. Louis. In 2016, Paul served as the clinical supervisor for the Belize City Community Counseling Center, which operated under the Ministry of Human Services and provided mental health services for youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Paul Witte returned to St. Louis to serve several years as a therapist on Project Safe Space before accepting a position as Coordinator of the St. Louis Partnership for Survivors of Torture and War Trauma.

Abby MacDonald, LCSW was born in St. Louis and attended The University of Arkansas for her undergraduate degree in Psychology and African Studies. After a volunteer year working for a nonprofit serving the foreign-born community in Philadelphia, she returned to St. Louis to obtain her Masters in Social Work from Washington University, focusing on social and economic development for international populations. She has practicum and work experience from various immigrant service providers in the area with both children and adults. Abby is passionate about learning from different cultures and always trying to find more ways to travel. She has been with Bilingual International

since 2019 and passed her LCSW exam in 2021.

5:20 POSTER PRESENTATION

Impacts of Traveling Through the Darién Gap on Torture Survivors

*Brian MacMillan, MSc
Research and Data Manager PSOT,*

*Madeline L. Cohodes BA-MPH Candidate
at New York University*

This study will analyze the impacts that traveling through the Darién Gap has on asylum seekers. The Darién Gap is a dense section of jungle in southern Panama that has recently seen a large increase in the number of migrants traveling through its dangerous terrain. Many migrants are taken advantage of by smugglers and/or fall victim to gangs and bandits in the area. The Bellevue Program for Survivors of Torture (PSOT) has recently experienced an influx of clients who have journeyed on foot from South America to North America via the Darién Gap, with the intention of entering the United States via the Mexican border. While most mainstream media outlets report on an influx of Latin American and especially Haitian immigrants, PSOT's asylum seekers who have traversed the Gap are primarily West African, and have been left out of this narrative. This study aims to rectify this problem, as well as explore how the Darién Gap in particular impacts the behavioral health, legal, medical, and social aspects of care.

The primary objective of this study is to review the narratives of survivors in order to assess the trauma inflicted upon them while traveling through the Darién Gap. This will be done by reviewing intake narratives of clients and interviewing service providers to ascertain how the specific circumstances of this journey have generated additional traumatic experiences for survivors. Legal providers will also be interviewed to analyze the unique legal challenges this population faces.

Key words: Darién Gap, Torture Survivors, Service Provision

Objectives:

- a. Describe the journey that torture survivors take through the Darién Gap.
- b. Describe clinical differences in service provision among Darién Gap patients compared to other patients
- c. Correct the prevailing narrative about Darién Gap migration to include other demographics such as West Africans

Brian Macmillan, MSc is the Research and Data Manager for the Bellevue Hospital Program for Survivors of Torture. He has over thirty years' experience doing research, analytics and data-related advocacy work in areas including the neurobiology of leadership, male sexual assault, and fixed income derivatives trading. He is currently working on applying machine learning algorithms to outcomes assessments of torture survivors.

Madeline Cohodes is a BA-MPH candidate at New York University. She graduated with her BA in the Fall of 2021 and is currently obtaining her Master's in Health Policy and intends to attend medical school in the Fall of 2023. Her main interests are revitalizing healthcare systems through prevention, holistic medicine, and policy aimed at health equity. Having worked in various healthcare organizations and having taught English to refugees and immigrants, her studies focus on how social change movements are rooted in healthcare inequity and championed by health care workers. Currently, she is the administrative assistant for NCTTP and works as a scholarship coordinator for Bellevue Program for Survivors of Torture.

5:30 ORAL PRESENTATION

Utilization of group psychosocial support to increase transnational caregiver wellbeing

**Emily S. Ledesma, LCSW, Heartland Alliance
Marjorie Kovler Center**

*Dr. Martin Hill, PhD, Heartland Alliance
Marjorie Kovler Center*

*Rihab Yako, MAPS, MSW, Heartland Alliance
Marjorie Kovler Center*

ABSTRACT:

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) currently faces a backlog of over 370,000 asylum cases to be processed. Other asylum seekers are subject to a "last-in-first-out-policy," meaning those whose cases have been pending for some time may wait for several more years for their case decision. Transnational families may experience family separation for many years as a result. While research documents the negative impact of family separation on transnational families' wellbeing, there is scant evidence about effective mental health interventions for this population. In response, the Marjorie Kovler Center Family Program (MKC-FP) designed a six-week, psychosocial support group. The target population is caregivers separated from their children and other immediate family. The program aims to increase social support and caregiver wellbeing, while simultaneously fostering connection to family members in home country. Paired sample t-tests of outcome measures and analysis of satisfaction surveys provided information about the needs, challenges, and strengths of transnational families. Key findings show significant improvement in social support, wellbeing, and parental self-efficacy for group participants. Participants also reported high satisfaction with the group overall. In conclusion, participants who were also in the SOT program showed significantly greater satisfaction in both personal and community relationships, compared to participants who were not also part of the SOT program. MKC-FP's psychosocial support group model may preserve survivors of torture wellbeing and healthy attachment for separated transnational families.

Key words: Psychosocial support; Transnational families; Family Separation; Asylum process

Objectives:

- a. Review the unique bio, psycho, and social impacts of transnational forced migration on the family system
- b. Consider elements of an effective intervention for forced migrant caregivers experiencing family separation
- c. Understand how Survivors of Torture (SOT) programs can mitigate the negative impacts of family separation via group psychosocial support

BIOS:

Emily S. Ledesma, LCSW is a bilingual (English/Spanish) clinical social worker with ten years of experience working with forced migrant populations. She currently serves as Family Program Manager at Heartland Alliance Marjorie Kovler Center. Her primary interests include culturally responsive mental health interventions for migrants and perinatal populations, as well as staff support and wellbeing initiatives.

Dr. Martin Hill, PhD is the Associate Director, Research and Evaluation at Heartland Alliance Marjorie Kovler Center. Dr. Hill has over thirty years of applied research experience in various capacities within government, academia, non-profit, and for-profit settings. He has extensive experience in program evaluation, needs assessment, and survey research. Prior to coming to Kovler Center, Dr. Hill was Director of the Carl Frost Center for Social Science Research at Hope College. He received his initial post-graduate research training with the U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons where he worked on a national longitudinal study evaluating drug treatment programs in the federal prison system. In addition to working part-time at Kovler Center, he is President of his own research and consulting firm VIP Research and Evaluation. Dr. Hill holds a PhD from Western Michigan University in sociology, specializing in medical sociology and applied research and evaluation.

Rihab Yako, MSW, MAPS is Multi-lingual (English, Arabic, Assyrian/Chaldean) Mental Health Clinical

Practitioner for eight years with Heartland Alliance. She currently serves as intake clinician for the Survivors of Torture program and psychosocial group facilitator for Family Program at Heartland Alliance Marjorie Kovler Center. She is a clinical worker skilled in individual and group therapy, client-centered program development, and client advocacy. She is experienced at setting people at ease and structuring treatment plans around each person's strengths. She is passionate about providing people with the support they need to reach their personal goals. Rihab has extensive experience in working with adult and teenage clients with PTSD, depression, anxiety, and dysfunctional relationships by providing individual and group therapy to people from variety of cultures especially Middle Eastern, Asian, and African. Rihab earned dual Masters Degrees: Master of Social Work from Saint Louis University and Master of Arts, Pastoral Studies from Aquinas Institute of Theology in Saint Louis. She published an article in the International Journal of Intercultural Relations about acculturative stress among Iraqi refugees in the United States

CONCLUSION

Hawthorne Smith, PhD, Executive Director PSOT

With Appreciation

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

*Felicitas Treue, Teresa Betancourt
and all presenters and authors.*

VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM CONSULTANT:

*Amelia Roeschlein DSW, MA, LMFT,
National Council for Mental Wellbeing*

ORGANIZER:

*José Quiroga, Former Medical Director and
Co-Founder of the Program for Torture
Victims in Los Angeles, CA*

SYMPOSIUM LOGISTICS:

*Ann Lundberg, National Capacity
Building, Center for Victims of Torture*

*Madeline Cohodes, Administrative
Assistant, NCTTP*

NCTTP'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Hawthorne Smith, President

Sylvia Acevedo, Vice President

Pete Dross, Treasurer

Dinali Fernando, Secretary

*Megan Berthold, Research & Data
Committee Chair*

*Celia VanDeGraaf, Membership Committee
Chair*

Jennifer Wilson, Policy Committee Chair

Kathi Anderson, IRCT Representative

Leah Spelman, At Large Member

Mario Gonzalez, At-Large Member NCTTP's

SYMPOSIUM PLANNING COMMITTEE

*Hawthorne Smith, José Quiroga,
Ann Lundberg, Sara Bracewell,
Madeline Cohodes, Leah Spelman*

Visit us online at [**www.ncttp.org**](http://www.ncttp.org)

Email us at [**info@ncttp.org**](mailto:info@ncttp.org)