DIVERSITY AND MENTAL HEALTH IN CHALLENGING TIMES

Edited by

Beverley Raphael, AM
and
Abd-Elmasih Malak

TRANSCULTURAL MENTAL HEALTH CENTRE
Diversity and Mental Health in Challenging Times

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Director, Psychiatry Research and Teaching Unit,
South Western Sydney Area Health Service

Dr Tony Williams
Consultant Psychiatrist
ABOUT THE AUTHORS . . .

Section I
Overviews, Strategies and Prevention

1 Cultural diversity and cultural wellbeing:
  Understanding a complex relationship

ANTHONY J MARSELLA PhD, DHC is a Clinical Psychologist who is well known internationally for his contributions to cross-cultural psychology and psychopathology. Professor Marsella is based in the Department of Psychology at the University of Hawaii where he is also Director of the Cultural Research and International Studies Program. He is Director of the World Health Organisation Psychiatric Research Centre in Honolulu and is a consultant to numerous national and international organisations. Professor Marsella has published widely in such fields as cross-cultural psychology, psychopathology, post-traumatic stress disorder, social stress and coping, and schizophrenia. He is a Visiting Professor in Australia, Korea, India, China, the Philippines and various universities within the United States.

Anthony J Marsella PhD
Professor, Department of Psychology
University of Hawaii
Honolulu, HAWAI’I 96822, USA
Ph: 808 956 8414  Fax: 808 956 4700
e-mail: marsella@hawaii.edu

2 Cultural diversity and early intervention

BEVERLEY RAPHAEL is Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Queensland and is Director, Centre for Mental Health, NSW Health. Professor Raphael is also Chair of the Australian Transcultural Mental Health Network. With a longstanding interest in, and commitment to, prevention in the field of mental health, especially with regard to child and adolescent mental health and family issues, Professor Raphael has contributed in these areas, as well as those of trauma, grief and disasters. In addition, Professor Raphael has a long-term interest in, and commitment to, the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

Professor B Raphael
Director, Centre for Mental Health
NSW Health
Locked Bag 961
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059, AUSTRALIA
Ph: 612 7391 9309  Fax: 612 7391 9041
3 The Mental Health Tribunal of New South Wales: Diversity in law and practice

CAROL ABELA is Assistant Dean (Clinical Legal Education) at the Faculty of Law at Newcastle University. She is Director of the University of Newcastle Legal Centre. She has been a Legal Member (part time) of the Mental Health Review Tribunal since 1990. Ms Abela was the Chairperson of the Hunter Area Health Service Board and for some years has been interested in the rights of persons from non-English speaking backgrounds when they receive health care and treatment.

Ms C Abela
Faculty of Law, University of Newcastle
University House, 2nd Floor
300 King St
NEWCASTLE NSW 2300
AUSTRALIA
Ph: 612 4921 8666
Fx: 612 4921 8866
e-mail: lscla@law.newcastle.edu.au

4 Weaving diverse partnerships: Consumer and carer participation in a culturally and linguistically diverse society

ANDREW SOZOMENOU BSc (Hons) Psychology has been a Psychologist with the Transcultural Mental Health Centre for five years. Mr Sozomenou has recently completed a project examining participation models and strategies that have successfully engaged consumers, carers and community members in partnership with mental health services in the areas of development, management and evaluation. Mr Sozomenou is the Coordinator of the NESB Youth Mental Health Network and has been responsible for the coordination of a series of forums examining mental health issues impacting young people of NESB. He is also the coordinator of the bi-annual Young Writers’ Competition. His current research interests focus on young people from culturally diverse backgrounds living with parents with mental health problems and adolescent mental health.

Mr A Sozomenou
Transcultural Mental Health Centre
Cumberland Hospital
Locked Bag 7118
PARRAMATTA BC NSW 2150
AUSTRALIA
PENNY MITCHELL BSc (Hons) Psychology, MPH, is a Public Health Psychologist. Penny has worked as a researcher in psychology, public health and mental health since 1987 with a focus on service development and evaluation research, transcultural mental health, and youth suicide prevention. Ms Mitchell joined the Transcultural Mental Health Centre as Research Officer in 1994 soon after its establishment. In March 1998 she moved to the Australian Institute of Family Studies where she worked as Research Fellow on the National Communications Project and the evaluation of the National Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy. She is currently with the Victorian Department of Human Services where she is managing the evaluation of the Primary Care Partnerships Strategy.

Ms Penny Mitchell  
Project Manager  
Primary Care Partnerships Evaluation  
Community Health Unit  
Department of Human Services  
Level 2, 555 Collins St  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000  
AUSTRALIA  
Ph: 613 9616 8307  
Fx: 613 9616 8277  
e-mail: penny.mitchell@dhs.vic.gov.au

MAUREEN H FITZGERALD RN, BIS, MA, PhD is a medical anthropologist and senior lecturer in the School of Occupation and Leisure Sciences, the Faculty of Health Sciences, at the University of Sydney. Dr Fitzgerald has a range of research interests that involve the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. One of her areas of interest is the development and provision of culturally relevant and sensitive health and social services. She had conducted research in Australia, the Samoas, Micronesia and the USA. Dr Fitzgerald co-chairs the Transcultural Mental Health Centre’s Research Sub-committee.

Dr M H Fitzgerald  
School of Occupation and Leisure Sciences  
Faculty of Health Sciences,  
University of Sydney  
PO Box 170  
LIDCOMBE NSW 1825  
AUSTRALIA  
Ph: 612 9351 9216  
Fx: 612 9351 9197  
e-mail: M.Fitzgerald@cchs.usyd.edu.au

ABD-ELMASIH MALAK BSW, MSW has worked in the field of health and social welfare, which for the past twenty-five years has included service provision, policy planning and management. He has written and published various papers on cross-cultural issues. Mr Malak has led the development of innovative state and
national services that address the difficulties faced by minority and disadvantaged
groups when accessing mainstream services. He was instrumental in the establish-
ment of the Transcultural Mental Health Centre where he is the Director. He is also
the National Director of the Australian Transcultural Mental Health Network, and
is the Director of Multicultural Health for Western Sydney Area Health Service.

Mr A Malak, Director
Transcultural Mental Health Centre
Cumberland Hospital
Locked Bag 7118
PARRAMATTA BC NSW 2150
AUSTRALIA

DERRICK SILOVE MB ChB (Hons I), MD, FRANZCP was appointed to the
Foundation Professorship in Psychiatry, University of New South Wales, at
Liverpool Hospital, Sydney, in 1998. He is the Director of the Psychiatry Research
and Teaching Unit, South Western Sydney Area Health Service, holding several
research grants and publishing extensively in the field of migrant and refugee
mental health. He is a past Chair, and is currently a member, of the management
committee of the Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and
Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) where he also serves as a consultant psychiatrist.
Professor Silove is Co-Chair of the Committee of Refugees and Other Migrants of
the World Federation for Mental Health. He is also the Executive Director of
PRADET (Psychosocial Recovery and Development in East Timor).

Professor D Silove
School of Psychiatry
University of New South Wales
Psychiatry Research & Training Unit
Liverpool Hospital
LIVERPOOL NSW 2170
AUSTRALIA
Ph: 612 9828 4902
Fx: 612 9828 4910
e-mail: dsilove@unsw.edu.au

5 A bilingual/bicultural case management model

IVAN FRKOVIC BSoCWrk, WSWAP, is currently the Manager of the Structural
and Service Reform Team in the Mental Health Unit, Queensland Health. At the
time of writing the paper, Mr Frkovic was the Manager of the Queensland
Transcultural Mental Health Centre. He has extensive experience with the migrant
welfare sector, being the author of the Queensland Non-English Speaking Background Mental Health Policy Statement and co-author of Assessing Needs for Mental Health in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities: A Qualitative Approach.

Mr Ivan Frkovic
Manager
Structural & Service Reform Team
Mental Health Unit
Queensland Health
GPO Box 48
BRISBANE QLD 4001
AUSTRALIA
Ph: 617 3234 1148  Fx: 617 3234 1362
e-mail: frkovic@health.qld.gov.au

POLLY NIP B SocWrk, is the Clinical Services Coordinator of the Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre. She has worked as a Chinese Bilingual Case Manager for two years prior to her current position. Ms Nip also worked as a social worker in a variety of settings including the counselling service for immigrant women in Brisbane, as well as the family services and the disabled children service in Hong Kong.

Ms P Nip
Level 3, Psychiatric Unit, Princess Alexandra Hospital
Ipswich Rd
WOOLLOONGABBA QLD 4102
AUSTRALIA
Ph: 61 7 3240 2833  Fx: 61 7 3240 2282
e-mail: nipp@health.qld.gov.au

6 Parenting adolescents in Australia:
   The experience of refugee parents with mental health problems

ANDREW SOZOMENOU (see above)

MARIA CASSANITI BSW is a social worker who has worked in a variety of mental health settings since 1991, including rehabilitation and acute care. In her role as Team Leader of the Transcultural Mental Health Centre (TMHC) Mental Health Promotion and Education Team she oversaw, and was involved in, a number of projects focusing on young people and mental health, suicide prevention, family psycho-education and rural outreach. During her five years with the TMHC Ms Cassaniti has undertaken a number of activities including; instituting participation of NESB consumer and carer, presenting and delivering training on transcultural mental health issues in a variety of settings, coordinating Centre planning and
evaluation initiatives, and the coordination of a number of the TMHC's major conferences, forums and workshops.

Ms Maria Cassaniti
Transcultural Mental Health Centre
Cumberland Hospital
Locked Bag 7118
PARRAMATTA BC NSW 2150, AUSTRALIA
Ph: (02) 9912 3850  Fax: (02) 9840 3755
Maria.Cassaniti@swahs.health.nsw.gov.au

MARIANO COELLO is a clinical psychologist who has worked for the past sixteen years with migrants and refugee survivors of torture and organised violence. Since 1991 Mr Coello has held several clinical positions at the New South Wales Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) where he is currently the Clinical Services Coordinator. He has represented STARTTS at a number of forums and conferences, nationally and internationally, on issues related to refugees in general and torture and trauma survivors specifically. In various other capacities Mr Coello has conducted and participated in several successful projects on psychosocial and mental health issues affecting children and young refugee survivors of war-organised violence.

Mr M Coello
NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS)
P O Box 203
FAIRFIELD NSW 2165, AUSTRALIA
Ph: 612 9794 1900  Fax: 612 9794 1910
e-mail: mariano.coello@swsahs.nsw.gov.au

ALISON SNEDDON MComHlth, BEd, is Area Coordinator of Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, South Western Sydney Area Health Service (SWSAHS) following her position as Deputy Director of SWSAH Health Promotion Unit and Program Manager Mental Health Promotion. Ms Sneddon has worked in health promotion since 1990. She was previously a teacher, having taught for twelve years. Ms Sneddon has been instrumental in the development of a number of program/projects and strategic plans for young people across the health promotion spectrum. She is also the Chair of the Transcultural Mental Health Centre's Mental Health Promotion Subcommittee.

Ms Alison Sneddon
Area Coordinator of Infant, Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services
South Western Sydney Area Health Service
Park House, 13 Elizabeth St
LIVERPOOL NSW 2170
AUSTRALIA
Ph: 612 9827 8011  Fax: 612 9827 8010
e-mail: alison.sneddon@swsahs.nsw.gov.au

X
BRYANNE BARNETT MD, FRANZCP is a graduate in medicine of the University of Aberdeen and a Fellow of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists. She has a doctoral degree from the University of New South Wales, and holds a Chair of Perinatal and Infant Psychiatry at that University. She is also the Area Director of Paediatric Mental Health Services in South Western Sydney. Professor Barnett's key interests are the health and wellbeing of infants, children, adolescents and their parents. To that end she has set up various services addressing their needs and is involved in an extensive research program on issues relevant to early intervention and health promotion. Professor Barnett is committed to ensuring that the needs of migrant and indigenous families are appropriately included in policy and planning.

Professor Bryanne Barnett  
School of Psychiatry, University of NSW  
Area Director, Infant, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
South Western Sydney Area Health Service  
13 Elizabeth Street  
LIVERPOOL NSW 2170  
AUSTRALIA  
Ph: 61/2 9827 8011  
Fx: 61/2 9827 8010  
e-mail: bryanne.barnett@swsahs.nsw.gov.au

MICHELLE HEGARTY BAAppSc. OT is an Occupational Therapist who has worked in mental health services since 1994. She had extensive experience in rehabilitation and accommodation services, and held the role of Residential Service Coordinator before moving into the Gaining Ground Project Manager position from 1998 to 2000. Ms Hegarty undertook numerous activities in this role, including the coordination of the development of the Gaining Ground Adolescent Program, implementation of Interagency Workshops and the development of a statewide network of project workers in this field. Ms Hegarty is now working as a Project Officer in Child and Youth Mental Health Services in Brisbane, Queensland, where she is involved in numerous mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention initiatives.

Mrs Michelle Hegarty  
Project Officer  
Child and Youth Mental Health Service  
Royal Children's Hospital and Health Service District  
PO Box 1507  
FORTITUDE VALLEY QLD 4006  
AUSTRALIA  
Ph: (07) 3835 1434  Fx: (07) 3839 8191  
e-mail: Michelle_Hegarty@health.qld.gov.au

ABD-ELMASIH MALAK (see above)
JOE CHUONG BA (Saigon), BSW (UWA), MSocAdm. (UWS) has been working in Fairfield Mental Health Service since 1991 as a rehabilitation worker, case manager (1994), Cross-cultural Mental Health Program Manager (1995) and Service Manager since 1997. Mr Chuong has been involved with the Transcultural Mental Health Centre since 1994, as a member of the Vietnamese Language Subcommittee, as a Bilingual Sessional Worker, and as a consultant on a number of mental health promotion projects, such as Let's Talk Mental Health, Family Help Kit and NESB Older Persons and Mental Health. He has also published a number of works in Vietnamese dealing with mental health topics and has been the recipient of two awards: NSW Mental Health Matters (1998) and the Transcultural Mental Health Award for Excellence in Early Prevention.

Mr J Chuong
Fairfield Community Mental Health Centre
53–65 Mitchell Street
CARRAMAR NSW 2165
AUSTRALIA
Ph: 612 9794 1714    Fx: 612 9794 1731
e-mail: joe.chuong@swsahs.nsw.gov.au

7 Issues in suicide prevention for young people from non-English speaking backgrounds living in Australia

NEDA DUSEVIC BSc (Psychol)(Hons), MPsychol.(Clinical)(Hons) is a Clinical Psychologist who, for over a decade, has worked in a number of clinical, adult mental health settings focused on case management, acute care and psychiatric rehabilitation. Ms Dusevic has specific interest in crisis management, post-traumatic stress disorder, management of personality disorders, chronic pain management, abuse survivors and group dynamics. She has also had wide-ranging research experience including the evaluation of cognitive-behavioural techniques in chronic pain management, animal models of drug addiction, processes underlying improvement in public speaking anxiety, mental health shared care and suicide prevention. She is currently employed as a Senior Evaluation and Research Officer at the Transcultural Mental Health Centre.

Ms Neda Dusevic
Transcultural Mental Health Centre
Cumberland Hospital
Locked Bag 7118
PARRAMATTA BC NSW 2150
AUSTRALIA
PIERRE BAUME is Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Psychological Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Monash University, and is Founding President of the Accreditation Council for Children and Youth Organisations. Previously, he was the Founding Director of the Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention and the Founding Dean of the Faculty Nursing and Health Sciences at Griffith University. Assoc. Professor Baume chaired the National Health and Medical Research Council Committee on Suicide Prevention. He has published several articles and chapters on suicide-related topics and he has authored/co-authored a number of government reports. Assoc. Professor Baume is involved in research projects on migrants and suicide, rural suicide, primary health care with indigenous populations, and the promotion of resilience in young people.

Associated Professor Pierre Baume
Reach Youth Ltd
Level 1/224 Church St
RICHMOND VIC 3121
AUSTRALIA
Ph: 613 9421 4100
Fx: 613 9421 4200
e-mail: reachyouth@ozemail.com.au

ABD-ELMASIH MALAK (see above)

MARIA CASSANITI (see above)

8 Better mental health for all: A multilingual multimedia community awareness campaign promoting the mental health and wellbeing of children, adolescents and young people

JOHN SPITERI RN, Assoc. Dip. in Rec., Masters Comm. has had extensive experience in mental health in both the hospital and community setting. Mr Spiteri has worked in mental health promotion since 1995 and has been instrumental in developing a number of projects, including the development of the Multilingual Family Help Kit for NESB communities that included a series of radio broadcasts and audio cassettes based on the Kit.

Mr John Spiteri
Transcultural Mental Health Centre
Cumberland Hospital
Locked Bag 7118
PARRAMATTA BC NSW 2150
AUSTRALIA
MARIA CASSANITI (see above)

ANDREW SOZOMENOU (see above)

SUZANNE POPE has a twenty-year background in a variety of mental health settings and roles including the establishment of the Gaining Ground Program for children and young people whose parents are affected by mental health problems and disorders across the South Western Sydney Area Health Service. For the past three years Ms Pope has been the Senior Policy Analyst for Child and Adolescent Mental Health with the Centre for Mental Health. In this position Ms Pope supports the implementation of a range of programs targeting prevention and early intervention, based on the best available evidence for enhancing the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.

Suzanne Pope
Centre for Mental Health
NSW Health
LMB 961
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059
AUSTRALIA
Ph: 612 9391 9306  Fx: 612 9391 9041
e-mail: spope@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

JAN HESLEY has worked in the community and health services sector for more than twenty years. Her work experience includes running a community housing service in the Blacktown local government area, managing two adolescent health services and working as a senior health promotion officer. She has experience in multicultural health, mental health promotion, project design and management, program implementation and evaluation; community development, policy writing, and capacity building in relation to organisational development. Ms Hesley is currently based at the Bankstown Regional Office of the Premier's Department working on implementation of the Drugs and Community Action Strategy in South West Sydney.

Ms Janet Heslep
Drugs and Community Action Project Manager, South West Sydney
PO Box 3047
BANKSTOWN SQUARE NSW 2200
AUSTRALIA
Ph: 612 9793 1577  Fx: 612 9793 1865
e-mail: heslepj@premiers.nsw.gov.au

KYM SCANLON has worked in the public health field for the past fifteen years on a range of topic areas including mental health, health promotion, drug and alcohol, HIV/AIDS and occupational health and safety. Since 1993 Ms Scanlon has worked for the NSW Health Department and has been responsible for initiating and
Section II
Cross-cultural Aspects of Anxiety, Trauma, Depression and Stress

9 Culture and child abuse

SOO SEE YEO is the Area Child & Family Psychologist in the Nepean area in the NSW Department of Community Services. She has a Bachelor of Science (Hons) and a Master of Science with an Award of Distinction in the Psychology of Education from the University of London, United Kingdom. Ms Yeo has worked in the area of Child Protection for twelve years in New South Wales and was also the Associate Lecturer in the Department of Psychology at the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur. She is a member of the Australian Psychological Society and has presented papers on issues in Child Protection in international conferences. She is also a representative of the NESB Reference Group in the Department of Community Services and has extensive experience with the provision of psychological services to Chinese speaking clients.

Ms S S Yeo
St Marys Community Services Centre
Department of Community Services
Corner Gidley and Chapel Streets
ST MARYS NSW 2760
AUSTRALIA
Ph: 612 9673 4777  Fx: 612 9623 7127
e-mail: SooSee.Yeo@community.nsw.gov.au
10 Migration: A grieving process

CLARA ESPIÑOSA works as a Drug and Alcohol counsellor at Merrylands Community Health Centre. Coming from Bolivia, South America, where she was a medical practitioner in Public Health, Ms Espinosa has worked for ten years (of the twelve she has been in Australia) in the Drug and Alcohol field. During this time she has been in contact with numerous clients of a non-English speaking background who, in addition to facing their problems with substance abuse, have faced the challenges of settling in a new country.

Ms C Espinosa
Merrylands Community Health Centre
14 Memorial Av
MERRYLANDS NSW 2160
AUSTRALIA
Ph: 612 9682 3133  Fx: 612 9897 3313
e-mail: Clara_Espinosa@wsahs.nsw.gov.au

11 Scale construction and modelling of life satisfaction for long-term migrants

CLAUDIE LAROSE is a Counselling Psychologist and researcher on migrant and cross-cultural issues. Ms Larose has lectured in this area for over six years at Victoria University of Technology, the University of Ballarat, the University of Western Sydney and Macquarie University. She is completing her PhD in this area at Macquarie University. She is currently working as a psychologist in private practice.

Ms C Larose
C/o Dept of Psychology
Macquarie University
RYDE NSW 2109
AUSTRALIA
Ph: 612 9850-6741  Fx: 612 9850-8062
e-mail: claro001@student.mq.edu.au

12 Spanish-speaking inmates have been forgotten

ISABEL STEPANIK, BSc, MA (Psych), MAPS, JP, is currently working as a Psychologist both at the Department of Corrective Services at Parklea Correctional Centre and at her private practice at Hurstville. With the Department of Community Services she worked for eight years with children who were emotionally, physically and sexually abused as well as neglected. Due to her Latin-American background (born in Peru), Ms Stepanik is an active member of the Spanish-speaking/Latin-
American community. She is frequently called to provide therapeutic counselling, intervention and treatment, not only to inmates in the different institutions in the metropolitan area, but also to people from non-English speaking background in the community who need her services.

Ms I Stepniki
Psychologist,
Parklea Correctional Centre,
P O Box 6148
BLACKTOWN NSW 2148
AUSTRALIA.
Ph: 612 9626.7122   Fx: 612 9596.0618
e-mail: psychel@speednet.com.au

13 Postnatal stress and depression in Latin-American women

LUCY MARIN is a Bilingual Counsellor (Spanish) with the Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) where she has worked for the past ten years. Originally from Chile, Ms Marin has twenty-five years’ experience of working with survivors of organised violence, both in Chile and Australia. Prior to her work with STARTTS she was a welfare worker (Grant in Aid) with refugee communities from Central and South America.
Ms L Marin
NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS)
P O Box 203
FAIRFIELD NSW 2165, AUSTRALIA
Ph: 612 9794 1900   Fx: 612 9794 1910

GABRIELA SALABERT BA (Hons Psych), MApp.Psych, MAPS, has worked for the last seven years as a Registered Psychologist / Bilingual Counsellor (Spanish-speaking) in the Child, Adult and Family Team at the Fairfield Health Service; and for the last four years she has been a sessional worker at the Transcultural Mental Health Centre. Ms Salabert has also worked as a non-English speaking background Women’s Health Educator/Counsellor at Multicultural Family Planning for four years. She has a Masters of Applied Psychology (Macquarie University) and has fourteen years of experience working as a Psychologist in Community Health and in private practice both in Argentina and Australia with victims of trauma (organised violence, torture, sexual assault and other human rights violations).
Ms G Salabert
Fairfield Community Health Centre
Cnr. The Horsley Drive and Mitchell Street
CARRAMAR NSW 2163, AUSTRALIA
Ph: 612 9794 1700   Fx: 612 9794 1777
e-mail: gaby.salabert@mailcity.com
14 Suicidal risk with war-related post-traumatic stress disorders

VITO ZEPINIC MBBS, BA (Hons), MSc, PhD, MAACBT, MAPS has worked for over twenty years in the mental health area. All his degrees were obtained in the former Yugoslavia and, owing to the civil war in his former country, he arrived in Australia some seven years ago. Upon arrival he began working as a Bilingual Counsellor and has worked as a Clinical Psychologist in two Sydney hospitals: St George Hospital and St John of God Hospital. Dr Zepinic is currently in private practice.
Dr V Zepinic
PO Box 440
BURWOOD NSW 1805
AUSTRALIA
Ph: 612 9747 0744
Mobile: 0419 696 155

15 Interpreters’ experience of working in a triadic psychotherapy relationship with survivors of torture and trauma:
Some thoughts on the impact on psychotherapy

RISÉ BECKER has a BA (Psychology Hons) and MA (Clinical Psychology) from the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa. She emigrated to Australia to take up the position as Clinical Director of the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS) in 1990 after experience working with ex-detainees, adolescent victims of township unrest and other survivors of organised violence in South Africa. Ms Becker resigned her original STARTTS position in 1995 and currently works as a supervisor for STARTTS, consults in the area of trauma and conducts a private practice. She has over twenty years experience practising and supervising psychotherapy with culturally and linguistically diverse populations.
Ms R Becker
NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS)
P O Box 203
FAIRFIELD NSW 2165
AUSTRALIA
Ph: 612 9794 1900
Fx: 612 9794 1910

ROBIN BOWLES BSW (Hons 1), MSW (UNSW) works as a psychotherapist and clinical supervisor at the Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS). Ms Bowles has been working at STARTTS since October 1988, and prior to this was a community consultant and social work
supervisor in the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. She is interested in human rights, social justice and cross-cultural issues, concerns that informed her Masters degree project examining the interface of trauma, culture and psychotherapy. She has worked extensively over the past sixteen years with interpreters in counselling and psychotherapy work with refugee survivors of torture and trauma.

Ms R Bowles
NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS)
P O Box 203
FAIRFIELD NSW 2163
AUSTRALIA
Ph: 612 9794 1900
Fx: 612 9794 1910

16 Evaluation of treatment of post-traumatic stress and adjustment disorder

NIKOLA TOMIC is a clinical psychologist (Faculty of Philosophy) and Medical Psychology Specialist (recognised doctoral degree from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Belgrade) and is employed at Bankstown Mental Health Service where he runs a Clinic for Somatoform and Psychoemotional Disorders. Dr Tomic is a sessional worker in Clinical Psychology at the Transcultural Mental Health Centre for clients from Serbian, Croatian and Russian backgrounds. He is an authorised report writer for the Victims of Crime Tribunal, a sessional lecturer at the University of Western Sydney, an honorary associate of the University of New England and Macquarie University, and holds memberships in the APS College of Clinical Psychologists, the International Society of Hypnosis, the Australian Society of Hypnosis and the Australian Association of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.

Dr N Tomic
Bankstown Health Service
Level 4, Compass Centre
Fetherstone St
BANKSTOWN NSW 2200
AUSTRALIA
Ph: 612 9780 2726
Fx: 612 9780 2888
e-mail: nikola.tomic@swsahs.nsw.gov.au

17 Treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder using eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing: Two case studies

GABRIELA SALABERT (see above)
18 The development of anxiety treatments for clients from diverse backgrounds

RENA TE WA GNER PhD (Clin.Psych.) University of Vienna, DipHEd. University of New South Wales, MAPS (Clinical College) is a Senior Clinical Psychologist and the Director of the Clinic for Anxiety and Traumatic Stress at Bankstown Hospital in Sydney. She is the Area Advisor for Psychology in South Western Sydney Area Health Service and is also conjoint lecturer with the School of Psychiatry at the University of New South Wales (UNSW). Dr Wagner has trained many health professionals in academic and clinical settings in Europe, the United Kingdom and Australia. She has published on factors affecting the delivery of good health care and on anxiety disorders, being especially interested in the delivery of mental health services to ethnically diverse clients.

Dr R Wagner
Director, Clinic for Anxiety and Traumatic Stress
Bankstown Hospital
Claribel St
BANKSTOWN NSW 2200
AUSTRALIA
Ph: 612 9722 8992
Fx: 612 9722 8964
e-mail: rwagner@unsw.edu.au and renate.wagner@swsahs.nsw.gov.au

JACKIE JOUKHADOR is a Registered Psychologist in New South Wales and has been working at the Bankstown Anxiety Clinic, Bankstown Hospital, for the past three years. She has a BA (Psychology) from Macquarie University and an MA (Psychology) from the University of Sydney. Her work includes the assessment and treatment of anxiety disorders, as well as research within that field, especially across cultures. Ms Joukhador’s other research is on pathological gambling, in collaboration with the Psychiatry Research and Teaching Unit.

Ms J Joukhador
Clinic for Anxiety and Traumatic Stress
Bankstown Hospital
Claribel St
BANKSTOWN NSW 2200
AUSTRALIA
Ph: 612 9722 8992
Fx: 612 9722 8964
e-mail: jackie.joukhador@swsahs.nsw.gov.au
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Introduction

OF THE MANY aspects of diversity, the variations among humans from differing cultural backgrounds are some of the more complex. If we add to these variations the culture-bound concepts of mental health and blend them in the crucible of turn-of-the-century multicultural Australia, the resulting mixture is rich indeed.

In these pages the authors tease out some of the complexities that beset those of culturally and linguistically diverse origins when they must contend with mental health concerns in a new environment.

In Section I: Overviews, Strategies and Prevention the chapters deal with aspects of mental health for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, giving the reader insights into the evolving mental health prevention and care system.

The leading chapter by Professor Anthony Marsella is an inspired call to Australia to understand and be proud of the complex relationships intrinsic to our cultural diversity and wellbeing. But he also sets this Australian focus within an internationalised global perspective. Australia, he asserts, has a unique place and opportunity at this time in the world’s global multicultural evolution.

Professor Beverley Raphael provides a ‘bird’s-eye view’ of prevention and early intervention issues for people of cultural and linguistic diversity. The situation, as it is presently understood, is examined concerning the prevention of mental health disorders within the context of cultural factors as individuals develop from birth to old age. The author moves on to discuss the health system’s need to make pertinent adjustments if it is to adequately address the conditions and concerns of those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. She then outlines the crucial features of prevention programs for people who have suffered trauma and loss. These considerations are applied to resettlement opportunities for additional prevention strategies, particularly in avoiding any possible further trauma, or exacerbation of the original trauma, in the resettlement process. Finally, Professor Raphael cites the National Action Plan for Mental Health Promotion and Prevention where a number of useful prevention and early intervention strategies are suggested for culturally diverse communities.

Carol Abela, a distinguished and concerned academic, examines the strengths and weaknesses of the Mental Health Review Tribunal of NSW in its attempts to deal humanely with a wide variety of people experiencing mental health difficulties.

Andrew Sozomenou and his colleagues describe groundbreaking work in understanding the creation and functioning of partnerships between mental health consumers, carers, and providers.
Ivan Frkovic and Polly Nip, writing about the experience of the Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre, illustrate the advantages and difficulties of a case management service to an ethnic community from a provider with a similar cultural and linguistic background.

Andrew Sozomenou and his co-workers provide a fascinating account of refugee parents grappling simultaneously with mental health problems and the raising of their adolescent children in the new cultural context of Australia.

Neda Dusevic and her co-authors discuss suicide prevention for young people from other countries when they settle in Australia.

The section is rounded out by John Spiteri and his collaborators who describe a multilingual multimedia community awareness campaign to promote mental health and wellbeing among the young, particularly those in non-English speaking background communities.

Section II: Cross-cultural Aspects of Anxiety, Trauma, Depression and Stress, contains chapters that deal less with systems and more with people.

Soo See Yeo outlines the ways in which some communities with long traditions, including the Chinese and Indian peoples, shape the upbringing of their children and explores how the differing traditions can lead to misunderstanding on the part of those more familiar with Western values.

Clara Espinosa writes of her insights into aspects of migration and mental health, illustrating the parallels between grief for an abandoned homeland and grief associated with other kinds of emotional loss; and how the astute clinician can help the griever.

Claudie Larose, in a somewhat more technical chapter, describes her research that contributes to an understanding of how people of differing backgrounds may solve problems in the course of adapting to the demands of a new culture.

Isabel Stepanik’s chapter is, by contrast, an impassioned appeal to acknowledge and understand the cultural ethos of Spanish-speaking people and the ways in which it exacerbates the pain of incarceration.

Latin American women are the focus of the chapter by Lucy Marin and Gabriela Salabert: two case examples illustrate postnatal stress and depression among traumatised women and show how they may be helped.

Vito Zepinici’s chapter reviews the effects of war-related trauma and reports an investigation into the long-term effects, including suicide, of severe stress among survivors of war prisons and concentration camps.

Rise Becker and Robin Bowles look into the role of interpreters in the psychotherapeutic relationship with traumatised clients: a rare insight into a little-known area.

Nicola Tomic’s chapter deals with the hypno-suggestive therapeutic treatment of post-traumatic stress and adjustment disorder and the evaluation of its efficacy with clients.
The chapter by Gabriela Salabert illustrates, with two case studies of post-traumatic stress disorder, the way in which eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing is used as a therapeutic technique.

In the final chapter, by Renate Wagner and Jackie Joukhador, we learn how cognitive behaviour therapy can be applied in the alleviation of anxiety in a cross-cultural context.

All these chapters in *Diversity and Mental Health in Challenging Times* raise important mental health issues in relation to people of culturally diverse backgrounds. The book recognises the need for research and data collection in this area of endeavour, and it advocates a change in policy development and argues for a better implementation of programs and services. It presents a variety of innovative ideas that encourage us to think through the complexities of mental health concerns among people whose cultural and linguistic background colours their adjustment in a new land.