

# International Association for Counselling's Counselling Practitioners' Round Table

***"Sharing practice around the world"***



## February 2017 Counselling Practitioners' Round Table Meeting Report

The following report highlights the proceedings of the February 2017 Counselling Practitioners' Round Table (CPRT) for the International Association for Counselling (IAC), which met on Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> February from 11:00am-12:30pm CST USA. The round table proceeded online through the Blue Jeans web conference with eight participants representing three countries and three continents.

### **The Round Table aims:**

To provide a forum within the International Community of Counsellors for practitioners to share and discuss matters arising from their practice for celebration or concern; create mutual support and encouragement across International and multi-cultural contexts around the world using video conference, webinar, Skype, e-mail and text, designed to combat isolation; and to address the wider professional and research community with matters of interest or concern.

### **Opening review of the CPRT purpose (above) and goals (below):**

- share matters of celebration and concern arising from counseling practice around the globe
- experience mutual support and encouragement
- address wider professional body (i.e. research, writing, etc.)

### **CPRT Attendees and participants** (in English alphabetical order by last name):

- Ms. Victoria Baah-Binney —counseling professional and doctoral student at University of Cincinnati in Ohio, USA
- Dr. Lorena Georgiadou—lecturer at University of Edinburgh in Edinburgh, UK
- Dr. Sandy Kacakek—professor at Adler University in Chicago, IL USA
- Dr. Jabu Muchado—lecturer at University of Botswana in Gaborone, Botswana
- Ms. Sudha Nagarajan—licensed counseling professional in New Jersey, USA; also student in a doctoral program for counsellor education and supervision; doing study to understand Indian women who come for short-term work assignments in US
- Dr. Nate Perron—Chair of CPRT, professor with Counseling@Northwestern at Northwestern University, Chicago, IL, USA
- Dr. John Pryor-Jones—current Secretary of IAC and former CPRT Chair, professional counsellor and lecturer, Wales, UK
- Dr. Nona Wilson—professor at The Family Institute at Northwestern University, Chicago, IL, USA



Attendees were reminded that participation in the CPRT is a benefit from membership with IAC. Members of the round table were encouraged to keep memberships active, and continue supporting the thoughtful participation of the CPRT.

### **2017 IAC Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina**

The next CPRT is scheduled to be held at the 2017 IAC conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on Friday, 21 April, 2017 from 11:00am to 12:00pm (Buenos Aires time). (This time has the potential to be moved as the program schedule is concluded in the upcoming weeks.) The round table reviewed the focal topic area and progress of the CPRT discussion related to the theme, “**Counseling on the front lines: Breaking barriers of gender, equality, and social progress.**” Presenters present agreed to discuss how to divide the topics of the theme through e-mail collaboration and discussion. Scheduled presenters include:

- Ms. Victoria Baah-Binney of Ohio, USA (originally from Ghana)
- Dr. Jayita Datta of Kent State University in Ohio, USA
- Ms. Amirah Diniaty of Islamic University in Indonesia
- Ms. Anita Engstrom Jones of Idaho, USA: difference between acquiring equality as opposed to losing it
- Dr. Nona Wilson of The Family Institute at Northwestern University, Chicago, Illinois, USA
- Dr. Nate Perron of Counseling@Northwestern at Northwestern University, Chicago, Illinois, USA

Participants were encouraged to review the conference details soon and sign up at <http://en.iacargentina2017.aacounselors.org.ar/>. The overall conference theme for 2017 is “Active Counselling for Social Development.”

### **Review of previous discussion items**

The previous meeting in December 2016 was re-scheduled due to some complications with mixed information sent out. Discussion addressed these complications and plans to avoid future re-scheduling.

The last full CPRT meeting occurred in October 2016, and the items of interest raised at that meeting were reviewed in order to provide opportunities to continue those conversations if desired. These content areas included:

- The status on counseling in Indonesia
- Determining the needs for a blog spot, either on the IAC website, through Facebook, or through creating another blog on another website
- Collaboration on research and writing: discussing ideas for writing together; potentially propose a special edition of IJAC
- Intentions for CPRT members to invite other counselling professionals to become involved with the CPRT
- Discuss supervision needs and options for rural locations around the globe

### **Open round table discussion**

**Training trauma care:** Opening discussion points emphasized the need to help students be mindful about how to deal with complex trauma among clients, and how to deal with trauma from different places of the world, taking culture and society into consideration.

**Research interests:** Discussion from a previous CPRT was raised again regarding an interest among members to collaborate and promote research on international counseling



practices as a whole. Although this topic was presented during the last round table, nothing came as a result. One e-mail attempt was made to advance the conversation, and it did not proceed further. Additional discussion explored ways to continue this meaningful dialogue on counselling practitioner research. Open dialogue with the Ethics round table could lead to helpful collaboration around how to promote a code of ethics that portrays the counseling profession accurately throughout the countries represented by IAC.

**CPRT blog:** The CPRT discussed some of the possible venue options from which a private dialogue could occur for ongoing group discussion and collaboration. Establishing a secure communication system will be important for advancing the research and support endeavors of the CPRT participants. Facebook and Twitter were both options that were presented. The IAC's Facebook page is quite active, and separate rooms could be created that would be CPRT-specific. In discussing these social media sites, concern was raised around privacy, the fact that some people may not want to start such an account, and that some countries actually block Facebook. Considering a separate blog on the IAC website was discussed as well. The CPRT discussed the possibility of having an option where members must sign in so they can see and participate in the CPRT blog, which could be housed on the website. Nate will provide a written proposal to the Executive Council (EC) to express the CPRT request to establish a blog located on the IAC website.

**Refugee wellness and support:** Conversation related back to the current refugee crises occurring throughout the globe currently. The CPRT participants shared ways in which the great needs of refugee populations are impacting each country represented among the round table. The significant implications for these populations were discussed, which included many cultural differences that exist among the countries receiving the influx of refugees, and the needs of the individual and groups of refugees attempting to manage the crisis. The CPRT focused an interest in understanding ways to support the mental health and counseling needs represented among refugees and displaced people as a whole. The scope of the crisis is vast, affecting most countries, and reports indicated Africa is closing up refugee camps. Further interest was generated around what impact this is having on individuals and families. A general sense of need was shared regarding what kind of research and collaboration would help promote greater understanding and change.

Various resources for addressing the needs of refugees were discussed as a group, including a site called Refugee 1 out of Chicago. The idea of having doctoral and masters students to provide support and help identify further resources. The cultural factors were considered as an important element to understand how to assist refugee individuals and families from a holistic perspective. Exercising empathy with ways displaced people are trying to adjust can serve as an important counseling approach to emphasize. Additional areas of support could include tutoring kids, providing skills for parents, working within homes to help provide wrap around services for families, or having a mission to help schools adopt families. Working outside the typical parameters of care among this population would seem to extend beyond the counseling room based on unique circumstances. The overarching support also helps develop trust in the counseling relationship. Counseling professionals also have the opportunity to write letters to their local governments in order to advocate for the needs of refugee and displaced people. Finding and collaborating with organizations that provide help to refugee crisis events will also be important. Working with institutions, such as Counsellors without borders or others, can help advance the focus on meeting basic needs in order to benefit the mental health needs.

**Potential research questions:** The CPRT continued to explore options for research that may address the various issues discussed as a group: What is helpful for refugees from the



counseling profession? Who is providing counseling services already to refugees? What is the psychological impact of displacement/ leaving home and going to another country? How is trauma recognized among refugee groups? What is the impact of complex trauma? What support systems and resources are most crucial for supporting the counseling and mental health needs of refugee groups? What currently is being offered? What types of supervision is available for counsellors? How does resilience impact response and recovery from traumatic events, and how can resilience be promoted?

### **Follow-up items**

- CPRT members are asked to provide feedback about the updated website. Please feel free to do so by e-mailing Dr. John Prysor-Jones at [rtpractitioner@gmail.com](mailto:rtpractitioner@gmail.com).
- Nate will disseminate the initial draft of the Argentina conference brochure
- Nate will begin the e-mail conversation with 2017 Conference CPRT panellists to prepare topic areas that include all aspects emphasized in the topic of focus for the round table.
- Nate will provide a written proposal from the CPRT to the Executive Committee to provide a blog on the IAC website for the CPRT members to maintain easy collaboration and contact, for the purposes of advancing practice and research.
- Nate will advance further dialogue of the CPRT through a blog, and continue to explore ways to understand how to support refugee populations as an important point of professional counselling research.

