

International Association for Counselling's Counselling Practitioners' Round Table *"Sharing practice around the world"*



Counselling Practitioners' Round Table September 14, 2019 Meeting Notes

- I. Introductions
- II. IAC updates
- III. Discussion points on Counseling Practice
- IV. Plans for CPRT

I. Introductions

1. **Sandy Kakacek (SK)**- professor with Adler University in the Chicago area; teaches with other programs and provides counseling services
2. **Lisa Pisani (LP)**- currently practicing as a counselor/ psychotherapist at a group practice in Burlington, Vermont, USA
3. **John Pryor-Jones (JP)**- counseling practitioner in Wales, United Kingdom; engaged in teaching and other projects counseling-related
4. **Anita Jones (AJ)**, recently retired from the Idaho Supreme Court; continuing to teach and offer counseling part-time
5. **Beatriz Brinckmann (BB)**, former past president of AAC (Argentina Association for Counseling) in Buenos Aires, Argentina; supporting aging population with counseling services
6. **Mirit Sinai (MS)**, lives in Israel used to work in academia, now works in private practice
7. **Victoria Baah-Binney (VB)**; originally from Ghana; now lives in New Jersey, USA, and is finishing up her doctorate at the University of Cincinnati
8. **Ilya Zakharov (IZ)**- psychotherapist at the Moscow Psychiatry Hospital
9. **Nate Perron (NP)**- counselor educator with Northwestern University in Illinois, USA, and counseling practitioner in New Hampshire, USA (also online with other states)

II. IAC Updates

- **2020 conference**- the [IAC website](#) has all details about registration and important dates for the 2020 IAC Conference.

- **Volunteer opportunities-** CPRT members are encouraged to explore volunteer opportunities on the [IAC website](#)

III. Discussion points on Counseling Practice

Research

- **SK-** suggested conducting a doodle poll to explore what the current issues are related to being counselors around the world
- **JP-** noted he has been involved with research for a number of years, and it has not been funded well, and they lost several different countries along the way that made completing the research difficult

First Responders

- **AJ-** would like to see us expand our supports to other helping professions; some do not have traditional counseling systems, and mental health support comes from other helping professionals; this could possibly be with front-line first responders, etc. (MS- inquired what types of people? Social workers psychologists?)
- **AJ-** suggested collaborating with first responders such as medical personnel, police, fire fighters
- **MS-** noted that especially in Israel where they are working with crisis situations on a regular basis, this can be very important to raise
- **SK-** shared the significance of family members who have lost a first responder
- **NP-** indicated this issue of first responder support has become a real issue in the USA; ongoing crises are arising on a frequent basis, and it was recently found that 2.5-3 times more officers die by suicide than those who died by active duty homicide
- **AJ-** noted first responders are not always the best to exercise the skills needed to assist their peers in the profession because they are dealing with the issues themselves
- **JP-** reported in the UK the professional perspective among first responders is that they do not need mental health support; oftentimes people will only be accepted when the counselor can identify as military or law enforcement, etc.
- **AJ-** indicated being prepared with knowledge about these areas is also very important, and you can be allowed in to offer support at times
- **NP-** shared that top-down support for such programs is extremely important for first responders to accept the knowledge
- **MS-** indicated this also becomes an issue with the families of military and first responders; it is important to remember the importance of supporting

Local Counseling Practice Issues

- **NP-** inquired “what have you found to be important for practice in your communities?”
- **MS-** families will need a lot of emotional support and technical support; this often comes from the wives
- **AJ-** there is a lot of role changes when someone is deployed or in extended programs. This is frequently defined as resiliency, and they do this with spouses and children. They

also provide emphasis on mind-body work; many find benefit with this, not only the families but also the personnel; it is important to understand the culture

- **BB-** in this area she has no specific experience, but in discussing the mind-body awareness she can speak to because she supports the elderly population with these skills; being able to get them moving and avoid plasticity is important; she has multiple people in their high 80s dancing with her regularly; this is also important for counselors
- **VB-** indicated she has not done a lot of work with this because she works in the schools; there is a lot of focus on supporting kids with fears of violence in the schools; law enforcement is now including mental health professionals much more when responding to any form of recovery issues;
- **NP-** recognized the importance of this discussion; school crisis events in the USA have created a need for recognizing issues of school violence
- **VB-** shared her local school created mental health breaks where kids can come and receive a break from the stress of their day; it is working out well
- **AJ-** offered that essentially our educators in the lower grades (K-6) truly are first responders, and they may not get the kinds of supports they need for themselves to be available for their students.
- **SK-** shared there are funding efforts taking place in order to support funding within the schools; there is much more attention being focused in this area; what can we do to help advocate for mental health around the world

Defining Mental Health Counseling

- **VB-** inquired what kind of counseling are we discussing? What are the thoughts and opinions people have regarding mental health?
- **NP-** indicated many times the term counselor can be misconstrued; someone can be a camp counselor and other variations as well
- **JP-** shared the profession of counseling has become so controlled that sometimes we do not support the indigenous methods that are often recognized or applied as well; they are not seen as valid at times, when they might be very important
- **AJ-** suggested we as counselors may also need to know how to engage in a support role. How can we support non-traditional helping professions?
- **IZ-** reported he has heard the discussion about stigma discussed several times; this will sometimes be a focus on recognizing they have a psychiatric disease, but they also have a stigma about receiving support around it
- **LP-** shared this is such an important topic to consider how to help people on the front lines as first responders; VB brought up an important point of bringing interventions in early; IZ also had helpful thoughts about stigma and how we can support people; how can we work to heal the stigma of those who are present 'out there.'

IV. Plans for CPRT

- **NP-** reported CPRT will occur in Kuching, Malaysia, and next online meeting could be in 2-3 months; all are encouraged to participate

- **AJ**- shared that Kuching is a beautiful city that is very welcoming and safe; she encouraged everyone to consider it as an opportunity; she also had a visit into Borneo that was nice

Action items:

- **NP** will send out a doodle poll with November and January dates
- All are encouraged to submit proposals to present at IAC 2020 conference, due in early November 2019