

## **Conference of the International Association for Counselling**

**Qawra, Malta, July 7 – 10, 2016**

**Theme “From Fate to Hope and Clarity: IAC Fifty Years on”**

The theme: 'From Fate to Hope and Clarity: IAC 50 years on' was envisaged to provide counsellors and researchers with opportunities to discuss and reflect on their counselling practices. Just like "Faith", "Hope" and "Charity", three small aeroplanes historically crucial in defending Malta in the Second World War, counsellors are often a beacon of hope seeing their clients move from disempowering narratives of fate to stories of empowerment and clarity.

Malta was well positioned geographically and culturally to host the conference. Historically, it has served as a bridge between North Africa and Europe, nestled between Italy to the north, Tunisia to the East and Libya to the South. That bridge continues today as it is in or near the path of many refugees on their way from Africa to Europe. In addition, Malta is one of the few countries in the world in which Counselling is legally recognized as a profession.

The subthemes of the conference were well aligned with UNESCO's major programmes I, III, and V: Education for peace; Fostering social inclusion and intercultural dialogue through the social and human sciences; Sustaining peace and development through freedom of expression and access to knowledge. In addition, it addressed the two priorities identified by the United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): Africa and gender equality. Regarding Africa, the conference included invited and funded delegates from Africa and resulted in the further development of a project to develop counselling in Malawi that will involve support and involvement from Botswana and Canada. Gender equity is a theme that was infused in the entire conference and was also evident in working group presentations and in a number of round table discussions.

### **Words of Welcome from Dr. Dione Mifsud, President of the International Association for Counselling and Ms Silvia Galea, President of the Malta Association for the Counselling Profession**

IAC is looking forward to celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in Malta with a world conference in 2016. This will be the third time that IAC will be hosted on our island nation in which there is evidence that a form of counselling already existed in prehistoric times. To its credit, Malta is one of the few countries in the world where counselling is legally recognised as a profession. Our

colleagues at MACP are preparing a programme that will celebrate IAC's birthday through inspiring keynotes, panel presentations, fora, round-tables and working groups.

Accompanying the conference there is a full social programme that will permit delegates to sample Maltese history, culture, arts, food, sea and sunshine. Judging by the detailed preparations I know that this conference will be one to remember and I would like to call upon all members of the counselling profession: practitioners, supervisors, students, researchers, educators and other kindred professionals to join us in this opportunity to meet, discuss, communicate, collaborate and celebrate IAC's 50 years of existence.

### **Dr Dione Mifsud**

MACP hosted its first IAC conference in 2008, a conference that had been well-organised and well-attended. MACP is excited to repeat and exceed this experience which will again take place at the Dolmen Resort Hotel Qawra. MACP has also worked on a social programme to ensure that participants savour the culture of our island home.

The theme: 'From Fate to Hope and Clarity: IAC 50 years on' is envisaged to provide counsellors and researchers with opportunities to discuss and reflect on their counselling practices. Just like "Faith", "Hope" and "Charity", three small aeroplanes historically crucial in defending Malta in the Second World War, counsellors are often a beacon of hope seeing their clients move from disempowering narratives of fate to stories of empowerment and clarity. On behalf of the MACP, I am honoured to invite you to the 2016 IAC Conference.

### **Ms Silvia Galea**

The major aim of all IAC conferences is to provide a setting in which counsellors and counselling associations irrespective of any kind of difference have equal opportunities to present, explain, understand, be heard and be understood. The intention of the conference in Malta was to bring together counsellors and kindred professionals including: Psychotherapists, Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Social Workers, Educators, Students, Researchers, Mental health and Educational Professionals to discuss ways that counselling can be a key element in effectively addressing personal, educational, career, social and cultural issues. The conference attracted 168 delegates, including leaders from 15 national or regional counselling associations. Delegates came from all major regions of the world. The pre-conference, plenary, working group and round table sessions encouraged dialogue among participants attending the conference and many sessions also included video links to presenters and participants who were unable to attend the conference. As such the spirit of the International Association for Counselling was well reflected in the conference.

## **Pre-Conference Sessions**

Pre-conference sessions were offered in full or half-day time periods and addressed the following topics;

- Ethno-cultural Dimension in Counselling Indigenous and Minority Populations in Canada
- How Can you Dance When you Don't Know the Steps?
- Drawing (to Build) Hope and Clarity
- Effective Group Therapy for Veterans with PTSD: Examining Therapeutic Engagement and Impact
- Active Witnessing Training: A Community-Building Strategy for Reducing Prejudice and Discrimination
- Counselling for Client Resilience and Wellbeing: An Adlerian Psychology-based Approach

## **Plenary Sessions**

### Ten years in Prison

Br Carmel Duca MoC

Brother Carmel Duca, is a Missionary of Charity Brothers - a Catholic Religious Congregation founded by Mother Teresa of Calcutta - in Paris. In 1998, he was sent to Colombia and then to Guatemala where he worked in different prisons. For almost ten years he was part of the chaplaincy team at Men's Central Jail in downtown Los Angeles. He currently resides in Lima, Peru and is again part of the chaplaincy team in Sarita Colonia Prison in Callao. He based his keynote speech on his experiences as a chaplain in these prisons and based is on his book Ten years in prison. Duca notes "Nobody deserves to have a loved one killed, be it by a gang-banger or the State that decides that a man is not worthy to live. I strongly believe that nobody has the right to take another person's life..." "Prisoners on death row are the poorest of the poor, so for me as a Missionaries of Charity Brother, they have a special place in my heart. I sympathize with their families and the shame they have to endure – the shame their children undergo at school especially if their father's case was a high- profile one."

### **And the Oscar Goes To...**

Dr Ruth Falzon

Dr. Falzon presented an auto-ethnographic narrative as a parent of a son with mental health issues. She also reflected on the significance of being a human with these experience in the

context of local suffering such as 640 million Children without adequate shelter;;400 million Children without access to safe water; 270 million Children without access to health services; 121 million Children without education; 10.6 million Children died unnecessarily in 2003 before the age of 5; She further presented what she would like professionals to do : We do not appreciate being given advice but want a discussion so we can decide on plans of actions on programmes and medication. This needs to happen not only with us but also with clients who may seem that they are not understanding or whom professionals may consider less intelligent than themselves. The less privileges clients have, the more responsible we need to be to lead them to empower themselves. I therefore implore you to regard your clients as the most important thing in your life for the duration of time that they are with you. She concluded: "in a context where I would not have been able to share this with you in Maltese, I would like to conclude but asking you to listen to Les Miserable's theme song Do You Hear the People Sing interpreting its lyrics within the context of people with Mental Health and their families and were It is always easy to question the judgement of others in matters of which we may be imperfectly informed. My message is: We'll live and live until we become alive again."

## Holes in our Soles

Dott. Roberta Attard & Mr. Daniel Mercieca

Attard and Mercieca gave a complimentary ethnographic narrative from the perspective of counsellors with particular reference to clients who have experienced Child abuse of been abusers themselves. Their Title – Holes in our Soles – refers to the effect of such counselling experiences on Counsellor's spirituality and wellbeing. Their keynote presented the voices of counsellors which they gleaned through individual audio-recorded interviews. These voices led them to the song Holes (Passengers) where, they noted, the lyrics of this song mirrors the counsellors' experiences in their study:

Well sometimes you can't change and you can't choose

And sometimes it seems you gain less than you lose

Now we've got holes in our hearts, yeah we've got holes in our lives

Well we've got holes, we've got holes but we carry on

They argued that counsellors to continue to do their work with passion, enthusiasm and care but to also ensure that they take care of themselves.

## How One's Own Creativity Becomes an Aid in Overcoming Obstacles

Artist John Martin Borg



Mr. John Martin Borg, spoke about his experience of finding out that he had a profile of Dyslexia and the effect that counselling has had on his wellbeing. Using the water colour painting of the Fortress Cisty of Mdina Malta EU, Mr. Borg notes: It is here in the open spaces, that my imaginative mind was able to escape, the reality of life. Here I could create my own imaginative world. It is at this point in time (1977) that my love for the country is born. He narrated his journey of the counselling experience as a very positive and lifting experience having had a very positive effect on his life, wellbeing and relationship with family and others. Mr. Borg took up water colour painting after graduating in Pharmacy from the University of Malta back in 1977 and exhibited his first works in 1979. Since then his works have gained recognition both locally and abroad. He is mostly renowned for his maritime pictures and atmospheric landscapes. Working mostly on location his water colours gradually developed into studies of moods and poetic expressions. He broke new grounds with his abstract and religious works, intertwining them seamlessly together to produce individual distinctive works, easily identifiable with the artist. In Malta his works are found in a number of important places In Malta as well as London, Paris, Heidelberg, Cologne, Munich, Stuttgart, Salzburg, San Tropez, Tunisia, Dubai and Florida (USA). Some of his works are permanently exhibited at the World Health Organization centre in Geneva, the European Parliament in Brussels, the Vatican collections, the Commonwealth Centre and the Royal Collection in London.

## **The Group Counsellor as a Person and as a Professional (via Skype)**

Dr Gerard Corey

Dr. Corey's skype session was a question and answer session rather than a keynote speech. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions directly to Corey, particularly with reference to his best-selling text which introduces students to the major theories of counseling (psychoanalytic, Adlerian, existential, person-centered, Gestalt, reality, behavior, cognitive-behavior, family systems, feminist and, postmodern approaches). In his book, he demonstrates how each theory can be applied to a single case ("Stan"). Corey's Seventh Edition covers the major concepts of counseling theories, shows students how to apply those theories in practice, and helps them learn to integrate the theories into an individualized counseling style. Incorporating the thinking, feeling, and behaving dimensions of human experience, Corey offers an easy-to-understand text that helps students compare and contrast the therapeutic models. Participants noted satisfaction at being given the opportunity to communicate directly with Corey.

## **IAC 50 Years On: Lessons Learned about the Advancement of Counselling**

Dr. Courtland Lee & Dr. William Borgen

In this session Dr. Bill Borgen and Dr. Courtland Lee, both past presidents of IAC discussed with Dr. Angela Gordon-Stair issues related to the history of the International Association for Counselling over the past 50 years, and the influence of the Association on the development of counselling worldwide. They began with comments related to Dr. Hans Hoxter who, along with his associates, decided to set up the International Round Table for the Advancement of Counselling (IRTAC) to encourage the exchange of ideas, research findings and personal

experience in the field of counselling which led to the formation of counselling. The name of the association was changed to the International Association for Counselling in 1997. Hans was the president from 1996 until 1998. Since 1966 the association has hosted 48 international conferences in over 30 countries. Through the sponsorship of consultations, seminars and conferences and to publishing the results of these exchanges, IAC has played a significant role in the development of counselling services in many parts of the world. In addition, IAC has offered advice and information to governmental and nongovernmental organizations, both international and national in industrial and developing countries alike, on the application of counselling in education, health and social services and other fields. The current definition of counselling and endorsed by IAC is as follows: a method of relating and responded others with the aim of providing them with opportunities to explore clarify and work towards living in a more satisfactory and resourceful way... Where is counselling is primarily nondirective and non-advisory, some situations require positive guidance by means of information and service. The International Association for Counselling is an international nongovernmental organization that has consultative the status with UNESCO, WHO and the ILO.

## **Working Groups**

Stimulated by the plenary sessions and the papers presented in the working groups, the discussions in each working group resulted in the development of recommendations to the conference and IAC. These recommendations will be collated into a final report on the conference which will guide future work of IAC in the use of counselling to foster a personal, educational and social opportunities for women, children and men around the world. Comments and recommendations from the working groups can be found in the Appendix.

### **Working Group 1 - Counsellor Education**

Convenor: Dorianne Coleiro  
Rapporteur: Anita Leeanna Portelli

#### **Papers Presented for Discussion**

The Changing Faces of Counselling 'Down under' In Aotearoa New Zealand  
Mr. Richard Cook

Pedagogical Consideration for Counsellor Educators Preparing Counselling Graduates for Increasingly Complex Diverse and Challenging Practice Contexts  
Ms. May Janet

Stepping Out of the Mould? A Qualitative Inquiry into the Development of a Counsellor Identity of Master in Counselling Students  
Ms. Silvia Galea

Tips for International Counselling Students and Counsellor Educators to Work with International Students  
Dr. Ümüt Arslan

My Ideal School: A Personal Construct Psychology Approach to Understanding the School

Constructs of Children Described as Anxious  
Dr. Keith Pirotta

Research Training for Counsellors and Psychotherapists -an International Exploration  
Prof. Jeannie Wright & Dr. Sofie Bager-Charleson

The Paper Mirror: Learning Self from Inside Out through Reflective Journaling among  
Counselling Students in Malaysia  
Ms. Amalia Madihie

Intercultural Competencies and the Process of Change (Le Competenze Interculturali e il  
Processo di Cambiamento)  
Ms. Manila Franzini

Diagnosis and Non-Pharmacological Treatment for Female Orgasmic Disorder  
Mr. Matthew Bartolo

### **Summary of Discussion - Working Group 1**

#### **Relational Process:**

Relational process is an area that counsellors bring to organizations. Other professions are almost in awe of this ability. This appreciation forms part of our distinctiveness and scope as counsellors.

#### **Student Counselling Education Experiences:**

Are we allowing students to work at their own pace or is education challenging them with “fixed” timeframes?

Students are exhausted with all the “reflection” writing and processes – worrying for some members of the workshop.

Counselling education teaching students to address the needs of clients and likewise counselling education must address the needs of its students – greater emphasis on pedagogy.

#### **Is it possible to create one general and international format for counselling training?**

Very difficult to honour each culture’s reality even though there are overarching theories. However an international framework would facilitate counselling education. To honour diversity the framework needs to allow for flexibility, but at the same time, guide the counsellor’s education process.

### **Working Group 2 - Practice and Supervision**

Convener: Dr John Prysor-Jones

Rapporteur: Ms. Sue Webb

### **Papers Presented for Discussion**

Ethical Belief Differences between Men and Women in Counselling  
Prof. John Sommers-Flannigan & Dr. Ümüt Arslan

Development of Competencies for Canadian Clinical Supervisors in the Counselling and Psychotherapy Profession  
Dr. Blythe Shepard

The Path Toward the Own Uniqueness: Voice Dialogue Counselling  
Dr. Elena DDV Dragotto

Lifelong Learning of Pastoral Agents between Workshop-Model and Gestalt-Counselling  
Dr. Emanuele Carbonara

The Development of a Consensus Licensure Title and Scope of Practice in the US  
Dr. David Kaplan

Examining and Processing Emotions: Enhancing Counsellor Development within the Supervision Setting  
Dr. Suzanne Mudge

Supervision: A Tool for Promoting Psychological Flexibility in Counsellors-in-Training  
Dr. Nona Wilson, Ms. Laura Vaughn & Dr Nathan Perron

Through a Glass Darkly: Investigating Non-Religious Therapists' Meanings of Religion  
Dr. Marlene Cauchi

Assessing and Promoting Psychological Wellbeing among Healthcare Employers in Malta  
Dr. Melanie DeMarco

### **Summary of Discussion - Working Group 2**

This group experienced a wide-range of papers, nine in all, addressing various aspects of counselling practice and supervision.

We began by hearing about research into the different ethical beliefs of male and female Turkish counselling students, where females were more likely to say they did not know what to answer. In a now female-dominated profession across the world, it is still necessary to encourage female counsellors to find their voice and trust their own ideas.

We then heard about the conception of an Italian training programme for lay pastoral workers, using the Gestalt construct of the cycle of contact.

This was followed by a paper on the development of competencies for supervision in Canada, which linked well with a later paper, from the USA, describing the development of a generic definition of, and scope of practice for, counselling. This was executed by bringing together 31 organisations and using the 'Delphi Method' to achieve consensus.

The working group noted a focus on the positive value of vulnerability in a number of presentations, for example, in the face of modern exigencies to be 'someone special', in the presentation of self on social media. A further paper identified that self-examination and self-reflection, which require a preparedness to be vulnerable, built growth in counselling trainees. These benefitted from an ACT approach in their training supervision, since it assisted in developing greater psychological flexibility and enabled them to be less fearful and defensive in



their supervision. In another paper, self-awareness was seen as core to managing researcher and therapist bias, with this supporting the functioning of 'an internal supervisor'.

Finally we heard about the struggle for health workers to maintain empathy and respect for their patients, when not experiencing receiving these themselves in their workplaces. Access to counselling and the provision of support groups were seen as mitigating burnout and the consequent loss of compassion.

We identified a number of recommendations for IAC:

- To recognise the differences that gender continues to bring, as well as culture;
- To develop a framework for supervision, applicable in different cultures and contexts, to promote this essential component in client and counsellor safety;
- To promote the idea of supervision as a career-long process;
- To promote the importance of self-awareness development and the encouragement of vulnerability and openness to emotions in both counselling practice and in the undertaking of counselling research;
- To stress the need for quality training for volunteer workers in the helping fields, as well as for professional counsellors;
- To encourage quality training in supervision;
- To advocate for the adequate provision of counselling services and support in workplaces that are focused on helping work, to enable workers to manage the risks of burnout.

### **Working Group 3 - Resilience**

Convener: Ms. Sharon Martinelli

Rapporteur: Mr. Karl Colerio

### **Papers Presented for Discussion**

Nurturing Attachment and Letting Go: Counselling Foster Parents Living this Paradox

Ms. Nicolette Camilleri

Body Image and Breast Cancer in Young Women

Ms. Anna Catania

Active Witnessing Strategy for Reducing Prejudice and Discrimination: Implications for Counsellors and Educators

Dr. Ishu Ishiyama

Youngest Survivors: Identifying Concepts for Combating Child and Adolescent Trauma Experienced By Refugees during International Crisis Events

Dr. Nathan Perron

Marked Difference

Mr. Matthew Scurfield

Behind Closed Doors: The Creation and experience of the female Prostitute

Ms. Marie Claire Cauchi

Resilience within the Personal and Social Development Practice: Its presence and its Contribution to the Holistic Wellbeing of Young People  
Dr. Amanda Bezzina

Milestones in the Trajectory of Female Problematic Drug Users  
Ms. Fleur Bianco

Counselling and Disability: An Understanding of Maltese Counsellors' Social Construction of Disability  
Ms. Amy Camilleri Zahra

### **Summary of Discussion - Working Group 3**

#### **Important ways of building and working with resilience.**

1. Good support system – good relationship with family friends, important other, groups and organizations and therapist is imperative for wellbeing of the person – this was seen across all presentations foster care, prostitution, drug addiction, academic or non-academic achievers, disability, young survivors of discrimination
2. The importance to empower - to promote Optimism and positive attitude – we are all intrinsically” survivors”- all have stories of resilience in different times of our lives- discrimination, vulnerable groups, illness/wellness
3. The ability to use failure/ not succeeding in one’s own advantage in constructive rather than destructive manner.
4. Seeing challenges as opportunities to grow and evolve – St. Francis of Assisi states that there are no problems in life but only solutions.
5. Engaging in acts of kindness – amongst the different groups - more release of serotonin (feel good factor) – empowering their resilience, validity as a person.
6. Good Holistic Health (physical, social, emotional psychological and spiritual) are foundational to resilience.
7. The importance of Humour – laughing in the face of adversity can be profoundly pain relieving for both body and mind.
8. Religiosity and spirituality may support resilience. Faith/ spiritual well-being doesn’t always take you out of the problem. It often takes you through the problem and doesn’t always take away the pain, but gives you the ability to handle the pain. It doesn’t take you out of the storm, but calms you in the midst of the storm.
9. The ability to find a balance – how we manage from what one needs to do and what the individual actually needs. How much responsibility do we put on the person and how much does society disown its own responsibility? Society needs to promote resilience and not just question individual’s contribution

#### **Role of counsellor**

1. The counsellor is a person who might have encountered his/ her own resilience and might also be part of the resilience of the client- Importance to create a good environment of trust and therapeutic relationship.
2. Professionalism to know own professional boundaries and expertise to be able to work with different polarities ex respectable /unrespectable; winners/losers; survivors/victims.
3. The importance professional growth -professional identity – specialization and supervision. The ability to reach out to people with different needs people who do not fit in – move away from stereotyping... one size fits all...
4. Counsellors are professional persons – and not a voluntary organization – People come to counsellors many a times overcoming their own resilience – therefore as professionals we are expected to acknowledge and be aware of this – know our own positioning. Who you are as a person will affect you how you will act as a professional – we owe our clients sensitivity, congruency, authenticity, professionalism and more.
5. To support the clients acknowledge the survivor in one's own self (people might not know what resilience means but might have experienced it) Identify resilience factors - inner strength and risk factors.
6. Hope is central to human life, hope in the future- without hope there is no recovery. Hope comes to our awareness in its absence.

### **Suggestions to IAC**

1. The importance for specialized training – to remain curious, to remain professional, to continue to update our learning
2. Counsellor's positioning – part of the system – finding a balance between one's role, the client's role and the system.
3. Self-awareness development amongst counsellors – quality training in supervision

### **Working Group 4 – Transcultural**

Convener: Ms. Jessica Bertolani

Rapporteur: Ms. Joanne Vella

### **Papers Presented for Discussion**

The Relationship between Racial Identity and Privilege Awareness among Maltese University Students

Ms. Elina Zalkalne

Cultural Infusions and Shifting Sands: How Indigenous and Immigrant Youth Make Career Decisions

Dr. William Borgen, Dr. Marla Buchanan & Dr. Ishu Ishiyama

Leadership in the Counselling Profession: Preparing Transcultural Competent Leaders

Prof. Matthew Lyons, Prof. Barbara Herlihy, Ms. Anita Pool & Ms. Katie Fetzer

Youngest Survivors: Identifying Concepts for Combating Child and Adolescent Trauma Experienced By Refugees during International Crisis Events  
Dr. Nathan Perron

Marked Difference  
Mr. Matthew Scurfield

Behind Closed Doors: The Creation and experience of the female Prostitute  
Ms. Marie Claire Cauchi

Resilience within the Personal and Social Development Practice: Its presence and its Contribution to the Holistic Wellbeing of Young People  
Dr. Amanda Bezzina

The Global Classroom: Integrating Concepts of International Counselling With Counselling Theory Constructs for a Meaningful On-Line Counsellor Education Experience  
Dr. Nathan Perron & Dr. Nona Wilson

Global Partnerships Committee: An Innovative Effort of the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association to Connect Globally  
Ms. Jenny Rowett

#### **Summary of Discussion - Working Group 4**

The suggestion was brought to utilize mentorship to help new comers to a country to undergo adjustments, not just in their career but in other aspects of their life.

For new comers to a county, the issue was brought up that language is not the only barrier, communication skills in general may be a barrier. Therefore we need to address this, by helping people adapt to the new set of communication skills.

Despite this being the information age, a lot of people had no knowledge about the labour market. We need to turn the information out there, to information that is personally relevant. This will help people have a better understanding of the information available.

We need to be aware that young people face more barriers, than older generations had, in finding a job. We need to base and adapt our theories, on knowledge of these barriers.

Young persons also need to know that they need to look for information; some may assume that labour market in other countries is the same as the labour market of their country.

Due to globalisation we need to train leaders who are transculturally competent.

Leadership should be taught in counselling courses

Studies on how to foster leadership skills were recommended.

As educators and school counsellors, we need to pinpoint people with leadership skills and help them foster such skills.

A good formation of professional identity is paramount in making a leader. We need to work on fostering a professional identity among young persons. It is the foundation to leadership.

We need to provide new leaders with mentorship and skills training, as persons are being elected as leaders and struggling to lead. This is having a negative impact on work environments.

Counsellors and other professionals working with migrants need to take on an advocacy approach, in working with migrants. We need to help with more practical factors. Helping them find new jobs and information.

A suggestion was brought up as to how to bring about a system to help refugees further their

education, how they can use their qualifications in context of the new country. We need to help them move forward

As counsellors we need to address and challenge the present system, which is a system that does not help migrants.

As counsellors, we need to challenge stereotypes, speak up when racist jokes are brought up. Our work does not end outside the counselling room.

We need to help migrants to empower themselves, the issue of self-advocacy.

We need to work on inclusion and learn from each other's culture. Cultures are existing alongside each other, but inclusion is not happening.

We need to start teaching about globalisation and cultural identity at young age. To promote inclusion we need to help people address their fears about migrants.

Come up with ways to challenge the political narrative, which seeks to blame the migrants for the country's problems.

Religion is a core part of our lives but it is not being integrated into our multicultural competencies teaching. It is not addressed as deeply or as intentionally or explicitly as other aspects of our social selves.

The issue of spirituality should not simply be a part of multicultural competencies education, but should be infused into all of counsellor education programmes

The question was brought up as to how we can do this, as religion is such a sensitive issue

Some suggestions included:

Set aside dogma and focus on values, using the language but not label of religion and spirituality

Adding values to our code of ethics.

Suggestion for counselling associations to utilize social media more in order to get message across.

More unity and collaboration between different associations is needed.

### **Working Group 5 - Youth**

Convener: Ms. Esnaty Obetile

Rapporteur: Ms. Miguela Cassar

### **Papers Presented for Discussion**

Young People Maneuvering in the Religious Feast in Malta

Dr. Andrew Azzopardi

The Use of Counselling Skills for Self-Advocacy – Listening to the Dyslexic Teens Dialogue Group

Dyslexic Teens Dialogue Group

Evaluating the YiXue Educational Programme (YEP) Listening to Voices of Different Stakeholders: A Case-Study Approach

Prof. Liberato Camilleri, Ms. Niamh Donoghue, Dr. Ruth Falzon, Dr. Dione Mifsud

Multicultural Exposure and its Challenge for Counsellors: Understanding and Helping Families and Individuals Hailing from War Torn Countries

Ms. Maria-Gabriele Doublesin

A Qualitative Study of Spirituality in the Context of Multi- Cultural Counselling Forces

Prof. Matthew Lyons & Ms. Angela James

Cultivating Two-Eyed Seeing: Creating Hope and Clarity through Conversations between Indigenous Elders and a Euro-Canadian Researcher  
Ms. Jenny Rowett, Mr. Chris Brooks, Dr. Albert Marshall & Dr. Murdena Marshall

Moving To the West: Exploring the Lived Experience of Gender Socialisation among Female Refugees Residing In Malta  
Ms. Nicolette Schembri

Overcoming School Failure – Setting up a New Post-Secondary Learning Centre – GEM16+  
Ms. Sylvana Zammit Pulo

Preparing Young Footballers for Migratory Transitions – An Action Research Study  
Dr. Adele Muscat

Socio-Demographic Variables Predicting Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice of HIV Voluntary Counselling among Secondary School Adolescents in Edo State Nigeria  
Dr. Osumah Obaze, Prof. Oyaziwo Alude & Prof. Austine Ojugo

Empowering Children through Technology  
Ms. Trine Natasja Sindahl

Problematic Internet Usage and Psychological Wellbeing of Adolescents  
Prof. F Ebru Ikiz, Prof. Zohre Kaya, Ms. Esra Asici & Dr. Ümüt Arslan

School Counselling from a Global Perspective: Building a Cross-National Theory  
Dr. Cirecie West-Olatunji, Dr. Jeff Wolfgang & Dr. HeeDae Kim & Ms. Kaifang Zheng

### **Summary of Discussion - Working Group 5**

Young People Maneuvering in the Religious Feast in Malta

- Feasts in Malta create an opportunity for young people to socialize and develop their personal skills
- Feast is a phenomenon that deals with cultural diversity, disability and other minorities. Fest helps young people feel included
- This phenomenon brings a sense of community where people have a common objective.
- It is an activity that serves to maintain society, inclusive of politics, education, economy, family and the religious aspect.
- Fest is associated with higher levels of well-being among participants and young people.
- Feast in Malta is traditionally associated with low status social groups but highly meaningful to tertiary educated youth social group.
- Preparation and participation in community events such as the festa, serve to convey meanings and expose values held by individuals as well as communities.

The Use of Counselling Skills for Self-Advocacy – Listening to the Dyslexic Teens Dialogue Group

- There is the need to create more awareness and educate the educators about dyslexia

- Create a world with equal opportunities and increase more pressure on matsec board of examinations to help change the board's system in order to provide dyslexic students with the necessary tools to help them perform better in exams
- Educate people to know more what dyslexia is and to not underestimate what people with dyslexia can do.
- Start conversation with politicians, professionals, teachers, parents, students and the public in general to empower and reach out to young people with dyslexia.

#### Evaluating the YiXue Educational Programme (YEP) Listening to Voices of Different Stakeholders: A Case-Study Approach

- A study that involved 8 youths who attended 3 seminars found themselves feeling better – they gained self-confidence, were more content and believed more in themselves.
- The profile of these youths: attention issues, communication issues, relational issues
- They had a live-in experience – the idea of being part of a community helped them to interact with each other, improved behaviour

#### Overcoming School Failure – Setting up a New Post-Secondary Learning Centre

- Give students an opportunity to study after failing exams
- Important to instill hope in students and empower them
- Setup a team to help students deal with feelings of failure
- Working on developing a more effective communication within the system i.e. teachers with students and also with parents or caregivers
- Implement the screening test process as a means of self-assessment for the student to understand better what they like and the studying habits of the students are
- Employ more counsellors

#### Preparing Young Footballers for Migratory Transitions – An Action Research Study

- Educate parents about issues youth face and provide social support
- Educate youth the skills to be more independent like managing accounts, self-care, discipline, time management
- Prepare youths for transition challenges by organising activities where youths have tutorials on handling pressure, meeting role-models, how to handle media, team sessions and organising training camps.

#### Empowering children through technology

- Counselling youths especially children through sms or chats
- It is useful because if children do not want to come to the office there must be another means how to help them
- For some youths this is the only option, it gives children a voice. Children can speak up. It is more safe for certain children to speak to a counsellor through an sms or chat especially when there is abuse involved or violence.

#### Problematic internet usage and Psychological Wellbeing of Adolescents

- Youths are using internet in a way that is creating problems in our relationships.
- Counsellors should teach children the skills and values of honour and trust in order to help youths and educate them about the use of internet.

- In certain countries girls have less problematic internet usage because they do not have the opportunity to reach internet because of not having equal opportunities.

#### School Counselling from a Global Perspective: Building a Cross-National Theory

- There is not enough research about counselling especially about school counselling
- When talking about school counsellors it is often understood as guidance teacher but school counsellors are more trained. There should be more awareness. School counsellors can do much more than just career and vocational counselling.
- School counsellors need to be comprehensive and holistic. They should be connected to families because family values are important and also to the community because community also assess values and so students can get support from the community as well.
- What we do with students must be consistent with their family and community values.
- School counselling must be evolutionary and it must be responsive to the needs of the people.
- There is a need for a holistic approach with children and not just focus on the cognitive part.
- There is the need to continue gathering data and work across-culture to assess and understand better what we as counsellors are doing.
- School counsellors should consider the culture and be responsive to the needs of the community.
- The client should be empowered and as counsellors we should be working with their communities as well and reach out in their environment

## Poster Presentations

### Poster 1

**Christopher Eriksson M.A, PhD**

***Wellbeing and Creativity – An Outcome of Individual Resonance and Community Feeling***

Gemeinschaftsgefühl (taking an interest in the interests of others, and a feeling of belonging, connectedness) is the central personality trait for psychosocial wellbeing in Adlerian psychology. One definition given by Adler is “to see with the eyes of another, to hear with the ears of another and to feel with the heart of another.” Adler placed Gemeinschaftsgefühl above nearly all desirable traits of character, and linked its absence to nearly all undesirable traits. Associated with courage and a growth mind set, it leads to a feeling of oneness and harmony. Like our body parts and organs that are integrated to work together for the common good of the whole body, Adler sees human nature and nature more broadly connected together as in a greater whole. Using an analogy from cellular biology, Adler writes about Gemeinschaftsgefühl as though it is a pluripotent cell differentiating into all forms of love: love of family, sexual love, love of nature, art, science.

This presentation shows that the creative moments described by the world’s greatest scientists and artists are an outcome of an orderly and harmonious feeling of resonance as understood by the physics of matter and music, and consistent with Adler’s feeling of community.

Creativity, originality, and genius may therefore be viewed as wellbeing that is highly focused to



a given end, and therefore potentially available to all. This must include special needs/neurodiverse children and adults like Stephen Hawking who is living proof of this, and which our own group work is confirming.

We are all part of the harmony, coherence, and resonance found in matter and in music. The great scientists and artists discovered this. As counsellors we can find it ourselves, and then help others to find it. Music can help here!

## **Poster 2**

***Dr. Tiziana Ramici***

### ***Professional Values and Code of Ethics of Career Guidance.***

The goals: This paper aims to describe some of the highlights of the Code of Ethics (American Counselling Association, Aca) during the counselling practices in which wellbeing is a positive outcome. Research questions: What are the possible effects on career trajectories?

Theoretical framework: The insecurity situations arising from organizational dynamics compromised the central phase of career, characterize more and more by boundless working experiences, prompting people to rethink life project, values and beliefs (Power & Rothausen, 2003; Ramaci, Alario & Santisi, 2014). New relevance have practices for guidance - vocational and career counselling. The lack of guidance skills is correlated to a risk of failure and exclusion which is reflected in a support of professional and flexible counselling (Guichard & Huteau, 2001). Due to the sensitivity of the issue, to monitor potential threats and curb the negative results of advisory work, are an increasing number of companies that choose to adopt a code of ethics that expresses their commitment to respect the rules of professional practice and procedures designed to promote the wellbeing and strengthening of personal resources. Limitations: This is not an easy aspect to be pursued, because the work is less and less oriented to tangible asset, and increasingly a tool that performs many of the psychological and social functions (e.g. identity and prestige). Conclusions and discussion: The knowledge of a code of ethics should be a permanent point of departure for every professional orientation. Adopt a code of ethics is equivalent to assuming a reliable and responsible behavior and, therefore, recognize the value of responsibility of individual choices.

## **Poster 3**

***Ms. Trine Natasja Sindahl,***

### ***Empowering Children through Technology***

Motivation and main research question: Child helplines all over the world have been using technology to reach children in need since the 1970s. Texting (SMS) and using Social Network Sites (SNS) is the social glue in many children's and youths' peer relationships. It makes sense to apply SMS technology to social services that target children and young people in a way that is in line with how the target group would prefer to use this technology. This research project aims to develop a validated method for dialogue-based counselling for children and youth through text messaging technology in the context of child helpline work. It will do this by investigating the micro-level processes that occur during SMS counselling sessions. Improvements in the effectiveness of SMS counselling will depend on a better understanding of therapeutic processes characteristic of this form of delivery. Data consist of transcripts of app.

1.000 SMS counselling sessions with children at the Danish child helpline. A content analysis (Neuendorf, 2002) is applied. Counsellor behaviour is compared with outcome measures in order to establish which counsellor behaviours and intervention styles are related to better outcome. The children participating in the study answers an End-session and a two week Follow-up Questionnaire. The children are contacted through the SMS technology used for the counselling sessions ensuring that the children remain anonymous throughout the entire study but still connecting the children's answers to the specific session. Outcome measures focus on three main outcomes: 1) Wellbeing, 2) Empowerment, 3) To be heard. Data are gathered from medio 2015 to ultimo 2016.

## Poster 4

**Ms. Jane Frank Nalubega**

**Co-authors:** Prof. Seggane Musisi, Dr Joyce Bukirwa Ssessanga & Mr. Christopher Ddamulira

### ***Counselling as a Part of Holistic Approaches for Elderly Interventions***

The total number of older persons in Uganda increased from 1,196,439 in 2005/06 to 1,304,464 in 2009/10 (UNPHS, 2013). This increasing numbers and an elongated life span signal the need for counselling services to a population overlooked. To advocate for counselling as part of holistic care of elderly persons in Mildmay Uganda. The continuity theory states that the elderly do not have to change their lifestyles, behaviours, or identities, but maintain consistency in personality beliefs, and relationships so as to remain active (Atchley, 1989). Counselling can help maintain social equilibrium and stability leading to good decision making thus "normal" aging. Why is Counselling seen as a best practice intervention for the elderly? Role transitions and losses heighten the vulnerability of the elderly. It is sighted that vulnerability of the elderly as influenced by social exclusion, prejudice and discrimination, including lack of socio-legal protection, overlaps with other developmental issues (Zelenev, 2008). Good counselling services can lessen the psychological turmoil experienced. This was an interventional study aiming at establishing what defines quality of life among the elderly. Face to face interviews using questions derived from the WHO-QOL BREF instrument were conducted. The questions required the elderly to state how they experienced certain aspects in the past four weeks. 82 participants were interviewed as part of the study. Major causes of discomfort reported included; unemployment which is not taken significant coupled with normal difficulties facing any job seeker, discrimination, stereotypical attitudes, changes in their abilities, and a negative self-image. Older persons are reluctant to disclose information and view counselling with doubt, suspicion, and anxiety. The majority of the elderly need holistic interventions to relieve stress. Counselors should treat them with respect while emphasizing their strengths not weaknesses, helping development of independence while diminishing dependence, and encourage decision making and action taking during counselling interventions.

## Poster 5

**Mr. Stephen Camilleri Prof. Deborah Chetcuti Dr. Ruth Falzon**

**The Experience of Students with Dyslexia Sitting for their SEC and MATSEC Examinations: Listening to their Voices**



This study explored the experience of Maltese students with a profile of dyslexia sitting for their SEC and MATSEC examinations. These examinations are highly selective and channel and certify students based on ability (Sultana, 1996; Buhagiar & Chetcuti, 2013) and their set up brings more pronounced challenges for these students. There is very little literature on the point of view of students with dyslexia (Pollak, 2005). This study attempted to address this lack of 'student voice'. Individual audio-recorded interviews and type/written narratives allowed participants to express themselves in their own time and provided a life history narrative that enables us to understand the assessment story through their eyes (Goodson, 2013). Participant Mark reflected, "I wonder how many great minds were lost simply because the type of intelligence and ideas they had were not the ones the examiners wanted." Mark's identity and self-worth are being determined by examinations and ascribed to him by examiners who might not understand him or what he really stands for. Participants expressed anger, dismay and sadness at the barriers these examinations were creating. They could not demonstrate what they know and can do. Their recommendations tally with literature and evidence-based practice on policy and implementations.

## Poster 6

### Ms. Janet Vella Walking in socks

I find this to be the most appropriate moment to bring all my happenings to share and change lives. A silent way of speaking to my audience, letting them draw in as much strength and transformation as they so wish, from every word and event they can relate to. If all the sufferings that happened to me in my last years were to be used to change only one life, then my work is done. There were two sides of me writing this book: the part of me that was open to the flow of expression with no inhibitions or voices, aiming to give away the minute details of each story; and the other part that wanted to cocoon and protect from spreading my life to the point of transparency. Voices arose; judging, mocking and deterring me away from the ultimate scope. Others that propelled me into one pointed focus. Yes of course this is a tell all; but not because I just want to expose. It is that deep inner, innate knowing that a word or an event can ignite something in someone's life, right when they need it. The realization that my experiences came to me for a reason, forced my pen to scribble.

Most moments came to me because I simply but unconsciously asked for them. Others happened because I wasn't switched on and needed a wake-up call. So with as many tiny memories, recalled and thought of, I write in full compassion of my instinctive ability to make a difference, through bold expression and interaction. I believe this life has given me the humble opportunity to meet any individual wherever they may be in their journey. I spiral in stories that show the subtle reluctance that I had to move away from being in contact with my stagnant comfort zone into unsteadiness and total expansion. Transitioning from dark to light reflecting new steps, new dreams and even fluffier skies - this is my enchanted journey of transformation. It is my story related in backward motion of events starting from the very beautiful present moment to the tenderness of my childhood that was scattered with fleeting moments of joy drowned by lasting days of gloom.

Along the way of my physical and emotional recovery, I had to deal with the demons of my shattered soul, past karmas and wounds that were gaping open. The process of spiritual



healing has changed the way I look at life, the way I choreograph my days and my steps, how I live and what I teach. Many times I found myself on the brink, being pulled back to safety with angelic forces, the kind that inject you with the determination to turn the most bitter lemons into the sweetest lemonade. My story starts right here, right now at this very present breath. It is where I stand tall. Writing backwards is due to a memory that has chosen to stray. The many things that I went through, perhaps, molded a protective wall to keep me guarded. I may have subconsciously chosen to block or forget certain events that tore my being to shreds. During the writing of this book, there were days an event would jolt me up at night and I had to wake up and write in fear of totally dis remembering details by morning. This is a peak in my closet, a secret passageway to my journal, my stumbles and life on this plane. My parents, the child that I lost, the brokenness, the written aches, letters to those who destroyed, words from my diary, Yoga, Dance, deadly silence, death, suicide, motherhood, womanhood, love, fragility and life; one word, one event, one experience at a time, I share it all with the world.

## **Poster 7**

**Dr. Asude Malkoç Dr. ilhan Yalcin**

### **From Mindfulness to Wellbeing: The Role of Emotion Regulation Strategies**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of emotion regulation strategies in the relationship between mindfulness and psychological wellbeing. For this purpose, a structural model was proposed. In this model, it is hypothesized that mindfulness positively predicts cognitive reappraisal in emotion regulation, and negatively predicts suppression strategy of emotion regulation. It is hypothesized, also, that cognitive reappraisal in emotion regulation positively predicts, and suppression strategy of emotion regulation negatively predicts the psychological wellbeing. A total of 551 university students participated in the study. The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale, The Emotion Regulation Questionnaire, and The Flourishing Scale were used to collect the data. The structural equation modelling method was used to analyse the data.

The results of the analysis confirmed the proposed model. Accordingly, mindfulness both directly and indirectly through cognitive reappraisal and suppression strategy of emotion regulation predicts psychological wellbeing. The findings suggest that mindfulness and emotion regulation strategies have considerable effects on the psychological wellbeing.

## **Poster 8**

### **The Dream Catcher**

A special thank you goes to the guidance team and staff at St. Theresa College for assisting the students with their work; and to Ms. Sandra Cortis, Service Manager and Mr. Victor Agius, Principal of St. Theresa College for their continuous support.

As counsellors and therapists we are collaborators in a process of positive change with our clients. Counselling is a humble and discreet profession embedded in confidentiality and the counsellor's job is complete when the client is ready to move on. The inspiration for this study came out of an element of professional curiosity: How do secondary school students describe their experience of the counselling process? Student-participants who had engaged in a counselling process for over six months were asked to use any media to express their

experience. All chose drawing, whilst one chose poetry and prose. These students agree that counselling made a difference in their lives. It was a process of collaboration between counsellor and student. They concentrated more on new skills gained from the process. The power of writing and how through this skill one's own stories and narratives can be re-edited into more functional realities was also reported. The participants chose the dream catcher as the title of this project as this symbolises the process wherein they come in touch with themselves and work towards achieving their dreams.

## **Round Tables**

The conference has also stimulated the work of the seven IAC Round Tables that will continue to meet though out the year via video conference.

### **Indigenous Roundtable: Sharing an Emerging Vision for Aboriginal Ways of Knowing in Counselling**

Chair: Dr. Blythe Shepard

### **Students' and Young Counsellors' Roundtable: Exploring Counsellor Training Opportunities Internationally**

Chairs: Dr. Bart Begalka & Ms. Valentina Chicinova

### **Ethics Roundtable: Multiple Relationships in Counselling - Perspectives from our Different Cultures**

Chair: Dr. Ron Lehr

Facilitator: Dr. David Paterson

Delphi Room

### **Research Roundtable: International Research: A Focus on its Present and Projecting its Future**

Chair: Dr. Courtland Lee

### **Projects' Roundtable - Working Together and Sharing Resources to Enhance Counselling**

Chair: Dr. William Borgen

### **Peace and Social Justice Roundtable - Exploring Concepts of Peace and Social Justice with Counselling through Multinational Dialogue**

Chair: Dr. Vivian Lee

### **Counselling Practitioners' Round Table: Experiencing Hope: The Benefits of Embracing Hope in Personal and Professional Contexts.**

Chair: Dr. John Prysor-Jones

## **Organizational Changes in the International Association for Counselling That Were Approved During the Conference**

1. IAC enhanced its organisational structure to ensure global and inclusive representation from each of eight designated world regions: Asia, Africa, Latin America, Caribbean, Oceania,

Europe, North America and the Middle East.

2. IAC elected eight Regional Members, one from each of the aforementioned world regions, to the IAC Executive Council. The regional members will represent IAC in their particular region and advance the central aim of IAC, namely, to advance the field of counselling through Practice, Education, Advocacy, Policy and Research initiatives.

3. The IAC Executive Council adopted and endorsed a new strategy (IAC Strategy 2016-2021, attached) which commits IAC to advancing the field of counselling worldwide in order to promote health, well-being, respect, social justice and peace. Through this strategy, IAC will promote the application of counselling knowledge and skills to enable the resolution of personal, societal and global challenges. The strategy sets out the Association's specific aims and actions that will enable the strengthening of our International, National and Organisational partnerships and the utilisation of IAC's global connections and technology in order to continue serving as a uniting global voice for counselling.

4. The IAC Executive Council approved the wider engagement of counsellors, counsellor educators, policy makers, national counselling associations and kindred professions in the areas of mental health and education through offering a new range of membership and partnership possibilities.

5. The IAC Executive Council appointed an acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to enhance the overall management, operations and administration of IAC. The CEO is tasked with the planning, communicating and execution of the organisational strategy and operations in a manner consistent with its mission, vision, ethos and values and to ensure the association's objectives and goals are delivered in line with the organisation's policies and procedures.

William A. Borgen, PhD.  
Member, Executive Council, IAC

