

WORKSHOP 2: GMH PASSION PROJECT CONSULTATION WORKSHOP: EXAMINING THE BI-DIRECTIONAL IMPACT OF OUR WORK

Gwen Mitchell, PsyD
University of Denver
Denver, CO

Yursa Ahmad, MD, FRCPC
Women's College Hospital & St. Michael's Hospital
Toronto

Omar Reda, MD
Oregon

Arlette Herry, PsyD
St. George's University
Grenada

WORKSHOP ABSTRACT: In today's busy world of multidisciplinary teams, our roles are constantly changing, and remaining true to our various roles can be a difficult demand. Not only must we often formulate a differential diagnosis early in initial consultations, we must also establish rapport, honor cultural explanatory models, consider individual and systems level concerns and expectations, and negotiate a care plan. This is often in challenging settings where limited resources are the norm and information technology systems are ever changing. Additionally, there is a well-intentioned push to scale up hopeful projects for greater reach. All these things are happening at a very fast pace and passion projects are typically being managed on top of full time jobs. This means that, in addition to meeting the demands of our systems, we are forced to manage our own emotions, agendas and uncertainties. The aim of this workshop is to first share a few exciting emerging projects and topic areas in GMH. These projects include Dr. Ahmad's innovative "Mindfully Muslim" initiative; Dr. Reda's work with refugees and traumatized families; Dr. Herry's work in Grenada focused on capacity building with law enforcement and social services personnel; and, Dr. Mitchell's reflections on Forensic Mental Evaluations conducted for US immigration courts. Each presenter will do a brief presentation on their respective projects and then reflect on how being engaged in these projects has both energized them as well as impacted them in unexpected ways. The point of this workshop is to practice engaged reflective practice and consultation. The presenters will be modeling this process by first presenting their projects and then engaging in a consultation process with workshop participants. Their aim is to collectively utilize each other as sounding boards and sources of mutual empowerment.

BACKGROUND: At first glance, consultation models, some of which were derived decades ago, may seem irrelevant to modern general practice. This workshop will be a blend of mini presentations about unique passion projects that serve marginalized communities, followed by a facilitated consultation session to reflect on the work, it's impact on us as providers, and

examine the relative advantages of taking the time to engage in meaningful self-reflection and consultation as it relates to our professional identities and engaging in work that matters to us. This workshop will also demonstrate to you why consultation models are relevant and how they can help practitioners, trainees, and clients. By the end of this workshop you will learn about some emerging projects, featuring the work of the four speakers and then participants will engage in an experiential consultation session that is meant to provide an opportunity for professionals to think about clinical and systems encounters which can leave us drained, puzzled, hopeless, or stuck. Through discussion about the relationship, culture, and identity, the workshop facilitators hope to provide an opportunity to consult about the various perspectives of the issues explored in this workshop.

AIMS/OBJECTIVES/ISSUES OF FOCUS: The aim of this workshop is to first share a few exciting emerging projects and topic areas in GMH. These projects include Dr. Ahmad's innovative "Mindfully Muslim" Curriculum; Dr. Reda's work with refugees and traumatized families; Dr. Herry's work in Grenada focused on capacity building with law enforcement and social services and Dr. Mitchell's reflections on Forensic Mental Evaluations conducted for US immigration courts. Each presenter will do a brief presentation on their respective projects and then reflect on how being engaged in these projects has both energized them as well as impacted them in unexpected ways. The point of this workshop is to practice engaged reflective practice and consultation. The presenters will be modeling this process by first presenting their project and then engaging in a consultation process with workshop participants. Their aim is to collectively utilize one-another as sounding boards and sources of mutual empowerment.

SPEAKER BIOS & FEATURED TALK TOPICS:

Yursa Ahmad Dr. Yusra Ahmad, MD, FRCPC, is a community & academic psychiatrist in Toronto. Dr. Ahmad created Mindfully Muslim after she witnessed the impact of repetitive trauma on her community, culminating in the Quebec City mosque shooting. Mindfully Muslim is an anti-oppressive, trauma-informed, faith-based group therapy program that blends her interests in mindfulness, neurobiology, poetry, self-help, psychotherapy and religion. It has been adopted by Women's Health in Women's Hands and Health Access Thorncliffe Park, two community health centres in Toronto. She delivered a modified version of this program alongside an Arabic translator to Syrian newcomer women at Sistering. Mindfully Muslim has received a 2019 Excellence Fund research grant through the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto. Dr. Ahmad has specific expertise in trauma, mood and anxiety disorders. She believes in the power of psychotherapy to address the struggles that spring from the human condition. She is also dedicated to community work & advocacy around diverse issues such as intimate partner violence, gender equity and the struggles of Muslim youth & families. She is the recipient of the 2019 Ontario Psychiatric Association Breakout Community Psychiatry Award and will be speaking about her journey to create, launch and sustain Mindfully Muslim. Please see: <https://www.eopa.ca/about-us/opa-awards/opa-breakout-community-psychiatry-advocacy-award>

Omar Reda is a Libyan-American psychiatrist in Oregon, with first-hand extensive personal and professional experience working with the psycho-social aftermath of the trauma story. His model

of care, Untangled, is designed to break the cycles of trauma, through family bonding and youth empowerment. Omar is inspired daily by the loving memory of his mother and the support of his amazing wife and three beautiful daughters. Dr. Reda's talk will focus on the importance of family bonding in untangling the web of trauma.

Arlette Herry is a health psychologist from Grenada whose work involves training with local law enforcement and social services agencies to provide culturally-sensitive care to victims of abuse and trauma. She is also the Director of the Masters in Clinical & Community Psychology at St. George's University - a program which was developed specifically to build psychological capacity in the Caribbean region. Dr. Herry's talk will reflect on establishing the Caribbean Association of National Psychological Associations (CANPA) and integrating disaster behavioral health into existing programming.

Gwen Mitchell is a clinical psychologist and assistant professor at the University of Denver in the Master's Program in International Disaster Psychology (MAIDP) which focuses on trauma psychology and global mental health. In this position is the clinical advisor for a program that offers mental health support to survivors of torture in the greater Denver, Colorado area. She also maintains a private practice where she provides expert evaluations and testimony in the areas of asylum, immigration, PTSD, and fight-vs-flight. Her international work experience includes positions with Doctors without Borders, The Center for Victims of Torture, Open Society Foundation, and SalusWorld. Dr. Mitchell has various publications in the areas of: refugee mental health, post traumatic growth (PTG), counseling applications with people of African ancestry, women's global health, the impact of war on civilians, therapeutic photography, re-entry trauma, group counseling with vulnerable groups in Myanmar, the experience of working as a psychologist internationally, and training graduate level students in clinical psychology. Dr. Mitchell's talk will focus on the impact of conducting forensic psychological assessments for immigration courts and reflecting on the required need to remain objective and neutral during these complex times.

METHODS/PROPOSITION: This workshop aims to slightly tweak the intent of a "Balint Group." Michael Balint was a Hungarian psycho-analyst who worked with groups of physicians in London in the 1950s and 1960s. He developed a model to help physicians explore, and understand, the psychological component of the medical consultation. The key to this model is to acknowledge that both the clinician and the client have feelings that they bring to the consultation and that these impact on the consultation.

The common thread running through Baliant Groups is emphasizing the importance of listening to our clients with the belief that attentive listening can make patients feel better. With this workshop we would like to emphasize that it is just as important to listen to ourselves as it is to listen to our clients. This workshop aims to provide an opportunity for professionals to think about their encounters (with clients or beneficiaries of research subjects or passion projects) and reflect on what leaves you feeling drained, puzzled or stuck, and, what leaves you feeling energized, hopeful and creative. Through discussion about the relationship to people and projects, we hope to provide the possibility of finding new ways forward with the work.

The frame of the workshop will be a series of four (Ted-style) talks that summarize four unique elements of the work in four very different context followed by a personal “Balint style” reflection on how the work and the clinical encounters associated with the work impact the speaker. This will be followed by facilitated discussions in smaller groups focused on the workshop participants and their work and personal projects. The proposed time is that each speaker presents for 6 minutes followed by an additional 6 months of large group discussion about the talks allowing for targeted questions to the presenters. For the next 45 minutes the speakers with work with smaller groups by facilitating reflective consultation groups for the attendees. The final 15 minutes will focus on focus on a large group debrief of the activity and its impact.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this presentation learners will be able to:

- 1) Speak about the special projects shared in this workshop.
- 2) Meaningful reflect on the work participants are engaged in and the impact this work has on providers.
- 3) Discuss the importance of consultation and reflection in our practices

Poem that could serve as a prompt for the consultation session:

Working Together

We shape our self
to fit this world
and by the world
are shaped again.
The visible
and the invisible
working together
in common cause,
to produce
the miraculous.
I am thinking of the way
the intangible air
passed at speed
round a shaped wing
easily
holds our weight.
So may we, in this life
trust
to those elements
we have yet to see
or imagine,
and look for the true
shape of our own self,

by forming it well
to the great
intangibles about us.

— David Whyte

from [The House of Belonging](#)