

THE HEALER AND THE PSYCHIATRIST

Mike Poltorak, MD

University of Kent

Canterbury

In the South Pacific Island group of Vava'u, the traditional healer Emeline Lolohea treats people affected by spirits. One day away by ferry, the only Tongan Psychiatrist Dr Mapa Puloka has established a public psychiatry well known across the region. Though they have never met in person, this film creates a dialogue between them on the nature of mental illness and spiritual affliction. Their discussion offers challenges and opportunities to help address the growing global mental health crisis.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this workshop, participants will be able to:

1. Recognize a concrete case of a Psychiatrist using traditional concepts to encourage greater awareness of Psychiatric ideas.
2. Gain an ethnographic understanding of the complexity of why people go to a healer or a psychiatrist for mental health conditions.

References

Poltorak, M. 2016. Anthropology, Brokerage and Collaboration in the development of a Tongan Public Psychiatry: Local Lessons for Global Mental Health. *Transcultural Psychiatry* 53(6) 743-765

Poltorak, M. 2013. The Efficacy and Self-Efficacy of Treatment: Ethnomedical Aspirations, Biomedical Inhibitions and Health Outcomes. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 27: 2, 272-291