

ART AND CULTURAL PSYCHIATRY: GLOBAL INITIATIVES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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Background: Cultural psychiatry has engaged with variations of global imaginations unique to local idioms, collective and individual realities especially for high risk groups. Community engagement projects using art based healing interventions are generating wider possibilities for cultural psychiatry. Since Prinzhorn's efforts to make a collection of "art brut", art methods stimulated by Winnicott's transitional theories, the emergence of "modern" art and art therapies, wider possibilities of art based work will be reviewed.

Aims: This presentation will discuss a few exceptional examples stimulated by need to use nonverbal methodology, promote resilience and advocacy for high risk populations and address trauma recovery. Project work will include: Dr. Bhargavi Davar's Pune art based programs, NIMHANS Bangalore's (Dr Shekhar Sehasdri's team) expanding advocacy and high risk programs (SAMVAD), the TARA trust projects (Dr. Katha Kakar) in Goa, the tree of life narrative project (Ncazelo Ncube) of South Africa, the psycho-historiographic basis of the Jamaican Dream-a-World project (Dr. Fred Hickling), and Brazilian theatre work for rehabilitation.

Method: The presentation will integrate theory and practice as well as research possibilities of art based intervention. Art based approaches for individuals at risk will be described with emphasis on essential aspects of these program approaches. In Pune (India), Dr. Davar for example has a trauma focus on the "body speaking" and non verbal methods of engagement developed with high risk communities where mainstream psychiatry have not been successful, failed to provide emotional safe spaces and have remained highly stigmatized.

Implications: The session will discuss the implications for a broader vision of art and healing with wider applications relevant to decolonization, war, and conflict zone mental health needs and diverse communities at risk. The implications for children, pedagogy and engagement with specific needs of minorities have been fundamental to these projects.

Learning Objectives

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

1. Become acquainted with several international global initiatives using art based methods which have had potential for aims of promote resilience, wellness, trauma recovery, community engagement and research in India, Jamaica, and Brazil.
2. Become acquainted with aims of these project initiatives and their theoretical bases using art based interventions with relevance to community engagement, resilience promotion, decolonization, identity formation, and developmental gains.