

MADRAS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY
International Conference on Excellence in Mental Health Practices – A Way
Forward
17th & 18th February 2020



Session 1

Healing Inner Conflict by Mr David Gotlieb

The session started with Mr. David Gotlieb explaining how one needs to look at people holistically instead of viewing them as a set of symptoms. He also explained that disturbances are not to be gotten rid of, but rather help us to locate the source of pain. He went on to assure the gathering that all of their choices are determined by mechanisms created by things that were not our choices.

The main concept under Healing Inner Conflict is as follows:

Four underlying mechanisms people have for their behaviour are

- Child - A source of Inner criticism
- Adolescents - Closely related to child, but an attempt to rearrange the external world to help with internal pain. Can involve acting out.
- Adult - Passive Aggressive behaviour, torn between adolescent instincts and long-term goals/keeping the peace.
- Self-Distracton - A need to override your inner self when you are seemingly overwhelmed.

Two types of brains:

- The Reptilian Brain - full of primal instincts, based on centuries of evolution and the human species.
- The Neocortex Brain - a more recent evolution, it is the brain capable of abstract thoughts, feelings and expression.

He also gave the audience a gist of the type of signals that can point to disturbances in the psyche.

- Content Signals: The meaning of the things people express to you.
- Process Signals: The way in which people express or choose not to express their feelings.



Session 2

Choice Theory Reality Therapy by Ms Loheshwary Arumugam.

The session began with the audience and resource person discussing the expected outcomes of the session. Then she outlined three modules herself - Intro into the theory, how one can use CTRT and how to supervise.

She went through the certification process for CTRT in Malaysia, which consists of going through theory, meeting with patients and getting supervision.

CTRT is a branch of psychotherapy. It is relatively briefer than other types of therapies and can be used to supplement them.

The 5 categories of Needs which are:

- Survival
- Love & Belonging
- Power
- Freedom
- Fun

She asked the crowd to talk about what they considered most important.

She discussed quite a few situations related to marriage in which CTRT can be effective.

Techniques Of CTRT

- Questioning - Asking the client what they want
- Summarization - Help client see clearly
- Asking open ended questions - Don't let them fixate on the problem alone
- Positivity
- Confrontation - Teaching clients see if their excuses are legitimate or not.
- Reframing - Help client change their perspective.



Session 3

The session 3 held on day 1 (17/02/2020) was a panel discussion on the topic Significance of Professional Supervision in the Indian Context. The panel consisted of IAPS Certified Supervisors Dr. Susha Janardhanan, Dr. Mamatha Shetty, Dr. Kushi Kuttappa, and Dr. Keshav Sharma. The session was moderated by Dr. Thaddeus Alfonso.

The session included discussions on the challenges faced by professional counsellors/psychologists in practice; the need, importance and ethics in supervision; and how supervision can help deal with the challenges in practice. These topics entailed discussions on self-care for therapists, burnout and compassion fatigue, social evolutions and the meanings attached to them, expectations of the society from both educational institutions and students, as well as the crossroads that threaten/demand a confidentiality breach. The panel discussion was concluded with points of how supervision is of paramount importance in helping to make budding professionals in the field of mental health more effective practitioners and also hoped for a professional licensing board for mental health professionals.



Session 4

Introduction to Gestalt Therapy by Dr. Sam Manickam

The session began with Dr. Sam Manickam discussing the people responsible for the rise of gestalt therapy, namely Laura Perls and Fritz Perls. He also mentioned how Laura does not

always get as much credit as Fritz, despite being just as influential. He introduced the crowd to a Gestalt Prayer and then discussed the Learning Objectives of the session.

Dr. Sam talked about the importance of giving the client returns on their time, effort and money and the common factors of gestalt therapy.

Soon, he did an activity on a few volunteers from the crowd, addressing their anxiety and meanwhile explaining what 'Here and Now' really means. He discussed Neurotic Anxiety and also mentioned how gestalt therapy encourages grounding. He concluded the discussion by talking about the concepts of unfinished business and catastrophizing.



Session 5

"Supervision" - A meta perspective by Dr. P. K. Saru

The session highlighted the need for a hierarchy in all domains including supervision in the mental health system and how it is the structural way for guidance, support and protection. Dr. P. K. Saru spoke about what is supervision, what are the factors influencing supervision, the role that supervision plays in providing supervisees with new perspectives, and the major issues that

supervision looks into. She also spoke about the need for supervision for all professionals essentially to manage situations of fallibility, burnout and stagnation. Further she explained the models of supervision that aim to cater to the level of experience of the supervisees thereby going from development of skills and confidence building, (to) building of identity and enhancement of knowledge, (to) challenge them develop a multi-theoretical framework while enhancing their flexibility. She concluded with the statement that integrity depends on the internal boundaries and so the guru can be the teacher, the trainer, the therapist, and a supervisor.



Session 6

The session 6 held on day 2 (18/02/2020) was a panel discussion on the topic "Achieving Excellence in practical Scope and challenges". The panel consisted of Dr. Shilpa Pandit, who was the moderator, Ms. Magdalene Jayarathnam, Ms. Priya Ramesh, Ms. S. Vandhana, Ms. Aarthi C Rajarathnam.

The discussion focused mainly on excellence in various fields. Ms. S. Vandhana discussed the challenges in geriatric counselling and how we can be more aware and assess better. Ms. Priya Ramesh elaborated on the challenges of changing trends in relationships and society. Ms.

Magdalene Jayarathnam detailed the challenges of working with Millenials and the importance of supervision and mentoring. Ms. Aarthi Rajarathnam highlighted the areas in the field and the education system that need fine tuning in order to attain excellence.

The panel discussion concluded with a discussion on change and recognising signs of excellence and how to get there.

