Greetings from International Section Co-Chairs

US-Based Co-Chair
Yu-Wei Wang, Ph.D.
Assistant Director/Research Director/Clinical Associate Professor, University of Maryland Counseling Center, U.S.A.

Non-US-based Co-Chair
Fatima Rashed Al-Darmaki, Ph.D.
Assistant Provost for Student Affairs and Associate Professor, Zayed University, U.A.E.

Dear Members and Friends of the International Section:

Greetings! This is the first Newsletter that we have issued since our term as the Co-Chairs of the International Section started in August, 2014. We would like to express our sincere and wholehearted appreciation to our outgoing officers for devoting their time and energy to serving the members of our Section. We really appreciate the wonderful leadership of our Section’s past Co-Chairs, Drs. Chiachih DC Wang & Makiko Kasai, Treasurer—Dr. Jinhee Kang, non-U.S.-based Membership Officer—Dr. Chi-Ping Deng, and the Chair of our International Mentoring & Orientation Committee (IMOC)—Dr. Sayaka Machizawa. Our Section has grown and thrived under their leadership and guidance!

The Board members and Committee Chairs have been working tirelessly on a number of projects to serve our members. Below is an update of the various initiatives and services that we have provided to international counseling psychologists and students.

At the 2014 APA Convention:
Our Section hosted the International Scholars Welcoming and Orientation Breakfast; more than 50 U.S. and international scholars and students attended this breakfast meeting. We also held our Section’s award ceremony to recognize two exceptional individuals who received the Section’s annual awards. Dr. Jeffrey Prince from University of California, Berkeley, received the Excellent Contribution Award for his distinctive contributions that advance the practice and science of international counseling psychology. Ms. Jennifer Mootz from Texas Woman’s University received the Outstanding Graduate Student Research Award for her dissertation on gender-based violence in Uganda.

In addition, we offered the International Students Mentoring Program on topics including applying for internship, academic career in the U.S., practice-related careers in the U.S. and career paths back home. We collaborated with the Div. 17 Supervision & Training Section to conduct a joint Section-dedicated Roundtable program focusing on issues related to clinical supervision and training of international trainees. Furthermore, we provided a Roundtable for international practitioners. Finally, we mentored one Div. 17 Leadership Academy participant—Dominique Malebranche—in conducting her Academy project, "Globalizing our field: Highlighting cross-cultural programs to enhance cultural competencies." She presented her project at the Convention.
Fall, Winter, & Spring of 2014-2015:
Our Board members and Committee Chairs have been working hard on a number of initiatives. Our International Mentoring & Orientation Committee (IMOC; chaired by Dr. Elena Yakunina) and the International Psychology Practitioners Committee (IPPC; chaired by Dr. Bong Joo Hwang) offered a webinar to Counseling Psychology doctoral students on preparing for pre-doctoral internship interviews. The IPPC presented on the experiences of international/immigrant supervisors at the 2015 National Multicultural Conference & Summit. Moreover, our Treasurer (Dr. Heweon Seo) and Membership Co-Officers (Dr. Sayaka Machizawa and Dr. Hana Suzuki) have been updating the membership directory, and our Website Master (Dr. Arlette Ngouebene-Atioky) has been working tirelessly on updating our website. Our secretary (Dr. Ingrid Weigold) coordinated the poster reviews for Div. 17 Student Poster Session at the 2015 APA Convention. Finally, our student representatives (Ted Bartholomew and Jennifer Chain) conducted a needs-assessment survey with international students and a student forum for international counseling psychology students on conducting research and clinical work abroad.

New Initiatives:
We have formed two committees for our new initiatives: (1) the International Research Committee (co-chaired by Drs. Bong Joo Hwang and Arlette Ngouebene-Atioky) to investigate international counseling students and psychologists’ job search difficulties, and (2) the Cross-Cultural Immersion/Training Committee (co-chaired by Ms. Dominique Malebranche and Ms. Lei Wang) to survey Counseling Psychology programs regarding cross-cultural training opportunities for their students. If you are interested in being involved in these exciting initiatives, please contact Drs. Fatima Al-Darmaki at fatima.aldarmaki@zu.ac.ae or Yu-Wei Wang at yuwei-wang2@gmail.com.

Newsletter:
This issue of our Section’s newsletter includes three articles in our Counseling Worldwide series. One of our student representatives, Mr. Theodore Bartholomew, wrote an article about mental health services in Northern Namibia. Professor Vsevolod Konstantinov contributed an article on the past, present and future development of Counseling Psychology in Russia. Finally, Dr. Fatima Al-Darmaki and Mr. Saad Yaaqeib wrote about the status of psychology and mental health services in the UAE. We really appreciate Dr. Keum-Hyeong Choi for her outstanding work with the Newsletters in the past two years. Please contact our incoming Newsletter Editor, Dr. Shengying Zhang at sherryzsy@gmail.com if you are interested in contributing an article to our future Newsletter issues.

Awards & Recognition:
Our Awards & Recognition Committee (co-chaired by Drs. Jinhee Kang and Yi-Jiun Lin) reviewed a number of outstanding nominations and selected this year’s award recipients:

- Lifetime Achievement Award: Alvin Seung-Ming Leung, Ph.D.
- Excellent Contribution Award: Arpana G. Inman, Ph.D.
- Graduate Student Outstanding Research Award: Theodore Bartholomew, M.A.

The award winners will receive a plaque and be invited to give a speech at the International Scholars Welcoming and Orientation Breakfast during the 2015 APA convention.

Election:
We pleased to share with you the results of the 2015 APA Div. 17 International Section elections:
- U.S.-based Co-Chair Elect, 2015-2016 (serve as Co-Chair for a two-year term from 2016 to 2018): Dr. Jinhee Kang
- Non U.S.-based Co-Chair Elect, 2015-2016 (serve as Co-Chair for a two-year term from 2016 to 2018): Dr. Zhi-Jin Hou

We look forward to having Drs. Kang, Hou, Weigold, and Lin joining our Board in August.

At the 2015 APA Conventions:
All of the conference programs that our Section sponsored were reviewed and accepted for presentations at the 2015 APA conventions. We will present (1) an interdivisional symposium on “Increasing supervisor competence in religious and spiritual issues” with the Div. 17 Supervision & Training Section, Div. 17 Special Interest Group in Religion/Spiritual Issues, and Div. 36 (Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality), (2) an intersectional symposium on “Women’s work issues in international health and economic contexts” with the Society for Vocational Psychology, Society for the Advance-ment of Women, and Health Psychology Section, and (3) an intersectional symposium on “Culturally responsive interventions within university counseling centers” with the Section on Ethnic & Racial Diversity, Section on College & University Counseling Centers, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender Issues Section.

In addition to these Symposia, we will sponsor/co-sponsor three Roundtable sessions at the 2015 APA Convention: (1) “Reentry experiences and transition process for international students/scholars,” (2) “Clinical supervision in a diverse, global society” with the Supervision & Training Section; and (3) “Understanding work issues for world citizens in the 21st century” with the Society for Vocational Psychology.

In addition to our regular activities (e.g., International Scholars Welcoming and Orientation Breakfast, awards recognition, and International Students Mentoring Program roundtables), we will celebrate our Section’s 10th year anniversary at the upcoming APA Annual Convention. The Board is planning very exciting celebrations for our anniversary. A list of our Section-Sponsored meetings/roundtables/symposia and our members’ presentations at the APA Convention are included in this issue. Please check our website: http://internationalcounselingpsychology.org/ for our celebration events. We very much look forward to seeing you in Toronto!

Sincerely,
Yu-Wei Wang, Ph.D., and Fatima Rashed Al-Darmaki, Ph.D.
Co-Chairs of the APA Div. 17 International Section

Fatima Al-Darmaki, Ph.D., Assistant Provost for Student Affairs, Zayed University
International Section Meetings and Presentations
2015 APA Convention
Toronto, Canada

Wednesday, August 5
7-10pm: International Section Executive Board Retreat, Raptor Room, Division 17 Hospitality Suite (Renaissance Toronto Downtown Hotel)
The International Section will hold our annual retreat for the Executive Board members and Committee Chairs to discuss Section business and planning for next year on Wednesday, August 5, from 7-10pm.

Thursday, August 6
8-10am: International Scholars Welcome & Orientation Breakfast, Arriba Restaurant (Renaissance Downtown Toronto Hotel)
The International Section will host the annual Welcome & Orientation Breakfast meeting for international scholars, hold our annual awards ceremony, and celebrate our Section’s 10th Year Anniversary on Thursday, August 6, from 8-10am. Our Section’s Co-Founders, Drs. Puncky Hoppner and Larry Gerstein will give a talk at our Breakfast meeting. Please note that this event will be held in the Arriba Restaurant within the Renaissance Downtown Toronto Hotel. For more information, please contact Yu-Wei Wang at yuweiwang2@gmail.com.

10-11:50am: International Students Mentoring and Orientation Roundtables, Northern Lights Ballroom, Division 17 Hospitality Suite (Renaissance Toronto Downtown Hotel)
The International Mentoring and Orientation Committee (IMOC) will be hosting a set of 3 roundtables designed to provide professional mentoring to international counseling psychology students as well as U.S. students interested in careers with an international focus. Below are the three roundtable topics and presenters:

- **Tips for Applying to Pre-Doctoral Internship**
  - Bong Joo Hwang, Ph.D., Training Director, Arizona State University Counseling Services
  - Elena Yakunina, Ph.D., Staff Psychologist, University at Buffalo Counseling Services

- **Advice on Pursuing an Academic Career in the U.S. or Abroad**
  - Yu-Wei Wang, Ph.D., Assistant Director/Research Director/Clinical Associate Professor, University of Maryland Counseling Center
  - Hanako Suzuki, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, University of Tsukuba

- **Advice on Pursuing a Practice-Oriented Career in the U.S. or Abroad**
  - Jinhee Kang, Ph.D., Staff Psychologist, University at Maryland Counseling Center
  - Min Jung (MJ) Doh, Ph.D, Director, International Family Counseling Center, Korea

For more information please contact Elena Yakunina at elenyak@buffalo.edu.

12-12:50pm: Practitioners in the U.S. with International Backgrounds, Northern Lights Ballroom, Division 17 Hospitality Suite (Renaissance Toronto Downtown Hotel)
International Psychology Practitioners Committee (IPPC) will be hosting an annual APA convention meeting for those who identify themselves as psychology practitioners with international background on Thursday, August 6, from 12 – 12:50 PM. The focus of the meeting will be networking with other international practitioners and also discussion on “How to Become a Leader as an International Practitioner.” For more information, please contact Bong Joo Hwang at bongjoo.hwang@asu.edu.

3-3:50pm: Div. 17 Inter-Sectional Roundtables, Convention Centre Constitution Hall 105


(continued on the reverse side)
International Section Meetings and Presentations
2015 APA Convention
Toronto, Canada

4:45-5:00pm: International Section Business Meeting, Raptor Room, Division 17 Hospitality Suite (Renaissance Toronto Downtown Hotel)
The International Section will hold its annual business meeting for our members and affiliates, as well as for those who are interested in joining our Section on Thursday, August 6, from 4 – 4:50 PM. For more information, please contact Yu-Wei Wang at <yuweiwang2@gmail.com>

Friday, August 7, 2015
9:45-10:00am: Inter-Sectional Symposium, Convention Centre Room 205C

11:11:50am, Joint International Network Meeting, Northern Lights Ballroom, Division 17 Hospitality Suite (Renaissance Toronto Downtown Hotel)
Several international psychology networks (e.g., Korean Psychology Network, Japanese Psychology Network, and Taiwan Psychology Network) will be holding a joint network meeting on Friday, August 7, from 11 – 11:50 AM. For more information, please contact Yu-Wei Wang at <yuweiwang2@gmail.com>

2:20:50pm: International Psychology Practitioners Committee
Hwang, B.J., & Li, Y. (August, 2015). How to start private practice on the side as a counseling psychologist. Workshop to be presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, Canada.

Saturday, August 8, 2015
8:00-8:50am: International Psychology Practitioners Committee

9:50am: International Psychology Practitioners Committee
Yakunina, E., Seo, H., Hwang, B.J., Weigold, I., & Wang, Y.-W. (2015, August). Outreach programs for international students across universities: Celebrating inclusion & diversity. In T.S. Sam (Chair), Culturally responsive interventions within university counseling centers. Symposium to be presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, Canada.

Sunday, August 9, 2015
noon-12:00pm: Inter-Divisional Symposium with Div. 17 and Div. 36, Convention Centre 206A

CALL for Submissions for the International Section of Counseling Psychology Newsletter
We would like to invite students and professionals to submit articles and announcements for the upcoming Winter 2015 newsletter. The deadline for submitting your manuscripts/announcements is October 15th. In addition, the editorial team is requesting members' suggestions regarding the content and issues that the newsletter could address.

General Requests:
(1) Please share pertinent information or activities relevant to International Section members (e.g., upcoming events, international conferences, member news/achievements, relevant grant deadlines, position announcements, opportunities to collaborate, volunteer opportunities in the International Section, etc.).
(2) Submit manuscripts on international issues related to research, teaching, or practice in Counseling Psychology.
(3) Submit brief reports (300 words or less) for the column, “Counseling Developments Worldwide.”
(4) Please suggest areas of content/issues that you would like the Newsletter to include (e.g., column by Counseling Psychologists outside U.S.).
Please email your manuscript submissions to Shengying Zhang, Ph.D. at shingzay@gmail.com Editor, Newsletter: International Section of Counseling Psychology Submission Guidelines
Articles should be written using 12-point, Times New Roman font according to the style of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th Ed.). A brief abstract (50 words or less) of the article should be included with each manuscript submission. Manuscripts should not be longer than 2,000 words. Personal information should not be included on the title page to ensure an unbiased review. Articles should be submitted electronically as file attachments using Microsoft Word. Please include a statement that the manuscript has not been submitted for publication or published elsewhere. Please include this information when submitting other types of documents (maximum 100 words):
1) Conferences/upcoming events (e.g., date, place, theme, registration, links, etc.);
2) Relevant grants (deadlines, proposal guidelines, eligibility, etc.);
3) Member news/achievements (e.g., dates, awards, awarding agency, etc.);
4) Position announcements (type of position, eligibility, application deadline, contact information, etc.);
5) Other announcements (e.g., collaborative projects, research studies);
6) Volunteer opportunities
Attending the APA Convention in Toronto: Considerations for International Students and Psychologists

Elena Yakunina, Ph.D.
Staff Psychologist, Counseling Services, University at Buffalo
Chair of the International Mentoring and Orientation Committee of Division 17 International Section

Yu-Wei Wang, Ph.D.
Assistant Director/Research Director/Clinical Associate Professor
University of Maryland Counseling Center
Co-Chair of the APA Division 17 International Section

Are you an international student or psychologist planning to attend the 2015 APA Annual Convention in Toronto? Do you feel confused about visa requirements related to traveling to Canada? Here are some general tips to help you with this process:

Check to make sure that your passport and United States visa are currently valid and will be valid at the time of your travel to Toronto in August 2015. As a general rule, your passport should be valid for at least six months beyond your intended return date to the United States. This means that your passport should be valid through February 2016. This will ensure that you do not experience any difficulties in re-entering the United States after the Convention is over. For international students, check with your university’s International Student Office to ensure that your passport, United States visa, and I-20 documents are current and valid for travel.

To determine if you need to apply for a visitor visa for travel to Canada, go to the link below and check whether citizens of your country of origin require a visa. Residents from certain countries (e.g., Republic of Korea) do not require a visa to travel in Canada, whereas others (e.g., India) do. In addition, if you are a U.S. citizen or a U.S. permanent resident (i.e., green card holder), you do not need a visa to travel to Canada. Check the website below for the most updated information, as immigration laws may change over time: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/helpcentre/answer.asp?q=416&t=16.

If you need a visa to travel to Canada, go to the website below and complete the application survey. Visa processing times vary, but usually take up to several weeks. As such, it is best to apply as early as possible. You should apply for a tourist/visitor visa. You will have the option of applying online or via paper and pencil. To apply online, you will need to have access to a scanner (to scan copies of your materials) and a credit card (to pay the required application fees). Applying online can result in a faster processing of your application: http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/apply-how.asp

After completing the questions on the Canadian Immigration Services (CIC) website above, you will receive a list of support documents you will need to attach to your online application. Typically, for international students, the required support documents include some of the following:

- Front pages of your passport
- Pages of your passport reflecting stamps from your past travel history
- Copy of your United States visa and I-20 forms
- Digital photo
- Family information
- Letter explaining your purpose of travel
- Travel itinerary
- Proof of financial means (this could include paycheck stubs, a bank statement showing funds that are at your disposal, a department letter indicating that you are employed as a graduate assistant and your annual salary, or a letter indicating that you received a scholarship/travel award to attend the convention and including the amount of the award)

Typically, for international psychologists, the required support documents include some of the following:

- Front pages of your passport
- Pages of your passport reflecting stamps from your past travel history
- Copy of past visas to other countries (e.g., U.S. visa or other visas)
- Copies of immigration documents if you currently reside in a country other than your country of citizenship. For example, if you are currently residing in the U.S. on an H1-B (work) visa, you will be asked to provide copies of your H1-B visa documents.
- Digital photo
- Family information
- Letter explaining your purpose of travel.
- Other documents demonstrating your purpose of travel – e.g., the Letter of Invitation provided by the APA International Affairs Office (see further below) and/or copies of your conference presentation schedule (if you are presenting)
- Travel itinerary (e.g., airplane tickets)
- Proof of employment – e.g., a letter from your employer including your position title, job responsibilities, current annual salary, and length of employment in this position
- Proof of financial means (this could include paycheck stubs, a bank statement showing funds that are at your disposal, a department letter indicating your annual salary, or a letter indicating that you received a travel award to attend the convention and including the amount of the awards)

The sample list above is for information purposes only. Please make sure to follow the individualized list you receive after completing the survey questions on the Canadian Immigration Services (CIC) website, as individual requirements may vary.

The APA International Affairs Office can provide a “letter of invitation” that you can attach to your application in support of your purpose for attending the conference. The instructions on how to request such a letter is provided on the link below: http://www.apa.org/international/resources/convention/index.aspx. International attendees may contact the International Affairs Office if they require additional information at international@apa.org. In addition, APA provides grants for international psychologists and psychology students to attend the APA Convention. For more information regarding this grant, please visit: http://www.apa.org/about/awards/convention-international-travel.aspx?ab=1-

After submitting your application and paying the application fee, check your email regularly for updates. If your application is processed successfully, you will receive an email asking you to submit your passport to one of the Canadian Visa Application Centres (VAC) based on your geographic region of residence. Follow carefully the instructions for submitting your passport to the VAC. Depending on your geographic region, you may be asked to mail your passport via courier service or submit your passport in person. Follow the instructions as stated in the communication you receive, as instructions may vary based on country and geographic region.

If you run into any problems with this process, please do not hesitate to contact the nearest Canadian consulate or embassy for more information or ask for help from your university’s International Student Office. We hope to see you at our International Section’s 10th Year Anniversary Celebration at the APA Convention in Toronto!

The APA Annual Convention in Toronto: International Section’s 10th Year Anniversary Celebration at the APA Convention in Toronto!

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After submitting your application and paying the application fee, check your email regularly for updates. If your application is processed successfully, you will receive an email asking you to submit your passport to one of the Canadian Visa Application Centres (VAC) based on your geographic region of residence. Follow carefully the instructions for submitting your passport to the VAC. Depending on your geographic region, you may be asked to mail your passport via courier service or submit your passport in person. Follow the instructions as stated in the communication you receive, as instructions may vary based on country and geographic region.

If you run into any problems with this process, please do not hesitate to contact the nearest Canadian consulate or embassy for more information or ask for help from your university’s International Student Office. We hope to see you at our International Section’s 10th Year Anniversary Celebration at the APA Convention in Toronto!
Counseling Psychology in Russia:
Past, Present and Future
Prof. Vsevolod Konstantinov
Penza State University, Russia

The term "counseling psychology" appeared in Russian psychological literature during the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late '80s and the beginning of the '90s. Psychology endured series of repression and persecutions. For example, in 1936, the Soviet government proclaimed pedology as a pseudo science. Subsequently, psychological equipments were physically destroyed. Hundreds of psychologists sharing the ideas of foreign theorists and practitioners were physically destroyed.

The training of the professional psychologists was carried out only at several universities behind the Iron Curtain, and the emphasis was placed on theoretical preparation. Further, the majority of the graduates, having earned the psychologist diploma, were engaged in teaching profession. From the beginning of “restructuring” in the mid ‘80s, foreign authors’ works began to be translated to Russian, and domestic Soviet psychologists had an opportunity to go abroad for study and training.

Counseling psychology stood apart from psychotherapy substantially in the mid ‘90s. Contrary to the illness concept, a bigger emphasis was placed on personal resources and relationship between a consultant psychiatrist and a client promoting the client’s additional resources to overcome difficulties. The Russian counseling psychology is rooted in personologiya and social, differential, and clinical psychology. The methodology choice for a concrete model of consultation is often connected with more general theoretically methodological orientations, such as psychoanalytical, personal aligned, cognitive, and Adlerian psychology. Consultation models are specified and adapted according to the life situations causing mental maladaptation in the developmental process. The main models or paradigms of consultation are life and communicative skill trainings, human relationship trainings, trainings in a problem solution and decision-making, healthy lifestyle trainings, and development of abilities (i.e., assistance in formation of self-identity and personal growth).

The Russian counseling psychology considers that it is possible to actualize additional psychological resources of the client by means of specially organized process of communication. These forces and abilities can provide a search of new opportunities for a way out of a difficult life situation. Practical and scientific research of the counseling psychology expert is directed on an increase of mental resources and opportunities of the person, harmonization of mental development, health protection, prevention, and overcoming of diseases and illnesses. The consultant psychiatrists focus on the mental processes and states, specific and interpersonal features, and social as well as psychological phenomena in various areas of human activities.

The problems that many clients have experienced in recent years include, but are not limited to, drug addiction, alcoholism, viktimity, family violence, and difficulty in parenting. Techniques from counseling psychology are used in professional training of administrators, teachers, and doctors. Various basic preparations also differ in professional consultant groups, such as psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and conflictologists.

Today’s realities indicate the need of organization of large-scale and active psychological assistance to all populations. The modern person lives in a situation of constant influence of stressful situations that generate a sharp increase in a great number of persons having different illnesses—mental, neurotic, and psychosomatic—and persons needing psychological assistance owing to the social and systemic disorders. In modern Russia, the counseling psychology experts can be found in any town: at schools and kindergartens, institutions and firms, various social, psychological centers, and medical institutions. Consultant psychiatrists are presented in Russia by professionals in areas of individual, family, age and psychological, organizational, medical consultation, who help to find solutions to personal problems and advise the organizations and collectives.

One of counseling psychology development prospects in Russia is the creation of professional organizations of experts in the field of counseling psychology, adoption of the charter, and development of the ethical code of this community of professionals. In our opinion, creation of the Russian-American association of counseling psychologists would promote expansion of professional development opportunities for the colleagues on both sides of the ocean.

The future of counseling psychology in Russia is directly connected with the harmony of developments and its institutionalization as a specific branch of psychology—a branch that has practical, research, and educational measurements. Especially, because of reforming of Russian higher education system and its transition into two-level system, it is important for our professional psychological community to develop standards of professional activities of the counseling psychologist and standards of master programs in Counseling Psychology.

Vsevolod Konstantinov is the head of the general psychology department at the Penza State University and an editor-in-chief of the online magazine “Penza Psychological News” http://psychology-news.ru/english He graduated from psychology and social work programs of the Penza State University and completed his post-graduate study in social psychology.
Counseling Worldwide: Exploring Ideas about Mental Health Services in Northern Namibia

Theodore T. Bartholomew
University of Nebraska – Lincoln

From February 2014 through May 2014, I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to spend time in Namibia, Southern Africa. I lived in a rural village in the north of the country and explored the beliefs that members of the Ovambo cultural group have about mental health and the treatment of psychological distress. Different ways of conceptualizing mental illness are real and worthy of their own discussion; moreover, such unique ideas about mental health are likely to inform the ways in which culturally competent care is provided. As a Western, counseling psychology trainee, a great deal of my training, though attentive to cultural competence in its many iterations, rests upon the idea that change in psychotherapy occurs, in part, because clients believe that the treatment modality is a viable way to alleviate their suffering. Belief in psychotherapy, however, is likely a culturally constructed phenomenon that may not be true of non-Western places or all those living in ‘Western’ settings. In Namibia, mental health services are offered in three primary avenues: (a) psychiatric hospitalization often overseen by psychiatric nurses as the country is home to few psychiatrists, (b) Westernized counseling provided by social workers or mental health counselors, and (c) traditional beliefs. This brief report details some of the ideas I was able to explore in conjunction with the help of community members, counselors, nurses, and a traditional healer. What emerged is a complex system of conceptualizing mental health from overlaps in tradition and Western thought in addition to navigating treatment services based on belief systems and preferences that are inherently fluid.

Mental Health Services: I was fortunate enough during my time in Namibia to spend a significant amount of time with counselors providing services through a non-governmental organization. These counselors offered a great deal of insight into the concepts I was studying and the way services are provided in Namibia. Counselors provide direct mental health services through individual counseling; however, as one of these clinicians indicated, their counseling is naturally ineffective without attention to the culture of their clients. Many counselors suggested that several clients come to therapy with ideas of distress stemming from being witched. The clinicians then navigate the ways in which they work with individuals and the techniques they actually use in order to insure their approach is as culturally attentive as possible. Cultural competence plays such a prominent role that one counselor described this to me as a deviation from Westernized ideas of how counseling should look and that many people at her home university would be surprised by the way she sometimes has to adapt her work to be effective. Additionally, shaping counseling in a way that fits the culture may be an effective means of circumventing some stigma associated to counseling. Similarly, the counselors I met with led me to an interesting way in which counseling is delivered in Northern Namibia – volunteer counselors. Northern Namibia is a very rural area, one that is home to the historically agro-pastoral Ovambo. As such, many villages are less accessible than larger towns in the region. Volunteer counselors are trained individuals placed in these more difficult to reach places in order to provide services and education about counseling services and mental health. Such a service potentially provides a means of helping communities understand the nature, onset, and course of psychological distress while also normalized the confidential counseling process. Although they encounter similar barriers with respect to traditional beliefs about mental illness and hesitation towards Westernized treatments, the volunteer counselors were confident in the efficacy and meaningfulness of their work.

Traditional Healing as Mental Health Care: Traditional beliefs about mental illness and its treatment are still visible and adhered too in Namibia. That is, many individuals believe that mental illness is not a dynamic or complex psychological state. Often, distress is encapsulated in the idea of ‘madness’ (eemwengu in Oshikwanyama), which is frequently considered to develop as a function of being witched or doing something that someone ought not, like stealing. Counselors and other community members alike frequently discussed the nature of traditional healing to treat this idea of madness; however, traditional healing has become much more rare and sceptive that it once was. Secrecy has developed around the historical practice because of colonial beliefs about its sinful and primitive nature as well as the onset of “fake” traditional healers or witch doctors who promise outlandish gains like virility, luck, and wealth. Those traditional healers who are genuinely interested in treating psychological distress and other illnesses have, as a result, become more private about their affairs or moved to Southern Angola where traditional Ovambo beliefs are more prominent. Though their prominence may have waned, traditional healers are still believed to be efficacious in treating mental illness. Herbs and ritualistic slaughter of cattle among other specific interventions were specifically cited as means of addressing one’s bewitchment or attending to those spirits that have caused one to be mad. Moreover, many counselors and one psychiatric nurse who shared their ideas with me expressed that they feel confident traditional healers can provide meaningful treatment for psychological distress. Several of these individuals suggested there is value in integrating mental health counseling with traditional healers, a sentiment that was echoed by the traditional healer with whom I was able to speak. This also overlays a modern political context in which the Namibian government has passed legislation to register traditional healers, which could not only legitimize the practice but could also serve to eliminate the proliferation of those who fraudulently offer their services.

Navigating Traditional Healing and Mental Health Counseling: Also of interest was the fluid nature with which people perceived seeking treatment. Participants and others with whom I spoke reported that people would choose between traditional healing and modern, Westernized treatments for mental illness based on belief. Others, however, would seek both forms of services in order to receive the best care possible. If the hospital or counseling were ineffective, one would go see the traditional healer. If herbs and other traditional remedies did not cure madness, one would seek help from the hospital or a traditional healer. This concept is important for several reasons. First, people will engage in treatment until they find what works for them and their families. Secondly, it reflects the idea that belief is central to choosing a treatment modality. One must actually believe that it will be effective in order to pursue treatment in the first place, and if one thinks either type could be a useful way to change behaviors or cure madness, one can make use of both.

Conclusion: Namibia is a context in which understanding of mental health needs is still growing. Services are available, as are training programs in psychiatric nursing, social work, and psychology. As echoed by the counselors, continued attention to cultural competence will aim to promote a form of counseling that is suited to Ovambo culture and that of other Namibian groups. Moreover, legitimization of traditional healing offers an avenue through which historically constructed cultural beliefs that have worked are not overshadowed by the development and implementation of Westernized forms of mental health service.

Theodore (Ted) Bartholomew is a doctoral candidate in counseling psychology at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. His research interests include positive and multicultural psychotherapy processes, international conceptualizations of mental illness and psychological healing, refugee mental health, and the application of diverse methodologies in psychological research. Ted currently serves as a Student Representative for Division 17’s International Section and is a member of the section’s Research Committee. He is also the Secretary of the Society for Cross-Cultural Research and a student affiliate of APA Division 52.
The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is undergoing a rising demand for mental health services. This demand is expected to increase by 241% in 2025 (Mourshid, Hediger & Lambert, 2006). This article presents and discusses various aspects of psychological practice in the UAE.

Mental health services were offered through specialized hospitals since 1975. Before then, individuals with mental health issues were treated by physicians, or traditional healers (Al-Darmaki, 2004). Data on governmental mental health facilities indicate that there are 3 outpatient facilities and 3 mental health hospitals. The rate of mental health professionals per 100,000 is as follows: 0.3 psychiatrists, 0.51 psychologists, 0.25 social workers, 0.04 occupational therapists, and 0.04 other health workers. These numbers indicate an extreme shortage of mental health professionals and facilities in the UAE. Recent reports indicate that there are approximately 33,000 patients with mental health concerns in the country, and new admissions to public facilities are put on waiting lists that can go up to two months (Abed, 2014). Despite the country’s phenomenal growth over the past decades, mental health services and the field of psychology did not meet the growth of the country and the increasing need for professional psychologists to provide specialized mental health services.

The practice of providing psychological services remains loosely regulated by the authorities. The lack of enforced rules of practice enabled ‘bogus’ psychologists and mental health workers that exploit legal loopholes to operate in the UAE’s market. A panel of professionals from Dubai Health Authority (DHA), Ministry of Health (MOH), Emirates Psychological Association (EPA) and other institutes are currently working on regulation guidelines for practice of psychology. The licensing procedures are expected to be different from one emirate to another depending on the local authority’s existing guidelines and willingness to unify the guidelines. The licensing source (federal vs local) will affect the scope of practice of professionals. Finally, current legislative efforts are directed toward psychiatry and clinical psychology, with no consideration of other professions such as counseling or school psychology. Currently, licensure is obtained from governmental health entities such as Abu Dhabi Health Authority (HAAD), DHA, and MOH. For counselors, Dubai Community Development Authority (CDA) provides licensing.

On the professional sphere, Emirates Psychological Association (EPA) was established in 2003 in Dubai by the Ministry of Social Affairs. It is the only officially recognized professional association for psychologists in the UAE. EPA’s mission is to raise awareness of mental health issues in the Emirates and to advocate for the public’s access to mental health services. This is to be achieved through organizing conferences, seminars, and workshops in relevant psychological areas. Another mission for EPA is to serve as a liaison between governmental departments and private sectors to better serve the community. However, EPA came short of achieving its missions due to reasons such as the small number of Emirati psychologists, commitments of members to other organizations, absence from the local scene, and lack of a platform to connect psychologists within the country.

Training psychologists in UAE remains very challenging. Most of the Emiratis who provide psychological services in schools and in the community mental health agencies have minimal training in applied psychology. This is because there are few options available for internships in psychology as well as for graduate training. The only well-established public undergraduate program is available in the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), a federal institution which admits national students and a very limited number of international students. Zayed University (ZU), another federal institution, recently started to offer a program in psychology as a major. Expatriate students seeking training in psychology would mostly enroll in private universities like Middlesex University Dubai and Heriot-Watt University Dubai that also offer undergraduate programs in psychology. Other universities like New York University Abu Dhabi, American University in Sharjah offer minors in psychology or hybrid majors involving psychology. At the graduate level, only one clinical psychology masters (MSc) program exists, which was recently introduced in UAEU. It is open to both UAE nationals and non-nationals. However, the clinical program has several challenges like securing adequate internships for students and sufficient resources (culturally relevant textbooks, bilingual faculty) and well-trained supervisors.

The majority of psychologists currently in the UAE have undergone a Western model of training. Scholars have expressed their concerns about the compatibility of Western therapeutic models with the UAE’s culture and values (Al-Darmaki & Sayed, 2009). There is a need to tailor psychological services to be indigenized toward Emiratis. However, it is challenging to develop culturally relevant psychological practice in the UAE because of the extremely low number of Emirati researchers and graduate level students in the field of psychology. In addition, it could be attributed to the limited time that the existing professionals in the field is able to devote to research apart from meeting the demand for teaching or providing other services. As most psychologists in the UAE were trained in the west, it is not surprising that there is an on-going reliance on Western frameworks in providing mental healthcare and higher education.

Mental health is a considerably neglected area of research in the UAE. However, the lack of attention to mental health research is a regional phenomenon affecting all of the GCC countries. Between 1989 and 2008, only 192 studies on mental health were published in the GCC countries. Among these countries, the UAE is the most prolific (Osman & Affif, 2010). The majority of studies conducted were epidemiological in nature (49%). The available studies indicate a high prevalence of psychosomatic disorders, depressive disorders, and anxiety disorders among primary health care attenders (Daradkeh, Eapen & Ghubash, 2005). Most of this research, however, is descriptive in nature with limited focus on developing theoretical frameworks that is culturally relevant.

One of the main challenges to providing psychological care in the UAE is the social stigma associated with the utilization of psychological services (Al-Darmaki & Sayed, 2009). A significant number of UAE nationals prefer self-reliance or the help of friends, family members, or religious healers (called muttawa, باللغة العربية المعاصرة واللغة العربية التقليدية) in dealing with mental illness. The common belief still present in the majority of the Emirati population is that those who are afflicted with mental disorders are associated with evil possessions, weak faith, or are victims of black magic. For these reasons, mental disorders often manifest as psychosomatic symptoms (Al-Darmaki, 2004). Families tend to prevent its members from seeking mental health services because the stigma affects the family’s reputation.

Even though some milestones have been made in the development of the field of psychology in the UAE, it is still in its initial phase. The lack of coordination between higher education institutions and health public sectors will keep a shortage of mental health professionals, forcing the government to import expertise to meet the rising demand for specialized services in the country. To further develop the field, it is essential to establish robust training programs in applied psychology (e.g., clinical, counseling psychology). It requires a strategy to consider expansion of the offering of psychology graduate level programs among the national priority in order for the major educational institutes (e.g. UAEU, ZU) as well as other mental health agencies to collaborate in meeting the shortage of Emirati professionals. The authorities have to place and enforce guidelines regulating the practice of psychology, to protect the integrity of the profession and prevent harming clients as well as to support the development of psychology as a profession in the UAE. Another strategy is to provide institutional support research initiatives targeting the development of indigenous therapeutic models in the country. (References are available upon request)

Fatima Al-Darmaki is the Assistant Provost for Student Affairs at Zayed University. Saad Yaaqib is a Teaching Assistant at the UAE University and a doctoral student in Educational Psychology at the University of Missouri.
Hence, another interesting point of my book is to emphasize the importance of understanding trauma from both the somatic, bodily perspective as well as psychological perspective. Most of us learned the basics of Autonomic Nerve System (ANS) in Psychology 101. The Sympathetic Nerve System is responsible for fight or flight response when we encounter stress, and stress is subjective to each person. In addition, according to the polyvagal theory by Dr. Stephen Porges, Director of the Brain-Body Center at the University of Illinois at Chicago, traumatic stress causes part of the parasympathetic system to be over-activated as another natural defense strategy: immobilization. Overall, trauma, as a form of overwhelming stress, overhelms and dysregulates our ANS system.

Therefore, through the understanding and treatment of traumatic stress, the psychology field starts to embrace the idea of “body-mind interaction”. For example, Dr. Bessel van der Kolk at the Trauma Center in Boston, collaborated with yoga instructor and published empirical study supporting the effect of specifically designed yoga movement as a complementary treatment for trauma survivors.

Most ancient cultures have traditional knowledge of how body and mind interact with each other. Even mindfulness (the MBSR), the thousand-year-old Eastern practice, has become empirically supported intervention for depression relapse prevention under the neuroscience studies. As an international psychologist, I am thrilled to see that we are standing in an exciting beginning of a new era, in which human beings may finally possess enough modern technology to re-examine the thousand-year-old wisdom from traditional medicines and body-mind practice (e.g., TCM, yoga, qi-kong, Tai-Chi, aroma-therapy... etc.). My only hope is that the psychology field is not too far behind compared to the medical field during the process of catching up with the trend of understanding and promoting body-mind integration! (PS: the above three experts I mentioned all have more than 30 years of research experience, but none of them are in traditional psychology field.)

Body, mind, and spirit practices are thriving in Taiwan

Recently, I spent 11 days in three different cities in Taiwan to give lectures and workshops related to traumatic stress and to promote my book. I have encountered many counselors, students, and general public, and they are very interested in learning more about how to bring “body” back to talk therapy! Some of the therapists I talked to already started this journey of exploring body-mind connection many years ago.

In conclusion, it is my hope that international psychologists, with our scientific training as well as intuitive understanding about body-mind interaction as gifts from each of our traditional cultures, may play a key role to promote the awareness of body-mind connection in both the psychology and counseling fields!

PS: Facebook page link for the book : https://www.facebook.com/journeybodymind?ref=aymt_homepage_panel

(I encountered a car accident on my way back to home from the airport after the Taiwan trip, I wrote down the trauma prevention steps I took and posted them on the Facebook (in Chinese Mandarin). There are links to my blogs on my FB.)
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