



IMHPJ 28th ANNUAL CONFERENCE

RE-EMERGING AFTER THE PANDEMIC

Strengthening Mental Health Connections

SATURDAY & SUNDAY, MARCH 2-3, 2024

KOBE GAKUIN UNIVERSITY, KOBE, JAPAN

INTERNATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS JAPAN

Conference Presenters

KEYNOTE

Sacred Space in a Post-Pandemic World: Intentional connection as a path forward

Billy Cleary, M.A., LMFT, Clinical Director of TELL Japan
Pronouns: he/him



Keynote Speaker, Billy Cleary, Clinical Director of TELL Japan, speaks to the post-pandemic challenges, collective exhaustion and burnout in our profession and how we can collectively heal as therapists and shine the light forward.

Billy Cleary, MA, LMFT has served as TELL Japan's Clinical Director since 2018. Billy is a graduate of Wheaton College's Marriage and Family Therapy program in Illinois, and is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. As a therapist, Billy believes that creating a space to collectively navigate social and relational issues promotes healing and change, thus strengthening relational bonds. His focus at TELL is to build upon its mission to support individuals, families, and communities throughout Japan and help restore relationships for the international and Japanese community.

Languages, Lands, Thresholds: The experience of a mental health professional working in a host country—challenges and rewards

Joanna Sato, M.A. Psychology
Pronouns: she/hers



In this workshop-style presentation, Joanna will focus on typical challenges therapists and counsellors face while working with their clients and how international relocation can influence these dynamics. Opportunities for growth, as well as difficulties, will be addressed. Through activities and discussion, participants will be invited to reflect on their professional experience in Japan and its impact on their identities.

Joanna Sato is a long-term resident in Japan, where she currently works in private practice. She has a commitment to holistic well-being and draws inspiration from various therapeutic approaches such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, analytical psychology, mindfulness and art therapies. She has more than twenty years of clinical experience, providing services for international communities in Japan, Switzerland, and Poland. Joanna received her master's degree in psychology from Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland and specialised in clinical and social psychology. She also offers life and executive coaching and holds the Professional Certified Coach (PCC) credential from the International Coaching Federation (ICF).

Addressing Challenges with Couples: Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) for couples in Japan

Miho Taki, MA, LMHC, NCC, JPP, Certified Emotionally Focused Therapist
Pronouns: she/hers



Working with couples is a unique challenge for therapists especially when partners are in negative relational patterns feeling defeated and lost in their relationship. Miho Takai, a certified EFT therapist working with couples in Tokyo, will share how she helps couples slow down and identify their own cycles through the attachment lens. She will also fold in her perspectives, based on her clinical experiences, working with couples in Japan and intercultural relationships, raising examples of couples who speak Japanese and/or English as their native language. Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) for Couples is an evidence-based couples therapy rooted in attachment theory and is widely used with various cultural groups.

Miho Takai, MA, LMHC, is the co-founder of Sky Counseling & Consultation in Tokyo where she is in clinical practice supporting couples, families, and individuals. She received a master's degree in counseling from Antioch University Seattle, in the U.S., and began her clinical work in Seattle working with diverse clients within a variety of settings including a university psychology clinic for communities and Washington state community mental health agencies. Miho returned to her native country Japan and has worked in multiple private practice offices in Tokyo before founding Sky Counseling & Consultation. She is a passionate advocate, organizer and coordinator for bringing EFT trainings here in Japan both in Japanese and English.

Working with Neurodiversity in the Therapy Setting

Denisse Wasumi, M.A. Clinical Psychologist
Pronouns: she/hers



Neurodivergent traits in clients can be difficult to discern and can leave the therapist puzzled regarding engagement and treatment for certain individuals. Denisse will focus on the influence of Neurodivergence in the course of therapy and treatment. While using case studies from her experiences as a base, she will guide attendees in visualizing and analyzing some examples of how to identify Neurodivergent patterns in clients. She will also discuss some of the usual difficulties that can arise and share different ways the therapist can support a client in this context.

Denisse Wasumi (formerly Moreno) completed her graduate studies in Mexico, where she worked for six years in the Special Education system. She received a scholarship from the Japanese government to study Clinical Psychology in Japan, at Tokyo Metropolitan University, where she did research on Cultural Adaptation and therapy methods for neurodivergent children. After graduating, she started working with the

international population in Tokyo, focusing on both therapy and psychological assessments for clients of all ages. Denisse is currently working in private practice for therapy, assessments and workshops.

The State of Post-Covid Psychological Therapies: Challenges and opportunities

Dr. Karan Sahar, DClinPsy, CPsychol., EuroPsy, Clinical Psychologist, Licenced in UK and Sweden, Chartered member of The British Psychological Society, European Certificate in Psychology - EuroPsy, a member of EFPA.
Pronouns: he/him



The COVID-19 crisis resulted in dramatic and significant challenges for the therapy profession in relation to the way practitioners practice. Many of the challenges brought about major changes in the way therapists offer services and engage in practice in these times. Dr. Sahar will focus on the complexities, challenges and opportunities of telemental health (online services), including the practical, clinical and technical aspects. There will also be audience dialogue with a focus on reflective exploration and highlighting the lived experiences and perspectives of practitioners working and navigating during the COVID and post-COVID era.

Dr. Karan Sahar is a Sweden and UK-licensed Clinical Psychologist with a particular interest in neuropsychology and neurodevelopment who received his Doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the University of London (UK). With his international background, he has over 15 years of experience in clinically and culturally diverse settings and populations. Dr Sahar also has several years of experience teaching and consulting psychology students and health professionals.

Dr. Sahar relocated to Japan in December 2020 and has since established his own practice, LivFull Psychology. He offers person-centred online psychotherapy, counselling, and parent training. He uses an integrative approach to therapy in his clinical practice but frequently utilizes Cognitive-Behavioral, Acceptance-Commitment, and Solution-Focused Brief therapies.

COMMUNITY TRACK 1

Examining the Hurdles of Private Practice in Japan

with Andrew Parkinson, MCouns, BSc.Psych, SEP

Private practice in Japan, especially for the expatriate professional, can pose some confusing twists and turns when it comes to the business side of things. Join Andrew in a discussion of collective struggles and learn tips and strategies for navigating private practice with more confidence and awareness.

COMMUNITY TRACK 2

Holding Space for Burnout and Compassion Fatigue

With Michelle Pietrzak-Wegner, MS, LMHC, SEP

No one therapist is immune to the exhaustion and fray of caring and attending to others. Join Michelle for a mindful reflective circle discussion on strengthening therapist self-care in the midst of post-pandemic mental health care.