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cesaralfonso@mac.com

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sartorius@normansartorius.com

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What's Next in Global Psychotherapy?

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**"Your visions will become
clear only when you can
look into your own heart.
Who looks outside, dreams;
who looks inside,
awakens." - Carl Jung**

What's Next in Global Psychotherapy? WFP Charts the Way Forward in Manila

WFP Regional Meeting 2025: A Global Call for Inclusive, Contextualized Psychotherapy

Alma L. Jimenez, MD



The World Federation for Psychotherapy (WFP) made a bold and timely statement at its Regional Meeting in Manila, held in January 2025: the future of psychotherapy is biopsychosocial, spiritual, evidence-based, and culturally grounded.

In his keynote address, WFP President César A. Alfonso, MD (USA/Philippines) affirmed that psychotherapy must reflect not only scientific rigor but also contextual sensitivity to the social and cultural realities of those it seeks to serve. Tracing the Federation's trajectory since its founding in 1934, he emphasized the need for inclusive practice, pluralism in theory, and sustained relevance in today's world.

This call to transformation reverberated through over 30 sessions that followed—featuring innovations from Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East that collectively reimagined psychotherapy as an enterprise rooted in local wisdom, collective care, and human dignity.

Training for Justice and Cultural Responsiveness in LMICs

In her plenary address, WFP Secretary General Alma L. Jimenez, MD (Philippines) called for a fundamental redefinition of psychotherapy training in LMICs. She advocated for structural competency, public mental health integration, and a training paradigm that equips psychiatrists as agents of equity and community engagement.

Sessions from Southeast Asia built on this message. Constantine Della, MD (Philippines), Samuel Cheng, MD (Singapore), and Jimenez discussed the challenges of psychodynamic supervision in collectivist contexts. Dr. Alfonso emphasized adapting supervision frameworks to cultural norms and identity formation.



Dr. Alfonso (left) and Dr. Jimenez (right), during the WFP Regional Meeting in Manila last January 2025. (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)

Training the Next Generation: Europe, East Asia, and Regional Collaborations

From Europe, the EFPT (European Federation of Psychiatric Trainees)—represented by Thomas Gargot—showcased training initiatives that promote cross-border collaboration and integrative psychotherapy models.

From Italy, Luca Giorgini, Martina Moneglia, Daniela Polese, and Alessandro Mazzetta presented The Human Birth Theory, a trauma-informed, attachment-based approach that resonates with early developmental experiences.

In China, Zhengjia Ren, MD discussed the psychodynamic underpinnings of self-harming behaviors among Chinese adolescents.

From Japan, Shigeru Iwakabe, PhD and Hideki Kohda, MD offered presentations on emotion-focused therapy and post-disaster psychotherapy, highlighting culturally attuned healing practices.

From Singapore, two symposia reflected distinct therapeutic innovations:

- Drs. Samuel Cheng, Yap Shing Min, and Felicia Ow Yong presented ISTDP adapted for high-stress, urban Asian patients.

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• Drs. Yap Shing Min, Christine Cheong, and Lynn Koh led the session “Bridging Science and the Soul”, focused on meaning-centered psychotherapy and psychospiritual care for those with chronic illness. They emphasized existential resilience in a culturally pluralistic society.

Localized Innovations in Practice and Delivery

Sessions from Africa and Southeast Asia demonstrated how psychotherapy is being reshaped in response to local needs:

- In Uganda, Dr. Etheldreda Nakimuli-Mpungu shared outcomes from Group Supportive Psychotherapy for people living with HIV and depression—an evidence-based, scalable model.
- In Indonesia, Drs. Petrin Lukman, Yaniar Mulyantini, and Dyani Velyani integrated spiritual and family-based approaches into psychodynamic training and pain management.
- In the Philippines, local innovations included Problem Management Plus (Dr. Maria Teresa Icaiano), Esketamine-assisted psychotherapy (Dr. Carmina Bernardo), and DIR Floortime for autism (Dr. Angel Belle Dy).

Cultural Adaptation, Trauma, and the Wounded Healer

The symposium “The Wounded Healer”, led by Shigeru Iwakabe, Alma Jimenez, and Mary Agnes Busuego, explored how therapists’ personal wounds can foster professional empathy—while requiring systemic support and resilience.

Trauma-focused sessions featured:

- Ulrich Schnyder, MD (Switzerland), who compared EBPs for PTSD across cultures.
- Goran Mijaljica (Sweden) and Amir Hossein Nadoushan, MD (Iran), who focused on trauma among refugees and war survivors.

A panel on Asian masculinities in psychotherapy—featuring Hazli Zakaria (Malaysia), Ashandi Prawira (Indonesia), and Chester Choi (Malaysia)—explored gender roles, emotional repression, and engagement in therapy.

Pluralism in Theories, Formats, and Futures

Psychotherapy’s new directions were exemplified in its diverse modalities and formats:

- Scott Stuart, MD (USA), a leading IPT trainer, held a workshop on Interpersonal Psychotherapy, emphasizing its fit for Filipino relational values. Dr. Ana Lantano and Dr. Inocencio presented Filipino case vignettes, showing IPT’s application in low-resource, culturally embedded contexts.
- Haifa Algahtani, MD (Saudi Arabia) introduced VR-assisted CBT.
- Reema Alhowaish, MD and Abdulrahman Almaghlooth, MD shared EMDR experiences for trauma.
- Gerhard Grobler, MD and Melane van Zyl, PhD (South Africa) outlined group-based psychotherapy for BPD, adapted for public hospitals.

Conclusion: A Profession in Transition

The 2025 WFP Regional Meeting in Manila did not just share models—it shaped a vision. Across five continents, speakers responded to the keynote with urgency and clarity.

Their message was united:

Psychotherapy must evolve—in theory, in delivery, in mission.

It must speak to community wounds, not just individual distress.

It must embrace pluralism, equity, and cultural coherence.

And it must be led by clinicians grounded in their cultures, committed to the global human good.

Where Science Meets Soul: Advancing Psychotherapy in Southeast Asia

Alma Lucindo-Jimenez, MD
WFP Secretary General (2023-2026)
Editor, WFP Newsletter



Editor-in-Chief's Notes: WFP Regional Meeting in Manila, January 2025

The World Federation for Psychotherapy (WFP) continues to champion its mission of promoting education and training in psychotherapy worldwide, ensuring equity in mental health services. The recently concluded WFP Regional Meeting in Manila, held in January 2025, exemplified this commitment. Under the theme Biopsychosocial-Spiritual Advances in Evidence-Based Therapies in Psychiatry, the conference highlighted both the global imperative for scientific rigor in psychotherapy and the regional cultural values shaping its practice.

The emphasis on evidence-based therapies underscores WFP's dedication to advancing psychotherapy through scientifically validated interventions. This ensures mental health services remain effective, ethical, and widely accessible, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) where resources may be limited. By centering discussions on best practices, the regional meeting strengthened competencies in research-driven mental health interventions, reinforcing WFP's vision of bridging gaps in access to quality care.

Evidence-based therapies in psychiatry provide structure to most forms of therapy, including both pharmacotherapy and psychotherapy, and largely originate from biopsychosocial Western traditions of science and individualism. However, Southeast Asia, with its strong collectivist and spiritual cultures, offers alternative ways of experiencing human connection. Using the common factors approach, where the therapeutic alliance is the strongest predictor of effective psychotherapy, the cultural adaptation of psychotherapy enhances its relevance across diverse societies. In this sense, WFP's vision of inclusivity and respect for diversity informs its educational efforts.

A defining feature of the Manila meeting was the explicit recognition of the biopsychosocial-spiri-

WFP Newsletter Editorial Team

Alma Lucindo-Jimenez, MD, FPPA
amljimenez@yahoo.com
Editor-In-Chief

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katrinaesling@gmail.com
Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Internal

Sedric John V. Factor, MD
sedricfactor@gmail.com
Deputy Editor-in-Chief, External

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Congress Calendar Editor

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Layout Editor

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mbcarandang.md@gmail.com
Profiles Editor

César A. Alfonso, MD
Editorial Consultant

tual model, which acknowledges the cultural context of mental health in Southeast Asia. While global psychiatry has largely adopted a biopsychosocial framework, the addition of the spiritual dimension aligns with the deeply held values of the region. Many Southeast Asian societies view mental well-being as interconnected with faith, community, and tradition. By integrating spirituality into clinical discussions, this conference highlighted the importance of culturally adapted psychotherapies that honor patients' lived experiences while maintaining empirical rigor. In many ways, this integration is where science meets soul, ensuring that modern therapeutic approaches remain both effective and culturally meaningful.

Where Science Meets Soul: Advancing Psychotherapy in Southeast Asia

Alma Lucindo-Jimenez, MD
WFP Secretary General (2023-2026)
Editor, WFP Newsletter



The strategy of regional collaboration was another key highlight of the meeting. By bringing together experts from across Southeast Asia, the conference facilitated a dynamic exchange of knowledge, strengthening the region's collective voice in global mental health. As mental health services gain increasing recognition as an essential component of public health, it is imperative that regional perspectives contribute to the international discourse. The shared insights from this meeting reinforce the importance of tailoring mental health interventions to local needs, ensuring that global mental health initiatives remain inclusive and contextually relevant.



(Photo: Erika Fletcher, from Unsplash)

Looking ahead, the outcomes of this conference will continue to shape WFP's advocacy for psychotherapy training and equitable mental health care. As Southeast Asia emerges as a hub for innovative and culturally responsive mental health strategies, it offers valuable lessons for the global community. The WFP remains steadfast in its mission to foster education, collaboration, and equity in psychotherapy worldwide.

The Manila meeting was not just an academic exercise—it was a reaffirmation of our collective responsibility to advance mental health care that is both scientifically sound and culturally meaningful. Through collaboration, we strengthen our field; through education, we empower our communities; and through equity, we ensure that mental health remains a fundamental human right for all.

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Alma L. Jimenez, MD is Secretary General of the WFP and the editor-in-chief of the WFP Newsletter. She is Professor of Psychiatry at the University of the Philippines Manila and the World Association for Dynamic Psychiatry Regional Representative. She is a past-president of the Philippine Psychiatric Association, a diplomate of the Philippine Board of Psychiatry and is a Life Fellow of the Philippine Psychiatric Association.

President's Column - An Overview of the History, Activities, and Future Directions of the World Federation for Psychotherapy, 1934-2026

César A. Alfonso, M.D.

President, World Federation for Psychotherapy (2023-2026)



The World Federation for Psychotherapy, like other mental health organizations, has transformed over time to reflect the cultural and paradigm shifts in the field. It was first incorporated ninety years ago in 1934 as the International General Medical Society for Psychotherapy, with Carl G. Jung as its first President from 1934-1940 and delegates from Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland. In 1954, with Medard Boss as President, it was re-established as the International Federation for Medical Psychotherapy, with delegates from 13 nations. In 1991 it became the International Federation for Psychotherapy and in 2023 the World Federation for Psychotherapy [1]. The Federation lost its exclusive medical identity in 1991 and became multidisciplinary, welcoming all psychotherapists in the mental health professions. Presiding over the Federation after Carl G. Jung were Medard Boss (Switzerland; 1948-1967), Pierre Bernard Schneider (Switzerland; 1957-1969), Finn Magnussen (Norway; 1979-1988), Edgar Heim (Switzerland; 1988-1998), Wolfgang Senf (Germany; 1998-2002), Ulrich Schnyder (Switzerland; 2002-2010), Franz Caspar (Switzerland; 2010-2014), Paul Emmelkamp (The Netherlands; 2014-2018), Driss Moussaoui (Morocco; 2018-2023), and César Alfonso (USA; 2023-2026). Dilip Jeste (USA) will be President from 2026-2029. Its Eurocentric identity has shifted to become more inclusive of leadership from other continents, and women now have prominent positions in the Council and Board of Directors.

At present, the Federation includes 21 member societies from all continents representing over 30,000 constituents worldwide.

New societies from Nigeria, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Armenia, and Malaysia are currently seeking membership status. The Federation includes member societies from Morocco, South Africa, Philippines, Indonesia, Iran, Korea, Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, The Netherlands, Spain, Kosovo, and Switzerland, plus two large international societies-the Society for the Exploration of Psychotherapy Integration, with 20 Regional Networks, and the World Association for Positive and Transcultural Psychotherapy, representing constituents from 60 countries. The World Federation for Psychotherapy also includes individual members in countries where member societies are not available, such as Guatemala. Annual Regional Congresses, Work-shops, and Lectureships take place in addition to the World Congress of Psychotherapy, which is currently scheduled every triennium. Educational activities over the last two years were delivered in Casablanca, Rome, Singapore, Malaysia, Istanbul, Marrakech, Mexico City, and New York.

In 2025, the Federation committed to hold symposia, workshops, courses and lectureships in Manila, Los Angeles, Tokyo and Prague. A year after, the World Federation for Psychotherapy 24th World Congress of Psychotherapy will take place at the Headquarters of the United Nations and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York in June 4-6, 2026, with theme of Psychotherapy, Mental Health and Human Rights-Caring for Vulnerable Populations, Humanitarian Relief Workers, and Health Professionals. Awards will be given at this upcoming World Congress to ten Early Career Psychotherapists and a Mid-Career Distinguished Researcher.

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Practicing psychotherapy in low- and middle-income countries is challenging given limited access to care and a miniscule number of available clinicians. Two-thirds of the world's clinicians serve one-third of the world's population, as most mental health clinicians live and practice in high-income countries [2]. The World Federation for Psychotherapy supports the pioneering work of colleagues in underserved areas who creatively maximize the use of scarce resources to serve persons with mental disorders.

While Sartorius and colleagues [3] affirm that Psychiatry is inherently social, and Engel's biopsychosocial model [4] paved the way for clinicians to consider social factors when understanding pathogenesis and illness course, the field of Social Psychiatry has been recently invigorated by critical research in converging areas of study.

Exploring how social determinants are linked to illness or health and resilience is the current focus of interest of the World Federation for Psychotherapy President-Elect Dilip Jeste [5,6]. Concomitantly, Nohesara and Alfonso [7] have described the epigenetic changes caused by exposure to trauma and adversity during the critical periods of development, and most importantly, how psychotherapy interventions seem to recalibrate our internal environment after being dysregulated by traumatic life events, thus reconceptualizing psychotherapy as a biological treatment and social determinants as altering our DNA, inflammatory pathways, microbiome, neural pathways, endocrine and immune systems. Di Nicola [8] proposes that incorporating these multiple dimensions under the rubric of "Social Psychiatry" allows for the

broadest framework to conceptualize our work and operationalize it to the benefit of patients.

Psychotherapy is reparative as it allows for revisiting emotional memories while considering a variety of contexts in past, present and future dimensions [9,10]. Our patients' resistance to revisit the past can be alleviated by reminding them that our task is not only to connect past with present but to connect past with present and future and develop mastery over distressing affects linked to avoidance, symptoms and inhibitions, so that we can facilitate improvement in functioning that goes beyond symptomatic reduction.



(Photo: Subbu, from Unsplash)

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Additionally, the Federation would like to emphasize that as much we recognize that a dyad is a social unit, and individual psychotherapies have proven effective transculturally and transdiagnostically, group psychotherapies allow for the delivery of treatment to larger cohorts and should be promoted in educational settings worldwide [11,12]. We envision a future for psychotherapy where delivery of services maximizes the opportunities provided by group psychotherapy treatment modalities.

Driss Moussaoui [13] asserts that “patients, as well as psychotherapists, are the product of their environment”, and their cultural contexts are essential components of the therapeutic process. Are psychotherapies designed in high-income countries relevant and effective when delivered in low- and middle-income countries? Are systematic and meticulous cultural adaptations necessary or are adequately trained therapists sophisticated enough to intuitively adapt psychotherapies transcontinentally? These are interesting areas of research study endorsed by the Federation and academic deliberations in future congresses will present diverse views on the subject.

Alma Jimenez asserts that the texturing of psychotherapy within the structures and systems of low- and middle-income countries presents as an urgent need considering the mental health gap, not only to improve clinical outcomes but to keep our profession relevant. The worldwide shortage of mental health clinicians drives training programs to adapt psychotherapy supervision systems to conditions in underserved regions. Attending to clinician burnout and moral injury is yet another area of clinical interest of the Federation.

Our Federation thrives to adapt to the challenges posed by the changing needs of our complex world. Our clinical journey has been arduous but rewarding and protecting psychotherapy in the clinical professions remains essential.

N.B. This article is an abridged version of a manuscript co-authored by Alfonso CA and Jimenez AL that will be published in 2025 in the journal World Social Psychiatry.

César A. Alfonso, M.D. is President of the WFP. He is Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Columbia University, Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry at Universitas Indonesia, and Visiting Professor of Psychiatry at the University of the Philippines in Manila, Prince of Songkla University in Thailand, and at the University Kebangsaan Malaysia. He is Chief Psychiatrist at Lighthouse Guild in New York and Editor of Psychodynamic Psychiatry. Professor Alfonso is a Fellow of The American Academy of Psychodynamic Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis, New York Academy of Medicine, and Academy of Consultation-Liaison Psychiatry. He is a Distinguished Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association.

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Geopsychiatry and Psychotherapy

Rowalt Alibudbud, Alexander Smith, Ana Buadze, Michael Liebreuz



As an emerging subspeciality in psychiatry, geopsychiatry focuses on the nexus of geopolitics and psychiatry, encompassing interdisciplinary concerns (1). Geopsychiatry aligns with the bio-psycho-social model first espoused by George Engel in the 1970s, which conceptualizes health, illness, and healthcare delivery through biological, psychological, and social aspects and the complex interrelationships among these factors (2). Following this, geopsychiatry highlights how geopolitical determinants of mental health influence the causation of mental disorders and outcomes at a local level, especially in our globalized and inter-connected world (2).

Specifically, geopsychiatry focuses on the impact of various distal dynamics, including climate change, disasters, globalization, population growth, migration, urban conglomerations, industrialization, and cultural practices on the proximal mental health of individuals and populations (1). Thus, it requires an intersectoral approach and aims to involve various professionals and scholars, including geographers, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, health professionals, urban planners, and economists (1,2).

Depending on the patient, perspectives from geopsychiatry could be beneficial for psychotherapists in providing more holistic and contextually aware mental health care and treatment that addresses the interplay between place, environment, and mental health. For example, psychotherapists can use insights into environmental factors that affect mental health, such as urban density, pollution, noise, or limited green spaces, to help patients recognize and mitigate environmental stressors through coping strategies, environmental modifications, or lifestyle adjustments that reduce exposure to these elements. Such considerations may be especially relevant in light of limited political and socioeconomic progress toward climate-related goals that contribute to ongoing climate change and natural disasters (2).

Moreover, informed by geopsychiatry, psychotherapists in certain contexts can better incorporate and acknowledge that geography shapes cultural norms, access to mental health resources, and socioeconomic opportunities, all of which can

impact mental health interventions and outcomes. For instance, rural and remote areas often have limited access to mental health care, and one way to address these barriers is by offering teletherapy or integrating local cultural practices and community resources into treatment plans.



(Photo: Markus Spiske, from Unsplash)

Lastly, climate-related events, disasters, wars, and displacement can induce critical life events and have long-lasting effects on mental health, potentially leading to post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression. Again, under this framework, findings from geopsychiatry can be incorporated into psychotherapy to provide interventions designed for trauma recovery and resilience building, helping patients process these experiences.

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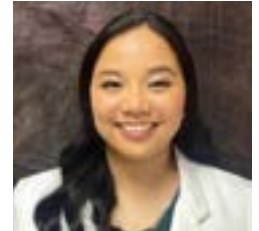
Dr. Alibudbud is a faculty member of the Department of Sociology and Behavioral Sciences of the De La Salle University, in Manila, Philippines. (rowalt.alibudbud@dlsu.edu.ph)

Dr. Smith and Dr. Liebreuz are members of the faculty of the Department of Forensic Psychiatry, of the University of Bern, in Bern, Switzerland.

Dr. Buadze is a faculty member of the Specialized Clinic for ADHD, in the Department of Psychiatry, Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics, of the University Hospital of Psychiatry Zurich, in Zurich, Switzerland.

Fast, Focused, Emotionally-intensive: Highlighting the Efficiency of Intensive Short-Term Dynamic Therapy

Hecil A. Cruz, MD



The Philippine Psychiatric Association (PPA) 51st Annual Convention, in conjunction with the World Federation for Psychotherapy (WFP) Regional Meeting, successfully brought together mental health professionals during a four-day scientific exchange in Manila, Philippines, focusing on innovations and the latest developments in modern psychotherapy.

One standout session was a 90-minute workshop on the basic theories and techniques of Intensive Short Dynamic Psychotherapy (ISTDP), conducted by Dr. Samuel Cheng Eng Teck, Dr. David Teo Choon Liang, and Dr. Andre Tay Teng Sng of Changi General Hospital in Singapore, with coordination from the session chair, Dr. Jacqueline Te Sy of Chong Hua Hospital, Philippines. It provided participants with an in-depth introduction to the focused and emotion-based therapeutic approach.

Using real-patient interaction videos (with appropriate consent and ethical safeguards), the workshop showcased integral elements of ISTDP, particularly approaches for unlocking the unconscious, recognizing defense mechanisms, and building emotional capacity. The effective use of video demonstrations offered attendees a glimpse into the therapeutic dynamics that are typically challenging to grasp through verbal and written descriptions alone.

The workshop also highlighted available training courses, particularly in Singapore, which sparked interest among attendees seeking to expand their therapeutic skills. Specifically, attendees from countries with limited resources and training opportunities for this type of therapy gained valuable insights on how ISTDP could be adapted to their respective local settings.

The Clinical Gains of ISTDP

ISTDP is a subject of ongoing empirical scrutiny, especially given that the field of mental health is often dominated by long-term therapeutic models and cognitive behavioral approaches. It was developed in the 1960s by Dr. Habib Davanloo to address the limitations he observed in psychoanalytic techniques. Dr. Davanloo aimed to mitigate the shortcomings of psychoanalysis concerning lengthy treatment duration, questionable outcomes, the ef-

fect of the therapist's passive stance on the persistence of patient defenses, and transference neurosis, which may lead to the patient's tendencies for regression, therapist dependence, and an endless cycle of analysis.^{1,2} ISTDP is designed to achieve symptom reduction in a shorter time-frame than traditional psychodynamic therapies, promising benefits in efficiency and cost-effectiveness—important considerations in low- to middle-income countries where healthcare costs limit the availability and provision of mental health services.

ISTDP has potential for a more cost-effective option than traditional psychodynamic therapies as it has been associated with significant and persistent reductions in doctor visits, use of hospital and emergency room, use of medications and even disability and welfare costs.^{3,4} Its promise, however, still center on targeting unresolved emotional conflicts stemming from early relational disruptions, much like traditional psychodynamic approaches, but with use of gradual and structured processes involving anxiety regulation and defense identification, and more focus on emotional honesty and direct confrontation of avoidance behaviors, to allow access to repressed feelings like grief, rage and guilt.

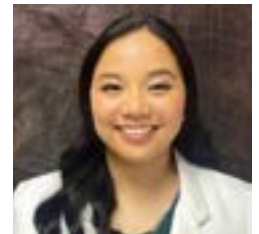
Interestingly, ISTDP targets emotional processes rather than DSM categories; hence, it may be adaptable across various diagnostic presentations. It has shown effectiveness for anxiety, depression, somatic symptom disorders, addiction, and personality disorders. It has also demonstrated effectiveness in treatment-resistant and complex cases, particularly depression and addiction.³



(Photo: Annie Spratt, from Unsplash)

Fast, Focused, Emotionally-intensive: Highlighting the Efficiency of Intensive Short-Term Dynamic Therapy

Hecil A. Cruz, MD



The Need for Sensitivity to Cultural Nuances

As ISTDP aims to confront avoided emotions and break through rigid defenses, it is essential to remember that the process is still shaped by the cultural context of the individual, as expressions of emotion, patterns of defense, and the nature of the therapeutic alliance can vary widely across cultural backgrounds. In some cultures, emotional restraint is considered a social virtue, and may be interpreted as rigid defense by a therapist who has a different cultural background from that of the patient. Hence, the therapist should always try to explore whether the defenses identified are considered a culturally-embedded norm for the patient. Additionally, the therapist should always raise the following question: what are the cultural and social costs when the patient confronts and abandons these defenses as part of the therapeutic goals?

The therapist should also be attuned to the influences of racial, ethnic, and language differences on transference. The techniques in ISTDP may often provoke strong emotional responses, which warrants careful and respectful cultural considerations in the approach of the therapist to avoid rupture of therapeutic alliance during the process. The confrontational stance of the therapy may be a challenge in individuals with strong cultural influences in terms of power dynamics; compliance and disengagement may occur during the therapeutic process, causing disruption of therapeutic alliance. The cultural differences between the therapist and the patient can also make it challenging for the therapist to understand the cultural influences on the patient's unresolved emotional conflicts and rigid defenses, but their cultural sameness also carries a risk of premature sense of closeness, which can prevent deeper exploration of the patient's individual cultural meanings and family dynamics. Thus, the therapist should be aware of these influences on transferences and counter transferences during therapy, and be flexible in the delivery to ensure cultural humility and sensitivity, while still adhering to ISTDP's core principles.

Thus, ISTDP requires intensive training of the therapist, as inadequate or ineffective delivery may lead to therapeutic rupture and even emotional harm. Training involves immersion programs and use of case videos to review processes, supervisions, structured case formulation and self-monitoring. The therapist's countertransference reactions, improper application and timing of interventions, difficulties in establishing conscious therapeutic alliance and inability to recognize patient's defenses despite efforts can be particularly challenging to address.³ The incorporation of cultural responsiveness in ISTDP techniques add to these challenges, but this should be considered essential – not optional - during training. Trainees should be encouraged to incorporate relevant local mental health practices and cultural considerations in supervisions, case formulations, and other relevant training activities.

Despite these challenges and considerations, ISTDP can be of potential benefit in individuals who are suitable for dynamic therapies but seek time-sensitive interventions due to cost, logistics and severity of symptoms. More training opportunities for ISTDP should be made available to different countries, to make use of its cost-effectiveness and efficiency, while ensuring cultural sensitivity and adaptation. Further regional collaborations and studies across diverse cultural and clinical contexts thus remain critical to understanding ISTDP's broader applicability and effectiveness.

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Dr. Cruz is a practicing psychiatrist and a member of the faculty of the University of the East – Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center in Manila, Philippines.

From Machismo to Menungsa: Rethinking Masculinity in Southeast Asia

Kevin Patrick P. Veneracion, MD, MBA



At the 51st PPA Annual Convention and WFP Regional Meeting, Session 6: Understanding Men, Masculinity, and Psychodynamic Psychotherapy Among Asian Men addressed a long-overdue topic: the emotional lives of men. With insights from Southeast Asian experts, the panel examined how boys are shaped into men—and at what cost.

Dr. Chester Chong Seng Choi opened with “How Boys Become Men,” emphasizing that masculinity is not innate but taught—through fathers, schools, media, and more. He traced how rigid expectations surrounding dominance and emotional suppression become burdens men carry into adulthood, often in silence.

Dr. Hazli bin Zakaria then presented “Tapping Into Masculinity for Asian Men Who Seek Help,” urging therapists to frame vulnerability as courage. He argued that men are more receptive to therapy when it aligns with values such as responsibility, protection, or loyalty—shifting the narrative from weakness to strength.

Dr. Nuur Asyikin binti Mohd Shukor contributed a clinical perspective in “How Masculinity Takes Shape in the Therapy Room,” illustrating how traditional male roles manifest in therapy—not as resistance but as material to work with. She suggested that therapists must be attuned to these dynamics to foster trust and engagement.

In a similarly powerful conversation, Dr. Ashandi Triyoga Prawira shared “Stigma Around Masculinities and Mental Health in Indonesian Men” and introduced Menungsa, a support group he founded in Indonesia. Menungsa creates safe, peer-led spaces—both online and offline—where men can discuss mental health without judgment. Its name, derived from the Javanese *manungsa* (to be human), encapsulates a profound message: to become strong, men must first be allowed to be human. The discussion naturally turned to toxic masculinity—the cultural script that equates man-



Dr. Ashandi Triyoga Prawira talked about Menungsa during the WFP Regional Meeting in Manila last January 2025.
(Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)

hood with emotional repression, dominance, and toughness. If left unchallenged, this mindset contributes to mental health issues, substance use, and violence.

Furthermore, the panel’s insights strongly resonate with the Netflix docuseries *Adolescence*, which explores how today’s youth—especially boys—absorb masculine norms not only from parents but also from influencers, video games, and viral content. Silence is still perceived as strength. Callousness is still mistaken for confidence. The show reminds us: toxic masculinity isn’t just inherited—it’s learned, and now, it’s downloaded.

That’s why initiatives like Menungsa matter. They offer counternarratives—new, culturally grounded definitions of strength based on empathy and connection. We also need similar safe spaces for men everywhere: school-based mental health campaigns, barbershop support circles, or male influencer-led “real talk” campaigns on vulnerability. These aren’t just nice ideas; they’re necessary if we want to help men unlearn what harms them and redefine masculinity on their own terms.

Because healing masculinity isn’t just for men—it’s for the partners, children, and communities who live in its shadow.

Dr. Veneracion is a practicing general adult psychiatrist based in General Santos City, Philippines. He is a co-founder and program director of Gensan Psych Mental Health Hub.

Client Approved? Therapy Adaptations for Autistic Individuals are Rated on Helpfulness by Neurodivergent Individuals

Katrina Therese R. Esling, MD



Autistic individuals are susceptible to mental health conditions, such as anxiety and mood disorders. These may be experienced and expressed in ways that are unique to those on the spectrum. Seeking mental health services can be challenging, particularly since most therapies are designed around neurotypical norms. Neurodivergent approaches to treatment have been suggested; however, these often stem from clinicians' perspectives. The effectiveness of these strategies in supporting autistic clients remains largely uncertain.

Jessica Paynter, Kristyn Sommer, and Amanda Cook's research on neurodivergent adaptations for therapies addresses the gaps in knowledge about their effectiveness for autistic clients. The study gathered information from formally diagnosed and autism-identifying individuals through online surveys in Australia and New Zealand over a period of two months in 2023. Participants had received therapy from a psychologist for various mental health conditions, most of which were related to anxiety. Fifty-five adaptations were evaluated for helpfulness using a 1-5 Likert scale. These adaptations were categorized into seven groups: communication, information, modality, neurodiversity affirming, session duration, sensory, techniques, and visual adaptations.

There was no single adaptation that was universally accepted as helpful. The majority of the adaptations had a wide range of ratings. The remaining adaptations received mixed perceptions, varying from extremely helpful to minimally helpful. Despite this variety in perceived helpfulness, 26 adaptations were rated as either helpful or extremely helpful. Among the highest-ranked adjustments was having a therapist with a deep understanding of autism.

Neurodiversity-affirming adaptations received the highest ratings, particularly from formally diagnosed participants. This reflects the increasing demand for inclusive and affirming mental



(Photo: SHVETS Production, from Pexel)

health interventions. Helpfulness ranked second. This aligns with characteristics often observed in individuals on the autism spectrum, who frequently display a preference for structure. Sensory adaptations ranked third in helpfulness, addressing the sensory experiences of autistic individuals.

This study highlights the need to tailor therapies to meet the specific needs of individual clients. Understanding and respecting neurodiverse conditions enable clinicians to address the requirements and enhance the strengths of their clients. Collaborating with patients to identify their preferences can positively influence their perception of therapy and outcomes.

There is no single approach for autistic therapy clients that suits everyone, reflecting the diversity of individuals on the spectrum.

Paynter, J., Sommer, K., & Cook, A. (2025). How can we make therapy better for autistic adults? Autistic adults' ratings of helpfulness of adaptations to therapy. *Autism*, 29(6), 1540-1553. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13623613251313569> (Original work published 2025)

Read the full article:

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/13623613251313569?int.sj-full-text-similar-articles.3>

Dr. Esling is a practicing child and adolescent psychiatrist at the ACE Medical Center and the Madonna and Child Medical Center in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines.

A Psychiatry Resident's Experience at the 2025 WFP Regional Meeting

Al Anthony A. Tating, MD



Attending psychiatry conferences in the Philippines during residency offers deep insights and knowledge that go beyond what textbooks and preferred journals provide. These events enable psychiatry trainees to observe how experienced consultants and speakers approach the complexities of psychiatric issues and challenges, providing them with new perspectives and innovative strategies for their future careers.

The announcement of the convention in partnership with the World Federation for Psychotherapy generated great enthusiasm, particularly because Carl Jung was the federation's first president. This collaboration heightened anticipation for the event and its potential contributions to professional development.

The World Federation for Psychotherapy (WFP) Regional Meeting was a pivotal event in the field of mental health, providing an avenue for professional growth, networking, and interdisciplinary collaboration. For us Filipino psychiatry trainees, this conference represented an opportunity to engage with global leaders in psychotherapy, explore emerging trends, and reflect on how international perspectives can be adapted to the Philippine context.

Conference Highlights: Day by Day Insights

Day 1

Dr. Cesar Alfonso, the current president of WFP, delivered an insightful talk on the origins of psychotherapy in psychoanalysis, the latest challenges in the field, and the future of psychotherapy. His talk inspired psychiatry trainees considering joining the WFP in the future. The Human Birth Theory was one of the innovative ideas presented, introducing concepts like annulment pulsion and the recognition of the fusion of body and mind from the very

beginning of life. Another fascinating session focused on psychodynamic psychotherapy training in Southeast Asia, highlighting its promising potential. Other discussion topics included psychodynamic psychotherapy for women with somatic symptom disorder, burning mouth syndrome, and understanding masculinity among Asian men. All of these topics provided insightful information about the applications of psychotherapy in diverse populations.

Day 2

The changing nature of transgender mental health issues and the significance of ensuring inclusivity and affirming psychiatric care were highlighted in the discussion of transgender health in the Philippines. The importance of preventive psychiatry in slowing the progression of cognitive decline was reaffirmed during the session on mild cognitive impairment. Understanding early interventions is still essential given the rising incidence of cognitive disorders in outpatient settings and the expectation of an aging population due to various factors, including improved health systems.

Day 3

The conference's final day focused on "Interventional Psychiatry," which included an examination of neuromodulation methods like transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), deep brain stimulation (DBS), and electroconvulsive therapy (ECT). The importance of culturally appropriate psychotherapy interventions in various countries, mindfulness-based therapy, and trauma-informed therapies were additional significant topics. A discussion about autism spectrum disorder yielded valuable insights into therapeutic modalities designed for those on the spectrum, knowledge that will undoubtedly assist clinical practitioners in providing better patient care.

Trainee's Corner: A Psychiatry Resident's Experience at the 2025 WFP Regional Meeting

Al Anthony A. Tating



Takeaways

Attending the WFP regional meeting was more than just an academic experience—it was an awakening. Engaging with global experts and exploring diverse perspectives in psychotherapy reinforced the importance of introspection in both personal and professional growth. This experience reignited a passion for psychiatry and underscored the significance of a lifelong journey of learning and self-discovery in the field of psychotherapy.

A memorable quote from Carl Jung, *"Your visions will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakens."* emphasizes the transformative power of introspection. It suggests that true understanding and clarity come not from external validation or seeking answers outside oneself, but from deep self-exploration. It can be said that this perspective aligns with the experience of the WFP Regional Meeting. Engaging with global experts and exploring diverse perspectives in psychotherapy was not just an intellectual exercise; it prompted a deeper, internal reassessment of professional aspirations and personal growth as a psychiatry resident. The conference provided not only new knowledge but also an opportunity to reflect on how these insights shape one's approach to patient care and the broader field of psychiatry. Jung's concept of awakening reflects the understanding that learning in psychiatry, and especially psychotherapy, involves more than just absorbing new knowledge; it also fuses with one's own experiences, feelings, and ideals. Examining oneself promotes a deeper and more meaningful interaction with the field, guaranteeing that psychiatric practice remains both evidence-based and profoundly human and introspective.



The author, with Prof. Cesar Alfonso, President of the WFP.

Dr. Tating is a third-year resident of the Institute of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine of the Southern Philippines Medical Center in Davao City, Philippines.

51st PPA Annual Convention and WFP Regional Meeting: Highlights

Sedric Factor, MD



Day 1 Highlights

Professor Cesar Alfonso (*left*), WFP President, Dr. Joan Mae Perez-Rifareal (*center*), PPA Vice President and Overall Chair of the 51st PPA Annual Convention and WFP Regional Meeting, and Dr. Arnold Angelo Pineda (*right*), PPA President, during the formal opening ceremony of the convention last 21 January 2025. (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)



Prof. Alfonso (*right*), in conversation with Dr. Constantine Della (*left*), the Chair of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA) Psychotherapy Section, and Dr. Alma Jimenez (*center*), the WFP Secretary General. (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)

The Philippine Psychiatric Association (PPA), in partnership with the World Federation for Psychotherapy (WFP) and the World Psychiatric Association (WPA), hosted the 51st PPA Annual Convention and WFP Regional Meeting from January 21 to 24, 2025, at the EDSA Shangri-La Hotel in Manila, Philippines. Under the theme "Biopsychosocial Advances in Evidence-based Therapies in Psychiatry," this event gathered leading psychotherapy experts from the Philippines and around the globe to explore innovative advancements in psychotherapy and their optimal application in clinical practice.



Prof. Cesar Alfonso, WFP President, delivering his keynote address during the first day of the convention. (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)



Participants from all over the world were present during the 51st PPA Annual Convention and WFP Regional Congress. (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)

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Dr. Petrin Redayani Lukman, Dr. Yaniar Mulyantini and Dr. Dyani Pitra Velyani (*from left to right*), during the open forum of Session 4: “Psychotherapy Education, Training, and Services in Indonesia: an Evidence-based Point of View”. This symposium discussed the innovations introduced to improve psychotherapy education, training, and services that meet the sociocultural needs of Indonesians. (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)



Dr. Anna Marie Garcia-Lantano (*second from left*), with Dr. Scott Stuart (*left*), Dr. Raphael Inocencio (*second from right*), and Dr. Kristine Elaine Abary (*right*), during the open forum of Session 7: “Bridging Theories and Clinical Practice in Interpersonal Psychotherapy”. All four speakers shared their insights on how they utilized interpersonal psychotherapy across various clinical settings. (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)



Dr. Frilya Rachma Putri (*center*), with Dr. Timothy Sullivan (*left*) and Dr. Lew Zhen Wei (*right*), during the open forum of Session 8: “Psychodynamic Psychotherapy in a Woman with Somatic Symptom Disorder and Burning Mouth Syndrome”. Dr. Putri talked about how psychodynamic psychotherapy was utilized in managing a patient with somatic symptom disorder and burning mouth syndrome, while Dr. Lew and Dr. Sullivan contributed their perspectives on the psychodynamics of somatic symptoms. (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)



Dr. Goran Mijaljica (*left*), facilitated a workshop on evidence-based psychotherapeutic treatments for PTSD in refugees. In the photo, Dr. Mijaljica is in conversation with Dr. Joffrey Sebastian Quiring (*right*) during the open forum of Session 9: “Evidence-based Psychotherapeutic Treatments for PTSD in the Refugee Populations”. (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)

51st PPA Annual Convention and WFP Regional Meeting: Highlights

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Day 2 Highlights



Dr. David Teo Choon Liang (*center*), with Dr. Josefina Ly-Uson (*left*) and Prof. Cesar Alfonso (*right*), during the open forum of Session 18: “Psychotherapy Practice in the General Hospital Setting”. The symposium examined the practice of psychotherapy in general hospital settings. (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)



Dr. Lourdes L. Ignacio (*center*), with Dr. Noor Melissa Nor Hadi (*left*) and Dr. Rene Samaniego (*right*) during the open forum of Session 20: “Positive Aging”. Dr. Ignacio shared her insights on the integration of spirituality and mental health in positive aging; Dr. Nor Hadi discussed the effects of aging on individuals with borderline personality disorder; and Dr. Samaniego explored gerotranscendence from a Jungian perspective. (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)



Dr. Thomas Gargot (*second from left*), with Dr. Poom Chompoosri (*left*), Dr. Zhengjia Ren (*second from right*), and Dr. Silvia Olarte (*right*), during the open forum of Session 17: “Psychotherapies Targeting Specific Needs”. Dr. Gargot discussed how motivational interviewing can be enhanced through multimodal social analysis; Dr. Chompoosri examined the psychodynamics of treatment non-adherence in clinical practice; Dr. Ren shared his insights on the psychodynamics of self-harming among Chinese teenagers; and Dr. Olarte explored how psychodynamic psychotherapy can be tailored to the patient’s life and needs. (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)



Dr. Sanjiv Nair Sasidharan (*left*), with Dr. Glen Cedric Roche Tze-Lee (*center*) and Dr. Cassandra See Cheng Hui (*right*), during the open forum of Session 19: “Democratic Therapeutic Community: Adapting the Principles to an Outpatient Group Therapy Program”. The symposium focused on the cultural adaptation of the democratic therapeutic community model in Singapore. Dr. Sasidharan shared insights into the democratic therapeutic community model; Dr. Tze-Lee discussed the naturalistic outcome measurement of recovery stories from the therapeutic community on patients’ health status; and Dr. See explored the lived experiences of staff members within the therapeutic community. (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)

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Dr. Etheldreda Nakimuli-Mpungu delivered a lecture on developing a culturally-appropriate and cost-effective group supportive psychotherapy for PLHIVs (people living with HIV) with depression in Africa during Session 15: "How Group Supportive Psychotherapy Revolutionizes HIV Treatment in Africa". (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)

Day 3 and 4 Highlights



Dr. Shigeru Iwakabe (*right*), alongside Dr. Etheldreda Nakimuli-Mpungu (*left*), shared their insights during the interactive panel discussion held in Session 34: "How Important are Cultural Adaptations in Psychotherapy in Different Countries?". The symposium focused on how psychotherapeutic treatments were culturally adapted for people with different backgrounds. (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)



Dr. Ulrich Schnyder, an adviser and a past president of the WFP, discussed the commonalities, differences, and future directions of evidence-based psychotherapies for post-traumatic stress disorders, during Session 14: "Evidence-based Psychotherapies for PTSD: Differences, Commonalities, and Future Directions". (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)



Session 30 featured a workshop on the basics of intensive short-term dynamic psychotherapy, facilitated by Dr. David Teo Choon Liang, Dr. Samuel Cheng Eng Teck and Dr. Andre Tay Teng Sng (*from left to right*). (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)

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Dr. Joseph Anlacan (*left*) and Dr. Mary Anne Sunga (*right*), during the open forum of Session 27: "Management of Complex Comorbidities of Bipolar Disorder with Comorbid ADHD". (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)



Following the shared experiences of various Filipino psychiatrists in psychotherapy education and training, Dr. Timothy Sullivan offered his insights in Session 36 entitled: "Psychotherapy Education and Training in the Philippines". (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)



Some of the finalists from the 2025 NCMH-PAI Interhospital Case Competition. Dr. Paola Patricia Quidlat (*second from the right*) from the University of the Philippines – Philippine General Hospital emerged as the winner. (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)



Dr. Ma. Lourdes Rosanna E. de Guzman, Dr. Goran Mijaljica, Dr. Amir Hossein Nadoushan, and Dr. Ulrich Schnyder (*from left to right*), during the open forum of Session 31: "Trauma-Informed Therapies". Dr. de Guzman shared her experiences with trauma disorders in the Philippines; Dr. Mijaljica highlighted the cultural nuances and global disparities that complicate PTSD treatment; Dr. Nadoushan stressed the need for psychiatrists to be trained in trauma-informed approaches; and Dr. Schnyder discussed the medications available for treating PTSD. (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)

51st PPA Annual Convention and WFP Regional Meeting: Highlights

Sedric Factor, MD



Traditional Filipino folk dances, such as the pandanggo sa ilaw, were featured during Fellowship Night. (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)



Even if they are unfamiliar with these folk dances, Filipino participants invited their foreign colleagues to join in and dance alongside them during the Fellowship Night. (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)



Dr. Jeremias Eduardo Bautista, Dr. Lourdes Ignacio, and Dr. Sonia Rodriguez (from left to right), during the final session of the convention, Session 37: "Spirituality and the Brain". Dr. Bautista discussed the neurobiological basis of spiritual practices, and Dr. Ignacio shared her insights on how spirituality can be integrated into mental health care. (Photo c/o PPA Documentation Committee)

Dr. Factor is a practicing general adult and consultation-liaison psychiatrist and a member of the faculty of the University of the Philippines - Philippine General Hospital in Manila, Philippines.

The 2025 WFP Regional Meeting in Manila: A Recap

Alma L. Jimenez, MD



The World Federation for Psychotherapy (WFP) convened its Regional Meeting in Manila in January 2025, bringing together leading mental health professionals to discuss advancements in evidence-based psychotherapy. The conference underscored the importance of integrating scientific research into clinical practice to enhance therapeutic outcomes.

Emphasis on Evidence-Based Practice

A central theme of the meeting was the critical role of evidence-based practice in psychotherapy. Speakers highlighted the necessity of grounding therapeutic interventions in robust scientific research to ensure efficacy and reliability. This approach not only enhances patient outcomes but also elevates the credibility of psychotherapy within the broader medical community.

Cultural Sensitivity in Therapy

The conference also addressed the importance of cultural sensitivity in therapeutic settings. Given the diverse cultural landscape of the Asia-Pacific region, participants emphasized tailoring evidence-based interventions to align with cultural norms and values. This culturally informed approach aims to make therapy more accessible and effective for individuals from various backgrounds.

Training and Education Initiatives

Discussions extended to the need for comprehensive training programs that equip therapists with the skills to implement evidence-based practices effectively. The meeting advocated for integrating evidence-based methodologies into the curricula of psychotherapy training programs to ensure that upcoming practitioners are well-prepared to deliver high-quality care.

Collaborative Research Efforts

The conference highlighted the importance of collaborative research in advancing psychotherapy. By fostering partnerships among institutions and practitioners across the region, the goal is to build a robust body of research that informs practice and policy. Such collaborations are essential for developing interventions that are both effective and culturally appropriate.

Conclusion

The WFP Regional Meeting in Manila reinforced the organization's commitment to advancing evidence-based psychotherapy. By focusing on integrating scientific research into practice, emphasizing cultural sensitivity, enhancing training programs, and promoting collaborative research, the conference set a clear agenda for the future of psychotherapy in the region.

Postscript: The contents presented in this article are based on the paper entitled "Advancing Evidence-Based Psychotherapy: Insights from the WFP Regional Meeting, Manila 2025" by Alma L. Jimenez, M.D., Constantine Della, M.D., and César A. Alfonso, M.D. This paper is available through Karger Publishers.

The SEPI 2025 Congress in Istanbul: Bridging Therapies Together

Jeffery Smith, MD, DLFAPA



The Society for the Exploration of Psychotherapy Integration (SEPI) is proud to be a member organization of the World Federation of Psychotherapy. Like all Federation members, we believe in the vital importance of psychotherapy as a means to bring peace and coherence to a world in need. Our mission for four decades has been to unite all therapies under one roof.

Registration is now open for our upcoming congress in Istanbul, from October 10-12, 2025, on the theme of "Integrative Foundations of Psychotherapy." We warmly invite and welcome members of the WFP and its member organizations to join us in celebrating and exploring the latest ideas for research and practice in what we envision as a joyous gathering in a unique and historic city that connects East with West.

For four decades, SEPI has worked to bridge gaps between psychotherapies, believing that the principles and mechanisms underlying various practice methods are more alike than different. A recent trend in psychotherapy integration is the identification of common factors and their importance across all psychotherapies. Another significant development is the unification movement led by Jack Anchin, Greg Henriques, Andre Marquis, Jeffrey Magnavita, and Jeffrey Harris, who have pioneered comprehensive metatheories of psychotherapy.

This year, for our annual meeting, we are collaborating with colleagues from around the world to forge new connections between therapies, encapsulated in the theme, Integrative Foundations of Psychotherapy. Our aim is to unite art and science to uncover the principles and mechanisms that define the universal framework of psychotherapy. Here are some highlights:

- Richard Lane and Hanna Levenson will connect theory and practice in a joint keynote focusing on memory reconsolidation and memory-emotion interactions as key features of a broader framework for psychotherapy integration based on neural systems and computational mechanisms.
- Richard Hill, co-founder and managing editor of Australia's Science of Psychotherapy, will take a fresh look at how the client is truly the guiding force in therapy, with therapist sensitivity and responsiveness becoming central themes.
- We are honored to welcome George Silberschatz and colleagues from the San Francisco Psychotherapy Research Group, who will present four sessions centered on their foundational model that conceptualizes the targets of psychotherapy as specific maladaptive patterns, contrasting with "disorders," which represent collections of symptoms.
- Eric Plakun is the Founder of the American Psychiatric Association's Psychotherapy Caucus, a senior leader among psychiatrists, and author of the "Y Model" of psychotherapy training, where the stem signifies factors common to all therapies. He will discuss how to make training efficient and effective.
- Kenneth Critchfield, SEPI's Treasurer and a leader in psychotherapy research, will discuss the Structural Analysis of Social Behavior (SASB) framework for analyzing interpersonal dynamics in psychotherapy.
- Ueli Kramer, Editor of SEPI's Journal of Psychotherapy Integration, is a prolific researcher exploring what contributes to change in personality disorders.
- Connor Adams, SEPI's current Secretary, and colleagues from Stanford will share a unique

The SEPI 2025 Congress in Istanbul: Bridging Therapies Together

Jeffery Smith, MD, DLFAPA



Some of the speakers at the 2025 SEPI Congress include (top row, L-R) Connor Adams, Nuno Conceição, Kenneth Critchfield, Richard Hill, and Ueli Kramer; (bottom row, L-R) Richard Lane, Hanna Levenson, Kristin Osborn, George Silberschatz, and Jeffery Smith.

- trans-theoretical approach to formulation and treatment planning, emphasizing modern teaching techniques and integrating DEI considerations.
- Nuno Conceição, former President of SEPI, and colleagues from Portugal will discuss the temporal phases of psychotherapy from both research and clinical perspectives.
- Tahir Özakkaş, our local host and Director of the Psychotherapy Institute of Turkey, brings an extraordinary breadth of interest to examining the role of culture in evaluating and understanding various therapy modalities. Additionally, his leadership in Turkish psychotherapy inspires multiple presentations from students and colleagues, who are applying the same innovation and thoughtfulness across various areas of psychotherapy integration.

For the many presenters I have not named and the numerous countries that represent SEPI's global reach, we eagerly anticipate their contributions to what is sure to be a remarkable gathering and incubator of ideas, taking place at the fulcrum of today's world.

Dr. Smith is a clinical professor of psychiatry at the New York Medical College, a Distinguished Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, the current Chair of the Psychotherapy Caucus of the American Psychiatric Association, and the president of the Society for the Exploration of Psychotherapy Integration (SEPI).

Oh, yes, and let's not forget that Hanna Levenson and I will each be presenting pre-conference workshops, with titles to be announced.

INVITATION



Society for the Exploration
of Psychotherapy Integration

SEPI

SEPI 2025
Istanbul Congress

Integrative Foundations of Psychotherapy

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WFP Announces Updates on Upcoming 2026 World Congress of Psychotherapy in NYC

Sedric Factor, MD



Last February 2025, the World Federation of Psychotherapy (WFP) revealed further details about the upcoming 24th World Congress of Psychotherapy, taking place from June 4-6, 2026, in New York City, USA. This three-day event is co-sponsored by the Critical Incident Stress Management Section (CISMS) of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), the City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate Center, and the Association of Women Psychiatrists. The congress will be hosted at two venues in Midtown Manhattan: the CUNY Graduate Center and the United Nations Headquarters.

The theme for this congress will be "Psychotherapy, Mental Health, and Human Rights: Caring for Vulnerable Populations, Humanitarian Relief Workers, and Healthcare Professionals." The agenda will include a variety of topics aligned with this theme, featuring sessions on caring for refugees, displaced persons, and asylum seekers, stigma and discrimination, 2SLGBTQIA+-affirmative psychotherapies, caring for survivors of natural disasters, caring for survivors of torture and terrorism, climate change, human rights, women's rights, children's rights, caring for humanitarian relief workers, prevention of burnout and moral injury, and caring for healthcare professionals. The congress welcomes clinicians, trainees, students, and academics from all mental health fields.

Call for Proposals and Submissions

In a recent press release, the WFP announced that they are currently inviting proposals for symposia to take place during the congress. Those interested may submit proposals that cover at least two of the congress topics.

Additionally, submissions are open for trainees, researchers, and clinicians wishing to present posters and individual papers during the Congress. Selected individual paper submissions will be thematically grouped with other relevant topics at the Congress. Submissions for poster sessions related to psychotherapy research studies and illustrative clinical case studies are encouraged. There are two poster session tracks available – clinical and research – providing participants with more opportunities to share their insights with attendees from around the world.

From the pool of poster submissions, ten early-career clinicians (those who are within seven years of completing their Masters, PhD, or postgraduate residency training) will be chosen to receive the Young Investigator Award. This award includes recognition during the closing ceremonies of the Congress, a waiver for the registration fee, and a stipend of USD 1,000 to help cover travel expenses.

The submission deadline for symposia proposals and poster submissions is on 1 October 2025, at 11:59PM EST (GMT+5). For further details about the congress and the submission process for proposals and posters, please visit the WFP website (<https://wfpsychotherapy.org/world-congress-of-psychotherapy>).

Dr. Factor is a practicing general adult and consultation-liaison psychiatrist and a member of the faculty of the University of the Philippines - Philippine General Hospital in Manila, Philippines.

INVITATION



24th World Congress of Psychotherapy

United Nations Headquarters &
City University of New York Graduate Center
June 4-6, 2026

Psychotherapy, Mental Health and Human Rights- Caring for Vulnerable Populations,
Healthcare Professionals, and Humanitarian Relief Workers

CONGRESS CALENDAR



2025

Pacific Rim College of Psychiatrists and World Association for Cultural Psychiatry Joint Congress - Where the Pacific Rim Meets the World: The Hope to Integrate Culture into Psychiatry

September 2025, 25-28

Tokyo, Japan

<https://www.prcpwacp2025.com>

World Psychiatric Association World Congress of Psychiatry - The Role of Psychiatry in the Changing World

October 2025, 5-8

Prague, Czech Republic

<https://wcp-congress.com>

Society for the Exploration of Psychotherapy Integration International Conference - Integrative Foundations of Psychotherapy

October 2025, 10-12

Istanbul, Turkey

<https://www.sepiweb.org/Annual-Meeting>

2026

25th World Congress of Social Psychiatry - Caring for the Vulnerable: Making Social Psychiatry Clinically Relevant

January 2026, 15-17

Marrakech, Morocco

<https://waspsocialpsychiatry2026.org/>

24th World Congress of Psychotherapy: Psychotherapy and Human Rights: Caring for Vulnerable Populations, Humanitarian Relief Workers, and Health Care Professionals

June 2026, 4-6

New York, New York

<https://wfpsychotherapy.org>

**For inclusion in the Congress Calendar of future issues of the WFP Newsletter, please send your congress announcements to
amljimenez@yahoo.com / cesaralfonso@mac.com**



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Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics



RESEARCH

Karger

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J. Guidi (2022–2024).

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