

2nd International Conference on

Mental Health & Human Resilience

July 14-15, 2016 Cologne, Germany

Developing spaces and places for youth mental health: The role of community development

Linda Liebenberg

Dalhousie University, Canada

Spaces and Places (S&P) is a participatory study that explores how communities can build better civic and cultural engagement with youth as a means of supporting improved mental health outcomes. This study makes use image-based approaches and elicitation interviews, where youth participants are involved in data analysis and arts-based dissemination projects designed to return findings back to local and broader communities. The study has taken place in three Aboriginal communities of Atlantic Canada. Findings highlight the importance of relationships that instill connection to cultural practices and facilitate strong personal attributes (such as self-esteem) in supporting positive mental health outcomes. Findings also highlight the key role of holistic education that extends beyond academic curriculum for mental health outcomes. While the school setting provides more formal and curriculum based approaches to supporting cultural engagement, connections to culture and community are also fostered through sports activities, recreational resources and community activities. Youth believe that the cultural and geographic landscape of the community is a key to doing well and aligns with the educational aspects of young people's resilience resources. They further feel that these aspects work together to support young people be happy, healthy and contributing members of their community. These underscore the critical importance of mental health service provision for youth that is grounded in community development. This presentation will review findings and related implications for service provision and policy.

linda.liebenberg@dal.ca

Mental health research in civil conflict and war: Challenges in terms of populations, research themes and methods

Joop de Jong

University of Amsterdam, Netherlands

The past years have shown an increase in wars and chronic conflicts generating widespread misery and large refugee populations. A majority of these civil conflicts take place in low and middle-income countries. The past decades have simultaneously shown a steady increase in research in situations of political violence. Based on decades of research experience in these settings, this lecture elaborates research challenges in three domains, the 'who', the 'what' and the 'how'. The term 'who' addresses the people involved, both as participants or beneficiaries of the research and as members of the research teams. The term 'what' describes research themes that are needed to further develop the field of public mental health and global health for survivors. The 'how' addresses a range of methodological implications and pitfalls. On the one hand this lecture argues that research in conflict situations presents a continuum with our day-to-day research and that many methodological questions can be solved with our normal tools. On the other hand, due to the volatile situation there are safety risks and problems with representativeness and validity. Different groups handle divergent psychobiosocial adaptation mechanisms in different phases of the conflict with defensive subsystems such as hyper vigilance, flight, freeze and fight. These adaptation mechanisms have implications for our research designs. Moreover, we need innovative methodologies to address prevention issues before and after the conflict and we also need longitudinal research into the outcome of civil conflicts that go beyond DSM/ICD/RDC. For example, by using staging or network models that enables us to follow recovery trajectories in a naturalistic way, transcending current classification systems and using self quantification methods.

jtvmdejong@gmail.com