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DIVERSITEIT



A Neuro-psychotherapeutic Approach of the Psychological Migration Trauma: Its Expression and Treatment in the Psychotherapeutic Group

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In this lecture the evaluation of the stressful social conditions that influence refugees' mental and organic health with focus to the covid19 pandemic will be attempted, including the mechanisms and the group psychotherapeutic factors that treat the psychological migration trauma by a neurobiological point of view.

In migration and in the refugees the psychological, migration trauma can be considered as a social, psychological, transgenerational and organic neurobiological trauma.

PTSD is expressed as a psychological, physical and organic trauma and trauma-related situations characterized by flashbacks, sleep disorders and insomnia, panic attacks, anxiety, lack of trust, un-capability to form positive relationships, feelings of helplessness and despair. PTSD symptoms as a mirror phenomenon can be also seen in many NGO's staff members and caregivers.

Exclusion, racism, violence, bad living conditions are some of the social factors in the refugee's life, thus causing distress, insomnia, syndrome of multiple losses, PTSD, cognitive disorders and depression.

The Syndrome of multiple losses is evaluated according to the stages of mourning and grief and in parallel to PTSD and losses.

The psychological migration trauma asks for evolutionary refugee - focused therapies based on a transcultural and trans-religion spirit, to help victims to face not only one traumatic event but multiple traumas such as rape, war and torture.

Group Psychotherapy modifies brain and synaptic plasticity by treating "in the group" stressful social factors in an analogue that is similar to life's emotional traumatic events and conflicts, thus altering memory function according to the restoration of the traumatic memories in the prefrontal lobe, the cortex and deeper brain areas.

The reduction of the cytokine's levels by participation and education inside the psychotherapeutic group, can lead to a regulation of the levels of blood cortisol and to the regulation of the brain's inflammation. (Catherine Mela, "Psychiatria Danubina" suppl3, vol 29,2017).

The function of the psychotherapeutic environment as a "container" is strongly associated with stress relief and improvement of depressive and dementia-like symptoms . Acceptance, containing, holding, equal human rights, transcultural dialogue, corrective emotional experience are some of the therapeutic factors that help in this direction.

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CV of Dr. Catherine Mela, MD

Catherine Mela (Greece) is a Neurologist, Medical Doctor with specification on Basic Research (Neuro-immune-oncology) and Brain Plasticity. She is a Psychotherapist, Group-Analyst, Trainer, Supervisor and Clinical Researcher.

On a clinical and research basis, she is working as a Neurologist and Group Analyst with cancer, neurologic and psychosomatic patients.

She is the IAGP (*1) f. Vice President (2018-2022), Founder and Chair of IAGP Research Committee (2012-2022) and she received the IAGP Fellow Award (2022). She is an Overseas Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine,

Scientific Board member of the *International Journal of Psychology and Neurosciences IJPN*. She was past member of the Cambridge Editorial Board.

She was member of the Organizing Committee of the Summer Academy of Granada and Past Secretary of IOGAP, Melbourne (*2).

She has conducted Median and Large Groups, she presented key-note lectures in many Universities and Organizations worldwide and she is the author of many scientific articles in local and international journals.

She has organized the 1st IAGP International Research Congress, on "Chronic Stress" (Greece, Athens, 2014) and the 2nd IAGP International Research Congress on "Trauma and Crisis" which will be realized in Thessaloniki, Greece, 14-17 June, 2019 at the Hotel Mediterranean Palace.

She is Founding member of HOPE in GA (*3, Athens, Greece) and past Director of its Education in Group Analysis,

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