

ISPS Newsletter Spring 2018

Dear all friends of ISPS,

It is with great pleasure we can register an increasing activity in our organisation, both in well-established local and national groups, as well as new groups around the world. And it is with great satisfaction I note that the dimensional view and understanding of mental disorders now seems to be the dominant view, and is gaining «new terrain». I attended the World Psychiatric Association's regional meeting in Melbourne, Australia in February 2018, where the overall theme for the conference was «Innovations in Mental Health Care». Also in traditional psychiatrists circles the categorical model and understanding seems to be being increasingly abandoned. The prevailing view is dimensional, based on a phase-specific understanding, also called «staging». And a central term when developing our future mental health service system is «Transdiagnostic», meaning that the old «silo-thinking» is passé! Emphasis is more and more on environmental factors, and the gene-hypothesis is being toned down. What a relief it is to see and be part of this development! The natural consequence is of course a more prominent place for non-biological approaches, for stress reduction perspectives, and for early intervention!

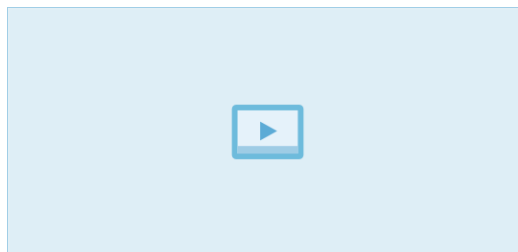
Our members may have noted that ISPS-UK has disseminated all key-note lectures from the Liverpool conference for free use on our International and UK homepages, as has the US-ISPS. Thanks for that important contribution, and I really do hope that our members will take the time to use, and to spread, these videos.

The EC has developed an «Action Plan» for its activities during the period 2018-2019. Central topics are supporting selected new ISPS regional groups, to continue our work on the book series, the journal, and to support regional conferences. We will also use a lot of time and energy on establishing a family group, and a group for milieutherapist/mental health nurses, within the ISPS. And of course, together with the local committee in the Lowlands, chaired by Margreet de Pater and Ludi van Bouwel, we are planning the next international conference in Rotterdam, 28th August-1st September 2019. Please save the dates already now, I think we can promise you an experience of a lifetime.

Finally, I will use this occasion to thank our members for the valuable work each and every one is putting into both our organisation, and in your local milieu. Thanks.

Jan Olav Johannessen, M.D., Ph.D.
Chair, ISPS'int

Keynote presentations from ISPS Liverpool now available at our website!



The ISPS welcomes a new regional group!

ISPS Johannesburg is born out of a local reading and supervision group. Nardus Saayman originally started the group to provide supervision for clinicians, and to create a space for collegial support. The group has grown, and has formed a hub with the view of centralizing referrals, and guiding treatment for individuals suffering from psychosis in a manner that echoes the ethos of ISPS.

The group is young and full of energy, and we are very pleased to be able to host our first seminar soon, and include high caliber international speakers with the support of ISPS. We hope to grow the group to the point where it can legitimately influence the treatment of psychosis in South Africa both in private and government settings, and partner with other countries to grow meaningful and enriching relationships.

For more information contact:
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The 8th Annual Conference of ISPS Hellas was held with great success on Saturday 2 December 2017 on the theme: **"Psychosis and Migration"**. The speakers were Dr Catherine Mela, Neurologist, Psychotherapist and Group Analyst; Constantine Morogiannis, Psychiatrist and Group Analyst; Dr Kalliopi Panagiotopoulou, PhD, Allergist and trainee in Group Analysis; and Irini Mitraki, Social Worker and Psychotherapist. The Conference held the unabated interest of a large audience from a broad spectrum of professionals in the mental health field, as well as other interested groups, and shed light on the many dimensions and aspects of the psychotic states and phenomena that are associated with and emanate from migration.

Constantine Morogiannis opened the Conference with his paper: *"Group Analytic psychotherapy for psychotic patients"* in which he undertook to approach psychosis and in particular schizophrenia, conceived as a bio-psycho-social process arising from the conflict between the subjective reality of the suffering person and the prevailing subjective reality of the social network in which this person exists, or between brain and mind, a fact which, in Bion's terms, takes on mainly the form of a constant and destructive rift between the psychotic patient and group. He concluded that the group-analytic group with psychotic patients can make a decisive contribution to reducing this conflict, by creating the conditions for a good enough therapeutic approach to psychoses, owing mainly to the group's ability to survive the destructive attacks that it will inevitably suffer from the psychotic patient.

In her paper: *"Strengthening the endurance of migrants: review of the mental health services provided for refugees in Greece between 2015-2017"*, Irini Mitraki established that the group-analytic group and the therapeutic community provided by the mental health care system can help to improve refugees' resistance to

psychiatric disorders, especially in the early weeks after arriving in the host country. She also noted that an international emergency group-analytic model, including local and foreign therapists, would be very effective in treating migrants.

In Kalliopi Panagiotopoulou's presentation entitled *"A life not lived: the course of a refugee towards mental illness and the trajectory of people suffering from mental disease to refugeeism"*, she referred systematically to studies showing that the incidence of visible psychoses in migrants is significantly higher than that of the native population, and argued that biological, psychological, social and cultural viewpoints are required to lend meaning and deal with the psychological problems characteristic of refugees. She concluded by emphasizing that international policies must be planned to prevent psychoses, and that analytic groups of mixed nationality are an ideal therapeutic intervention.

In relation to the paper by Kalliopi Panagiotopoulou, patients from the group she coordinates at the Specialized Day Centre or "Social Dialogue Centre" of the Panhellenic Association for Psycho-social Rehabilitation and Work Integration (P.E.P.S.A.E.E.), presented creative writing texts and improvisations and then, using her texts and ideas, the interactive feature was shown entitled *"A refugee in the world"*, directed by Christos Ververoudis with actors Christos Vlassis and Christos Ververoudis.

In her paper *"The impact of the psychological migration trauma on Mental Health"*, Catherine Mela associated psychological migration trauma with a number of cultural epidemiology factors on the neuropsychological, socio-political and cultural level, and focused in particular on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) together with the multiple losses syndrome, as well as the psychotic disorders that afflict immigrants and refugees. She also confirmed that PTSD symptoms, as a mirror phenomenon, are also manifested in many NGO staff members and caregivers, and concluded that psychological migration trauma makes it urgently necessary that evolutionary refugee-focused therapies also be used to help victims cope with other traumatic situations such as rape, war and torture. The techniques applied in many "hot spots" to both refugees and NGO staff members were presented and systematically analysed.

The Conference ended in accordance with the prevailing tradition, with the Large Group convened by Anastassios Koukis.

Conference Organizer:

Dr Anastassios Koukis, Chair of ISPS Hellas

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Meeting Point - a Day of Dialogue Between Therapists and Patients in Mental Health

On 22/3/18 **members of ISPS Israel** created and participated in a day dedicated to a dialogue between the different groups in the mental health field. The conference was composed of 3 different segments of group dialogue - one small group, a large group and then a small group again. The conference was hailed as a pioneering enterprise.

Psychosis from a Psycho-Social Perspective, a Course

On the 16/3/18 ISPS Israel held its last lesson for its first educational course. The course was held in the Be'er Sheva Psychiatric Hospital and it included several different perspectives from the psycho-social spectrum. Its presenters were all well-respected members of ISPS. Now that it has ended, ISPS Israel is planning to expand the course to other institutes.

For more information contact:

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Join us for the 21st International conference of the ISPS in Rotterdam!

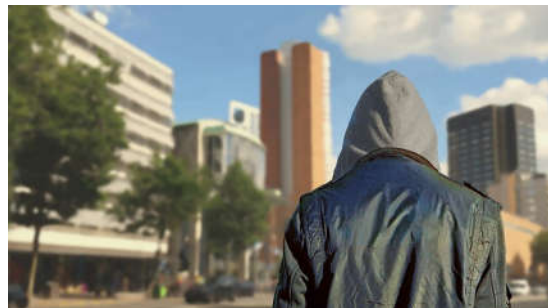
28th August – 1st September 2019

STRANGER IN THE CITY:

**On the circular relationships between psychosis
and alienation, and the healing power of human
reconnection**

[Welcome to ISPS Rotterdam - watch our film](#)

The connection between social exclusion and psychosis
Someone with psychosis can become a stranger for the



people who surround her or him. However, more and more research shows that this relationship is circular: being treated as and feeling a stranger promotes psychosis, makes one in other words psychosis prone. The risk is for instance much higher when you:

- originate from a non-Western country and are living in a Western country. The chances to become psychotic appear to be much higher for immigrants (esp. those of colour) than for people who have been living for generations in the same country, esp. when one has felt discrimination;
- moved a lot within a Western country or countries when you were young;
- were bullied or otherwise excluded;
- grew up in a city or neighbourhood where people didn't care about each other and were demoralized;
- are homosexual and do not dare to 'come out';
- are hard of hearing or deaf.

In short: when you don't feel 'at home' or to belong you run a high risk to become psychotic.

In Western psychiatry psychosis is seen as a dangerous disease which must be treated thoroughly and quickly, primarily by medication and seclusion. Psychiatrists and other mental health professionals who want to cure can easily be experienced as enemies. Hospitalisations, and especially forced seclusions can be traumatic, while medication dulls emotions and often does not help in curing the problems that are bothering the person, like difficulty with thinking and functioning in study or work. Medication can make these problems even worse. Because of this, a vicious circle may start that makes people more and more alienated from themselves and their surroundings.

A different view on psychosis

Contrary to many psychiatrists and mental health professionals, the people that are themselves afflicted by a psychosis can have a view and an understanding of their experiences as being intense and real and closer to their real self. Some understand and give meaning to their psychotic experiences as presenting a developmental crisis, a turning point in their lives, that brings them insight. Also, in other times and cultures, there seems to have been more occasion for psychotic experiences to be seen in a more positive light, e.g. becoming a shaman or as representing special wisdom.

The 2019 ISPS conference is intended to discuss the nature of psychosis and alternative psychological and social ways to deal with it, and to empower the people afflicted by psychosis, especially the more vulnerable ones. Scholars, scientists and clinicians, will talk about their findings. An especially important place is reserved for those who themselves have had a psychosis or who are psychosis prone and can talk from experience and combine these experiences with their professional background and education.

Important subthemes are:

The relationship between psychosis, migration status and cultural transitions

How does it feel to be a non-Western immigrant in a Western country? What are the dynamics of becoming psychotic, what insights does this bring? How to understand what it means for the offspring of immigrants to grow up within a family with scarce social connections and a low social status?

Reconnecting

Addressing family members and others the focus will be on reconnecting the psychotic person with them and with society. In this conference there will be much attention given to approaches and ways by which to reconnect as well as to alternative ways that people with psychotic experiences may find helpful, like addressing their bodily sensations.

Psychological approaches do not aim to fight the psychotic experiences but to cope with them and to come to terms with their special nature. For instance, someone with psychotic experiences can learn to find ways for these experiences not to take over. Or they can discover how memories of traumatic experiences can trigger them.

Connecting different therapeutic ways of understanding

In confronting and connecting the different views of therapeutic schools of thought, like cognitive-behaviour therapy and psychoanalysis, with what works, with what kind of problem, when and how, we hope to get a clearer view on the differences and the similarities and esp. their possible complementarity.

Prevention of psychosis: a political issue

A lot happens in early development and involves infant mental health while adolescence is also a critical period. More research is needed but we do know that it is important for parents and children to live in a safe neighbourhood and in an extended network, buffering stress. A safe community is the responsibility of people from all origins as well as of policy makers, mayors, teachers, policemen and neighbours.

Welcome to ISPS Rotterdam!

From our members

Reflections on the 16th Annual ISPS-US Conference in Portland, Oregon By Diane Inda, MSN, APRN, PMHNP-BC

I am an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse who specializes in Psychiatric and Mental Health care across the lifespan. I have studied in Western Colleges, I have studied with a Lakota Medicine Woman and I have studied with trained teachers of European Oathbound Experiential Practices. I was delighted to find that in this most recent conference of ISPS-US I have found others who can explore the connections and comparisons between "medical" and "spiritual" and lived versions of extreme states of being.

At the conference I listened to a woman describe the calling of her ancestors that led to her undertaking a profound spiritual path. I listened to young people describing the pain and challenge of reuniting with their families after dealing with their individual battles to grapple with psychosis. Each struggled to find their own path and meaning coming out of their experiences. I listened to comparisons between Lakota ritual and Psychological care.

In my own practice, which is currently focused on Acute and Emergent Care, I have watched someone pace a small room, muttering, lost, because of a recent experience he describes as spiritual. He struggles with a new understanding of what is important in life, and now contemplates discarding his previous material values. Money, he says, is not what is important. His family, his fiancée and his career hang in the balance. I have watched a young woman cringe behind a bed, terrified of persecution perceptible only by her and repeatedly only in the context of use of a cocktail of drugs meant to induce a "good time". I have watched a former "A student" after successful completion of the first year of University, do the breast stroke around and around under the bed in our Emergency Department. I encourage rest, but the patient declines, describing this process as a spiritual test, and assures me rest will come later. Collateral from family tells me that this patient has been awake for at least 80 hours. Is this a spiritual

experience? Or one borne of sleep deprivation? Or both? I have seen many young men, sons of immigrant parents from war-torn countries, discard the medications that allowed them to function, to begin to hold jobs, to care for themselves, and be reduced to disheveled, malodorous, isolative angry remnants of the proud young men they should be. Used to be.

In the ISPS I have found people with whom to not only discuss, but empathize with these disparate stories of struggle with the many many widely varying experiences that Western Society throws under the gross heading of "Psychosis". It finally hit me during a panel discussion on the very last day of this wonderful conference that a better term would be "Psychoses".

There are many who disparage the DSM. I recognize that one thing it attempts to do is describe recurring patterns that occur in human responses to stress. I think that the time has come for someone, ideally more than one someone, to find a way to describe the myriad patterns; but recurring and recognizable patterns of human response which are currently; and not particularly accurately; lumped under the far too general term "Psychosis". I promise to make an attempt. I know that others have, and hope that more will. This conference has inspired me, and I know that I am not the only one. From the bottom of my heart I thank the many who took time and energy to present and share their insights and experiences to allow us all to learn. I believe that when we can more clearly understand and identify the differing patterns, we can do much better in terms of helping those experiencing extreme states deal with them successfully.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS
ISPS-US 17th Annual Meeting

Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Wholeness in Extreme States
November 9-11, 2018 • Philadelphia, PA
Courtyard by Marriott Downtown
Submit your proposal online at www.isps-us.org by May 21, 2018.

Keynote Speaker: Berta Britz, MSW, ACSW, CPS

Berta Britz offers consultation and training through Berta Britz Consulting. Recipient of the 2016 Intervoice Inspiration Award, Berta is on the board of HVN-USA. Her ministry, "Hearing Voices and Healing," is under the care of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting. Berta uses the liberation she experienced in the International Hearing Voices community and in Montgomery County Hearing Voices Network Taking Back Our Power Hearing Voices Groups to inform her collaboration for understanding the experience of living and working with anomalous beliefs and voices and growing compassionate communities. Her deepest passion is for creating spaces that welcome young people growing into their fullest selves.

Honoree: Krista MacKinnon

Krista MacKinnon is the Director of Families Healing Together, an online resource for families struggling with emotional distress. After working in the mental health system for fifteen years Krista, who was also a patient herself, understands deeply that families deserve access to a community that supports a recovery mindset. Deeply fascinated by exploring the intersection of wisdom and technology, Krista leverages tools of the internet age to create an online community that both supports and inspires. Krista is a mom of three, a Canadian expatriate to Costa Rica and California, and a lifelong student of yoga and breathwork.

As we gather together in this historic city of Philadelphia, we are aware that one of the central symbols of what is best in our country is the Liberty Bell, cracked and yet whole, stifled and yet resonant, emblematic of failure and of hope alike. When we look at the available resources for those who are struggling with psychosis and other anomalous experiences, we can both celebrate the supportive network of services, research and relationships that fill the spaces between us and bemoan the cracks in our communities and in our system of care, through which so many still fall. In this, the ISPS-US 17th Annual Meeting, we welcome presentations that aim to fill the gaps -- to bridge the divide between where we are now and where we need to go, to connect people with optimal services, to bring us closer to one another through empathy and wisdom, and to make the spaces between us more liberating and alive.

Join ISPS-US for a weekend of inspiration, support, and possibility as we work to transform the cracks in our communities, our continuum of care, and our understanding into fertile spaces where hope can thrive. Philadelphia, here we come! We welcome proposals for presentations, papers, panel discussions, and creative or alternative formats focused on psychological and social approaches to psychosis or extreme mental states. We encourage interactive and experiential formats. A variety of perspectives and topics are welcome and we are interested in representing a diversity of voices. All professional disciplines, experts by experience, and family members are encouraged to submit proposals. Please share your knowledge, experience, energy, and hope. Proposals must be submitted online by May 21, 2018.

Romão de Sousa Foundation
ISPS Institutional Member
together with NOVA Institute of Philosophy
(IFILNOVA),
invite you to attend an international scientific
meeting in Portugal!

Open Dialogue and Reflective Processes
in Mental Health
working with families, communities and networks

The meeting will take place in Lisbon on the 24th of November 2018,
preceded by a number of practical workshops on the 23rd of November (please see the recently launched website
<http://congress2018.fundacaords.org/>).

The international meeting will be preceded by a 3-Day training event called "Living Learning Experience", chaired by Professor Rex Haigh (UK NHS and University of Nottingham). <http://congress2018.fundacaords.org/events/>

Following that, we will have a day dedicated to discussion around "Open Dialogue and Reflective Processes" on which we would like to include different traditions such as the Finish Treatment System "Open Dialogue", the Therapeutic Community tradition and philosophy, as well as other phenomenological and reflective processes.

Professor Jaakko Seikkula from the Finish Open Dialogue system, and Professor Giovanni Stanghellini, Psychiatrist and Doctor Honoris Causa in Philosophy from Chieti University, are already confirmed as a Keynote speakers.



We hope to see as many ISPS members as possible in these events.

Very Best Wishes

Joao G. Pereira
Chair of the Organizing Committee
Co-Chair of the Scientific Committee
joaogpereira@fundacaords.org

Upcoming Events

The ISPS has over 20 regional networks around the globe, many of which organise annual events. Take a look at the wide selection of meetings and conferences taking place this Spring and Summer

[ISPS events listing](#)



ISPS Book Series Edited by Alison Summers and Anna Lavis

The ISPS series of books illuminates the efficacy of psychological approaches in the treatment of psychoses.

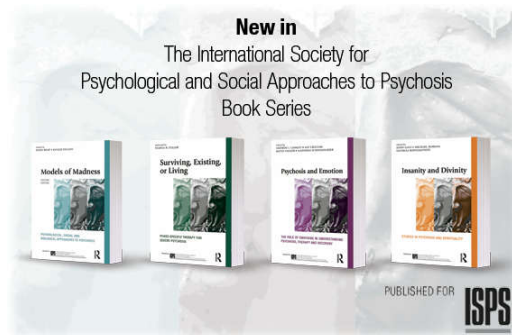
Written by ISPS members around the globe, these volumes reflect the compassionate and enlightened treatment patients worldwide are receiving.

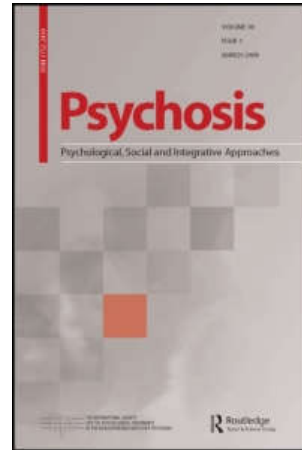
ISPS members receive a 20% discount when ordering through Routledge

Some of the books will be controversial and certainly our aim is to develop and change current practice in some countries. Other books will also promote the ideas of clinicians and researchers well known in some countries but not familiar to others. Our overall intention is to encourage the dissemination of existing knowledge and ideas, promote healthy debate, and encourage more research in a most important field whose secrets almost certainly do not all reside in the neurosciences.

There are over 20 books published in the series. Some books have been translated into Chinese, Italian, Russian, Spanish and/or Swedish.

[Find out more](#)





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