

Symposium | Immigrant, Refugee : [Symposium 103] Global Perspectives on Mental Health Challenges and Resilience Among Migrant and Expatriate Populations

📅 Sun. Sep 28, 2025 2:50 PM - 4:20 PM JST | Sun. Sep 28, 2025 5:50 AM - 7:20 AM UTC 🏛️ Session Room 4 (Large Hall B)

[Symposium 103] Global Perspectives on Mental Health Challenges and Resilience Among Migrant and Expatriate Populations

Moderator: Roberto Lewis-Fernández (Columbia/NYS Psychiatric Institute)

[SY-103]

Global Perspectives on Mental Health Challenges and Resilience Among Migrant and Expatriate Populations

Yunyu Xiao², Mohamad Elfakhani⁵, Haruka Kokaze³, Yasuyo Yoshikuni⁴, Tsuyoshi Akiyama¹ (1. Rokubancho Mental Clinic (Japan), 2. Cornell University (United States of America), 3. Columbia University (United States of America), 4. Healthway Medical Group (Singapore), 5. Western University (Canada))

[SY-103-01]

From Arrivals to Thrivals: Navigating Refugee Integration and Mental Health in Canada

*Mohamad Elfakhani^{1,2} (1. Western University (Canada), 2. London Health Sciences Centre (Canada))

[SY-103-02]

Integrating Culture into Corporate Mental Health: Supporting Japanese Expatriates and Their Families in the U.S.

*Haruka Kokaze^{1,2}, Kathleen Pike^{1,2} (1. One Mind (United States of America), 2. Columbia University's Mental Health + Work Design Lab (United States of America))

[SY-103-03]

Mental Health Challenges among Japanese Residents in Singapore: Insights from Clinical Practice, Research Findings, and Cross-Border Support Efforts

*Yasuyo Yoshikuni¹ (1. Healthway Japanese Medical (Singapore))

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Keywords : Migration、expatriation、Mental Health

Migration and expatriation create profound opportunities and challenges, particularly in mental health. This symposium highlights the complex interplay of social determinants, cultural contexts, and systemic frameworks in shaping the mental health of migrant and expatriate populations across different global regions. By presenting diverse perspectives from the United States, Canada, and Asia, this session offers critical insights into mitigating mental health disparities and fostering resilience through tailored interventions.

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[SY-103-01] From Arrivals to Thrivals: Navigating Refugee Integration and Mental Health in Canada

*Mohamad Elfakhani^{1,2} (1. Western University (Canada), 2. London Health Sciences Centre (Canada))

Keywords : Community Partnerships, Integration, Refugees, Transcultural Psychiatry, Mental Health

This presentation explores Canada's response to the influx of refugees, focusing on experiences with Syrian, Yazidi, Ukrainian, and Afghan populations. Beginning with the significant arrival of Syrians in 2015, and continuing with subsequent groups, the discussion centers on systems designed to aid newcomers in adapting to Canadian life. Key aspects include social integration initiatives, healthcare provisions, and mental health support mechanisms. The presenter will draw from personal experience supporting a Transcultural Mental Health Consultation Service (TMHCS) and participating in a collaborative care model with London Intercommunity Health Clinic (LIHC) and the Muslim Resource Centre (MRC). LIHC serves as a primary healthcare provider for incoming refugees, while MRC acts as cultural brokers, facilitating interactions with law enforcement and child welfare agencies. Lessons learned from these engagements underscore the importance of culturally responsive mental health interventions and community partnerships. The presentation advocates for sustainable policies that enhance the resilience and well-being of migrant communities, highlighting pathways for effective integration and support.

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[SY-103-02] Integrating Culture into Corporate Mental Health: Supporting Japanese Expatriates and Their Families in the U.S.

*Haruka Kokaze^{1,2}, Kathleen Pike^{1,2} (1. One Mind (United States of America), 2. Columbia University's Mental Health + Work Design Lab (United States of America))

Keywords : Mental health、 Japanese expatriates、 Corporate wellness、 Cultural competence、 Cross-cultural support

Over a lifetime, the average professional spends about 90,000 hours at work. Employers therefore have both the opportunity and the responsibility to foster mentally healthy workplaces by lowering exposure to psychosocial risks, building organizational capacity and reducing stigma, and ensuring that high-quality care is easy to access. For Japanese multinational corporations with U.S. subsidiaries this is especially urgent: according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, majority-owned Japanese affiliates employed nearly one million Americans in 2022, making Japan the second-largest foreign employer in the U.S. These affiliates contributed over \$174.4 billion to U.S. gross domestic product and invested \$57.7 billion in capital expenditures while conducting \$11.5 billion in research and development. Japanese expatriates and their families face unique stressors when relocating abroad. Navigating new cultural, social and professional landscapes can heighten stress and isolation. Language differences, unfamiliar workplace norms and limited access to culturally informed mental health care only intensify these challenges. This presentation will share the latest data and insights and equip business and scientific leaders with practical evidence-based strategies to proactively support Japanese expatriates and their families in the U.S. and apply these lessons to other overseas assignments before, during and after deployment.

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[SY-103-03] Mental Health Challenges among Japanese Residents in Singapore: Insights from Clinical Practice, Research Findings, and Cross-Border Support Efforts

*Yasuyo Yoshikuni¹ (1. Healthway Japanese Medical (Singapore))

Keywords : Mental health、 Support for Japanese nationals overseas、 Singapore、 COVID-19 pandemic

The speaker is a Japanese physician and licensed public psychologist residing in Singapore, providing medical care exclusively to Japanese patients at a Japanese clinic since 2010, under a bilateral agreement between Japan and Singapore. Although Singapore offers a safe, high-quality living environment, legal and social constraints hinder accompanying spouses from working or engaging in volunteer activities, limiting their opportunities for social participation and affecting their mental well-being. Efforts to support the Japanese community in Singapore have gradually developed. In 2018, over 90 residents participated in Psychological First Aid (PFA) training. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a volunteer-led online program called "Terakoya 2021" was launched to support Japanese children during a stay-at-home school holiday, engaging over 1,000 participants. From 2021 to 2022, a mental health survey involving 1,249 Japanese residents revealed increased psychological vulnerability among women under 50 and a strong link between loneliness and mental distress. Respondents expressed a need for informal, easily accessible mental health support. In recent years, cross-border collaboration among Japanese support providers has expanded through online platforms. A key example is JAMSNET, a global network connecting Japanese support groups worldwide. These efforts bridge geographically isolated individuals and communities. In New York, for instance, the Japanese Consulate collaborates with local community-based support groups, illustrating a model of effective public-private partnership. Such international and multi-sectoral collaborations are expected to play an increasingly vital role in supporting Japanese nationals living overseas, especially in times of crisis.