

Symposium | Psychotherapy : [Symposium 16] Cultural Adaptations of Psychotherapies-A Symposium Sponsored by the World Federation for Psychotherapy

📅 Thu. Sep 25, 2025 4:25 PM - 5:55 PM JST | Thu. Sep 25, 2025 7:25 AM - 8:55 AM UTC 🏢 Session Room 3 (Large Hall A)

## **[Symposium 16] Cultural Adaptations of Psychotherapies-A Symposium Sponsored by the World Federation for Psychotherapy**

Moderator: César A. Alfonso (World Federation for Psychotherapy, President), Norman Sartorius (Advisor to the Board of Directors, World Federation for Psychotherapy)

### **[SY-16] Cultural Adaptations of Psychotherapies-A Symposium Sponsored by the World Federation for Psychotherapy**

César A. Alfonso<sup>1</sup>, Alma Jimenez<sup>2</sup>, Nik Ruzyanei Nik Jaafar<sup>3</sup>, David Teo Choon Liang<sup>4</sup>, Chaimaa Aroui<sup>5</sup>  
(1. World Federation for Psychotherapy, President (United States of America), 2. World Federation for Psychotherapy, Secretary General (Philippines), 3. National University of Malaysia, Professor (Malaysia), 4. World Psychiatric Association Psychotherapy Section, Secretary (Singapore), 5. Hassan 2 Hospital, Consultant Psychiatrist (Morocco))

Keywords : psychotherapy、 cultural adaptations、 religion、 spirituality、 training

With increasing diversity in the population, it is essential to cultivate a deeper understanding of cultural aspects that shape the psychotherapeutic experience. This symposium gathers experts to discuss cultural adaptations of psychotherapy. Jimenez addresses the prevailing structure, values, and mental health beliefs in collectivist cultures. She defines culture-specific adaptations in the content and process of psychotherapy. Local adaptations in psychotherapy should balance promoting psychotherapy's acceptability and fidelity to core principles, and ultimately, effectiveness. Ruzyanei discusses how training psychiatric residents in Malaysia to culturally adapt evidence-based therapies is crucial for ensuring therapeutic interventions that are efficient and respectful. Cultural adaptation requires knowledge and skills of being culturally aware, humble, and competent. Teo discusses how in Singapore spirituality and religion can play a significant role in shaping individual and collective worldviews and, in turn, patients' attitudes toward mental illness and treatment. Integrating spiritual/religious inquiry into psychotherapeutic frameworks can enhance the treatment relationship, cultural relevance and therapeutic effectiveness. Aroui addresses numerous constraints that impact mental health care within the Muslim community, with cultural and religious prohibitions being among the most significant to consider. She provides clinical recommendations to process adversities encountered in this context, attending to gender, community dynamics, religious practices, confidentiality and family honor. Avoiding stigmatization and creating a safe, culturally adapted space and respectful communication style are essential for providing competent treatment.