

## Symposium

📅 Fri. Sep 26, 2025 1:10 PM - 2:40 PM JST | Fri. Sep 26, 2025 4:10 AM - 5:40 AM UTC 🏛️ Session Room 3  
(Large Hall A)

## **[Symposium 38] Cultural Competence - essential skills for mental professionals**

Moderator: Itsuo Asai (Heart Clinic Medical Corporation)

[SY-38]

### Cultural Competence – essential skills for mental professionals

Itsuo Asai<sup>1</sup>, Kenneth Fung<sup>2</sup>, Jaswant Guzder<sup>3</sup>, Byamah Brian Mutamba<sup>4</sup>, Syuichi Katsuragawa<sup>5</sup>  
(1.Heart Clinic Medical Corporation(Japan), 2.University of Toronto(United States of America),  
3.MacGill University(Australia), 4.Butabika Hospital(Uganda), 5.Toho University School of  
Medicine(Japan))

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[SY-38-01]

### Promoting Mental Health Equity through Cultural Competence

\*Kenneth Po-Lun Fung (University of Toronto(Canada))

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[SY-38-02]

### Use of Interpreters in Culturally Competent Care : a therapeutic predicament

\*Jaswant Guzder<sup>1,2</sup> (1.University of British Columbia(Canada), 2.McGill University(Canada))

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[SY-38-03]

### Developing culturally appropriate messages for mental health promotion; the role of alternate care providers'

\*Byamah Brian Mutamba<sup>1,2</sup> (1.Butabika National Mental Hospital (Uganda), 2.YouBelong Uganda(Uganda))

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[SY-38-04]

### Cultural competence: the changing social perceptions from stigmatization to understanding of mental health issues in Japan in recent years

\*Shuichi Katsuragawa (Department of Psychiatry, Toho University Sakura Medical Center(Japan))

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### **[SY-38] Cultural Competence – essential skills for mental professionals**

Itsuo Asai<sup>1</sup>, Kenneth Fung<sup>2</sup>, Jaswant Guzder<sup>3</sup>, Byamah Brian Mutamba<sup>4</sup>, Syuichi Katsuragawa<sup>5</sup> (1.Heart Clinic Medical Corporation(Japan), 2.University of Toronto(United States of America), 3.MacGill University(Australia), 4.Butabika Hospital(Uganda), 5.Toho University School of Medicine(Japan))

Keywords : Cultural Competency、Mental Health Services、Transcultural Psychiatry、Health Equity、Health Communication

Training in cultural competence, an essential skill and system for mental health practitioners, is not always included in the training content of mental health professionals in many countries. Do you all know what it is? Broadly speaking, cultural competence refers to the ability to interact appropriately with, understand and work effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds. This symposium will explore what cultural competence is and how it needs to be addressed in the future. We hope that your understanding of cultural competence will be useful in your clinical and research work. First, Professor Kenneth Fung from the University of Toronto, Canada, one of the countries with the most advanced research and social systems for transcultural psychiatry, will give a presentation entitled 'Promoting Mental Health Equity through Cultural Competence', defining it and explaining what hinders its realization. Barriers to its implementation, its adaptation to clinical situations and an overview of social structural issues will be presented. Next, Professor Jaswant Gazder from MacGill University, Canada, will discuss 'Interpreters in culturally competent care: Canadian Clinical Contexts' and the development of interpreters' cultural understanding skills to overcome language barriers. Thirdly, Dr Byamah Mutamba from Uganda will discuss 'Developing culturally appropriate messages for mental health promotion; the role of alternate care providers' from Africa, where psychiatric resources are extremely scarce. His presentation on 'Alternative care providers' will give concrete examples of how to gain understanding of mental disorders among local healers. Finally, Professor Katsuragawa from Toho University School of Medicine, Japan, will present 'Cultural competence: the changing social perceptions from stigmatization to understanding of mental health issues in Japan in recent years'. The ability to interact with, understand and respond appropriately to the conflicts and relationships between patients and the cultures of the society to which they belong and the cultures of their counterparts.

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## **[Symposium 38] Cultural Competence - essential skills for mental professionals**

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### **[SY-38-01] Promoting Mental Health Equity through Cultural Competence**

\*Kenneth Po-Lun Fung (University of Toronto(Canada))

Keywords : Cultural Competence、 Structural Competence、 Cultural Safety、 Cultural Humility

Mental health disparities persist across diverse communities due to systemic inequities, cultural barriers, and inadequate access to culturally responsive care. Cultural competence is a critical framework that encompasses and extends beyond cultural humility, cultural safety, and structural competence to ensure equitable mental health services. This presentation explores the foundational concepts of cultural competence, including its role in mental health assessment, treatment, and systemic implementation. It addresses common misconceptions, emphasizing that cultural competence is not about expertise in other cultures but about the ability to engage cross-culturally with sensitivity and effectiveness. The session outlines key strategies for culturally competent assessment using the DSM-5-TR's Outline for Cultural Formulation and Cultural Contextual Formulation. In treatment, cultural adaptations of psychotherapeutic approaches, such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), can demonstrate the significance of integrating cultural perspectives into care. Systemic barriers, including language accessibility, cultural stigma, and structural discrimination, are discussed alongside organizational strategies and policy recommendations aimed at fostering culturally responsive mental health systems. By implementing standardized training, increasing linguistic inclusivity, and integrating traditional healing practices, healthcare organizations can promote equity in mental health services. Ultimately, cultural competence is an evolving and necessary approach to achieving mental health equity. It requires a commitment to lifelong learning, advocacy for inclusive policies, and sustainable investment in culturally responsive interventions. This presentation aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of cultural competence and inspire actionable steps towards reducing mental health disparities.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Define cultural competence and related concepts, including cultural humility, cultural safety, and structural competence, and explain their relevance to mental health care.
2. Identify barriers to culturally competent mental health care and discuss strategies to integrate cultural considerations into clinical practice.
3. Explore the role of systemic and structural approaches in addressing mental health disparities through culturally responsive policies and interventions.

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**[Symposium 38] Cultural Competence - essential skills for mental professionals**

Moderator: Itsuo Asai (Heart Clinic Medical Corporation)

**[SY-38-02] Use of Interpreters in Culturally Competent Care : a therapeutic predicament**

\*Jaswant Guzder<sup>1,2</sup> (1.University of British Columbia(Canada), 2.McGill University(Canada))

Keywords : use of interpreters in consultation、 cultural competency and language translation、 psychotherapeutic issues related to language hybridity and translation

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**symposium :Cultural Competence: essential skills for mental health professionals**

**title of talk : Use of Interpreters in culturally competent care**

**In training situations and in the clinic, the use of interpreters is a skill that is essential to therapeutic alliance. Currently in the McGill Cultural Consultation Service we have used in person interpreters.However in many regions the clinician may have access to only telephone, computer generated or might even eventually revert to AI technology. Clinical case examples will be given to underline the clinical interactions, predicaments and challenges that illustrate cultural competency skills in the interpreter, clinician and patient consultation situations.**

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### **[SY-38-03] Developing culturally appropriate messages for mental health promotion; the role of alternate care providers'**

\*Byamah Brian Mutamba<sup>1,2</sup> (1.Butabika National Mental Hospital (Uganda), 2.YouBelong Uganda(Uganda))

Keywords : Alternate care providers、Community mental health、Primary health care、Awareness、health promotion

Health seeking for mental health care at primary health care facilities remains poor with majority of those affected opting for alternate care; traditional and /faith healing. To increase awareness about mental health services at primary health care facilities ,and improve health seeking behaviour, the YouBelong Uganda team engaged various stakeholders including alternate care providers.

We describe a collaborative process involving the Ministry of Health in Uganda, the YouBelong Uganda team and alternate (mental health ) care providers to develop culturally appropriate information, communication and education materials to support this initiative

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### **[SY-38-04] Cultural competence: the changing social perceptions from stigmatization to understanding of mental health issues in Japan in recent years**

\*Shuichi Katsuragawa (Department of Psychiatry, Toho University Sakura Medical Center(Japan))

Keywords : cultural competence、 social perception、 acculturation、 worker's compensation、 foreign workers

The speaker is interested in the change in public perception of mental health issues in Japan, a country that has undergone acculturation over time, and will discuss the changing of social perception showing the two examples. First, Japan is known for having one of the highest numbers of suicide in the world: for 10 years since 1997, the number of suicides exceeded 30,000 in every year, and the government has been working to reduce the number through suicide prevention measures. Mental health measures have been positioned as an important national project, and educational activities on depression have become popular. Depression among workers has been regarded as a private illness, which means there are no relationship between its occurrence and work environment. Therefore the rate of worker's compensation applications had not been high. In these days, the number of recognitions for worker's compensation, including suicides, has been increasing year by year, as the problems such as long working hours and harassment in the workplace have become more visible. The second is the increase in the number of foreign workers. Compared to other countries, Japan has a decline birth rate and increase of aging population, and the decision to accept foreign workers was made with the goal of securing the labor force. Today, we see workers of foreign origin working alongside Japanese in every workplace, but there still seem to be many issues regarding mutual communication. Although foreign workers are also residents of Japan, it has been pointed out that the clients have not received the necessary improvements in the areas of housing, public services, medical care, and education. In particular, in the field of psychiatric care, there are only limited number of facilities that can treat foreigners, and urgent measures are needed to address this issue. Japan, supported by inbound demand, welcomes many foreign tourists, but it should be known that mental health problems are not limited to Japanese people in the transition to multicultural society, and I would like to emphasize the need to enhance the ability to understand cultures.