

ACT/ Contextual Behaviour Science Conference

ACTing to Promote Community Wellbeing

Dr Ross White, Institute of Health and Wellbeing, University of Glasgow

Concerted efforts are being made to build capacity for community-based mental health services across the globe. However, this work has progressed in the absence of sufficient consideration being given to how the concept of ‘community’ can vary across time, geography and culture. To date, ‘community’ approaches have tended to focus on finding cost-effective ways of reaching large numbers of individuals, rather than exploring how the collective strengths and resources of communities can be harnessed to promote wellbeing.

This workshop highlights the role that Contextual Behavioral Science (CBS) can play in building community-based approaches aimed at elevating wellbeing. A key aspect of this work will be addressing sources of social injustice (e.g. marginalization, discrimination, stigma, and gender-based violence). Particular emphasis will be placed on moving beyond the therapy-room to work creatively with voluntary sector organizations, charities, non-governmental organizations, schools, community groups, and service-user organizations to promote mental health and wellbeing.

Attendees will learn about innovative projects that have used CBS approaches (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and PROSOCIAL approaches) to challenge social injustice and foster personal and social-environmental contexts for promoting wellbeing in diverse communities in the UK, Uganda, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. Emphasis will be placed on finding creative ways to support communities to deal with the impact of emerging global crises related to climate change, food insecurity and migration.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the workshop attendees will have:

- A good working knowledge of the PROSOCIAL process.
- Generated innovative ideas for engaging with communities and identifying sources of strengths that exist within these communities.
- Practiced strategies aimed at elevating community wellbeing.

About the presenter:

Ross White (PhD, DClinPsy) is a Senior lecturer and Director of the MSc Global Mental Health programme at the University of Glasgow. His research interests relate to psychological mechanisms involved in complex mental health difficulties such as psychosis. He conducts randomised controlled trials to determine the effectiveness of psychotherapeutic interventions for complex mental health difficulties. His particular interests relate to the application of mindfulness-based treatments and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for these populations. Dr. White is engaged in scholarly activity that investigates the role that socio-cultural factors play in the manifestation of mental health difficulties, and explores how psychological interventions can be adapted to accommodate cultural beliefs and practices. He is a co-editor of the upcoming *Palgrave Handbook for Global Mental Health: Socio-cultural Perspectives*. Dr. White has active collaborations in Rwanda, Uganda and Sierra Leone, and

he is the Chairperson of the ACBS Developing Nations Committee. He is deputy-chairperson of the charity '*commit and act*' - a non-governmental organization training non-specialist workers to deliver psychosocial interventions in Sierra Leone. Dr White has an honorary contract as a Principal Clinical Psychologist with Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS.