

Session 1 Speakers

6/17/2020

Dr. Lena Verdeli

Lena Verdeli, Ph.D, MSc, is Associate Professor of Clinical Psychology, Director of Clinical Training at Teachers College, Columbia University, and the Founder and Director of the Teachers College Global Mental Health lab. Over the years Dr. Verdeli has received funding from governments (US-NIMH; Canadian government –Grand Challenges Canada; UK- Medical Research Council, Economic and Social Research Council); intergovernmental agencies (WHO, UNHCR); and foundations (NARSAD, Eleanor Cook Foundation, etc) to test psychotherapy for prevention and treatment of mood disorders. In the past fifteen years Lena Verdeli has played a key role in landmark studies involving adaptation, training, and testing of psychotherapy protocols used by both specialists and non-specialists around the globe (psychologists, psychiatrists, primary care staff, community health workers, etc). She collaborated internationally with academic groups, ministries of health, local NGOs and international agencies to alleviate the suffering of adults locally defined as depressed in southern Uganda; war-affected adolescents in IDP camps in northern Uganda; traumatized IDP women in Colombia; distressed patients in primary care in Goa, India; depressed community members in Haiti; war-affected Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

Dr. Verdeli is a Scientific Advisory Council member of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, and the Scientific Advisory Board of Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance. She received the Klerman Young Scientist award; the APA Division 52 Mentoring Award; and chaired the research workgroup of the Family NGO at the UN. She is the first author of the manual on Group Interpersonal Psychotherapy which has been disseminated globally online by WHO (http://www.who.int/mental_health/mhgap/interpersonal_therapy/en/)

Srishti Sardana

Lab Coordinator & Doctoral Student, Global Mental Health Lab Teachers College, Columbia University

Srishti Sardana is a fourth-year doctoral student and has assisted on various projects with aims to study efficacy and effectiveness of Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT) and other related intervention variables in low- and middle-income countries. She assists on studies including the Grand Challenges Canada funded IPT scalability for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, assessing fidelity and adoption of IPT for depressed adolescents in Nepal, UNHCR funded IPT implementation for treatment of depression among Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh & Congolese and Burundian Refugees in Tanzania, and has implemented a pilot study to assess the mental health needs of home-based female sex workers in rural India.

Before enrolling at Teachers College, Srishti was employed in the juvenile offender unit at the Institute of Juvenile Justice, Delhi Police and initiated a narrative therapy-based intervention project in collaboration with a team of Australian psychotherapists for youth offenders committed for violent and non-violent crimes. Srishti is currently working on co-developing a tool to measure networks of received

and perceived social support, and the potential mediating role of conflict and support in recovery from depression among Rohingya refugees within an IPT intervention pilot study, for her dissertation.

Mebane Boyd

Over the course of Mebane's career, she has had considerable influence on the nonprofit organizations which she has worked for and led. Among these organizations in Wilmington she counts the Domestic Violence Shelter & Services, Children's Museum of Wilmington, Cameron Art Museum, and Smart Start of New Hanover County.

Since July 2018 she has directed the New Hanover County Resiliency Task Force (RTF) which works across systems (early childhood, schools, healthcare, first responders/justice, and family/faith/community and arts) to create trauma-sensitive, resiliency-focused organizations. Over 110 organizations and close to 700 individuals have together created a roadmap and strategic plan to create a trauma-informed community, and the RTF is hard at work to realize the goals.

Hurricane Florence brought new awareness of the trauma caused by natural disasters for children and families, and the inequity in recovery experienced between those with means and those without. Mebane's work with the National Center for Disaster Preparedness, a Community Champion, has brought greater awareness to the unique needs of children in disasters and the need for a community-wide effort to ensure sustainable policy changes to ensure child well-being.