

## Plenary Presentation Proposal

Susan Gere, Ph.D. & Lisa Tsoi Hoshmand, Ph.D.

### "Evidence-informed Trauma Counseling in an International Context"

Social work and counseling share a common mission in a world where conflicts are increasingly entwined with issues of human rights. Both professions address conflict from a personal and social justice perspective. Both view the person in context and approach human suffering with a strengths-based understanding of how to overcome the expected consequences of violence, oppression, deprivation and natural disasters. This presentation will focus on trauma counseling as globally many people experience traumatic life events that challenge their coping skills and disrupt their lives. The field of trauma counseling is among the fastest growing and most researched areas and has given rise to a group of evidence-supported, technically similar, phased intervention methods.

International organizations such as the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies disseminate information on trauma research and practice. It is becoming clear that the sequelae of traumatic events are similar regardless of the precipitating event. It is also clear that interpersonal trauma (at individual and group levels) can have the most devastating long-term consequences for societies. However, the ways in which individuals and societies make meaning of experience vary across cultures. The social work and counseling professions are particularly challenged when applying evidence-based interventions to diverse populations. While current research and practice may involve multiple international settings, there is a predominance of work from Europe and North America. In this plenary session, we propose to review the evidence-based treatments for psychosocial trauma and to open the question of how non-Western societies view adverse life events and healing from stressful events. We highlight the need for trauma counseling practitioners to adapt evidence-informed guidelines to a variety of settings and populations, and to inform such practice with local knowledge.