

## CLINICAL AND COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY

August 20-21, 2018 Singapore

**Defining and operationalizing psychosocial wellbeing in Afghanistan: A participatory phenomenological study****Mariam Ahmadi<sup>1</sup>, Spozhmay Oriya<sup>1</sup>, Bezhan Ayubi<sup>1</sup>, Zekrullah Faiq<sup>1</sup>, Fereshta Barakzai<sup>2</sup> and Martha Bragin<sup>3</sup>**<sup>1</sup>Kabul University, Afghanistan<sup>2</sup>Herat University, Afghanistan<sup>3</sup>University of New York, USA

While there have been many studies showing the extent of human suffering in Afghanistan, there has been no formal study of what it means to be psychologically and socially well. Literature on Afghan resilience has called for such studies to take place to begin to develop indicators of positive outcomes for the practice of counseling. This presentation will report on a 2018 participatory phenomenological study conducted in Afghanistan to better understand psychosocial wellbeing. The research specifically elaborated and operationalized definitions of psychosocial wellbeing among adults. This research is the first of its kind to be conducted in Afghanistan, modeled on previously published studies in other conflict-affected countries. This presentation will reveal the results from the study, which are helping professional Afghan psychological counselors to understand their clients' psychosocial wellbeing and subsequently tailor their work to support that state. Results from the study are also supporting Kabul University and Herat University Counseling Psychology Departments to solidify curricula that will equip graduates to meet the growing needs of Afghan individuals, families and communities for qualified professional counseling services provided to Afghans by Afghan professionals. Soon, these operationalized domains will contribute to the development of valid and reliable instruments to measure psychosocial wellbeing in Afghanistan.

**Biography**

Mariam Ahmadi is an Associate Professor and the Head of the Counseling Department at Kabul University. She has her Master's degree in Educational Psychology from the University of Indiana, USA in the Child and Developmental Psychology Department. She has her Bachelor's degree in Education from Kabul University. She has been teaching for 20 years and has been with the Department of Psychology for 5 years. Her special interest is in children with special needs and developmental psychology.

mahmadi94@gmail.com

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