

Post conference workshop: ITA Symposium: International Perspectives on the Future of Transpersonal Psychology

In a pioneering post-conference workshop, Sofia University played host to the "ITA Symposium: International Perspectives on the Future of Transpersonal Psychology" on September 25, 2023. This unique event took place in both Costa Mesa, Sofia University, and online, offering participants an immersive experience as distinguished leaders from esteemed international transpersonal organizations shared their visionary insights into the future of this extraordinary movement.

Dr. Glenn Hartelius: Honoring Transpersonal Psychology's Roots and Diversity

Dr. Glenn Hartelius, the symposium's moderator, expressed gratitude to Sofia University for hosting and acknowledged its historical role as the first to offer transpersonal psychology programs. He recognized Dr. Harris Friedman's contributions, including the first transpersonal assessment and support for the field. The symposium featured six International Transpersonal Association board members, emphasizing the need for more diverse representation. Dr. Hartelius briefly mentioned Abraham Maslow's views on human capacities and their relevance to spirituality. The workshop showcased global advancements in transpersonal psychology's mission and vision.



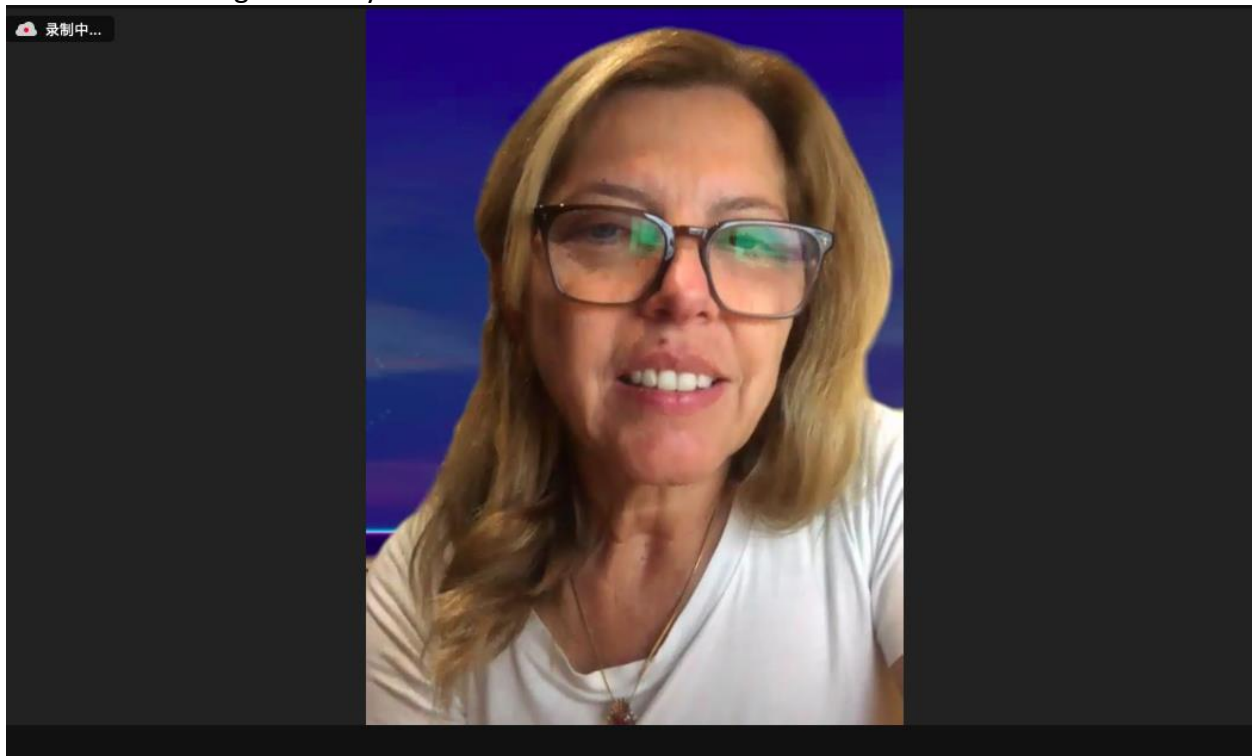
Dr. Maria Cristina Barros: Uniting Spirituality and Transpersonal Psychology in Brazil

Dr. Maria Cristina Barros delivered a captivating speech on the profound connection between Brazil's rich spiritual traditions and transpersonal psychology. Her central message emphasized the seamless integration of spirituality into the realm of psychology, highlighting Brazil's diverse spiritual landscape.

She explored the deep roots of spirituality in Brazil, with 1.7 million indigenous people representing 305 distinct ethnicities and conversing in over 274 languages. The country's religious diversity, where approximately 80% identify as Christians, further illustrated the deeply ingrained belief in spirituality. Dr. Barros also emphasized the influence of African religions, mystic practices, and French Spiritism in shaping Brazil's intricate spiritual tapestry. Dr. Barros portrayed the present as a bridge that connects these spiritual roots to integrated psychology, emphasizing the growing acceptance of spirituality within mainstream psychology, creating a favorable environment for transpersonal psychology to thrive.

Furthermore, she showcased the flourishing branches of transpersonal psychology in Brazil, shedding light on research related to anomalous experiences and traditional healing practices. Brazil's significant contributions to the intersection of spirituality and health, along with advancements in integrative medicine, were duly acknowledged.

Looking to the future, Dr. Barros envisioned a path characterized by integration, symbolizing a harmonious blend of "roots and wings." She expressed confidence in the ongoing progression of transpersonal psychology, with the ultimate aspiration of witnessing the universal incorporation of spiritual wisdom. This, she believed, would play a pivotal role in fostering greater well-being and understanding in society.



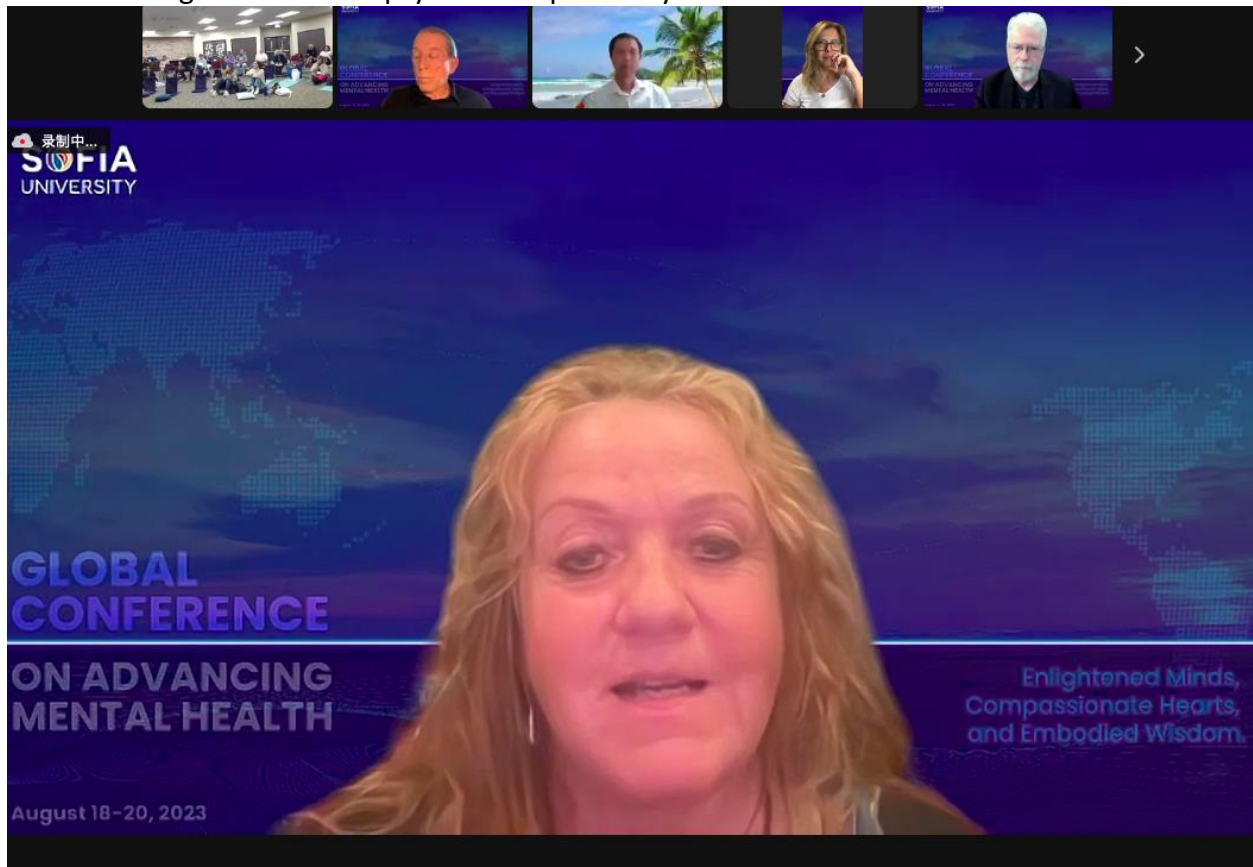
Dr. Regina Hess: A Journey from Clinical to Transpersonal Psychology

Dr. Regina Hess's path from clinical psychology to prominence in transpersonal psychology and spirituality was ignited by surviving the 2004 Asian tsunami in Thailand. Her established career

as a clinical psychologist took a transformative turn after this life-changing event, leading her to pursue advanced studies in transpersonal psychology at ITP Sofia University.

Dr. Hess represents the International Transpersonal Association (ITA) and the European Transpersonal Association (Euro Trust). She highlighted the global reach of the transpersonal movement, emphasizing the importance of publications in various languages and Euro Trust's contributions in developing guidelines for transpersonal psychotherapy certification in Europe. Her work in psychedelic science and transpersonal psychology pioneers' clinical interventions and may gain legal recognition in the coming years, bridging ancestral healing with modern science.

In summary, Dr. Regina Hess's journey exemplifies the transformative potential of life experiences and her role as a prominent figure in transpersonal psychology, fostering a deeper understanding of the human psyche and spirituality.



Dr. Caifang Zhu: Exploring the Blossoming of Transpersonal and Integral Psychology in China

Dr. Caifang Zhu's presentation highlighted the growing interest in transpersonal and integral psychology in China, fueled by the fertile ground provided by traditional Chinese culture. Influential figures like Abraham Maslow and Rollo May have expressed admiration for Taoism and Buddhism, furthering the appeal of these fields.

Despite official restrictions in state-owned universities, there is a noticeable curiosity about transpersonal psychology, with the emergence of conferences featuring international experts in humanistic and transpersonal psychology. Dr. Zhu discussed the establishment of the Association for Transpersonal and Integral Psychology in China and introduced his unique model, Meditation-Initiated Integrative Therapy (MIIT). The Ph.D. program in psychology at Sofia University in China has attracted a growing number of students interested in transpersonal and integral psychology. Additionally, Dr. Susan from Fudan University successfully established the Division of Integral Psychology and the Chinese Society of Social Psychology.

In summary, transpersonal and integral psychology are gaining prominence in China despite challenges and restrictions. Driven by significant developments and a growing community of enthusiasts, these fields continue to thrive and expand in the country.



Dr. Steven Schmitz: Shaping the Future of Transpersonal Psychology

Dr. Steven Schmitz, a prominent figure in transpersonal psychology, has made significant contributions to the field through roles such as Chair of the Outreach Committee for the Association of Transpersonal Psychology (ATP) and past president of ATP. His journey began in the transformative 1960s and 1970s in the San Francisco Bay Area, marked by the influence of Eastern spiritual teachings.

With over 50 years of involvement, Dr. Schmitz highlighted the continued relevance of transpersonal psychology in addressing societal challenges like violence and division. He envisions the field as a resource for healing and transformation, emphasizing activism,

interdisciplinary collaboration, and broadening the field's image. Dr. Schmitz advocates for peace, supports the younger generation, promotes diversity, and bridges ancient spirituality with modern science. His contributions and visionary outlook shape the future of transpersonal psychology, ensuring its impact in our ever-changing world.



Dr. Elias Capriles: Embracing the Transpersonal Future of Psychology

Dr. Elias Capriles echoed the belief that the future of psychology must be transpersonal, emphasizing the link between psychology and wisdom. He highlighted his journey in founding the "American Transpersonal Association" (ATI) and the challenges he faced. Dr. Capriles' unique focus lies at the intersection of psychology, philosophy, and Tibetan Buddhism, stressing the importance of restoring the transpersonal perspective. He differentiated between various transpersonal states, emphasizing the need to integrate Buddhist categories into transpersonal psychology for greater specificity. Dr. Capriles clarified the Buddhist perspective on the final state, asserting its unequivocal transpersonal nature.

In conclusion, his message underscores the vital role of transpersonal psychology in addressing global challenges and guiding the field towards a transpersonal future.



Dr. Kiran Kumar Salagame: Navigating Spirituality and Transpersonal Psychology

Dr. Kiran Kumar Salagame explored the intricate relationship between spirituality and transpersonal psychology, particularly within the cultural context of India. He highlighted the clash between India's spiritual worldview, emphasizing immortality, and the naturalistic perspective of transpersonal psychology. Despite this tension, he noted the integration of spirituality and action in Indian culture.

In academia, the need for validation of spiritual experiences was emphasized, with transpersonal psychology playing a vital role in addressing these concerns. Dr. Salagame discussed the evolving landscape of transpersonal psychology in India, including its introduction into university courses. He also expressed his personal efforts to promote the field in India and the importance of a global transpersonal perspective. Furthermore, Dr. Salagame highlighted the wealth of ritual data in India, suggesting its potential use in research. He concluded by mentioning Glenn Hartelius's work on assessing states of consciousness.

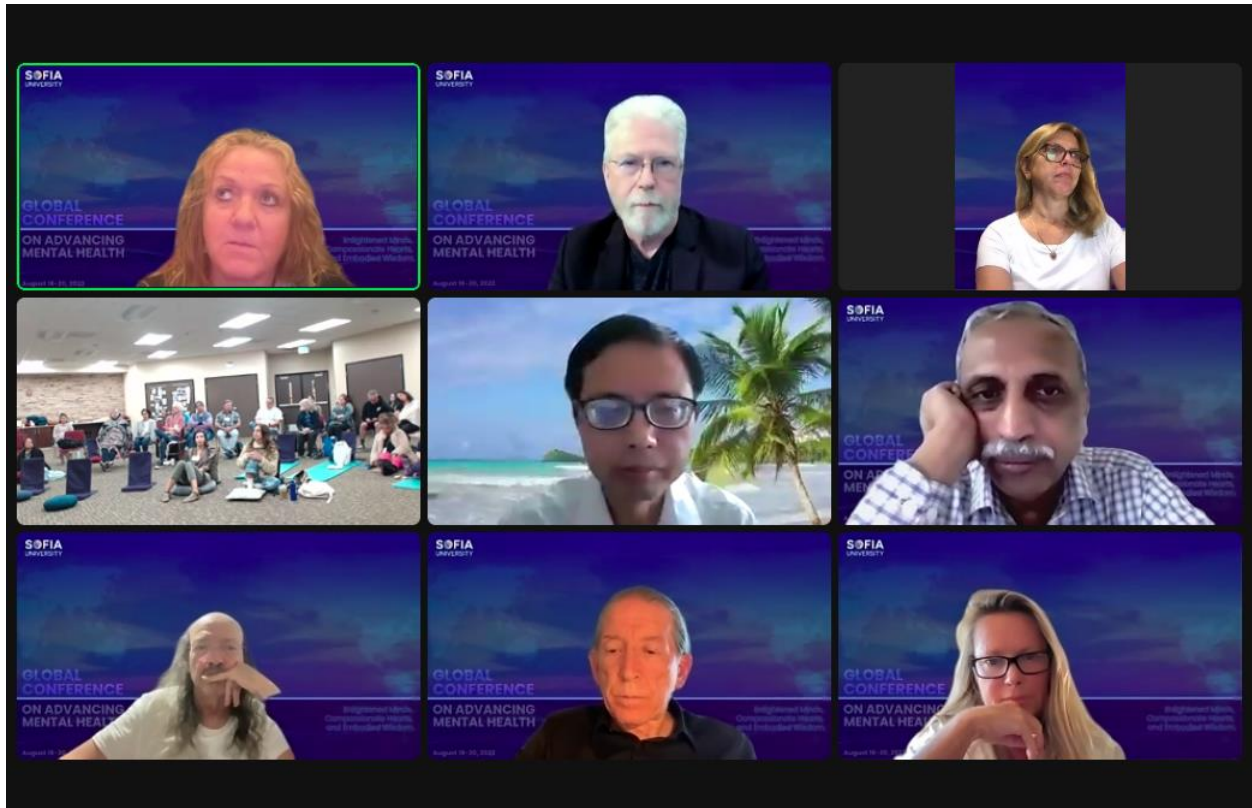
Dr. Salagame's presentation shed light on the intersection of spirituality and transpersonal psychology, emphasizing cultural diversity and the field's evolving role in academia.



Dr. Dorote Lucci: Shaping the Future of Transpersonal Psychology

Dr. Dorote Lucci, the Co-chairs of Sofia University Global Conference expressed gratitude to panelists and participants for their involvement in the ongoing global conference. She announced an upcoming conference to delve deeper into the transformative themes discussed.

Dr. Lucci emphasized the need to bridge mainstream and transpersonal psychology, highlighting a shift towards inclusive psychology. The future conference will explore the "whole person" in connection with the environment, incorporating dual and non-dual states, personality structure, and transcendence while integrating various perspectives and traditions. Additionally, she highlighted practical applications of transpersonal psychology in fields like business, computer science, mental health, and healthcare, emphasizing "embodied transcendence" in real-world contexts. Dr. Lucci invited participants to join the next year's Sofia University Global Conference, emphasizing the value of ongoing dialogue and exploration in transpersonal psychology.



Click here for video recap: [edited version.mp4](#) check with Karen to see if It can be posted on Youtube Chanel.