



2020 CSV SYMPOSIUM



26 | 27 | 28
August 2020
Johannesburg,
South Africa



CSV

Centre for the Study of
Violence and Reconciliation

BLEND**E**D VOICES: Building an understanding of torture, war trauma and violence through an african lens

Africa's relationship to torture, war trauma and violence spans across the continent's history of slavery; precolonial, colonial and post-colonial violence; as well as current civil war, tribal and political conflict. The symposium explores this history and how it has shaped Africa's narrative, as well as rehabilitation strategies at individual, family, group, community and societal levels to bring about collective healing, in attempts to disrupt the cycle of violence in Africa and transgenerational trauma that has been carried through from the past.

Who should attend

- Practitioners
- Academics
- Students
- Civil society organisations
- Individuals working in the field of torture, trauma, violence and rehabilitation

Abstract submission open:

01 December 2019

Abstract submission deadline:

28 February 2020

Abstract feedback:

31 May 2020

Registration opens:

01 February 2020

Registration closes:

30 April 2020

Spaces are limited, acceptance of registrations will close once capacity is reached.

For more information or to RSVP:

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THEME 1

A traumatized Africa

A history of torture and trauma in our continent

Africa's relationship to torture, war trauma and violence spans across time, reflected in the continent's history of precolonial conflict, colonialism and postcolonial conflict. Telling the stories of Africa's history is important to understanding how history has shaped the African narrative today and its relevance to continued domination over people through violence, othering to maintain power, lack of empathy for the minority and transgenerational trauma. This theme calls for stories that tell Africa's history to allow a witnessing of these stories through documentaries, storytelling and art, so that we can begin to understand and reflect on the psychological and social architecture/landscape that Africa sits with today following years of violence.



THEME 2

Repetitive cycles

An analysis of the repetition of trauma across time, is violence inevitable and repetition a compulsion?

'The past is always present and calls us to repeat the past' - These words of Fanon capture the repetition of violence across the African continent and speaks to the pull within us human beings to repeat the past, as evident in the perpetration of violence in Congolese political regimes; Zimbabwe's years of dictatorship rule; civil conflict in Sudan; and South Africa where we have witnessed the repetition of the past in triggering images of students attacked by armed forces in the Fees Must Fall Movement in 2017, which bore a scarring resemblance to images captured during the student uprising in 1976.

This theme questions the inevitability of the repetition of cycles of violence and the possibility of breaking these cycles needs to be answered, as the impact of the past trauma has rippled into the present and a state of anomie looms. Do we envision that the current traumas will feed into future generations and nothing can be done?



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THEME 3

Torture and trauma rehabilitation in Africa

Can it influence the narrative of violence among African people and facilitate healing?

What does trauma rehabilitation look like in Africa? This theme explores rehabilitation strategies that have been used in individual, family and group settings and its impact on survivors. Unpacking western perspectives of trauma healing that is promoted by psychology, social work, psychiatry and other mental health disciplines and whether or not it works in Africa, taking into account religion, culture, socialization, and context. Thus, reflecting on what we have learnt from practice? What are survivors teaching us? And how do they shape our philosophical/theoretical framework or understanding of healing in Africa?



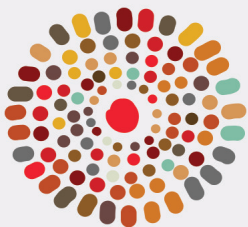
THEME 4

In the aftermath

Engaging with collective trauma post conflict?

How can communities and societies emerging from violence and conflict resolve the hurts of the past and rebuild for the future, when forgetting is not an option. This theme explores the impact of collective trauma on communities and societies and efforts made to provide collective healing through memorialization sites, commemoration events, commissions and reparation.

The effectiveness of these strategies are explored, drawing on examples such as the South African TRC process, Rwandan Gacaca, TRRC process in Gambia and others in its aim to bring about collective healing. Furthermore, the theme explores the place of perpetrators/ torturers in society in the aftermath and their place in the healing process. As well as wounded leaders, a common pattern amongst African leaders, who are often themselves survivors of torture, war trauma and violence and who then are positioned to lead wounded nations



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ABSTRACTS



THEME 5

Unpacking the concept of mental health in Africa

African, postcolonial and other critical theories and thought have come to highlight the coercive, erosive and persistent nature of Western conceptions of mental health. This includes the continuation of biomedical and public health approaches to mental health, which continue to neglect lived experiences, alternative views of health as well as aspects of power, domination and oppression.

This theme focuses on alternative conceptualization of mental health in the African context. This includes a history of mental health emanating from and embedded in Africa, current localized approaches to mental health as well as rehabilitation.



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