



International Society
for the Study of Trauma
and Dissociation

VIR

Virtual Regional Conference

Presentation Title: When Trauma and Systemic Betrayal Intersect With Gender Diversity

Presentation Time: 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM US Eastern Time

Content Level: Beginning/Introductory

Abstract: Do you work with transgender and/or gender diverse people? Do you have knowledge about gender diversity and want to explore the intersectionality with minority stress and the trauma of systemic betrayal? Trauma is not an individual experience, it happens within systems that often enable it. We develop our capacity to process distress, integrate meaning and remain connected to ourselves, others and the world around us. This development is foundational: safety, bonding, belonging... a burgeoning sense of identity. Our 'attachment' to life and others continues to develop as we get older. Dysphoria means a profound state of unease or dissatisfaction. What happens when that 'attachment' is ruptured by a dominant culture that displays a profound state of unease or dissatisfaction towards people who are trans? If a person senses that simply being themselves could mean rejection at one end of the scale and death at the other, do they internalise that, do they experience it as constant threat? Where do our cultural and professional narratives, which create our beliefs and approaches, obstruct our ability to provide clear unbiased therapeutic support for gender diverse people? When are we seeing 'gender dysphoria,' and when are we seeing distress/dissociation from one's 'self' brought about by societal and family systems that often marginalise, attack and abandon those who are different? Is it even possible to accurately assess this, when each is so interwoven with the other? We will examine these questions and posit effective methods moving forward using current research connecting minority stress to symptoms of trauma, and the impact of systemic betrayal, abandonment and the abuse of power on traumatic threat responses for individuals and communities. As well as recognising best practice clinical and non-clinical recommendations, this workshop will involve theory, self-reflection, discussion, application and contain an experiential component.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Name their cultural and professional bias related to gender diversity and societal trauma, and identify how this may help or hinder their work.
- Recognise the traumatic pain of family and societal abandonment for gender diverse people, and that daily micro-aggression, can in and of itself, cause the symptoms of traumatic stress.
- Share their ideas of effective approaches when working with gender diverse people, who may also be experiencing a dominant society's 'unease and dissatisfaction' with their diversity.

Presenter(s)

Dragan Z Wright, Graduate Diploma Psychotherapy

Dragan Zan Wright is a transgender psychotherapist who identifies as non-binary and embraces his 'she, he and they.' Dragan is a survivor of complex childhood and adult trauma and has been engaged in a long journey of recovery from the resultant developmental and mental health manifestations. In seminars and workshops Dragan weaves together his fourteen years of professional experience, relevant therapeutic theory and his lived experience of trauma, resilience and gender diversity. Dragan is an authentic, engaging and humorous speaker who has for the last seven years been presenting workshops throughout Australia, both publicly and in-house for various services, on behalf of the Blue Knot Foundation, the Mental Health Coordinating Council and the Disability Justice Program. These include an in depth look at working therapeutically with complex trauma, historical trauma, trauma informed practice, and protection from vicarious trauma. In 2018 Dragan also began running his own training packages in 'Trauma Informed Gender Affirmative Care' and 'Complex Trauma: Transgender and Gender Diversity - When experiences intersect.' He has run these for a wide array of people including sexual assault services, LGBTIQA+ services and Gestalt Master's students. Dragan is committed to speaking publicly and providing quality education in order to support societal and cultural change, particularly within the Mental Health and Gender Affirmation sectors.

Continuing Education

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