

Executive Summary Report

World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH) – International Trauma Summit

Dates of event: November 28 - 30, 2018

Location of event: J. W. Marriot Hotel, Houston, Texas, USA

Number of persons attending 60

Primary sponsor: The Hogg Foundation

Additional sponsors: Prosumers International & Pro International

Contact Name: Dr. Tracey Bone, Corporate Secretary, WFMH

WFMH event site: <https://wfmh.global/trauma-summit/>

Conference Summary

The World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH) is an international membership organization founded in 1948. Its mission is to promote the advancement of mental health awareness, the prevention of mental disorders, advocacy in mental health, and best practices in recovery-focused interventions worldwide. In keeping with this mission, the WFMH held its inaugural three-day International Trauma Summit November 28-30, 2018 at the J.W. Marriot Hotel in Houston, Texas, USA. The theme of the conference was “Impacting Trauma: Issues and Opportunities”.

Goal: The goal of the summit was to invite participants from around the world to contribute towards a collective identification of Calls to Action as to how to address the pervasive impact of traumas experienced around the world.

Dr. Alberto Trimboli, President (2017-2019) of the WFMH shared opening remarks. Dr. Octavia N. Martinez, Jr., Executive Director of the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, the primary sponsor of the conference followed bringing greetings and acknowledging the importance of the Summit. Additional sponsors of the conference were Prosumers International, and PRO International. Open to the public, approximately 60 people attended, including both members and non-members of the WFMH. Participants came from South Africa, Uganda, Kenya, Argentina, Canada, Taiwan, India, USA, and Israel.

“Open Space Technology (OST)” directed the conference proceedings. Defined as a participant-driven methodology, the conference facilitator introduced the Open Space methodology. Participants were invited to identify themes for small-group conversations. Themes were posted, and, over the initial two days, participants attended the sessions of their choosing throughout the day. The initiator of the theme assumed the role of convener, and led a small-group discussion on that particular theme, with a recorder documenting the conversation. A total of 31 topics were identified and discussed. An initial draft Book of Proceedings was developed from the Summaries of the first days’ conversations, and made available to participants for review. The Book was then updated with content from the second days’ conversations. The content is available on the Trauma website. Session topics varied around the general theme of trauma and included issues such as Stigma: strategies for abolishing stigma; Sex trafficking; Beyond Trauma; Building resilience from disaster; Intergenerational trauma following events of genocide; Trauma of Loss; LGBTI; WFMH Peer support section; and many others. Day two ended with the showing and discussion of the 2018 documentary titled; Is your story making you

sick? The 1 hour 33 minute documentary followed eight individuals battling addiction, depression, and/or trauma as they learned ways to re-write the toxic story they tell themselves, and learn ways to transcend their pain in life and relationships.

The final day involved two distinct activities. In the first, participants worked in small groups to distill the various topic areas discussed throughout the Summit to formulate specific priorities for the WFMH in the general area of trauma. The groups collectively generated twenty-seven priorities. In the final activity, conference participants voted for their top three priorities moving forward. The top five recommendations overall were,

1. WFMH creates comprehensive guidelines in collaboration with all stakeholders regarding topics including formulating a definition of trauma, and culturally sensitive interventions,
2. WFMH to create strategies of engagement that prevent re-traumatization,
3. That all calls to action include voices of people with lived experience,
4. WFMH creates a public awareness campaign specific to trauma - acknowledging trauma at epidemic levels,
5. That all documents resulting from the summit be multi-sectoral in design and implementation and be co-created by persons with lived experience.

The conference ended with a Closing Circle, giving participants the opportunity to share final comments on the event, activities, and/or the theme in general.

Outcomes: An outcome of this Summit was the acknowledgement of the collective and pervasive impact of traumas around the world. One specific Call was for the creation of a clear and concise definition of trauma, one that acknowledges the depth and breadth of the issue and that incorporates the unique dynamics associated with international realities. A further Call was for the recognition of the profound need for further and comprehensive discussion on the topic. The WFMH will respond to these calls by engaging members through the Trauma section (see <https://wfmh.global/sections/more-information-on-official-sections/>), and exploring other strategies of engagement.

Closing remarks: WFMH President Alberto Trimboli declared that September 1 be henceforth, commemorated as International Trauma Awareness Day. This proposal received unanimous support from the Board of Directors at their meeting November 27, 2018, and received full support from participants of the 2018 Trauma Summit.

Trauma may be experienced through one-time, multiple event, and/or long-lasting repetitive events. The impact of trauma is unique and influenced by a myriad of circumstances. This summit was a unique opportunity to acknowledge the voices, experiences and wisdom of participants from 11 countries around the world. All agreed that the conversation related to trauma must continue at the local, national and intentional levels. The World Federation for Mental Health accepts this as a Call to Action, and has agreed to focus its future commitments towards supporting future international conversation towards fundamental change in the way trauma is defined, acknowledged, and supports funded.

Dr. Tracey Bone, MSW, RSW
Board Member & Corporate Secretary
World Federation for Mental Health