

Call for 'Expert Opinion' Articles for Mad in South Asia

Mad in South Asia (MISA), is an ally and affiliate of Mad in America (a global mental health magazine that focuses on people's own experience with mental health systems and publishes research, podcasts, articles, and resources from non-mainstream perspectives).

We are reaching out to South Asian mental health experts with a critical perspective who would like to write a piece for our "expert opinion" section. These experts include psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors, social workers, sociologists, anthropologists, alternate medicine practitioners, indigenous healers, and anyone else who works with/does research around mental health.

How do you know if you have a critical perspective?

Are you a mental health professional who is critical of mainstream perspectives? Does the overly simple biological and medical approach to understand people's suffering seem too narrow? Are you someone who thinks that traditional knowledge in psychiatry and psychology does not do justice to your clients or patients? Do you think ideas around healing and harm coming from the West don't easily fit your patients, and often do them harm? Have you seen your patients struggle with psychiatric drugs – both because of severe side effects or inability to stop taking these drugs once they start (withdrawal)? Does your research address these concerns? Are you an alternate medicine practitioner? Then you are someone with a critical perspective.

By critical perspectives we mean those who have deeply thought about the shortcomings of overdiagnosis and overmedication. A mental health professional with a critical perspective does not consider human suffer a pathology or just a disease/disorder. They look at the environment and consider factors such as poverty, discrimination (gender, caste, sexual orientation), societal pressures, modern day stress etc. to understand why an individual would be suffering. A critical professional actively brings these issues into one's practice when they work with a patient. A critical perspective is anti-reductionistic – whether biologically, sociologically, or psychologically.

This includes psychiatrists who would help clients taper off medication, who are careful in their use of psychiatric medication, and who transparently talk about severe side effects with their patients – those who are honest, upfront, and humble. This includes therapists who understand that the culture, society, and family systems in South Asia are vastly different than those presented in psychological textbooks, so those theories don't simply apply to their clients/patients. This includes professionals (social workers, lawyers) who are advocating against involuntary treatments, and advocating for patient rights.

If you would like to write an expert opinion piece for us, please email us at adhar@madinsouthasia.org.

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