



**Abstract Nr:** 242  
**Internet ID:** 565

**Type of Presentation:** Workshop

**Diagnosis and management of spirit-possession, culture, psychosis or dissociation?**

Marjolein Van Duij

Amulet Mental Health Consultancy, Centrum voor Transculturele Psychiatrie, Balkbrug.

**Learning Goal:**

The participants will achieve tools to:

- deal with different explanatory models for spirit possession in a transcultural setting;
- learn how to differentiate between normal cultural experiences, psychotic features and trauma related dissociation;
- and reflect on options for management of pathological experiences of spirit possession.

**Abstract Text:**

In the context of conflict, disasters, insecurity and migration patients seeking help can present with spirit possession experiences in many cultural settings. When mental health professionals are confronted with pathological spirit possession experiences and cultural explanations western diagnostic categories and treatment models however seem limited. Differentiation between psychotic disorders, traumarelated dissociation or cultural idioms of distress is often confusing. There is increasing evidence however that spirit possession presenting as dissociative trance and possessive trance disorders, are related to traumatic experiences.

This workshop will give more insight in recognition, diagnosis and management of spirit possession in the transcultural setting. The applicability of diagnostic criteria for dissociative disorders in the DSM-5 will be discussed and practiced in the workshop. Differential diagnosis with e.g psychotic disorders will be discussed. Case histories from the African and Dutch clinical setting with refugees, migrants and prisoners will be discussed to illustrate different idioms of distress, explanatory models and culturally sensitive interventions. Presenters' research findings on classification, help-seeking and explanatory models of patients with spirit possession in Uganda will be referred to, as well as recent relevant literature. A side step will be made to the interrelation of the recent Ebola emergency outbreak in West Africa with former war experiences and the functioning of traditional and modern health care systems.

**ON THE HEALING POWER  
OF HUMAN RECONNECTION**