



Thursday, September 13, 2018

## Good Things Happening in Poland and Italy

By David Prescott, LICSW

I had the honor of spending several days training in Wroclaw, Poland, last week. Two days went into a Master Class series training trainers and supervisors in their various areas related to Motivational Interviewing (MI), two days at a conference on MI and trauma, and three other days providing consultation on the use of the Good Lives Model (GLM) and MI for private organizations interested in implementing these approaches in Poland and Italy.

The real heroes of the story are people who work days, nights, and weekends to ensure the best possible services in the areas of trauma and addictions in their various countries. Iga Jaraczewska is a clinician who has worked diligently for over ten years to bring MI into Poland to replace older status-quo approaches to addictions. This has brought an increase in understanding how clinicians and other professionals can best respond to trauma. Iga has organized trainings all over Poland, as well as international conferences in Krakow, Warsaw, Torun, and other locations to bring in outside voices. These often involve a progression of introductory and advanced trainings with consult and supervision. Similar efforts are rising in Estonia, with the work of Inga Karton. Following along the same basic path as Iga Jaraczewska in Warsaw, is Dominik Meinhart, located in the area surrounding Wroclaw. He has worked to ensure training, master classes, and supervision circles to put these methods into place with fidelity.

Their efforts are remarkable. Around the world, an ongoing phenomenon shows people like these working incredibly hard, often with little reward, to ensure that treatment services to marginalized people are as effective as can be. Among other areas of focus, Iga and Dominik have each taken a great interest in how MI and the GLM can be used to treat people with a variety of problematic sexual behaviors. Both approaches are inherently collaborative and strengths-based, an important consideration in light of research finding that the



**Kieran McCartan, PhD**  
Chief Blogger



**David Prescott,  
LICSW**  
Associate Blogger



**Alissa Ackerman,  
PhD**  
Co-Blogger

### SAJRT Bloggers' Profile

We are longtime members of ATSA dedicated to furthering the causes of evidenced-based practice, understanding, and prevention in the field of sexual abuse.

*The Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers* is an international, multi-disciplinary organization dedicated to preventing sexual abuse. Through research, education, and shared learning ATSA promotes evidence based practice, public policy and community strategies that lead to the effective assessment, treatment and management of individuals who have sexually abused or are at risk to abuse.

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more coercive the treatment experience the less effective it likely is to be and that low therapist empathy can be toxic. Iga produced an edited volume focusing in these areas, while Dominik has recently collected articles for the Polish *Terapia*. Each have built well-received organizations that focus on disseminating these methods with fidelity across a spectrum of professional disciplines.

Equally encouraging are the efforts of the students and other participants in these trainings. People routinely travel from around the country in order to attend various trainings and supervision sessions, often with little incentive beyond becoming a better therapist. As in the implementation of various models and methods in North America, these therapists submit recordings of their sessions to be reviewed by a supervisor, transcribed, and discussed in a group session with other therapists. I had the opportunity to sit in on a day of feedback sessions and felt fortunate to see just how supportive these groups can be.

Similar efforts are bringing these approaches into more areas of the criminal justice system in Italy. Previously, this blog focused on a group in Milan (<https://sajrt.blogspot.com/2016/05/whats-on-in-milan-successes-and.html>) including pioneers Carla Xella and Paolo Giulini. Now, a group led by Giacomo Salvanello is working to expand these methods into other areas within Italy.

Most impressive of all is how all these people work to secure funding for their efforts. Very few people enter the human services with an eye on developing expertise in fundraising in challenging times. And yet, this is often what makes or breaks their efforts to ensure high-quality services for people who often have no voice in the systems that order their lives. Of course, much of the same happens around North America. There are any number of people doing amazing things with unreasonably scant resources. Having had the great privilege of visiting many programs, it is always an honor to witness the efforts of people working behind the scenes to make trainings, conferences, and other forms of professional development happen.

Taken together, the efforts of these professionals show that therapeutic services improve when like-minded professionals get together with a common goal and purpose to exchange resources and ideas.