

Episode 42 - Dr. Mo Yee Lee: Integrative Body-Mind-Spirit Social Work - Myth-Busting to Build Accurate Understanding (part 3 of 3)

[00:00:09] Welcome to living proof. A podcast series of the University at Buffalo School of Social Work at www.socialwork.buffalo.edu. We're glad you could join us today. The series Living Proof examines social work research and practice that makes a difference in people's lives. I'm your host Adjoa Robinson. And I'd like to take a moment to tell you about a new feature of living proof. In addition to listening subscribing to and sharing podcast you can now rate and write a review of each episode of living proof to rate or write a review of a podcast. Just go to our Web site at www.socialwork.buffalo.edu forward slash podcast and click on. Create your own review button. We look forward to hearing from you. Greetings from sunny Buffalo. I'm your host Peter Sobota. This is a third of a three part episode in which Dr. Mo Yee Lee discusses her research and clinical work bridging social work practice and integration of Eastern philosophy and practice with traditional Western approaches to climate change. Dr. Mo Yee Lee is Professor of Social Work at the College of Social Work at the Ohio State University. Her research interests include intervention research using a strength based perspective and solution focused approach as well as multicultural social work practice and education. In this final episode Dr. Lee addresses some of the challenges and opportunities of the integrative approach for social work.

[00:01:42] She explores some of the common misunderstandings and misperceptions about meditation and Eastern practices and the role that education and information can play in an accurate understanding of these practices here Dr. Lee discusses issues of empowerment. Helping people to help themselves and the role of complementary interventions in the area to increase our knowledge base for social work practice. Elaine Hammond co-ordinator of the UB school of social works Jamestown York extension program spoke with Dr. Lee by telephone. What kind of issues have you found in your work with integrative treatment. What kind of barriers and opportunities have you had going back to when we actually integrate you know techniques or because of these beliefs. What are the opportunities and what might be challenges. Let me talk about the challenges first and then talk about opportunities and strengths and strengths is a good place to be. One thing is people are nothing new in India. Now just use meditation as an example. I remember you know talking to take a very very conscious and very beginning into recruitment. We have the orientation meeting etc so I share with them meditation is a practice and we're not into any religion. We're not into religious question at all. You know that's not the interest me of using meditation as a treatment. Some clients later on they share with me that the family actually stopped them try to stop them participating. When they talked to the family even today no residential treatment backing the didn't of contact with family since they actually stopped them saying that they'll go to hell if they see the program because meditation is from Buddhism more. Well I think that is some worrisome Eastern religion extra. So that's clearly if you talk about challenges like to talk in terms of practice and also maybe later on we should. In other stuff.

[00:03:43] And so in terms of practice is there. There are misconceptions myths and on the other side. I also have clients that shared with me they look forward to this program so much that when because for this cohort there is so little delay of the beginning. We think we start we will start in January and then we start in February. We couldn't even share with this machine and get into depression because she has so much hope in a program and we have to come in the months later McGuff so disappointed that there are many other things going on as well. I'm thinking exactly you already describe one of the major challenges people sometimes have misconception myths and negativity about it in practice because they're different from other diseases so excited and so hopeful that they have over the patient. I think one of the major things is really a about this one is more of education information. When I find out is when you too many people repair the cloning

people to know what that is and of course they are now. We need to be very careful about what do we choose. Also a lot of the practice now meditation and transformation evening think that we also have that tradition also. But if you bring you which is actually a discipline to me and it's basically a technique a process what whenever you add to it it can be different.

[00:05:09] I mean Catholic people think about different things right at the moment navigating a decline lots of things I try to do is to really be very careful at the very beginning in terms of education etcetra and it's the same thing of many other enough integrated body mind spirit in social work I won't go into all the details because it's not a book that we do have very careful criteria to see that what we do is cruel. We do have principles because once we go into holistic approach the good thing is you know we expand our ourselves and then we can utilise other modalities to work with quiet down more consistent with where people are. But on the other hand if we let that door open ended thinking I mean also ethics became a very important issue. That's helpful. And so we talk about nonintrusive we talk about things that the clanking self administered self criteria in terms of isolation and in terms of the ethics of the book that we describe it also when I look at other cultural differences or differences between different cultures East and West etc etc. When I think of integrated social work. Actually I already assume that there are cultural differences and I'm not going to deny it there. However I actually make the assumption that people can learn from each other. There are empirical evidence showing that you found deafness. So one major important thing about integrated social work is we want to demystify body mind spirit practice and so we always go back to research and attitudes. We don't want to just let open a door and you know they can come in with that attitude. What thinking is the fundamental assumption about change or at least a defining characteristic that I have described you know early on in our conversation I think still you'll be mercial body mind spirit are fundamental domains and we can use them.

[00:07:16] You now welcome people like you know sharing space like we believe in you know the movement you know to create change in this kind of thing. I absolutely believe that they are the Herschell. However the techniques about how to get there. I think there's a lot of cultural differences and I think it's just natural. I guess you're trying to prepare for this conversation and thinking Yeah. Right now they talk about translation though science is so big on their mind. Now and they have the recovery bill. They have a lot of awful grammar Losman that focus just on translational science how to upload pro-choice that they have evolved into practice starting into reality. And so I'm thinking even approach developed here you know West they still go through this major hurdle you know trying to translate them into practice. Now of course just to be realistic meditational any kind of techniques from other places know these approaches want the process of translating into practice with quiet. I mean we need to put in some effort thinking to do that. I think there are people already doing that and I can give you some examples like you know mindful eating something that people have used already here. Yes with good success in the eating disorders a man in Hong Kong or in the east they use rice. They actually use raisins. It's just because it's different people different different. And so what I'm trying to say is the technique is helpful how to use them effectively with our client. We need to think carefully just from meditation that Im in the east.

[00:09:01] When people meditate they actually crossed the lake in a lotus position now in meditation study there might be two or three clients who actually do that. But most of them just sit on a chair and say OK. What I'm thinking is like you know there are differences. My other two I won't deny the differences but let's face it directly and see how we can still think about the principle and look at the techniques and see how we can change them in a helpful way. So I think to those students who are ever going to use integrated social work in the practice I think they will need to know the absence of the approach in the techniques very well but then they also need to know decline in their culture then then we need to be a bridge in the process that's a social or professional. We need to do the breeching work in making the approach Sergiu practice of the the people happen to any other person like what you have just mentioned. We also you know use a lot of process

techniques. I mean Chapter 6 The whole chapter in traditional Chinese medicine. They use acupuncture. Now of course you will use acupuncture because it's too intrusive. We use acute pressure to just press on the point where when to make sure that things know that we can use Vesely and some and that also proof to how the motions are meant to account for and tea you claim very anxious. We actually asked declined to press between the thumb and the thing and things are good just press on.

[00:10:32] I mean the area in between very technical like maybe just 60 seconds to calm down the person not because it's magic but just because Tomaree the intro you are an aspect of our daily motion. And so I mean these are really simple things but it's also very empowering and politically also because when clients are very panic if they know there is something that they can use it's like an anchor and they just learn it so they become part of that of course we do need to use whatever therapy that cognitive behavioural solution focused on whatever who work with them to process what's going on but it really gets them to to calm down and to think and to talk. That is one of the major purpose for me to fall into people or to commit to the approach is bitches and then think people need help of course but we assume that it's more important to help people to bring up their potential so that they don't need to depend on others. But they know how one other the that they can do to actually help themselves the way not to the exclusion that they don't need help but oftentimes they have a tool that part of the process. When we talk about and tell them I think you know that's what it's all about and I'm so glad you know your department actually making you the focus because now there's so much discussion around. I mean right now a lot around a lot of the stuff that you're seeing is really related to trauma they might not develop PTSD it's related to something Spooner's that people have.

[00:12:06] And these two Gustov and trying to resource them but going back to your question the other thing may be academic inefficient because when I talk about where they are at the practice level with the Quien with the treatment I think I'm I'm pretty lucky in some way. I think I begin doing this line of we should at a time when people are more open to it I remember talking to body it's actually Alan Lorwin and he you know the world using meditation with substance abuse and also prison or Arcel then he need that in 1970. There's so much Namphy negative feelings or perception of a holistic approach that he said you can never even use the word mindfulness it's already too controversial or too unscientific whatever. And so at this time my experience has not been that at all. Now the major support to study we got a lot of attention actually just last week on how to come out of mental health that you might add me and my PM to go for and to share the study with them and they're very interesting where we do we want our friends. So yeah and also you know right now we hope the National Centre of complementary and tentative Maddux's provides support to these types of studies. And so in terms of academic research I'm sure there will be you know and there are and always that Lasch Marzo hurt things that it might it's you know people are a different conversation about how active are this is the alternative Delfina with cancer or another illness also in some way. I do anticipate resistance to a new approach may not necessarily see it as a bad thing because I think people should be suspicious about anything that's new especially different from conventional practice and for good reason.

[00:14:01] But I also see that the window for change because there's a lot more openness and then maybe it might be a good transition to talk about how I think about the opportunities. I do think there are opportunities because when I think of it I think the first thing is really doing research national centre I'd rather mention my age already have a centre you know focus on this area. But I think there are primarily two types of research that need to be accomplished to be done a doctoral student whatever. The first one definitely is innovation research developed like this approach you know the study was made on meditation we're doing study with it now. Now before innovation we should I think that's really important. I have students already integrating yoga and meditation with a group of teenage girls who are at residential treatment and half fear emotion and behaviour disorder

and so it's a small study everything. I mean think of I mean have to begin somewhere over beginning in research. I imagine it will be small not a big one but I also think there is it's so important to have the I mean the power of number. I don't think we have a lot of studies in this area right now for your social work. And so the first thing I would encourage in terms of opportunity for a student or a practitioner or scholar who are interested in this area is just to do it don't think about too many things just do it. No law study can always do an unnatural and then getting the pile of data. You know they'll be a next step to get them they level funding or you know federal level funding so that will be.

[00:15:42] But the other thing I also think is we need also basic research really refer to the mind body connection or spirituality or this kind of stuff. It's almost like MRI study or meditation looking at the real logical impact of meditation on different aspects of health or mental health or different things. I think what we also need a basic research to strengthen our knowledge base for this kind of approach working with people who think Beauford intervention they think we should a lot of opportunities there in terms of practice. I really think we don't have enough people working in this we have people but we don't have enough of a large number of people doing that to develop the models to do more training to consult with people because we need that our group is still pretty small we are not a huge group at this point. And so I definitely look for people who are interested to basically of course you know we need to look into our social profession alcove antics and everything. But under that under the rubric we develop different training model consulting with different agents and whenever and then hopefully this approach will bring really bring some more impact into our feel and share with the audience and in a bikini try to bring back some balance and want you know devolvement so that we know that better helper really believe if we're able to be mindful of what's going on mammal is turning off the lights you know be so scared or with so many other things that happen that will happen in the future or they already have in the past.

[00:17:24] I think that ability will help us to make the choices even as reassures her as the faculty and the faculty know student as a practitioner. Mean does anybody think there are something in the whole dear or the whole philosophy that will bring some benefit to life. Any last words that you'd like to fit in before we end. Maybe one last thing I just want to emphasize integrated social work. Really try to build a point existing sexual practice. So we're not getting rid of anything that people already been doing or they already have that expertise. I think it's a very empowering attitude that we have. We always utilize whenever we have a bit of a point whatever expertise we already have but try to integrate and bring back the other dimension that is missing. But that is also we see that as a need when also to bring it back to attain the balance and so that I guess will be one last thing I would like to share with the audience not getting rid of anything that you already knew. Just ring more than integrate it in a useful way. Thank you. That's an excellent final point. Thank you so much you're very welcome I really enjoyed the opportunity to share with you. And also the audience well you've been listening to Dr. Mo Yee Lee dicuss integrative mind body and spirit approach to social work assessment and treatment are living proof. The podcast series has been UB School of Social Work. Hi I'm Nancy Smyth professor and dean at the University of Buffalo School of Social Work. Thanks for listening to our podcast.

[00:19:25] For more information about who we are our history our programs and what we do we invite you to visit our website at www.socialwork.buffalo.edu. At UB we are living proof that social work makes a difference in people's lives.