

Episode 38 - Dr. Mo Yee Lee: Integrative Body-Mind-Spirit Social Work - Core Concepts (part 1 of 3)

[00:00:08] 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 and create your own review button. We look forward to hearing from you. I'm your host Peter Sobota. As many practitioners and researchers have learned despite program and individual workers hesitancy many clients are more than willing to discuss and acknowledge the role of spirituality in their lives and personal challenges. While few would argue against the value of an evidence based practice approach and scientific rigor to guide our practice behavior and research it's also clear that the so-called alternative ideas of Carl Jung and Ken Wilbur the fundamental principles of 12 step groups and postmodern approaches all that acknowledge clients values in utilizing Eastern or spiritual concepts in bringing about practical change in their hearts in the first episode of a three part series. Dr. Mo Yee Lee discusses some of the core concepts in the integrative approach and the defining practice domains as it is applied in assessment and treatment.

[00:01:52] Dr. Lee is professor 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 to social work practice as well as multicultural social care practice and education. Elaine Hammond coordinator of Eubie school of social works Jamestown New York extension program spoke with Dr. Lee by telephone. Welcome Dr. Mo Yee Lee to the University at Buffalo School of Social Work podcast series. I am so pleased to be speaking with you. Well I feel very honored to write to you or so because it's a good opportunity for me to share with you or the audience my work on integrating into this well. So thank you. You are very welcome. Now your work first came your individual work. First came to my attention through your new text integrative body mind spirit social work and evidence based approach to assessment and treatment which was a text that I greatly enjoyed. Could you begin for us by speaking directly to what is integrative social work. I think the I would say integrative nobody minds likes and should work this right and empirically informed treatment approaches that integrate what in philosophy can take weeks including conflict changes in people and the group of knowledge and newly developed by my co-authors who are at to argue his way health at the University of Hong Kong. Dr. David Eisenberg at the Harvard Medical School. In 1990 early 1990 he and his associate will be some study looking at how many people in the US that use complementary alternative medicine alter that and how much money they spent at that time. The first study was 1993 and who want the final one.

[00:03:54] About one third of Americans are already using a complementary treatment in Madison and then they spent 13 billion off pocket expenses and then yeah by 1999 I think he published another one. And so by that time the figures grow to 42 percent. And then if I think he's the fourth I remember around 30 Balian Venator so I guess no one question you know people might be asking why you know people spending all this money of their own pocket you know to to do that missing. You know what. Yep. How will you know come over share with you some Dodu experience how meditation body using meditation working with female trauma survivors will have even interpersonal abuse as well. And so very fortunate to have nation can send them from Iowa he said from the Institute of Bodenstein like suit the deputy director there is under the administration of the Allama. So they are very glad to have him develop a curriculum well nothing came to them that you

know do worked with ladies. And so at that time you know I'm with the College of Social Work like you know with the buffalo you know them thinking you know there is a great opportunity to just maybe you know get him to present to the community knows about. You know this approach of meditation and working with trauma survivors now. So my staff tell me I mean we just publicized or washed up I think maybe a week or two before the date which is I think at the end of February. So my bath actually emailed me. She told me within the first hour they pose this line on line already 30.

[00:05:40] And so within a day or two we have to close the registration because it's awful. You know what time I'm trying to make ends meet. There must be something many people. A lot of interest in energy. And so one question that would turn to you and me and my co-author and one group is one you know what's missing want to get what's going on here. And so I guess you know we actually have to go back to a lot of you know looking at the development of social work I won't go into all the final details but I think it's really important. I guess what happens is like you know by the end of the 19th century to early 20s and to a social work and other helping professions we've become legitimate. And set groups substitution to address human problems of working because people no longer you know choose to use the while should no communal or religious way of healing. And so I mean we all know social work or the verdict. We you know we do so say was not only related to modernism secularism and rationalism and they were defiant. It's not very natural. So we actually accomplished a lot. No I do that lead the arbitration process. Now it's no longer something people just think it works. You know Appleton's movement right now big thing going on is so hopeful and so we also regularly unethical no killing practices of noontide. You know we are a large base you know I mean we grow so much.

[00:07:15] But on the other hand I think by doing that we also you know get to the other side of the problem. I'm sure you're probably familiar with the work of Alexander and you talk about the sins of omission and I also respect I mean Kim Zilber dealing with consciousness. You talk about the idea of partial truth. Yes actually this is what's going on here. I would like to maybe also introduce the young perspective just one fundamental philosophy that we also utilize in our book ourselves. So basically essentially from the Book of Change which actually has been described as the aviation system theory of the age because it's really look at change and you know that time very similar to system perspective yes. And how do we manage change within our lives. This kind of mean ancient wisdom when they just observe the nature and come of of all this great idea right. Yes indeed. It's a very elegant system simple and effective. Yes. Yes. So basically they talk about you know there are two contrasting forces in nature. And in the end just for audience who might not be too familiar for the year they talk about a strong you know that kind of qualities the yield more do I mean weaker or Sophal gentil centaury Cetra thing is if we look at the boundary between the black white portion of the metaphor. It's actually not a straight line it's a fluid Bungaree actually dynamic changing all the time. And if we look at that symbol more closely they actually have to lean in again and again. I mean they have a white you know very little circle in the in a dark circle and then you know life reversed.

[00:09:08] So I think this is really interesting is the wisdom because what they're talking about is the contrasting force in nature even though they look different and can talk to each other they actually inseparable in face each other are actually interdependent. So the other thing is there also comes to me naturally striving for some balance and complement each other's existence. So there's always continuity float and contradictions among different forces but they are also characterized by Baumann's into volition and complementarity. Well I tried to say that here is like in social work in development of social work. On the one hand when we align with the value of modernism and science I mean the Steelers eins they accomplished a lot like doing that and separating ourself from the other forces. We actually missed some other thing also one of the major reasons why you know we come up with integrated social work to try to you know maybe bring some balance you know

back to the development of such a profession. I think the shadow of what we are practicing now there are several things that I think is pretty prominent and actually are the reason why you know we develop an approach. Now one thing you know is to spirituality. We don't we even I mean for a very long time we don't talk about it by 1990 or the 1990s. MCSA beauty recognize the intrusion of spirituality it into education but it's 1993. And we're still catching up. I think the most recent Nishio on the general social work education they have several articles in this area Aarsal. But art and spirituality. You know we also see some other things. It's a mind body thing also.

[00:10:56] I think we have a very limited field of my body. We talk about my mostly cognitive therapy right. Randi we're focusing on the resh no money talking about your rational beliefs. And we are trying to help to identify them and change them. They make them not you know contribution a lot of the evidence based approach right now is awfully CBT but on the other hand the focus Plinio is really the rational mind and not unlike the body when we talk about the body we're really talking about the observable behaviors don't talk about the body process at all even though we know it is so important. I actually said right to psychotherapy network of the most widely read magazine professional magazine among private practitioners one of the things that I wrote down actually that you said when we spoke several weeks ago I have quotes around it is that the mind is not limited to the rational and in a very short sentence that really speaks I think very clearly to a lot of what must propel your research and your work. Exactly exactly. And we like I mean in social work it takes us a long time to find this right. Just because yes. But anyway I know these are some of the reason I'm in Indiana thing and I think we're going to have a conversation about them before every show and even when we talk about mind body connection for a long time in mental health we actually used the word psychosomatic. Yes. I don't think really carry a very positive connotation raid with so much influenced by the linear and reductionist thinking.

[00:12:41] I also like you know very clean cut and clean. You know whatever. But in reality when we look at you know working with people when you look at our service system such a view might not be very helpful. You know the reality is more connected than we think. You know it is though. I mean even the mental health and substance abuse it's been separated for so long. And then we find that a lot of Lwala right now in trying to get them together now. And so I think right now it might be a good time for me to actually define what is integrative social work because I think that basically describe. I mean how we come to the point that we think it's very helpful to integrate to bring in Eastern philosophy and practice now into Shushan what Truman was not you know definitely we don't you know minimize all the above. You know what we've done now when we try to do is to build up whatever we have. But bring back some balance you know to how we work with people in soaped. Now we actually have 5 I would say 5 defining characteristic of our work. I would like to share with the audience and so the first one is we see the body. My spirituality as fundamental domains of human experience. And then we equally use them in creating positive changes in our clients. So that's the first important defining characteristic. The second one I would say is we see things are more connected. We actually think everything is connected in some way or the other.

[00:14:16] So we recognize the body mind spirit totality stimulation with insight on that in how we work with clients. Now of course we cannot do everything in a Trivett. The book will talk about how to choose the point of entry and etc. etc. The perception is we see these things are connected and we can not you know treat one aspect in isolation from the other. Then the other thing I would say is we integrated social work appreciating you know diverse forces in life. And so the focus is more about how to attain or reaching the balance across these forces instead of getting rid of the presenting problem. Traditional even social treatment we do think you know symptom reduction. You know getting rid of the problem etc. etc.. Demento in how the Baoulé Weder are too many successful are not what you know from the perspective is very much influenced by the unique perspective or so we see different forms of life you know whatever going on they actually happen to

grow and they complement each other. The important thing is how to you know retain the balance and that can actually speak to a little bit. Because my first book published by Oxford is actually on solution focused therapy working with domestic violence offenders. So this group of people I mean they are all court order all of them have anger issue. But even with our clients no I do think what we want to do is to get rid of the anger because anger is actually a natural emotion. We all need them. Is that just how to manage them. So I think you know integrative arguments very social work.

[00:15:57] Not looking at getting rid of the present because we see the problem actually they carry the message for us. The important thing is how to bomb them. So that is another defining characteristic. Now the last two I will say one other is we see change in wise move in the system in the person allow people to grow and change. And so in integrated social work we actually welcome change. We see uncertainty in lives. It's not true. And we're not afraid of crisis. We actually help our clients to have a more open attitude towards things because a lot of decline when they come to us is something unexpected happened to them. But this appeal that they have is that Sandra has brought the need for change to the surface Mama given many clients the opportunity to act on longstanding issues through the door of the crisis. Exactly exactly. We see that change in life actually create a movement that is necessary for growth. I love to use the metaphor of riding a bicycle because when you ride a bicycle you know I mean if you just stay there a bicycle. Yes we follow it like. However that was our show from the 70s. Laffin one of the actors would often be portrayed on a bicycle and he would stop and then just kind of tip over to the side. It's ugly. So actually I mean that is the best metaphor I think that I him. I mean I can come I want to right you know toward this war happiness like you know search me when the bicycle is moving and there we are balancing on a bicycle all the time shifting back and forth right. And so the bicycle moves.

[00:17:46] And I think in some way to describe you know life in many ways is the balance is the movement that allow us to go ahead. And so we try to you know work introduced to our client and added to a more open attitude. We work a lot with patients. I mean cancer patient actually. So it's a very you know I mean scary disease for most people. We hope to take a different attitude to look at how they can embrace these demons and then move on in a way that actually is helpful to them. I remember one case example from that from the book I'm talking about a woman who was at the very end of her physical life and yet continued to embrace working with other patients. So that is something that you know we see the last part of me is the potential I want to bring to them last I think defining characteristics of integrative social work. We believe in the strength of people is very much sharing based and this is you know with the strength based perspective and also for us we believe in the potential of individual or system because we think you know we all have the potential to get to a balanced state not because of anything else but because it's just a natural state of mind. You know when we look at the nature you know it's not changing you know you talk about weather all the time. The days that we hate it because it's rainy the day that we love it because it's Sunday they are complementary to each other.

[00:19:19] I cannot think the ball applies that we have no ring and just fun all the time. So from that perspective no integrative Shinshu of believe in the healing ability of each person because if we actually have the right environment you know people can imagine within the bounds within the womb system and then they can bring out their potential. It's like when you just mentioned you know the Nady at the end of her life to helping the people and live happily or you know despite whatever yeah. So I think you know it's a very long answer to your question you know. I mean asking me to defy you know integrate you know social world you've been listening to Dr. Mo Yee Lee discuss and integrate her body mind and spirit approach to social work assessment and treatment. Continue to follow our series to hear episode 2 of Dr. Lee's discussion. Hi I'm Nancy Smyth professor and dean at the University of Buffalo School of Social Work. Thanks for listening to our podcast. 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.