



A Report on  
Crisis Psychology and Disaster Response Course in Norway,  
as a part of  
**International Semester in Global Mental Health**  
Center For Crisis Psychology  
University of Bergen



Prepared By  
M. Phil Clinical Psychology Residents,  
Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health, TUTH  
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We extend our gratefulness to everyone who participated in this semester. For each of us, it has been a journey both personally and academically. We hope that the report will be helpful to those who participated, serve as a reminder of the friendships and knowledge we all gained, and be instructive to those who seek to learn from our global semester.

M. Phil Clinical Psychology Residents, 2<sup>nd</sup> year (2021-2023)

*Nikita Pradhan*

*Reecha Khadka*

*Sulav Raj Upreti*

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## Background

The NORPART (Norwegian partnership programmes for Global Academic Cooperation), grant was approved for period 2019-2023 with the aim to enhance the quality of higher education in mental health in Nepal and Norway, to strengthen internationalization of higher education through mobility of master / PhD students and academic personnel. This student exchange program is between The University of Oslo, University of Bergen and Tribhuvan University.

Center for Crisis Psychology offers an international semester that was started from August 2020 where students from Nepal, Vietnam and Norway take three different courses including Global Mental Health, Crisis Psychology and Disaster Response and Global Mental Health Practicum. Being NORPART projects, supported by DIKU, students from Nepal and Vietnam joined the Norwegian students in the course 'Crisis Psychology and Disaster Response' in Bergen following that each Norwegian students will visit Nepal and Vietnam for 'Global Mental Health Practicum' respectively.



*Figure 1: University of Bergen*

The aim of this international semester is to be able to apply skills and knowledge in practical settings in order to help improving mental health for children and adults in various settings, and to be better able to contribute to reducing the treatment gap in the world.

This course provides implication for different contemporary theories and models used in the field of mental health which is strongly beneficial for the understanding of socio-cultural foundations

that emerge from those theoretical perspective. The recognition of the religious and spiritual needs of individual play a significant impact on the effectiveness of cooperation an overall way of experiencing life, of experiencing ourselves and our relationships together. This multicultural setting exposure has helped us to gain an experience of growing personal integration of psychodynamic and relational approaches. Hence the international semester is useful for increasing competency in the field of clinical psychology.

Being a student of clinical psychology, we encounter various individuals who suffer from different crisis situation in their lives. Learning different types of intervention modality play very important role to be a competent clinical practitioner. In this regard, as a part of syllabus, we have a course that includes ‘psychotherapy for special groups or conditions’ focusing on crisis interventions such as sick, survivors of bereaved family’s case with suicidal attempts and others.

Students who was a part of the exchange program, got an opportunity to take this course in an international platform. This helped them to strengthen their professional competency and learn more in fulfilling the treatment gap in our context. There are a few expertise working in the field of crisis and its specific interventions in country like Nepal. With this collaboration, students got chance to learn diligently from the professionals who are pioneer in the respective field.

This exchange program comprises of three courses:

1. Introduction to Global Mental Health PSY380
2. Crisis Psychology and Disaster Response PSY381
3. Global Mental Health Project PSY380B

There were two previous batches including 10-15 students in each year who completed their whole course virtually due to COVID-19 pandemic. This year is third batch of such an international semester that went according to the ideal proposal. This year only Nepalese students joined Introduction to Global Mental Health course virtually while they got an opportunity to complete second course i.e., ‘Crisis Psychology and Disaster Response’ in person at Center for Crisis Psychology. For the Global Mental Health Project, students are divided into three groups; based on their respective assigned place.



## **1. Introduction to Global Mental Health PSY380**

The course Global Mental Health introduces general background related to mental health and mental health services which is an integral part of health in a global perspective. This course helps to uplift the existing knowledge about mental health and mental disorders across contexts, and about the existing gap between needs and services. In addition, students will have knowledge and skills that can be used to promote mental health and resilience, and in efforts to prevent and treat mental disorders. The major highlights of this course were conceptual framework on global development, human right intervention levels and approaches, scalable interventions, different vulnerable groups affected by war/disasters and their support systems.

### **Course Details**

Course Title: Introduction to Global Mental Health PSY380

Duration: 5 weeks (August 15 to September 16, 2022)

Credit: 10 Credits

Language: English

Total Students: 10

There were six national and international guest lecturers for this course. Dr. Dang Hoang-Minh from Vietnam University of education highlighted about 'Mental Health in Vietnam'. Prof. Mita Rana from Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, Nepal delivered a lecture on 'Mental health and women's situation in Nepal'. Dr. Suraj Shakya from Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, Nepal highlighted on 'community mental health project in Nepal: A case study of UMN project'. Dr. Lars Lien from INN College, Norway discussed on 'Work on addiction', Dr. Kerstin Sodersrom from INN College, Norway highlighted on 'Domestic violence, child abuse and neglect' and Nora Sveaass from University of Oslo provided lecture on 'Severe Human right violations and a role of psychologist and other health professionals to prohibit and prevent such violations and provide care'. Then after, course ended with an exam. Nepalese students completed the course virtually on September 16, 2022. On September 17, 2022 Nepalese students travelled to Bergen, Norway to attend the 'Crisis Psychology and Disaster Response course' in person.

## **2. Crisis Psychology and Disaster Response PSY381**

Crisis Psychology and Disaster Response focuses on research and practicum area of crisis psychology and clinically anchored assessment, intervention and counselling to families, health professionals, and community-based services, inspired by the UN sustainable development goals. The main themes are individual reactions and adaptation to trauma, assessment and screening of trauma and grief reactions, preventive interventions in families, schools and the community settings. It provided in-depth knowledge of psychological and social factors that influence individual reactions and adaptation to trauma, adaption of low threshold individual, family-, school- and community-based interventions following trauma and optimal ways to organize psychosocial support after severe trauma, both in the short and longer run.

The course helped to increase competency to assist in establishing family, school and community-based programs, implementation and utilization of relevant research-based screening and assessment instruments, to provide psychosocial support after violence, abuse and trauma, work effectively in concert with other health professionals, families and communities. Overall, this course guided interventions that are used during emergency crisis situations like mass disasters, traumatic experiences, and to have better understanding related to the interventions that are essential during such situations.

### **Course Details**

Course Title: Crisis Psychology and Disaster Response PSY381

Duration: 5 weeks (September 19 to October 21, 2022)

Credit: 10 Credits

Language: English

Total Students: 8

Among 8 students; three were from Vietnam (Mai Huong Nguyen, Bich Phuong Vu, Hoai LinhVu), two were from Norway (Julie Scheihansen, Mona Selland) and three were from Nepal (Nikita Pradhan, Reecha Khadka, Sulav Raj Upreti). Major facilitators for the course were Unni Marie Gulla Heltne, Associate Professor Ragnhild Dybdahl and a guest lecturer Dr. Christine Mbabazi Mpyangu. Hanna Tandberg an Executive Officer coordinated administrative procedures and students shelter at the Haukelandsbakken 47, Bergen.

The detail modules of this course along with different activities and programs that Nepalese student attended is elaborated in the next section. Similar to the previous course, second course ended with an exam. All students passed with positive feedbacks and they returned back to their respective destinations for next course.

### **3. Global Mental Health Project PSY380B**

This course is the practical application and expanded knowledge from previous two courses of this semester. Students worked on applied projects related to Global Mental Health and Crisis. For final project, a task has been given to all three groups residing in different country.

Group 1 working in Vietnam: Mona, Phuong, Linh, Huong

Group 2 working in Nepal: Julie, Reecha, Nikita, Sulav

Group 3 working in South Africa: Mathilde, Ann Elise

#### **Course Details**

Course Title: **Global Mental Health Project PSY380B**

Duration: 4 weeks (November 7 to December 15, 2022)

Credit: 10 Credits

Language: English

Total Students: 10

The common task given for this project is to describe major challenges to children and adolescents mental health in respective country along with challenges that are met locally/ nationally/ regional by social interventions, mental health services and/ or other interventions. During the project period, facilitators will follow up students through digital meetings. Final conference is on Thursday December 15, 2022; 1:00 PM Nepali time.



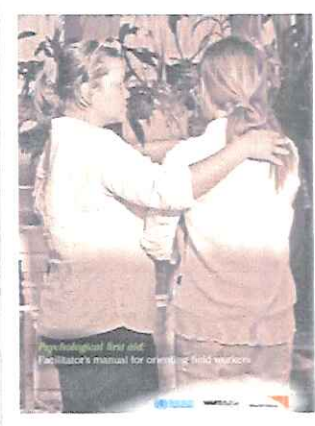
## Major Activities

An orientation and meet up with faculties and staff of Centre for Crisis Psychology was structured on the first day. We met Prof. Bjorn Helge Johnson; Department Head of Centre for Crisis Psychology, Ms. Unni Marie Gulla Heltne; Senior Advisor and Specialist in Trauma Psychology and Ms. Hanna Tanaberg; Executive Officer. Afterwards, formal in-person class of Crisis Psychology and Disaster Response 2022 was initiated with a detail schedule.



*Figure 2 Crisis Psychology 2022 students with course*

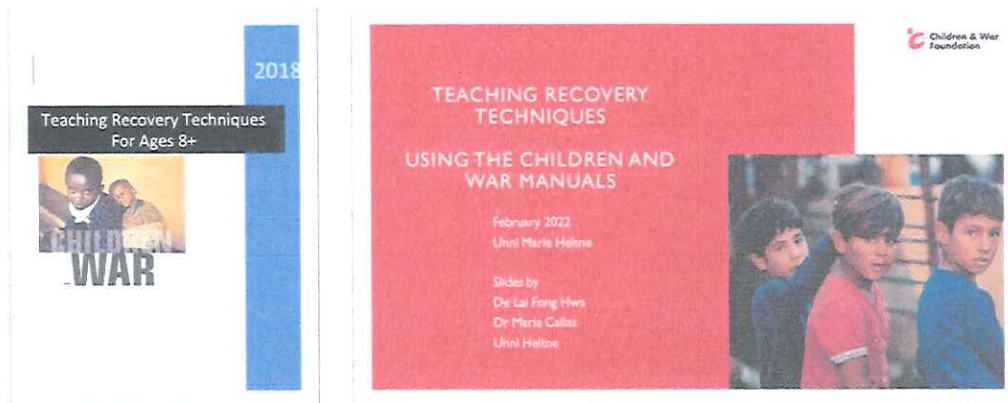
Course started with Introduction to Psychological First Aid and its manual. Psychological first aid manual includes humane, supportive and practical help to fellow human beings suffering serious crisis events. It gives a framework for supporting people in ways that respect their dignity, culture and abilities. It covers both social and psychological support. This guide helps us to know the most supportive things to say and do for people who are very distressed. It also provides us information on how to approach a new situation safely for self and others. It also involves factors that seem to be most helpful to people's long-term recovery. It works on major principles: prepare, look, listen and link. Other guidelines for psychosocial interventions in humanitarian contexts like Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) in the Emergency Settings and others guidelines were also discussed.



*Figure 3 PFA manual*

Other lectures were focused on the Teaching Recovery Techniques manual. Manual contains two parts. The first part provides information on the background of the manual and its use. Second part provides detailed sessions intended as a guide to lead five 90 minutes groups with up to 15 children. First two sessions deal with intrusive thoughts and feelings: problems such as upsetting memories,

nightmares, and flashbacks. Third Session deals with children's arousal: their difficulties in relaxing, concentrating, and sleeping. Fourth and fifth Sessions deal with avoidance: children's fears and difficulties in facing up to reminders of the war events. An additional Session contains guidelines for running a parallel parent's group. A final section contains information and interventions to help children who have been bereaved.



*Figure 4 TRT manuals*

One of our lectures was focused on the effect of crisis on children and how it is a risk factor to children's overall development. We discussed regarding vulnerable groups of children who are in need, resilience in children who are exposed to trauma, disaster and war from global perspectives. It emphasized about the role of parents and caregivers to protect their children during crisis.

In the student's presentation week, two students from Nepal presented their thesis research that they were working for past one and half year. This research work is a part of the curriculum for their partial fulfillment of their respective M. Phil degree.

Ms. Reecha Khadka presented her thesis research on 'Effectiveness of suicide gatekeeper training program among health workers: Single-group pretest-posttest study among nurses at Tribhuvan University Teaching

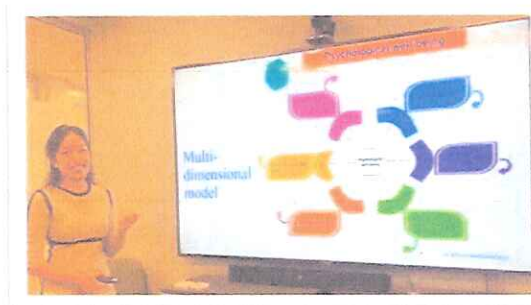


*Figure 5 Ms. Reecha presenting her research work*

Hospital' at Center for Crisis Psychology, UiB in front of Course facilitators Associate Professor Ragnhild Dybdahl, Unni Marie Gulla Heltne, Guest lecturer Dr. Christine Mbabazi Mpyangu and Vietnamese and Norwegian students. She presented her overall program along with pre and post-



test findings till date. Similarly, Ms. Nikita Pradhan presented her thesis research on ‘Psychological well-being and Quality of sleep among health care professionals at Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital’ at Center for Crisis Psychology, UiB in front of the same group. Both received constructive feedback and suggestions that would be useful for its completion.



*Figure 6 Ms. Nikita Pradhan presenting her research work*

Following student’s presentation, a Guest Lecturer, Dr. Christine Mbabazi Mpyangu visited the Center for Crisis Psychology. She is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Religion and Peace Studies, Makerere University. She holds a PhD in Science of Religion from the School of Mission and Theology, Stavanger,



*Figure 7 Christine showing her community dance*

Norway and teaches Psychology of Religion, Gender, Peace and Conflict, and Introductory courses in Biblical Studies. Christine was our external examiner for the Global Mental Health course. As a guest lecturer, Dr. Mpyangu shared about her research work related to child soldiers, violence against children, sexual violence, conflict and post-conflict contexts. It was an overwhelming experience hearing about those stories. Later, on request, she also showed us a few steps of dance representing her community.

Next lecture was on education in emergencies by Ragnhild. She explained about the quality learning opportunities for all ages in situations of crisis, including early childhood development, primary, secondary, non-formal, technical, vocational, higher and adult education. She elaborated on how education in emergencies provides physical, psychosocial, and cognitive protection that can sustain and save lives. She focused on



*Figure 8 With Guest Lecturer Dr. Christine*





child rights, an Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) framework in order to ensure quality, safe, relevant, and equitable education.

For the World Mental Health Day 2022, students were assigned to work on a write up for a webpage and a Norwegian Journal. Two groups were divided; one group wrote on 'Childhood trauma in humanitarian crisis', relating it with the slogan of this year's World Mental Health Day for the Norwegian Journal. And the other group wrote for a webpage, about 'Maternal suicide: A crisis of not one person, one family but a nation'. Also, the article for the Norwegian Journal was translated into English language and shared among the article among the online psychology network in Nepal.

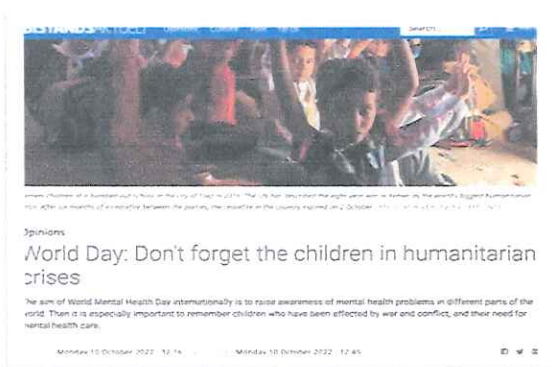


Figure 9 An article published in Norwegian Journal



Figure 10 Publication in web page

Unni provided a lecture on 'Planning and organizing interventions after large accidents and mass disasters.' This lecture was more focused on psychological consequences of terror and man-made accidents and challenges related with mass disasters. The major objective was to develop knowledge about ways of dealing and helping people in such situations and way of preventing peoples from chaos.



Figure 11 Mini-seminar on impact and intervention after terror events

We got an opportunity to attend a mini seminar on 'Impact and intervention after terror events' organized by Center for crisis psychology at Alerk Helseklynge. Major aim of seminar was about to enhance

ability to respond with effective interventions that can be scaled up to meet the demands for psychosocial help in future disaster.

First part was on Disaster Recovery: Understanding the psychological impacts of a terrorist attack on two Mosques on Christchurch, New Zealand by Caroline Bell (Associate professor at Department of psychological medicine of University of Otago, New Zealand). Her expertise is in anxiety disorders and disaster recovery having led planning and implementation of the psychosocial responses after Canterbury earthquakes in 2011 and the Mosque attacks in 2019. Second part: Support and recovery after a major terrorist attack by Unni Heltne, Senior consultant, Center for crisis psychology, UiB. She is senior advisor and specialist in trauma psychology. Third part: Terror bereaved over a decade: findings from a longitudinal study by Professor Pal Kristensen, Center for crisis psychology, UiB. He has been involved in projects studying the mental health consequences of disaster related bereavement.



*Figure 12 Group photo: Mini seminar*

Last lecture was about 'Care for Helpers' delivered by Unni. It mainly focused on meaning and role of work, work satisfaction, compassion fatigue, secondary traumatisation, vicarious traumatisation, burn-out, compassion fatigue and work environment. She highlighted more on the way to care for helpers and the importance of helping the helpers. It also includes different consequences of working with trauma victims and factors for the individual that can protect or increase vulnerability. Every week, students used to have their group task that used to be uploaded in Mitt UiB (Student's web page) along with all manuals and materials related to the course.



Last week was exam preparation week. Our major task for exam week was to select one topic from four given topics and to make a presentation. We were divided into two groups. We three from Nepal were in the same group along with one Norwegian student. And on the main exam day we delivered our presentation in front of our two faculty lecturers. We had internal and external examiners who attended virtually. Henriette Pauline Risvoll, a Ph.D. candidate in the Center for Crisis Psychology, was our internal examiner, and Dr. Safwat Diab from Palestine was our external examiner. We passed our exams with positive feedbacks.



*Figure 13 Exam day*



## Visit to different centers



Figure 14 Faculty of Psychology, UiB



Figure 15 Library for Social Sciences, music and Psychology



Figure 16 University Museum



Figure 17 Nepalese monuments at University Museum



*Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Center at Mollendalsbakken-9. Ms. Maren Ceciie, a psychologist shared OCD- 4 days treatment package including psychoeducation, make task in group and exposure. Subsequent follow up is planned after 10 days and 3 months respectively. Manualized training is required to use this intervention approach.*

## Observation to Neuropsychological assessment and Psychotherapy clinic at Alrekhelseklynge-UiB



*Figure 18 Department of Biological and Medical Psychology at Alrekhelseklynge*



*Figure 19 M. Phil students with Dr. Raudeberg*

Alrekhelseklynge is a health centre involved to create innovative health and care solutions for the whole person, with the help of outstanding research and education, full-fledged practice arenas and interdisciplinary collaboration. It contains office areas, teaching areas and specially designed rooms such as treatment room, GP office, care technology lab and display room for welfare technology. The building also has great common areas and meeting places that facilitate professional interaction in the best possible way.

We visited Neuropsychological assessment and psychotherapy clinic of Alrekhelseklynge. They provide different types psychological services like play therapy, individual psychotherapy for adolescents, young adults and adults. Also, group therapy, couple therapy, Cognitive Behavior Therapy and other consultations. In addition, this center is one of the specialized centers for numerous evaluation services. The most common types of services were Neuropsychological evaluations focused on Autism Spectrum Disorders, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Learning Disabilities, Intellectual Disability and others.

Dr. Rune Raudeberg, Assistant Professor; a certified specialist in Clinical Neuropsychology is a Director of Neuropsychology clinic at University of Bergen, Norway. Dr. Raudeberg facilitated



our visit to University Clinic. We observed counseling and psychotherapy session rooms for individual, child, couple, family and group. He showed us different assessment tools used for the cognitive, personality tests. Older tools were kept for the display however the newer versions of tools were used for the evaluation purpose. The professionals who facilitate the assessment process are under keen supervision from the experts.

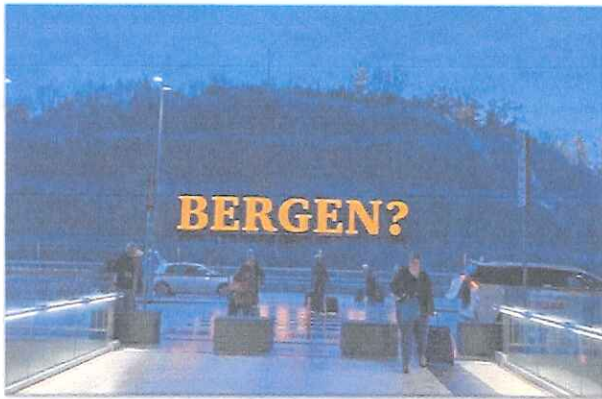


*Figure 20 Neuropsychological assessment and Psychotherapy clinic at Alrekhsseklynge-UiB*

In this process, confidentiality of each patient were maintained by keeping each session records in a desktop free from internet access present in the same room locked with pass code. Also, we discussed on prevalence of types of mental disorders, therapeutic approaches used in our respective countries, barriers to treatment approach, stigma and others.



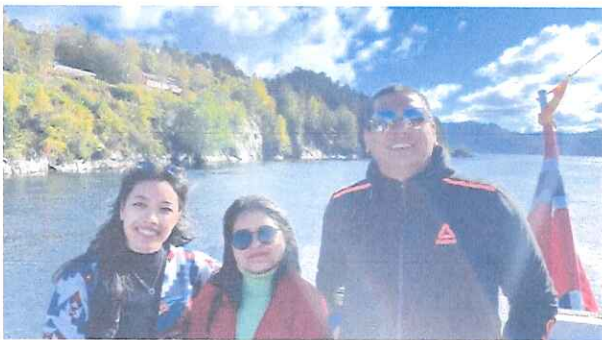
## Gallery



*Figure 21 Bergen airport*



*Figure 22 Dorm; Hakeulansbakken-47*



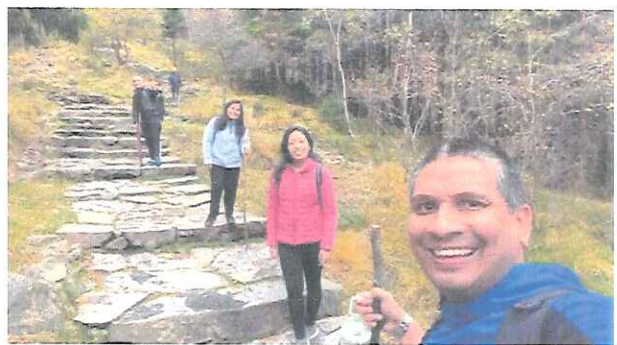
*Figure 23 Alversund Streams; Fjord Cruise*



*Figure 24 Fløyen*



*Figure 25 Hike to Mt. Ulriken*







*Figure 26 Lunch with faculty members*



*Figure 27 Hike to Mt. Landås fjellet*



*Figure 28 Dinner with Norwegian students*



*Figure 29 Dinner at dorm*







*Figure 30 Stegastein view point*



*Figure 31 Dashain celebration with Nepalese Community*



## Reflections



I am grateful for the opportunity and be a part of this student exchange program. This exposure provided a platform to learn from different professionals in a common ground. In such a multi-cultural setting, it was interesting to view treatment approaches from different perspectives. I believe that it helped me grow both internally-externally and looking forward to implement techniques in practice.

- Nikita Pradhan



It was a very wonderful experience for me to be touched by the beauty of a new place, meeting new people, and feel fortunate to encounter a different lifestyle and culture. Different approaches to teaching and learning captivated me more. Even every strategy and intervention that was discussed, in my opinion, is extremely necessary and applicable in any crisis situations. The setting for the assessment and therapeutic room drew me in more. At last, I feel grateful for being a part of this course and eager to use what I've learned in my practice.

- Reecha Khadka



Overall, this was a great and a new experience for me and I came to know different kinds of psychological interventions during crisis situations. I was also able to share my experience and gain experience with different cultural perspectives regarding crisis like situations. The group task was a great experience where we have created different models with interaction in real life crisis situations.

- Sulav Raj Upreti

