



International Perspectives on Counseling: An Introduction to *TPC* Global



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The World Health Organization (WHO; 2022) estimates that globally 1 in 8 people is living with a mental health condition, with anxiety and depressive disorders among the most common conditions. Multiple contextual factors affect mental health, including natural disasters, pandemics, armed conflicts, genocide, political unrest, gender-based violence, and legislation targeting vulnerable populations. Counselors and counseling researchers require research and scholarship that extend beyond the United States in order to strengthen the evidence base for the work that they do and to improve mental health globally.

As the official journal of the National Board for Certified Counselors, Inc. and Affiliates (NBCC), *The Professional Counselor* (TPC) exists for just this reason. The journal aims to inform the counseling profession and enhance mental health worldwide through rigorous scholarship published in an open-access format. Although the accessibility of the journal allows its contents to travel across borders, the prevalence of global scholarship published in the journal has been low historically. In a meta-study of the publication trends of *TPC*, Williams et al. (2021) reported that only 3.4% of lead authors published in the first 9 years of the journal lived outside of the United States. This finding presented an opportunity for *TPC* to intentionally engage international scholars and support global scholarship in accordance with NBCC's priority of global capacity building. Through NBCC's global virtual conference, the editorial team of *TPC* has shared its expertise with an international counseling audience, presenting about quantitative and qualitative methodology, scholarly writing and publishing, and ethical considerations for research outside of the United States. In this issue of *TPC*, I am proud to introduce a new initiative that will extend the journal's engagement and support of global mental health research and scholarship: *TPC* Global.

TPC Global is a special section of the journal where we will elevate international counseling scholarship to expand the knowledge base on mental health, wellness, and culturally grounded approaches to care. Rather than a single special issue focused on international scholarship as suggested by Williams et al. (2021), *TPC* Global will be a recurring designated section of the journal. This will establish global scholarship as a priority of the journal and ensure the longevity of our commitment to publishing such scholarship.

The first article to be featured in *TPC* Global explores experiences of people living with HIV in rural Uganda. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has claimed over 44 million lives since the virus was first identified in the 1980s (WHO, 2026). Currently 41 million people are living with HIV worldwide (WHO, 2026), including more than 1 million people in Uganda (UNICEF, n.d.). In the article titled "Exploring the Lived Experiences of Rural Ugandans With HIV/AIDS: Existential Threats and Community and Social Resources," Godfrey Ddungu, Corinne W. Bridges, and Cynthia A. Briggs (2026) contextualize HIV/AIDS in Uganda and provide insights for mental health professionals supporting individuals and communities affected by the illness. This article exists as a valuable resource for counseling professionals in Uganda who are currently serving this population and



seeking practical and structural support for the services they provide. Additionally, the relevance to readers in the United States is twofold. First, the prevalence of HIV in Uganda is comparable to that of the United States, where roughly 1.2 million people are living with HIV and facing similar mental health challenges as those discussed by Ddungu et al. By engaging with this article, counselors in the United States can deepen their understanding of the psychosocial effects of HIV on individuals, families, and communities. With that deeper understanding, they may be motivated to explore ways that they can support Ugandan counseling professionals serving people living with HIV in rural areas. Alternatively, they might apply the implications of this study to their own work by incorporating spirituality, community, and family into their counseling services for people living with HIV. Second, Ddungu et al.'s article serves as a reminder to readers in the United States that recent cuts to federal funding for HIV/AIDS programs and research can have global consequences for vulnerable individuals in under-resourced areas, such as rural Uganda (amfAR, 2026a, 2026b). Ddungu et al.'s scholarship underscores the human experience of HIV/AIDS and other conditions that are subject to policy shifts.

Articles like this one and others we hope to publish in *TPC Global* can move the counseling profession toward global connectivity (Williams et al., 2021) and strengthen counselors' understanding of and response to the social and political determinants of health within the various contexts that they work. We look forward to publishing more scholarship like this, including empirical and conceptual pieces that address country- or region-specific mental health needs, apply indigenous and decolonial healing frameworks to counseling practice outside of the United States, and critique the application of traditional theoretical frameworks in global contexts. Collectively this scholarship can better equip the counseling workforce to advance mental health globally.

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