

Counter-Narratives - The MHI Conference

Organised by
Mariwala Health Initiative in collaboration with The Department of Sociology and The
Department of Psychology, K.C. College, Mumbai
February 7th and 8th 2025

Mental Health of Marginalised Communities: Perspectives from India

Call for Abstracts

Background

COUNTER-NARRATIVES, Mariwala Health Initiative's Conference Series, launches in 2025!

The first conference of the series, **Mental Health of Marginalised Communities: Perspectives from India**, is to be held at K.C. College, Churchgate, Mumbai on 7th and 8th February, 2025.

Founded by Harsh Mariwala, Mariwala Health Initiative (MHI) is a capacity-building, advocacy, and grant-making organisation with a particular focus on making mental health accessible to marginalised persons and communities

We aim to expand our work into the academic sphere to build networks with researchers who work on topics related to mental health within marginalised communities. MHI is working towards social justice by challenging dominant narratives. MHI seeks to centre and foreground voices of the margins, i.e., counter-narratives that are bound to be different from dominant narratives as they are based on the lived realities of those who experience inequality and oppression.

Mariwala Health Initiative is unique in its position as not only a grantmaking organisation but also a movement and thought leader in the mental health sector. Besides fulfilling its primary role as a grantmaking agency, MHI has included various endeavours within its work that utilise its strengths in knowledge creation, communication, and dissemination. We aim to engage with dominant knowledge critically while centering knowledge from the margins in all our initiatives.

Mental Health of Marginalised Communities

Evidence and literature suggest that communities in India marginalised by caste, gender, religion, sexuality, indigeneity and ability are disproportionately affected in terms of mental

health concerns. This indicates that disparities in mental health are a reflection of social inequalities and development inequalities. In our inaugural conference, we aim to shed light on these social and developmental inequalities and their impact on the mental health of marginalised communities, highlighting voices with lived experience.

Abstract Submission Guidelines

1. We invite abstracts under the following main themes*:

- **Mental Health of Transgender and Queer Communities**
- **Mental Health of Marginalised Caste and Indigenous Communities**
- **Mental Health of Minority Religious Communities**
- **Mental Health and Disability**

*Please note that we at MHI operate with a strong understanding of intersectionality. If your work falls into more than one of the above themes, please select the theme you feel is best suited for your work, and we guarantee a thoughtful organisation of panels if your abstract is selected.

2. Though our themes are distinct, we are aware of how they are inter-connected; for instance, we wish to highlight how research on various marginalizations informs advocacy and curriculum development, which in turn informs therapeutic practice and clinical work. At MHI, we maintain that each of these domains informs each other. We aim to highlight the interlinkages between these areas so that none of this work occurs independently in a vacuum. We also hope to showcase how the overlap of this work promotes social justice goals.

In this line, we will accept abstracts of two types*:

- **Academic Abstracts** – Abstracts focused on research studies (including literature reviews, systematic reviews/meta-analyses), commentaries, education & training (including curriculum development)
- **Professional or ‘Practice’ Abstracts** – Abstracts focused on therapeutic/clinical work, programs, interventions, activism (including campaigns/movements), advocacy (including policy implementation)

*Again, please select the category that best suits your work, and we will ensure thoughtful panel organisation.

3. Abstracts **may** discuss the following sub-themes under the above main themes (please note that this list is NOT exhaustive, and is being shared to illustrate examples of the work we are looking to highlight):

- Structural determinants of mental health
- Therapeutic care, treatment and recovery
- Barriers and access to care
- Critique of the current mental health landscape
- Critique of biomedical mental health models
- Contemporary digital solutions to mental health issues (including critiques)
- Mental health activism
- Mental health and incarceration
- Mental health of those under active occupation or genocide
- Mental health and neurodivergence
- Mental health and reproductive justice
- Mental health and food/housing insecurity and poverty

4. Submissions are particularly invited from academics, researchers, activists, practitioners, fieldworkers and policymakers belonging to marginalised communities. **All submissions must be unpublished.**

5. Please note that -

- You need not have a technical research background.
- You need not submit a traditional academic abstract that includes primary data collection and analysis.
- You need not be a previously published author.

6. Abstracts should be 500-700 words with 6 - 9 keywords with a clear title.

7. For each author associated with a single abstract, please submit a short bio including their name, pronouns, profession, organisation/educational affiliation, highest educational qualification and social media/website links (if applicable).

8. Abstracts written in English and Hindi are accepted. If a Hindi abstract is selected, presentations can be made in Hindi.

9. All selected presenters will have their accommodation (2 nights), all meals and 2-way travel fully covered by MHI.

10. The selection committee will comprise of academicians, researchers and persons with lived experience from Mariwala Health Initiative and K.C. College.

11. PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR ABSTRACT THROUGH THIS GOOGLE FORM

Timelines

1. Abstracts should be submitted by 11.59 PM IST on 8th December, 2024.
2. Decisions and feedback will be communicated by 27th December, 2024.

Conference Information

1. Venue: K.C. College Auditorium, Churchgate, Mumbai City
2. Time and Date: 9 AM to 6 PM on 7th and 8th February, 2025

Publication

All selected presenters need to submit fully developed papers (from your abstract) by 30th March 2025. These papers will be published by MHI. Guidelines for publication will be shared after the conference. Writing support to develop your paper will be provided.

About the Organisers

To know more about the organising team (Mariwala Health Initiative and K.C. College), please visit <https://mhi.org.in/mhiconference> .