

## Seminar on Psycho-Social Trauma and Its Management in Pakistan

**Organized by:** Pakistan Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (PSTSS) in collaboration with CTCRC TSA / Forman Christian College (A Chartered University)

**Date:** 9:am- 1:30 pm. September 27, 2025, followed by a lunch

**Venue:** Technical Services Association (TSA), China Chowk, Lahore

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### Introduction

On September 27, 2025, the *Pakistan Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (hereafter PSTSS)*, in collaboration with *TSA* and *Forman Christian College University (FCCU)*, hosted a seminar titled “**Psycho-Social Trauma and Its Management in Pakistan.**” The event brought together mental health professionals, social scientists, representatives of different religious groups, academicians, and representatives from civil society to discuss the growing challenge of trauma in Pakistan and explore evidence-based strategies for its management and prevention.

The event was part of PSTSS’s ongoing mission to build a trauma-informed society through interdisciplinary dialogue, research, and collaboration.

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### Opening Remarks

The seminar began with **opening remarks by Mrs. Abeeha Shaloom**, Campus Counselor at Kinnaird College for Women, who also served as the moderator for the day’s sessions. She warmly welcomed all participants and highlighted the need for collective action in addressing trauma as a national issue.

Mrs. Abeeha emphasized that trauma—whether caused by violence, natural disasters, loss, or social instability—deeply affects individuals and communities alike. She shared the history of the initiative, beginning with the collaboration between FCCU and the *Korean Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (hereafter KSTSS)*, which started in 2019 and has since led to several successful training sessions in *Psychological First Aid (PFA)* and *Problem Management Plus (PM+)* across institutions in Pakistan.

She extended heartfelt gratitude to **Dr. Matthew Jeong** and **Ma’am Sue**, whose 33 years of service in trauma care and training have made a lasting impact, and also appreciated the commitment of **Dr. Amjad Tufail**, Dean of Social Sciences at Leads University, Lahore for his academic and institutional support, and serving PSTSS as president.

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### Session 1: Keynote Presentations

The first session featured keynote presentations by renowned professionals:

- **Dr. Rafia Rafique (Director of Institute of Applied Psychology, University of the Punjab, President of Pakistan Psychological Association)** discussed the prevalence of psychological trauma in Pakistan, highlighting that **32.28% of trauma cases relate to domestic violence** while the country has only **0.19 psychiatrists per 100,000 people**—a striking gap in mental health infrastructure.
- **Dr. Nadeem Ahmad Bhatti (Vice Chancellor of Lahore Leads University)** spoke on *trauma in the business realm*, explaining how economic volatility, job insecurity, and market instability can cause collective anxiety and stress across sectors.
- **Dr. Hanik Yoo (Director of International Partnership of KSTSS, via video message)** shared South Korea’s experience in building trauma care systems after the *Sewol Ferry disaster in 2014*, encouraging Pakistani scholars to continue building networks of care and research, with his big congratulations to this Seminar of PSTSS
- **Dr. Jonathan Addleton, Rector of FCCU**, served as the **Chief Guest**. In his remarks, he emphasized FCCU’s partnership with mental health institutions like Fountain House and commended PSTSS’s growing role in advancing trauma research and response in Pakistan.

Following the first session, participants enjoyed a tea break, providing space for informal networking and reflection.



(Image: Dr. Rafia Rafique (on the left) addressing the audience on the need for trauma-informed systems in Pakistan. Dr. Jonathan Addleton (on the right) commending PSTSS’ growing role in advancing trauma research and response in Pakistan)

## Session 2: Presentation of Research and Case Studies

**Chair:** Dr. Ismat-Ullah Cheema

**Moderator:** Mrs. Abeeha Shaloom

This session presented three insightful case studies:

1. **“Trauma: Unseen Wounds, Its Effects, and Paths to Resilience”** — *Dr. Ayesha Farooq* shared data on the long-term psychological effects of early-life trauma and emphasized resilience-building as a crucial part of recovery.
2. **“The Jaranwala Crisis: Psycho-Social Impact on the Christian Community”** — *Mr. Naseer John* discussed the trauma faced by families affected by the tragic incident in Jaranwala on August 16, 2023, and how the *CTCRC/TSA-FCCU* team responded with psychological and social support.
3. **“A Case Study of PTSD”** — *Dr. Amjad Tufail* analyzed the clinical and historical dimensions of PTSD and highlighted Pakistan’s situations in PTSD, including forgiveness as a personal and therapeutic tool for healing.

Dr. Cheema concluded the session by underscoring the importance of **spiritual rehabilitation**, stating that psychotherapy is most effective when individuals are motivated for change.

*(Image: Participants and presenters during the research session at TSA.)*

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## Session 3: Panel Discussion

**Chair:** Dr. Usman Rasheed (Fountain House)

**Moderator:** Mrs. Abeeha Shaloom

### Panelists:

- Dr. Waqas Hassan (Riphah International University)
- Dr. Sharoon Hanook (FCCU)
- Dr. Kalyan Singh (Sikh Community Representative)
- Dr. Sabir Naz (Hindu Community Representative)
- Dr. Muhammad Zubair (FCCU)

The panel engaged in a powerful and lively discussion addressing:

- The prevalence of psychosocial trauma in Pakistan

- Political instability and its contribution to public anxiety
- Gender dynamics and social stigma in seeking help
- Cultural and religious barriers to mental health care

#### Highlights:

- *Dr. Kalyan Singh* reflected on the historical trauma of minorities dating back to Partition, stressing the need for national acknowledgment and healing.
- *Dr. Sharoon Hanook* shared findings from FCCU, noting that **90% of surveyed students expressed a desire to leave Pakistan**, citing psychosocial distress as a key reason.
- *Dr. Waqas Hassan* pointed out the absence of official interfaith dialogues and emphasized an urgent need for national reconciliation.
- *Dr. Sabir Naz* passionately stated, *“I don’t like to be called a minority — I am a Pakistani first,”* urging unity and inclusion.
- *Dr. Muhammad Zubair* discussed the link between trauma and physical health, sharing his experience in China where stigma led to tragic outcomes. He proposed that medical conditions and diseases should also be recognized under PSTSS, as they often induce trauma.

Dr. Usman Rasheed concluded by emphasizing that *“a shoulder to cry on can sometimes be the best therapy.”*



(Image: Panel Discussion chaired by Dr. Usman Rasheed, moderated by Mrs. Abeeha Shaloom.)

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#### **Session 4: Presentation of PSTSS Working Group**

**Chair:** Dr. Amjad Tufail

**Moderator:** Ms. Abeeha Shaloom

The session introduced the **PSTSS Working Group**, which will continue to strengthen collaborations between KSTSS and local institutions. Recommendations were shared for future training, community-based interventions, and national advocacy for trauma-informed education and health policies.

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#### **Closing Remarks**

**Rt. Rev. Irfan Jamil**, Bishop of Lahore (Retired), delivered the closing remarks, urging all attendees to integrate compassion and understanding into their work and daily lives.

**Dr. Matthew Jeong** concluded with a *vote of thanks*, expressing gratitude to the speakers, organizers, and participants and all the staff of TSA serving quietly behind curtains for their commitment to the cause of trauma care and resilience-building in Pakistan.



(Image: Group photo of all participants, speakers, and organizers of PSTSS Seminar 2025.)

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## **Conclusion**

The *PSTSS Seminar on Psycho-Social Trauma and Its Management in Pakistan* marked a significant step in bringing together experts from psychology, religion, and academia to address trauma in a comprehensive manner. It highlighted the need for national trauma awareness, needs of training and research in interdisciplinary collaboration, and culturally sensitive approaches to healing.

This seminar would lead us to a Launching Symposium of PSTSS on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026 at FCCU

The event reaffirmed PSTSS's mission to foster resilience, empathy, and hope — ensuring that no individual in Pakistan faces trauma alone.