

NICHOLAS R. SHERWOOD, Ph.D.

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

- Peace psychologist with 8+ years of professional experience in international NGOs with experience in leadership and mentoring, cross-cultural conflict resolution, advocacy, community engagement, & collaborating with diverse and marginalized communities.
- 10+ years of research experience in academic research contexts, with content expertise in mental health, peacebuilding, reducing violent conflict, human rights protection, qualitative methods, and participatory action research.
- Behavioral characteristics include proactivity, empathy, emotional intelligence, visionary, transformative leadership & cultural awareness / sensitivity. Clifton Strengths: Connectedness, Strategic, Activator, Input, Maximizer.
- Recently completed my doctoral dissertation project on psychological resilience within international peacebuilding practitioners supporting international reconciliation processes based on a qualitative data analysis of over 40 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with grassroots peacebuilders in conflict zones.
- Presidential Management Fellow Finalist, US Office of Personnel Management, Class of 2023 (850 of 10,070 applicants selected)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Mental Health & Psychosocial Support Advisor | Think Peace Learning and Support Hub, Mary Hoch Foundation 1/2024 – present

Supervisor: Antti Pentikäinen, M.Th. (+358 40 5313514)

Ad hoc contractor position supporting fundraising/development, programming, and research within a small-sized neuroscience-informed peacebuilding NGO.

- Provides expert-level guidance on integrating evidence-based mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) best practices into peacebuilding programs
- Supports a grant application totaling US\$100,000 focusing on MHPSS promotion among Tribal leaders and mental health professionals in Native Americans Tribes within the Western United States
- Creates and conducts participatory monitoring, evaluation, assessment, and learning plans for peacebuilding practice grants to ensure programming includes and centers the perspectives of local community members in all stages of grant cycles

Visiting Scholar | Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution, George Mason University (GMU)

12/2023 – present

Supervisor: Karina V. Korostelina, Ph.D. (+1 703 993 1300)

Research faculty appointment providing full university affiliation and institutional access to author a monograph and related journal articles stemming from my dissertation research.

- Creates and submits a scholarly book proposal to a top-tier university press.
- Supervises, co-authors, and submits a series of scholarly journal articles focusing on the experiences of and supporting insider peacebuilders operating in conflict contexts utilizing qualitative-participatory action research methodologies

Graduate Lecturer | Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution, GMU

8/2023 – 12/2023

Supervisor: Susan Allen, Ph.D. (+1 703 993 3653)

Co-instructed the graduate-level course "Becoming Insider Reconcilers," a special topics fieldwork seminar designed for advanced graduate students to directly engage in peacebuilding practice as a graded part of class activities.

- Conducted all course preparation (e.g., course structure and flow, each meeting's topics and activities, assigned and vetted course readings, creation of assignments, and recruiting and securing guest speakers, high-level peacebuilders leading mental health-focused reconciliation processes)
- Created and instructed an applied learning unit on integrating mental health/psychosocial support (MHPSS), reconciliation process design and implementation, and participatory action research
- 9 enrolled graduate students (masters and doctoral)

Associate Director | Mary Hoch Center for Reconciliation, GMU

07/2021 – 8/2023

Supervisor: Antti Pentikäinen, M.Th. (+358 40 5313514)

Reporting to the Director, runs all day-to-day operations of a university-based research and practice center, focusing on supporting and upscaling reconciliation and conflict resolution processes after violent conflict, emphasizing mental health/psychosocial support.

Leadership and Administration

- Facilitated and set the agenda of 2 standing team calls and at least 4 standing one-on-one calls to maintain team unity and complete critical deliverables in a fully remote, telework professional context
- Briefed Director (bi-weekly) and Board of Advisors (quarterly) with project updates and critical milestones; presents findings to organizational partners and grant collaborators through verbal and written reports

- Hired, trained, mentored, supervised, and managed staff (including 12 doctoral, master, and bachelor student-employees and 6 fellows)
- Created and currently implemented a multi-year campaign designed to improve employee health and well-being in the workplace, leading to improved recognition and prevention of burnout and maintaining a culture of health promotion and care
- Created and currently implemented a professional development program to establish a university-to-employment pipeline for student-employees; to date, facilitated over 10 professional development seminars for staff members in addition to 4 weekly one-on-one mentorship programs
- Ensured the Center is in compliance with federal and international laws, regulations, and best practices and provides recommendations for more effective laws, regulations, and best practices at the intersection of international conflict resolution, reconciliation, and mental health/psychosocial support

Research

- Designed and conducted three original qualitative research studies, interviewing over forty (40) key informants and disseminating surveys to over forty (40) participants to support technical and operational practices for international peace, justice, human rights, and reconciliation programs
- Managed 6 ongoing research projects, including project conceptualization, data collection/analysis, write-up, and dissemination of findings to key stakeholders (including 3 foreign policy briefs for policymakers and political leaders)
- Supervised 2 consultants and 3 employees to author a guidebook for the United States Institute of Peace focusing on reconciliation theories of change and best practices in conflict contexts

Practice

- Initiated relationships and collaborated with representatives from private, governmental, and international agencies and organizations to bolster the transformative effects of peacebuilding and conflict resolution research and practice programs
- Oversaw research and practice peacebuilding and conflict resolution projects ranging in scope from \$5,000 to over \$500,000, spanning over 5 different countries, in a fully remote environment using technologies such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Microsoft Office, Google Drive, and other communication platforms
- Created and implemented a monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plan to assess operational and programmatic goals of the Center and contributed to MEL plans for specific peacebuilding programs in collaboration with grant partners (e.g., NGOs, academic research centers, and international governmental organizations)
- Collaborated extensively with high-level and grassroots conflict resolution/peacebuilding practitioners across global regions (Areas of focus: the Horn of Africa, the Middle East / North Africa, the United States of America, and Nordic states)
- Served as lead author on 3 policy briefs to provide actionable recommendations for local, national, and international organizations to increase effective mental health/psychosocial support services for peacebuilding practitioners in conflict zones

Communications and Impact

- Oversaw all aspects of the Center's communications, including the development of communications campaigns and strategies, key program messages, production of print and electronic materials, and reputation management
- Directed communications staff to implement communications strategies on various platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, email newsletters, Eventbrite, website) to educate the public on ongoing programs, promote upcoming events, and connect supporters with peacebuilding practitioners and researchers
- Authored quarterly- and event-based newsletters to increase event attendance and educate supporters on new research and practice developments at the Center
- Represented the Center at local, national, and international fora, engaged with representatives from other NGOs and GOs to initiate and bolster research and practice initiatives
- Presented over 25 papers, posters, and panels at local, national, and international conferences and gatherings to communicate research and practice innovations

Finances and Development

- To enhance technical and operational performance, utilized evidence-based approaches to shape research- and practice-based grant submissions
- Engaged in fundraising efforts initiatives, including donor relationship management, research- and practice-grant applications, and scholarship/fellowship funding applications for student-employees
- Directed a multi-year fundraising campaign to apply for over \$1 million in grants and donations. Total funds raised to date (since first joining MHCR in January 2020): ~\$221,000
- Planned, executed, and monitored program budgets, approved expenditures, and prepared quarterly and annual financial and program reports to internal and external parties (~\$200,000 annual program budget)

Founding Member & Wellbeing Expert, Board of Directors | The Parachute People

10/2019 – present

Chairperson: Kesi Michael, M.P.H. (+1 330 696 1410)

In partnership with the Board of Directors, supervises all aspects of a 501(c)3 nonprofit delivering mental health promotion and grassroots community-building to music festivals and live music events worldwide.

- Along with other Board members, drafted and filed articles of incorporation to form a nonprofit

- Created and currently implements a community intervention focusing on workshops, panels, and experiential learning opportunities for participants to rehearse resilience-building, wellbeing-promotion, trauma healing, and interpersonal conflict resolution
- Collaborates with executive-level decision-makers in the music and entertainment industry to deliver mental health promotion programming at local, regional, and national-level events
- Recruits, trains, and supervises over 10 volunteers to represent the organization at music events around the US
- Facilitated 9 workshops focusing on community resilience-building, interpersonal conflict resolution, mediation, and transformational leadership
- Created and maintained positive community relations with music and entertainment corporations, local businesses, and other non-governmental organizations
- Submitted, was awarded, and currently implements a \$6,000 grant focusing on arts-based approaches to mental health promotion in Nashville, TN, Columbus, OH, and Washington, DC to educate NGOs on best practices in these domains

Research Officer | Mary Hoch Center for Reconciliation, GMU

01/2021 – 07/2021

Supervisor: Antti Pentikäinen, M.Th. (+358 40 5313514)

Supervised all aspects of an in-house research laboratory (Transformation & Reconciliation Laboratory) and conducted evidence-based research supporting reconciliation processes after violent conflict.

- Developed evidence-based key indicators, data collection methods, data management, and analysis for MEL plans on a multi-year research/practice grant focusing on bolstering mental health/psychosocial support and reconciliation processes within the Horn of Africa.
- Oversaw projects ranging in scope from \$5,000 to over \$100,000
- Briefed senior leaders and other staff on research project updates, critical milestones, and key deliverables weekly
- Managed 4 ongoing research projects, including project conceptualization, data collection and analysis, write-up, and dissemination of findings to key stakeholders
- Mentored 7 M.S. and B.A. student-researchers on research methodologies and design and analytical writing
- Collaborated with programmatic staff to craft research studies to improve service provision within grant-funded programs
- Provided 3 training sessions to 4 team members on research skills, including: interviewing, transcription, qualitative data analysis, analytic and critical writing, crafting public presentations on Microsoft PowerPoint, and public speaking skills

Graduate Research Assistant | Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution, GMU

08/2019 – 07/2021

Supervisor: Karina V. Korostelina, Ph.D. (+1 703 993 1300)

This role was part of my competitive doctoral assistantship package, including full tuition remission, health insurance, and a stipend. Primary duties included assisting faculty with research-, teaching-, and service-related tasks.

- Under the supervision of a Full Professor, co-created and co-taught graduate-level coursework on world religions and diplomacy, mental health in peacebuilding, and doctoral-level qualitative research methods
- Recruited graduate students to participate in 5 annual overseas peacebuilding practicum trips (Israel/Palestine, Jordan, Northern Ireland, and Bosnia/Herzegovina)
- Copyedited and provided critical feedback to over 6 book chapters and peer-reviewed journal articles examining the role of identity and culture in international conflict dynamics
- Assisted in preparing a book-length manuscript submitted to Oxford University Press focusing on neuroscience and conflict resolution practitioners, including database literature searches, authoring footnotes, and copyediting
- Hired, trained, and supervised 4 B.A. students to write scholarly blogs on world religions and ethno-political conflicts
- Supported Center staff on a week-long study abroad trip to Israel/Palestine, focusing on reflective practice in conflict zones
- Served as a model and mentor to newly matriculated Ph.D. and M.S. students, ensuring these new students felt welcome and a part of the School's intellectual and professional community
- Published a peer-reviewed academic journal article centering on building psychological resilience within Black and minority women living with HIV/AIDS

Research & Practice Fellow | Mary Hoch Center for Reconciliation, GMU

01/2020 – 12/2020

Supervisor: Antti Pentikäinen, M.Th. (+358 40 5313514)

Equally supported research projects and peacebuilding practice on international reconciliation, trauma healing, and surveying expert scholars and practitioners on their opinions surrounding international reconciliation processes.

- In collaboration with other staff and organizational partners, devised and implemented an evidence-based rapid response project designed to provide mental health support to grassroots peacebuilders, change-agents, and humanitarian workers experiencing psychopathology during the onset of COVID
- Created and facilitated an evidence-based, multi-day workshop on trauma healing and resilience building for high-level peacebuilders in Muscat, Oman

- Conceptualized an original research project focusing on measuring psychological resilience within peacebuilders leading international reconciliation processes (this project later began the flagship study of the Center)
- Supported a grant-funded project that provided peer support counseling to at-risk conflict resolution practitioners during the outbreak of COVID-19
- Authored an evidence-based handbook for general audiences to build psychological resilience during the outbreak of COVID-19 as a rapid response to the burgeoning mental health crisis brought about by the COVID pandemic
- Mentored 4 B.A. and M.S. students on expectations and values of working in a professional, office-based context

Senior Research Fellow | War Child USA

4/2018 – 8/2018

Supervisor: Samantha Nutt, M.D. (+1 646 661 4372)

First masters-level researcher hired to provide evidence-based scholarly research, gray and white literature, and reports to field-based staff providing psychosocial and education services to children living in active conflict zones.

- Compiled and maintained an online research database for post-conflict humanitarian fieldworkers, incorporating over 600 academic, popular media, governmental, and nongovernmental sources
- Drafted 3 Executive Summary Briefs to inform high-level donors and War Child executives on the ongoing humanitarian crises within the Middle East / North Africa, including Syria, Jordan, and Turkey
- Authored a peer-reviewed academic publication proposing a transdisciplinary research and professional agenda to investigate resilience-building across cultures experiencing armed violence / post-conflict humanitarian aid

Graduate Researcher | Institute for Human Rights, University of Alabama at Birmingham

01/2017 – 08/2019

Supervisor: Tina Kempin Reuter, Ph.D. (+1 205 996 9896)

First graduate student assistant hired to support the newly-formed Institute specializing in monitoring and promoting international human rights, cross-cultural conflict resolution, and just governance at the local, national, and international levels.

- Created and managed an online marketing campaign, gaining over 1,500 unique followers, reaching 10,000 social media users, and facilitating 10,000 engagements
- Conceptualized and submitted 2 grant proposals to conduct an original research project assessing access to health services, social inclusion, and psychological resilience within resettled refugees with disabilities living in the United States
- Authored and edited over 40 scholarly blog posts on recognizing and protecting international human rights and marginalized communities (<https://cas.uab.edu/humanrights/author/nrs1992/>)
- Supervised 7 undergraduate and graduate interns by editing their scholarly blog posts and other research-related tasks
- Charted and documented non-governmental organizations' standard operating procedures resulting in the Institute's first official employee handbook
- Served as Court Rapporteur for the United Nations Division of Social and Economic Affairs at the UN Conference of State Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Authored the Executive Brief for UN Secretariats and the General Assembly on the 10th session of the Conference of States Parties to the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*
- Supervised 6 undergraduate interns and collaborated with 5 graduate assistants to transcribe UN General Assembly proceedings for UN historical records
- Utilizing information and communication technologies to increase participation access during 6 expert-level paper presentations and 3 roundtable discussions
- Represented the Institute's ethos, values, and ongoing initiatives to local populations to engage community buy-in and targeted outreach to marginalized communities (for example, populations with disabilities, the queer / trans / LGBTQIA+ community, ethnic and religious minorities, and individuals living with the consequences of poverty / homelessness)
- Recruited over 70 geographically-diverse research participants for a global research project examining shame, guilt, responsibility, reconciliation, and reputation on a state's willingness to apologize for committing human rights violations
- Determined participant eligibility by traveling over 400 miles of urban and rural areas across the state of Alabama
- Conducted 10 semi-structured interviews and 75 surveys to complete an assigned data collection matrix

Sales Manager & Vendor | Cultured South, LLC

3/2016 – 12/2016

Supervisor: Melanie Wade (+1 404 549 8314)

Under the supervision of the owner-operator, sold kombucha products throughout the Athens/Atlanta GA region at farmers' markets, wholesale accounts at grocery stores and restaurants, and assisted with bottling and production at the in-house brewery.

- Sold kombucha and company merchandise at 3 farmers' markets within the Athens, GA, area, totaling over ~\$10,000 in sales
- Brewed kombucha and other beverages in accordance with USDA Organic-designated brewing standards
- Recruited, onboarded, trained, and managed 3 employees
- Initiated and managed wholesale kombucha accounts at 3 local bars and restaurants

Barista | Sips Espresso Café

8/2015 – 12/2016

Supervisor: Quintin Robison (+1 706 363 7211)

Sold coffee, tea, and food products at a locally owned café in Athens, GA. Served as a sole on-site employee during almost all shifts, assuming full responsibility for café upkeep and management.

- Prepared and crafted coffee- and tea-based beverages
- Maintained store upkeep and industry-standard cleaning procedures
- Consistently broke daily, weekly, and monthly sales records

Intern | Fear 2 Freedom

8/2013 – 7/2015

Supervisor: Rosemary Tribble (+1 888 453 3059)

Served as first research-oriented intern at a 501(c)3 nonprofit providing education about and direct service provision for survivors of local, national, and international sexual violence, intimate partner violence, and commercial sex exploitation/sex trafficking.

- Provided executive assistance for the founder/CEO with all aspects of the nonprofit, including transportation to events, contacting supporters donors and community partners, and relaying executive strategic plans to an affiliated university student organization
- Trained and managed over 400 student volunteers across 4 universities at 6 events to provide services to survivors of sexual violence
- Conducted an evidence-based literature review on sexual violence to train nonprofit staff on current terminology, standard operating procedures, and recent empirical studies to strengthen the nonprofit's service-provision practices
- Provided operational and logistical support for over 8, 100+ person events, including recruiting and training event staff, event set-up and break-down, on-site management, and providing post-event feedback to nonprofit leadership

Data Manager | Applied Psychology Laboratory, Christopher Newport University (CNU)

8/2013 – 12/2014

Supervisor: Thomas D. Berry, Ph.D. (+1 757 594 7934)

Under the supervision of a tenured professor, assisted with data management and input and conducted original research on topics within applied psychology with a specialization of the mental health of survivors of human rights violations.

- Recruited, supervised, and trained 4 laboratory staff to assist a tenured professor with a grant-funded research project examining handwashing and personal cleanliness behaviors among university students
- Supervised and executed data input and visualization, totaling over 2,000 data points on Microsoft Excel to prepare the study for scholarly publication and presentation
- Presented 4 poster presentations on original, evidence-based research at regional and national academic conferences on the following topics: cultural dynamics of mental health in Pakistan, health psychology and the survivor's psychological reaction to sex trafficking, nature reverence in indigenous Peruvian communities, and psychological motivations of sex traffickers

Community Outreach Coordinator | Where is the Line, CNU

6/2013 – 5/2014

Supervisor: Rosemary Tribble (+1 888 453 3059)

Served on the executive leadership board of a university student organization that provided education, training, and outreach on survivors of sexual violence, intimate partner violence, and sex trafficking.

- Conceptualized, planned, and implemented a one-day symposium to educate the university student body on recognizing and preventing sex trafficking at the local, national, and international levels
- Created and delivered an evidence-based presentation for university students on the psychological treatment of sex trafficking survivors and psychopathology in sex trafficking perpetrators
- Facilitated communication between the student organization and over 5 external partners in the nonprofit, for-profit, and university sectors

President | National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), CNU

6/2012 – 5/2013

Supervisor: Michelle Lange, Psy.D.(+1 757 594 7643)

Presided over a university student organization partnered with the regional and state-level chapters of a grassroots organization providing outreach, advocacy, and wellbeing promotion for individuals with mild to severe psychopathology.

- Set the agenda and led 10 monthly meetings with the executive board to govern all aspects of a student advocacy organization
- Prepared and delivered 2 hour-long, evidence-based presentations for university students to educate attendees on narcissistic personality disorder and substance use disorder within university students
- Coordinated with the local NAMI chapter to provide student volunteers for local NAMI events seeking to build community between individuals with mental illness experiencing homeless and loss of basic income
- Conceptualized and implemented a semester-long campaign to provide services to individuals with mental illness experiencing homelessness, raising over \$1,000 and over 75 blankets for a local homeless shelter
- Presented 1 poster and 1 paper presentations on original, evidence-based research at regional and national academic conferences on cognitive deterioration following emotional stress from simulated violent combat

EDUCATION

PH.D., CONFLICT ANALYSIS & RESOLUTION

08/2019 – 12/2023

Dissertation: *Building Peace for the Peacebuilders: A Psychological Profile of Resilience within Insider Peacebuilders Supporting Global Reconciliation Processes*

Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution

George Mason University (GMU)

GMU's conflict analysis and resolution graduate programs are ranked first worldwide for peace and conflict studies. Studies focused on conducting qualitative/participatory research, mental health/psychosocial support within conflict zones, and a practicum experience directing all aspects of an international reconciliation-oriented research and practice center.

M.A., ANTHROPOLOGY OF PEACE & HUMAN RIGHTS (Phi Kappa Phi)

01/2017 – 08/2019

Thesis: *Modeling Resilience in Resettled Syrian Refugees with Disabilities in the United States*

University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB)

Matriculated into UAB's first Anthropology of Peace and Human Rights MA cohort in spring 2017, which trains students in international peacebuilding and human rights across cultural contexts. Studies focused on mental health promotion across cultures, the Middle East/North Africa region, and a practicum experience working in a human rights-oriented research and practice center.

B.A., PSYCHOLOGY & POLITICAL SCIENCE

08/2010 – 12/2014

Minors: Philosophy & Religious Studies, Human Rights & Conflict Resolution (undeclared)

Christopher Newport University (CNU)

Graduate with two majors and two minors at a small liberal arts university with studies focusing on the psychology and socio-political context of survivors of human rights violations with a focus on human trafficking.

RELEVANT COURSEWORK, SKILLS & CERTIFICATIONS

Relevant Graduate Coursework:

Participatory Action Research (2021) | Wellbeing & Peacebuilding (2020) | Trauma & Recovery (2020) | Doctoral Social Science Qualitative Research (2020) | Doctoral Humanities Qualitative Research (2020) | Reflective Practice in Israel/Palestine Study Abroad (2020) | World Religions, Diplomacy & Conflict Resolution (2019) | Nationalism, Ethnicity & Violence (2018) | Anthropology of Ecology, Peace, and Justice (2018) | Cross-Cultural Conflict Resolution (2017) | Medical Anthropology & Health Disparities (2017) | Advanced Mixed Methods Research in Human Rights and Peace Studies (2017) | Peace, Justice, and Human Rights (2017)

Skills:

Microsoft Office Suite | Mac iOS | Google Drive | OneDrive | Drop Box | Slack | MyEmma | WordPress | database literature searches | NVivo | EndNote | Canvas | Blackboard | grant writing | SquareSpace

Certifications:

GMU Certificate: Tools for an Ethical Workplace (2021) | CITI Certificate: Responsible Conduct of Research – Social and Behavioral, Humanities (2019) | UAB Certificate: Queer and Trans Safe Zone 101 (2017) | NIH Certificate: Human Subjects Training (2012)