



How We Work

Meet Marina Braun

Heeding the call to serve people with AIDS/HIV in Tanzania

Told to JUAN HENG, CCH, on January 18, 2017

This is the first in a series of interviews with homeopathic practitioners who are expanding the reach of homeopathy by providing integrative care for clients. Get a peek inside the practices of these remarkable individuals who are using homeopathy to improve lives, one at a time. Find out how they work, what motivates them, and how they stay inspired.

Marina Braun, CCH, has been practicing homeopathy since 2002. She travels regularly to study with masters all over the world and organizes seminars to bring their expertise to the U.S. She has a busy practice in New York City and Westchester County where she works with private clients and supervises budding homeopaths.

For many of us, volunteering in a developing country is a once in a lifetime dream. Marina, however, has been volunteering in Tanzania *every* summer since 2010 except one. We sat down to talk about why this means so much to her.

She first signed up to volunteer when she was intrigued by hearing Jeremy Sherr (“a true mensch”) speak about Homeopathy for Health in Africa (HHA) when he visited New York City on a fundraising tour for the initiative. Her first visit was

“an eye opener. I looked at how people live compared to us, with our Western-style comforts. You see people with nothing. I was shocked to see how far people have to travel to get homeopathic care. I was impressed by how humble and thankful they are.”

This population is a far cry from the mostly middle class clients that most homeopaths work with in the United States.

“We don’t really understand struggles until we go to rural Africa. We don’t understand what it’s like to be kicked out of a village when the husband dies of AIDS and the widow and her young



Marina Braun and Camilla Sherr conduct a home visit for Homeopathy for Health in Africa.

children have AIDS themselves. The pain they have is so basic. It’s about survival.”

She elaborates on the defining difference between her Western practice and her work in Africa.

“Here, we want to be comfortable, we want to deal with our disease, but we don’t have to deal with survival. In rural Tanzania, the question is how to help a woman so she can work in the fields, so she can support her children. You see so many cases and don’t have the luxury to work on a case for hours. There are 30 people waiting to be seen.”

Marina finds that she has to return to basics in her homeopathic prescribing in order to help her Tanzanian clients.

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the antiretroviral drugs they are taking for HIV or AIDS. Usually you will get a very clear picture when you take their case—what makes their symptoms better, what makes them worse.

There is still a big stigma associated with AIDS though, and it's emotionally very difficult for the patients and their families. The mental/emotional issues are mostly anger, sadness, and grief. You still take the whole person into consideration, and it's important to find out about their dreams, which are often characteristic of the epidemic and a side effect of the antiretrovirals. But here in the West, I ask my clients many more questions on the mental and emotional level."

Then there is the privilege of working with Jeremy Sherr, who has been researching, refining, and applying the genus epidemicus of AIDS (the set of remedies that work well for the epidemic). This is cutting-edge work. AIDS patients do not walk into a homeopath's office in the Western world every day.

"Jeremy has a protocol for treating the AIDS epidemic—it's his forte. In an epidemic, you see a similar picture, a similar set of symptoms in people with the disease. You treat the disease as well as the side effects of the antiretroviral drugs. Jeremy has given us a repertory for this epidemic. The most amazing thing is that the remedies that Jeremy has proven—*Californium muriaticum*, *Germanium*, *Onchorynchus tshawytscha* (Pacific Chinook salmon), *Adamas* (diamond), and *Androctonus* (scorpion)—work really beautifully in Tanzania.

You still have to have your regular repertory and look at the strange, rare, and peculiar individualizing symptoms, but you also have the epidemic picture—the set of symptoms peculiar to the epidemic. We have to see the epidemic and

figure out how to treat the individual in the epidemic."

Marina elaborates on the epidemic (both HIV and full-blown AIDS) from a homeopath's perspective.

"You have specific AIDS dreams—for instance, dreams of big houses—that fit the symptom picture of the AIDS nosode (homeopathic remedy). Other common dreams are of coffins, water, being chased, and getting rich. What is common as well is cheerfulness in an unhappy situation, which is a symptom of *California muriaticum*. Usually you see a lot of symptoms such as itchiness, ulcers, lots of respiratory issues, a lot of secondary diseases that come with AIDS. Another remedy that has been beneficial is *Oncorhynchus* (Pacific Chinook salmon)—you can imagine how difficult it is to try and "swim upstream" when you have AIDS in rural Tanzania."

There is beautiful synchronicity at work here. The homeopath born in South Africa who has a lifelong interest in Africa and epidemics is drawn to prove the very remedies that would be most helpful when he finally returns to Africa to work with people who have AIDS.

"Yes, like attracts like! Jeremy Sherr [has been] proving the remedies he would need [since the 1990s]. Times have changed so much that diseases have changed. Jeremy is amazingly in tune with the times."

When Marina talks of her journeys to Africa, it is really a journey of the heart and mind, as much as it is one of crossing oceans and time zones. She describes how Tanzania pulls her back, year after year.

The first year, I did not really treat people. It was only about gathering impressions. Then I went back, and



Camilla Sherr and Marina Braun during a Homeopathy for Health in Africa home visit.

back, and now I can make the leap to Africa—it seems like I never left once I arrive again. You get very familiar with the local people's way of thinking. I have learned to be in the community. I know the reactions to daily life.

But the Maasai people are a different matter. Maasai land is two hours away from the urban center of Moshi where HHA is headquartered. The Maasai are semi-nomads; they have such a completely different way of life. A four-year-old child herds cows or goats, traveling up and down hills. You see a woman who you think is a grandmother, and she turns out to be 35 years old. None of the structures of civilization and modern life exist.

I communicate with them through two translators. We treat them out in the open, in the sand. There is no way I can understand the Maasai. It's an amazing experience and up till today I am shocked at how the Maasai live, how they send out boys of thirteen years old into the wilderness for three months to



Marina says hello to a little client in a Homeopathy for Health in Africa clinic.

The true appreciation you feel when you see people get better and able to move forward in their lives—it's beautiful.



Marina shows some Maasai children her camera.

become men. It's their rite of passage after being circumcised."

The Maasai way of life and their environment give rise to their common ailments.

"Women have many female problems after giving birth. They have no access to health care. There are a lot of respiratory problems, especially among children, because they live in the sand and it gets very cold at night. They have lots of joint problems because they walk everywhere."

Interestingly, some of the cases that Marina remembers most vividly are those where she comes to terms with what is most foreign to her.

"I remember one case clearly. This young man was in a *Stramonium* state. You could clearly see the fear in his eyes. He had been run over by a herd of cattle in the dark when he was 13 years old, and the fright he experienced remained with him 10 years later. A dose of the remedy *Stramonium* completely removed all that terror.

I was pulled into a hut to treat a child once. The Maasai mother had recently given birth and a Maasai custom calls for mothers not to leave their hut for three months after giving birth. They had practically nothing in the hut. The child who was with [his confined mother] was so

fragile, so underfed and had AIDS. Something goes through you when you see that the child could possibly die within a week. We brought the boy to a hospital where he could get nourishment and some homeopathic remedies. A year later, he was round and thriving."

Some of the most profound work a homeopath can do is to attend to a dying person—not to cure, but to offer some comfort. Marina recalls her most challenging case.

"The most difficult case for me was this little girl, Pendo, who had full-blown AIDS. She was terribly thin, maybe 10 kilos [22 pounds]. Looking at her face, it's like you were seeing death. I would always spend time with her, try to give her some jewelry, do something special for her to get a little smile on her face. We'd always bring a bag of rice and other groceries to get them through a couple of weeks. Her mother knew exactly what was going wrong and would call us when Pendo needed immediate help. We always brought things for the healthy kids playing in the dirt in the yard. Bubbles are always a great success but Pendo barely had the strength to blow bubbles. It is horrible to see adults suffer, but for me, to see children suffer is much worse. Very difficult for me to distance myself. We always knew it would be a miracle if she made it. They tried to keep her alive for a few years, but the disease had ravaged her body too far.

It's difficult to do home visits because it means that the people are too ill to go to regular outreach clinics. I was always grateful for Camilla [Sherr] to be with me. We treat very serious pathology in these cases and yet some have gotten much better. They revive and thrive, despite the odds.

People deal with such deep grief, losing so many people to the AIDS epidemic— young men, children, whole families. But the survivors go on. They are not complainers."

Homeopathy can bring a community together, despite the tragedy or perhaps because of it.

"It's about tapping into a network and building a network. Once people see the homeopathic remedies working, they bring their friends. We often give them remedies as well as food. They have to walk five miles or more to get treatment. You see a camaraderie among these women, sitting and waiting under trees. It's a nice feeling."

I asked her how her experience of volunteering in Tanzania has changed her as a homeopath and as a person.

"As a homeopath, I was able to go to a foreign place and treat people on a different level that I have never dealt with before. To try to understand the AIDS epidemic, and to help a nation ravaged by this disease. To see the amazing possibilities and results with Jeremy's remedies. *To see humanity in a whole different light.* To be able to do this work with Homeopathy for Health in Africa has changed my soul. It's such thankful work in Africa. The true appreciation you feel when you see people get better and able to move forward in their lives—it's beautiful. I miss it in my core every day. I want to get more of those experiences. Once you've been in Africa, you crave it."

Visit Marina Braun's website at: aquamarinahomeopathy.com

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jiuan Heng PhD, CCH, decided to enroll in homeopathy school when she saw her son, who was diagnosed with autism at the age of three, improve dramatically with homeopathic treatment. She brings a tenacious optimism, a skeptic's mind, and an open heart to her practice in New

York City and Long Island. Her dream is to collaborate with holistic healers of different modalities to help clients. Her website is: www.homeopathystudio.com



Homeopathy for Health in Africa

Homeopathy for Health in Africa's story began in 2005, when world-renowned homeopath, author, and founder of the Dynamis School, Jeremy Sherr, began practicing in Tanzania during his twice-yearly visits. Having grown up in South Africa, Jeremy was deeply moved by the human suffering of Africa's AIDS crisis. He had already had positive experiences working with AIDS patients in other parts



of the world and believed that homeopathy could be of great help to the people of Africa, who were bearing the full brunt of the disease. In 2008, Jeremy and Camilla Sherr moved with their family to northern Tanzania and founded Homeopathy for Health in Africa (HHA), a registered non-profit in Tanzania.

HHA provides free holistic care, especially to those living with HIV/AIDS in Tanzania. HHA's work complements conventional medical care and helps to mitigate the side effects of antiretroviral drugs, enabling patients to remain healthy enough to hold jobs and care for themselves and their families.

With a permanent clinic and 16 outreach clinics, HHA also works alongside Tanzanian doctors and nurses in two regional hospitals. Besides providing homeopathic care, HHA starts community vegetable gardens, distributes used eyeglasses, provides food and nutritional supplements, and trains locals to become homeopaths.

To accomplish its mission, HHA relies on interns and experienced volunteer homeopaths from all over the world, individual donations, and the personal funds of the Sherrs, as well as donations of remedies from homeopathic pharmacies.

- Learn more at:
homeopathyforhealthinafrica.org
- Keep up with their work on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/homeopathyforhealthinafrica/
- Read the research paper by Jeremy Sherr and Tina Quirk, "Experiences with an Integrative Approach to Treating HIV/AIDS in East Africa," published in *Journal of Medicine and the Person*, volume 13, doi:10.1007/s12682-014-0193-2 <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12682-014-0193-2>

