

## HEALING EMBRACE: REBUILDING THE “DEFILED SELF” FOR RAPE SURVIVORS THROUGH RENEWED AND NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS

**B. Maisha**

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**T**his presentation will explore the healing power found in safe, healthy and enjoyable relationships for individuals and communities who have suffered from war related trauma, rape survivors in particular. The speaker will discuss the implications of sexual taboos on the ‘images of self and other’ among survivors, cultural beliefs behind their social rejection and the healing that occurs when relating becomes safe again, hence a source of pleasure and trust for both survivors and their communities. The speaker will share results from his ground-breaking research focusing on sociocultural norms (sexual taboos) and images of self and other for survivors of rape during armed conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Developed from the research is a context-based therapeutic model highlighting cultural beliefs around sexuality and social behaviour. This model will also be discussed.

### Biography

Buuma Maisha has completed his PhD at the age of 36 years from Saint Paul University. Faculty member at the same University, he is the coordinator of the couple and family counselling program, French stream, and co-director of the new “Centre of Excellence for Research in Psychotherapy and Spirituality”. He is a member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario and a certified member of the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association. For the past seven years, Dr. Maisha has worked directly with survivors of childhood sexual abuse and rape both in Canada and the Democratic Republic of Congo. His publications include two books on war time rape and transgression of sexual taboos, and the identity crisis among survivors who, based on cultural interpretation of rape, are viewed as victims on one hand and danger to their community on the other. He has also published peer reviewed articles on the same issues and seats on the editorial board of the *Journal of Social Sciences*.

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