

Social Work Honours Student Seminar 2018

Presenters:

Ms Chew Wei Ting
Ms Melissa Choo Hui Hong
Ms Carene Lee Ting Wei
Ms Celine Tham Yi Xin
Ms Flora Tan Chunxiu
Mr David Puvaneyshwaran S/O Kunasekaran

Date: 13 July 2018

Time: 2:30pm to 5:45pm (*Registration starts at 2:00pm*)

Venue: Lecture Theatre 12, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore
Address: 10 Kent Ridge Crescent (S)119260

About:

This seminar showcases research by Social Work Honours students and covers two major themes – Caregiving and Youth work. Panel 1 explores the perspectives and experiences of caregivers while Panel 2 sheds light on how to better engage youths in Singapore

Abstracts:

Chew Wei Ting | Caregiver Stress and Coping of Foreign Domestic Workers Caring for Older Adults with Dementia

An increasing number of Singaporeans turn to Foreign Domestic Workers (FDWs) for caregiving support. Yet, little is known about caregiver stress and coping from the perspective of FDWs. This, coupled with the reality of possible caregiver stress and burden experienced by the FDWs as they assume caregiving duties prompted this study. The purpose of this study is to explore the stress and coping of FDWs caring for Older Adults with Dementia (OAWDs), to provide insights and information on the support that can be rendered. This study adopted a mixed method approach of cross-sectional quantitative survey and qualitative interview. A sample size of 32 FDWs for the survey and 5 FDWs for the interviews were obtained. Analysis of data revealed more FDWs to be in the lower stress category and are coping relatively well. This study revealed that perceived self-efficacy of caring for OAWDs and worries with regards to home country were predictors of stress levels while the frequency of Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia (BPSD) of OAWDs predicts FDWs' coping levels. Statistically, the quantity of social support was not found to be significantly associated with stress and/or coping, an unexpected finding which can be explored in further research. Recommendations were then made at the end of this paper to engage employers, healthcare institutions and employment agencies in providing a conducive caregiving environment for the FDWs, to reduce their caregiver stress and improve their coping.

Melissa Choo Hui Hong | Siblings' Voices Heard: Exploring the Caregiving Experiences of Siblings of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

As compared to the research done on the caregiving experiences of parent caregivers of PWID, fewer studies have explored the caregiving experiences of sibling caregivers, in particularly those who are adolescents. Considering the life-long significance of sibling relationships, it is helpful to gain insights on the experiences of sibling caregivers who are likely to assume primary caregiving roles of their sibling with intellectual disabilities in the future and recognize their challenges faced. Incorporating Pearlin's Caregiving Stress Process Model, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and literature reviews, a conceptual framework is formulated to explore participants' experiences of caregiving which encompasses their perception towards caregiving, the challenges faced as well as the ways of coping they utilized. Qualitative interviews were conducted with siblings of PWID (n = 7) who are currently involved in caregiving roles. Study findings revealed that existing factors in

their ecological systems had influenced their caregiving plans. Apart from cognitive and behavioural ways of coping, findings revealed an added dimension of coping which was not expected – the spiritual dimension. These sibling caregivers proved to emerge stronger amidst their challenges, having enhanced their social roles with the caregiving qualities they possessed and becoming a source of strength for other sibling caregivers. These insights offer key perspectives and practice implications that support these individuals in their likelihood of undertaking main caregiver roles.

Carene Lee Ting Wei | Meaning Making as a Coping Strategy: An Exploratory Study on How Bereaved Caregivers Cope with the Death of a Loved One

During times of stressful life events such as death, meaning may hold a critical role in people's adaptation to death. This qualitative study aims to provide insights into the meaning making experiences of bereaved caregivers, and examines the relationship between meaning making and coping. Qualitative interviews were conducted with 10 bereaved caregivers. Findings of this study showed that (i) Meaning making is a dynamic coping strategy that comprises four main processes: making sense of the event, the deceased figure, the bonds and the self. These processes happens concurrently and are interactive to one another, (ii) Meaning making is a multi-dimensional process. Depending on the meanings made, meaning making can impede or facilitate coping. (iii) Continuing bonds is a process that evolves in its forms and that internalizing the deceased's legacy promotes coping in the long run. Implications for social work practice with the bereaved population and recommendations for future research are discussed.

Flora Tan Chunxiu | An Exploratory Study on Therapeutic Spaces: The Impact of the Counselling Room on the Worker-adolescent Helping Relationship

The aim of this study was to explore the interaction between the physical environment of counseling rooms and middle-stage adolescents, and its consequent impact on the worker-adolescent helping relationship, thereby illustrating the importance of the physical environment on the person-in-environment in social work practice. Existing literature has underscored the salience of the physical environment in social work, particularly on impressions clients form of workers, clients' willingness to disclose, and their perceptions of comfort, control, and privacy crucial to the helping relationship. An exploratory qualitative study adapted from the person-environment fit theory and based on Erikson's theory of psychosocial development was employed to study the impact of the counseling room on the helping relationship in social work with middle-stage adolescents. Semi-structured interviews with 6 social workers engaged in youth work, and focus group discussions with 8 middle-stage adolescents were conducted. Findings call for the importance of considering the physical environment in the person-in-environment perspective, necessitating social workers to co-work with the counseling room to strengthen the helping relationship.

David Puvaneyshwaran S/O Kunasekaran | Youth Theatre Project - A Participatory Action Research using Theatre of the Oppressed in Youth Social Service Settings

Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) is an internationally acclaimed drama pedagogy designed to provide a platform for oppressed citizens to unpack structural issues within their own contexts and collectively seek solutions. A participatory research study was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of TO as a group work tool within the local youth social service setting and its perceived impacts on at-risk youths. Utilising an arts-based research approach with elements of participant observation, participants under the Guidance Programme were recruited to join the Youth Theatre Project which comprised 2 phases: a 9-session TO workshop and a final Forum Theatre performance put up for an invited audience. Dominelli's Anti-Oppressive Practice framework was consulted as the conceptual lens to guide the study as its features sit well within TO and the Social Work practice. The findings revealed the need for cultural adaptation when working within a multi-cultural, heterogeneous society like Singapore and the importance of creating a safe platform for at-risk youths to express themselves, which in turn affect the progress of the group. Through the findings of this preliminary study, the value of TO within the youth social services is evident and seeks the need for more extensive research to investigate its long-term impacts in local youth social services.

Celine Tham Yi Xin | Mental Health Literacy and Help-seeking Behaviour among University Students in Singapore

There is a high prevalence of mental disorders among university students, yet few seek professional help. Existing interventions target students directly but have yielded limited results in increasing help-seeking behaviour, thus, an alternative approach is to tap on students as resources to look out for their peers and provide timely referrals. This quantitative study explored the relationships between factors that influence university students encouraging professional help-seeking and the likelihood of them doing so. These factors are: (i) mental health literacy (MHL); (ii) experiences with mental health (MH) help-seeking; (iii) course of study; and (iv) being acquainted with a MH professional. 302 NUS students responded to the online questionnaire. Results show that MHL and experiences with MH help-seeking have independent effects on increasing the likelihood of university students encouraging professional help-seeking. This provides justification for training university students to support distressed peers. Additionally, the roles of social workers as advocates and brokers were discussed.