

## **Presentation 1: Sakhardande Pradnya Govind**

### **Understanding the Experiences of Women who Have Both Family Violence and Child Abuse Concerns in the Child Protection Context**

The rates of family violence (FV) and child abuse (CA) have been rising worldwide, including within Singapore. Women comprise a disproportionately large number of FV victims. Research highlights the deleterious physical, mental and social impacts of FV and CA on both the women and children affected. Despite the high co-occurrence of FV and CA cases in child protection agencies, there is a dearth of literature on the experiences of women who face both FV and CA concerns and they are generally expected to protect their children from harm while being victims themselves.

This study is a qualitative exploratory study that aims to examine the help-seeking behaviour and needs of these women and to explore the challenges that social workers face when working with them. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten social workers from a social service agency.

Thematic analysis of the responses elicited the following themes. With regards to help-seeking behaviour, the point at which these women defined FV and CA as a problem, barriers faced in seeking help from formal and informal support, point at which they sought help and the source of support they chose were discussed. The top five needs of these women were related to the 'financial', 'social', 'psychological', 'housing', and 'immigration status' aspects. The challenges social workers face include higher complexity of cases with co-occurring FV and CA, difficulty in balancing the 'helper' and 'social control' roles, difficulty in engaging these women's husbands, systemic barriers, keeping the 'personal' and 'professional' self separate and ambivalence regarding effectiveness of inter-agency collaboration.

This study illustrates the unique and complex factors that influence the experiences of women facing both FV and CA concerns. Social workers in child protection agencies are encouraged to value the efforts of these women to protect their children in their difficult situations. Further research is needed to understand these women's experiences from their perspectives. It is hoped that the findings can contribute to developing relevant services and policies that better meet the needs of these women.

## **Presentation 2: Clarice Seng**

### **Protecting our child protectors – understanding the prevalence of and factors associated with secondary traumatic stress amongst child protection workers**

Globally, Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) has been found to be a main contributor to burnout amongst child protection workers, and their subsequent departure from the field. Despite its prevalence amongst child protection workers internationally and its adverse impacts on them, no study has been done to understand STS and its correlates in Singapore.

**Aims:** This study aims to address these gaps by measuring the prevalence of STS and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) amongst child protection workers in Singapore, and by examining the relationship between STS and select variables from the Compassion Fatigue Resilience model, namely years of experience, empathic response [empathic concern and perspective taking], social support at work, and sense of satisfaction.

**Methods:** This study utilized a quantitative cross-sectional study design, surveying 39 child protection workers from three agencies in Singapore using a series of validated self-report questionnaires.

**Results:** Study results provide evidence of a high prevalence of STS and PTSD amongst the sample population. Levels of STS was found to be positively associated with empathic concern, but negatively associated with perspective taking. Years of experience was found to be positively associated with STS during one's first five years of employment, but negatively associated with STS beyond the five-year mark. Sense of satisfaction and social support at work were found to be negatively related with STS.

This study suggests that the adoption of a trauma-informed self-care approach, as well as the exercising of cognitive empathy, may help to manage and reduce STS levels among child protection workers in Singapore.

### **Presentation 3: Valerie Neo**

#### **The 'app-etite' for cash – an exploration of online food delivery sector on youths in Singapore**

This study aims to explore the impact of online food delivery work on youths age 21 to 24 years old by employing two methods – participant observation where the researcher worked as a part-time online food deliverer for a month and tagged along with two youths in one of their food delivery shifts, as well as formal semi-structured interviews with five youth deliverers and two youth workers.

Findings revealed that the allures of the online food delivery sector such as flexible working hours and immediate cash-out positions itself as an effective temporary stop-gap measure against the complex and dynamic nature of youth's lives in the short run, thereby suggesting a good fit in meeting their immediate needs.

However, the perils of the online food delivery sector such as safety risks and limited career progression carry insidious effects that can potentially cascade through other facets of youth's lives, where the fit between work environment and youth's future goals in the long run are incongruent. Consequently, the tensions between the risks and rewards of the online food delivery sector may interlock and cause youth food delivery workers to be entrenched in their economic or social positions.

In response to these findings, this paper recommends for social workers to continually assess the clarity and feasibility of youth's exit strategies in the online food delivery sector, while taking on a posture of support in their employment choices. Policymakers should also consider fostering an environment of greater collaboration between agencies, co-creating solutions with citizens and modifying employment classification.

## **Presentation 4: Zhang Keyan**

### **Employment experiences of the young working poor in Singapore – how do social capital and online platforms help?**

Research on poverty and inequality in Singapore has paid less attention to the plight of the young working poor. To bridge this gap, this study sets out to examine how the young working poor in Singapore use social capital in their employment experiences and how the rise of online platforms shapes the use of social capital in their employment experiences.

In-depth interviews were conducted with ten young low-earning workers from low-income households in Singapore. It was found that social capital, as opposed to formal resources, is more important and useful to the young working poor as it improves their job-finding experiences. The rise of online platforms has also shaped the use of social capital.

The young working poor can now conveniently access their social networks or go beyond their pre-established social ties for job information through the Internet. Nevertheless, despite shaping the use of social capital, online platforms do not help the young working poor in job advancement and social mobility.

Social networks, whether online or offline, are still limiting the young working poor to dead-end jobs. Online platforms also facilitate the foraging of work, increasing the precarity and vulnerability of the young working poor. In view of these findings, social workers and policymakers should consider building the assets of the young working poor through initiatives at the individual, community and societal level.