

Hospital Authority Resilience Project

Date of Submission

01-Mar-2012

Department

Applied Social Sciences

Principal Investigator

Professor Samuel M.Y. Ho

Project duration

01 January 2012 - 31 December 2014

Source of funding

Hospital Authority

Link

Nil

Description

This project aims to enhance the resilience of Hospital Authority (HA) health care workers so that they will be better able to cope with potential crises or epidemics. Resilience is conceptualised as “the ability of an individual to maintain relatively stable and healthy levels of psychological and physical functioning despite extreme adversity and/or being exposed to potentially highly traumatic events” (Ho, 2007). A positive psychology approach will be used. Positive psychology involves the scientific investigation of factors and processes that facilitate a worthwhile life – one that is pleasurable, engaging and purposeful. Instead of asking “what is wrong?”, positive psychology asks “what is right?” (Vella-Brodrick, 2011). The present program also aims to enhance the mental health, flourishing, flow (immersion in life's activities), positive virtues and strengths of HA members, with an added potential benefit of enhancing their overall level of happiness. The project will develop educational and psychotherapy materials to be used in class training, individual psychotherapy and web-based training for HA staff (see next section). The project has several important characteristics:

1. It is an interdepartmental collaborative project between SS (Prof. Samuel M.Y. Ho) and IS (Dr. Ron Kwok), and it brings together the professional knowledge of social scientists and information system experts within the university in a single knowledge transfer project.
2. Following the key principles of knowledge transfer, the project team at CityU will work with clinical psychologists of the HA, and the whole intervention package will be transferred to HA staff upon completion of the project.
3. Building resilience among HA staff is very important to Hong Kong society in view of the many crises hospital staff encountered in the past (e.g. SARS) and of crises that may occur in future.

Expected outcomes

The project will produce three professional outputs for the HA:

1. A 2-day group training that includes talks, experiential exercises and handouts on topics related to positive psychology (e.g. hope, optimism, gratitude, positive mood, personal strengths, etc.) will be developed and conducted for all HA staff. Before completion of the project, the project team will develop a detailed curriculum, manuals and training materials to be transferred to HA staff.
2. An individual psychotherapy model based on empirically supported positive psychology and conventional strategies (such as cognitive behavioral therapy) will be developed. Manuals and intervention materials will be transferred to HA clinical psychologists upon completion of the project.
3. A website featuring interactive exercises and educational materials on positive psychology will be established for all HA staff. The website will be housed on the HA server and will be accessible to all HA staff upon completion of the project.

We will conduct systematic research to examine the efficacy of the above-mentioned interventions, and we will prepare at least two manuscripts for publication in peer-reviewed journals. The materials being developed will be used by SS and IS faculty members in teaching and education. Resilience projects for other populations will be developed on the basis of our experience in this project.