

Strength-based “Train the Trainer” Practice: Narrative therapy in Action

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Department

Applied Social Sciences

Principal Investigator

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Link

<http://wikisites.cityu.edu.hk/sites/newscentre/en/Pages/201305141400.aspx>

Description

Interest in spirituality, meaning and purposes of life as a source of strength for people experiencing illness and disability is growing among health and social work professions. Yet, current health and social services for chronically-ill persons and caregivers are primarily relied on the disease/deficit model of understanding the “illness” with focuses on the limitations imposed on its victims. To enrich practice competence in clinical intervention in elderly and rehabilitation services, a "Train the Trainer" knowledge transfer (KT) program is launched in applying Narrative Therapy (NT) to working with stroke survivors (SS) and the carers, in partnership with not-for-profit health and welfare organizations (NPO) in Hong Kong context. Viewing individuals as the experts in their own lives, and assuming persons to have many skills, abilities, beliefs, and values that assist them to change their relationships with problem, NT is adopted to externalize the dominant “problem-saturated” experiences, and open diverse possibilities for reconstruction of identity, to re-authorize other storylines to address the problems (i.e. loss, or unexpected changes) in ways that are powerfully connected with their meaning and purpose of life. The project aims to train and collaborate with professional social workers (social work students inclusive), nurses, and other health care professions in working with SS and the carers to co-construct and discover positive and appreciative perspective of life within the limits of disability through NT conversations.

There are different levels of participation from joining an introductory seminar to a three-phase KT Program. (1) 2 day Workshop: Basic foundations cover the concepts of NT; (2) Participative observations: participants have the opportunity to observe the narrative therapist in practice (8-session) following a debriefing and questioning time after each session; (3) Group Practice: the actual practice carried out by participants, and the therapist provide feedback and guidance to the practitioner(s) on their practice.

Expected outcomes

An evidence-based NT Group Manual has been developed for clinical practitioners in health and social industries. It is expected that the participants of the seminar would gain new perspectives in understanding illness and disability, and in addressing the psychosocial and spiritual needs of the users. For those who have participated in the three-phase KT program, they are expected to acquire the knowledge, skills and value-

base of NT, and eventually adopt NT as one of their therapeutic means to improve their service quality and the competence of their clinical practice. For the institution, the university is collaborating with the health and social service providers in discovering innovative evidence-based practice to serve our community. In sum, it is expected that with our collaborative efforts, the service users from the community would have an alternative way of therapy to deconstruct the problem, and reconstruct their meanings of lives.

8 seminars were conducted in Hong Kong Council of Social Services, City University of Hong Kong, and Hospital Authority respectively to a total of 650 practitioners from health and welfare industries, including social workers, clinical psychologists, nurses, and physicians. 39 clinical practitioners, primarily social workers and nurses from 15 NPOs, and 6 full-time social work students had taken part and successfully completed the first two stage of the KT program. 10 of the NPOs have adopted NT in practice, and applied NT to 92 SS. Five of NPOs have planned to launch their practice in the coming financial year. A symposium was held which was well-received by 35 NGOs, 250 SS and carers on 11 May 2013 at CityU to consolidate NT practice among SS in sharing their experience to rekindle the light of life after Stroke.