SCHOLARS CONFERENCES

6th | ASIA-PACIFIC MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING CONGRESS

NOVEMBER 23–24, 2026 | BANGKOK, THAILAND



Address: 45 Willowford Place, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear England, UK, NE15 6DZ

SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM

DAY 01

MONDAY

November 23, 2026 | Eagle | Bangkok	
08:30-09:00	**Registrations**
09:30-09:40	**Opening Ceremony**
KEYNOTE FORUM	
09:40-10:15	Title: Brain-Switch 2.0® A Neuroscience-Informed Approach to Rapid and Lasting Change. An experiential Workshop
	Joachim Lee Tai Loong, PBM, Neuro-Therapy, Singapore
10:15-10:50	Title: Dreams and Dreamwork - Impulses from Psychology, Spirituality, Mysticism and Tradition for a Culture of Change and Empowerment in Mental Health and Therapy
	Ernst Hans Juerg Meier, Practice for Psychotherapy and Hypnosis Therapy, Switzerland
NETWORKING AND REFRESHMENTS BREAK @ DOVE 10:50-11:10	
11:10-11:45	Title: Women's Perceived Mental Health and Healthcare Support Needs Following Intrauterine Fetal Death in Rural South Africa
	Mary Maluleke, University of Venda, South Africa
Speaker Session	
Session Chair: Joachim Lee Tai Loong, PBM, Neuro-Therapy, Singapore	
11:45-12:10	Title: Beyond Talk Therapy: A Conceptual Framework for Tactile Cognitive Restructuring and Structured Play in Adult Psychotherapy
	Selinta Clarke, *The Holistic Psychotherapy Centre, Thailand*
12:10-12:35	Title: High-Functioning but Distressed? Examining Depression, Anxiety and Stress Among Malaysian Employees in Contemporary Work Environments
	Azman Shah D Aziz, *Performance Development Consultants Sdn Bhd, Malaysia*
12:35-13:00	Title: Opening the Window of Tolerance: The Role of Somatic Therapy in Processing Trauma
	Danielle West Mars, *West of Mars, Thailand*
GROUP PHOTO	
LUNCH AND NETWORKING BREAK @ 13:00-13:50	

13:50-14:15	Title: Neuro-Informed Broadcasting for Scalable Mental Wellness Communication in the Asia-Pacific
	Carol Ong, *DCO Brain Switch, Malaysia*
14:15-14:40	Title: Cultural Perceptions and Interpretations of Childhood Trauma: A Stakeholder Consultation on Research Efficacy within a Singaporean Counselling Training Programme
	Ellen Fong, *Keele University, UK*
14:40-15:05	Title: Self-knowledge as self-improvement in Plato's dialogues and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
	Chloe Bamboulis, *Clinical Psychological Therapy Limited, UK*
15:05-15:30	Title: Supporting the Developing Self: Adolescent Identity, Agency and Mental Wellbeing in Schools
	Pamela Christie, *Inclusive Future Ltd, Vietnam*
15:30-15:55	Title: Peer Support Programme in the Singapore Civil Defence Force: A Community-Embedded Model for Mental Health Support in Young Emergency Services Personnel
	Chan Luo Ming (Kada), *Singapore Civil Defence Force, Singapore*
NETWORKING AND REFRESHMENTS BREAK @ DOVE 15:55-16:15	
16:15-16:40	Title: Blame, Guilt and Shattered Hopes: Psychological Experiences of Women Following Intrauterine Fetal Death in Rural South Africa
	Thingahangwi Cecilia Masutha, *University of Venda, South Africa*
16:40-17:05	Title: When Care Falls Silent: Perceived Bereavement-Care Gaps Following Intrauterine Fetal Death in Rural South African Hospitals
	Mphedziseni Eshter Rangwaneni, *University of Venda, South Africa*
Poster Session @ 17:05-18:00	
EP001	Title: A Psychodynamic Case Formulation: An Object-Relational and Trauma-Focused Perspective on Disorganised Attachment
	Kok Han Ang, *Institute of Mental Health, Singapore*
EP002	Title: Too Bright to Fail, Too Complex to Fit: Twice-Exceptionality in an Adolescent with ADHD, Autism, and Complex Mood and Behavioural Dysregulation
	Alena Foong, *MOHH, Singapore*
EP003	Title: Online Adaptations of the Tavistock Model of Infant Observation: A Literature Review since the COVID-19 Pandemic
	Akihito Fujomori, *International University of Health and Welfare, Japan*

EP004	Title: "You Will Never Replace My Father" Transference, Countertransference, and Enactment in a Trainee's First Psychodynamic Case
	Yiyang Aun, *National University Hospital, Singapore*
EP005	Title: Characteristics and Outcomes of Individuals Referred by CRT to IMH ES in 2023
	Magdelene Siow, *NHG, Singapore*
EP006	Title: Sheltered, Yet Shaped: Between Emotional Closeness and Pulling Away — A Psychodynamic Case of Relationally Transmitted Trauma
	Hui Xin Jenies Foo, *Institute of Mental Health, Singapore*
EP007	Title: Knockout: A Case Report On Recurrent Self-Harm Through Self-Inflicted Facial Blows In A Filipino Adult With Schizophrenia
	John Ruben Esperanza, *Cagayan Valley Medical Center, Philippines*

PANEL DISCUSSIONS & B2B MEETING

Day 01 | Closing Ceremony

BOOKMARK YOUR DATES

8th Asia-Pacific Mental Health and Well-being Congress

October 18-19, 2027 | Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

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SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM

DAY 02

TUESDAY

November 24, 2026 | Virtual | GMT +1	
08:45-09:00	**Introduction**
KEYNOTE FORUM	
09:00-09:30	Title: Real Conversations, Real Change: The Check-In Framework
	Nicholas Bloom, *Nic Bloom Pty Ltd, Australia*
09:30-10:00	Title: Interdisciplinary Studies as an Approach to Humanizing Educational Curricula: A Comparative Field Study in Five Arab Countries
	Mandour Abdelsalam Fathalla, *National Center for Educational Research and Development, Egypt*
10:00-10:30	Title: Giftedness Under Pressure: Mental Health, Identity and Sustainable High Performance
	Heather O'Donnell, *TGR The Green Room, Germany*
10:30-11:00	Title: Mindful Breathing with Music (MBM): An Integrative Wellness Approach to Supporting Emotional Self-Regulation
	Marilyn Immoos-Langlois, *Mindful Breathing with Music (MBM), Switzerland*
BREAK @ 11:00-11:15	
11:15-11:45	Title: The Missing Curriculum: Purpose, Attention and Mental Wellbeing in a Hyper-Connected World
	Anish Baheti, *Train My Brain® , India*
Speaker Sessions	
Session Chair: Heather O'Donnell, TGR The Green Room, Germany	
11:45-12:05	Title: Palliative-psychological care for severe and persistent mental illness: a qualitative expert study toward an integrative, interdisciplinary model
	Gabi Gubel, *PUK Zurich, Switzerland*
12:05-12:25	Title: Power Home as an Author Developed Pedagogical and Psychoeducational Framework for Well Being From Prevention to Supporting Adolescents After Crisis and Trauma
	Marzena Folusz, *Stiftung Jugendhilfe Aktiv, Germany*

12:25-12:45	Title: Understanding Burnout Amongst Occupational Therapists: A Qualitative Meta-Synthesis Review
	Jess Chen, *Sengkang General Hospital, Singapore*
12:45-13:05	Title: The Effect of Psychodrama Group Therapy on Anxiety Levels in Parents of Children with Anorectal Malformations
	Aslihan Eslek, *Izmir University of Economics Faculty of Medicine, Turkey*
13:05-13:25	Title: Understanding How mTBI Impacts the Career and Independence of Young Adults
	Juliet Haarbauer-Krupa, *Emory University School of Medicine, USA*
BREAK @ 13:25-13:40	
13:40-14:00	Title: Developing Life Skills Training Module in Drug Abuse Preventive Program among Adolescents in Mumbai
	Meena Zore, *Smt Vimladevi Kkhyalilalji Vagarecha College of Nursing Education, India*
14:00-14:20	Title: From Physical Circles to the Metaverse: Leveraging Virtual Anonymity and the Online Disinhibition Effect to Neutralize Mental Health Stigma in Malaysia
	Syahida Zulkarnain, *NGO Empati, Malaysia*
14:20-14:40	Title: Attitudes Towards Mental Illness Among Student Nurses
	Shannah Marie Alkonga, *St. Paul University Iloilo, Philippines*
14:40-15:00	Title: Feasibility and acceptability of self-regulation, economic and combined interventions to prevent depression and anxiety among poverty-affected adolescents in Nepal: a pilot c-RCT
	Nagendra Luitel, *Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO), Nepal*
PANEL DISCUSSIONS & B2B MEETING	

Day 02 Virtual End | Closing Ceremony

BOOKMARK YOUR DATES

8th Asia-Pacific Mental Health and Well-being Congress

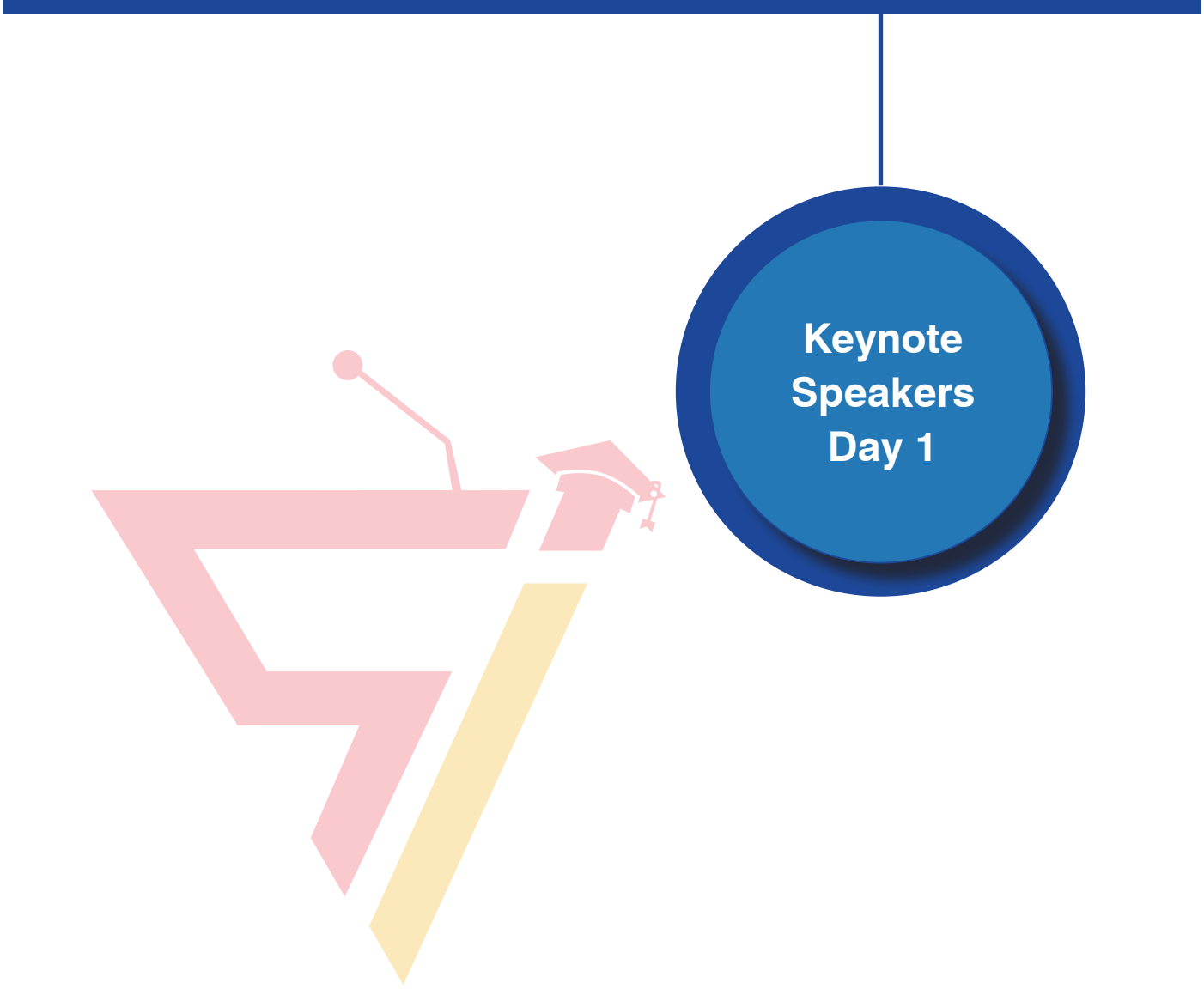
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6th Asia-Pacific

Mental Health and Well-being Congress





Brain-Switch 2.0® A Neuroscience-Informed Approach to Rapid and Lasting Change. An experiential Workshop

Joachim Lee Tai Loong, PBM
Neuro-Therapy, Singapore

Brain-Switch 2.0® is a next-generation, neuroscience-informed intervention designed to address trauma, anxiety, depression, and other distress states through the precise application of memory reconsolidation principles. By targeting the brain's default mode network (DMN) and integrating evidence-based mechanisms from neuroplasticity research, this process offers a pathway to transform entrenched emotional patterns at their root.

Unlike traditional talk therapy or symptom management approaches, Brain-Switch 2.0® works by updating the brain's predictive models, enabling clients to experience rapid and durable relief. It is a structured-yet-flexible method that can be integrated into diverse therapeutic settings, counselling, psychotherapy, coaching, or trauma recovery work without unnecessary jargon or rigid protocols.

In this interactive workshop, participants will:

- Understand the neuroscience underpinning Brain-Switch 2.0®, including DMN modulation and emotional memory updating.
- Experience a live demonstration of the process, illustrating how real-time state shifts can occur within a single session.
- Learn how to apply Brain-Switch 2.0® in practice, either as a stand-alone intervention or within existing therapeutic frameworks.
- Explore case studies showing significant improvements in anxiety and depression symptoms, supported by qualitative and emerging quantitative evidence.

By the end of the workshop, attendees will not only understand the neuroscience that makes Brain-Switch 2.0® effective but will also gain the practical skills to apply it, empowering them to help clients move beyond coping and into lasting, life-changing transformation.

Biography

Dr Joachim Lee, PBM, is a Senior Principal Psychotherapist with twenty-five years of clinical and leadership experience in mental health care. He is a clinical hypnotherapist, neurofeedback therapist, and the developer of Brain-Switch 2.0®, a neuro-integrative process designed to support trauma recovery, nervous system regulation, and sustainable mental well-being. He is the Principal Trainer of Multichannel Eye Movement Integration and serves as Co-Chair of the Clinical Supervision Board of the Singapore Association for Counselling, contributing to professional standards and clinical governance.



Dreams and Dreamwork - Impulses from Psychology, Spirituality, Mysticism and Tradition for a Culture of Change and Empowerment in Mental Health and Therapy

Ernst Hans Juerg Meier
Practice for Psychotherapy and Hypnosis Therapy, Switzerland

Dreaming is a universal human phenomenon that has accompanied the development of cultures, religions, and healing traditions throughout history. Across civilizations, dreams have served as sources of meaning, guidance, and transformation, while contemporary psychology and psychiatry increasingly recognize their role in emotional regulation, memory integration, and meaning-making processes.

This presentation offers an integrative exploration of dreams and dreamwork as resources for change and empowerment in mental health and psychotherapy. It combines historical perspectives with contemporary clinical practice, drawing on psychology, psychiatry, spirituality, mysticism, and cultural traditions. Historical examples include ancient Greek dream traditions such as temple healing sleep and philosophical symbolism (e.g., the ‚Ladder of Love' in Plato's Symposium), biblical dream narratives (including the dreams of Joseph and kings in the Old and New Testament), early scientific discovery dreams, and Alpine peasant dream culture in Europe. These traditions are presented as early models of symbolic, relational, and meaning-oriented dream understanding.

In dialogue with these perspectives, the presentation illustrates contemporary clinical approaches to dreamwork through examples of nightmare dreams, trauma-related dreams, spiritually meaningful dreams, and lucid dreams, drawn from psychiatric and psychotherapeutic practice like ‚Hypnosis and ‚Resource Therapy'.

The goals of the presentation are to enable participants to understand the historical development of dream concepts, gain insight into the psychological functioning of dreams, and learn how dreamwork can be applied in professional contexts and personal life. Dreams are presented as clinically relevant processes supporting emotional integration, resilience, and empowerment within a holistic culture of mental health and therapy.

Biography

Ernst Meier, MSc MA, is a seasoned psychologist, psychotherapist, and emergency psychologist with a diverse academic and professional background. He holds a Master of Arts in Languages from Mississippi State University (1977) and a Master of Science in Psychology with a focus on Social and Preventive Medicine from the University of Zurich (1996). In 1997, he completed a sabbatical at the University of Queensland in Australia, further deepening his expertise in prevention and crisis intervention. Ernst has worked extensively in psychological prevention and crisis support and currently maintains a private practice as a psychological psychotherapist. He also participates in a music-therapeutic Balint supervision group, integrating his passion for music into his therapeutic approach. A dedicated musician, he plays the dulcimer and alphorn and practices overtone singing.



Women's Perceived Mental Health and Healthcare Support Needs Following Intrauterine Fetal Death in Rural South Africa

Mary Maluleke
University of Venda, South Africa

Intrauterine fetal death (IUFD) is a profound reproductive loss with potential psychological and social consequences. Understanding women's perceived support needs is essential for developing responsive and culturally appropriate mental-health and bereavement services, particularly in resource-constrained rural settings. This qualitative study explored women's perceived mental health and healthcare support needs following IUFD in the Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa. Thirteen women aged 18 years or older who had experienced vaginal delivery following IUFD were purposively recruited from six hospitals. In-depth interviews were conducted in Tshivenda, audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, translated into English, and analysed using Tesch's eight-step process. Women identified four interdependent support needs: prioritised and emergency care; holistic quality care incorporating compassionate communication, professional counselling and a protected environment; early, consent-based family involvement; and accessible primary-healthcare resources, including clinicians, referral support, and diagnostic equipment. Support was described as a continuum beginning with prompt maternal assessment, continuing through sensitive disclosure and labour care, and extending to follow-up at the clinic and at home. Support following IUFD should integrate maternal safety, grief-informed relational care, and health system continuity. Rural services should provide prompt assessment, clear and empathetic information, psychosocial assessment and referral, family-inclusive care, and continuity across hospital, primary care, and home settings.

Biography

Professor Mary Maluleke is an academic in the Department of Advanced Nursing Science at the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Venda, South Africa. Her scholarly interests encompass nursing science, mental health, women's health, and the strengthening of responsive healthcare services. Her academic work contributes to understanding the experiences and support needs of individuals and communities in healthcare contexts, with particular attention to evidence-informed, contextually responsive care. She is committed to advancing nursing scholarship, research, and approaches that promote mental health and well-being within health systems and communities.

6th Asia-Pacific

Mental Health and Well-being Congress

Speaker Sessions Day 1



Beyond Talk Therapy: A Conceptual Framework for Tactile Cognitive Restructuring and Structured Play in Adult Psychotherapy

Selinta Clarke
The Holistic Psychotherapy Centre, Thailand

Objectives: Adult psychotherapy often privileges verbal processing. For clients who intellectualise, avoid emotionally charged material, or struggle to articulate experience, talk-based work alone may limit access to meaning and slow therapeutic progress. Although play-based interventions are established in child practice, tactile and construction-based methods remain less developed in adult psychotherapy. This presentation proposes a conceptual framework integrating principles from Cognitive Behavioral Play Therapy (CBPT) and structured LEGO®-Based Therapy (LBT) for adult individual and group work.

Methods: A focused thematic synthesis of literature on constructivism, cognitive restructuring, narrative externalisation, embodied learning, and social scaffolding informed the framework. CBPT principles are used to translate thoughts, schemas, and stressors into physical models; structured LBT principles organise collaborative building through defined tasks and roles.

Results: The synthesis identifies three proposed clinical functions. First, tangible models externalise abstract distress, creating psychological distance and allowing clients to observe, modify, and reframe patterns. Second, task structure may reduce interpersonal ambiguity and support engagement, collaboration, and perspective-taking in group contexts. Third, a shared visual focus may broaden clinical observation beyond verbal content, supporting formulation through metaphor, spatial relationships, sequencing, and symbolic choice. These mechanisms are presented as theoretically grounded practice hypotheses rather than established treatment effects.

Conclusion: Tactile construction may offer a structured adjunct to talk therapy, particularly when verbal processing becomes repetitive, defended, or inaccessible. The framework provides a practical basis for clinical adaptation and future empirical evaluation of feasibility, acceptability, therapeutic process, and clinician experience in adult populations.

Biography

Selinta Clarke is a Professional Counsellor, LEGO®-Based Therapist, and Executive Coach who works with individuals, teenagers, families, couples, professionals, and leaders. She offers a range of therapeutic and developmental approaches, including counselling, LEGO®-Based Therapy, executive coaching, mindfulness-based support, and structured therapeutic interventions. Her work focuses on helping clients navigate emotional regulation, ADHD-related challenges, family dynamics, stress, burnout, cross-cultural identity, and executive functioning. She also supports individuals and professionals through significant personal and career transitions, fostering emotional well-being, self-awareness, resilience, and personal growth.



High-Functioning but Distressed? Examining Depression, Anxiety and Stress Among Malaysian Employees in Contemporary Work Environments

Azman Shah D Aziz
Performance Development Consultants Sdn Bhd, Malaysia

Workplace mental health has emerged as a critical concern as organisations seek to balance employee wellbeing with productivity and performance demands. While many employees continue to meet work expectations and remain functionally engaged, underlying psychological distress may remain undetected. This study examines the prevalence of depression, anxiety and stress among Malaysian employees and discusses implications for the development of high-functioning and psychologically healthy workplaces. Data were collected from 585 employees across multiple organisational divisions and job positions in Malaysia. Mental health status was assessed using the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS). Descriptive analyses were conducted to determine the distribution of depression, anxiety and stress severity levels within the workforce. Findings revealed that anxiety was the most prominent mental health concern. Four in ten employees (40.0%) reported anxiety symptoms within the moderate to extremely severe range, compared with 28.4% for depression and 18.3% for stress. These findings suggest that a substantial proportion of employees may continue to function and perform at work despite experiencing significant psychological distress. The results highlight the existence of a potentially "high functioning but distressed" workforce, where organisational performance may conceal underlying mental health risks.

These findings highlight the possibility of a "high functioning but distressed" workforce, where performance and productivity may mask underlying mental health challenges. The results reinforce the importance of proactive workplace mental health initiatives that extend beyond crisis intervention to include psychological safety, supportive leadership, early detection mechanisms and organisational wellbeing strategies. The study contributes to the growing evidence on workplace mental health in Malaysia and underscores the need for organisations to integrate mental wellbeing into broader workforce sustainability and performance agendas.

Biography

Azman Shah Dato' Aziz is an experienced psychotherapist, international speaker, trainer, consultant, and executive coach with over three decades of expertise in human performance and organizational development. A pioneer in promoting Emotional Intelligence in Malaysian workplaces since 1995, he has designed customized learning solutions for organizations across the public and private sectors. He spent 13 years in the United States, providing training and consulting services to government agencies, healthcare institutions, and academic organizations. His clients include PETRONAS, Perodua, Malakoff, Tabung Haji, major Malaysian ports, and leading banking institutions. As CEO of Performance Development Consultants (PDC), he leads a consultancy dedicated to helping organizations maximize performance through innovative management practices. An American-trained psychodynamic coach and consultant psychotherapist at Mind Faculty, Azman integrates psychology with leadership and talent development. He is also the ASEAN lead facilitator for CELEMI business simulations, helping organizations strengthen leadership, decision-making, and organizational effectiveness.



Opening the Window of Tolerance: The Role of Somatic Therapy in Processing Trauma

Danielle West Mars
West of Mars, Thailand

The objective of this presentation is to focus on the role of the body in processing trauma and the practice of increasing the window of tolerance using somatic techniques to enable clients to process traumatic experiences. Clients often find themselves speaking about a traumatic event repeatedly while not seeming to noticeably progress. In noting the breathing, posture, movement and language being used during initial consults one can begin to note and even disrupt the traumatic loop of hyperarousal or hypoarousal clients can experience when recounting or ruminating on traumatic experiences.

This presentation will focus on techniques to increase the window of tolerance so that clients are able to process traumatic events without slipping into states of hyperarousal or hypoarousal. It will examine various considerations with clients, approaches in treatment and cues to watch for when working with clients. The presentation will also address over intellectualisation of emotions and pop psychology proliferation that has become increasingly common with clients in the age of social media and ai.

Attendees will gain a greater understanding of the role of the body in processing trauma along with tools to use in their own practice with clients to increase the window of tolerance so that clients can stay rooted in the present while reflecting on the past.

Biography

Danielle West is a counselling psychologist, mentor, speaker, author, and facilitator with experience in mentoring, counselling, and facilitating meaningful conversations since 2016. She specializes in supporting individuals through trauma recovery, anxiety, depression, life transitions, self-esteem challenges, existential concerns, and burnout. Danielle brings a diverse range of professional qualifications and holistic practices to her work. She is a clinical hypnotherapist, Level 1 Neurokinetic Therapist, NICABM-certified Traumatic Memory Specialist, Certified ACTP SF Coach, Certified CLC Coach, and Reiki Master. She is also a Certified Tribeless Host and tarot card reader.



Neuro-Informed Broadcasting for Scalable Mental Wellness Communication in the Asia-Pacific

Carol Ong
DCO Brain Switch, Malaysia

This paper examines how neuro-informed broadcasting can support scalable mental wellness communication across the Asia-Pacific. It is presented through a practitioner's reflection grounded in both therapeutic and media practice. The purpose of this paper is to explore how principles underlying Brain-Switch-based interventions may be translated from one-to-one client work into broadcast and podcast formats that are accessible, repeatable, and emotionally safe for wider audiences.

Drawing on the presenter's therapeutic practice alongside seven years in prime-time broadcasting and content production, the paper reflects on the design of audio-led wellness content addressing burnout, emotional overload, brain fog, and performance pressure. Core techniques—including guided visualisation, somatic anchoring, tone regulation, pacing, and narrative reframing—are applied to shape media content that functions as structured psychoeducational support.

Observations indicate that clients and audiences alike respond positively to simple, sensory-based, repeatable interventions that reduce overthinking and support emotional regulation, suggesting that broadcasting can extend beyond informing or entertaining to serve as a culturally adaptable channel for mental health literacy and low-barrier support.

The paper concludes that neuro-informed broadcasting offers a promising framework for extending mental wellness communication beyond the therapy room to reach populations who may not otherwise seek formal care, while underscoring the importance of clear ethical boundaries, reflective practice, and careful distinction between media-based support and clinical treatment.

Biography

Dr Carol Ong Ke Rou is a Malaysian media practitioner, brain-science communicator, and mental wellness facilitator with a PhD in Mass Communication and Media Management. She is recognised by the Malaysia Book of Records as the country's first Brain-Switch 2.0® Specialist and first MEMI Practitioner. With seven years as a prime-time news anchor and producer at Astro Television, she now works at the intersection of neurocommunication, therapeutic practice, and public education, translating brain-based emotional regulation tools into accessible content, workshops, and media formats for high-functioning professionals experiencing burnout, anxiety, and performance pressure across the Asia-Pacific.



Cultural Perceptions and Interpretations of Childhood Trauma: A Stakeholder Consultation on Research Efficacy within a Singaporean Counselling Training Programme

Ellen Fong
Keele University, UK

This study investigates the efficacy and appropriateness of proposed doctoral research exploring how culture influences perceptions and interpretations of childhood trauma within a Singaporean counselling training programme. The objectives were to determine stakeholders' understanding of childhood trauma in a cultural context, gather views on further research in this topic, and explore the perceived utility of the findings for teaching, supervision and curriculum development. The scope involved a qualitative design that included a scoping review of 19 peer-reviewed articles and semi-structured interviews with three purposively selected faculty members who served as key stakeholders. Methodologically, the study was grounded in constructivism and phenomenology, utilising Reflexive Thematic Analysis to identify patterns in the data while managing the researcher's insider position.

Results from the scoping review highlighted that Western Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) frameworks often overlook culturally specific adversities, such as "left-behind" experiences and the normalisation of abusive discipline under Confucian values in Asia. Stakeholder interviews yielded five themes: (1) cultural framing of trauma beyond diagnostic manuals; (2) the urgency of research to bridge theory-practice gaps; (3) challenges in recruitment due to "saving face" culture; (4) the necessity of robust ethical safeguards; and (5) practical design recommendations, such as using third-person hypothetical framing. Table 1 summarises the six themes from the scoping review, while Figure 1 shows the thematic findings from the stakeholder interviews.

The study concludes with stakeholders affirming a genuine gap in counselling education in Singapore. Key recommendations included trauma-informed and culturally sensitive questioning, and transparent management of the researcher's dual lecturer–researcher role for the next phase of research with counselling students. This study confirms the feasibility and ethical soundness of further research and provides a refined foundation for its design.

Biography

Ellen Fong is a doctoral student at Keele University, UK. She is a registered counsellor and clinical supervisor with the Singapore Association for Counselling (SAC) and a registered member of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). Ellen is also currently a full-time faculty member in a graduate counselling programme in Singapore, where she is involved in the education and supervision of future counselling professionals. Drawing from evidence-based approaches, she integrates research, teaching, and practice in her professional work.



Self-knowledge as Self-improvement in Plato's Dialogues and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

Chloe Bamboulis
Clinical Psychological Therapy Limited, UK

Some researchers, who examine the similarities between philosophy and psychology, conclude that engaging in philosophy can improve one's mental health, instead of, or in addition to, traditional forms of therapy. This paper reinforces this by establishing the relationship between self-knowledge as self-improvement in Plato's dialogues and in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). Despite multiple important points of congruence, some authors have rejected the idea that Platonic self-knowledge can be assimilated to self-knowledge in psychotherapy. Here, I argue against this criticism by focusing on three key areas of interest: 1) self-knowledge as improving one's beliefs via objective (non-subjective) means, 2) self-knowledge as resulting in objective (non-subjective) outcomes, and 3) self-knowledge as progress towards the Good. I reinforce the link by demonstrating that CBT uses methods which are equally objective with those of the Platonic dialogues. I then continue by claiming that the outcome of self-knowledge in both is also *equally* objective. Finally, I explore the nature of their relationship. Instead of arguing that self-knowledge in CBT is a modern version of self-knowledge in Plato's dialogues, I propose that although not intended to, it functions as a preparatory process for one to be able to participate in Platonic self-knowledge.

Biography

Chloe is an HCPC-registered Clinical Psychologist, BABCP-accredited CBT Therapist, and fully trained EMDR practitioner, with extensive experience in the mental health sector since 2016. She holds a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Birmingham, where her research focused on Ancient Greek Philosophy. Alongside her clinical practice, she has extensive teaching experience in psychology and philosophy and holds Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). She has also worked as a postgraduate teaching assistant and as a freelance translator of academic articles and books in psychology, philosophy, and the social sciences. Her professional background combines clinical expertise with academic research, teaching, and interdisciplinary scholarship.



Supporting the Developing Self: Adolescent Identity, Agency and Mental Wellbeing in Schools

Pamela Christie
Inclusive Future Ltd, Vietnam

Adolescence is a critical period of identity exploration and consolidation, yet identity development is not always explicitly considered within approaches to mental health and wellbeing in educational settings. Emerging research indicates relationships between identity synthesis and confusion and symptoms of depression, anxiety and eating disorders, while contemporary adolescents negotiate identity within increasingly complex interpersonal, cultural, educational and digital environments.

This paper draws on an integrative literature review undertaken as postgraduate research into adolescent identity development in educational settings, reconsidered through a mental-health lens. The review synthesised theoretical and empirical literature alongside educational case studies, drawing principally on Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory, Marcia's Identity Status Theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. Together, these frameworks highlight identity exploration and commitment, multiple developmental influences, and adolescents' agency in constructing a coherent sense of self.

The synthesis is considered alongside emerging evidence connecting identity development with psychological wellbeing and contemporary research examining digital environments as contexts for identity exploration, self-presentation and identity distress. Evidence also indicates that educational environments can influence identity development both intentionally and unintentionally.

The paper argues that identity development warrants more explicit consideration within school approaches to adolescent mental health and wellbeing. Schools should not determine who young people become, but recognise identity formation as a significant developmental process and provide opportunities for exploration, reflection and agency. Greater attention to the developing self may broaden how adolescent mental wellbeing is understood within educational settings.

Biography

Pamela Smith-Christie is an educational leader and mental health & wellbeing practitioner with extensive experience in international education. She holds an MSc in Mental Health and Wellbeing in Education, with postgraduate research focused on adolescent identity development and educational environments. Her professional experience spans whole-school leadership, safeguarding, pastoral care and mental health and wellbeing. She is a qualified Designated Safeguarding Lead, Senior Mental Health Lead and Mental Health First Aider, with additional training in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST). Pamela is Founder and Director of Inclusive Future Ltd., with particular interests in adolescent identity, agency and psychologically supportive educational environments.



Peer Support Programme in the Singapore Civil Defence Force: A Community-Embedded Model for Mental Health Support in Young Emergency Services Personnel

Chan Luo Ming (Kada)
Singapore Civil Defence Force, Singapore

In Singapore, full-time National Servicemen (NSFs) form a significant proportion of Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) personnel — conscripted at age 18 to serve in firefighting, rescue, and emergency medical services. Recognising the convergence of occupational stressors, developmental challenges, and psychosocial pressures unique to this population, the NSF Peer Support (NSPS) programme was developed to provide accessible, peer-level mental health support as a first-line intervention within a tiered care model in SCDF. The programme aimed to equip selected NSFs to look out for troubled peers, provide practical and emotional support, and share help resources. In 2019, an in-house survey (n = 609) revealed that SCDF NSFs demonstrated a preference for peer-based help-seeking over formal services, informing the launch of the NSPS programme in 2020. Selected NSFs underwent training in mental health literacy and peer support competencies, with clear referral pathways to formal psychological services. Outcomes were evaluated through self-reported data from trained peer supporters.

Programme observations suggested that peer supporters actively engaged with distressed peers and perceived the programme as valuable in strengthening their empathy, active listening, and self-awareness. Participation also appeared to reduce mental health stigma among peer supporters, suggesting a broader positive influence on organisational culture.

These findings contribute to the growing evidence base for peer support models in emergency services, highlighting how peer-level intervention can complement formal psychological services within a tiered approach. Key learnings offer insights for adapting youth mental health programmes across diverse cultural and organisational contexts in the Asia-Pacific region.

Biography

Mr Chan Luo Ming (Kada) is a Psychologist in the Emergency Psychological Sciences Department of the Singapore Civil Defence Force, holding a Bachelor of Social Sciences in Psychology (Nanyang Technological University). He oversees the full-time National Servicemen Peer Support Programme and provides psychological support including counselling and crisis intervention for in-service officers. Drawing on his prior experience in facilitating youth development programmes across both mainstream and at-risk populations, Kada's clinical and research interests encompass choice theory and reality therapy, youth mental health, and peer support programme evaluation.



Blame, Guilt and Shattered Hopes: Psychological Experiences of Women Following Intrauterine Fetal Death in Rural South Africa

Thingahangwi Cecilia Masutha
University of Venda, South Africa

Intrauterine fetal death (IUFD) may disrupt expectations surrounding pregnancy and motherhood and be accompanied by profound grief, guilt, blame, and uncertainty. This qualitative study explored blame, guilt, and shattered hopes in women's accounts following IUFD in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa. Thirteen women aged 20–45 years who had experienced vaginal delivery following IUFD were purposively recruited. In-depth interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, translated into English, and analysed using Tesch's eight-step procedure. Trustworthiness was supported through member checking, independent coding, and consensus procedures. Four interconnected patterns were identified: shattered hopes, inward blame and guilt, relational blame, and institutional blame. Self-blame was expressed through counterfactual questions about personal behaviour and perceived wrongdoing; relational blame included partner-related stress; and institutional blame concerned perceived delays, referral failures, and inadequate care. Shattered hopes reflected the collapse of an anticipated future following pregnancy preparation and bonding. These experiences were intertwined, with uncertainty about causation encouraging counterfactual reasoning. IUFD should be recognised as both a reproductive loss and a significant psychological and social experience. Bereavement care should address guilt and blame, provide honest explanations without speculation, acknowledge motherhood and the lost future, and facilitate culturally responsive psychological follow-up.

Biography

Dr. Thingahangwi Cecilia Masutha is an academic in the Department of Advanced Nursing Science at the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Venda, South Africa. Her scholarly work contributes to nursing and health sciences, with an interest in strengthening evidence-informed healthcare and understanding experiences that influence mental health and well-being. Her research engagement reflects an emphasis on person-centered and contextually responsive approaches to healthcare. She contributes to academic scholarship focused on improving health outcomes and supporting the development of responsive healthcare practices in South Africa and broader health contexts.



When Care Falls Silent: Perceived Bereavement-Care Gaps Following Intrauterine Fetal Death in Rural South African Hospitals

Mphedziseni Eshter Rangwaneni
University of Venda, South Africa

Healthcare encounters following intrauterine fetal death (IUFD) form an important part of women's bereavement experiences. Understanding perceived gaps in care may inform the development of more responsive maternity and mental health services in resource-constrained settings. This qualitative study explored women's perceived gaps in hospital-based bereavement care following IUFD in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa. Thirteen women aged 18 years or older who had experienced vaginal delivery following IUFD were purposively recruited from selected hospitals. In-depth interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analysed using Tesch's eight-step thematic process, with member checking, independent coding, and an audit trail supporting trustworthiness. Four interconnected care gaps were identified: delayed or deprioritised attention; deficient compassionate communication and information; fragmented counselling, therapeutic space, and follow-up; and limited family inclusion and rural service resources. Women associated waiting, professional silence, and inadequate explanations with feelings of abandonment and concern about care. They expressed needs for skilled counselling, continuity from hospital to home, protected ward space, consent-based family involvement, and reliable referral and clinical resources. Bereavement care following IUFD should be organised as a continuous, culturally responsive pathway combining prompt maternal assessment, compassionate communication, psychosocial screening and referral, family-inclusive care, and resource-sensitive follow-up.

Biography

Dr. Mphedziseni Esther Rangwaneni is an academic in the Department of Advanced Nursing Science at the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Venda, South Africa. Her scholarly interests are situated within nursing and health sciences and include promoting responsive, evidence-informed healthcare. Her academic work contributes to the understanding of health experiences and how healthcare services can respond more effectively to individuals experiencing psychological and social vulnerability. She is committed to nursing scholarship and research that strengthen person-centred care, mental well-being, and healthcare practice within diverse communities.

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Poster Presentations Day 1



A Psychodynamic Case Formulation: An Object-Relational and Trauma-Focused Perspective on Disorganised Attachment

Kok Han Ang
Institute of Mental Health, Singapore

Objective: This case report illustrates the use of psychodynamic formulation, grounded in object relations theory, to understand and guide treatment of an adult presenting with pervasive emptiness and relational instability rooted in complex developmental trauma.

Methods: A single case study of "S," a woman in her mid-twenties, was developed from twelve weekly sessions of outpatient psychodynamic psychotherapy. Formulation was derived from clinical interview material, with attention to history, defences, and the transference-countertransference field. Informed consent was obtained and identifying details anonymised.

Results: S presented with depressed mood, emotional numbness, disordered eating, and a chronic sense of "emptiness," against a background of inconsistent and abusive parenting, sibling differential treatment, maternal disappearance in infancy, and three episodes of non-consensual sexual contact. Her presentation was consistent with disorganised attachment, characterised by identification with the aggressor, splitting, projective identification, and humour as an immature defence against affect. Tattoos emerged as symbolic markers of permanence and longed-for constancy. Within the therapeutic relationship, a "push-pull" dynamic re-enacted her early relational patterns, complicated by transference related to her history of disappointment with male figures. Green's "dead mother complex" offered a useful lens for her chronic emptiness. Therapy ended abruptly due to a change in S's employment, before deeper trauma material could be fully processed.

Conclusion: This case demonstrates how object-relational and trauma-focused formulation can illuminate the origins and function of disorganised attachment patterns, even within a brief and prematurely terminated treatment. It underscores the clinical importance of a consistent, containing therapeutic frame and patience in building trust with trauma-exposed, avoidantly attached patients.

Biography

Ang Kok Han is a Senior Resident in Psychiatry at the Institute of Mental Health, Singapore. He graduated from Barts & the London School of Medicine and Dentistry in London, and has presented at multiple international conferences in the field of consultation liaison psychiatry. He is currently developing his interest in forensic psychiatry at IMH and is serving as the Chief Resident for the National Healthcare Group Psychiatry Residency Programme.



Too Bright to Fail, Too Complex to Fit: Twice-Exceptionality in an Adolescent with ADHD, Autism, and Complex Mood and Behavioural Dysregulation

Alena Foong
MOHH, Singapore

Twice-exceptional (2e) individuals possess high cognitive ability alongside one or more neurodevelopmental or psychiatric conditions, yet clinical and educational services typically assess giftedness and disability within separate frameworks, obscuring both intervention priorities and prognosis. We present a 13-year-old girl with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and autism spectrum disorder, with cognitive testing in the extremely high range, who developed progressive mood and behavioural dysregulation over eighteen months, including recurrent self-harm, suicidal ideation, and escalating aggression culminating in an emergency psychiatric admission. Sequential diagnoses of major depressive disorder and oppositional defiant disorder were added despite trials of an SSRI, stimulant medication, and an antipsychotic, with limited sustained improvement. Multidisciplinary review suggested her presentation reflected the interaction, rather than the simple sum, of her exceptionalities: high intelligence masking early distress, autism-related rigidity intensifying oppositional behaviour, and a coercive parent-child cycle reinforcing dysregulation. Applying an operational definition of twice-exceptionality reframed the case as a comorbidity effect requiring integrated, rather than sequential, management. Drawing on evidence from a strengths-based, talent-focused school programme that produced sustained cognitive, emotional, and social growth in 2e students, we argue that psychiatric management of twice-exceptional youth should incorporate strengths-based strategies alongside standard pharmacological and psychotherapeutic approaches, rather than defaulting to purely deficit-oriented treatment. This case highlights the need for assessment and management models that account for the interactive effects of giftedness and disability in this under-recognised population.

Biography

Dr Alena Foong is a fourth-year psychiatry resident at the Institute of Mental Health (IMH), Singapore. She holds an MD from the University of New South Wales (UNSW). With a strong clinical interest in child/adolescent psychiatry, Dr Foong has rotated through child/adolescent units during her training as well as in her earlier years as a medical student.



Online Adaptations of the Tavistock Model of Infant Observation: A Literature Review since the COVID-19 Pandemic

Akihito Fujomori
International University of Health and Welfare, Japan

The Tavistock model of Infant Observation is a foundational training method that cultivates the 'observational mind'—the capacity to wait and think about early emotional experiences without premature intervention. During the COVID-19 pandemic, home visits were moved to digital platforms, raising critical questions about whether the method could retain its psychoanalytic value through a screen. This literature review examines the methodological adaptations and clinical implications of remote Infant Observation, analysing twelve publications (10 English-language and 2 Japanese-language papers) published between March 2020 and December 2025.

The thematic analysis revealed three core dimensions of transformation. First, the observational frame and sensory field were radically reorganised. The parent became an active 'director' or co-constructor of the setting by controlling the camera lens, thereby reversing the observer's traditional physical agency. While smell and touch were lost, the 'over-proximity' of the screen often intensified visual experiences of facial expressions. Second, the observer–parent–infant relationship shifted. The observer became an 'ambiguous object'—physically absent yet emotionally present through a 'psychic portal'. Technical disruptions, such as frozen screens, functioned as 'digital countertransference' or technological parapraxes, mirroring primitive separation anxieties. Infants were observed using the device as a concrete object or searching for the observer 'behind' the screen. Third, methodologically, the literature suggests that the training task is preserved when the seminar group can contain fragmented online experiences and transform them into thinkable emotional material.

Conclusion: Online Infant Observation is a distinctive setting with specific possibilities and limitations. While widening access to training, it demands renewed theoretical focus on embodiment, containment, and how parent-infant dyads negotiate presence and representation in digital spaces.

Biography

Akihito Fujimori is a Japanese clinical psychologist and certified public psychologist affiliated with the International University of Health and Welfare, Tokyo, Japan. He completed specialist training at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust in London as a psychodynamic psychotherapist working with children, young people, and families. His clinical and research interests include Tavistock model of infant observation, child and adolescent psychotherapy, school-based psychotherapy, and psychoanalytic approaches to trauma and development. He has conducted both in-person and online infant observation as part of his professional training and is currently exploring the methodological and clinical significance of online observation for the training of child psychotherapists.



"You Will Never Replace My Father" Transference, Countertransference, and Enactment in a Trainee's First Psychodynamic Case

Yiyang Aun
National University Hospital, Singapore

Psychodynamic psychotherapy training requires residents to work not only with the patient's material but with their own. This reflective single-case report examines transference, countertransference, and enactment across an 11-session psychodynamic therapy conducted by a third-year psychiatry resident in Singapore, and considers what these processes teach at trainee level. The patient, "Sera" (pseudonym; informed consent obtained), is a 23-year-old woman with a history of childhood sexual abuse by her father, emotional neglect, cumulative bereavement, and chronic suicidal ideation, referred following a course of CBT that left core relational wounds unaddressed. The therapeutic approach prioritized a consistent frame: a fixed weekly slot held regardless of attendance, as a corrective emotional experience for a patient whose attachment history predicted abandonment. Key clinical moments are presented: the interpretive use of the patient's repeated question "Are you angry with me?"; a session in which the patient applied makeup before a date, understood as transference testing of a male figure's capacity to remain non-intrusive; and a symbolic moment of restored agency at a literal junction between the Emergency Department and home. The report then examines a three-month treatment break coinciding with the therapist's paternity leave, analyzed as a complementary countertransference enactment of the patient's core abandonment fear. The patient's return, and her termination-phase statement: "I see you as my father, but you will never replace my father", is discussed as evidence of developing reflective function and object differentiation. The case argues that trainee enactments, when recognized and worked through in supervision, are not failures but central learning material in psychodynamic training.

Biography

Aun Yiyang is a third-year psychiatry resident at the National University Hospital, Singapore. His interests include psychodynamic psychotherapy and medical education. This is his first psychodynamic long case, conducted under supervision as part of residency training.



Characteristics and Outcomes of Individuals Referred by CRT to IMH ES in 2023

Magdelene Siow
NHG, Singapore

Objectives and Scope: The Singaporean Crisis and Response Team (CRT) supports individuals in the community with mental health crises. Working closely with the Institute of Mental Health Emergency Services (IMH ES), the CRT refers at-risk individuals to IMH ES for further psychiatric evaluation. This study aims to describe the characteristics and outcomes of individuals who were referred by the CRT to IMH ES in 2023.

Methods: Data was collected from the Mental Health Hotline's records of police referrals.

Results: The CRT engaged with 4427 cases in 2023, of which 2598 were brought to IMH ES. Of the 2598 cases assessed in IMH ES, 884 were admitted, 228 were placed in a 24-hour observation unit, 1409 were discharged, 67 were transferred to a restructured hospital for further medical management, and 10 had unknown dispositions. Of the 884 admitted, 411 were involuntary admissions under the Singapore Mental Health (Care and Treatment) Act (MHCTA). With regard to the ages of those admitted, 173 were below 21 years old, 355 were between 21 and 40 years old, 217 were between 41 to 60 years old and 126 were above 60 years old. Of the 1409 discharged, 607 were given a subsequent outpatient appointment.

Conclusions: These findings showcase the significance of collaboration between the CRT and IMH to provide timely intervention for at risk individuals in the community. By serving as a reflection of real-world clinical experiences at Singapore's only tertiary psychiatric institution, these findings can help identify trends in patient needs and assess the adequacy of available resources.

Biography

Dr Magdelene Siow is a psychiatry resident currently training and working within Singapore's public healthcare system.



Sheltered, yet Shaped: Between Emotional Closeness and Pulling Away — A Psychodynamic Case of Relationally Transmitted Trauma

Hui Xin Jenies Foo
Institute of Mental Health, Singapore

This case explores how trauma that is not directly experienced, but is present, unspoken, and unprocessed within a family system, can nonetheless shape a person's attachment, defences, and sense of self. The patient, a 32-year-old married woman with Panic Disorder and Bipolar 2 Disorder, was referred for psychodynamic psychotherapy after a recurrence of self-harm and mood symptoms following medication discontinuation. She had been "sheltered" from the fact that her father, incarcerated during her childhood, had sexually assaulted her elder sisters, and was later invalidated by her mother when she sought to understand what had happened. Over 17 weekly sessions, three phases emerged: an initial inaccessibility of affect, in which highly charged material was reported without apparent feeling; a middle phase in which anger and dissatisfaction surfaced but were repeatedly foreclosed through premature closure; and a later phase revealing a split self-organisation, in which an earlier, emotionally "alive" identity was actively disowned in favour of a controlled, role-bound present self. Self-harm functioned bidirectionally, generating sensation during numbness and discharging affect during overwhelm. Formulation drew on attachment theory and object relations theory, including splitting, false-self organisation, and attachment to frustrating objects. Transference and countertransference, marked by confusion and a recurring sense of exclusion, appeared to re-enact the patient's early relational experience and proved central to understanding her presentation. Despite this, tentative boundary-setting attempts and, in the final session, her first expressed tears and acknowledgement of the cost of her suppression, suggest an emerging, if fragile, capacity for affect tolerance. Therapy ended when the patient subsequently defaulted. The case highlights how exclusion from, rather than direct exposure to, family trauma can produce lasting relational and structural difficulties, and underscores the clinical value of countertransference and careful pacing in supporting resilience where affect tolerance is limited.

Biography

Foo Hui Xin Jenies is a psychiatric resident at the Institute of Mental Health, Singapore, currently undergoing training in psychodynamic psychotherapy under clinical supervision. Her clinical interests include attachment-informed formulation, the effects of relational and intergenerational trauma on identity and affect regulation, and the integration of psychodynamic technique with mood disorder management. This case was presented and discussed at the IMH Psychodynamic Retreat as part of ongoing case-based psychotherapy training.



Knockout: A Case Report on Recurrent Self-Harm Through Self-Inflicted Facial Blows in A Filipino Adult with Schizophrenia

John Ruben Esperanza
Cagayan Valley Medical Center, Philippines

Background: Self-harm is a well-documented complication of schizophrenia, particularly during periods of active psychosis, affective dysregulation, and functional deterioration. While suicidal behavior is widely reported, unusual forms of self-injury, such as repetitive self-inflicted facial trauma, remain underrepresented in the literature, especially in the Philippines and in low-resource and Asian settings. Psychosis-related motoric self-harm presents unique challenges because behavior may be driven by hallucinations, delusions, or impulse dyscontrol rather than suicidal intent alone.

Case Presentation: This is a case of a 32-year-old Filipino man with long-standing schizophrenia and prolonged medication non-adherence who developed recurrent episodes of forceful self-punching of his face, causing severe facial swelling and repeated emergency consultations. His clinical course progressed from mood symptoms to persecutory and grandiose delusions, auditory hallucinations, spiritual preoccupations, and social dysfunction. In the two months preceding admission, his selfinjury escalated to near-daily episodes. Neuroimaging showed no intracranial pathology. Mental status examination demonstrated psychomotor retardation, flat affect, persistent delusions, and impaired impulse control.

Management and Outcome: Immediate safety measures and trauma evaluation were implemented, followed by initiation of clozapine for treatment-resistant psychosis and high-risk self-harm. Crucially, care was delivered through a multidisciplinary framework involving psychiatry, nursing, psychology, social work, and occupational therapy. Family engagement, behavioral monitoring, psychotherapy, and rehabilitation interventions complemented pharmacologic treatment. The frequency and intensity of self-harm decreased substantially, emotional stability improved, and partial insight was achieved.

Conclusion: This case highlights a rare manifestation of psychosis-related self-injury and emphasizes the importance of early recognition of atypical motoric self-harm. Effective management requires evidence-based pharmacotherapy, particularly clozapine, alongside coordinated multidisciplinary care. Detailed case reporting from local settings is essential to inform culturally relevant assessment and treatment strategies for severe self-harm in schizophrenia.

Biography

Dr. John Ruben Apilado Esperanza is a Filipino physician dedicated to advancing mental health and public health in underserved communities. Born and raised in La Union, he completed his nursing degree at the University of Santo Tomas and earned his Doctor of Medicine from the University of the East Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center. He later pursued a Master's in Public Health at the University of the Philippines–Manila. He began his career as a Doctor to the Barrio in Batanes, serving remote populations, including the doctorless municipality of Mahatao, during the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by community physician work in La Union. These roles exposed him to significant gaps in mental health services and solidified his commitment to psychiatric care.

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Virtual Keynote Speakers Day 2



Real Conversations, Real Change: The Check-In Framework

Nicholas Bloom
Nic Bloom Pty Ltd, Australia

Most workplaces start Monday morning with stand-ups, pulse checks, or weekend small talk. But what if we took things a layer deeper?

Objectives & Scope: Depression and anxiety cost the global economy 12 billion working days and US$1 trillion annually in lost productivity (WHO). Across Asia, 82% of employees carry a moderate to high mental health risk (Aon TELUS Health Asia Mental Health Index). Yet the WHO also gives us the other half of the story: every $1 invested in mental health returns $4 in improved health and productivity. This session explores how a simple weekly practice can shift that trajectory.

Method: Drawing on personal experience leading team check-ins — both in person and online — this session role-models a structured practice built on seven key principles: choosing to opt in or out, confidentiality, using "I/Me/My" language, listening without fixing, being present & offering presence, mindful disclosures, and AQUAROK (All Questions U Ask R OK). Participants experience the process live and leave equipped to implement it immediately.

Results: In practice, this approach has moved teams beyond performative wellbeing culture toward genuine psychological safety — strengthening relationships, building resilience, and lifting productivity. Colleagues reported feeling more connected, more supported through struggles, and more able to celebrate wins authentically.

Conclusion: Putting humanity first paradoxically puts work first. A structured, opt-in check-in requires no major resource investment yet delivers measurable returns — reduced absenteeism and presenteeism, stronger team cohesion, and, in some cases, the potential to save lives. Real conversations create real change. Let's start our work week differently.

Biography

Nic transforms how people navigate mental health conversations. After witnessing his mother's mental illness and a friend's suicide, he left corporate life and is now a leading voice in mental health. A seasoned speaker and Mental Health First Aid Instructor, Nic has been an MC, host and keynote presenter at major events including the Australian & New Zealand Mental Health Association's AddictionZ conference alongside Australia's National Loneliness conference, with features on ABC Radio National and Australian Financial Review.

His clients include Boston Scientific, J.P. Morgan, Warner Brothers, NAB, ANZ, BHP, PwC, Telstra and Australian government agencies, alongside Olympic athletes, TEDx speakers, clinicians, CEO's and 10,000+ students.



Interdisciplinary Studies as an Approach to Humanizing Educational Curricula: A Comparative Field Study in Five Arab Countries

Mandour Abdelsalam Fathalla
National Center for Educational Research and Development, Egypt

This study aimed to examine the extent to which interdisciplinary studies are integrated into secondary school curricula in five Arab countries (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Jordan, and Morocco), and to demonstrate their role in humanizing curricula and enhancing students' psychological well-being. It stemmed from a research gap represented by the scarcity of comprehensive Arab studies on human development experts' perceptions of humanizing curricula through the interdisciplinary approach, the weak inclusion of soft skills and human values, centralized decision-making, and limited women's participation. The study sought to answer questions concerning the extent of interdisciplinary studies integration, how curricula address human values, soft skills, and students' psychological well-being, the perceived impact of interdisciplinary approaches, the main challenges and opportunities, and the proposed strategic framework. It employed a mixed-methods design, combining a standardized 27-item questionnaire across five dimensions—interdisciplinary integration, human values, the impact of psychological well-being, challenges, and opportunities—with semi-structured interviews, document and policy analysis, and curriculum review. Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) ranged from 0.87 to 0.92. The sample consisted of 200 experts, 40 from each country, including university professors, curriculum experts, and school leaders. Findings showed that the overall mean for interdisciplinary studies integration and its impact on well-being ranged from moderate to high, with the UAE ranking first, while Egypt and Morocco indicated a greater need for systemic reform. In addition, 85% of experts reported a significant soft-skills gap, 90% identified bureaucracy as a major obstacle, 88% supported interdisciplinary integration, and 75% endorsed project-based learning. Thematic analysis revealed themes of bureaucracy, life-skills deficit, teacher readiness, values and identity, partnership gaps, and women's empowerment. The study concluded with a five-step strategic framework and recommendations including designing interdisciplinary units, training 10,000 teachers by 2027, establishing innovation centers and partnerships, allocating 30% of scholarships to girls, reducing bureaucratic barriers, and building a national monitoring system for soft skills and well-being.

Biography

Prof. Dr. Mandour Abd El Salam Fath Allah Abd El Salam is a distinguished professor of Curriculum and Instruction, Science Education, and Educational Technology. He previously served as Director of the National Center for Educational Research and Development (NCERD), Dean of the Curriculum Research Division, and Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Educational Research.

He earned his PhD in Education, specializing in Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Technology, from Menoufia University in 2000. He also holds a Master's degree in Science Curriculum and Instruction, a Special Diploma in Education and Psychology, and a BSc in Science and Education (Chemistry and Physics), with Excellent with Honor, from Alexandria University. In addition, he holds the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) and is a certified Trainer of Trainers (TOT). His academic achievements include receiving the Prof. Dr. Youssef Saleh El-Din Kotb Award for the Best PhD Thesis. His career reflects extensive expertise in science education, curriculum development, educational research, and educational technology.



Giftedness Under Pressure: Mental Health, Identity and Sustainable High Performance

Heather O'Donnell
TGR The Green Room, Germany

High-performance environments often reward outstanding ability, discipline and persistence. Yet the same conditions that support exceptional achievement can also shape identity, self-worth and psychological vulnerability in ways that persist long after training has ended. Professional musicians offer a particularly revealing case study: talent is often identified early, training is intensive, and evaluation becomes a continuous part of development. Drawing on psychological theory, clinical experience with professional musicians, and reflections developed in On Being a Musician (Routledge, forthcoming 2027), this keynote examines how giftedness can become both a resource and a psychological burden. It asks three questions: How does exceptional ability shape identity? What happens when high performers encounter failure or limitation? And what supports sustainable excellence over time?

The keynote examines recurring vulnerabilities associated with high-performance development, including self-worth becoming contingent on achievement, perfectionism, severe self-criticism, chronic comparison, fear of failure, and difficulty separating professional setbacks from personal worth. In musicians, these patterns may be intensified by early specialization, public evaluation and the unusually close relationship between artistic work and personal identity.

The final focus is sustainability. Long-term psychological health cannot be understood solely in terms of individual resilience, coping skills or the ability to perform under pressure. It is also shaped by the environments in which gifted people develop and work. Mentorship, institutional culture, workload, economic security, access to psychological support, patterns of evaluation, power relationships and the degree to which failure can be tolerated all influence whether high achievement remains psychologically sustainable. The keynote therefore considers both internal and external conditions for well-being: the development of a more flexible sense of self and a healthier relationship to failure, but also the responsibility of institutions to create environments in which excellence does not depend on chronic psychological strain. Psychological sustainability is approached not simply as an individual capacity, but as an outcome that is co-created by people, relationships and systems.

Biography

Heather O'Donnell is a psychologist (M.Sc.), certified artistic-systemic therapist (DGSF), and former international concert pianist. She is the founding director of TGR The Green Room, a Cologne-based organization supporting the psychosocial and professional wellbeing of performing artists. Her work focuses on mental health, giftedness, high performance, artistic identity, and sustainable careers in the arts. Following an injury that redirected her own performing career, she studied psychology at the Free University of Berlin and Prevention and Health Psychology at SRH University, and later trained in musicians' health and mindfulness. O'Donnell has presented internationally and taught at institutions including Columbia University, the New England Conservatory, Eastman School of Music, UNESCO in Bonn, University College London, and Weill Medical Center in New York. Her forthcoming book, On Being a Musician (Routledge, 2027), explores failure, identity, renewal, and the psychological conditions that shape sustainable artistic lives.



Mindful Breathing with Music (MBM): An Integrative Wellness Approach to Supporting Emotional Self-Regulation

Marilyn Immoos-Langlois
Mindful Breathing with Music (MBM), Switzerland

This presentation introduces the conceptual foundations of Mindful Breathing with Music or MBM, describes its developmental evolution, and discusses its potential role as an accessible wellness resource that may complement broader mental health promotion and preventive well-being initiatives. Mindful Breathing with Music (MBM) is not psychotherapy, nor a medical treatment. It is a structured, secular wellness approach designed to support nervous system regulation, relaxation, and steady attention in everyday life. The method integrates gentle diaphragmatic breathing, grounded awareness, and original piano music composed specifically to facilitate a calming, non-demanding experience. MBM is evidence-informed, non-pathologizing, and accessible to individuals without prior experience in meditation or music. Its purpose is to support physiological settling and emotional self-regulation rather than to provide psychotherapy or treat mental disorders.

MBM emerged through a cumulative, practice-based developmental process spanning several decades. Its origins lie in psychiatric and therapeutic work during the late 1980s, where breath, voice, resonance, and guided imagery were used to promote grounding, emotional safety, and self-regulation. This early clinical work, originally referred to as Resonance Therapy, was subsequently adapted and refined across diverse settings, including education, performance, leadership development, and wellness programs. Through ongoing practical application, the core regulatory elements were progressively distilled into a structured, gentle, and easily accessible format suitable for everyday use while retaining a foundation informed by established psychological and psychophysiological principles.

Biography

Dr. Marilyn Immoos-Langlois is a psychologist, composer, and developer of Mindful Breathing with Music (MBM), an evidence-informed wellness approach integrating diaphragmatic breathing, grounded attention, and original music to support emotional regulation and well-being. She earned a Master's degree in Psychology from the University of Innsbruck and a Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Vienna, complemented by advanced musical studies at the New England Conservatory and the Mozarteum University Salzburg. During an analytical music therapy internship at the Psychiatric University Hospital Basel in the mid-1980s, she began developing resonance-based methods integrating breath, voice, imagery, and embodied attention. These concepts were presented internationally and further refined through the Center for the Psychology of Voice in Zurich (1991–2003). After relocating to the United States, she completed postdoctoral training at California State University, Sacramento, and spent two decades with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation as a Senior Psychologist Specialist, where she spearheaded statewide online mental health training and founded the Statewide Psychology Internship Program. All music used in MBM is composed by Dr. Immoos-Langlois to support the method's regulatory objectives.



The Missing Curriculum: Purpose, Attention and Mental Wellbeing in a Hyper-Connected World

Anish Baheti
Train My Brain®, India

The modern world has given us unprecedented access to information, connectivity and opportunity, yet being constantly connected does not necessarily mean being mentally well. While education and professional environments continue to emphasise knowledge, achievement and performance, essential human capabilities such as self-awareness, purpose, emotional regulation and attention management often remain underdeveloped. This paper explores the idea of a "missing curriculum" for mental wellbeing in a hyper-connected world.

Drawing on Anish Baheti's work as an Ikigai Coach, educator, speaker and founder of Train My Brain®, the paper examines the relationship between purpose, attention and psychological wellbeing. It explores how digital overload, fragmented attention and externally defined measures of success can influence an individual's sense of meaning, identity and emotional balance. The approach combines conceptual reflection with practical frameworks used in coaching, experiential learning and wellbeing education, including self-awareness exercises, purpose discovery through Ikigai, reflective questioning and meditation-based practices.

The central proposition is that mental wellbeing should not be treated merely as a response to distress but developed proactively as a human capability. Individuals need opportunities to understand themselves, identify what gives their lives meaning, manage their attention consciously and build practices that support emotional resilience.

The paper proposes three foundational questions for a practical wellbeing curriculum: What has my attention? Why does it have my attention? And is it worthy of my life? By bringing purpose, self-awareness, attention and emotional wellbeing into everyday learning, workplaces and communities, the missing curriculum can become a practical pathway from simply knowing more to being well.

Biography

Anish Baheti is a 4x TEDx Speaker, award-winning author, Ikigai Coach and transformational speaker, and the founder of Train My Brain® (India) and Concepts Coach® (Australia). A Chartered Accountant from India with an MBA in Accounting & Finance from the University of Technology Sydney, he is also a Certified Life Coach and Trainer & Assessor from Australia and a Certified Brain Mapping Practitioner from the UK.

For more than 18 years, Anish has worked across education, coaching, personal development and human potential, helping individuals and organisations simplify complex ideas and reconnect with purpose, self-awareness and wellbeing. His work includes experiential learning, Ikigai, meditation, emotional awareness and practical approaches to personal growth. He is the author of *The Life Deck – 52 Simple Concepts for Complex Lives* and has delivered sessions for educational institutions, corporate organisations and diverse professional audiences.

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Virtual Speaker Sessions Day 2



Palliative-Psychological Care for Severe and Persistent Mental Illness: A Qualitative Expert Study Toward an Integrative, Interdisciplinary Model

Gabi Gubel
PUK Zurich, Switzerland

Inpatient psychiatry is largely oriented toward cure and symptom remission, yet for people with severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI), such as treatment-resistant schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, severe depression, personality disorders and dementia, this focus often falls short, and quality of life, dignity and autonomy receive too little attention. Palliative-psychological care prioritises these dimensions rather than cure and is well established in somatic medicine, but barely implemented in psychiatry. This study examined which contents, goals and limits such an approach could define for inpatient care, and how an integrative, interdisciplinary concept could be developed. A qualitative, exploratory design was used: eight semi-structured expert interviews with professionals from psychiatry, psychology, nursing and hospice care, together with a family caregiver, were analysed using Mayring's qualitative content analysis with combined deductive and inductive categories, intercoder checks and communicative validation. Palliative-psychological approaches were barely established, fragmented and conceptually unclear, as palliative was often equated with end-of-life care only. Barriers included staff shortages, placement and financing gaps, professional resistance, and ethical dilemmas around autonomy, advance directives and chronic suicidality. Success factors were interdisciplinary collaboration, continuity and relationship-based care, family integration, and psychosocial interventions such as biography work and music therapy. Findings informed a seven-module integrative concept spanning structured indication, existential support, family integration, continuity, spiritual and cultural support, interdisciplinary teamwork with supervision, and cross-sector transition management, supporting a shift toward quality-of-life-centred psychiatric care and a basis for participatory piloting and evaluation.

Biography

Gabi Gübel is a RN and APN with a BSc in Psychology and an MAS in Palliative Care. She is currently completing an MSc in Clinical and Forensic Psychology and is enrolled in a PhD programme. Her thesis investigated the integration of palliative-psychological approaches into inpatient psychiatry, focusing on quality of life, dignity and autonomy for people with severe and persistent mental illness, including dementia. Drawing on qualitative expert interviews with professionals from psychiatry, psychology, nursing and hospice care, she developed a seven-module integrative care concept that bridges psychiatric and psychological expertise. Her work supports a shift from a purely curative orientation toward a quality-of-life-centred model of psychiatric care.



Power Home as an Author Developed Pedagogical and Psychoeducational Framework for Well Being from Prevention to Supporting Adolescents after Crisis and Trauma

Marzena Folusz
Stiftung Jugendhilfe Aktiv, Germany

This chapter introduces Power Home, a pedagogical and psychoeducational framework developed by Marzena Agata Folusz and used for approximately six years in her professional practice, including her private practice, with children and adolescents after experiences of crisis and trauma. It builds on the author's earlier conceptual paper on Power Home, published online in August 2026, and extends that work through a comparative analysis of two distinct but related contexts: preventive efforts to promote well-being and pedagogical support for adolescents after difficult experiences. The chapter examines how the framework's four areas—physical health, psychological well-being, relationships and social support, and the living environment—can structure reflection on young people's needs and resources in both contexts. The comparison considers the goals and intended audiences of these efforts, the role and competency boundaries of the practitioner, and situations in which referral to specialized support is appropriate. The chapter is conceptual and practice-oriented. It draws on an analysis of the framework's assumptions and reflection on its application; it does not present an empirical study or evidence of effectiveness. Power Home is presented neither as a diagnostic tool nor as a clinical treatment method. The chapter proposes criteria for distinguishing broader preventive efforts from individualized support after a crisis and identifies next steps for evaluating the framework. These include clarifying how it should be applied and examining its comprehensibility, acceptability, and usefulness across educational and support settings.

Biography

Marzena Agata Folusz, M.A., holds a master's degree in social rehabilitation pedagogy and has 30 years of professional experience. She provides pedagogical and psychoeducational support to children and adolescents. She is affiliated with Stiftung Jugendhilfe Aktiv in Stuttgart and runs a private practice in Balingen (Germany). Her work focuses on supporting young people who have experienced crisis and trauma, with an emphasis on strengthening their personal resources, sense of agency, and well-being. She is preparing a doctoral dissertation in psychology on post-traumatic growth in children and adolescents under the supervision of Professor Alicja Senejko, who collaborates with the University College of Professional Education in Wroclaw (Polen).



Understanding Burnout Amongst Occupational Therapists: A Qualitative Meta-Synthesis Review

Jess Chen
Sengkang General Hospital, Singapore

Background: Burnout is a significant workforce and well-being challenge amongst occupational therapists (OTs). Although qualitative studies have explored the lived experience of burnout within the profession, a synthesis of evidence regarding its contributors, impact, prevention and management remains limited.

Aim: To synthesise qualitative evidence on occupational therapists' experiences of burnout and identify perceived factors influencing its prevention and management.

Methods: A systematic review of qualitative and mixed-methods studies published between 2000 and 2025 was conducted across four electronic databases. Records were screened using the SPIDER framework and predefined eligibility criteria. Methodological quality was assessed using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist. Findings were synthesised using thematic narrative synthesis.

Results: Twelve studies met the inclusion criteria. Burnout was described as a multidimensional experience affecting occupational therapists physically, emotionally, psychologically, and professionally. Findings suggested that burnout emerged through the interaction of individual characteristics, including perfectionism and emotional investment in care, and systemic workplace pressures. High productivity expectations and administrative demands frequently compelled therapists to prioritise rapid discharge-focused care, contributing to ethical distress when service requirements conflicted with occupation-centred practice values. Participants also reported threats to professional identity when the occupational therapy role was poorly understood or undervalued by multidisciplinary teams and organisational leadership. Effective prevention and management were perceived to require both individual and organisational approaches. Key protective factors included boundary-setting, supportive leadership, structured peer support, formal mentorship, manageable workloads, and reduced productivity pressures. Included studies were generally of good methodological quality, although transferability was limited by the inherent constraints of qualitative research.

Conclusion: Burnout among OTs appears to be shaped by interconnected individual and organisational factors rather than individual coping capacity alone. These findings may inform workforce well-being initiatives, leadership practices, and occupational therapy education, and future research aimed at supporting a sustainable OT workforce.

Biography

Jess Chen Jieyin is a registered Occupational Therapist in Singapore, currently practising at Sengkang General Hospital. She holds a Master of Science in Psychology and Neuroscience of Mental Health from King's College London and has a clinical focus in mental health. Her practice is grounded in compassionate, client-centred care, with a strong interest in promoting psychological well-being and meaningful participation in everyday life. Alongside her clinical work, Jess is passionate about workforce well-being and the sustainability of healthcare systems. Her research explores the intersection of organizational factors and frontline clinician experiences, with a particular focus on resilience, burnout prevention, and the development of healthier work environments for allied health professionals.



The Effect of Psychodrama Group Therapy on Anxiety Levels in Parents of Children with Anorectal Malformations

Aslihan Eslek
Izmir University of Economics Faculty of Medicine, Turkey

Objective: Evaluating the quality of life and anxiety levels of parents of children diagnosed with anorectal malformations (ARM) and to examine the effect of psychodrama group therapy on anxiety levels.

Method: The study was conducted with parents of children with ARM who participated in the ARM Expert Family Meeting organized in collaboration with Izmir University of Economics Faculty of Medicine. Participants were first administered a demographic information form, the Hamilton Anxiety Scale (HAM-A), and the EUROHIS Quality of Life Scale. Following these assessments, three structured psychodrama group therapy sessions, each lasting 60–90 minutes, were conducted. After the completion of the psychodrama sessions, the HAM-A scale was administered again to the participants to evaluate the effect of the intervention on anxiety levels. The data obtained were evaluated using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test and Spearman correlation analysis.

Results: 22 parents (11 men, 11 women) participated in the study. The mean age of the participants was 35.2 ±11.7 (19-65). A statistically significant difference was found between anxiety levels before and after psychodrama group therapy ($p<0.05$). Furthermore, a moderate, negative, and significant correlation was found between EUROHIS quality of life scores and initial and final HAM-A anxiety levels ($r=-0.53$; $p<0.05$; $r=-0.57$, $p<0.05$, respectively).

Discussion: Psychodrama group therapy was effective in reducing anxiety levels in parents of children with ARM and revealed a significant relationship between quality of life and anxiety level. These findings indicate that psychodrama can be an applicable and beneficial intervention method for this specific group.

Biography

Dr. Aslıhan Eslek is a psychiatrist and certified psychodrama practitioner from Turkey, educated at the Faculty of Medicine, Izmir University of Economics. He completed his psychiatry specialization at Bakırköy Mental and Nervous Diseases Hospital between 2002 and 2008. From 2008 to 2018, he worked as a psychiatrist and the responsible specialist at AMATEM at Manisa Mental and Nervous Diseases Hospital. In 2009, he completed a one-month observership in addiction treatment at the Maudsley Clinic in England.

Having completed his psychodrama training in 2008 and received the Psychodrama Manager certificate, Dr. Eslek has conducted psychodrama group sessions since 2006. His work focuses on addiction, including alcohol, substance, and behavioral addictions, as well as depression, anxiety disorders, exam anxiety, and psychotic disorders. From 2018 to 2023, he worked as a psychiatrist and psychodramatist in private practice, with a particular emphasis on group work and team-based interventions.



Understanding How Mtbi Impacts the Career and Independence of Young Adults

Juliet Haarbauer-Krupa
Emory University School of Medicine, USA

Background: Young adults are frequently affected by traumatic brain injury (TBI). Sustaining this injury during young adulthood can significantly impact academic, career, and social development as well as community participation. However, younger adults have not been examined in detail to understand how a mTBI can impact them when establishing a career and lifestyle.

Objectives: This study describes 12-month outcomes of young adults (ages 17–29) seen in U.S. level 1 trauma centers with mTBI and compares them to an uninjured control group examining post-concussion symptoms, work and school status, physical functioning and mental health, and life quality one year post injury.

Methods: We analyzed data on 663 persons aged 17–29 years old with mTBI and 170 controls who did not experience an injury from the Transforming Research and Clinical Knowledge in TBI (TRACK-TBI) study. Participants with mTBI were followed at 12 months post injury with measures to examine symptom persistence, work and school status, and functional outcomes.

Results: Results indicated differences between mTBI, and control participants related to return-to-work, return-to-school, and persistent symptoms. Those in the mTBI group were more likely to experience adverse symptoms and detrimental functional effects compared to controls at 12- months post injury.

Conclusions: Young adults are in a transition period where they are working to achieve independence and establish careers; however, if they sustain a TBI it may not be understood how the injury contributes to their outcomes. Because a mTBI could disrupt their career and life trajectories, this an important area for further investigation.

Biography

Juliet Haarbauer-Krupa is a Health Scientist on the TBI Team, Division of Unintentional Injury, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC. Her background is in child development, clinical rehabilitation, and rehabilitation research with experience in clinical program development, academic teaching, and longitudinal outcome studies. She also serves as adjunct faculty in the Department of Pediatrics, Emory School of Medicine. Haarbauer-Krupa's primary focus is on long-term health effects following TBI and outcomes for children and adolescents with brain injuries. She is a principal investigator for a longitudinal study funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), a comprehensive model transition program for teens with acquired brain injuries, and a study to examine transition to adulthood across complex medical conditions.



Developing Life Skills Training Module in Drug Abuse Preventive Program among Adolescents in Mumbai

Meena Prakash Zore
Smt Vimladevi Khyalilalji Vagarecha College of Nursing Education, India

Objectives:

1. To assess drug abuse among adolescents in the study and control groups

2. To evaluate the impact of the drug abuse preventive program on substance abuse among adolescents.

Novelty: Drug abuse is now-a-days one of the gravest social harms. Recent years have experienced a drastic rise in drug abuse among school and college students. Thus, the need for special attention to the issue is deemed important. The present study was conducted to assess the impact of Life skills training on the promotion of drug abuse preventive behaviors. Evidence-based substance use preventive interventions like life skills training programs can be rooted in school/ college curriculum.

Methodology: Research Approach was quantitative approach; Research Design was Quasi experimental pre-test post-test; Target Population – School students; Sampling techniques – stratified proportionate sampling; Sample –Eight standard students from selected school of Maharashtra who fulfil the inclusion criteria. Sample size was 60; Inclusion Criteria – Students willing to participate in the study and who were present during the Drug abuse preventive program training. Exclusion criteria–Students who have attended drug abuse training program in the past. Data were collected a questionnaire, including two sections of demographic information and drug abuse preventive behaviors (Self-awareness, Decision making, Problem solving, Critical thinking, stress management and Drug abuse effects). The tools were prepared and taken validity and reliability from the experts of the subject. Findings: The study group received 3 hours of training on 6 preventive behaviors, while the control group received no training. Later, the post-tests were conducted after completion of training on the drug abuse preventive program. Mann-Whitney results among the groups showed that the drug abuse preventive training program was significantly more effective in raising awareness in the study group than in the control group. It was recommended that the drug abuse preventive training program should be used as an adjunct strategy in the school curriculum to enhance prevention of drug abuse among adolescents.

Biography

Mrs. Meena Prakash Zore is an experienced nursing educator and Associate Professor specializing in Psychiatric Nursing. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Nursing from Dr. D. Y. Patil University, Navi Mumbai. She holds a B.Sc. Nursing and an M.Sc. in Psychiatry Nursing from S.N.D.T. Women's University, Mumbai. She has extesnsive academic and clinical experience across reputed nursing institutions and healthcare organizations, including Smt. Vimaladevi Khyalilalji Vagarecha College of Nursing Education, Sadhu Vaswani College of Nursing, Sinhagad College of Nursing, Fortis Institute of Nursing, and Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital. Her professional interests include mental health nursing, adolescent mental health, life skills training, substance-use prevention, and nursing education. She has published research articles and presented papers at national and international conferences. She has received awards for research presentations related to digital life skills and substance-use prevention among adolescents. She is also actively involved in professional organizations and continuing professional development.



From Physical Circles to the Metaverse: Leveraging Virtual Anonymity and the Online Disinhibition Effect to Neutralize Mental Health Stigma in Malaysia

Syahida Zulkarnain
NGO Empati, Malaysia

Access barriers and social stigma remain critical hurdles in youth mental health services within Malaysia, where structural and confidentiality fears often deter early help-seeking. This study presents the hybrid expansion of “Lepak & Luah,” an established community counseling initiative originally executed through 24 physical sessions engaging 720 youth participants. The project has now scaled into a virtual platform within the Roblox ecosystem, providing a digitally safe, gamified 3D space that leverages user anonymity to bridge the gap between clinical support and community outreach.

Qualitative data from user empathy workbooks (N=11 in the pilot phase) highlighted severe psychological burdens kept secret from families. Participants disclosed childhood trauma, the overwhelming demands of living with autism, and relationship grief. Notably, the platform facilitated the disclosure of highly stigmatized identities, such as Bipolar Disorder 2 and hidden struggles with sexuality (bisexuality). Participants reported feelings of being “trained to survive, not live,” illustrating deep-seated survival mechanisms that hinder emotional growth. While participants demonstrate high openness to change, they expressed significant fears that “letting go” of these burdens might cause them to lose their identity or trigger the return of painful memories.

Preliminary insights show that avatar embodiment triggers the online disinhibition effect, successfully lowering social anxiety, neutralizing shame, and accelerating emotional self-disclosure compared to face-to-face setups. This virtual anonymity allows for a “culturally safe” space where youth feel empowered to discuss issues that are typically taboo in Malaysian society. Ultimately, this project demonstrates how translating verified, counselor-led group dynamics into immersive metaverse environments can dramatically bridge the mental health gap, providing highly accessible early psychological interventions for contemporary Malaysian youth

Biography

Syahida Zulkarnain is the Founder and President of NGO Empati, a Malaysian youth mental health organisation focused on community-based recovery, early intervention, and stigma reduction. Drawing from lived experience as a mental health survivor, she has developed programmes that connect counselling, peer support, advocacy, and creative community engagement. Her flagship initiative, Lepak

& Luah, has reached hundreds of young people through counsellor-led sessions designed to create safe spaces for emotional disclosure and support. She is now leading the initiative’s expansion into digital environments, including a Roblox-based platform that explores anonymity, avatar embodiment, and the online disinhibition effect as tools to improve help-seeking among youth. Syahida’s work centres on making mental health support more accessible, culturally relevant, and youth-friendly, particularly for those facing stigma, confidentiality concerns, trauma, neurodiversity, identity struggles, and exclusion. She is based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and represents NGO Empati in advocacy, research, programme innovation, and cross-sector collaboration.



Attitudes towards Mental Illness among Student Nurses

Shannah Marie Alkonga
St. Paul University Iloilo, Philippines

Background: Mental illness remains a major public health concern worldwide. Despite increasing awareness regarding mental health, stigma and negative attitudes toward individuals with mental illness continue to persist among healthcare professionals and student nurses. Such attitudes may influence the quality of psychiatric nursing care and patient outcomes.

Purpose: This study aimed to determine the attitudes of student nurses towards mental illness among Bachelor of Science in Nursing students at St. Paul University Iloilo during the Academic Year 2025–2026.

Methods: The study utilized a descriptive-quantitative research design. A total of 213 student nurses from Levels I to IV were selected through stratified random sampling. Data were gathered using an adapted and modified version of the Attitude Scale for Mental Illness (ASMI) developed by Ng and Chan (2000). Frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, independent samples t-test, and one-way ANOVA were used in the analysis of data.

Results: Findings revealed that most participants were female and had personal encounters with persons with mental illness. Student nurses demonstrated positive attitudes in terms of separatism, stereotyping, and pessimistic prediction. Negative attitudes were observed in restrictiveness and benevolence, while highly negative attitudes were identified in stigmatization. Significant differences were found in stigmatization when grouped according to sex, year level, and personal encounter with persons with mental illness.

Conclusion: Although student nurses generally demonstrated positive attitudes toward mental illness in certain dimensions, stigma and negative perceptions remained evident. Strengthening psychiatric nursing education, mental health exposure, and anti-stigma interventions is essential in promoting compassionate, holistic, and recovery-oriented nursing care among future nurses.

Biography

~~Nic transforms how people navigate mental health conversations. After witnessing his mother's mental illness and a friend's s~~



Feasibility and acceptability of self-regulation, economic and combined interventions to prevent depression and anxiety among poverty-affected adolescents in Nepal: a pilot c-RCT

Nagendra Luitel
Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO), Nepal

Introduction: Depression and anxiety are common mental health problems among adolescents worldwide, impairing development, healthy lifestyles, and educational attainment, while contributing substantially to disability and suicide risk. Poverty further increases vulnerability through resource deprivation, family stress, and social isolation. This study examined the feasibility and acceptability of school-based interventions designed to prevent depression and anxiety among adolescents affected by poverty in Nepal.

Methods: This pilot randomized controlled trial was conducted in eight public schools in Budhanilkantha Municipality, Kathmandu, involving 229 adolescents aged 13–15 years. Schools were randomly assigned to one of four groups: self-regulation intervention, economic intervention, combined intervention, or control. Data were collected at baseline, post-intervention, and 12- and 18-month follow-ups. Qualitative interviews were conducted post-intervention with adolescents (18), caregivers (18), and facilitators (9). Feasibility outcomes included recruitment, retention, fidelity, adherence, and acceptability. The primary outcome was the cumulative incidence of depression or anxiety, assessed using validated PHQ-A and GAD-7 cut-offs.

Results: Very few adolescents exceeded the PHQ-A or GAD-7 cut-offs during follow-up (≤2% across groups). Attendance was high, with over 95% of participants attending at least 70% of sessions in the self-regulation (90.2%), economic (98.3%), and combined (96.6%) groups. Absences were mainly related to academic demands, illness, or family circumstances. Participants reported improvements in communication, stress management, and social interaction skills. Interactive activities, including martial arts, games, role-plays, and creative exercises, were highly valued. Learning materials such as notebooks, worksheets, booklets, and posters reinforced engagement. Challenges included scheduling conflicts and the longer duration of the combined intervention.

Conclusion: The results demonstrated that school-based mental health promotion interventions were feasible and acceptable in Nepalese schools. High engagement and positive feedback suggest potential for preventing adolescent depression and anxiety in poverty-affected settings. Streamlining intervention content and aligning delivery with school schedules may enhance feasibility and scalability for a future fully powered randomized controlled trial.

Biography

Nagendra Luitel, PhD is a global mental health researcher from Nepal with more than 20 years of experience in mental health research and implementation. He holds a PhD from the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, focused on integrating mental health services into Nepal's primary and community healthcare systems. He currently serves as Research Advisor at Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO) Nepal, a leading national non-governmental organization.

Dr. Luitel has played a key role in transforming Nepal's mental health care system from a hospital-based, specialist-driven model to community-based services delivered through a task-sharing approach. His work has included epidemiological studies of mental health in humanitarian and crisis settings, the development and validation of culturally appropriate mental health assessment tools, and the evaluation of community-based interventions to improve access to and utilization of mental health care. Through his research, he has contributed significantly to strengthening mental health systems and expanding evidence-based mental health services in Nepal.

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Upcoming Conferences

5th World Congress on Advances in Mental Health and Psychiatry
March 22-23, 2027 | Paris, France
mentalhealth@scholarconferences.org
https://mentalhealth.scholarsconferences.com/

Global Autism Research & Innovation Summit
March 22-23, 2027 | Paris, France
autism@frontiersmeetings.org
https://autism.scholarsconferences.com/

4th World Congress on Addiction Medicine, Behavioral Health and Psychiatry
March 22-23, 2027 | Paris, France
info@addictionsummit.org
https://addiction.scholarsconferences.com/

7th International Women's Forum
March 22-23, 2027 | Paris, France
womensforum@scholarsevents.org
https://womens-forum.scholarsconferences.com/

3rd World Congress on Advances in Preventive Medicine and Public Health
June 07-08, 2027 | Barcelona, Spain
preventivemedicine@frontiersmeetings.org
https://preventivemedicine.scholarsconferences.com/

10th World Nursing Education and Practice Congress
June 07-08, 2027 | Barcelona, Spain
nursing@scholarconferences.org
https://nursingworldcongress.com/

3rd Global Physiotherapy, Physical Rehabilitation & Sports Medicine Summit
June 07-08, 2027 | Barcelona, Spain
physiotherapy@frontiersevents.com
https://physiorehab.scholarsconferences.com/

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October 18-19, 2027 | Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
dileep@scholarsconferences.com | https://scholarsconferences.com/asia-pacific-mental-health/

