



When East Meets West

An Integrative Body-Mind-Spirit Intervention for
Depression

Community Mental Health

- Community survey reported that a lifetime prevalence rate of 6.0% and 7.3% for anxiety disorders and depression (Kessler, 2007)
- In Hong Kong, 12-month prevalence rate of anxiety is 4.1%; the rate of mood disorders is 8.4% (Lee, Tsang, & Kwong, 2007; Lee et al., 2007)

Common Treatments

- Psychotherapy (e.g. CBT)
- Pharmacotherapy (e.g. anti-depressants)
- Both are proven to be clinically effective

In Chinese communities...

- Only a quarter of those who are aware of their anxiety or mood problems consider seeking professional treatment, while the large majority of them prefer self-help (Lee et al., 2007)
- Reasons include:
 - Social stigma
 - Time and financial commitment
 - Chinese people tend to somatize mood disorders (Parker, Cheah, & Roy, 2001)



Holistic Psychosocial Care

The Chinese perspective

Conceptualization of Health

- The belief in:
 - a universal life force (qi, life energy, bioenergy)
 - the unity between mind, body, spirit, and the universe
- The conceptualization of:
 - health as a state of harmonious dynamic equilibrium between the body sub-systems, and between the person and nature
 - disease as a loss of such harmony

Goal of Healing

- to stimulate the body's own self-healing abilities for the re-establishment of **harmony** and the **undisturbed flow of 'energy'** within the body-mind continuum
- Beyond being physically healthy, a 'harmonized' person:
 - demonstrates ability to endure pain peacefully and accept the undesirable happenings
 - is able to turn crises into opportunities
 - has a sense of gratefulness and contentment towards life
 - exhibits persistent efforts for realization of human potentiality and dedication in helping others

An Integrative Body-Mind-Spirit Approach

Spirit

Spiritual
Wellbeing

Emotional
Wellbeing &
Interpersonal
Relationship

Physical
Wellbeing

Mind

Body



Means of Healing

- Traditional Chinese Medicine **BODY**
- Indigenous mind-body techniques **BODY, MIND**
- Spiritual teachings (Daoism, Confucianism, Buddhism)
SPIRIT, MIND

(1) Traditional Chinese Medicine

Daoism

Respect nature
Simple lifestyle



Yi-jing

Five Elements Theory
Yin-Yang Theory



- Holistic Perspective
- Syndromatic Diagnosis

- Trust in self restoration ability
- Believes that restoring the harmonious dynamic equilibrium can help the organism to heal itself
- Facilitates self-healing
- Positive experiences

(2) Indigenous Mind-Body Techniques

- Techniques from the East, such as relaxation techniques, yoga, and breathing exercises as treatment of psychosomatic symptoms are getting more popular (Wolsko et al, 2004)
- A recent meta-analysis found considerable evidence that mind-body techniques improve outcomes for patients suffering: (Astin et al, 2003)
 - coronary artery disease
 - depression and anxiety-specific physical symptoms (e.g. headaches, insomnia)
 - treatment-related symptoms of cancer (e.g. incontinence, chronic low back pain)

(3) Spiritual Teachings

- Confucianism
 - Devote to collective well-being, both in family and in society
 - Maintain interpersonal harmony
 - Achieve self-perfection
- Daoism
 - Flow with the 'Dao' (the Way)
 - Appreciate the dynamic equilibrium of the 'yin' and 'yang'.
 - Softness, tenderness and flexibility desirable attributes of life: the paradox of attaining control by letting go
- Buddhism
 - Understanding suffering in terms of desire and attachment



A Body-Mind-Spirit Intervention for People with Subclinical Depression

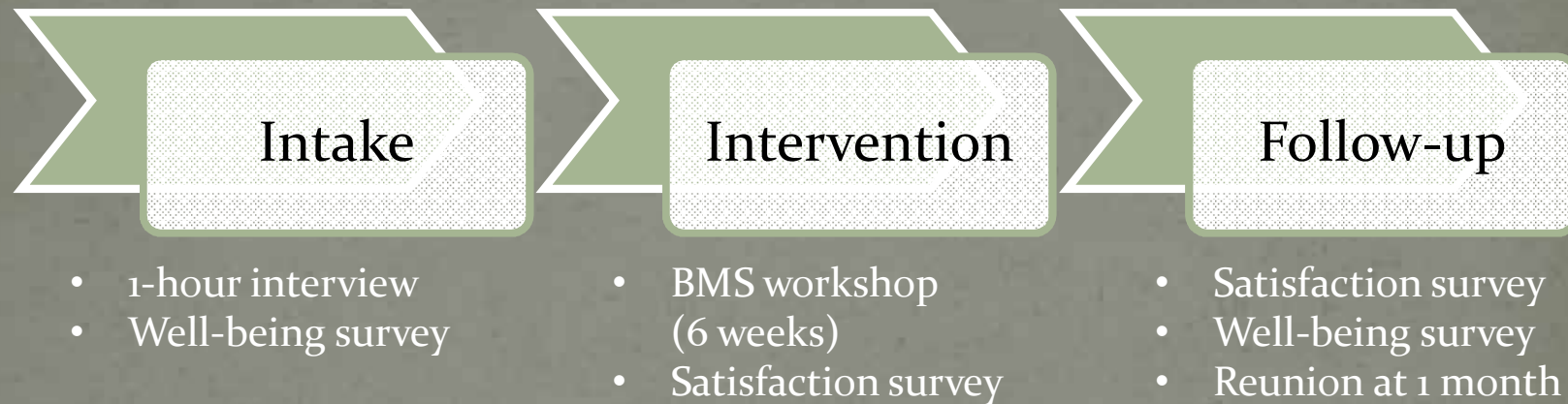
A pilot program

About the Workshop

- February to August 2011
- 58 participants in 4 groups
- 6 sessions × 3 hours per session

Group	Number of participants
1 (16.2.2011 – 23.3.2011)	14
2 (19.4.2011 – 31.5.2011)	12
3 (4.6.2011 – 9.7.2011)	11
4 (27.7.2011 – 31.8.2011)	21

About the Workshop



- Average attendance rate: 91.8%
- Depression and Anxiety at intake:
 - 80% of participants ($N = 47$) had HADS score ≥ 13 (cutoff suggested by Singer et al, 2008)

Themes in Each Session

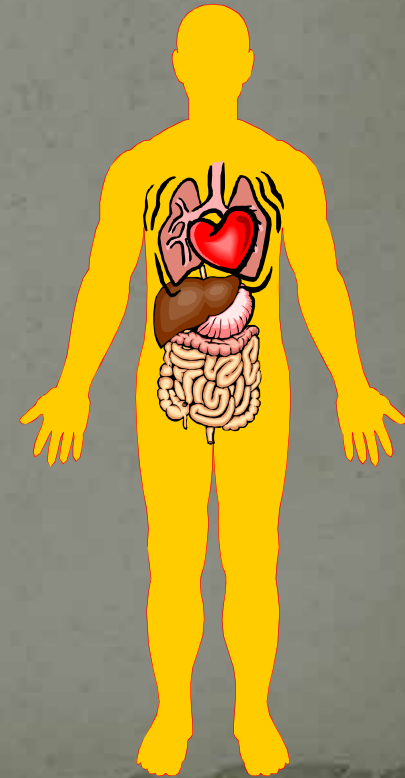
Session	Theme
ONE	全人健康 · 治癒自己
TWO	平衡身心 · 調適情緒
THREE	看透得失 · 跨越苦痛
FOUR	放手解執 · 心寬自如
FIVE	愛惜自己 · 惜福感恩
SIX	生命轉化 · 規劃人生

Components

- Psycho-education on mental well-being from TCM perspectives
- Hands-on mind-body techniques
- Culturally relevant spiritual teachings

Psycho-education with TCM concepts

- Educate on body-mind connection and somatization
- Heighten bodily awareness through body scan exercise
- Promote understanding of emotions from TCM perspective
- Encourage emotional flexibility



木
肝主怒
(大怒傷肝)

水
腎主恐
(驚恐傷腎)

火
心主喜
(大喜傷心)

金
肺主悲
(過悲傷肺)

土
脾主思
(過思傷脾)



Five Emotions

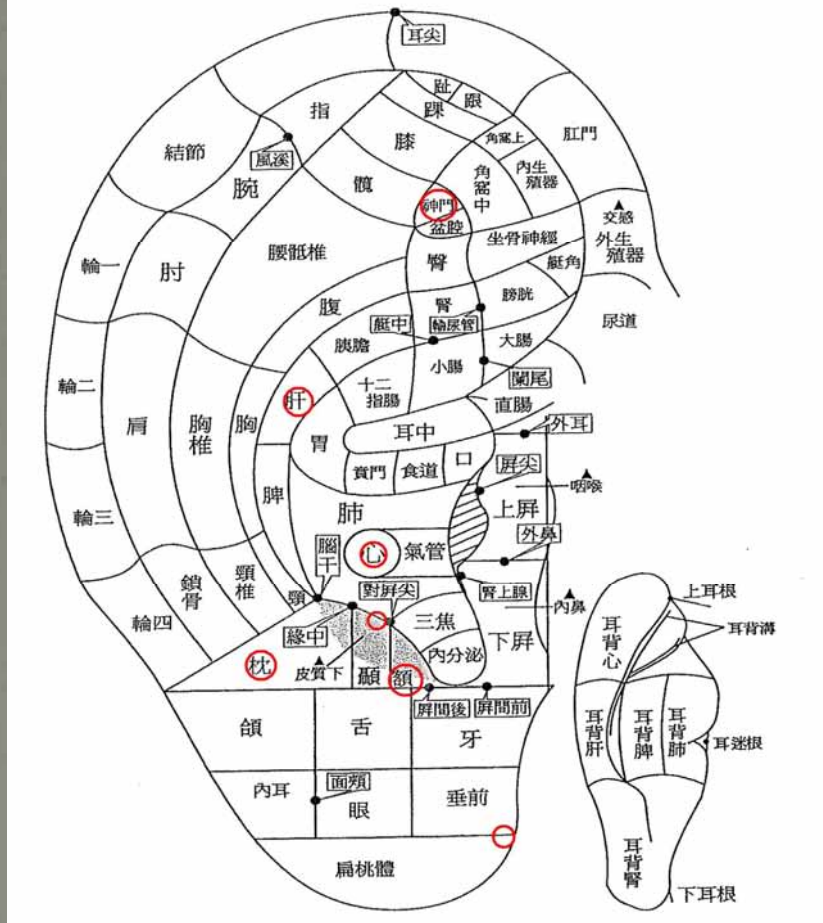


→ Facilitating Force → Repressing Force

Mind-Body Techniques

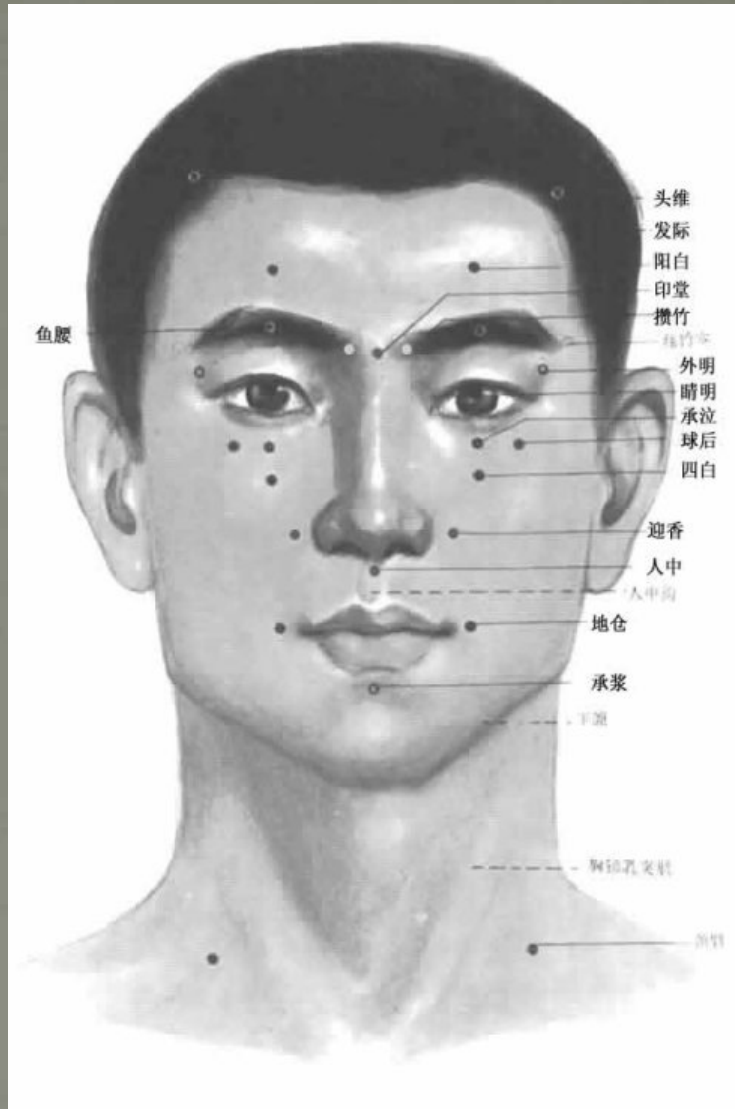
- Clapping *qigong* (拍手功)
- Back clapping
- Hand massage techniques (十巧)
- Acupressure
- Auriculotherapy
- Breathing exercise

標準耳穴定位示意圖



Mind-body techniques

Auriculotherapy for insomnia

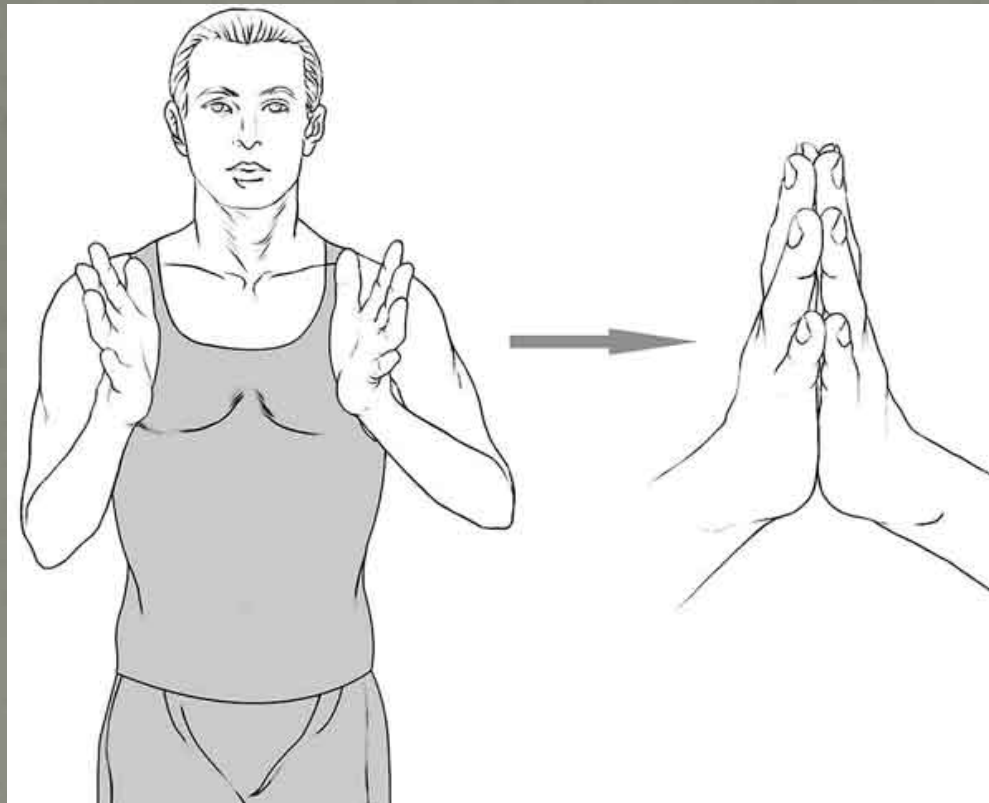


Mind-body techniques

Acupressure for better sleep quality

Mind-body techniques

Hand-clapping for mood stabilization



**Mind-body
techniques**

Back-clapping

Spiritual Teachings

- Acceptance ('flow with the tides')
- Emotional detachment (Non-attachment)
- Live the moment (Zen)
- Take charge, assume responsibility
- Continuous self-realization, unfolding of humanity
- Selflessness

Aging

Illness

Birth

Death

Suffering

Separation

**Encountering
Unpleasantries**

**Clinging to Five
Aggregates**

**Violated
Expectations**

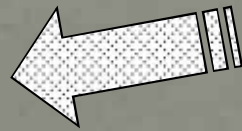
Spiritual Teachings

Buddhist view on
sufferings

Transformation



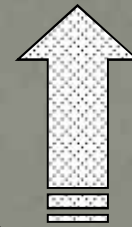
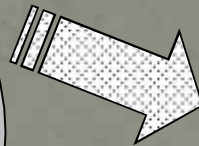
轉化



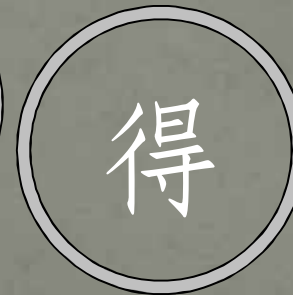
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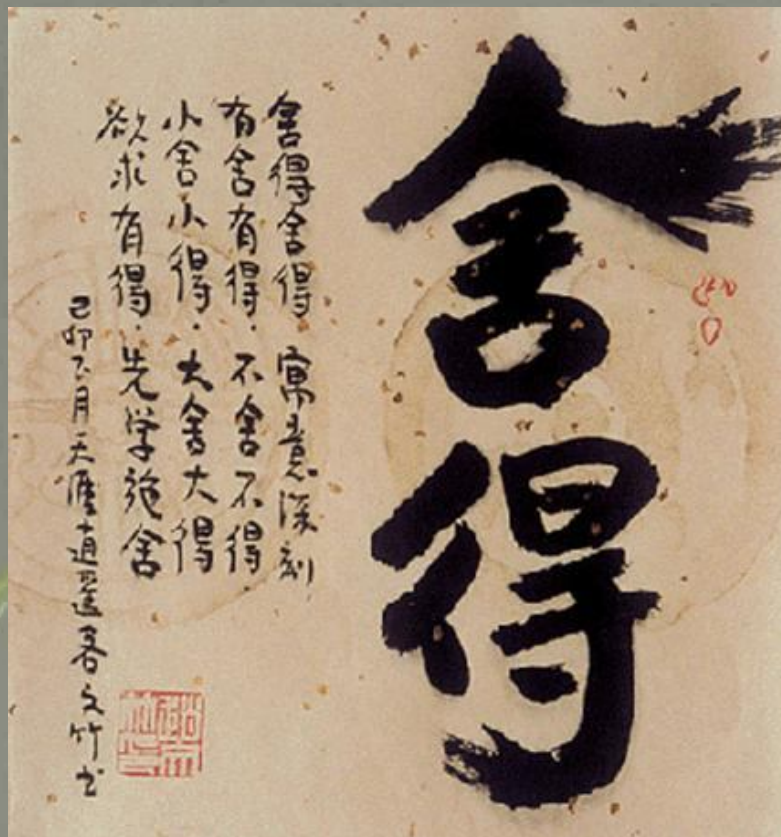
失衡



平衡



Let-go



Evaluation

Satisfaction and Self-rated Effectiveness

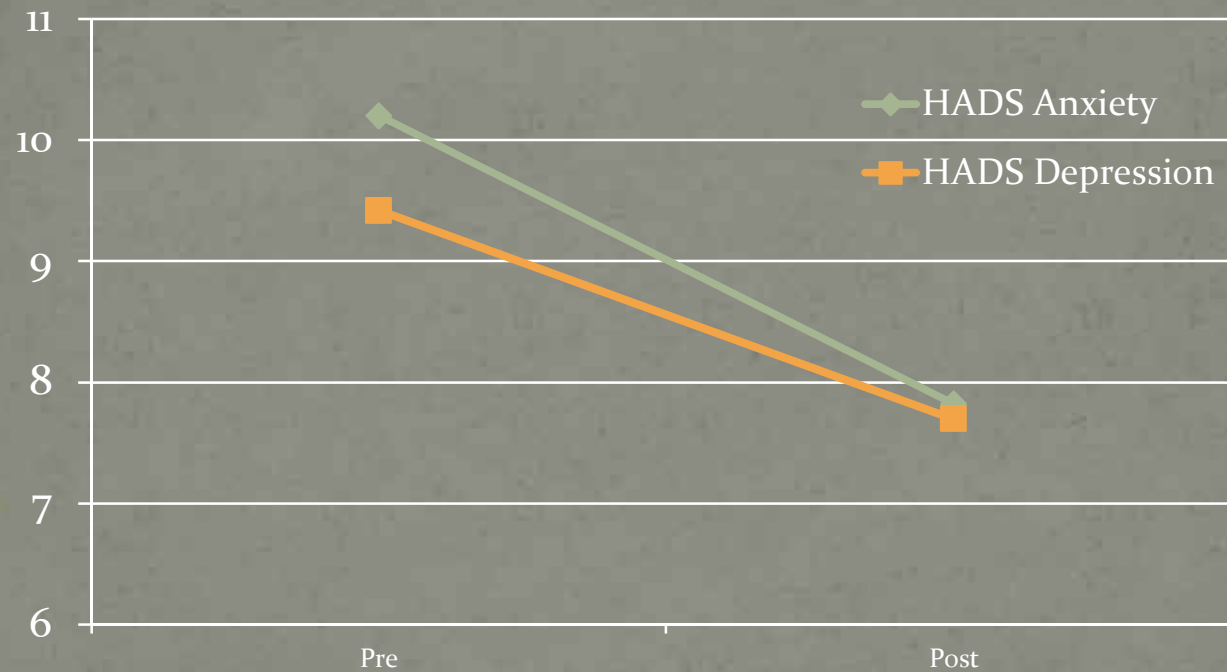
Satisfaction	Mean (0-5)	S. D.
Participation	4.21	0.66
Content	4.35	0.52
Overall	4.30	0.56

Self-rated effectiveness	Mean (0-5)	S. D.
Hardiness	4.02	0.97
Relaxation	3.87	1.09
Support	3.73	0.92
Enjoyment	4.23	0.75
Positive outlook	4.02	0.82

Clinical Efficacy

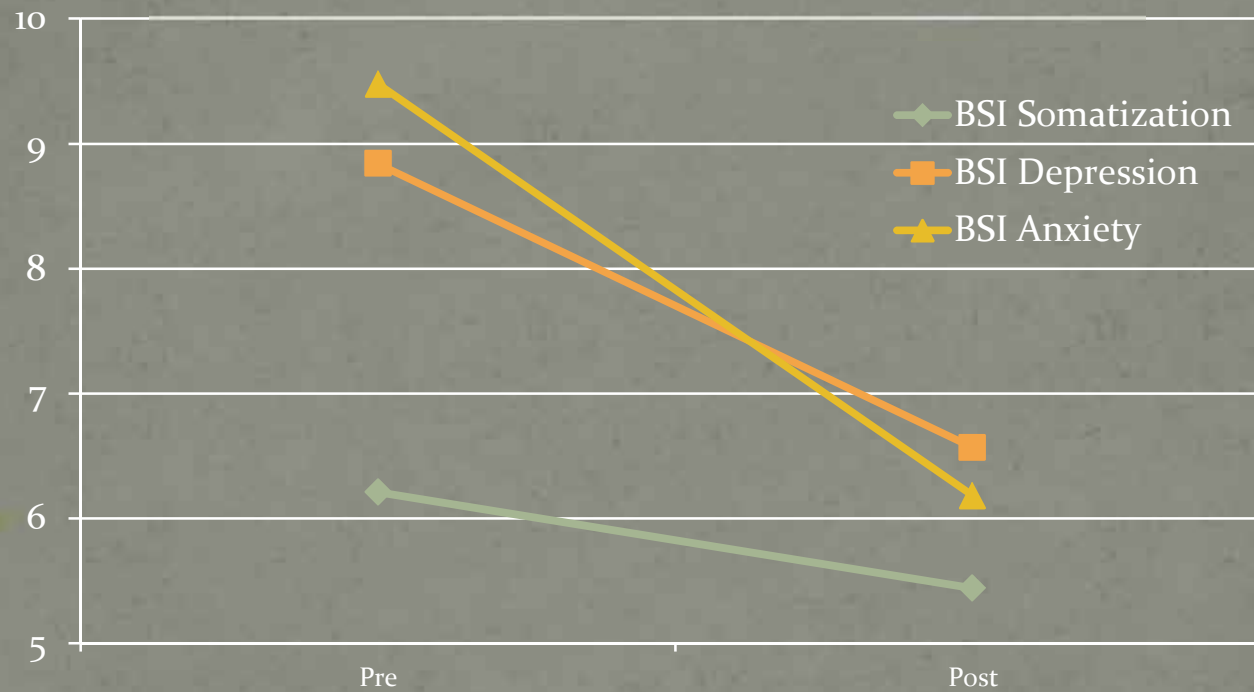
- Hospital Anxiety and Depression
- Brief Symptom Inventory

Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale



Anxiety: $p < .01$; Depression: $p < .01$

Brief Symptom Inventory



Somatization: *n.s.*; Depression: $p < .01$; Anxiety: $p < .01$

Feedback

- In the 4th session we've talked about the origins of suffering. That got me thinking: I can be content with simple food and simple clothes. (Mr. J)
- The mind-body techniques are very easy to do... The breathing exercise really helps me sleep. (Mrs. L)
- In the third lesson we learned about how we can overcome and transcend from sufferings. We have to learn how to accept pain. (Mrs. A)

Feedback

- Being able to share our own stories help us know ourselves more. The acupressure techniques inspired me a lot. (Mrs. W)
- I could let go of my hatred after the letter-writing exercise. (Mr. L)
- I've come to know that everybody has his own story; I should be grateful and treasure what I have now. (Mr. C)



The Way Forward

Rethinking Depression Care

- Integration of physical component
- Creative synthesis and cultural sensitivity
- Rigorous effectiveness study

Integration of Physical Component

- A rethinking of depression care
- An integration of body, mind and spirit
- Physical activities shown to be effective in treating depression, and suggested to be an adjunct to psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy (Ströhle, 2009)
- How to incorporate physical component into regular depression care?

Depression in Different Cultures

- Somatization of depression more prevalent in some cultures
- Cultural sensitivities in patient communication
- Creative synthesis of TCM concepts, e.g. *stagnation* as a clinical syndrome (Ng et al, 2006)
- How to incorporate cultural context into depression care?

Evidence-based Holistic Care

- Standardization of holistic care
- Calls for more rigorous built-in research
- Dosage and individual difference in treatment response
- How to provide holistic care that is evidence-based?



May peace be with you