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From Trapped Self to Liberated Self: Recovery-Oriented Cognitive-Behaviour Approach For Working with People with Mental Illness

Presentation Abstract

The concept of recovery has been widely accepted in mental health services in Hong Kong. However, three issues deserve our attention. (1) There are very few practice manuals that clearly document the clinical strategies and skills that have translated the concept of recovery into clinical practices. (2) There is almost an absence of culturally-attuned recovery practices that suit the Chinese populations (3) There are very few vigorous studies that have examined the effects of a recovery model for the Chinese populations.

This presentation will delineate a new evidence-based recovery-oriented cognitive and behavior approach for people with mental illness in Hong Kong. It will also present the results of a clinical study on the above model.

The presentation will begin with a delineation of the theoretical underpinnings of this strength – based recovery – oriented CBA for people with mental health. Following a 7-stages recovery framework, this presentation will describe the various CB strategies and skills that are relevant to each stage of the recovery process. Case examples will be used to illustrate the use of these strategies and skills and cultural adaptations of these strategies and skills will also be discussed.

This will be followed by a presentation on an evaluation of the effects of this model in enhancing hope and meaning in life among people with mental illness in Hong Kong. A matched pair comparison approach was adopted. Twenty-seven and 25 experimental and comparison group participants received recovery-oriented CBA and standard counseling services respectively. Assessments were administered at pre-intervention and at 6-month and 12-month of intervention. Repeated measures ANOVAs indicated that the model was more effective than the control condition in improving basic functioning, finding new potentials and spirituality and a sense of hope among participants. Given these initial positive results, more vigorous studies and refinement of this recovery-oriented CBA are needed to ascertain the effectiveness of this combined intervention approach.