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Between Structured Design and Personal Narratives: The Report of an RCT Study of a Hybrid Design Group Programme for Family Caregivers

Presentation Abstract

According to Hong Kong Hospital Authority (2011), nearly 20,000 outpatients with schizophrenia in Hong Kong require both the community and family support. We developed an eight session Integrative Peer Support Growth Group (IPSGG) to support primary family caregivers of people with schizophrenia. This approach combined the strength of psychoeducation and narrative practice to facilitate not only the knowledge and skills of primary caregivers, but also explore their own agency and inner resources of the caregivers.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the study, we used a longitudinal framework (pre-assessment, post-assessment, and three-month follow-up) and a delayed treatment control nested design with a mixed method involving parallel quantitative and qualitative research. Several standardized psychometric scales were administered to our participants in different time points to track their changes.

In this study, 194 participants joined our screening test. Since the project is still on-going, the data analysis is not completed at this stage. Based on the current data collection, several scale scores supported the effectiveness of the IPSGG. For example, the pre-test and post-test scores of the IPSGG group participants (N= 26) attained from Experience of Caregiving Inventory Szmukler, Burgess, Herrman, Bloch, Benson, & Colusa, 1996) showed a significant increase of positive care giving experiences and a decrease of negative caregiving experiences after the IPSGG group.

We would like to take this opportunity to present views from our primary caregivers of people with schizophrenia, psychiatrists, frontline case managers and group facilitators. Issues concerning family coping, stigma, empowerment and hope will be discussed for practice implication and policy advocacy.

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