

Empowering Caregivers of People with Schizophrenia An Impact Case by Dr. Ruth ZHOU

Dr. Ruth Dehui Zhou, in collaboration with Dr. Marcus Yu Lung Chiu at the City University of Hong Kong, received funding from RGC to conduct a project entitled “Empowering Caregivers of People with Schizophrenia: Comparing Intervention Effectiveness of Family Link Education Programme (FLEP), Collective Narrative Practice Group (CNPNG) and Integrative Peer Support Growth Group (IPSGG)”. The research findings show that these three intervention approaches each have their unique strengths in supporting caregivers of people with schizophrenia. Among them, the Integrative Peer Support Growth Group (IPSGG) emphasizes both training in mental health knowledge and the exploration of the inner resources of caregivers. This approach has shown a longer-term effect on helping them explore their inner resource, improving the positive caregiving experience, and strengthening their family coping skills than existing psychoeducational and narrative interventions for caregiver support.

Mental health nurses and psychiatrists implemented the integrative caregiving support group intervention developed by the research team at the East Kowloon Psychiatric Centre from January 2016 to May 2018. As many as 194 family caregivers were involved. The mental health professionals recognized not only the improved family coping skills of the caregiver participants who took part in the intervention groups, but also the positive effect on the schizophrenia outpatients whom they were taking care of. A representative from Kwai Chung Hospital reported at the International Conference on Recovery-Oriented Services and Policy Planning in Mental Health at the University of Hong Kong that an improved family relationship and a stronger determination for recovery on the part of the schizophrenia outpatients were clearly notable.

Selected Related Publications

Zhou, D.H. R. (2020). Empowering primary family caregivers of people with schizophrenia in Hong Kong. *Hong Kong Journal of Mental Health*, 46(1), 37-41.

Zhou, D.H. R., Chiu, Y. L. M., Lo T. L. W., Lo, W. F. A., Wong, S. S., Luk, K. L., Leung, C. H.T., Yu C. K., & Chang, Y.S. G. (2020). An unexpected visitor and a sword play: A randomized controlled trial of collective narrative therapy groups for primary carers of people with schizophrenia. *Journal of Mental Health*. Doi: 10.1080/09638237.2020.1793123

Zhou, D.H. R., Chiu, Y. L. M., Lo T. L. W., Lo, W. F. A., Wong, S. S., Luk, K. L., Leung, C. H.T., Yu C. K., & Chang, Y.S. G. (2020). Outside-in or inside-out? A randomized controlled trial of two empowerment approaches for family caregivers of people with schizophrenia. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*. 41(9), 761-772. SSCI Impact factor: 1.05. Doi: 10.1080/01612840.2020.1734992



*PI Dr. Ruth ZHOU,
[front, right] with group
facilitators and case
managers*

*Eight volumes of the manual of the
Integrative Peer Support Growth Groups*