

Mental Health First Aid in Everyday Life: Collaboration for Promoting Mental Health in Higher Education in China

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Expected Project Result 1

To develop a Chinese version booklet entitled "Mental Health First Aid in Everyday Life". This booklet will be used as the key resource for the 4-unit workshop. It will provide workshop participants with the knowledge and skills to recognise the signs and symptoms of mental health problems and identify possible causes or risk factors for these mental health problems. In order to achieve this result, our Chinese team will travel to Australia to work with the Australian team to develop an English version of this booklet. Dr Li will then work with the Chinese team to translate it into Chinese.

Expected Project Result 2

To deliver a 4-unit MHFAiEL workshop. The workshop will offer an opportunity for participants to better understand mental health issues they may face in their everyday lives, and develop mental health first aid skills to cope with negative moods and enhance their self-esteem, confidence and emotional intelligence. To achieve this result, our Australian team (Dr Li, A/Prof West and Prof McDermott) will travel to Taiyuan, China to work with the Chinese team (Dr Wang, Dr Feng, Prof Xue and Prof Liang) to deliver two workshops to 100 students each at Shanxi University and Shanxi Medical University respectively.



Expected Project Result 3

To deliver a pre-project presentation at the 12th Biennial Conference of the Global Network of WHO Collaborating Centres for Nursing and Midwifery, 17-20 July 2018, Cairns, Australia. This pre-project presentation aims to seek feedback from world-class mental health experts in relation to the design of the 4-unit workshop and the content of the aforementioned booklet. To achieve this result, our Australian team has submitted an abstract which has been accepted for oral presentation. The team will present the project to the conference in July 2018.

Expected Project Result 4

To analyse feedback from students about the content of the workshops: their understanding of key risks and aetiological factors, whether pre-post improvements were seen in MH literacy, their confidence in engaging in MH promoting activities (e.g. active coping and mindfulness), and their understanding of the benefits of help-seeking for themselves and others. Our plan is to create a final version of the Mental Health First Aid in Everyday Life program that had empirical evidence of effectiveness and could be disseminated across universities in China.

Abstract

Generally speaking, Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a program that to train helpers to help a person who is developing a mental health problem and/or experiencing a worsening of an existing mental health problem or in a mental health crisis. The rationale of training helper in traditional MFHA is that many people developing mental disorders do not get professional help or delay getting professional help. They may talk to someone in their social network about their mental health issues. With appropriate mental health first aid skills, this someone (helper) may reduce the risk of the person coming to harm and assist the person to seek professional help. However, in some cultures (e.g., in the Chinese culture), people, in particular young people, may not discuss their mental health issues with someone in their social network because of the stigma of mental health. Considering such a cultural context, providing MFHA in Everyday Life to help people to deal with their mental health issues in their everyday life is as important as MHFA in a mental health crisis. This collaborative project among James Cook University, Taiyuan Psychiatric Hospital, Shanxi University and Shanxi Medical University aims to develop and provide a five-unit training program of MHFA in Everyday Life for university students in China. The topics of the five units are: 1) Mental health conditions across the lifespan; 2) Mental health and wellbeing in the Chinese culture; 3) Psychological resilience; 4) Mindfulness and mental health; and 5) Emotional intelligence.

Significance of Project

Our project will contribute to increased awareness of, and the engagement with China by:

- (1) Introducing Chinese mental health (MH) experts to North Queensland by organising seminars on local MH service delivery when the Chinese teams visit JCU. Compared with the other parts of Australia, the health community in North Queensland is much less engaged with China. Our project fills this gap in the bilateral relationship between China and Australia.
- (2) Introducing Australian mental health models to our Chinese counterparts. Australia is a world leader in MH promotion and early intervention (e.g. Beyondblue); this is relatively unknown in China. As a former Director of BeyondBlue, Prof McDermott will introduce this model to our Chinese counterparts.
- (3) Creating people-to-people links, particularly the link between our distinguished MH experts and distinguished practitioners in China. Such people-to-people links will lead to more fruitful outcomes by establishing a network of collaboration.