



Presentation

Samantha NG: Saturday 6th June

Title of Presentation: **Body Image Satisfaction: A Gratitude Pilot Intervention for Adolescents in Singapore**

Presenter Name: **Samantha NG and Albert Kienfie Liau**

Abstract:

Positive psychology interventions have been found to promote well-being and build resilience against potential adversities in life, and are available in brief forms that are simple, easily completed in minutes, and require minimal resources to implement. The gratitude-based forms of such interventions have been found to be especially helpful in building this character strength of gratitude, which has a strong impact on well-being. This study aimed to extend the use of positive psychology interventions into the area of body image. Poor body image has been linked with negative outcomes such as impaired social functioning, eating disorders, emotional disturbances, and unhealthy weight-management methods. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to developing body image dissatisfaction, bringing about calls for programmes targeting body image to be developed and implemented from an early age. While such programmes are available, these tend to span over extended periods of time and require much training and monetary resources. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to develop an intervention programme – the Body Image Satisfaction (BIS)-gratitude intervention – based on the “Three Good Things” activity, a positive psychology intervention involving gratitude. The study also examined the mechanisms through which the intervention might have achieved its results. Forty-four (44) adolescent participants from two classes at a Singapore secondary school were recruited. The classes were randomly assigned to receive either the BIS-gratitude intervention (N = 22) or a control programme (N = 22) over a three-week period. Participants in the BIS-gratitude intervention group completed the intervention activity over two sessions. Participants in the control group completed the control activity over two sessions. Body image satisfaction (body appreciation and body preference) and well-being (positive affect, negative affect, low-arousal positive feelings, gratitude, and life satisfaction) were measured at three points of the study: pre-intervention, post-intervention, and at 1-week follow-up. The study

found that at post-intervention, the BIS-gratitude intervention significantly improved body appreciation, positive affect, low-arousal positive feelings, gratitude, and overall life satisfaction. It was also found that through improvements in the level of gratitude in adolescents, positive affect was in turn improved, and low arousal positive feelings were partially improved. Improvements in body appreciation in turn improved adolescents' overall life satisfaction, and partially improved their positive affect. The BIS-gratitude intervention did not have any significant effect on the negative affect, current life satisfaction, and prospective life satisfaction of adolescents. At 1-week follow-up, the significant effects of the BIS-gratitude intervention were not sustained. Based on the findings, improvements to sample size, sample type, and intervention design were recommended. Future directions in research also included the application of the BIS-gratitude intervention in a clinical context.

Presenter Biography:

Samantha Ng

Samantha Ng recently completed her Master of Arts (Applied Psychology – Counselling Psychology) at the National Institute of Education (NIE), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore. She is currently a psychologist with the Department of Psychological Medicine, National University Hospital, Singapore. As part of a community-based mental health team, she works with children and adolescents and provides early assessments and interventions to students referred from schools, hospitals and polyclinics.

Albert Kienfie Liao

Dr. Albert K. Liao is Associate Professor and the Assistant Head of Research for the Psychological Studies Academic Group of the National Institute of Education, at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He is a Developmental Psychologist and his recent research interests include resilience of at-risk youth, evaluating positive psychology interventions for well-being, positive technology, and exploring Internet and video-game use among children and adolescents. He has co-authored the book, *What Do I Say to My Net-Savvy Kids: Internet Safety Issues for Parents*, and is the author of a strengths-based instrument called the *Personal Strengths Inventory*.