

Asian Traumatic STRESS POINTS



Asian Society for Traumatic Stress Studies
亞洲創傷心理研究學會

President's Message

Dr. Kitty Wu, President

Asian Society for Traumatic Stress Studies

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When this message was written, the Euro crisis has deepened affecting the financial markets over the world. In Hong Kong, the best option for most common people may probably be focusing on striving our best to keep up the standard of our work and service so that we can keep our heads above the water in a competitive free market, which we have been living in for decades. Flexibility, creativity and striving for excellence are the motto that we have learnt since our years in primary school, consistent with the values reiterated in positive psychology that have attracted academic research in recent years. With a forward-looking spirit and steadfast dedication to achieving our mission, I am content to inform members the major milestones AsianSTSS have achieved in the past months, or are heading for in the coming year.

In the past year, the software and presentation of our website (<http://www.asianstss.org>) have been upgraded to expand its capacity for knowledge exchange and support the use of different languages. Major information in the website has been translated into Chinese, and will soon be uploaded. AsianSTSS has also provided financial and manpower support for the publication of an edited book, "Healing Trauma: A Professional Guide" published by Hong Kong University Press in April 2011. This book was the first to provide the knowledge base on the application of various approaches for effective and ethical psychological support work after traumatic experience in local context.

The Instructors Training Workshops on "Psychological First Aid (PFA)" and "Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR)" conducted by Dr. Melissa Brymer and Dr. Patricia Watson from the National Child Traumatic Service Network of USA in November-December 2011, co-organized with Hong Kong Red Cross and Oasis of the Hospital Authority, have received overwhelming responses from experienced trainers of disaster support organizations from NGOs and government bodies. This has laid the groundwork for

modernizing disaster mental health service in Hong Kong for enhancing the knowledge base and training opportunity for PFA and SPR in major organizations that may provide relief work after major incidents in Hong Kong. The participation of overseas delegates from Japan and Singapore has certainly enriched the training with discussion of issues faced by service planners and providers in different Asian regions. We were also encouraged by the overwhelming enrolment (over 300) for the public lecture on "Modernizing Disaster Mental Health: Developmental & Cultural Perspectives" conducted by Dr. Melissa Brymer and Dr. Patricia Watson on 30 November 2011. AsianSTSS shall continue to provide a platform for knowledge exchange and promote practices that are evidence-based, safe and aligned with international standards.

As one of the 9 supporting organizations for the initiative of the launch of the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020 in Hong Kong, AsianSTSS shall continue to advocate road safety and enhance awareness of the psychological trauma of motor vehicle crash.

Internationally, we have pledged to continue our support for the translation of abstracts of the Journal of Traumatic Stress into Chinese when International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS) has successfully enhanced the presentation format of Chinese abstracts. Through our contribution to the discussion of setting up the ISTSS Global Initiative, a proposal initiated by ISTSS to develop a new global collaborative structure to operate across the existing societies of traumatic stress studies to foster growth in the field globally, we are looking forward to opportunities for further collaboration with ISTSS and other traumatic stress studies.

There are a few specific targets that AsianSTSS hope to achieve in the coming year. These include constructing and implementing the Chinese version of the AsianSTSS's website. We shall invite Prof. Esben Esther Pirell Benestad and Prof. Elsa Almås from Norway to conduct a 2-day seminar on Modernizing Services for Sexual Minorities: a Life-span

Approach Local experts will also be invited to expand the discussion from a spiritual, experiential, psychological, and empirical perspectives (please refer to Upcoming Events for details). We are also exploring the format of setting up a scholarship or award for promotion of local trauma work/research.

Last, but probably the most important step is the preparation of AsianSTSS to fulfill the final requirement for our application to be listed as a charitable organization in Hong Kong. Upon the advice

from our Hon. Legal Advisor, Ms Selina Lau of Fan & Fan Solicitors, an EGM shall be held in the near future for revision of our Memorandum and Articles of Association as proposed in our application.

With the continuous support of members and committed effort of the Exco, AsianSTSS shall continue to utilize flexibility and creativity for providing a platform to enhance knowledge and practice in the field of traumatic stress.

Knowledge Gateway

Following Adversity and Trauma: The Positive Side

Cher SN Liu
Clinical Psychologist, Castle Peak Hospital

Introduction

Knowing someone who has been exposed to adverse or traumatic event, the public is usually concerned about what kind of psychological “problems” the victims are going to experience and how we are going to fix what is “wrong” with them. In fact, most people who experienced adversity and trauma can recover readily, and even more, a growing body of evidence suggesting that negative life events or traumatic experiences can lead to positive psychological changes.

Terminology

In addition to the traditional emphasis on psychopathology, researchers and psychologists are trying to get a better understanding of the full range of sequelae of adversity and trauma – not just the negatives but also the positives. Such positive changes have been labelled “posttraumatic growth”, “stress-related growth”, “adversarial growth”, “perceived benefits”, “benefit-finding” and “thriving” etc. Among all, “posttraumatic growth” (PTG) has become the most widely used term to describe the positive changes following adversity or highly stressful circumstances. Contrary to resilience, which is generally conceptualized as an ability to resume normal or pre-adversity level of functioning, posttraumatic growth involves a movement beyond pre-trauma levels of adaptation in which the person not just resumes his or her normal

functioning, but is “better than before” with higher level of functioning after the adverse or traumatic event (Ho, 2011; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004).

Measuring Posttraumatic Growth

The idea that trauma or life crises lead to positive changes has long been suggested in ancient literature, philosophy and religion. Yet, it is not easy to measure and study positive changes due to its qualitative and multidimensional nature. Initially, across the qualitative studies that have examined positive changes as a result of highly stressful life events, three important and consistent domains of change are noted: 1) perception of self; 2) relationships with others; 3) philosophy of life (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). The changes in self-perception involve the belief that one becomes stronger and more confident, and capable of coping with difficult challenges; the changes in interpersonal relationships reflect one’s perception of closer relationships and stronger sense of belonging, as well as increased appreciation of others especially close relatives and friends; finally, the changes in philosophy of life include an increased experience of existential wisdom, new life directions and priorities, and enhanced spiritual beliefs (Calhoun, & Tedeschi, 1998; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996; Updegraff & Taylor, 2000). Some standardized instruments have been developed to assess such positive changes. One of the most extensively

used measures is the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996) which comprises five subscales that access growth across dimensions of relating to others, new possibilities, personal strength, spiritual change and appreciation of life. PTGI was first developed in Western English-speaking countries, but now translated versions are found in many countries around the world, such as the Chinese version of PTGI (Ho & Cheung, 2007). With the introduction of standardized instruments, studies have progressed considerably and posttraumatic growth has been identified in many diverse areas of trauma and life crises, including sexual assault (Shakespeare-Finch & Armstrong, 2010), disaster (Tang, 2007), road traffic accident (Harms & Talbot, 2007), medical problems such as cancer, HIV/AIDS and head injury (Manne et al., 2004; Milam, 2004; Powell, Ekin-Wood, & Collin, 2007), life experiences such as bereavement (Engelkemeyer & Marwit, 2008; Shakespeare-Finch & Armstrong, 2010), divorce (Krumrei, Mahoney & Pargament, 2009) and infertility (Paul et al., 2010).

Cognitive Processing in Posttraumatic Growth and Clinical Implications

Traumatic events are likely to cause some examination of one’s assumptive world beliefs, with more disturbing events leading to more challenges to these beliefs. Not surprisingly, various

studies on posttraumatic growth have demonstrated that cognitive processing plays important role in rebuilding of shattered world beliefs following trauma (Linley & Joseph, 2004). For instance, findings have shown that positive reappraisal coping and cognitive processing such as reflection, trying to find meaning and learning from the experience were strongly associated with posttraumatic growth (Prati & Pietrantonio, 2009; Stockton, Hunt & Joseph, 2011). Two recent local researches involving non-clinical bereaved individuals and Chinese breast cancer survivors also suggested that optimistic explanatory style for positive events might aid the process of adjustment after trauma and enhance posttraumatic growth (Ho, 2011). Though research on posttraumatic growth in the context of psychological interventions with persons who have experienced adversity or trauma is limited, early indications suggest that positive changes can be used as foundations for further therapeutic work and facilitation of growth may be considered a legitimate therapeutic aim (Linley & Joseph, 2002). While current clinical interventions typically do not take account of the potential for posttraumatic growth and focus on how to change a person's negative or pessimistic appraisals for negative events, clinicians should be aware of the potential for positive changes when working with individuals struggling with stressful life events or traumatic experiences, and consider facilitating the positive cognitive processing such as finding positive meaning in the event and enhancing optimistic explanatory style for positive events.

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Upcoming Event

Modernizing Services for Sexual Minorities: a Life-span Approach by Professor Esben Esther Pirell Benestad and Professor Elsa Almås



Esben Esther Pirell Benestad Physician, specialist in clinical sexology NACS, professor of the University of Agder, Norway, family therapist IAP

Elsa Almås Specialist in clinical psychology, specialist in clinical sexology NACS, professor of the University of Agder, Norway, family therapist IAP

AsianSTSS is honored to invite Prof. Esben Esther Pirell Benestad and Prof. Elsa Almås to Hong Kong to give a 2-day seminar on the challenges faced by professions in managing the psychological difficulties of the sexual minorities – lesbians (L), gay (G), bisexual (B), transsexual (T), and intersex (I). The seminar is co-organized by The Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong.

During the seminars, Prof. Esben Esther Pirell Benestad and Prof. Elsa Almås would:

1. update the changes in the revised guidelines of WPATH (The World Professional Association for Transgender Health) in 2011. The revision is seen as propaganda of the new standard of care of transgender people;
2. delineate the different states of intersex;
3. advise on how to form a network to assist children who display variations over the nonconforming gender;
4. facilitate our understanding of possible special sexual issues of LGBTI; and
5. discuss the political issues of LGBTI.

In addition to the lectures by Prof. Esben Esther Pirell Benestad and Prof. Elsa Almås, we would also invite local experts to share their experiences in supporting the LGBTI. During the seminars, they would:

1. share the experience from running support group for parents with children who are sexual minorities;
2. share local research findings on stigmatization & self-esteem for sexual minorities;
3. share the information of legal and psychological support in end-of-life care for sexual minorities

Date 24 - 25 October, 2012
Venue Room 502, 3 Lockhart Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong
Time 9 am - 5 pm
Co-organizer The Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong

Pending for CE accreditation from various colleges and professional bodies.

For enquiry, please send your email to info@asianstss.org or visit our website at www.asianstss.org

Past Events

2-day Train-the-Trainer Workshop on Psychological First-aid and 2-day Train-the-Trainer Workshop on Skills for Psychological Recovery by Prof. Melissa Brymer and Dr. Patricia Watson

Both workshops received numerous applications that the vetting team had regrettably turned down a couple of the applications due to seat limit. The workshops not only attracted trauma professionals in Hong Kong, but also professionals from Japan and Singapore as well. During the workshops, Dr. Melissa Brymer and Dr. Patricia Watson had supervised the participants in conducting the workshops on psychological first-aid and skills for psychological recovery. They also provided numerous advices to improve the training skills of the participants. AsianSTSS would like to thank all the participants for their active participation in the workshops. After the workshops, an email platform was formed for future sharing of trauma-related information and materials.



Dr. Melissa is advising the participants on training skills



Participants in the Train-the-Trainer Workshop on Psychological First-aid

Public Lecture on 30 November, 2011

The public lecture “Modernizing Disaster Mental Health: Developmental & Cultural Perspectives”, organized by Center for Personal Growth & Crisis Intervention of Hospital Authority and co-organized by the AsianSTSS and Hong Kong Red Cross has attracted over 300 enrolments. During the lecture, Dr. Melissa Brymer and Dr. Patricia Watson had provided an overview of modern principles and strategies for public disaster mental health response and recovery; introduced strategies for triage, needs assessment and surveillance; and demonstrated tiered and stratified approaches to post-disaster mental health planning and intervention from developmental and cultural perspectives AsianSTSS would like to thank all the participants for their active participation.



Annual General Meeting 2011

Annual General Meeting 2011

The Annual General Meeting 2011 of the AsianSTSS was held on Saturday, 3 December 2011. Eugenie Leung, Cher Liu, Esther Ng, Karen Shum, Catherine Tang and Kitty Wu were elected as the Directors for the years 2011-13.

The Executive Committee 2011-13 was appointed at the 1st Directors meeting held on 15 February 2012. Its composition as follows :

Kitty Wu (President)	Cher Liu (Publicity Officer)
Eugenie Leung (Vice-President)	Rose Wong (Publication Officer)
Esther Ng (Secretary)	Darren Chan
Karen Shum (Treasurer)	Chung-sing Kan
Sara Lam (Scientific Officer)	Catherine Tang
Betty Luk (Membership Officer)	Mabel Yum

Website Updates

AsianSTSS has continued to upgrade the website (www.asianstss.org). During these several months, we are working with the technician to improve the presentation of the website information. We have already translated the information into Chinese and the translation will be uploaded to the website soon.



Asian Society for Traumatic Stress Studies 亞洲創傷心理研究學會

Email: info@asianstss.org website: www.asianstss.org

Enrolment Form

A 2-Day Seminar on “Modernizing Services for Sexual Minorities: a Life-span Approach” by Professor Esben Esther Pirell Benestad and Professor Elsa Almås 24 & 25 October 2012

Title: _____

Name (with surname in block letters): _____

Phone: () _____

Fax: () _____

Email: _____

Correspondence Address: _____

Profession: _____

Position held: _____

Organisation: _____

Enrolment details (please tick as appropriate):

For Registration on or before 23 September 2012

	Oct 24 only	Oct 25 only	Both workshops
AsianSTSS Member	<input type="checkbox"/> HK\$650	<input type="checkbox"/> HK\$650	<input type="checkbox"/> HK\$1100
AsianSTSS Student member	<input type="checkbox"/> HK\$300	<input type="checkbox"/> HK\$300	<input type="checkbox"/> HK\$500
Non-member	<input type="checkbox"/> HK\$850	<input type="checkbox"/> HK\$850	<input type="checkbox"/> HK\$1500

For Registration after 23 September 2012

	Oct 24 only	Oct 25 only	Both workshops
AsianSTSS Member	<input type="checkbox"/> HK\$700	<input type="checkbox"/> HK\$700	<input type="checkbox"/> HK\$1200
AsianSTSS Student member	<input type="checkbox"/> HK\$350	<input type="checkbox"/> HK\$350	<input type="checkbox"/> HK\$600
Non-member	<input type="checkbox"/> HK\$900	<input type="checkbox"/> HK\$900	<input type="checkbox"/> HK\$1600

* Join AsianSTSS now and receive member's rate!

Please visit our website (www.asianstss.org) for updates.

Please complete and return the enrolment form with a cross cheque payable to Asian Society for Traumatic Stress Studies Limited by mail to:
Asian Society for Traumatic Stress Studies Limited
Room 402, Chuang's Tower, 30-32 Connaught Road, Central, Hong Kong

* **Deadline of enrolment: 15th October, 2012**

Remarks:

1. Seats are served on a first-come-first-serve basis. Priority is given to members/staff of organising bodies.
2. AsianSTSS reserves the right to modify the programme and reject an enrolment at any point in time.
3. Enrolment will be confirmed ONLY when full payment has been received by the AsianSTSS. Confirmation will be sent by email or fax one week prior to the workshop.
4. Official receipt will be issued at the registration counter. All fees are non-refundable.
5. If the Typhoon Signal No. 8 or above, or the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal is hoisted, the workshop will be cancelled.
6. For enquiry, please send your email to info@asianstss.org or visit our website at www.asianstss.org



Asian Society for Traumatic Stress Studies 亞洲創傷心理研究學會

Membership Application Form

(Membership does not imply qualification or expertise)

AsianSTSS will treat the data provided by you strictly confidential. AsianSTSS may provide such data for its administrative and service planning purposes. In order to facilitate networking among members who are interested in the trauma field, your personal information may be placed on the AsianSTSS website, in the Members' Directory which is only accessible to members of this Society. AsianSTSS will not disclose any personal information provided by you to any bodies or organizations unless you have been informed or it is required to do so by law.

Please put an X in the red square boxes if you do not want any of such information to be included in the Members' Directory on the AsianSTSS website.

Membership: New Renewal: Membership No: _____

Title: _____ Family Name: _____ Given Name: _____

Correspondence Address: _____

Phone: () _____ Fax: () _____ E-mail: _____

(AsianSTSS encourages electronic communication with members. Please provide your email address to facilitate communication between AsianSTSS and you.)

Office Address (if different from correspondence address): _____

Profession: _____ Relevant Academic Qualifications: _____

Please check the categories that identify your main areas of interest:

Populations

Children Adolescents Adults Elderly

Emergency Personnel Health Care Workers Minorities Perpetrators

Disciplinary / Military Personnel Others, please specify: _____

Areas of Interest

Research Teaching / Training Assessment Treatment

Grief Legal / Forensic Policy development Human rights

Others, please specify: _____

Work Settings

University Private practice Disciplinary

Teaching institute Community Public health

Social Welfare Others, please specify: _____

The Society's financial year runs from 1st October through 30th September, membership fees are not pro-rated.

I hereby enclose my cheque for Full membership: HKD 200 Student membership: HKD 100

(Student member applicants are requested to send a copy of current and valid proof of full-time student status together with this form)

<http://www.asianstss.org>

* I hereby agree to provide the above information for AsianSTSS and support the objectives of the AsianSTSS as expressed in the Constitution.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Office Use

Form received on: _____ Amt: _____ Cash / Cheque (no: _____)

Confirmation sent on: _____ Ref no: _____

Message from AsianSTSS



What is AsianSTSS ?

The Asian Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (AsianSTSS) was founded in 2005 as a fully incorporated limited company registered in Hong Kong for professionals to share information about the effects of trauma. AsianSTSS is a multi-disciplinary organisation that provides a forum for exchange of knowledge about severe stress and trauma within the Asian region. This knowledge includes preventing traumatic events, understanding the scope and consequences of traumatic exposure, and ameliorating their consequences.

Our Mission

- To advance knowledge about the nature and consequences of highly stressful events
- To provide a forum for the sharing of research, clinical strategies, public policy concerns and theoretical formulations on trauma around the Asian region
- To promote high standards and ethical practice in the trauma field

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Further information is available on request

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