



Psychology Laboratory

Research Seminar

Coping with Disaster by Enhancing Meaning in Life and Resilience

by

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Date : 11 Oct 2017 (Wed)
Time : 11:00 am - 12:00 nn
Venue : Room Y7302, SS Multi-function Room
Academic 1, City University of Hong Kong

Abstract

The model of meaning making (Park, 2010), which reflects the latest contributions of positive psychology to the field of trauma research, forms the background of this presentation. In our endeavors to advance this theory, we proposed the problems of how to engage in an effective meaning making, who benefited more from meaning making, and what are the cognitive outcomes of meaning making. First, future focus was introduced to the meaning-making model to distinguish adaptive from non-adaptive ways of meaning making. In this phase, experimental methods were used to manipulate temporal distance. Future focus techniques were proved to be effective in enhancing meaning in life and post-stress adjustment. Second, resilience was proposed as a moderator for the meaning-making model based on two longitudinal follow-up surveys. Meaning Making was demonstrated to be especially effective among individuals with low resilience. In addition, we explored the interactive effect of the COMT Val¹⁵⁸Met polymorphism and adversity on the psychological resource of future focus and proposed a differential post-stress growth hypothesis, which might point to genetic evidence for resilience. Third, an implicit method, the directed-forgetting task, was used to construct cognitive representations of the “meaning made” among 2008 Sichuan earthquake survivors. Finally, these results were summarized by developing a modified model of meaning making and a protocol for group-based trauma interventions. A randomized control trial was conducted among cancer patients with meaning making as the focus of the intervention group and two control groups, namely, supportive group and waiting-list group. The results supported the effects of enhancing meaning in life and resilience, which contributed to the development of the meaning making theory and put the theory into practice in disaster intervention.

Biographical Sketch

Yiqun Gan is a professor at School of Psychological and Cognitive Sciences, Peking University, China. She has received her Ph.D. in the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1998. She has published over 90 research papers as the first or corresponding author, and her findings were published in the top international journals such as *Journal of Personality* and *Journal of Behavior Decision Making*. She has been the PI of a number of research projects funded by the National Science Foundation of China. She was invited to present as a Transversal Keynote Speaker at the International Congress of Applied Psychology in 2014, and to convene an Invited Symposium at the International Congress of Psychology in 2012 and at the International Congress of Applied Psychology in 2018. She currently serves on the editorial board of an IAAP journal *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-being* and a top Chinese journal in English *Psych-Journal*. Her research on future orientation and resilience has embraced numerous state-of-the-art techniques such as laboratory experiments, molecular genetics, physiological indexes, eye tracking, and ERP, which has placed her work on the cutting edge of the science. She has won the title of “Recognized Psychologist” by the Chinese Psychological Society in 2016, and was nominated as a fellow of the International Association of Applied Psychology in 2017.

All Are Welcome