

Keynote

Translational Mental Health Research in the Family Context: Opportunities and Challenges in the Digital Age



Speaker

Prof. Jenny Yiend

Professor, Department of Psychosis Studies, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience, King's College London, United Kingdom

Biography

Professor Yiend is a distinguished alumnus of Cambridge University, where she earned her first degree in Psychology and a PhD focusing on anxiety and attention. She is currently a Professor in the Psychosis Studies Department at King's College London, having previously worked at Oxford University's Department of Experimental Psychology and the Warneford Hospital. Her research primarily explores emotion processing biases in psychopathology, and she is developing innovative digital therapies to alleviate mental distress. Prof. Yiend has published over 80 peer-reviewed papers on various psychological disorders, including anxiety, depression, psychosis, eating disorders, and psychopathy. She has served as an associate editor for two academic journals and was a panel member for the 2020 RAE in Hong Kong. A Fellow of the American Psychological Society since 2014, she has received significant grant awards from UKRI, including ESRC, NIHR, and MRC.

In addition to her research, Prof. Yiend has extensive experience in educational leadership. She directed the Institute of Psychiatry's Master's Programme in Mental Health Studies and currently oversees the University of London's online BSc Psychology. She has also served as interim Dean of Education and has been a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy since 2017.

Keynote

Rewards and challenges in the digitalization of family social services: A look at the big picture



Speaker

Prof. Paul P. Freddolino

Professor, School of Social Work,
Michigan State University, United States

Biography:

Professor Paul P. Freddolino is a distinguished scholar in social work, currently serving as Professor of Social Work at Michigan State University and as a Visiting Professor at the London School of Economics. He holds a PhD in Sociology from the University of Michigan, an MDiv from Yale Divinity School, an MA from Cornell University, and a BA from the University of Notre Dame. His teaching portfolio includes research methods, administrative skills, and information technology in social work.

Freddolino's research focuses on technology and social work practice, digital literacy and exclusion, program evaluation, and technology for aging populations, particularly in the context of dementia care. He has led and collaborated on numerous international projects examining the impact of digital tools on older adults and caregivers, and has published extensively on these topics. Freddolino is also active in professional organizations and editorial boards, contributing significantly to the advancement of technology in social care.

Keynote

Empowering Families with Dementia: Early Diagnosis and Prognosis through the 'VEEM Digital Biomarker



Speaker

Prof. Kyoungwon Seo

Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Artificial Intelligence, Seoul National University of Science and Technology, South Korea

Biography:

Professor Kyoungwon Seo earned his B.S. and Ph.D. degrees in industrial engineering from Hanyang University in Seoul, South Korea, in 2014 and 2018, respectively. He served as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at The University of British Columbia, Canada, from 2018 to 2020. Currently, he is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Applied Artificial Intelligence at Seoul National University of Science and Technology. His research focuses on human-computer interaction, deep learning, and augmented/virtual reality.

As an innovative interdisciplinary researcher, Kyoungwon possesses extensive expertise in human-computer interaction, cognitive psychology, and the development of machine learning models to interpret complex data. His work emphasizes designing human-centered AI systems that enhance user understanding and capabilities through data science and deep learning techniques. He has collaborated with both industrial and academic partners, including product designers at Microsoft, engineers at Hyundai Motor Company, and medical professionals, to create impactful AI technologies that address significant challenges in various fields.

Keynote

WAIT LESS: the Co-Production Of A Digital Intervention To Support Young People with Depression Waiting on the Psychotherapy Waiting List



Speaker

Prof. Tamsin Ford

Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

Biography:

Tamsin Ford is a Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the University of Cambridge and a leading Child Psychiatric Epidemiologist. Her research focuses on the organization, delivery, and effectiveness of mental health services and interventions for children and young people. Prof. Ford's work is translational and cross-disciplinary, emphasizing the promotion of mental health and prevention of mental ill-health. After earning her PhD at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London, she joined Exeter University Medical School in 2007, where she established a Child Mental Health Research Group. In 2019, she moved to Cambridge.

Her research spans a wide range of psychopathologies and is directly relevant to policy and practice. Notably, her papers on mental health and school exclusion were referenced in the Timpson report (2019), and she led the clinical rating for the national child mental health survey, providing essential statistics for the NHS Plan. Prof. Ford has received numerous accolades, including a CBE for her contributions to psychiatry in 2019, highlighting her significant impact on child mental health services.

Abstract:

The increasing waiting lists for Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS) are a major barrier for young people trying to access mental health care. The average wait until the first assessment is 9 weeks, often followed by a further 20 weeks wait for treatment, with huge variation between- and- rapid-variation within clinics. Access to digital support earlier is highly desirable and might free up CYPMHS capacity for those who need more treatment. There is no adequately tested digital tool that can achieve these aims. This presentation will describe the coproduction of a such a tool (MyMindMatters) – alpha and beta testing are complete and we are about to start recruitment to a randomised controlled trial to test the feasibility, acceptability, and potential utility of eBPI to reduce wait list suffering among young people on CYPMHS waitlists. Our objectives are to: i) understand young people's, parents' and clinicians' waitlist experiences ii) co-produce eBPI iii) determine if eBPI warrants a fully powered RCT to robustly establish clinical and cost effectiveness.

Keynote

AI in Human Services



Speaker

Prof. Lauri Goldkind

Professor, Graduate School of Social Service,
Fordham University, United States

Biography:

Professor Lauri Goldkind is a leading scholar in social work and technology, serving as Professor at Fordham University's Graduate School of Social Service and Editor in Chief of the *Journal of Technology in Human Services*. She holds a PhD from the Wurzweiler School of Social Work at Yeshiva University and an MSW from SUNY Stony Brook, with a focus on planning, administration, and research. Goldkind's research explores the intersection of artificial intelligence, data justice, and information and communication technologies (ICT) in nonprofit management and human services, as well as social justice and civic engagement in organizational life. She has a robust network of community partners in New York City and internationally, including the International Federation of Settlement Houses and Caritas Macau.

Goldkind's practice background includes leadership roles in youth development, education, and juvenile justice, notably as Director of New School Development and Evaluation at The Urban Assembly in New York City. She is the author of *Digital Social Work: Tools for Practice with Individuals, Organizations, and Communities* (Oxford University Press), and her scholarship is widely published in leading journals. Goldkind is recognized for her commitment to social justice, equity, and the ethical use of technology in social work.

Keynote

Hybrid Service Models for Individuals and Families with Psychiatric Needs



Speaker

Prof. John Torous

Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Department of Psychiatry, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Harvard Medical School, United States

Biography:

Professor John Torous is director of the digital psychiatry division in the Department of **Psychiatry** at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC), a Harvard Medical School-affiliated teaching hospital, where he also serves as a staff psychiatrist and associate professor. He has a background in electrical engineering and computer sciences and received an undergraduate degree in the field from UC Berkeley before attending medical school at UC San Diego. He completed his psychiatry residency, fellowship in clinical informatics, and master's degree in biomedical informatics at Harvard.

Professor Torous is active in investigating the potential of mobile mental health technologies for psychiatry and has published over 300 peer reviewed articles and 5 book chapters on the topic. He directs the Digital Psychiatry Clinic at BIDMC which seeks to improve access to and quality of mental health care through augmenting treatment with digital innovations. Dr. Torous serves as editor-in-chief for the journal JMIR Mental Health, web editor for JAMA Psychiatry, and is a member of the FDA Digital Health Advisory Committee.

Plenary

Utilizing Stepped-Care Models of Self-Paced Interactive Websites to Reduce Burden on Clinician-Delivered Behavioral Therapy for Children and Adolescents with Behavioral Concerns



Speaker

Prof. Rosanna Breaux

Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), United States

Biography:

Professor Rosanna Breaux is an Associate Professor of Psychology and Director of the Child Study Center at Virginia Tech. A licensed clinical psychologist, Professor Breaux's research centers on the social, emotional, and academic functioning of children and adolescents, with a particular emphasis on those with ADHD. Her work explores the development of emotion regulation and the role of parents and environmental factors in shaping children's and adolescents' social-emotional growth. She leads the CALMER Lab and is actively involved in evaluating and disseminating the RELAX intervention, which targets emotion dysregulation and interpersonal conflict among adolescents and their parents. Professor Breaux earned her BS in Psychology from Carnegie Mellon University and her MS and PhD in Clinical Psychology from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Plenary

Clinical Virtual Reality: A Brief Review of the Future



Speaker

Prof. Albert Skip Rizzo

Research Professor, Department of Psychiatry and Davis School of Gerontology, Director of Medical Virtual Reality, Institute for Creative Technologies, University of Southern California, United States

Biography:

Professor Albert “Skip” Rizzo is a Clinical and Neuropsychologist and the Director of the University of Southern California Institute for Creative Technologies Medical VR Lab. He is also a research professor in the USC Department of Psychiatry and the School of Gerontology. Rizzo's research focuses on designing, developing, and evaluating VR systems for clinical assessment, treatment, and rehabilitation. He directed the creation of the Virtual Iraq/Afghanistan VR exposure therapy system for combat-related PTSD and is working on tools for PTSD assessment and prevention. His cognitive research explores VR applications for testing and training cognitive functions, while his motor domain work includes developing VR game-based applications for rehabilitation in individuals with CNS dysfunction, such as stroke and TBI.

Rizzo is also creating artificially intelligent virtual human patients for clinical training and online healthcare guides to improve access to psychological care. His contributions have earned him several awards, including the American Psychological Association Award for Outstanding Contributions to Trauma Psychology in 2010 and the 2020 Innovation Award from the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies. As of January 2023, he has secured over \$60 million in funding for advanced VR research and innovation in clinical applications.

Sharing of Best Practices of the Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project - Harnessing Technology and Data to Advance Family Services in Hong Kong



Panelist

Prof. Reynold C.K. Cheng

Professor, School of Computing and Data Science, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Principal Investigator of the Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project

Biography:

Prof. Reynold Cheng is currently the Division Head and Professor (Computer Science), at the School of Computing and Data Science, in the University of Hong Kong (HKU). He is a Steering Committee Member of the HKU Musketeers Foundation Institute of Data Science. He is an academic advisor to the College of Professional and Continuing Education of HKPU. He was an Associate Dean of Engineering in 2022-24. His research interests are in data science, big graph analytics and uncertain data management.

Professor Cheng is named the AI 2000 Most Influential Scholar Honorable Mention in Database in 2023 and 2024. He received the ACM Distinguished Membership Award and the HKU Outstanding Research Student Supervisor Award in 2023. He was listed as the World's Top 2% Scientists by Stanford University in 2022. He received the SIGMOD Research Highlights Reward 2020, HKICT Awards (2021, 2023), HKU Knowledge Exchange Award (2024) and HKU Knowledge Exchange Award (Engineering) (2024, 2021). He was granted an Outstanding Young Researcher Award 2011-12 by HKU. He received the Universitas 21 Fellowship in 2011, and two HKPU Computing Performance Awards in 2006 and 2007. He was a PC co-chair of IEEE ICDE 2021. He is on the editorial board of IS, DAPD and DSEJ.

Sharing of Best Practices of the Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project - Harnessing Technology and Data to Advance Family Services in Hong Kong



Panelist

Prof. Kelvin M.P. Wang

Professor, School of Nursing, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
Principal Investigator of the Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project

Biography:

Professor Kelvin Wang is a leading figure at the School of Nursing and Assistant Dean for Professional Development in Health Science at the University of Hong Kong (HKU). He holds multiple degrees from HKU, including BN, MPH, MPhil, and PhD. A Fellow of both the UK Faculty of Public Health and the American Academy of Nursing, Prof. Wang is the principal investigator of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Smart Family Link Project (Phase 2, Nursing) and co-leads the Smoking Cessation & Tobacco Control team at HKU. He serves on various councils, including the Nursing Council of Hong Kong and the Council on Human Reproductive Technology. An associate editor for *BMC Public Health*, he has published over 210 papers in prestigious journals, achieving a Google Scholar H-index of 37. His research focuses on behavioral interventions, addiction, and health communication, with notable work on alternative tobacco products and community-based smoking cessation programs.

Sharing of Best Practices of the Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project - Harnessing Technology and Data to Advance Family Services in Hong Kong



Panelist

Prof. Daniel F.K. Wong

Chair Professor, Department of Social Work,
Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong
Principal Investigator of the Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project

Biography:

Professor Daniel Wong is a clinical psychologist and currently the Chair Professor in Mental Health and Counselling of the Social Work Department at Hong Kong Baptist University. His major research interests revolve around evidence-based practice in mental health, cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), and mental health literacy promotion. In the past sixteen years, Daniel and his team have obtained numerous funding to develop innovative, culturally-attuned intervention models to tackle public health issues such as depression, anxiety, chronic illnesses, gambling and drug addictions among the Chinese.

His empirical works have appeared in prestigious academic journals such as *Depression and Anxiety*, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, and *British Journal of Social Work*. In addition, he authored 15 books and has promoted the use of culturally-attuned CBT practice by mental health professionals.

Sharing of Best Practices of the Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project - Harnessing Technology and Data to Advance Family Services in Hong Kong



Panelist

Prof. Siu-man Ng

Professor, Department of Social Work and Social Administration, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
Principal Investigator of the Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project

Biography:

Professor Siu-man Ng is a prominent scholar in social work and mental health, currently serving in the Department of Social Work and Social Administration at The University of Hong Kong. With a distinctive background in both social work and Chinese medicine, his research focuses on the intersection of culture, mental health, and psychosocial interventions. He is notably recognized for translating the concept of stagnation syndrome from Chinese medicine into a measurable psychological phenomenon, fostering culturally sensitive mental health care. His work addresses critical issues such as family expressed emotion in schizophrenia, mindfulness, and workplace well-being. Prof. Ng has authored the influential book *Integrative Body-Mind-Spirit Social Work*, advocating for holistic assessment and treatment. He actively contributes to professional service as President of the Hong Kong Association of Schools of Social Work, promoting the integration of Eastern and Western approaches in social work and mental health through research, teaching, and leadership.

Sharing of Best Practices of the Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project - Harnessing Technology and Data to Advance Family Services in Hong Kong



Panelist

Ms. Josephine LEE, MH

Chief Executive Officer, St. James' Settlement

Biography:

Josephine Lee received her Bachelor of Social Sciences (Social Work) and Master of Social Sciences in Social Work from The Chinese University of Hong Kong and The University of Hong Kong respectively. Besides, she also holds an EMBA degree from The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. Ms Lee is currently the Chief Executive Officer of St. James' Settlement.

Ms Lee is a well-known social innovator in Hong Kong and promotes learning social innovation in action. She is actively involved in developing social services and social enterprises. To name a few, she is a member of government advisory committees (Commission on Poverty and its Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund Task Force, etc.), a member of the Social Workers Registration Board, an External Advisor of the social work training of tertiary institutions and a Council Member of the Hong Kong General Chamber of Social Enterprise.

Mapping the Way Forward for Greater Impact: Digital Innovation for Next-Generation Family Services



Panelist

Mr. Raymond CHENG

Convenor, Advisory Committee of the Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project

Biography:

Mr Raymond Cheng is a seasoned IT professional and has established a long career in the finance industry for more than 35 years. He was the Group General Manager and Chief Operating Officer in the Asia Pacific region at HSBC, overseeing Information Technology, Operations, Real Estate, Procurement and Consulting Services functions of the bank. Also he held various IT management positions for the bank in Hong Kong, United States and Canada. Currently, Raymond is holding a Senior Advisor position in QBN Capital Management Ltd. Besides, he has established strong connections with different IT professional bodies and the IT community in Hong Kong. He also acts as a Director and mentor to provide advisory services to a few FinTech startups.

In addition, Raymond is a Non-Executive Director of Hong Kong Interbank Clearing Limited. He is the Chairman of Vocational Training Council Hong Kong Institute of Information Technology Advisory Committee and Chinese University Engineering FinTech Applied Research Academy Advisory Committee. He is a Council Member of the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Group and Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency Governing Council.

Raymond participates in some key charity programmes from The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust including JC InnoPower, JC SMART Family-Link and JC Global STEM Post-doctoral Fellowship projects. He is currently the Deputy Chairman of Hong Kong Internet Registration Corporation Ltd. Raymond also sits in some technology funding committees of the government.

Raymond is a Distinguished Fellow of Hong Kong Computer Society and an Honorary Fellow of Vocational Training Council.

Mapping the Way Forward for Greater Impact: Digital Innovation for Next-Generation Family Services



Panelist

Prof. LAM Tai-hing, BBS, JP

Emeritus Professor; Honorary Clinical Professor, School of Public Health, LKS
Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong

Biography:

Graduated from The University of Hong Kong (HKU) with MBBS in 1975, and University of London (MSc medical sociology 1980; MSc occupational medicine 1981), and HKU (MD by research 1988). In HKU, Prof LAM Tai-hing was Head of the Department of Community Medicine (2000-12) and Director of School of Public Health (2009-13), Chair Professor in Community Medicine (2000-21) and Sir Robert Kotewall Professorship in Public Health (2007-21). H-index: 92 (2024), Top 1% most cited scientists (2021).

Prof Lam was appointed World Health Organization (WHO) short-term consultant, temporary advisor or expert participant for more than ten occasions. In 1998, he received Commemorative Certificate and Medal from WHO in recognition of his efforts on tobacco control. His research areas are epidemiology and control of noncommunicable diseases, leading many researches and trials on smoking cessation interventions and healthy lifestyle. Prof Lam has published 1000+ papers in international peer reviewed journals. He was Chairman of Scientific Committee on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections of the Department of Health, Member of Hospital Governing Committee of Shatin Hospital, Chairman of Cancer Expert Working Group on Cancer Prevention and Screening of Food and Health Bureau, Member of the Family Council, principal investigator of Jockey Club FAMILY Project and SMART Family-Link Project.

Mapping the Way Forward for Greater Impact: Digital Innovation for Next-Generation Family Services



Moderator

Prof. Daniel Shek

Associate Vice President (Undergraduate Programme), Chair Professor of Applied Social Sciences, Li and Fung Endowed Professor in Service Leadership Education, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

Biography:

Professor Daniel Shek (PhD, FHKPS, BBS, SBS, JP) is Associate Vice President, Chair Professor of Applied Social Sciences, and Li and Fung Endowed Professor in Service Leadership Education at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. He is also Advisory Professor of East China Normal University, Honorary Professor of Guangdong University of Technology and South China Normal University, Changjiang Scholar, Guanghua Scholar (Guanghua Chair Professor) of Southwestern University of Finance and Technology. Professor Shek has received two Bronze, one Silver and two Gold QS Reimagine Education Awards which are usually regarded as “Oscars in Education”. He is Editor-in-Chief of *Applied Research in Quality of Life*. In past years, he was named one of the world's most cited 2% scientists by Stanford University and Clarivate. In 2025, Professor Shek was named an inaugural Highly Ranked Scholar by ScholarGPS in Social Work and Chinese kinship research (top 0.05% of all scholars worldwide).

Plenary

Leveraging Decision Trees to Identify At-Risk Youth through Personal, Family, and Peer Perspectives: Tools, Profiles, and Implications



Speaker

Prof. Wenjie Duan

Professor of Social Work, Department of Social Work, School of Social and Public Administration, East China University of Science and Technology, China

Biography:

Professor Wenjie Duan is a distinguished scholar in social work and positive psychology, serving as a professor and doctoral supervisor in the Department of Social Work at East China University of Science and Technology (ECUST). He earned his Ph.D. in Applied Social Sciences from City University of Hong Kong, **receiving** the Chow Yei Ching Graduate Studies Scholarship and graduating with top honors. His research focuses on evidence-based practice, social indicators, psychometrics, and intervention studies, emphasizing character strengths, positive education, and mental health. He has published over 40 SSCI-indexed papers and several influential books in both Chinese and English, including the Chinese Virtues Questionnaire and the Flourishing Scale.

Professor Duan has held visiting scholar positions at the University of California, Davis, and has received recognition from various talent programs, including the Shanghai Shuguang Program. He serves as an associate editor for international journals and is a reviewer for over 50 academic journals, significantly advancing social work theory and practice.

Plenary

Research and Practice on Youth and Family Mental Health Interventions from a Communication Perspective



Speaker

Prof. Shuo Zhou

Associate Professor, Department of Communication Studies, School of Communication, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong

Biography:

As a researcher long immersed in technology-based health communication, Professor Zhou's research integrates disciplines of communication, social psychology, public health, and information technology. Her expertise lies in developing and evaluating innovative mobile health (mHealth) interventions and theory-based communication strategies for health promotion and reducing health disparities. Her studies have been supported by the National Cancer Institute (NCI), National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), American Cancer Society (ACS) and the Colorado Office of Economic Development & International Trade (OEDIT).

Professor Zhou also investigates the persuasive effects of various communication strategies and the psychological mechanisms of how people respond to health-related messages, including using narratives to reduce psychological reactance, maximize personalization, and activate unconscious health goals. These studies have been published in top-tier communication and public health journals, including *Health Communication*, *Journal of Health Communication*, *New Media and Society*, *Communication Monographs*, *Health Promotion Practice*, and *Journal of Medical Internet Research*.

Plenary

When AI Meets Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT): A Tailored Mental Health Solution for Caregivers of Children with Special Needs



Speaker

Prof. Connie Yuen-yu Chong

Assistant Professor, The Nethersole School of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine,
The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Biography:

Professor Connie Chong is an Assistant Professor at the Nethersole School of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Registered as a nurse, she has extensive clinical experience in medicine and pediatrics. Her research focuses on contextual behavioral science (CBS), particularly in applying and evaluating Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) for family caregivers of children with special needs and chronic conditions. Recognized for her contributions, Professor Chong has published extensively, delivered invited presentations, and secured competitive grants from various prestigious organizations.

Recently, she has expanded her research to include machine learning and natural language processing in CBS-related psychotherapies. Her innovative work led to the development of Pai.ACT™, a pioneering mobile app that integrates deep-learning algorithms with ACT. Tailored for family caregivers, it offers tiered emotional support through an AI chatbot and live online counseling. Pai.ACT™ has received multiple patents and accolades, including a gold medal at the 49th International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva.

Plenary

A Pilot Study of iCBT for emotional well-being among Chinese Emerging Adults within Family Contexts



Speaker

Prof. Zhongfang Fu

Assistant Professor, School of Psychological and Cognitive Sciences, Peking University, China

Biography:

Professor Zhongfang Fu is a clinical psychologist and researcher at the School of Psychological and Cognitive Sciences, Peking University. She earned her BSc (2013) and MSc (2016) in Psychology from Beijing Normal University, specializing in clinical psychology, and completed her PhD in Clinical Psychology at the Amsterdam University Medical Center, University of Amsterdam, in 2021. Since joining Peking University in 2022, Prof. Fu has led a research lab focused on understanding and intervening in mood disorders through a transdiagnostic approach, integrating cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and evidence-based interventions into clinical practice. Her work emphasizes translating research findings into practical applications, particularly in the training and practice of clinical psychology. Prof. Fu has published extensively on topics such as digital psychological interventions, depression, and psychosocial interventions, with her research appearing in leading journals like *The Lancet Psychiatry* and *Journal of Affective Disorders*.

Plenary

Familial Communication in The Era of Digital Media: Connecting with family by technologies



Speaker

Prof. Anthony P.K. Kong

Assistant Professor, School of Design, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong

Biography:

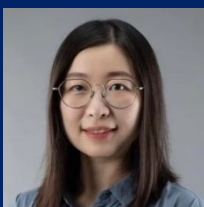
Professor Anthony Kong is an Assistant Professor at School of Design, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, specializing in Entertainment Media and Design Engineering. With extensive expertise in the interdisciplinary fields of design, technology, and service, he brings a wealth of knowledge to his role. Currently, he is Fellow of Royal Society of Arts, Chairman of the Design Education Council of Hong Kong Designers Association (HKDA) and serves as Secretary of the Executive Committee of Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Hong Kong Section, Computer Society Chapter. His research interests encompass Design for Hospitality, Digital Entertainment, e-Learning, Sports Technology, and Cultural Art Technology.

Abstract:

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has transformed familial communication, creating a digital divide across generations. It examines shifting communication behaviors among the elderly, young adults, and children, focusing on screen time and technology adoption. While younger generations seamlessly immerse digital platforms preferring instant messaging, emojis, and video calls, older adults often struggle with technological literacy, relying on traditional verbal communication. Children, growing up as digital natives, develop communication patterns heavily influenced by social media, gaming, and screen-based content, altering their use of nonverbal cues. Screen time studies reveal stark disparities: youth spend excessive hours on screen, potentially reducing face-to-face interactions, whereas older adults exhibit lower but increasing engagement. The reliance on digital communication impacts familial bonds, with concerns over emotional depth and misunderstandings due to the absence of physical cues. Societally, this divide exacerbates generational gaps, influencing education, workforce dynamics, and social cohesion. Addressing these disparities requires promoting digital literacy among the elderly and fostering balanced, mindful technology use across all ages to sustain meaningful familial connections in the digital era.

Plenary

Empowering Emotions: A Mobile Solution for Chinese Parents of Children with Special Needs



Speaker

Prof. Xiaoyu Zhuang

Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work,
Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong

Biography:

Professor Xiaoyu Zhuang is a faculty member in the Department of Social Work at Hong Kong Baptist University. She earned her PhD in Applied Social Sciences from City University of Hong Kong and has been trained in psychology and social work in both Mainland China and Hong Kong. Dr. Zhuang has also gained working experience in both Mainland China and Hong Kong. Her research interests primarily focus on mental health issues in youth and families, prevention and early intervention in mental health, emotional resilience of diverse populations, and migration and psychological adaptation.

Professor Zhuang has secured several research grants from Mainland China to develop innovative early prevention interventions for adolescent depression, as well as to employ advanced data analytic approaches to explore the psychological adaptation of young people under cross-border migration. She has published her research findings in highly ranked academic journals such as *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, *Child and Family Social Work*, and *Psychiatry Research*.

Agency Sharing on the Use of ICT in Family Services

Caritas-Hong Kong

Caritas–Hong Kong (Caritas) was founded in July 1953 by the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong. As a multi-service organization, Caritas provided a wide-ranging service within four major areas under Social Work, Education, Medical and Other Services. Family Service aims to preserve and strengthen the family as a unit to improve the ability of individuals and family members to deal with their problems and to improve the quality of life within the family unit. With collaborative efforts to create synergy across multi-disciplines, signature projects and services including Family Service assists individuals and families through a variety of programmes.

Hong Kong Family Welfare Society

Hong Kong Family Welfare Society is a charitable non-governmental social welfare organization established in 1949. With a family perspective, the Society is dedicated to provide a range of quality and professional services for families and individuals in Hong Kong and foster a caring community. Types of services include Integrated Family Services, Integrated Children and Youth Services, Elderly and Community Support Services, ChildCare Services and Special Services. We have also initiated a variety of experimental and innovative services and approaches to meet the needs arising in the community.

Hong Kong Christian Service

Since 1952, Hong Kong Christian Service (HKCS) has been dedicated to fostering a humane and just society by offering quality services to the disadvantaged. Guided by the vision "Towards a Benevolent and Just Society, Holistic Development for All," HKCS aims to instill hope, advocate justice, and promote harmony. A key component of their work is the integrated family service centers, which focus on strengthening family networks and ties, ensuring families remain united through challenges. These centers provide comprehensive preventive, supportive, and remedial services, with a focus on children's development, family functioning, and community harmony. Established in the 1970s, they offer consultation, counseling, education, and diverse programs, emphasizing accessibility and early needs identification.

The Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council

The Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council, founded in 1965 by Fr. Edward Collins, S.J., aims to enhance marriage and parenthood in Hong Kong. Initially offering Natural Family Planning services, the Council expanded to include Family Life Education, Marriage Counselling, and Pre-Marriage Education. It introduced Marriage Mediation Counselling in collaboration with the Hong Kong Government in 1988 and has since pioneered various family and marital services. To address growing family needs, the Council launched the Grace and Joy Integrated Family Service Centre in 2004. This center integrates former counselling and family life education services into a comprehensive support system. Its goals are to identify problems early, promote healthy development and harmonious relationships, and empower families to manage challenges effectively.

Christian Family Service Centre

Christian Family Service Centre (CFSC) was founded in 1954 by Miss Muriel Boone, a United Presbyterian missionary, to assist Mandarin-speaking refugees. Initially relying on overseas church donations, CFSC provided material aid, financial support, and job guidance to impoverished families. Since 1969, the Hong Kong Government and The Community Chest have offered financial backing. Over time, the agency's services expanded, transforming into a comprehensive organization dedicated to strengthening families and fostering growth and change. CFSC now offers a range of services, including support for children, families, youth, education, the elderly, people with disabilities, mental health, primary healthcare, environmental protection, community development, and employee service consultancy.

The International Social Service – Hong Kong Branch

The International Social Service (ISS), founded in 1924, is an international NGO dedicated to assisting families separated by borders due to migration, conflict, asylum and refugee issues with operation in over 120 countries. The ISS Hong Kong Branch, established in 1958 and incorporated in 1973, plays a crucial role in this network. It specializes in aiding migrants, divided families, and refugees between Hong Kong, Mainland China, and beyond. ISS Hong Kong offers diverse local services, including adoption, foster care, small group home, integrated family service and school social work, addressing community needs. It is an active service provider with a global outlook, with one of its strengths being the ability to provide social work assistance across borders, races, ethnicities, and beliefs.

Hong Kong Children & Youth Services

Hong Kong Children & Youth Services is a multi-social service agency offering a comprehensive range of services, including the Integrated Family Services. This service is designed to preserve and strengthen family units, promote resilience, assist families at risk, and support the restoration of families facing difficulties. Targeting residents of Hunghom, it provides a comprehensive, one-stop approach tailored to district needs. The service comprises three primary components: the Family Resource Unit, which offers consultation, a resource corner, volunteer training, and educational programs; the Family Support Unit, featuring support groups, mutual help groups, and marriage enrichment initiatives; and the Family Counselling Unit, delivering individual and family counseling and therapeutic groups. These integrated services play a crucial role in enhancing family cohesion and supporting families through diverse challenges.

St. James' Settlement

St. James' Settlement, established by Rt. Rev. Bishop R.O. Hall of the Anglican Church in 1949, has evolved into a major service provider across Hong Kong. A cornerstone of its offerings, Family and Counseling Services, began in 1971, delivering case counselling services to individuals and families in need. Over the years, this service has expanded to include integrated family service centers, comprehensive support for the homeless, short-term men's hostels, a pilot crisis family support project, and programs assisting parents in nurturing children with special learning needs. Through casework, group sessions, outreach, and residential services, it focuses on discovering and nurturing family potential, enhancing communication, and improving problem-solving abilities.

Tung Wah Group of Hospitals

Tung Wah's community services are dedicated to "Quality Care, Holistic Development," offering an extensive range of social welfare services tailored to the needs of families, children, youth, the elderly, and the disabled. A significant aspect of their offerings is the Youth and Family Services, which provide crucial support through day care for infants and pre-school children, residential services for children and youth, integrated family and youth services, specialized counseling, school social work, student guidance, and hotline services. With 90 service centers, these programs deliver vital support, counseling, and development opportunities to those in need.

Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council

Established in 1966, the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council has provided a wide range of social services, from caring for infants and toddlers to supporting the elderly, from promoting physical and mental health to offering rehabilitation care, from community support to residential care, from life education to end-of-life care, from social work intervention to interdisciplinary team collaboration. Additionally, they provide food assistance, community living room, and transitional housing to grassroots families. The Welfare Council currently operates over 250 service units and member agencies across Hong Kong, Macau, and Guangzhou, creating a comprehensive and close-knit service network. They offer personalised services and holistic care to those in need, helping them to "transform life, live in abundance".

The Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council

The Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council (NAAC) is committed to fostering self-help, mutual support, equity, and justice, aiming to build a society characterized by caring, respect, and sharing. Central to this mission are their Family and Child Welfare Services, which focus on strengthening family bonds and cultivating child development. Recognizing the evolution of family structures in Hong Kong from large extended families to core units, NAAC addresses the vulnerabilities in the family support network. Their services provide essential support to individuals and families, helping to build resilient family connections. The Tung Chung Integrated Services Centre, established in 2001, exemplifies NAAC's community-based approach, offering a one-stop array of activities tailored to the needs of individuals and families across all life stages, emphasizing a strength-based perspective.