

Symposium Title: Insights and Lessons Learned in International Mental Health Promotion

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Background: Globalization and advances in communication technologies have enabled increased international cross-cultural collaborations in mental health promotion and research. These collaborations contribute to increased knowledge synthesis, exchange, and uptake to advance innovative policy and practice. However, effective collaborations require a collective understanding of cross-cultural and cross-nation dynamics. In 2018, forty multidisciplinary researchers in Canada and China formed a partnership and secured resources to collaborate in a five-year implementation research -Linking Hearts- in Jinan, Shandong, China.

Aims: The presenters of this symposium aim to share critical insights gained from Linking Hearts and offer innovative strategies that support international collaboration. The Linking Hearts team will engage and train 360 multidisciplinary professionals and 360 university students in Jinan to become champions to reduce stigma and promote mental health. The Canada-China team collaborates to adapt and implement an evidence-informed intervention, Acceptance and Commitment to Empowerment – Linking Youth and ‘Xin’ (hearts), developed and evaluated in Canada. ACE-LYNX consists of: (1) Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, a mindfulness-based psychological intervention, and (2) Group Empowerment Psychoeducation which integrates critical dialogue and collaborative learning.

Methods: This symposium consists of three presentations that call attention to multiple critical aspects of effective collaboration: (1) theoretical grounding in project design and implementation; (2) establishment of equitable partnership principles; (3) cross-discipline dialogue and exchange; (4) pragmatic adaptation in real-world contexts; and (5) defining and redefining ‘cultures’ in international collaboration.

Results: This symposium offers new knowledge and insights, gained from Linking Hearts, to illustrate the processes and outcomes of applying evidence-informed implementation frameworks, principles of equitable partnership, grounded flexibility, and cultural analysis to enhance effective and empowering international collaboration.

Discussion: Globalization has given rise to ample opportunities of collaboration in healthcare practices. Through the presenters’ sharing, attendees will have the opportunity to reflect on

the potential gains and challenges in cross-cultural interdisciplinary collaborations in research and practice.

Learning Objectives: At the conclusion of the symposium, learners will be able to:

1. Articulate the challenges, facilitators, and complex issues in research collaborations;
2. Describe three strategies to enhance effective research collaboration across disciplines, cultures, and nations;

References:

1. Bridle, H., Vrieling, A., Cardillo, M., Araya Y., & Hinojosa, L. (2013). Preparing for an interdisciplinary future: A perspective from early-career researchers. *Futures*, 53, 22-32. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2013.09.003
2. Leahey, E., Beckman, C.M., & Stanko, T.L. (2016). Prominent but less productive: The impact of interdisciplinary on scientists' research. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 62, 105-139. doi: 10.1177/0001839216665364