



**Service Priorities and Programmes**  
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**Drama approach to enhance positive emotion in patients with mental illness**

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**Introduction**

Occupational therapy plays significant role in advocating Recovery-Oriented Practice (ROP), which fosters person-centered and strength-based activities etc. Drama allows free role repertoire, which fits well into ROP context. As an action-oriented therapy, drama intervention has some unique features that talking therapies have not. Emotions and thoughts can be distorted and hard to contain for people with schizophrenia. Conventional psychotherapy hence can be problematic as it requires some ability to self-regulate feelings and thoughts and to undergo basic reality-checking. The distancing effect of drama therapy can contain delusional contents, which are sensitive and alarming to clients that they might choose to deny or minimize them. By acting the idea out in a symbolic way or in metaphorical way, it can help client to ventilate their thoughts. With regard, 10 weekly drama sessions in group format were implemented in Yung Fung Shee Psychiatric Day Hospital (YFSPDH) from November 2012-January 2013, which was under the supervision of drama therapist.

**Objectives**

The main objectives of the 10-session drama program were to 1) enhance the self efficacy and 2) positive emotions of people with chronic schizophrenia by allowing emotional ventilation and assertiveness.

**Methodology**

A focused group interview proceeded immediately after the last session of the program. There were 7 participants recruited in the focused group interview. The participants were initially asked a broad question, 'what do you think about the 10-session drama program?' to allow free expression of feelings about the program. They were then asked four guided questions to explore their gains from the program, what parts they liked or disliked, and any suggestion for improvement. Subsequent probing questions were asked based on their responses to elicit more insight and in-depth discussion. The qualitative content was analyzed by transcribing meaningful statements and paragraphs. Coding was assigned to useful information, which was then sorted into categories based on difference and similarities.

## **Result**

The seven categories identified in the analysis were 1) feelings of stress relief, 2) senses of achievement, 3) enhancement of positive emotions, 4) confidence in verbal fluency, 5) obtainment of freedom, 6) barrier to face emotion and 7) unwillingness to resume reality. The effectiveness of 10-session drama on the enhancements of social skills, assertiveness, positive emotion and emotional expression could be witnessed through behavioral observation and qualitative data. The here-and-now experience could definitely benefit them by relieving their stresses and promoting self