

T8.3

Nursing: Helping the Elderly Patients in the Community

09:00 Theatre 2

Strengthening Parenting of Mothers with Depression in Community Psychiatric Services

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Parenting nowadays is widely known to be challenging. In the Intensive Care Team of Community Psychiatric Services of Kwai Chung Hospital, there are many female clients with depression who have to take up the parenting role. Other complex social and economic issues such as marital discord, poor housing, financial strain faced at the same time have led to further distress. Coping with mental health condition on one hand and parenting on the other cause these clients to be particularly stressful. The depressive symptoms often interfere with the provision of child care and mother-child interaction. Evidences have shown that negative parenting may affect the children's social and emotional development negatively. It then becomes a vicious cycle on the maternal depression and parenting behaviours.

Parenting programmes are found to be effective in improving the parental well-being and parent-child interaction. Group-based positive parenting programme was attempted but considered unsatisfactory due to the common difficulties of group work encountered in community setting. Besides, unlike the motivated parents in mainstream context, the intense mental distress of the clients in the Intensive Care Team had difficulty trying out positive parenting behaviours with short-term group programme.

To modify the practice, one-to-one parenting intervention during home visits can be more flexible and tailored to the clients' specific conditions. Moreover, the focus of parenting is about the emotional connection between mothers and children, rather than modifying the difficult behaviours of the children. The parenting interventions consisted of (1) raising clients' awareness of emotional arousal like anger and hostility during identified, specific parenting situations, and then employing mindfulness breathing to calm their emotions; (2) engaging children in play activity together for 10 to 20 minutes daily. As a result, it appeared that there was improvement in clients' own emotional awareness as well as reduced frequency of difficult moments with their children reportedly.