

Future-Ready Series : Research Postgraduate Wellness Initiative 2023/24



Filling Conversations: Exploring Our Emotions through Storytelling and Art *(Student-led session)*

Ms. Stephanie Ng, PhD, School of English
Mr. Jealdrin Madrid, Be/longing HK

Date: January 12, 2024 (Friday)

Time: 3:30 p.m. – 5:20 p.m.

Venue: Centennial Campus, HKU

Overview

Have you ever felt an emotion that you didn't know how to describe in words? Have you ever stopped yourself from sharing how you felt because you were scared of how others around you might respond? While these experiences can make us feel very lonely, they are actually very common.

In the “Filling Conversations” workshop, you are invited to participate in a series of interactive storytelling and arts-and-crafts activities aimed at helping you to explore your emotions and to empathise with others’ emotional experiences as well. Building on the concept of the Story Circle, coined by John O’Neal, a civil rights activist, playwright, and actor, this experience aims to carve out a safe space for participants to share stories and personal experiences. “Filling’ Conversations” is an adaptation of “Unwrapped”, an experiential workshop co-created with Peace Generation and Jane Ngai. This workshop was first delivered during be/longing’s 2023 event, “Seated with Strangers” .

To prepare for the workshop, we ask that you bring a few items of old clothing and your sense of curiosity 😊

Learning Outcomes

After completing the workshop, students will be able to:

- Describe a personal experience and the emotions that they felt during that experience.
- Practice active listening skills when peers share their experiences.
- Practice using the mediums of storytelling and arts-and-crafts activities to identify, process, and cope with different emotions.



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Learning Activities

During the workshop, students will:

- Listen to a presentation on (1) the importance of learning to identify our emotions, (2) the different ways that our emotional experiences can manifest within ourselves (e.g., as thoughts and physical sensations) and between us (i.e., different people experience and express their emotions differently).
- Participate in small-group discussions about (1) the challenges of identifying and expressing our emotions in the HK cultural context, and (2) strategies to accept both pleasant and unpleasant emotions.
- Participate in an arts-and-crafts activity involving using scrap cloth to create 'dumplings' which represent a 'turning point' moment in their lives – that is, an event that changed their perspective or impacted them in a significant way. At the end of the workshop, students will share their 'dumplings' with the rest of the group.
- Reflect on the experience of sharing part of their life story with a group of peers, and hearing others' stories.
- Consider how they can continue to practice self-reflection and listening to others in their everyday lives.

Remarks

Students are asked to bring a few items of your old clothing or scrap cloth/old clothing to the workshop. There will be personal sharing during the session and it is important for students to ensure the confidentiality of any personal experience/opinions shared.

About the Instructors

Stephanie Ng is a mental health advocate, entrepreneur and researcher whose work aims to foster caring conversations on body image and mental health topics, particularly amongst young people in Hong Kong. She is the founder of Body Banter, a registered Section 88 charity in Hong Kong on a mission to empower young people to spark conversations about body image with curiosity and courage. As a research fellow with local mental health charity Mind HK and as a PhD candidate at HKU, she conducts research into the role of storytelling in shaping perspectives toward mental illness and recovery in Hong Kong, and incorporates these insights into evidence-based mental health initiatives.

Her influential voice in the field of mental health and body image advocacy has gained international recognition, and has been featured on prominent platforms such as BBC, TED, Channel NewsAsia, Tatler Asia, NowTV, and Deutsche-Welle. She is the winner of the Young Changemaker Award at the American Chambers of Commerce Women of Influence Awards 2023, and the recipient of the Youth Award at Jessica Magazine's Most Successful Women Awards 2023.

Jealdrin Madrid has been working professionally as a Marketing Specialist for five years within various industries. Jealdrin values sustainable actions and focuses on well-organised strategies in the workplace. In addition, he specialises in community building outside of the office through the creation of (youth) programs, career mentoring and arts workshops. He serves as an executive board member of Be/longing HK, where he champions storytelling through the arts to break barriers in the city. Be/longing HK uses storytelling and other art forms to promote inclusivity for Hong Kong's ethnically diverse communities.

