

Abstract Submission for a Conference Seminar

**From Alienation to Alliance: Reflective Journeys of Counselling Psychologists
Trained in Sign Interpreter-Involved Psychotherapy**

Lan-Sze Pang¹, Ka Yi Tam², Lok Man Lui³, Hoi Ying Tam⁴, Xin Yi Tang⁵, Siu Long Ringo
Wong⁶, Ka Ho Tong⁷, and Tsz Lui Lau⁸

¹Hong Kong Shue Yan University ² Edge Development Centre ³ Hong Kong Shue Yan
University ⁴Ascendo Health ⁵ New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association
⁶ Methodist Centre ⁷ Hong Kong Shue Yan University ⁸The Centre for Sign Linguistics
and Deaf Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

This seminar presents experiential reflections from counselling psychologists who completed Hong Kong's first research-informed systematic training in sign interpreter-involved psychotherapy. Designed and facilitated by a registered counselling psychologist (the first author) specializing in multicultural counselling training and psycholinguistic phenomena, the pilot scheme combined experiential-dialectical workshops with process-oriented group supervision and a clinical practicum. The cohort comprised seven master's- to doctoral-level counselling psychologists with over three years of clinical experience, prior multicultural counselling coursework, and Hong Kong Sign Language proficiency ranging from none to fluency. Three cohort members will reflect on how these three training dimensions impacted their clinical competence, professional identity, and therapeutic effectiveness. Initial training stages revealed common challenges among therapists, including feelings of nervousness and alienation within the triadic dynamic and a tendency to overemphasize a problem-saturated Deaf narrative. Through reflexive workshops and supervision, therapists moved beyond stereotypical Deaf-Hearing differences toward integrating a holistic, multiple-identity perspective. This shift fostered recognition of shared human experiences, clients' internal strengths, and positioning Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing (D/HH) clients, instead of service providers, as experts of their lived experiences. Therapists were guided to establish a collaborative workflow with sign interpreters within nuanced clinical realities, bolstering therapists' professional integrity and capacity to form meaningful therapeutic alliances with their D/HH client, yielding full retention. The audience will gain insights into how multidimensional, experiential multicultural counselling training facilitates the co-construction of culturally and psycholinguistically responsive practice, supporting therapists' growth while contributing to enhanced mental health care for the Deaf community.

(242 words)

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