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**The effectiveness and cultural compatibility of a
guided self-help cognitive-behaviour programme for
Asian students in New Zealand**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Masters of Arts in Psychology at
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New Zealand

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Abstract

With more Asian migrants and students coming to New Zealand, there is a need to provide psychological interventions that is both effective and culturally compatible. Even though Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) has been shown to be an effective intervention in the treatment of depression and anxiety, few researches have examined the effectiveness of CBT with Asian populations outside the United States. Furthermore, no research has been identified that looked at the effectiveness of low intensity CBT with Asians in New Zealand. From an emic perspective, the cultural values and principles in which interventions were developed in, warranted that it be tested with other cultures to determine if its effectiveness was cross-cultural.

The purpose of the study was to fill the gap by examining the effectiveness and cultural compatibility of a guided self-help, low intensity CBT programme, Living Life to the Full (Williams, 2007), for students of Asian descent in New Zealand. A sample of 11 East Asian and Southeast Asian participants was recruited from universities and language school around the Auckland area. Quantitative measures were administered throughout the 8 weeks of the programme, and qualitative feedback was obtained at the end of the programme. Results supported the effectiveness of the programme, in the reduction of depression and anxiety, and the improvement of quality of life, adjustment and participants' understanding of stress and low mood. In addition, participants found the programme culturally compatible and beneficial. The findings supported the suitability of the low intensity CBT programme for use with the Asian population.

Asian immigrants and students experience unique stressors and problems associated with adjusting to a new culture. Low intensity CBT helps to remove the barriers of stigma and reluctance to seek help, by providing a more accessible form of psychological interventions that is effective and culturally compatible with the Asian population.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Figures.....	viii
List of Tables.....	ix
CHAPTER 1: Introduction.....	1
CHAPTER 2: Mental Health through the Lens of Culture.....	3
How important is culture?.....	3
The New Zealand context.....	4
Mental health in New Zealand.....	4
Asian in New Zealand.....	5
Difference between the East and West.....	5
Influences and values of Chinese culture.....	6
Cultural explanation and responses for mental health problems.....	6
Problems with immigration for Asians in New Zealand.....	7
Stigma and shame: barriers to accessing help.....	8
International students of Asian descent.....	9
Expectation for academic success.....	10
Loss of social support.....	10
Poor adjustment.....	11
Reluctance to seek help.....	11
Summary.....	11
CHAPTER 3: Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and its Use with Asians.....	13
History of CBT.....	13
Principles of CBT.....	13
Using CBT with Asians.....	14
Principles of CBT are transferable.....	15
Modifications to CBT.....	16
Summary.....	17
CHAPTER 4: Low Intensity CBT.....	18
The need for Low Intensity CBT.....	18
Principles of LI-CBT.....	19
Benefits of LI-CBT.....	19
Challenges to LI-CBT.....	20

Suitable client characteristics for LI-CBT	20
Types of LI-CBT.....	21
Guided self-help versus unguided self-help.....	21
Internet-based verses book-based	22
Individuals versus group-based.....	23
The empirical evidence for Low-Intensity CBT.....	23
HI-CBT versus LI-CBT	24
Guided versus unguided self-help.....	24
Modes of LI-CBT delivery	25
Living Life to the Full.....	25
Summary	26
CHAPTER 5: Present study	28
Research rationale.....	28
Research aim.....	28
Research hypotheses	28
CHAPTER 6: Method.....	30
Participants.....	30
Inclusion/exclusion criteria.....	30
Design	30
Procedure	31
Recruitment.....	31
Screening questionnaire	31
Informed consent	31
Intervention	32
Measures	33
Patient Health Questionnaire 9 (PHQ-9).....	34
Generalised Anxiety Disorder 7 (GAD-7)	34
World Health Organisation Quality of Life Questionnaire (WHOQOL-BREF)	35
Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ)	36
Understanding stress and low mood (UndSLM).....	36
Client Satisfaction Questionnaire 8 (CSQ-8).....	37
Semi-structured interview	37
CHAPTER 7: Results	38
Part I. Preliminary Data Screening	38
Missing data.....	38
Normality.....	39

Outliers.....	39
Part II: Effectiveness of the guided self-help programme	39
Group's scores across time	39
Depressive and anxiety symptoms	39
Quality of life.....	40
Adjustment to studying.....	41
Understanding of stress and low mood.....	42
Individuals' scores across time	43
Clinical significance.....	43
Comparing sample means	45
Part III: Cultural compatibility of the guided self-help programme	47
Participant satisfaction.....	48
Semi-structured interview	48
Helpful aspects of the programme	48
Recommend to friends	50
Meeting expectations	50
Facilitator support	51
Less relevant parts of the programme	51
Cultural compatibility	52
Resolving problems	53
Help seeking behaviour.....	54
Family influence	55
CHAPTER 8: Discussion.....	56
Summary of aims and findings	56
Hypothesis 1: Group ratings on the outcome measures would improve over time.....	56
Hypothesis 2: Individual participants' scores would improve at a clinically significant level and when compared to sample means.....	57
Hypothesis 3: Participants would be satisfied with the programme and find it suitability and cultural compatible.....	58
Satisfaction.....	58
Suitability	59
Cultural compatibility	60
Limitations of the study	62
Measures	62
Language proficiency.....	63
Social desirability.....	63

Self-referred	63
Small sample	64
Extraneous variable.....	64
Recommendations for future research	65
Implications for clinical practice.....	66
Conclusion	67
References.....	69
Appendix A: Programme Posters and Flyers in English and Mandarin	87
Appendix B: Screening Questionnaire.....	89
Appendix C: Information Sheet	90
Appendix D: Consent Form	93
Appendix E: Patient Health Questionnaire 9 (PHQ-9)	94
Appendix F: Generalised Anxiety Disorder 7 (GAD-7)	95
Appendix G: Understanding stress and low mood (UndSLM).....	96
Appendix H: Client Satisfaction Questionnaire 8 (CSQ-8)	97
Appendix I: Semi-structured Interview Questions.....	98
Appendix J: Outliers by Participant, Measure and Time, with the Participant's Score and the Group Mean Score on the Corresponding Measure.....	99

List of Figures

- Figure 1 The decrease in mean scores on the PHQ-9 and GAD-7 at baseline and across the 8 weeks of the programme
- Figure 2 The increase in mean scores on the WHOQOL-BREF subscales at baseline, week 4 and week 8
- Figure 3 The increase in mean scores on the SACQ subscales at baseline and week 8
- Figure 4 The increase in mean scores on the UndSLM at baseline and week 8
- Figure 5 The mean change on the PHQ-9 and GAD-7 for the clinical and non-clinical groups at baseline and week 8

List of Tables

Table 1	The self-help materials used in this study, with the week the booklet was presented, the name of the booklet, and the topic the booklet covered
Table 2	The mean, standard deviation, t-score, degree of freedom, and two-tailed p-value for the scores at baseline and week 8 across all the WHOQOL subscales
Table 3	The mean, standard deviation, t-score, degree of freedom, and two-tailed p-value for the scores at baseline and week 8 across all the SACQ scales
Table 4	Participants' PHQ-9 and GAD-7 scores at baseline (pre) and week 8 (post) with an indication of clinical significance
Table 5	Comparing sample means with participants' scores across the four WHOQOL-BREF subscales at baseline and week 8
Table 6	Comparing sample means with participants' scores across the five SACQ scales at baseline and week 8