

DOCTORAL THESIS

Mental Health Recovery Strengths of Chinese Emerging Adults

CHEN, Qi Rong

Date of Award:
2024

[Link to publication](#)

General rights

Copyright and intellectual property rights for the publications made accessible in HKBU Scholars are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners. In addition to the restrictions prescribed by the Copyright Ordinance of Hong Kong, all users and readers must also observe the following terms of use:

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from HKBU Scholars for the purpose of private study or research
- Users cannot further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- To share publications in HKBU Scholars with others, users are welcome to freely distribute the permanent URL assigned to the publication

Mental Health Recovery Strengths of Chinese Emerging Adults

CHEN Qi Rong

Abstract

Emerging adulthood is a particular life stage that occurs during the transition from adolescence to adulthood and is characterized by specific developmental challenges, of which mental health is a particular concern among this population. In the past few decades, mental health services have witnessed paradigmatic shifts, including the change from problem-oriented to strengths-based practices and from functional recovery to personal recovery. However, studies of Chinese emerging adults and their strengths in mental health recovery are still in their infancy in China.

This study systematically examines the strengths that promote mental health recovery, denoted as recovery strengths, of Chinese emerging adults. The study aims to understand the recovery strengths of Chinese emerging adults and promote strengths-based practice to improve the mental health recovery of this population in the Chinese context. By adopting an exploratory sequential mixed-methods research design, three empirical studies are carried out with Chinese emerging adults in mainland China.

The first study aims to explore the underlying domains of recovery strengths among Chinese emerging adults. Chinese emerging adults who are recovering from mental health issues (N=15) and mental health practitioners (N=15) are recruited to participate in individual in-depth semi-structured interviews. Content analysis suggests that the domains of recovery strengths can be grouped into individual, interpersonal, and environmental strengths. Furthermore, four themes of strengths derived from traditional Chinese culture that promote the mental health recovery of Chinese emerging adults are revealed, including familial values that emphasize filial piety and consanguinity, interpersonal relationships that value harmony, spirit of self-introspection and self-improvement, and ways of life that follow natural laws.

The second study develops and validates a strengths-based assessment tool, named the Recovery Strengths Scale (RSS), to measure the recovery strengths of Chinese emerging adults. Chinese emerging adults who are in recovery (N=420) are recruited to complete an online survey. The factor structure of the RSS is identified via an exploratory factor analysis. Another sample of Chinese emerging adults who are in recovery (N=456) is recruited to validate the factorial model of the RSS via a confirmatory factor analysis. The results indicate that the RSS is a 42-item scale comprising nine domains: social connectedness, professional services, mental health literacy, peer support, social skills, family support, family cohesion, goals and hopes, and active response, with satisfactory reliability and validity.

The third study investigates the features and roles of recovery strengths of the sample (N=876) in mainland China. The results show that their recovery strengths significantly vary across genders, occupational status, and educational levels. Recovery strengths significantly and partially mediate the relationship between mental health recovery and life satisfaction.

In conclusion, the concept of recovery strengths is a multidimensional construct that plays an essential role in the mental health of Chinese emerging adults. The RSS is an effective strengths-based assessment to measure the recovery strengths of Chinese emerging adults. Promoting the recovery strengths of Chinese emerging adults is promising to improve their mental well-being.

Keywords: recovery strengths, strengths assessment, emerging adulthood, Chinese culture