




Public Lecture

Reframing Mental Health Risks in ADHD and Autism: The Contribution of RE-STAR

 CPD-2.42, 2/F
The Jockey Club Tower
Centennial Campus, HKU

 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

 (For participants who couldn't attend the seminar in person)

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Abstract

Young people with ADHD and autism are at increased risk for depression and anxiety. Traditional accounts focus on internal deficits in emotion regulation as the source of this risk. The Regulating Emotions – Strengthening Adolescent Resilience (RE-STAR) programme set out to explore these mechanisms in order to develop new interventions to target this risk. However, interviews with young people with ADHD and autism revealed an alternative account that shifted the focus from internal deficits to external challenges. This led to a new concept and a new hypothesis: That mental health difficulties experienced by neurodivergent young people are due to accumulated emotional burden caused by intensely experienced, extreme levels of common upsetting events and encounters in everyday life. Through a series of different work packages the RE-STAR team; (i) worked out how to measure emotional burden, (ii) tested its functional brain correlates, (iii) explored its significance in school, (iv) studied its longitudinal outcomes and (v) developed a school-based intervention to address it. RE-STAR is now finished. In this talk I will give an overview of the entire study, highlighting its contributions and providing pointers for the next stage of study.

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