

## ***Mental health of Asian LGBTI Population in Auckland***

Speakers: Mr Seng Poh Lee and Mr Yun Huang

Dear members

The Cross Cultural Interest Group workshop **on 27 November 2018** was well attended. More than 60 colleagues from various health disciplines attended the evening workshop. Thank you to those who stayed behind to help tidy up the meeting room and rearrange the furniture.

Our presenters include **Mr Seng Poh Lee**, a registered psychotherapist in private practice with extensive knowledge and experience working with the rainbow community; and **Mr Yun Huang**, Asian Community Engagement Coordinator at New Zealand AIDS Foundation.

The session started with Seng Poh giving an introduction to the terms commonly used to describe the rainbow community. A series of pictures and photos were used to demonstrate the diversity of this community.



It was followed by Yun introducing the NZ AIDS foundation and his specific role working with Asian MSM (men having sex with men) in Auckland. Yun gave an update on the medical practice of HIV prevention and treatment. In particular, a HIV positive person with undetectable viral load has no risk of transmitting an infection, i.e. undetectable = untransmissible, "U=U"..

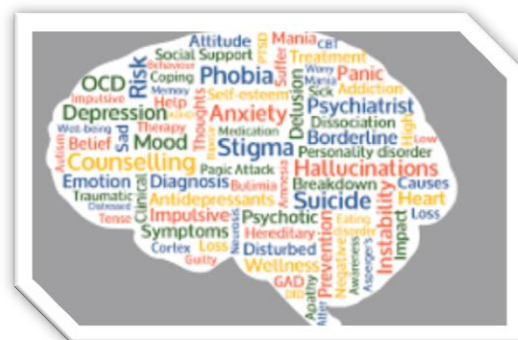


**Mr Seng Poh Lee**



**Mr Yun Huang**

Seng Poh then gave a comprehensive presentation on the mental health challenges faced by the rainbow community when they were also a racial minority. Common mental health challenges include depression, anxiety, increase in suicide risk, alcohol and drug use, and others. A person who is mentally unwell is less likely to take appropriate precautions against sexually transmitted disease or to cooperate with treatment, increasing the risk of having sexually transmitted disease (STD) including HIV. The psychological burden associated with STD infection worsens mental health.



Seng Poh moved onto discuss the importance of openness and non-judgemental attitude when clinicians work with the rainbow community. He pointed out common issues like making assumptions on a person's gender identity, "microaggressions" in seemingly normal conversations, and attempts to fit a queer person into a certain set of descriptions.

This was echoed by Yun who discussed ways of engaging the Asian rainbow community into services. He shared his success story of engaging Asian MSM in NZ AIDS foundation. Engagement was made possible by an open and accepting attitude, seeing clients as whole person with different facets of life.

A number of thought provoking questions were asked regarding the situation of transgendered people, and suggestions on working with clients with traditional family and religious background.



For more detail about the session, you can view the recording via the **Vimeo link:**

<https://vimeo.com/304811384>

**Password:** WongConsultationGroup1234

#### **Next meeting:**

The next meeting will be:

Topic: **The role of Age Concern in elder abuse**

Tuesday: 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019 (6pm to 8.30pm)

Venue: Conference Room, Independent Living Service, 14 Erson Avenue, Royal Oak, Auckland

**A flyer with more information will be sent out nearer time.**

Thank you again for your interest and support and we look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

***Merry Christmas and Happy New Year***

**Sheila Chan**

***On behalf of the Cross Cultural Interest Advisory Group***

*For more information about the advisory group, newsletters, membership application, previous topics, please go to*

[www.ecald.com/cross-cultural-interest-group/](http://www.ecald.com/cross-cultural-interest-group/).

