

Communication Strategies Guided by the Key Principles of Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST): Development and Potential Applications

¹Winsy Wing Sze Wong, ²Gloria Hoi Yan Wong, ³ Jacky Chak Pui Choy, ¹Qihan Huang

¹The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, HKHKSAR

²University of Reading, UK

³The University of Hong Kong, HKSAR

Introduction: Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST) is an evidence-based behavioural intervention for people with mild/mild-to-moderate dementia (Spector et al; 2003). Benefits to different aspects, such as cognition, communication and social interaction, and activities of daily living, have been obtained (see a Cochrane Review by Woods et al., 2023). The three aspects of CST attributed to the positive outcomes suggested in Woods et al. (2023), namely generalized cognitive exercise, social interaction and support, and a person-centered approach, are largely consistent with the 18 key guiding principles of CST (Spector et al., 2022) introduced and stressed during CST facilitator training. Nevertheless, little is known about what communication strategies are related to the key CST principles, and whether (and how) these strategies may affect the communication and interaction among the facilitators and people with dementia (PwD). The current study aims to identify communication strategies stemming from key CST principles.

Method: Ten certified CST trainers will be invited to join a focus group to discuss and identify communication behaviors of the CST facilitators that may promote/impede PwD's verbal and nonverbal communication and resolution of communication breakdown. A qualitative analysis of the transcribed interview will be conducted to categorize the facilitative/non-facilitative strategies derived from the key principles (i.e., CST-based communication strategies) under different themes.

Results and Significance: The CST-based communication strategies will be summarized and discussed. The potential applications, such as exploration of the relationship between facilitator's and PwD's interaction during CST sessions and their relation to therapy outcomes, will be discussed.