

## What We Offer

The clinical health psychologists of the Clinical Health Psychology Centre have ample experiences helping women resolve physical and psychological health issues. We provide professional and comprehensive assessments and offer sound psychological advice and guidance for individuals with issues and difficulties related to:

- Parenting
- Self-confidence
- Relationships
- Work
- Stresses
- Decisions and choices
- Mental health
- Adjusting to physical problems
- Sexual health
- Burden and care of the elderly
- Bereavement and losses

The clinical health psychologists of the Clinical Health Psychology Centre aim to provide advice and assistance that promote success and fulfillment, enhance problem resolution and adjustments at different stages of a woman's life. Joint sessions with couples and/or family members may also be arranged to foster better communication and understanding.

## Women in Contemporary Society: Demands & Struggles

Women in modern society often have to struggle to meet multiple demands and responsibilities. Working women are often exhausted after work, yet are expected (and expect themselves) to take on domestic tasks (cooking, keeping the house clean, supervising children, looking after their husbands and caring for parents and in-laws). Some also have the burden of pursuing further studies for career advancement.

### Difficult Choices

Managing multiple stresses and demands, women often face conflicts within themselves and in relationships with their loved ones. Common dilemmas include making difficult choices that involve working and leaving children to the care of maids or on their own, and pursuing personal interests and career advancement over family affairs and interests. The potential cost of facing unresolved stresses and difficult choices is huge, and women may find themselves in a no-win situation with growing emotional distance among family members, weakening of mutual understanding, and even escalating family crises and break-ups despite personal sacrifices and utmost efforts.

### Health Consequences

Adverse health consequences may also be incurred. Women's biological dispositions, reproductive system, gynaecological health and sexual practices may place them in a vulnerable position. With chronic unremitting stresses, women are prone to develop emotional distress and problems, the most common being depression, insomnia and anxiety.

## Challenges in a Woman's Life Cycle

Since puberty, women are confronted with a range of health and psychosexual issues. These issues may include:

- With onset of menstruation, there is an increasing concern over secondary sexual characteristics, gender identity, body shape and image
- With increased opportunities to interact with the opposite sex, they are exposed to issues involving romances, intimacy, broken love affairs and relationships, with potential adverse implications on self-esteem and emotional stability
- Being sexually active, there is the need to observe safe sex practices, contraception, HPV vaccinations, etc.
- The need to make plans for marriage, pregnancy, child delivery, breast-feeding and child care, and to cope with unexpected and unwanted events like miscarriages, abortions and infertility
- Meeting the challenge of motherhood and dealing with the stresses of marital life
- Coping with health problems, such as menstrual and pelvic pains, maternal diabetes, weight issues, sexually transmitted diseases, gynaecological problems, and a host of common cancers. Some clinical problems are particularly common among females, e.g. eating disorders, anxiety and mood disorders, ante- and post-depression
- Managing the physical and emotional challenges associated with menopause, ageing, retirement and losses

Being a woman is not easy. However, overcoming challenges successfully is highly rewarding and fulfilling! In this process, awareness and maintenance of mental well-being is of utmost importance.

## Positive Steps

Women need to learn to balance responsibilities with reserving time for themselves. Assigning priority in taking good care of oneself is a prerequisite for upkeeping the ability to care for others. Nurturing healthy habits of eating, sleep, exercise and relaxation is important. While individuals differ in needs and preferences, women should always make quality time for themselves, take up activities of preference, exercise, take a walk, engage in hobbies or simply take a break or do nothing at all. Keeping in touch with friends is also important. Chatting away on your wildest dreams and fantasies with a trusted friend brings joy and fun, and provides a valuable opportunity for ventilation and nurturance of psychological well-being. Sharing your ideas with someone who genuinely cares may invite positive suggestions to broaden and expand your tactics of problem resolution and stress reduction.

However, if you need more help than a friend can offer, getting prompt psychological advice may help to lift you up to higher levels of life satisfaction and personal effectiveness.

