Culture and How It Shapes and Protects against Mental Illness Stigma: Empirical Illustrations from Chinese Groups

Date: March 21, 2014 (Friday)
Time: 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Venue: Social Sciences Chamber, 11/F, The Jockey Club Tower, Centennial Campus, HKU
Speaker: Dr. Lawrence H. Yang
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Mental illness stigma is known to vary by culture, but there have been few theoretical formulations of how culture shapes how stigma is experienced across cultures. Dr. Yang will present a new theoretical framework of 'what matters most', or the capacities that define what it means to be a full-fledged 'person' in cultural groups, and how this novel framework facilitates identification and prediction of stigma's cultural effects. He will illustrate this theoretical framework with 3 studies: 1) qualitative study of 50 Chinese immigrants with psychosis; 2) national vignette study with 56 Chinese immigrants and 589 European Americans; and 3) experimental memory paradigm with 48 Chinese American and 37 European American college students. These studies provide new evidence that 'threat to lineage' constitutes a threat to 'what matters most' among Chinese groups that exacerbates stigma in this population. These findings have important implications for culture-specific measurement and anti-stigma interventions in Chinese groups.