



**MSI PROFESSIONAL SERVICES LIMITED**

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Your Life is the

**MSI Bulletin**

A Call to Christian Professionals

# Board ADVENTURE

PRINTED MATTER

Almond So

Joyce Lau

## WHERE IS YOUR BLANKET WHEN THE SKY FALLS?

During my childhood, I enjoyed playing games such as Chinese checkers and Monopoly with my family and friends. However, I never thought these games, now called board games, can be used for therapy.

I had the privilege of attending a board game for therapy training in March, and would like to share what I gained from the session:

What are board games?

Board games refers to all games that are fun, played at a table yet with a clear objective. It started in Germany during the 1990s and has gained worldwide popularity since.

The 4 steps to use Board games for therapy are: observation, analysis, diagnosis and therapy.

What I gained from the training session:

1. To relax and play which by themselves can already relieve stress: we all enjoyed the games a lot during the training session. I believe the relaxation of clients during a session could already achieve a certain level of therapy.

2. To learn a new method of counselling to help children with special needs in the future. One purpose of therapeutic board games is to improve concentration and hand to eye coordination. I once played a game of building a tree with leaves and fruits (similar to the wooden blocks stacking game) which requires very steady hand movements.
3. A natural icebreaker and a great way to get to know each other. One ice-breaking activity I have used previously with field workers and volunteers had pictures with 1, 2 or 10+ matchstick people. The participants had to pick the picture which best represents the relationship they have with their families to share with the group. The group got to know each other's family and past experiences better through this activity, and built a deeper relationship with one another.

Conclusion: Board games is a great tool to use, whether as a therapy tool or a fun activity. Come and experience it for yourself!

The sky is falling! Plans and schedules crashed, planes and operations stalled while anxiety and confusion skyrocketed. COVID-19 which was first discovered in China is now a worldwide phenomenon and international pandemic. As all of us are still experiencing and reeling from this, thank you for taking the time off from following online COVID-19 statistics, medical facts and human tragedies to pause and reflect together what God is doing.

We were first alerted of the COVID-19 during our annual conference in January. To be honest, it was just a blip on my radar and I hardly noticed. Boy, was I wrong! As we all returned home for Chinese New Year, the scale and severity of the pandemic rapidly unfolded before the world's eyes. We scrambled to deliver coherent guidelines on whether colleagues should return to their sites after their annual Spring break. There were also MSI colleagues who were already in mainland China, together with local staff and partners. I became involved in this whirlwind of operations as I myself had to decide whether to stay or to go.

It was no longer a given that we could happily hop onto the plane and return to our beloved sites. I re-discovered it is really by God's grace that we are able to live and work in China. COVID-19 really hit this home.

Amidst the chaos and cacophony of voices, I am encouraged many MSI colleagues and staff paused and sought His help and leading. I believe it is God who enabled us to see and seize the opportunity to explore different ways of serving. What some would define as creativity, I would deem as necessity when we partner God. The new norm only feels new for us. God is not surprised or shocked by the pandemic but has been waiting for us to take time to listen, to

see and to follow His plans and His purposes.

In this bulletin, you would read how we are adopting online training as an integral part of our service opportunities. You would also discover how MSI colleagues are ministered to first before we minister to others, and how we need to continually learn new skills before we teach and journey with others. Find out how we are expanding the scope of the professional services we offer to better fit the needs of those we serve. I believe this new normal is not externally enforced by the pandemic but God's way of moulding MSI to abide and to be in-step with Him. Amidst the floods of change, what will never change are God the Rock and for us to choose to stand on that Rock and not sinking sand. Even if the sky falls, He is the blanket we take refuge in. We welcome you to continue to enjoy His refuge as we serve together.



## My Gratitude for the MSI Abridged Counselling Online Course

Since last year, my wife (Irene) and I already confirmed travel plans to Chengdu this June. With plane tickets booked and hotel reservations made, our trip was cancelled last minute due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I started to wonder about the future of my overseas ministries, which I have been doing non-stop during the past ten years of early retirement. MSI President Dr. David Leung and Ms. Eva Yau, my co-worker in Sichuan, contacted me about teaching an online counselling course for MSI members, who delayed their return to sites due to COVID-19. I knew the necessity of the course, but I was hesitant because I have never taught an online counselling course. After some prayers, I agreed to the idea and submitted a course proposal to them for review. Teaching a counselling course for MSI on Zoom was indeed a blessing from the Lord, and it opened future overseas ministry opportunities.

This abridged counselling course comprises Basic Counselling skills and Advanced Counselling skills. Each component had six two-hour sessions covering lectures and skill practices. The Basic Counselling course included materials such as rapport building, role and function of a peer counsellor, setting boundaries, listening and asking questions, identifying the problems and problem solving, and mental health issues such as anxiety and stress, depression, PTSD, role-play and case studies. The Advanced Counselling course covered counselling approaches for specific mental health issues such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for Depression and Motivation Interviewing (MI) for addictive behavioural change and pros and cons of pharmacological treatments, etc.

The 100% attendance for both sessions, with over 30 in the basic and over 20 in the advanced, was exceptional! I was impressed with MSI members' dedication and commitment to learning and completion of homework (yes, I assigned homework!). They were well engaged in the training and raised excellent and pointed questions, which some could not be quickly answered. Feedback from the attendees was positive, with comments like useful and essential skills to have, practical, excellent and clear teaching, and helpful case examples, etc. I want to express my gratitude to MSI, allowing me to serve and be part of the family, and I look forward to future collaboration in God's Kingdom.

Prof. Chow S Lam



## Heart Matters

Before joining MSI in 2003, I had worked in many different areas, like nursing, project management, administrative and personnel management etc. In my job I had to dialogue with people every day. Misunderstandings arose if I was not careful with the communication content. Even if I did understand what people meant, at times I did not know how to reply to them. My learning through some short courses on 'communication skills' were evidently inadequate.

Since I joined MSI, I often need to care for the local staff and visit scholarship recipients or the sick. Seeing how stressed they were concerning their unknown future, marriage, studies, finance, job and illness, I wished I knew some basic counselling skills to help them. I have always wanted to take some psychological counselling courses taught by Christian instructors. However, our short visits in Hong Kong and too expensive or lengthy courses prevented us from doing so.

With the epidemic outbreak, many MSI colleagues were unable to return to their sites. We are thankful to the headquarter's timely arrangement of the counselling courses by Dr. Lam. During the course, he continually reminded us of our position as counsellor. We were not there to resolve the problems of those we are helping, but to walk alongside them in searching for the most appropriate remedies to their complicated problems. I used to talk non-stop about my rich life experiences and successful stories thinking that these would encourage and help others. Obviously my incessant talking did not work; in counselling more talking and less listening is indeed a taboo!

When Job in the Bible faced extreme pain in his life, his friends gave many reasons for his sufferings. Job said to them: 'If only you would be altogether silent! For you, that would be wisdom.....' (Job 13:5-8). Pray that with these counselling knowledge, we can use them to 'care for' many, and to listen well in the 'heart to heart talk'.

Amy Leung

## Equipping for the Next Lap

Annie Yeung

I attended a rehabilitation training course in April. Due to the impact of the pandemic and the restrictions on gathering, we had only four people in the class, including the instructor. Consequently, three of us had numerous opportunities to practise the rehab exercises and the instructor could spend more time to guide each of us.

Thinking back, ever since I joined MSI in 2011, I have begun to learn more about rehabilitation as required for my ministry. These rehabilitation knowledge are very helpful to the patients, such as those with stroke or cerebral palsy. Therefore, I have been searching for opportunities to gain relevant rehab knowledge all these years to enrich myself and to provide better services to the patients in our sites.

This training not only increased my knowledge in rehab, I myself also personally benefited. The instructor alerted me that I belong to the category of low muscle tone, which explains why I have a "hunchback", a poor standing posture, and an inability to wring a towel dry. The instructor also reminded me to use the strength of my torso and pelvis (pelvic bone) to support my body while standing as poor posture in the long run would cause neck and back pain. I am indeed the first beneficiary of this course and it will keep me healthy to continue the next mile of my ministry!

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33)

# INTERCEDING TOGETHER

1 Please pray for foreign passport holders awaiting return to China.

2 Please pray for more people to respond to the Lord of the harvest.

3 Please pray for continued good cooperation with local partners.

4 Please pray for our annual work plans and budget for year 2021.

5 Please pray for new ways of working and wisdom in using new technology.