

TECHNOLOGY, WELLBEING, & POLICY IN SINGAPORE

Date: Thursday, 2 October 2025, 2-5 pm

Venue: RD Seminar Room & Zoom

Address: #6-42, AS7 Shaw Foundation
Building, 5 Arts Link, 117570

Registration

In-Person

[https://Tech_Wellbeing_Policy.
eventbrite.sg](https://Tech_Wellbeing_Policy.eventbrite.sg)



Zoom

<https://shorturl.at/PWgWO>



Jungup Lee
NUS Social Work



Gerard Chung
NUS Social Work



Lim Tse Min
Fei Yue Community Services



Kean J. Hsu
NUS Psychology



Nur Hani Zainal
NUS Psychology



Singapore Research Nexus
Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences

SINGAPORE RESEARCH NEXUS <i>Technology, Wellbeing, and Policy in Singapore</i> Thursday, 2 October 2025, 2:00 to 5:00 pm	
2:00-2:10 pm	Registration
2:10-2:15 pm	Opening Remarks by Jack Meng-Tat CHIA Associate Professor, NUS History, & FASS Assistant Dean of Research
2:15-2:20 pm	Introduction of Presenters by Nina POWELL Associate Professor, NUS Psychology
2:20-2:40 pm	‘Technology-Related Harms and Youth Mental Health’ by Jungup LEE Associate Professor, NUS Social Work
2:40-2:50 pm	Q & A
2:50-3:10 pm	‘Core Components of Effective Text-based Conversations: Evidence from a Local Social Service Agency and Implications for Practice, Training, and Service Design’ by Gerard CHUNG Assistant Professor, NUS Social Work, and Tse Min LIM Senior Social Worker, Fei Yue Community Services
3:10-3:20 pm	Q & A
3:20-3:40 pm	‘Mental Health in the Age of AI Technology’ by Kean J. HSU Assistant Professor, NUS Psychology
3:40-3:50 pm	Q & A
3:50-4:10 pm	‘Promises and Pitfalls of Digital Mental Health Interventions (DMHIs): Implications for Policy, Equity, and Personalized Care in Singapore’ by Nur Hani ZAINAL Assistant Professor, NUS Psychology
4:10-4:20 pm	Q & A
4:20-4:25 pm	Closing Remarks by Jack Meng-Tat CHIA Associate Professor, NUS History, & FASS Assistant Dean of Research
4:25-5:00 pm	Refreshments & Networking with Participants

Technology-Related Harms and Youth Mental Health

Jungup LEE

NUS Department of Social Work

swklj@nus.edu.sg

2:20 pm to 2:40 pm

Digital technologies are deeply embedded in young people's daily lives, yet their pervasive use poses complex challenges for wellbeing and public policy. This presentation draws on two studies with university students in Singapore to examine how problematic smartphone use and cyberbullying victimization intersect with mental health outcomes. The first study (N=1,105) found that smartphone addiction was associated with higher levels of cyberbullying involvement, depression, and anxiety, with anxiety mediating the impact of cybervictimization on problematic smartphone use. The second study (N=723) showed that cyberbullying victimization was linked to disordered eating behaviours through lowered self-esteem, and how this risk was intensified by deviant peer affiliation. Together, these findings reveal that digital harms extend beyond individual behaviour to peer dynamics and broader socio-educational contexts. They underscore the importance of routine screening, digital literacy initiatives, and peer support systems within schools and communities. The results also point to opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration across education, health, and community organisations to design evidence-based interventions and policies that foster safe digital engagement and strengthen youth resilience.



Dr Jungup Lee is an Associate Professor in the Department of Social Work and Co-Director of the Social Service Research Centre at the National University of Singapore. Her research focuses on youth mental health and digital well-being, cyberbullying and online harms, parenting and peer support, and AI/technology in children and youth development. She currently conducts several interdisciplinary research projects aligned with these interests, including a multipronged study on the mechanisms of cyberbullying, a mixed-method investigation into campus sexual misconduct and online harassment, a longitudinal mixed-method study of parenting styles and children's emotional regulation, a project exploring human-AI collaboration in reducing mental health stigma and enhancing social care, and a cross-cultural study on the integration of technological innovation to support youth mental health and well-being. She has over 70 academic publications including *Handbook of School Violence, Bullying and Safety* (Edward Elgar, 2024), articles in leading journals such as *Computers in Human Behavior*, *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, and *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, and conference papers in top human-computer interaction and computation conferences like ACM CHI and ACL. She is a Review Editor of *Frontiers in Public Health* (Injury Prevention and Control Specialty Section).

Core Components of Effective Text-based Conversations: Evidence from a Local Social Service Agency and Implications for Practice, Training, and Service Design

Gerard CHUNG

NUS Department of Psychology
gerard@nus.edu.sg

LIM Tse Min

Fei Yue Community Services
limtsemin@fyccs.org

2:50 pm to 3:10 pm

This presentation examines the core components of effective text-based conversations with youths, using evidence from a local social service agency providing online chats to youths and young persons. The analysis identifies specific linguistic features and counsellor skills associated with helpful outcomes. Findings show that text crafting skills are key especially to express emotions and support, and that multiple communication styles—from emotionally expressive to inquiry-driven—can be equally effective. The findings provide a basis for improving practice and have direct implications for the training of chat supporters, the design of digital mental health services, and the development of AI in chatbots.



Dr Gerard Chung is an assistant professor of Social Work at the Department of Social Work, National University of Singapore, researching technology in social work. Before academia, he practiced as a social worker at Fei Yue Family Service Centre. He explores how social work professional identity shapes our interpretation and adaptation of new technologies, particularly AI. He focuses on ensuring meaningful technology interactions that maintain quality professional standards and ethics. He identifies as a quantitative methodologist and is interested in advancing the use of administrative data in the social service sector to improve social work practices and to evaluate interventions and services.



Ms Lim Tse Min is currently a team leader and senior social worker at Fei Yue Community Services with over 10 years of experience working with youths and families. Her current main portfolio includes supporting youths on eC2, a community mental health programme for youths. eC2 aims to promote mental resilience by empowering youths to take charge of their mental health by connecting them to available resources and instilling courage in them to seek help and engage with the community. She also has prior experiences working with youth at risk, reaching out to them on the streets and steering them back to meaningful engagements. She believes that every youth has the potential to shine, given the opportunities and support that they need.

Mental Health in the Age of AI Technology

Kean J. HSU

NUS Department of Psychology

kean.hsu@nus.edu.sg

3:20 pm to 3:40 pm

Modern understandings of mental health are increasingly impacted by AI technology, both in terms of how we conduct clinical science and in terms of factors that influence mental health. For instance, scientific studies increasingly incorporate machine learning and other AI approaches to study mental health. Alternatively, social media personalization algorithms and generative AI may contribute to growing difficulties with mental health in adolescents and young adults. This presentation will highlight some of the recent developments in our understanding of mental health and AI in the domains of science, education, and policy that my lab is contributing to.



Kean J. Hsu, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at National University of Singapore. His research investigates how basic cognitive processes (e.g., attention, executive functioning) impact the etiology and exacerbate symptom severity of depression and anxiety. He is also interested in scalable mental health interventions (e.g., cognitive training, brief interventions) and examining mechanisms underlying psychotherapeutic interventions, as well as increasing awareness of issues surrounding mental health and stigma in communities that are typically under-served or under-utilize mental health services. Clinically, Kean specialises in the treatment of depression, anxiety disorders, and stress in adults.

Kean completed a B.A. with honours in psychology (with a behavioural neuroscience specialization) at Yale University before receiving his Ph.D. in clinical psychology at the University of Southern California in 2014. He completed postdoctoral research fellowships at McLean Hospital/Harvard Medical School, the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of Texas at Austin. He previously co-directed the Anxiety and Stress Clinic with Jasper Smits, Ph.D., at UT-Austin. Most recently, Kean was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Georgetown University.

Promises and Pitfalls of Digital Mental Health Interventions (DMHIs): Implications for Policy, Equity, and Personalized Care in Singapore

Nur Hani ZAINAL

NUS Department of Psychology

hanizainal@nus.edu.sg

3:50 pm to 4:10 pm

Digital Mental Health Interventions (DMHIs), including virtual reality exposure therapy, mindfulness apps, and scalable cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) platforms, offer unprecedented opportunities to expand access to evidence-based mental health care. Drawing on recent clinical trials, machine learning research, and meta-analytic findings, this presentation will outline the therapeutic promise of DMHIs in reducing anxiety, enhancing executive functioning, and sustaining long-term gains for diverse populations. However, this promise is tempered by critical implementation and ethical challenges. These include low sustained user engagement, algorithmic bias, disparities in digital health literacy, and logistical constraints in coaching supervision and fidelity. The talk will also address cost-effectiveness, public trust, and equitable access, especially for underrepresented groups in Singapore. Specific attention will be given to how DMHI research at NUS has informed treatment-matching rules, precision digital care, and scalable delivery models. The session concludes with policy-relevant recommendations for Singapore's National Mental Health Strategy, emphasizing the importance of blended care, public-private partnerships, and culturally responsive digital health innovation. In doing so, this talk highlights actionable steps for advancing ethical, equitable, and personalized mental health care in a tech-enabled society.



Dr Hani is a Presidential Young Professorship (PYP) Assistant Professor in Clinical Psychology at the National University of Singapore (NUS) and the Director of the Optimizing Wellness (OWL) Lab. She completed a two-year postdoctoral research fellowship at the Harvard Medical School (HMS), received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from The Pennsylvania State University, and completed her predoctoral clinical fellowship at the HMS-affiliated Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) - Cognitive Behavioral Scientist Track.

Her research interest on how executive functioning, social cognition, and cognitive-behavioral strategies link to the etiology, maintenance, and treatment of anxiety and depressive disorders. She is also interested in technology-facilitated interventions and psychoneuroimmunology. To achieve these aims, she uses a variety of approaches and datasets. These include cross-sectional and longitudinal surveys, basic science experiments, ecological momentary assessments, and prospective cross-panel designs. To this end, she hopes to make novel and positively impactful contributions to basic science and translational clinical research and practice. Also, Dr Hani is a recipient of awards such as the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT) Leonard Krasner Dissertation Award,

Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA) Alies Muskin Career Development Leadership Program (CDLP), and the Pennsylvania State University (PSU) Superior Teaching and Research (STAR) award.

Panel Chair



Nina POWELL

NUS Department of Psychology

psynlp@nus.edu.sg

After her undergraduate studies in the US, Nina hopped across the pond to pursue a Ph.D. in the psychology of human behaviour and decision-making (Social and Cognitive Developmental Psychology) at the University of Birmingham (UK). After her doctoral studies and a postdoctoral position, Nina left the UK to join NUS in 2013 and has since made Singapore the place she calls home, firmly planting roots here. Her domain expertise is in how people process information about moral judgments, and the development of cognitive reasoning used in making moral judgments. To date, her research has explored both children's and adults' moral judgments, capacity for moral reasoning and moral agency. Currently, Nina's work focuses on the ethics of autonomy and care in AI and human interactions. She is particularly interested in human beings' perception and evaluation of agency in non-human agents (i.e., robots, drones, etc.), and the ethical implications for technology-driven smart cities where human beings cooperate and engage regularly with AI and machines. Nina is currently the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Psychology and Associate Director of CTLT, and promotes agentic teaching through reflective practice and values-driven approaches through her work within the NUS Teaching Academy.

Opening and Closing Remarks



Jack Meng-Tat CHIA

NUS Department of History

jackchia@nus.edu.sg

Jack Meng-Tat Chia is the Foo Hai Fellow in Buddhist Studies and an Associate Professor of History at the [National University of Singapore](#). He is a historian of religion with a focus on Buddhism and Chinese religions in Southeast Asia. He is the author of [Monks in Motion: Buddhism and Modernity Across the South China Sea](#) (Oxford, 2020), which was awarded the [2021 EuroSEAS Humanities Book Prize](#) and shortlisted for the 2023 Friedrich Weller Prize. The book has been translated into [Chinese](#) and [Indonesian](#). His second book, [Dongnanya fayin: Xinjiapo fojiao yanjiu](#)

[Junji 東南亞法音: 新加坡佛教研究論集](#) [Southeast Asia's Dharma: Essays on Buddhism in Singapore] (Boyang, 2025), is a collection of essays on Buddhism in Singapore. Chia is currently completing an edited volume, [Figures of Buddhist Diplomacy in Modern Asia](#), which consists of twenty-two chapters examining monastic, lay, and political figures involved in Buddhist diplomacy from the early twentieth century to the present. This project is supported by the [Social Science and Humanities Research Fellowship](#), awarded by the Social Science Research Council Singapore. He is also working on his monograph, *Buddhayana: The Making of an Indonesian Buddhist Movement*, which explores the history and development of the Buddhayana movement in Indonesia.

Chia is the founding chair of the [Buddhist Studies Group](#) and the convenor of the [GL Louis Religious Pluralism Research Cluster](#) at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, NUS. He co-chairs the [Theravada Studies Group](#) of the Association for Asian Studies and serves as a board member of the [Society for the Study of Chinese Religions](#). He is an editor for the journals *Asian Culture* and the *Journal of Global Buddhism*, an associate editor of the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, and a member of the editorial boards for *Contemporary Buddhism*, *Journal of Chinese Religions*, *MINDEN: Journal of History and Archaeology*, *Reading Religion*, *Yin-Cheng Journal of Contemporary Buddhism*, and the book series "Religion in Contemporary Asia" (De Gruyter). He also serves on the Heritage Advisory Panel and the National Collection Advisory Panel of the National Heritage Board. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.