

Abstract

Despite the low help-seeking tendency of adolescents with mental health issues as the result of stigma, teachers were still regarded as one of their most important source of support and help-seeking target (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Department of Psychology & New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association, 2010). Teachers' attitude towards adolescent students with mental health issues can be very critical for the latter's willingness to access mental health service and their experiences of school reintegration and recovery. Yet, teachers' attitude specifically towards those students was not widely examined. According to the intergroup contact hypothesis (Allport, 1958) and findings of related research (Couture & Penn, 2003; Van der Kluit & Goossens, 2011; Van der Kluit, Goossens, & Leeuw, 2013; Weller & Grunes, 1988), contact frequency, quality of contact, health care providers' perceived mission and perceived support might all play a role in attitude formation. The present study aimed at investigating Hong Kong secondary school teachers' attitude towards their students with mental health issues and identifying possible moderators, namely the contact quality, teachers' perceived mission and teachers' perceived support, which might influence the effect of teacher-student contact frequency on teachers' attitude. The study adopted a cross-sectional correlational research design. Among the convenience sample of 175 Hong Kong secondary school teachers surveyed, 154 participants were included in the analyses. Separate regression moderation analysis for the three moderators, being contrary to prediction, indicated no interaction effect. Yet, contact

quality, teachers' perceived mission and teachers' perceived support were all found to be the significant predictors of lower teachers' stigma. Theoretically, result of this study shed light on the intricacies of how contact frequency may or may not influence one's stigmatizing attitude. Practically, it suggested the importance of "software" enhancement like pre-occupational and on-job support and mission cultivation to stigma reduction among teachers.

Keywords: stigma, contact frequency, contact quality, perceived mission, perceived support, teachers, adolescents with mental health issues