

Mrs. Dorothy Koo and Dr. Ti Hua Koo Centre for Interdisciplinary Evidence-Based Practice and Research

2026–2027 Lunchtime Seminar Series

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From Stigma to Signal : Destigmatising Negative Emotions as the Foundation of Resilience and Well-Being

🕒 28/10/2026 | 12:30 PM to 2:00 PM

🔊 Zoom Meeting ID : **992 7451 6111** (Passcode: 123456)



HKSYU Campus, Room 105, Academic Main Building,
10 Wai Tsui Crescent, Braemar Hill, Hong Kong
(Hybrid mode with zoom)

Chaired by Dr Jason Chow, Department of Counselling and Psychology, Hong Kong Shue Yan University

In this talk, I aim to advance a simple premise with broad implications: resilience and well-being begin by removing the stigma attached to negative emotions. Drawing on three strands of my research, I argue that unpleasant affect is often informative and, when legitimised, can enhance judgment and social functioning. First, a meta-analysis of 130 studies (151 samples; $N = 33,043$) clarifies the 'depressive realism' debate. While the average effect favours slight depressive distortion, realism reliably emerges in analytically complex, self-referent tasks and in control/contingency judgments—precisely the contexts where careful calibration matters. Pathologizing sadness or doubt can therefore suppress signals that improve decisions. Second, a review of 71 empirical articles on leader loneliness shows how conceptual ambiguity, measurement imprecision, and methodological weaknesses obscure practice in work and organisational settings. Treating leadership loneliness as a character flaw rather than an occupational signal inhibits accurate diagnosis and support, undermining both leader health and organisational resilience. Third, cross-cultural evidence ($N = 733$; China, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, United States) reveals that subjective power and collectivist/horizontal values relate to lower loneliness, and that cultural values (e.g., horizontal individualism) moderate power–loneliness links—highlighting that stigma and its antidotes are culturally embedded. I conclude with actionable implications: replace positivity mandates with emotion-as-information norms; build psychologically safe support systems at work; refine constructs and measures to distinguish signals from symptoms; and tailor interventions to cultural value profiles.

🔗 Registration link : <https://forms.gle/tjZdjPmgx4VHwRsDA>



Speaker :

Dr Ho Wa Hodar LAM,
Research Assistant
Professor,
Department of Psychology,
Lingnan University.

Dr. Hodar Lam (RIOP & AFHKPS) is a Research Assistant Professor and Associate Programme Director of MSc in Work and Organisational Psychology in the Department of Psychology, Lingnan University. He received his PhD in Organisational Behaviour at Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University (RSM). Before joining Lingnan University, he was an Assistant Professor of Work and Organisational Psychology at University of Amsterdam. He is now the Vice-Chair (Chair, 2024–26) and Research Sub-Committee Lead of Division of Industrial-Organizational Psychology (DIOP), The Hong Kong Psychological Society (HKPS).

With an industry background in human resources management and counselling, Hodar's research focuses on emotion and well-being issues (especially loneliness and solitude) in leadership and work contexts. He has been teaching courses on coaching, leadership, and diversity. He received the Merits (2025–26) and Finalist (2023–24) Awards in the Teaching Excellence Awards Scheme in Lingnan University. He has contributed knowledge to industry-oriented outlets, such as Forbes, QS Top Universities, and I/O at Work; mass media, such as RTHK, Mill Milk, NowTV News, TVB News, am730, and Oriental Daily; and webinars and podcasts about loneliness, leadership, well-being at work, and mental health.