

Research Fellowships

Fellow Spotlight – Meet Monalisa Saikia

think2perform Research Fellow, 2020-2022



Research Fellow Monalisa Saikia Examines How to Support Emotional Well Being in Nurses

A desire to help people is what drew Monalisa Saikia to nursing. After completing her bachelor's degree at Sikkim Manipal College of Nursing in Sikkim, India, Monalisa worked as a staff nurse and considered working abroad until an interest in mental health nursing prompted her to pursue a masters in psychiatric and mental health nursing from the acclaimed LGB Regional Institute of Mental Health in Assam, India.

The experience planted the seed for her research. "While doing my masters and working as a psychiatric mental health nurse, I realized it was a bit difficult to manage my emotions," says Monalisa. "I was affected by seeing people who were in a poor state of mental health and, of course, my colleagues were also facing problems, but nobody would vocalize that they were having issues."

These insights pointed Monalisa to her Ph.D. studies with a major focus on emotional well-being. “The primary goal of my research was to understand how we can better the emotional health and mental health of nurses,” says Monalisa.

As she went deep into the literature review to discover factors that could affect nurses’ well-being, variables such as emotional intelligence and self-compassion emerged. Monalisa found studies that explored the effects of positive psychology on nurses’ emotional and overall wellbeing, however few studies implemented an intervention to improve the emotional wellbeing and emotional intelligence of nurses.

With help from her supervisor, Monalisa designed a quasi-experimental study of staff nurses using five data collection time points including a baseline and pre-test prior to the intervention, along with three post-tests: immediately after the intervention; three months later; and six months following the intervention. At each time point, the nurses were rated on emotional intelligence, self-compassion, intrinsic motivation, and emotional labor.

The eight-hour intervention program was delivered in-person during two-hour training sessions at a hospital in India. “The training

program was a mixture of variables including interpersonal relationship skills, self-compassion, compassion and empathy and managing different emotions, but it mostly focused on emotional intelligence skills,” says Monalisa. To introduce and reinforce the concepts, Monalisa used multiple interactive elements including worksheets, a workbook, activities, games, lectures, audio and video.

When the study was completed, the data showed nurses improved their scores following the intervention with the highest levels of emotional intelligence, self-compassion and intrinsic motivation at time point four, three months following the intervention. A dip in scores at month six (time point five) suggests that booster interventions may be useful in maintaining higher levels of emotional intelligence, self-compassion, and intrinsic motivation over time.

Monalisa is currently preparing her research for publication and will be presenting her findings at two upcoming conferences in Manipal, India: one this month at the Interdisciplinary Conference on Healthcare and Technical Research, and one in February at the National Conference on Integration of Genomics in Nursing and Healthcare Practice.

Considering practical applications of her research, Monalisa envisions

expanded possibilities. “I want to focus on how to give this intervention through an app or through an online program,” she says. Reflecting on why Monalisa chose nursing as a profession, it appears likely that through her research she is poised to help people on a much larger scale than she initially imagined.

Learn more about Monalisa Saikia's research project design and outcomes in our new [Social Impact Paper Series](#).

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Fellowship proposals are accepted through January 15 & June 1 each year