


# 11th Henry Lim Lecture by Professor Kalyani K. Mehta, PhD

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# Agenda

My life course journey with GS

What Gerontology means in  
Ageing Singapore

Changing mindsets of employers

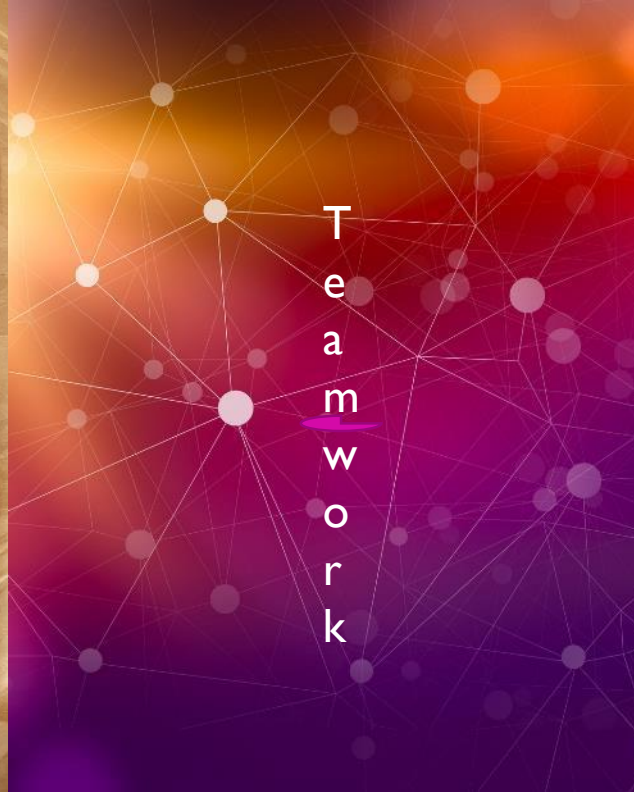
Gerontologists – game changers

Indigenous models of intervention

Summary







# Introduction

- My mission today is to clearly articulate the contribution Gerontology will make in the future in Singapore, provided the graduates holding Gerontology degrees and diplomas strive to make a difference, and GS members vocalise how important a multi-dimensional, holistic approach is for creating an age-friendly Singapore

# My life course journey with GS

Joined in early 1990's and met icons who  
influenced my life greatly e.g. Mr Henry Lim

Became GS President in 1998-2000

Have been active since (in various roles)

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The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing.

Walt Disney

Master of Gerontology Programme at SUSS in 2011



Students Overseas Study Trip to Melbourne to learn about Australian policies and services for seniors and their families



# What Gerontology means in Ageing Singapore



**Focus on  
ageing  
families**



**Integrated  
policies**  
- going beyond  
IMC



**Holistic  
approach –  
beyond body  
and mind**



**Aging in place**  
- in the  
community  
- age with  
dignity

# Changing mindsets of Employers (private, public and people sectors)



- The work culture should value experience of seniors, their foresight and their wisdom

# Gerontologists can be Game-changers

## EXPECTATIONS

- What graduates expect and what employers expect
- Work conditions
- Drive to perform at a high level, win the trust of employers, and prove that gerontology training has a perspective that is different, valuable and effective

## PERSUASION

- Job interviews – opportunity to convince the listener that gerontologists add value to teams as well as management
- Champions of gerontology need to create niche for the graduates who are now found in almost all sectors
- Mainstreaming gerontology is a necessity



# Design indigenous models of Intervention - biopsychosocial approach

## Health beliefs

- Psychosocial and physiological belief systems
- Related to cultural patterns
- May have religious or spiritual connotations
- With understanding, knowledge of the client's culture and religion, gerontologists can alter health beliefs that are faulty and replace with realistic and constructive beliefs



# Design indigenous models of Intervention

## Nutrition

- Related to cohort history, as well as income and educational levels
- Connected to culture eg. Cooking style.
- Awareness and knowledge e.g value of turmeric
- Related to social eating patterns
- Family socialization e.g. type of food eaten in childhood

# Planning holistic Communities

- Primary care model is becoming more important worldwide
- The gerontology trained staff is better equipped to handle management of social day care.
- Home-based care – observe family dynamics, caregiver training, prevent burnout
- For special populations e.g. dementia, palliative and mentally challenged
- Gerontologists are better planners as they are cognizant of needs of seniors, practicality, technological aids and overall comfort desired by clients



# Future challenges: Graduates have a harder time getting jobs

## Solution:

- A) set up own consultancy/ or group consultancy
- B) Create a new job position
- C) Start-up e.g. social entrepreneur







# Summary

My students fondly call me “mother of gerontology” so I have some words of wisdom for people who are passionate about gerontology. Do not give up your passion – just reimagine! Just like the synapses in the brain take a leap, we also have to make our leap of faith! Express! Convince! Expand!

# Thank You

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