

**Workshop 10: Empowerment Practice In Supporting Disadvantaged Families:  
The Use of Supportive Group**

8/10/2016 10:15 am – 11:45 am

**Moderator: Ms. FU Suk-Yin** Supervisor, Corporate Development, BGCA

**Speaker: Dr. Shirley HUNG Suet-Lin** Director, Social Work Practice and Mental Health Centre; Associate Professor and Associate Head, Department of Social Work, Hong Kong Baptist University

**Title: Empowerment Practice In Supporting Disadvantaged Families: The Use of Supportive Group**

**Abstract:**

Since the 1970s, the significance of social support has been well articulated all over the world particularly in developed countries facing ongoing challenges of urbanization, dominant ideologies of individualism and neo-liberalization, all together resulting in the dismantling of traditional social support structure. In view of the need to strengthen social support for those who are deprived and disadvantaged, creating opportunities to bring people together, develop and sustain relationship using small groups is considered an effective solution. In places where social work has been well developed such as the Northern Europe and Northern American, supportive group work models have been widely applied in working with different target groups. In Hong Kong, however, group work on the whole and supportive group work model in particular has been less developed. The speaker, together with a team of colleagues of BGCA, has been involved in developing a model of supportive group to work with disadvantaged individuals/families in the local context of Hong Kong. The model is composed of clear purposes and systematic step-wise implementation, and has been widely applied to working with different target groups including single parents, new immigrants, parents with children having learning difficulties, parents having children who are homosexuals, women suffering from depression, etc. The use of storytelling is an essential part of the model which allows in-depth sharing of life experiences that create a sense of collectiveness while acknowledging differences. Impact of this group work model on developing mutual support among group members, empowering them to gain control over their lives and connecting them with the wider community has been well proved by various assessment methods. The model of supportive groups and practical tips in planning and implementation would be shared in this workshop using examples of practice conducted by the BGCA team.