



ICPMH 2024

**1<sup>st</sup>** International Conference on  
Psychology and Mental Health

# Conference Proceedings

*Organized by*

Counselling Psychotherapy Unit  
Faculty of Buddhist Studies  
Nāgānanda International Institute for Buddhist Studies,  
Manelwatta, Bollegala, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka



1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Psychology and Mental  
Health

## Conference Proceedings

ICPMH 2024

22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024

*"Mind, Body, and Soul: Exploring Holistic Approaches to  
Psychological Well-being"*

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## THE IMPACT OF INTERACTIVE BIBLIOTHERAPY ON SELECTED UNDERGRADUATES AT SABARAGAMUWA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA: A CASE STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

Interactive Bibliotherapy promotes personal development, emotional well-being, and mental health of individuals. Due to the unstable nature of the future of the undergraduates, tide semester based academic calendar and exams, financial issues, and relationship issue, the undergraduates are in a struggle in terms of mentally, physically, and emotionally. Therefore, this qualitative case study aims at its applicability and effectiveness as a therapeutic approach among undergraduates of Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka. This study focuses on purposively selected 15 undergraduates who participated in 2 interactive bibliotherapy sessions of 'hithak langa natharawena pothak' organized under the library project, Plazz Café by the library in collaboration with the Faculty of Social Sciences and Languages, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka. Utilizing in-depth interviews, and content analysis of reflective reviews they provided at the end of each session, rich and nuanced insights were taken into the experiences of the participants. The eight-week interactive bibliotherapy sessions addressed various aspects of their psychological well-being, including stress management, emotional regulation by both reading and writing, and self-reflection through Sinhala literature. Findings revealed a positive impact of interactive bibliotherapy on the selected participants. The data highlighted 1. an increased self-awareness. The participants were satisfied how time was effectively utilized with colleagues and academics involved in such extracurricular activities, organizing such activities has influenced their organizational capacity and event management, 2. improved emotional intelligence after the session. The different characters in the selected literature and the writers' story impacted their emotional intelligence, and ability to articulate emotions 3. Influenced collaborative reading behavior of undergraduates being with a reading community and fostered a sense of community and support among participants 4. Enhanced reflective thinking, and experience sharing through the review writing of the undergraduates after the sessions. 5. Participants reported a reduction in stress levels due to leisure reading. Specially the new reading habit has leveled up their emotional well-being and sleep hygiene. This case study provides valuable insights for academics, student counsellors and counselling unit "Sitharana" by offering a cost-effective and accessible means of promoting students' mental health influenced by interactive bibliotherapy in reading communities.

**Keywords:** Interactive bibliotherapy, Mental health, Psychological well-being, Reading, Stress management