Lunch will be served. This event is open to all. Parking is available in the metered lot of The Plantations across Forest Home Drive.

Adapting evidence-based programs to match the needs of local settings sounds like a great idea: what could be wrong with tailoring a program to fit users better? But program adaptation can be costly and time-consuming, especially when using community-based participatory methods. What does research tell us about the value of program adaptation? Do adapted programs (compared to the originals) produce better outcomes? Are we sure that adapted programs are as good as the original? In short, is program adaptation “worth it”?

In her talk, Emily Chen will share and discuss the results of a Translational Research Institute on Pain in Later Life (TRIPLL) study that examined the effects of an adapted (vs. the original) version of the Arthritis Self-Help Program (ASHP) among 201 older adults in eight New York City senior centers. Participants in the adapted (vs. original) ASHP had significantly better attendance records and were less likely to drop out of the program. Continued use of self-management exercises after the program ended was similar in both groups. Significant positive physical and psychosocial outcomes were documented in both programs.

The adapted ASHP improved program attendance and retention, while maintaining improvements in physical and psychosocial function. The results highlight the need for comparative studies of adapted vs. original evidence-based programs, both to quantify the benefits of adaptation and to ensure that the adapted programs are as effective as the originals.

Emily Chen is a Ph.D. candidate in Human Development. She works with Karl Pillemer and Cary Reid (Weill) on projects related to chronic disease and aging, including a recent focus on palliative and end-of-life care.

After graduating from Bryn Mawr (’03) Emily sought to work in an area that would address the issue of getting good research into the hands of people who make decisions or implement policies. She is specifically interested in issues related to health and chronic disease of older adults in the United States because she believes that understanding how to improve quality of life for this population, even in small or incremental ways, has the potential to help many people. She received her M.A. in Developmental Psychology from Cornell in January 2012. Emily is planning a dissertation that will explore issues related to palliative care and end-of-life care planning by older adults.