

Act Together Now for Youth Mental Health: Online Youth Emotional Support Organizations Share Latest Data and Jointly Call For Immediate Action to Prevent Student Suicide

HKJC Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention HKU, Hong Kong Caritas, The Boys' & Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups, Hong Kong Children and Youth Services and St. James' Settlement jointly held a press conference responding to the recent a surge in student suicide cases across different educational levels, from secondary schools to universities. This alarming trend highlights the urgent need for immediate support and intervention to address the deteriorating mental health status of students. The organizations have released their latest findings from online youth emotional support platform to bring attention to this issue and calls upon schools, parents, and the public to take immediate action in providing support and promoting the mental health and well-being of students.

Latest Findings

There has been an alarming increase in student suicide cases. According to The Hong Kong Jockey Club Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention, there have been 22 reported suicide attempt and death cases involving individuals under the age of 18 or tertiary students from August to October in 2023, compared to a total of 11 such cases reported in the same period of 2022. The situation is worrying.

Furthermore, an online youth emotional support platform has observed an 10.3% & 9.2% of incoming crisis cases among secondary school and university students respectively, from August to October, which is an increase compared to the previous year. The most common sources of distress reported in recent crises and high-risk cases include study-related pressure, family relationships, and interpersonal issues.

Call for Action

Schools

Understanding that the schools have raised their awareness, we hope NGOs can collaborate with schools in the community to take action and prioritize students' mental health and well-being. While enhancing the academic performance of the students, the schools have to as well allocate resources to provide accessible and comprehensive mental health programs that include counselling services, support groups, and mental health education, to help students understand more about their emotions and mental health needs. It is crucial to create a safe, loving and supportive environment and reduce the labelling effect for students to seek help.

Parents

Parents need to take the initiative to check on their children, in particular, who are undergoing life stages transition. Family relationships have a significant impact on an youngsters' well-being, providing a support system that fosters emotional security. A better support system can be achieved through open communication, sufficient space for growth, shared experiences, and mutual respect.

Public

As a society, we must pay close attention to the young people around us and be vigilant in identifying those at risk. Warning signs should never be ignored. If an individual shows any behavioural changes, mood swings, unusual behaviour on social media, or even discussion of suicide planning, we should take the initiative to care and talk to him or her. We need to let young people know they are welcome and encouraged to discuss their

problems, assuring them that we are always ready to offer support. By reducing the stigma associated with seeking help, we can make an impact.

Youth

Youth nowadays are facing many difficulties. When anyone realises themselves or their friends have suicide ideation, please seek help from family and friends around you, teachers and classmates, or other community resources. Help-seeking is an act of courage, instead of a symbol of weakness. Your family, friends, schools, and the community all wish to give you as much support as possible.

Community Services

Government-subsidized Service – Cyber Youth Support Teams :

- SJS 6 PM Cyber Youth Support Team - <http://cyberyouth.sjs.org.hk>
- Caritas Infinity Teens - Cyber Youth Support Team: <https://it.caritas.org.hk>
- BGCA Nite Cat Online – Cyber Youth Support Team - <https://nitecat.bgca.org.hk>
- HKCYS eSmiley Cyber Youth Support Team - <https://esmiley.hkcys.hk>
- HKFYG uTouch Cyber Youth Outreach Service - <https://utouch.hk>

Online Text-based Counselling Service

- Open Up (Text-based): (Whatsapp) 9101 2012 / <https://www.openup.hk/>
- ChatPoint: <https://chatpoint.org.hk/#/home>
- Teens Online: <https://www.teensonline.hk/>

Hotline Services

- The Samaritans 24 hours hotline: 2896 0000
- The Samaritans targeted distressed teens hotline: 23892227
- HKFYG Youthline (government subsidized): 2777 8899
- Justone 24-hour - Community Mental Health Support Project: 3512 2626
- Say Something: 2382 0000
- Youth Link: 23820777

Online Self-help Resources

- Jockey Club eGPS Psychological Support Project - <https://www.egps.hk/mental-well-being-info>
- Jockey Club Project Well-being (Search Engine) - <https://jcprojectwellbeing.hk/resources.php>
- Newlife 330 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EID0MIRB4qQ&t=1>
- HKFYG Wellnesshub - <https://wellnesshub.hk/>
- Jockey Club Electronic Clinic for Psychological Service - https://eclinic.hk/e_clinic/
- Headwind - <https://www.youthmentalhealth.hku.hk/>

Offline Service

- LevelMind@JC - <https://www.levelmind.hk/>

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