Connected For Suicide Prevention

HKJC Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention, HKU Newsletter Sep 2016

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In the past six months, the words "Student Suicide" frequently appeared in various news headlines. There were more than 20 reported student suicide cases by August 2016. In response to this alarming and tragic problem amongst students, this month's issue will not only focus on the progress of our regular research, but will also highlight the latest suicide research, preventive measures, and methods of intervention.

Cover Story:

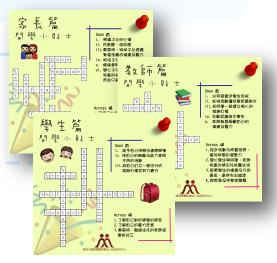
Back to School

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World Suicide Prevention Day Press Conference

9 September 2016

14:30-15:30

2/F, 5 Sassoon Road

Back to School

he new academic year of 2016 just started. Students may have mixed feelings towards how best to start a fresh school year. They may feel excited about the new academic curriculum and look forward to catching up with classmates and seeing old teachers but also feel anxious about what to expect in the following year. For example, students may worry about who is going to be in their new class? Will the teacher be angry all the time? Will they be able to keep up with the advanced school work? Starting a new school year will be especially hard for students who are new to the school, as they will

also need time to adjust and get comfortable in the new environment. It will also to be worrying for those going back to the same school, as they will be facing various challenges and problems, according to their class year.

For example, P.5 and P.6 students will have to take the internal examinations for Secondary School Places Allocation, junior high school students will have to acquire and study senior high academic syllabus, F.5 and F.6 students will have to start preparing for the HKDSE, etc. Here, we have a few words for students, parents, and teachers.

Dear Students:

If you are the new kid at school, it is normal to feel anxious and worry.

 Give yourself sufficient time and space for adjusting to the new school environment.

Build and establish various relationships with classmates and teachers through signing up for class activities, and posts base on your personal interests.

 Meet up with your class mistress or social worker at school regularly to share your personal aims,

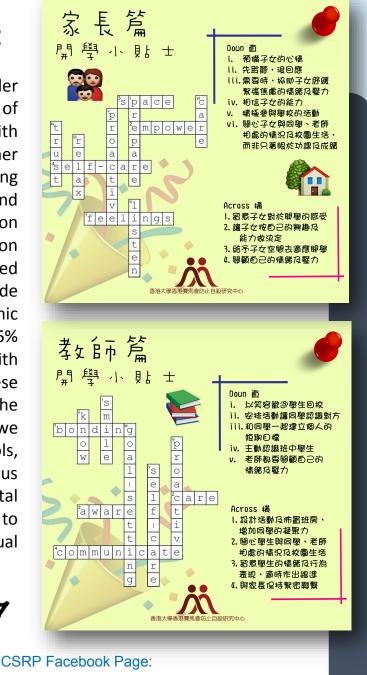
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any interesting stories or difficulties.

As for returning students, give yourself some time to settle back in, adjust and get ready for the new academic year. Set yourself some new targets/goals to accomplish within this school year. They could be striving for better grades, developing new personal interests and hobbies or strengthening current friendships and relationships.

To Parents and Teachers:

Our younger generation is under tremendous pressure and face lots of difficulties that are not only to do with academic results but numerous other factors such as changes in the body during emotional fluctuations, puberty, and relationship problems. The Committee on Prevention of Student Suicides, Education Bureau (EBD) and our Centre concluded from an analysis of past student suicide cases that 80% of the cases had academic and familial adjustment issues, while 85% resulted from relationship problems with peer and conflicts with parents. These complex factors significantly affect the mental health of students. Therefore, we encourage recommend schools. and teachers and parents should not only focus on academic success, but to take the mental health of our students seriously, and to empower and cultivate their individual strengths.



"Little Tips for the New School Year"

In conclusion, students should be encouraged to remember that there is no right or wrong when it comes to emotional and perspective differences. Most importantly, adolescences should pay more attention to their feelings and thoughts, knowing when and where to seek help. Hence, in this newsletter, we have prepared some tips for students, parents, and teachers on how to have a fresh start for the upcoming school year. **CSRP** Updates

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Connected for Suicide Prevention

We take the opportunity here to thank each and every stakeholder who was actively involved in supporting suicide prevention work. Your invaluable contributions led us to successfully establishing and launching numerous public awareness interventions and events to raise the importance of suicide prevention in the past five months.

> 如果自殺個案讓我們每個社會成員都感到心痛,那我們就都需要為療 癒這份心痛盡一分心力。你我都可以成為身邊人的守護天使。

> > 程綺瑾、葉兆輝 2016年8月4日《明報》 防止自殺「心病」不止需要「心藥」醫

With the of preventing suicide amongst youth and increasing the awareness of this alarming issue in general public, we have utilized various online and offline platforms to engage with the public and reach out to those who are in need. Thus, we have launched the "WeCare" website and the "WeCare" fund for student initiated youth suicide prevention projects; implemented various mental health educational programmes to develop students' positive attitudes and values: collaborated with Facebook to release a booklet on suicide prevention tips "I'm Here to Support!" and worked with Initium

Media to establish a dashboard to support students who have just received their DSE results. By effectively using social media (i.e. Facebook), we have made great strides in educating the public about suicide prevention.

The underlying theme of this issue is "Connect". Despite all the challenges and difficulties that we will encounter in the future, we hope to connect everyone in Hong Kong's society and encourage them to cherish life and always have faith that the best is yet to come.

Every one of us needs to be a gatekeeper to stop such tragedies. Whether in school, the workplace or at home, we can all seize opportunities to win back young people; we can make a difference.

> Paul Yip, 12 Mar 2016 'South China Morning Post' In the wake of student suicides, let's give Hong Kong's troubled youth some hope, rather than more despair

Connect Research with Good Practice

As a research hub for good practice on suicide prevention, we strive to generate and advance knowledge on suicide through rigorous evidence-based studies. Our research identified various risk and protective factors that may contribute to or prevent suicide. As a result, we can provide timely interventions for those who are in need. Furthermore, we have also successfully implemented a school-based mental health intervention, "Little Prince is Depressed" programme at various primary schools. Results showed significant improvement in students' mental health literacy and reduction in stress and anxiety level. Hence, by incorporating research into good practice, we are currently training teachers to implement mental health programmes in schools and to promote "positive attitudes and values" amongst students, to strengthen and empower teachers and students mental well-being and resilience.

> 年輕生命的逝去為我們敲響了警鐘,只有將關愛學生精神健康當做恆常教 育的一部分去堅持,我們才能預防悲劇的發生。

> > 黎淑怡、程綺瑾、羅亦華、葉兆輝 2016年3月14日《明報》 主動建構防止學生自殺的安全網

Quality Education Fund Thematic Network on Developing Students' Positive Attitudes and Values

The Quality Education Fund (QEF) has been supporting our school mental health initiatives since 2006. Last April, QEF granted us the opportunity to implement a project called "Quality Education Fund Thematic Network on Developing Students' Positive Attitudes and Values" (QTN) to promote evidence-based practice in schools to enhance the mental health of students. With the collaboration of core schools, we developed two mental health programmes for primary and secondary school students in the past academic year. The programmes were carried out by teachers that had undergone intensive training. Feedback from the teachers was positive with regards to the usefulness of the programmes and its impact on students.

from student mental health Apart programmes, we organize talks for parents, conduct school visits, etc. to educate and parents/teachers to support empower students by teaching them practical and effective strategies they can use to help students. We hope schools can foster a positive and caring environment, and believe it is of the utmost importance to enhance students' resilience and well-being daily, rather than through programmes alone, and that the collaboration with teachers, parents, and other stakeholders is crucial.

Our research also indicates that adolescents prefer to express their emotional distress and suicidal thoughts through social media sites. Therefore, by utilizing the internet as an online platform, such as instant online chat rooms, we can identify people who are suffering from emotional distress and can reach out to those who find it difficult to express their feelings. Thus, we collaborated with Facebook, the Hong Kong Youth Federation Groups, The Samaritans and Save the Children Hong Kong to promote the importance of suicide prevention and worked closely with Initium Media to establish a website that supports DSE students.

Relaxing Dashboard for DSE



Focusing our work on enhancing the mental well-being of students, CSRP collaborated with Initium Media to produce several multimedia products, which aimed to raise public awareness on mental well-being and suicide prevention. In early July when the results of DSE were released, we launched a Relaxing Dashboard for DSE. This dashboard provided a platform for students to relieve stress and relax through several mini-games and breathing exercises. The site also featured a video with encouraging messages by various famous artists and graphics from well-known illustrators.

Individual and family character traits, relationships, mental well-being, peer and school experiences, support for children with special needs, and so on, are all of concern. All have been shown to be related to suicide risk.

Paul Yip, 17 Apr, 2016 "South China Morning Post" To prevent student suicides, all of Hong Kong has to fight the battle – each and every day

"I'm Here to Support"

Facebook has been an active ally in suicide prevention work. Together with The Hong Kong Youth Federation Groups, The Samaritans, and Save the Children Hong Kong, CSRP collaborated with Facebook to publish a booklet titled "I'm Here to Support" (「有困難, 我撐你!」). The booklet aimed to raise public awareness and equip the community with crucial knowledge on suicide prevention. It also provided information on the warning signs of suicide and taught necessary skills to

communicate with people who have suicidal thoughts.

A press conference with the theme of "Connected for Life" (連結關愛 守護生 命) was held on 29 June, 2016 to call for members of the community to connect with the others. A video of Ms Miriam Yeung encouraging the public to care for others was released.

> > 有困難

3. 我了你们的你们的你们的你们的你们的你们的你们的你们。"

筆者對一些有自殺風險的青少年做個案訪談時發現,他們通常較為內向 (有些即使表面開朗,但內心覺得應付周圍人很累),不善或不愛與人 面對面交流,他們覺得網上短訊交流更為「舒服」和有種自主感覺。

> 程綺瑾、葉兆輝 2016年6月29日《經濟日報》 香港低頭族多 網上支援少



Connect various Stakeholders

Our research shows the Public Health Approach is effective in suicide prevention and requires collaboration from various stakeholders. Therefore, we have been proactively connecting with different interested parties in the community to develop a suicide prevention network. Using student suicide incidents as an example, stakeholders may include; healthcare professionals, social workers, schools, parents, and friends. In fact, anyone can be a "life gatekeeper" for suicide prevention with the necessary skills and knowledge, that CSRP hopes to impart to raise people's awareness of suicide prevention and empower them all to be gatekeepers of life.



Suicide prevention is everyone's business. CSRP strives to raise public awareness on suicide prevention,

initiate open discussions on this topic, and reduce stigma towards people with mental health problems. We hope to enlighten community members with the necessary knowledge needed for suicide prevention and equip everyone to become gatekeepers. Most importantly, we aim to promote a loving community that cares.

今天的社會,需要多一點的欣賞、多一點的包容,給別人多一個機會,彼 此才可建立一個健康和進步的社會。大家可以成為彼此的守護天使,互相 扶持,為香港的未來修補不平的道路。

沈君瑜、許麗澤、鄭雅心、葉兆輝 2016年3月12日《信報財經新聞》 學習接納 懂得欣賞

Every adolescent will have to face various challenges and Parents and School difficulties throughout lifetime. Therefore, it is

their Partnership

essential that parents show understanding and an acknowledgment of their kids. We recommend parents spend quality time with their children daily, which may, in turn, strengthen the parent-child relationship. Spare ten minutes a day to understand what is going on in school or what extracurriculum activities your child is doing. Most importantly, each child has their individual strengths, so remember to compliment them and let your kids flourish in their unique way.

WeCare

In response to the student suicide incidents this year, CSRP launched its "WeCare" website. WeCare implies CSRP cares about the community and, at the same time, urges members of the community to care for others, as suicide prevention requires the participation of everyone in our society.

The WeCare website aims to provide suicide-related knowledge for different stakeholders such as teachers, parents, the media and suicide survivors.

Practical information on the site includes:





- Warning signs of suicide
- Communication skills in people with suicidal thoughts
- Risk Factors and Protective
 Factors related to suicide
- Debunking of suicide misconceptions
- Story sharing
- Suicide prevention hotlines
- Latest suicide data
- Emotion test

Connect Needs with Resources

We identify the needs of different stakeholders and provide information and services suitable for them. Other than providing training on suicide prevention for teachers and mental health education for students, we also organized an initiative to recruit student-initiated youth suicide prevention projects.

Recognizing social media is the most effective to reach a larger youth audience, practical recommendations and tips related to suicide prevention for different stakeholders are made online. Also, we have been advocating the importance of "think before you share" and to be a responsible social media user.

WeCare Fund for Student-Initiated youth Suicide Prevention Projects

In responding to the student suicides in recent months, WeCare Fund for Student-Initiated Youth Suicide Prevention Projects was set up with the support of Mr. Lau Ming Wai, Chairman of Commission on Youth. The Fund aims to empower young people to create projects that help their peers with emotional distress or suicidal risk and to promote helpseeking and mental health among the youth. All full-time and part-time post -secondary students in Hong Kong can apply. The first round of applications is now closed, and we have selected seven projects from five institutions. All selected projects were creative and included a vary of activities, such drama, story-collection, peer as support programmes, and eengagement. The second round is now open for applications, and we will select another eight projects at the end of September. We believe students have the ability to support their peers with innovative ideas and generate good practices on suicide prevention.

Details of the Fund and how to apply - can be found at http://csrp.hku.hk/ wecare-fund-projects-round2/



Suicide Prevention Fact Cards Series

To effectively disseminate knowledge on suicide prevention in an easier and simpler manner, we published a series of fact cards and posted them to our Facebook Page back in March. The content of these cards was collated from our WeCare website, then transformed into a graphical representation, making it far easier for people to understand the information.



Besides information on suicide prevention, we have specifically focused on several suicide risk factors. For example: being a responsible internet user.



Suicide Prevention Fact Cards on CSRP Facebook Page

一句譏諷,或許成為壓死駱駝的最後一根稻草; 一句問候,卻或許可以挽救一條生命。

> 鄭雅心、程綺瑾、葉兆輝 2016年4月8日《明報》 與你同行We Care



Suicide Prevention Fact Cards on CSRP Facebook Page

Research Updates

Centre's Recent Published Journal Articles

Suicide Related Articles

- Chang, S.-S., Cheng, Q., Lee, E. S., & Yip, P. S. (2016). Suicide by gassing in Hong Kong 2005–2013: Emerging trends and characteristics of suicide by helium inhalation. *Journal of affective disorders*, 192, 162-166.
 - Cheung, T., & Yip, P. S. (2016a). Lifestyle and depression among Hong Kong nurses. International journal of environmental research and public health, 13(1), 135.
 - Cheung, T., & Yip, P. S. (2016b). Self-harm in nurses: prevalence and correlates. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 72(9), 2124-37.
 - Lai, E. S., Kwok, C.-L., Wong, P. W., Fu, K.-W., Law, Y.-W., & Yip, P. S. (2016). The Effectiveness and Sustainability of a Universal School-Based Programme for Preventing Depression in Chinese Adolescents: A Follow-Up Study Using Quasi-Experimental Design. *PloS one*, 11(2), e0149854.
 - Law, Y.-W., Yip, P. S., Lai, C. C., Kwok, C. L., Wong, P. W., Liu, K.-S., . . . Wong, T.-W. (2016). A Pilot Study on the Efficacy of Volunteer Mentorship for Young Adults With Self-Harm Behaviors Using a Quasi-Experimental Design. *Crisis*. Advance online publication. http://dx.doi.org/10.1027/0227-5910/a000393
 - Sha, F., Yip, P. S., & Law, Y. W. (2016). Decomposing change in China's suicide rate, 1990–2010: ageing and urbanisation. *Injury prevention*, injuryprev-2016-042006.
 - Wang, X. L., Yip, P. S., & Chan, C. L. (2016). Suicide prevention for local public and volunteer relief workers in disasteraffected areas. *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*, 22(3), E39-E46.

Other Articles

Fu, K.-w., Wong, P., Law, F., & Yip, P. S. (2016). Building a Typology of Young People's Conventional and Online Political Participation: a Randomized Mobile Phone Survey in Hong Kong, China. Journal of Information Technology & Politics(just-accepted).

Kandt, J., Chang, S.-S., Yip, P., & Burdett, R. (2016). The spatial pattern of premature mortality in Hong Kong: How does it relate to public housing? *Urban Studies*, 0042098015620341.

Centre's Recent Academic Funding

The Hong Kong Government provides academic funding to support a wide range of academic research. Our Centre has received the following grants in the year 2016/17:

General Research Fund

Media and authoritative discourse of suicide and depression over three decades (1985-2015) in Hong Kong and mainland China

Principle Investigator: Dr. Qijin Cheng

Duration: 8/2016 - 9/2018

<u>Objectives</u>: This study aim at revealing what reality/realities of suicide and depression was/were represented in the mass media, government documents, and academic publications, in the past three decades, and who or what forces contributed to the media discourse.

<u>Deliverables</u>: The project will provide insights into the differences and commonalities in constructing social attitudes and norms towards mental health issues in the context of One Country, Two Systems. Its implications can inform more effective and culture-sensitive de-stigmatization of suicide and depression and promotion of mental well-being.

The effect of individual- and neighborhood- socioeconomic status on older adult's health: a cross-sectional and prospective cohort study in Hong Kong

Principle Investigator: Prof. Paul Siu Fai YIP

Duration: 8/2016 - 6/2019

<u>Objectives</u>: The aim of this study is to investigate the socioeconomic inequality (at individual- and neighborhood level, and their interaction) affects health disparities among older adults in Hong Kong. Our work will focus on the common adverse physical and mental health outcomes among this age group, that is, depression and mortality outcomes (all-cause and several major causes including stroke, ischemic heart diseases, cardiovascular diseases, suicide etc.)

<u>Deliverables</u>: Our findings will shed lights on social and public health policies that promote physical and mental health well-being among the older population. Our work can identify key neighborhood characteristics that affect older age's health, and thus allows targeted interventions that mitigate (promote) their adverse (protective) impacts. As Hong Kong share similar economic development and social welfare systems with several neighboring East-Asian countries, our findings will provide key insights for our neighbor communities as well.

Early Career Scheme

Effects of community-based caring contact on post-discharge young adults with self I I -harm – a multicenter randomized controlled trial

Principle Investigator: Dr. Frances Yik Wah LAW Duration: 8/2016 - 6/2019

<u>Objectives</u>: The proposed study will determine whether community-based caring contact via a mobile app connection with or without volunteer support in addition to treatment as usual (TAU; psychiatric and psychosocial treatments) is effective in reducing suicidal ideation, and hopelessness among postdischarge self-harm young adults, and if personalized contact by volunteers has additional effects on engaging self-harm individuals.

<u>Deliverables</u>: This study will generate empirical evidence on the novel use of mobile app and volunteer support as engagement tools among this high-risk group, and the theoretical development of self-harm prevention.

Up Coming Events

World Suicide Prevention Day 2016 Press Conference

September 10th is the World Suicide Prevention Day. The HKJC Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention (CSRP) of the University of Hong Kong (HKU) will hold a press conference on September 9 (Friday) with the theme "WeCare 與你同行"

Date: September 9, 2016 (Friday)
Time: 2:30 pm (Media registration starts at 2:15 pm)
Venue: Studio 3-4, 2/F, HKJC Building for Interdisciplinary Research, 5 Sassoon Road, Pokfulam, Hong Kong
Language: Cantonese (English is available for Q&A session)

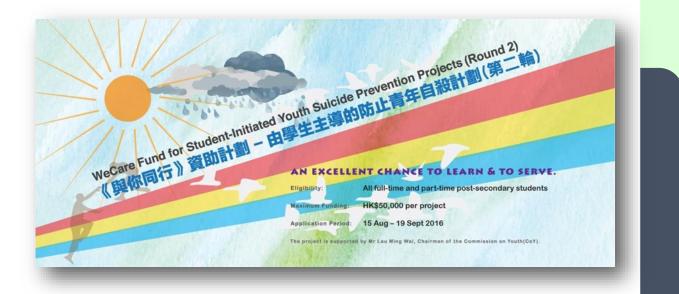
Enquiries: Mr. Rickey Yau Email: csrp@hku.hk Tel.: 2831-5232

Website: http://csrp.hku.hk/wspd2016/

2016世界防止首般日 WORLD SUIGIDE PREVENTION DAY 2016







WeCare Fund (Second Round) Open for Application!

The second round of competing for the WeCare Fund is now accepting applications. We welcome applications from all fulltime and part-time post-secondary students studying at any of the listed universities/institutions*. A review committee will be organized by CSRP to select eight projects from all the applications. In principle, each approved project will receive up to HK\$50,000#.

This initiative aims to encourage students to create, initiate and deliver mental health related projects on campus that target young people; to guide student-initiated projects with the support of professional advice; to foster positive emotions amongst the universities/institutions, and to enhance public awareness on mental health issues.

Application Deadline:19 September 2016 (Monday)Enquires:Ms. Phoebe HuiTel.:2831-5229Website:http://csrp.hku.hk/wecare-fund-projects-round2/

*Check our website for the list of accepted universities / institutions # The actual amount of funding approved will reflect the merits of the proposed project

"The Power of Sharing" - Story collection

CSRP and Ocean Park recognize the power of using positive affirmations. Therefore this Story Collection initiative was organized in hopes of fostering a culture of expressing gratitude in the community. To achieve this, we offer a platform for the public to take tangible steps in practicing gratitude by sharing personal stories and the aim to inspire participants to show their appreciation to others on a regular basis.

Please find the details below:

Eligibility: Junior (Age 6-12); Intermediate (Age 13-18); Open (19 and up)

Prize: Top 10 participants from each division will receive two Ocean Park one-time entry adult tickets (valid until 31 Dec 2016)

Application Deadline: 30th September, 2016 (Friday)

Enquires: Ms. Michelle Leung

Tel.: 2831-5221

Website: http://csrp.hku.hk/story-collection

Website : http://csrp.hku.hk/

Email : csrp@hku.hk

Address : The HKJC Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention, HKU

2/F, The Hong Kong Jockey Club Building for Interdisciplinary Research,

5 Sassoon Road, Pokfulam, Hong Kong

Tel.: 2831-5232

Fax: 2549-7161

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