



## HKU HKJC Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention Holds “Strengthening Family Relationships” Media Event



The Hong Kong Jockey Club Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention (CSRP) at the University of Hong Kong released today (June 17) the latest research results of the “Wellbeing Guardians” Project with the theme “Strengthen Family Relationships”. The 2023 Primary Schools Wellbeing Guardians Award Ceremony was held on the occasion.

Professor Paul YIP Siu-Fai, Director of the Centre presented the findings and recommendations on the mental health of child and adolescents.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the parent-child relationship has undergone significant changes as families spent more time together due to quarantine measures or special school arrangements. This extended period of togetherness has presented families with unique challenges, such as increased stress, balancing work and home life, and potential conflicts. Conversely, it has also offered opportunities for family bonding, improved communication, and mutual support. Aiming to address these unprecedented challenges and capitalize on the opportunities brought on by COVID-19, the “Wellbeing Guardians” project was designed with structured activities that foster stronger relationships and enhance mental well-being while navigating the complexities of the pandemic.



## Latest Research Findings

The latest research findings from our center reveal that out of approximately 6,700 surveyed high school students, 30% reported a decline in their mental health. However, 20% of students believe their mental well-being has improved. The study reveals that secondary school students who were dissatisfied with their academic performance were significantly more likely to report poorer mental health (OR = 1.468, 95% CI = 1.233–1.748) compared to students with unchanged status. In contrast, secondary school students who were satisfied with their family relationships experienced a strong association with improved mental health status post-pandemic (OR = 1.261, 95% CI = 1.006–1.579 for unchanged status; OR = 1.369, 95% CI = 1.085–1.728 for poorer status) (Yeung, et al., 2023). These findings underscore the importance of promoting family relationships and increasing quality family time when improving mental health among young people, even after the pandemic has passed.

Reference: Yeung, C.Y., Men, V.Y., So, W.W.Y., Fong, D.Y.T., Lam, M.W.C., Cheung, D.Y.T., & Yip, P.S.F. (2023). Risk and protective factors related to changes in mental health among adolescents since COVID-19 in Hong Kong: a cross-sectional study. *Child Adolescent Psychiatry Mental Health* 17, 68  
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-023-00622-x>

## Recent successful project

The “Wellbeing Guardians” program is an online well-being educational initiative, grounded in the evidence-based Bio-Psycho-Social (BPS) model, which emphasizes the interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors in contributing to overall well-being. Designed to nurture parent-child relationships, this 24-day program offers individual and parent-child activities, encouraging families to practice positive character strengths, enhance mental health, and foster resilience and optimistic thinking. In collaboration with Ocean Park, the HKU HKJC Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention launched not only the “Wellbeing Guardians” program, but also the “Ocean Park Discovery Journey: Explore Your Character Strengths” activity, in which student participants watched videos about character strengths and Ocean Park’s animal ambassadors and explored how they could apply the strengths they observed on animals to themselves by creating drawings, writings, photographs or videos.

“Wellbeing Guardians” spanned the Lunar New Year and Easter holidays, and nearly 100 primary schools, with over 6,000 participants, engaged in the program. Participants, including students and their families, accessed daily character strength-related activities through the website. With over 6,000



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submitted works, including family photos and short videos, the program aims to promote parent-child bonding, enhance family resilience, and provide meaningful engagement experiences during the holidays.



Photo: Mr Ivan Wong, Chief Executive of Ocean Park, attended the award presentation ceremony of the “Wellbeing Guardians” program and commended the students who participated in the program with flying colours. The HKU HKJC Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention extends special thanks to Ocean Park for sponsoring 4,000 admission tickets to the participating families, allowing them create fond memories at the Park together.

### **About the HKJC Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention (CSRP), HKU**

Established in 2002, CSRP has built a worldwide reputation in suicide research and prevention and extended its research scope to the well-being of individuals and society. CSRP believes that empirical research optimizes practices and contributes to societal improvement.

This press release and the PDF file for the press conference can be downloaded from the following website after 14:00, June 17, 2023: <https://csrp.hku.hk/press-release-strengthening-family-relationships/>

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