

Bridge



Department of Health

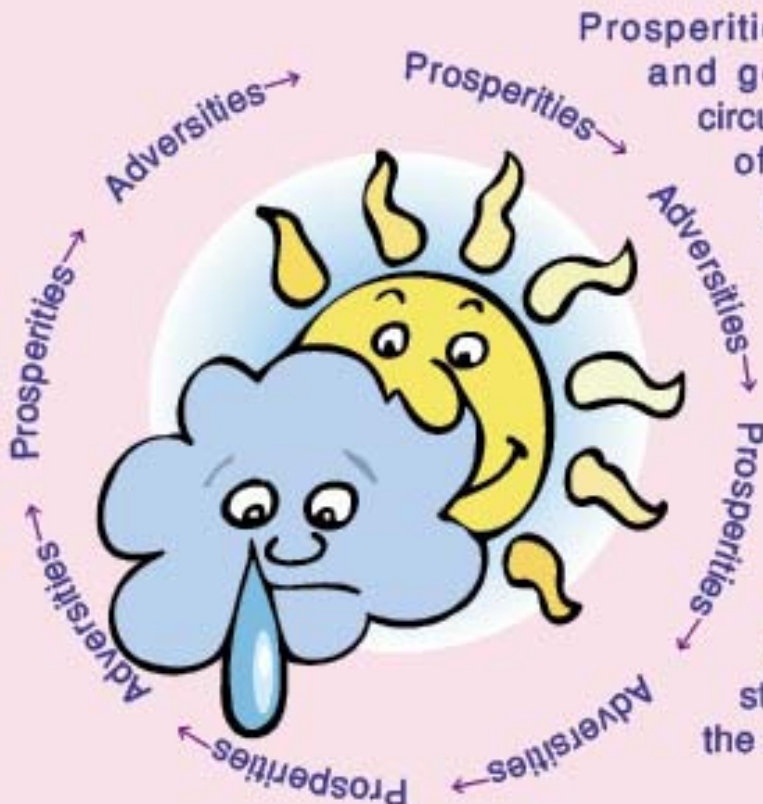
This Newsletter aims to promote communication between schools and the Student Health Service of the Department of Health.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Wish you all another fruitful academic year! At the beginning of the school year, you may need to adapt to new schools or new classes, meet new classmates and teachers, and make new friends. New problems or difficulties will be waiting for you to solve or cope with. Tackling problems is one of the most efficient and fruitful ways for us to grow and develop. We hope all of you think positive, work hard and play hard, and enjoy your school lives.



Prosperities and adversities often come and go. Life is much easier when circumstances are favourable. People often live confidently and are not prepared for adversity. When adversity comes, most people are scared and worried. If we cannot react positively, the outcome will get even worse. In the feature article, Mr. Tom Ho, Clinical Psychologist of Student Health Service, tells us how to "strive against adversity". He shares with us the strategies to tackle against difficult situations. These strategies may help you jump over the coming hurdles.

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From the Editor



Striving against Adversity

Mr. HO Chung Wai
Clinical Psychologist
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Adversities in daily lives

Mary will take her Mathematics examination in two weeks. To prepare for the examination, she is taking a mock examination at her school today. Despite she has reviewed a few times in the past two days, she feels really bad when she receives the test paper as she has no idea how to answer the first few questions.



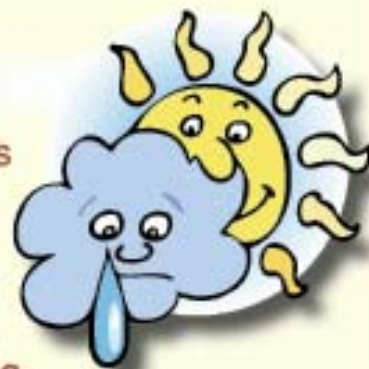
Staring at those questions, Mary starts to panic. She keeps murmuring that she is weak in Mathematics all along. Expecting to fail this time, she complains that her effort for the revision is wasted. She also thinks that this is just the mock and she will let it go. She drops her pen as she is really frustrated.



Peter is playing in a table tennis competition. He prefers attack to defense during play. He often scores with his powerful topspin forehand strokes and he has won two opponents in the competition. However, he appears helpless this time when his opponent strives for the first move and puts him into defense today. Failing to play in his favourable way, he looks awkward and is gradually tracing from behind.

Peter starts questioning why he needs to play against such a strong player, or he should not have joined the competition right at the beginning. He worries that he may lose with shame today because he is out-played a lot. He is losing his concentration and commits two consecutive faults during his service game.

Damage of adversities



Adversities include unfavourable and difficult situations in general. Mary and Peter are in such situations. Both of them feel anxious and unsure, and cannot concentrate to apply their abilities effectively. In fact, many adolescents encounter adversities such as bad academic results, repeating grade, not being accepted by peers, breaking-up with lovers, suffering from severe illnesses or quitting study but being unemployed.

Although the natures of adversities vary, they have something in common; they render such negative thoughts and feelings as degrading oneself, blaming for bad luck, thinking hopeless, and assuming no one can help or want to help; and thus isolating oneself. Such negative thoughts and feelings like smoke and fog --- they render distresses and blur people's vision, prompting them to hesitate, worry and give up.

Relaxing and staying calm

Being burdened by distresses and negative thoughts, we can hardly perform effectively as usual. Worse, we tend to make more mistakes which further undermine our confidence. We need to understand and accept that distresses often come with adversities, lest we may overreact and exaggerate troubles.



Meanwhile, we may choose to first manage our distresses so that we are in a better emotional state to combat challenges. For examples, Mary may take a deep breath, exhale slowly, look at her watch and plan her time accordingly to attempt each question; Peter may go to his chair, take a towel to dry his sweat, drink some water, go back to the table slowly, and start to serve after he has calmed himself down.

Listen some cheerful songs.



People have their own ways to relax. We may choose according to our own preference and circumstances. For instance, putting aside our troubles at hand for the time being, recalling some happy or successful experiences in our mind, listening to some cheerful songs, doing physical exercises, taking a

nap, or sharing and discussing with friends are some commonly adopted ways to deal with stresses. Stress coping skills may not help solving our troubles at hand instantly, but they can ease our mind to avoid screwing up due to panic. They also restore our mind so that we are in a better emotional state to apply our efforts against challenges.

Optimistic thinking, Positive action and Standing firm

There is no single, simple and fast way to fix various kinds of troubles in our daily lives. No one can make sure that Mary will pass her Mathematics test or let Peter win his opponent. Nevertheless, we can develop appropriate attitudes to perform our best to combat adversities.



First, optimistic thinking is more able to cheer us up. For examples, Mary may regard her mock as a chance to verify whether she has fully grasped the knowledge she has learnt, and she doesn't need to get all questions right to get a pass. Peter may think of playing against a strong opponent as a challenge, as an exciting event, or as a valuable experience to win some more points from high-level players. Likewise, when we think bright, we are livelier and more willing to fight against troubles.

Likewise, when we think bright, we are livelier and more willing to fight against troubles.

After developing "optimistic thinking", we need to take "positive action". Thinking optimistically can relieve the burden in our mind but change in reality comes only after action. Mary can read her paper once and first attempt those test items she is familiar with. Peter can serve his most able one reducing the chance of making fault and try to attack later. When we take the first move to do something that we are capable of, we are no longer passive. At the same time, we have better chance to bring positive change.



Adversities most often will not be overcome in a moment. We need to stand firm and proceed bit by bit. There must be some reasons that make Mathematics particularly difficult to Mary all along. But, as she has taken part in the mock, she has to do whatever she can, finds out which areas of the syllabus she has not yet understood and reviewed with focus before the real exam. Peter's opponent is putting him into defense and winning points repeatedly. Very likely, he is skilled at controlling play. He will keep on attacking even though Peter is able to reduce service fault. However, as long as the game is going, Peter cannot quit. He needs to apply his full effort to hang on instead.

Standing firm is to prepare ourselves for the long fight because, despite of cheerful thought and positive action, our strike will still be weak if it cannot persist. To defeat adversities, even if our effort may not work instantly, we need to be persistent.



Try your best and accept with peace

Shall Mary pass her examination two weeks later? Can Peter gain the final victory? We do not know now. Whether or not they make it this time, they are brave and respectable if they put their full efforts to fight against heavy odds. Certainly, they can advance and get better knowledge and skills if they keep improving themselves later.

Dear readers, do you hope Mary and Peter to keep trying or just give up right away? This shows your tendency towards adversities too.



People with self-confidence always motivate themselves and strive for their own goals. They accept challenge and do not give up easily even though they are in setbacks. When facing with adversities, they still think positive, and effectively use their talents into full play. Where does confidence come from? Some students share their opinions on the topic "I always feel confident because..." as follows: -



Answer: c
Group activities may facilitate friendship development, rapport establishment and mutual help among people. Besides, doing exercises can energize us and enhance our self-confidence.

Life has waves and we may experience happiness, ecstasy, anger and sadness in succession. Adolescence is a phase of life with numerous changes in various aspects. In psychosocial aspect, we would face problems related to academic performance, family, and friendship. In order to achieve healthy physical and psychological development, we need to understand and manage our emotion appropriately and handle the problem positively. Seek help and advice whenever facing difficulties or in adverse conditions beyond our capabilities can manage.

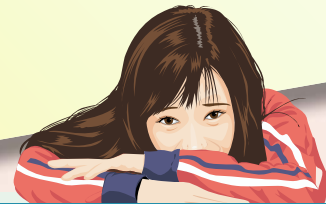
Friends of Health Box,

How are you, my name is Tong Tong.

I felt sad because my mother turned away my two best friends because of their poor academic results. She asked them not to come again and forced us to part. Mother was worried that they will have bad influence on my study. I felt distressed and my mother said she will bring me to see a social worker.

Mother does not allow me to make friends with them and ask me to work hard. I felt very stressed, please teach me how to do?

Tong Tong



Dear Tong Tong,

Thank for your letter. We appreciated that you could voice out your problem, ask for opinion and seek help.

You mentioned in your letter that your mother disliked your good friends. We understand your feelings as your mother wants you to part with them. Your mother is afraid that your friends will affect your academic result. It is always good for you to seek help and voice out your problem whenever needed. When you meet your social worker, you may tell her your worries and frustration and let her help you. You may also talk with your mother and express your feelings and needs. Let her understand you more. I suggest that you may talk to your mother, a social worker or a teacher who you trust to let them know your feelings and give you advice.

Tong Tong, I hope that you can stand on your mother's side and think about her worries. It makes you understand her concern more. Besides, you may prepare a timetable and stick to it to express your capability in managing your time appropriately. If you can show that you have self-discipline and your friendship does not affect your study badly, your mother may trust you more and be more willing to let you have the freedom of choice.

Wish you have a happy life and get on well with your family. Be optimistic and you will have a bright future.

Your friends,
Health box

Interesting Knowledge Q & A

When your classmates feel down, you should:

- let them be
- also feel down as you are their friends
- invite them to have group exercise with you
- enjoy big meals together with them



Health Tips Face Adversity and Get Through it

We always have setbacks and misfortune in our daily life. Indeed, adversity is a part of life. Therefore, we have to know how to face adversity and get through it. When facing with adversity, we have to adopt a positive attitude rather than considering ourselves as victims. We have to analyse without bias, keep our momentum and make use of appropriate means to thrive through the event effectively. However, we must know our limits and the severity of the event. We have to seek help from professionals if we cannot solve the problem or deal with it alone.

For enquiries of student's health problem,
please write to "Health Box"



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Kwun Tong,
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Please write your
name & address,
contact tel. no.
in the letter.