

# Bridge

Department of Health

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

June 2013 Issue No.59

Published by the Student Health Service, Department of Health



## Editorial

Nowadays, we can easily find many stories related to youth covered by press, some of them are encouraging like young people obtained awards in competitions, putting great efforts to achieve their goals and serving the community etc. On the other hand, some of them are rather desolate such as young people become habitual psychotropic substance abusers and participating in illegal activities etc. Our society is evolving rapidly. Apart from new opportunities, our young people also face challenges ahead.

There are different sectors in the community that concern the healthy development of young people. In collaboration with non-governmental organizations the Government also provide a wide range of social services to meet the needs of young people, assist young people to make best use of their talents, and to live a purpose-driven life.

We are going to introduce the social services for children and youth in the article. It is hoped that our young people can make good use of these services to develop their potentials and having a fruitful life.

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# Health Decoding An Overview

## Introduction

Hong Kong is a developed city filled with rapid changes. Nowadays, our teenagers face many challenges as they step forward into adulthood. The Government allocates a lot of resources on social services for children and youth to assist them to develop positive attitude and life values as well as to equip them for a better and healthy life style. We are going to introduce a range of preventive, developmental and remedial services for young people by means of a story.

## Integrated Children and Youth Services Centre

Outside the school premises Mrs. Chan met Mrs. Lee, her new neighbor. “I just move to live in this community. My younger son is studying primary three while my elder son is a secondary two student. I would like to arrange some extra curricular activities for them yet I lack information in this aspect.” Mrs. Chan said.

Mrs. Lee replied, “Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres (ICYSC) are targeted to serve children and youth aged between 6 to 24 in the neighborhood. Services are provided in a holistic manner including guidance and counselling, volunteer services, after school care programme, interest groups, homework guidance, summer youth programme and study room services etc. All these service aims at fulfilling the needs of young people with a view to enable them to have a balanced and healthy development.”

Mrs. Chan asked, “I know that you have been living in the community for quite some time. What kind of activities your sons had joined previously?”

Mrs. Lee replied, “My sons had participated in homework guidance service provided by ICYSC. Besides, there are other classes such as English and Mathematics as well as interest groups offered by ICYSC. For example, my elder son joined the basketball interest group and he made many friends having the same interest. Their team had participated in various basketball tournaments through which they developed a sense of belonging and cohesiveness. My younger son liked Taekwondo and thus he joined the Taekwondo class.”

Mrs. Chan said, “Wow, as there are many interest classes offered by ICYSC, I am sure my sons would join some of them.”

Mrs. Lee supplemented, “Besides, my sons also joined the volunteer service group. They will visit the elders on the coming Sunday. This service is good in the sense that the young people have to organize the visit on their own and provide an opportunity for them to serve the needy. They have to plan the programme, prepared all the necessary materials and rehearse the performance by themselves. Through the process, they learnt how to cooperate and communicate with different people and ways to resolve conflicts and problems. All these experiences were beneficial and valuable to the development of young people. Through these activities, the potential of young people could be realized and helped them to become responsible members of the society.”

Mrs. Chan said, “Oh! You’re so smart and resourceful!”

Mrs. Lee replied, “Indeed, the information came from Ms Wong, social worker of the ICYSC. Actually, everyone can obtain this information when you take the initiative to ask for it.”

Mrs. Chan said, “You are right. If my sons join the activities of the ICYSC, it will reduce the chance of them wandering around the streets and get acquainted with juvenile gangs. Under the guidance of social workers, it would help my son to instill positive social values and attitude.”

*(For more information of ICYSC, please refer to the website of Social Welfare Department at <http://www.swd.gov.hk>)*



## School Social Work Service

In one sunny morning, Mrs. Chan accompanied her son to school where she met Mrs. Lee. Mrs. Chan asked Mrs. Lee, “Do you know a classmate of my son had absconded from home. His mother was very worried that her son might acquaint with some bad guys?”

# Work on Social Services for Children and Youth

Mrs. Lee replied, “This really needs prompt action to deal with the problem. You better advise your classmate’s mother to approach the school social worker for assistance as soon as possible.”

Mrs. Chan asked, “What is school social work service? How can they help my friend’s son?”

Mrs. Lee suggested Mrs. Chan to approach Ms Wu, school social worker for advice. Inside the school social worker’s room, Ms. Wu listened attentively to Mrs. Chan’s description on the problems of her friend’s son. After that Ms. Wu explained, “Each secondary school is provided with one full-time on-site social worker to provide support and counselling services to the needy students to assist them to deal with their academic, social and emotional problems. As at November 2012, there are 34 non-governmental organizations providing school social work services to 471 secondary schools.”

Mrs. Chan further enquired, “Ms. Wu, could you explain more how school social worker help the students in need?”

Ms. Wu replied, “We will provide counselling through interviews and home visits to assist the needy students to tackle their problems related to academic, emotional, social, family and behavioral aspects. Besides, group activities aim at enhancing students’ self awareness, realizing their potential, developing their positive life values will also be organized. These activities could help the students to build up positive attitude and enhance their concern on social issues. In response to the enquiries from students and parents, we would try our best to provide accurate and relevant information for their reference.”

Mrs. Chan felt satisfied as she got the answers she needed and said, “Ms. Wu, thank you so much as you have enriched my understanding towards school social work service.”

Ms. Wu replied with a smile, “It’s my pleasure. I hope the problem of your friend’s son could be resolved soon. You better remind her to contact the school social worker for assistance as early as possible.” Mrs. Chan agreed, “The sooner, the better.”

*(For more information of school social work service, please refer to the website of Social Welfare Department at <http://www.swd.gov.hk>)*



## District Youth Outreaching Social Work Service and Overnight Outreaching Service for Young Night Drifters

Inside the school social worker’s room of a secondary school, Mrs. Cheung, friend of Mrs. Chan said in a low mood, “Mr. Wong. My son, Cheung Siu Ming of Form 2B had low motivation to study recently. He stayed away from home frequently. I have no knowledge of his friends and what he had done outside. I am worried about his situation and don’t know what to do.”

Mr. Wong empathized with Mrs. Cheung and said, “The situation needs attention. I will try to contact Cheung Siu-ming to have an understanding of his situation. I can also solicit assistance from my colleagues who are working in the district youth outreaching social work team to provide assistance to your son if necessary. By the way, do you want to know more about this service?”

Mrs. Cheung said, “I have learned about the school social work service but have no idea about the district youth outreaching social work service. Can you tell me more about it?”

Mr. Wong explained, “Youth outreaching social workers usually visit the hotspots where the at-risk youth usually gather. Social workers will make friends and build up relationship with them and make assessment on their needs and problems. Counselling and guidance will be rendered to prevent further deterioration of their behavior and assist them to overcome difficulties. The target group is at-risk youth aged between 6 to 24 years who are vulnerable to undesirable influences. There are 16 district youth outreaching social work teams operated by the non-governmental organizations providing services on a territory-wide basis in addressing the needs of at-risk youth and tackling juvenile gang problems. In respect of overnight outreaching service for young night drifters, it provides territory-wide services to reach out to high risk young night drifters exposed to possible moral danger. There are 18 designated ICYSC providing 18 overnight youth outreaching teams to serve the at-risk youth over the territory.”



# Health Decoding

Mrs. Cheung, enquired further, “Mr. Wong, how can the youth outreaching social workers contact the young people and offer assistance to them?”

Mr. Wong explained, “The youth outreaching social workers usually go to places where youngsters gather such as playgrounds, parks, cyber café, billiard rooms, fast food shops, shopping malls and game centres etc. to assist the at-risk youth to deal with their behavioral, emotional, studying, employment, familial and peer relationship problems. Social workers will foster the at-risk youth to develop positive social values through various interventions. The overnight youth outreaching teams would provide on-the-spot crisis intervention and escort the at-risk youth to temporary shelter or their home if needed. Besides, mainstream social activities would be organized for the at-risk youth to help develop their potential and to enhancing their problem solving ability.”

Mrs. Cheung expressed her gratitude to Mr. Wong for his detailed explanation of the district youth outreaching social work service and overnight outreaching service for young night drifters.

*(For more information of Youth Outreaching Social Work Service and Overnight Outreaching Service for Young Night Drifters, please refer to the website of Social Welfare Department at <http://www.swd.gov.hk>)*



## Hotline Service for Youth at Risk

Mrs. Lee said, “Mrs. Chan, you seem to know a lot about social services for young people.”

Mrs. Chan replied, “Actually I have recorded the information about social services for the young people from a talk I attended. For example, there is a service known as the Hotline Service for Youth at Risk. My friend, Mrs. Cheung after attending the talk suggested her son to seek help from the hotline service with positive outcome.”

Mrs. Lee felt puzzled, “Hotline service for youth at risk? I’ve never heard of it. What’s it all about?”

Mrs. Chan replied, “Hotline service for youth at risk is run by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups under the subvention of Social Welfare Department. The target clientele is children and young people aged from 6 to 24. The hotline service operates between 2 p.m. to 2 a.m. from Monday to Saturday. It provides counselling and guidance to young people through telephone contact by offering help in an easy and convenient way in crisis situation, facilitating them to solve their problems and providing counselling to alleviate their distress. In times of need, face to face counselling will be offered to clients who require immediate intervention and for further referral to other appropriate service units to meet their needs.”

Mrs. Lee found the hotline service useful and asked, “What number is the telephone for the service?”

Mrs. Chan answered, “The telephone number of the hotline service is 2777 8899.”

*(For more information of Hotline Service for Youth at Risk, please refer to the website of the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups at <http://www.hkfyg.org.hk>)*

## Pilot Cyber Youth Outreaching Project

Mrs. Lee said, “Nowadays young people indulged in the world of internet which led to at-risk behavior in the internet. Nevertheless, young people did not take the initiative to seek help when problems arise. It will be great if the young people can solicit assistance from social workers through the internet.”

Mrs. Chan replied, “My friend told me that the Social Welfare Department has commissioned three non-governmental organizations to launch a three year pilot cyber youth outreaching projects with funding support from the Lotteries Fund with effect from August 2011. The three projects are “Nitecat” run by Boys’ and Girls’ Clubs Association of Hong Kong, “uTouch” run by Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups and “Infinity Teens” run by Caritas - Hong Kong.”

Mrs. Lee was curious about the project and said, “I have never heard of such projects. Could you tell me more about it?”

Mrs. Chan explained, “The pilot projects target children and young people aged under 24. They use various cyber means such as e-mail, SMS, MSN, blogs, Facebook etc. to proactively reach out to young people particular at-risk or hidden youth who engage in at-risk behavior in the internet and provide counselling and guidance for them to tackle their problems. It provides preventive, developmental, supportive and remedial services to the needy youth. Social workers will invite the

needy ones to meet in person and those who are assessed to be in need of follow up services will be linked up to other appropriate service units for appropriate assistance.

Mrs. Lee was happy to learn these pilot projects and said, "Thank you for your valuable information and I'll disseminate the information to my friends to facilitate them to seek help when needed."

*(For information of the project "Nitecat", please refer to website of Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong at <http://nitecat.bgca.org.hk>)*

*(For information of the project "uTouch", please refer to the website of Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups at <http://utouch.u21.hk>)*

*(For information of the project "Infinity Teens", please refer to the website of Caritas - Hong Kong at <http://it.caritas.org.hk>)*

## Counselling Centre for Psychotropic Substance Abusers and Centre for Drug Counselling

Mrs. Cheung said happily to Mrs. Chan, "Hi, Mrs. Chan. Thank you for your encouragement and support to my son's problem. The problem has been alleviated. With this experience, I learned that it's essential to have a positive attitude and to seek assistance from the social service units whenever problem arose."

Mrs. Chan echoed, "That's right. However some problem cannot be solved by individual efforts. It requires the concerted efforts of the society to deal with it, like the drug problems. You may note that in the recent years, the Government pays much efforts to fight against drugs problem in the society."

Mrs. Cheung said, "Indeed, drug problems really affected many families. I think the best way to tackle the drug problems is to seek help from appropriate social service agencies as early as possible."

In the case of Mrs. Lai, a friend of Mrs. Cheung faced the drug problems. Mr. Lai Kwok Keung, Mrs. Lai's son was addicted to drugs when he was associated with undesirable peers. Mrs. Lai was very worried about his son and sought help from her friends. To help her friend, Mrs. Cheung tried to search information on counselling centre for psychotropic substance abusers for Mrs. Lai.

Mrs. Cheung said to Mrs. Lai, "Counselling centres for psychotropic substance abusers provide counselling and assistance to psychotropic substance abusers and to young people at risk with a view to assisting them to abstain from psychotropic substance abuse and develop healthy life style. Services provided include case and group counselling, counselling for their family members, regular preventive education programmes for secondary students and the community, professional training for allied professionals and medical support service for needy people to identify and motivate them to seek early treatment and rehabilitation services. As at October 2012, there are 11 counselling centres for psychotropic substance abusers under subvention of Social Welfare Department. Besides, there are two centres for drug counselling run by Caritas - Hong Kong to provide counselling, activities and preventive education services to help drug abusers to abstain from drug abuse, assisting ex-drug abusers to maintain abstinence and assisting their family members to tackle problems arise from drug abuse."

*(For details of Counselling Centres for Psychotropic Substance Abusers and Centre for Drug Counselling, please refer to the website of Social Welfare Department at <http://www.swd.gov.hk> and Website of Narcotics Division Security Bureau at <http://www.nd.gov.hk>)*

### Conclusion

It is hoped that the readers of this article could have a better understanding on the social services for children and youth. In case of need, the needy youth and their family members know how to seek appropriate service to tackle the problems and meet their needs. With the concerted efforts of the society, we can help young people to engage in meaningful activities, develop potentials, foster development of positive social values and attitude and to become a contributing member of the society.

Source of Information

Website of Social Welfare Department at <http://www.swd.gov.hk>

Website of Narcotics Division Security Bureau at <http://www.nd.gov.hk>



## My view on this article:

Services provided by social workers are so professional!

Actually, the social services are quite updated such as the pilot cyber youth outreaching project.

The activities offered by Integrated Children and Youth Service Centres are so diversified, that attracted me to enrol in these activities.

Since the society has allocated plenty of resources to provide social services for young people, it is hoped that you can make good use of these services.

Although we did not want to see young people having drug and internet addiction problems, we should be brave to face the problems and seek appropriate assistance when needed.

Wow! I didn't know that there are so many different kinds of youth services and I have learnt a lot from this article.

# Bridge Chats

+852 1234 5678~ Siu Ming

My neighbour, Ah Keung asked me to take Kaetamine with him last night. He offered Keatamine to me free of charge and assured that I would feel great after taking it.

**Bridge**

Oh, you should not take drugs. Do you remember Dr. Cheung, Medical Officer of Counselling Centre for Psychotropic Substance Abusers told us that we will become addicted once we take the drugs?

+852 1234 5678~ Siu Ming

But ..... how can I kill time in this long summer holiday? It's so boring.

**Bridge**

You can participate in the activities organized by Integrated Children and Youth Service Centres.

+852 1234 5678~ Siu Ming

Oh, would it be very boring? I don't want to join the homework guidance class during the summer holiday.

**Bridge**

I think you have an misunderstanding on the services offered by Integrated Children and Youth Service Centres. In fact, there are various kinds of activities like basketball, Taekwondo, adventure-base training and playing music.

+852 1234 5678~ Siu Ming

The activities seems good and attractive. How can I obtain more information about the services provided by the centres?

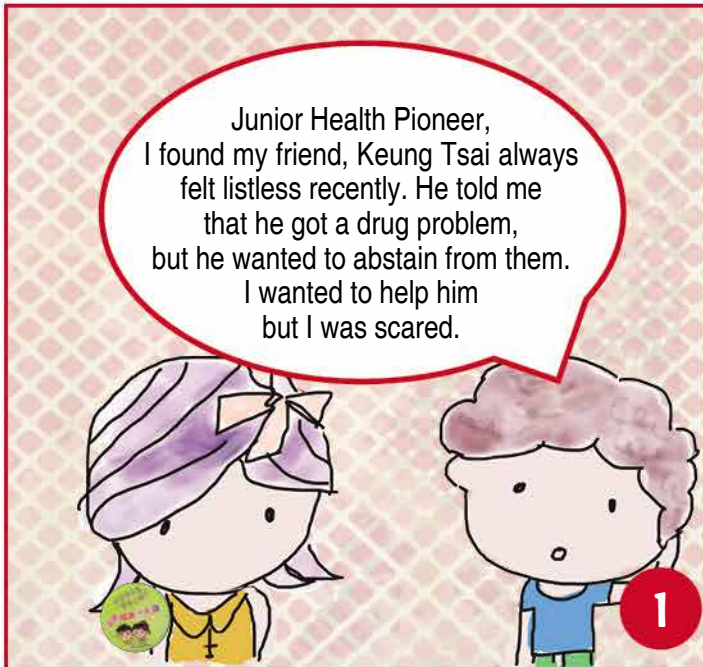
**Bridge**

You can refer to the website of Social Welfare Department at <http://www.swd.gov.hk>.



# Junior Health Pioneer

This article described Siu-wah learnt that Keung Tsai is addicted to drugs. She wanted to help Keung Tsai to get rid of the drug problem and thus sought advice from the Junior Health Pioneer.



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

4/F, Lam Tin Polyclinic, 99 Kai Tin Road, Kwun Tong, Kowloon