

## **Partnership in Promoting Community Mental Health**

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### **Introduction:**

Mental Health problems have become rising concerns for the general public in Hong Kong. As a team of community social workers serving the most deprived and poor communities in Hong Kong, we have developed a three-tier mental health prevention model to achieve the goals of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. This presentation is an attempt in secondary mental health prevention.

### **Purpose of the Project:**

- To heighten the sensitivity of the community and volunteers on mental health for the individuals with depressive symptoms
- To detect the individuals with pre-symptoms or early psychiatric symptoms.

### **Material and Methods:**

We had recruited 26 core members from mutual help groups and other volunteers from our Mutual Aid Centre for Single Parent Families, Women Development Project & IFSC Shaukeiwan to form a community mental health concern group. After equipping them with program skills and knowledge on mental health, members of the concern group took part in community concern programs and reached out to people suffering from mental health problems. Our colleagues conducted evaluations with the volunteers on the outcome of our intervention through focus groups and individual interviews. We used before and after test to test the knowledge of volunteers after training. A set of questions about knowledge, expectations and changes after joining the training, and also motivation for future participation was used in focus group

interview.

We used also a questionnaire and individually interviewed the participants of the counseling sessions to evaluate the effects.

**Results:**

Totally 44 person/times participated in two community programs. 3/4 volunteers demonstrated increased knowledge and abilities in differentiating depression symptoms after training. They all were positive about taking part in the present and future mental health programmes. 124 participants of the community program filled in the Chinese version CES-D. 40 participants scored 16 marks or above, indicating that they are depressed. A total of 12 participants joined the counseling sessions with social workers & peer counselors.

**Conclusions:**

32.3% participants scored 16 marks or more, showing depression tendency is alerting and the rate is consistent with our past activities. It indicates also that the activities could reach the target population. The positive feedbacks from the volunteers on our training and the programmes is encouraging and proofing to be effective strategy in promoting community participation in mental health promotion.