

Press Release: 30/1/2009

School Bullying in Hong Kong - The Potential Cause of Youth Early Psychosis
Urgent Attention Needed - Delay No More

The Press Conference of the Research of “Study of School Bullying among Youths
and Early Psychosis in Hong Kong”

According to the information released by the Hospital Authority, the number of young service users seeking medical treatments in public psychiatric service has increased tremendously for 30% from 2001 to 2007, which reflects the worrying fact of the youth mental health problems in Hong Kong. If timely medical treatments cannot reach the persons in need, it is likely to cause long-term psychological, physical and social impacts on these people’s lives. Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service (BOKSS) has been showing concerns on youth mental health problems, especially on people who show relatively mild and early symptoms and their accessibilities to medical support and services, as well as the various factors affecting youth mental health problems.

Therefore, BOKSS has authorized Professor YIP, Kam-Shing of the Applied Social Science Department, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, to conduct a research on the relationship of school bullying among youths and early psychosis in Hong Kong. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were implemented on the data obtained from the case studies of existing clients in BOKSS. The results indicated that about 1 in 4 young people with mental health problems had experience of being bullied at school. Among this group of people, 60% of them showed symptoms of early psychosis or schizophrenia, which this situation requires urgent attention from the general public.

Professor Yip from the Applied Social Science Department of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University says, “Young people with the relating experience were interviewed in this study. We found that 80% of the people who bullied the victims were indeed the victims’ classmates or schoolmates, while the consistent bullying experiences lasted for more than 6 months, with the longest of 7 years. The consequence of assaults on victims’ mental health status was the most severe in the

verbal assault group as compared to physical assaults or other assaults on relationships.” The chief executive officer of BOKSS replied, “Bullying incidents in Hong Kong are not to be treated as minor problems. If appropriate actions were not taken for the bullying victims who experience mental disturbance, it will be too late to deliver such assistance when serious mental problems have developed. BOKSS is therefore launching the “Walk With” campaign, in order to gather more attention from the public on youth mental health issues.”

The “Walk With” campaign is collecting 10,000 signatures of people who support the promotion of youth mental health care through various channels including schools, commercial sectors and the community. Moreover, the BOKSS “Walk With” Charity Walkathon fundraising event will be held on 2 February 2009 for the youth mental health service, which aims to deliver timely assistance and support to more young people in need. BOKSS later will make proposal on the school bullying and early psychosis issues. A detailed report of the research study will be released in the press conference on 2 February 2009, which is aimed to provide a healthier environment for the next generation in Hong Kong.

The details of the Press Conference are as follows:

Date: 2 February 2009

Time: 3 pm – 4pm

Venue: 9th floor, Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service, 36 Oi Kwan Road, Wanchai

Time for Press Reception: from 2:30pm

Speakers:

- Professor YIP, Kam-Shing from Applied Social Science Department, Hong Kong Polytechnic University
- Mr. Johnny Tsang, Chief Executive Officer of Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service

Enquiry: Miss Ho, Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service (Tel: 3413-1651)

Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service is a subsidized organization of the Social Welfare Department and a member organization of the Community Chest. Commencing early in 1982, we have been serving the community through the integration of Biblical principles with professional competence of social work. In the past twenty seven years, we have been providing various and diverse services to the elderly, ex-mentally ill people, children, youth, family and the non-Chinese communities. In the recent years, we have been actively promoting healthy living education to wide age range of

people, which matches our community-serving principles. BOKSS has been developing its service and we now have more than 30 serving units, covering various districts across Hong Kong. About 50% of our annual expenditure comes from the government, while the remaining fund is raised through various fundraising events. Within these self-funding services, youth mental health service is a pioneering project, which provides early assistance and comprehensive rehabilitation services for youths aged 13 to 28 diagnosed with early psychosis, depression or anxiety disorders, and their families. For more information about the organization, please visit our website: www.bokss.org.hk