

**World Health Day 2017 – Depression**

**Purpose**

This paper aims to introduce the Department of Health (DH)'s Publicity and Public Education Campaign for World Health Day (WHD) 2017 and solicit support from the District Councils and community partners for the Campaign.

**Background**

2. World Health Day (WHD) is celebrated on 7 April every year to mark the anniversary of the founding of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1948. Each year, a theme is selected to highlight and provide a unique opportunity to mobilise actions around a specific health topic of concern to people all over the world. The theme for the WHD 2017 campaign is depression. The overall goal of the campaign is that more people with depression, everywhere in the world, both seek and get help.

3. Depression is an illness characterised by persistent sadness and a loss of interest in activities that one normally enjoys, accompanied by an inability to carry out daily activities, for at least two weeks. In addition, people with depression generally have several of the following symptoms: a loss of energy; a change in appetite; sleeping more or less; anxiety; reduced concentration; indecisiveness; restlessness; feelings of worthlessness, guilt, or hopelessness; and thoughts of self-harm or suicide.

4. Depression affects people of all ages from all walks of life. According to the WHO, more than 300 million people are suffering from depression globally, equivalent to 4.4 per cent of the world's population. Depression is now the leading cause of disability worldwide and is a major contributor to the overall global burden of disease.

***Depression in Hong Kong***

5. According to a local study, the one-week prevalence of depressive episode for adults was 2.9 per cent and the risk increased with age, reaching 4.7 per cent in adults aged 66 to 75. Depression has been found to be the major contributor to suicide deaths. In 2015, about 30 per cent of suicide cases in Hong Kong were elderly persons aged 65 or above. A local study found that elderly people with depressive symptoms had 2.2 times the risk of suicide mortality of those without.

### ***Publicity and public education campaign by the Department of Health***

6. To echo the theme of WHD 2017, the DH launched a territory-wide publicity and public education campaign (Campaign) with various government bureaux/ departments and supporting organisations on 7 April. The slogan of the Campaign is “Depression Matters – Let’s Stand Together (抑鬱你我齊面對 同心同行衝過去)”. Together, we aim to achieve the following:

- the general public is better informed about depression, its causes and possible consequences, including suicide, and what help is or can be available for prevention and treatment;
- people with depression seek help; and
- family, friends and colleagues of people living with depression are able to provide support.

7. The Campaign will bring out two important messages and provide advice based on the three key elements “SME” - "Sharing", "Mind" and "Enjoyment" - advocated by the "Joyful@HK" Campaign. The first message is “Depression can be treated”. Talk with someone you trust about your feelings for the first step to recovery, seek professional help and do exercise regularly. Exercise has been proven to be effective in both the prevention and management of depression. The second message is “When you live with someone with depression, you can help them recover”. While offering your support, you should also take good care of yourself.

8. A thematic miniweb for WHD 2017 can be found at <http://www.chp.gov.hk/whd2017>. The miniweb provides a series of health educational resources for members of the general public. In particular, we would like to recommend two videos:

- an appeal video by Ms Sammi Cheng, our ambassador of the Joyful@HK Campaign – Sammi made an appeal to members of the public to face depression with a positive attitude
- a motion graphic video entitled “Know about Depression” – it introduces what one can do if one thinks he/she has depression and if one lives with someone with depression.

Both videos are available in the DH’s Centre for Health Protection Youtube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/c/ChpGovHkChannel>.

### ***Suggested Community-based Actions***

9. The Government's actions alone are not enough to combat depression. Different sectors have to join hands and actions are needed at every level, from individual, family, organisation to the wider community.

10. The success of the Campaign depends on the active support of the District Councils and community organisations. They can hold events such as health talks, exhibitions, game booths, competitions/quiz, health festivals and "Know Depression Day", to encourage more people with depression to seek and get help.

11. District Councils and community organisations are welcome to make use of the resource materials available at the Campaign miniweb mentioned in paragraph 8. They can also provide information about the events organised for uploading onto our Campaign miniweb.

### ***Advice Sought***

12. Members are invited to note the content of this paper and support the DH's Publicity and Public Education Campaign for WHD 2017.

Department of Health

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