



#### 封面故事

「來，抓住我的手。」一隻毛茸茸的手遞了過來，扶起了受挫的人類。面對不熟悉的事物，人類總是投以恐懼的目光和偏見。但倘若你嘗試了解這副臉龐，也許你會不再害怕，願意擁抱這陌生的溫暖... ..



**Want to learn more?  
Come and visit our website!**

Public Mental Health Laboratory   
公共心理健康研究室

@pmhlabb 



香港中文大學  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

SoCUBE   
CUHK Social Innovation Centre

Supported by Knowledge Transfer Fund at CUHK  
香港中文大學知識轉移基金支持項目

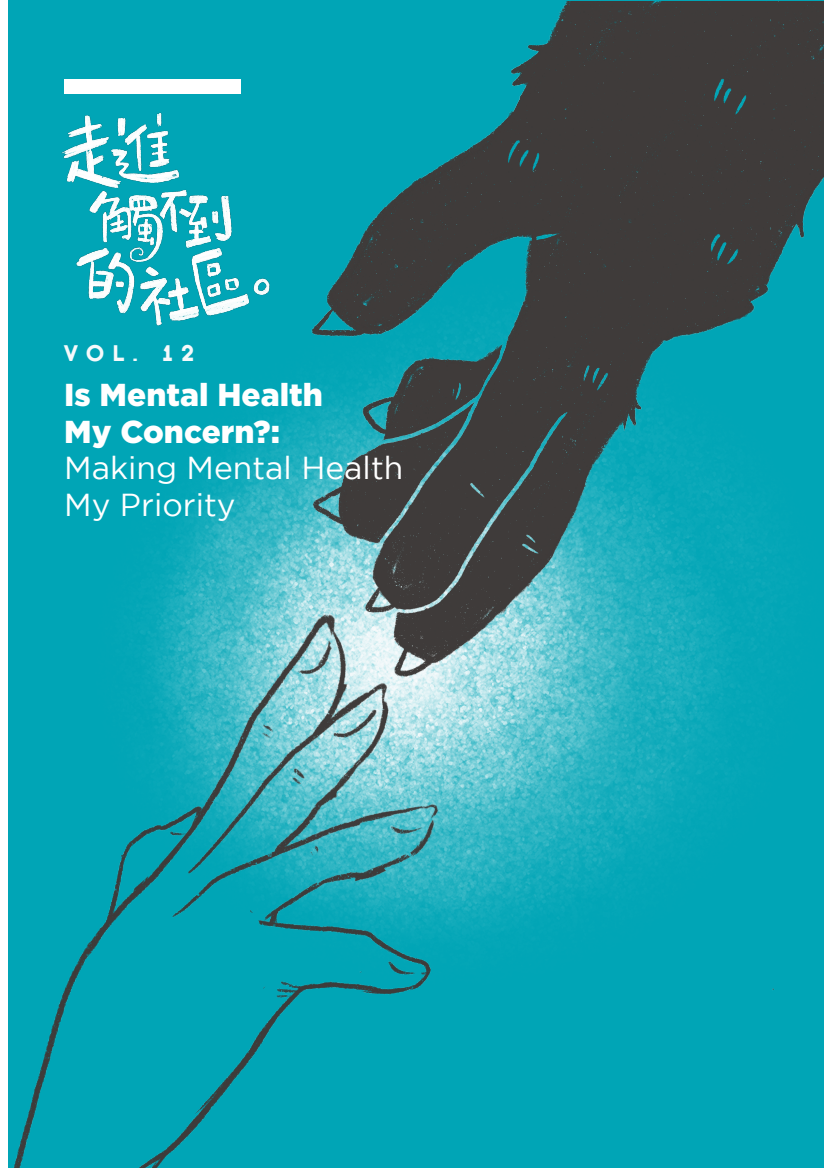


走進  
觸不到的  
社區。

VOL. 12

**Is Mental Health  
My Concern?:**

Making Mental Health  
My Priority



After reading this series of booklets provided by the CUHK Public Mental Health Research Office, do you have a better understanding of mental health?

We've introduced methods to maintain physical and mental health. Have you tried them, and what were the results?

#### Recap of Booklet Contents:

1. "Come, on! Let's Gather."
2. "Stressed, You Say? Me Too!"
3. "The Mighty 'Tools' of Wellness: Diaphragmatic Breathing and Muscle Relaxation"
4. "Eat Well, Feel Well: Secrets to a Happier You"
5. "Move to Improve: Exercise for a Healthy Mind"
6. "Good Night, Great Mind: The Benefits of Quality Sleep"
7. "Embrace Calm: Managing Worries and Anxiety"
8. "Mindful Moments: Nurturing Self-Compassion"
9. "Ancient Wisdom, Modern Relief: Chinese Medicine for Mind and Mood"
10. "The Healing Power of Nature: Your Path to Mental Wellness"
11. "Bright Minds, Brighter Lives: The Power of Positive Psychology"
12. "Is Mental Health My Concern?: Making Mental Health My Priority" ◀

## Slow Living for Heart and Mind

Residents in the Blue Zones are known worldwide for their longevity, whether they are in middle age or reaching a hundred years old.

Blue Zones are scattered in different corners of the Earth, including the Nicoya Peninsula in Costa Rica, Sardinia in Italy, Icaria in Greece, and Okinawa in Japan.

Experts found common traits among the residents of Blue Zones:

1

### Good Stress-Reduction Habits

Stress can induce aging and diseases. The pace of life in Blue Zones is slow, and there are regular stress-reducing activities, such as Okinawan women learning tea ceremony.

2

### Balanced Dietary Habits

95% of the food for Mediterranean residents consists of plants and legumes, followed by deep-sea fish. They consume meat only five times a month and use nuts as snacks. Okinawans have a saying: "Hara Hachi Bu," which means eating until 80% full.

### Avoiding Prolonged Sitting

The natural living environment in Blue Zones encourages residents to have a habit of regular physical activity.

4

### Maintaining Close Social Interactions

Blue Zones emphasize family and neighborhood relationships. Okinawans rarely feel lonely because they value good friends, and they call this close-knit group of friends "moai."

Therefore, health is not just the absence of diseases but also having a healthy mind and social life. In 1948, the World Health Organization defined "health" as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being.

## Common Misconceptions About Mental Health

### QUESTION

If I eat and sleep well, why does mental health matter?

Even without troubling psychological issues, we can still take care of our mental health to enhance its quality.

A person with good mental health:



### QUESTION

Does mental health problems concern me?

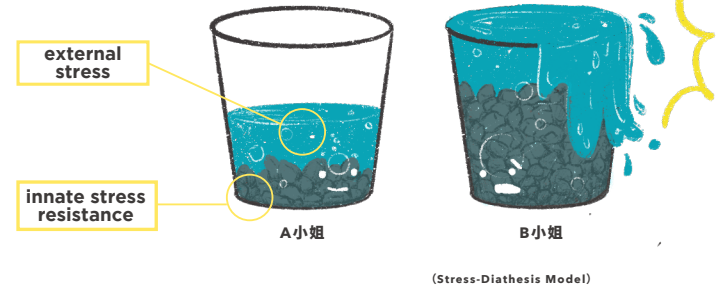
In fact, mental health problems are not uncommon, and everyone has the chance to encounter them.

According to the latest Hong Kong Mental Morbidity Survey, the prevalence of common mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression is 13.3% among the population aged 16-75.

### QUESTION

Is the main cause of mental health problems family inheritance?

Most mental health disorders have a certain genetic component, but congenital factors alone are not enough to trigger mental health problems. They only increase the risk of developing such conditions.



Psychologists generally explain the causes of mental health disorders through the "**stress diathesis model**". When innate stress resistance is relatively low, combined with external factors such as sudden stress or setbacks, it is easier to induce mental health problems. However, there are still many preventive methods.

### QUESTION

Are mental health problems incurable?

The survey shows that nearly 80% of mental health problems do not belong to severe mental health disorders. As long as patients find a professional doctor, control the condition through methods like psychotherapy, adhere to medication, and have regular follow-ups, they can recover and prevent the recurrence of the disease through systematic recovery methods.

#### QUESTION

**Do people with mental health problems always have a tendency for violence?**

<sup>3</sup> Society has many unreasonable labels and discrimination against "mental illness." Only less than 5% of mental health patients with violent behavior and tendencies, mostly due to a lack of appropriate treatment.

In contrast, we can better predict violent behavior in people who abuse alcohol and drugs.

#### QUESTION

**Is suffering from mental health problems due to patients being unsatisfied, not strong enough, or too stubborn?**

The majority of mental health disorders are related to imbalances in brain secretion. For example, people with depression lack serotonin in the brain, which makes it difficult for them to feel happy.

It's not that patients "can't see the good, are not strong enough, or deliberately seek trouble," but rather, the deficiency in serotonin makes them susceptible to negative thoughts, falling into the trap of negative thinking.

~~serotonin~~

## Limitations of Mental Health Services in Hong Kong

### ● Negative Labels on Mental Health Disorders

People with mental health issues are often misunderstood, labeled as having violent and suicidal tendencies, unpredictable behavior, and an inability to make rational decisions. Negative labels lead to a sense of isolation for mental health patients.

Negative labels lead to a sense of alienation among individuals with mental health disorders. However, social acceptance and inclusiveness are precisely crucial conditions for facilitating their successful reintegration into society. The general skepticism towards the decision-making ability of patients makes it even more difficult for them to assimilate into society.

### ● Lack of Public Awareness

Lack of Public Awareness: Limited knowledge of mental health disorders increases the difficulty of detection and early identification, delaying treatment.

Raising public awareness of mental health is crucial for early detection and finding suitable services for those in need.

### ● Current Limitations of Mental Health Services <sup>4</sup>

From April 2020 to the end of March 2021, the average waiting time for psychiatric outpatient services in public hospitals was 68 weeks, which may discourage seeking medical help. Private psychiatric and clinical psychology services have shorter waiting times, but the higher cost may be a barrier for some families.

## Mental Health Checkpoint

In the past two weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following issues?

The content is for reference only and cannot replace the advice of a doctor or be used as the basis for self-diagnosis or treatment.

Not at all (0)/ Several Days (1)/  
More than half the days (2)/ Nearly Every Day (3)

1. Feel bored or not wanting to do anything at all.
2. Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless.
3. Trouble falling asleep; waking up in the middle of the night or sleeping too much.
4. Feeling tired or having little energy.
5. Poor appetite or overeating.
6. Disliking yourself, feeling you've done poorly, or not meeting family expectations.
7. Difficulty concentrating on things like reading newspapers or watching TV.
8. Others notice you moving or speaking more slowly, or you're more active than usual—restless or moving excessively.
9. Thinking that you would be better off dead or hurting yourself.



Depression?

Check Results and  
Treatment Methods  
for Depression

1. Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge.
2. Being unable to stop or control worrying.
3. Worrying too much about different things.
4. Being unable to relax.
5. Feeling restless or uneasy.
6. Easily becoming annoyed or irritable.
7. Feeling afraid, as if something awful might happen.

Anxiety?

Check Results and  
Treatment Methods  
for Anxiety



## Related links

心靈地圖

### Wellness Map (Website)

The Public Mental Health Research Lab of the Psychology Department at the Chinese University of Hong Kong has designed a website that introduces various mental health issues. The website provides information on mental health, simple psychological assessment questionnaires, and introduces local public and private psychological therapy services and procedures. By offering self-help strategies and relevant resources, the website aims to help individuals understand their mental health conditions and find suitable psychological services as needed.



### Wellness Travellers (Social Enterprise) @ f

The purpose of the establishment of Wellness Travellers (心旅) is to translate research findings into psychological services that can be widely accessible to the public. With a commitment to evidence-based, safe, and cost-effective practices, the organization aims to impact lives positively and enhance public mental health. By offering low-density therapy in the community, Wellness Travellers seeks to increase opportunities for citizens to access psychological services.



### Lifestyle Hub (App)

(Lifestyle Hub) is a telephone application developed by the Public Mental Health Research Lab of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. In the modern age, people often engage in insufficient physical activity, maintain unbalanced diets, and experience poor sleep quality. Improving mental and physical health is achievable by making changes to daily habits. The app serves as a self-help tool in the field of lifestyle medicine and has shown significant effectiveness in enhancing mental well-being.



If you wish to fill out more questionnaires,  
you can visit the “心靈地圖” (Mind Map) website.

# MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS!

## **Integrated Community Centre for Mental Wellness (ICCMW)**

The Mental Health Integrated Community Centre for Mental Wellness (ICCMW), established in various districts across Hong Kong, provides services for individuals in need of mental health recovery. This includes individuals with mental illnesses, those suspecting mental health issues, their families/care-givers, and residents living in the respective districts.



### **Hotlines**

182 88 (24-hour service hotline) - Caritas Warm Line

2382 0000 (24-hour service hotline) - LifeLine

2389 2222 (24-hour service hotline) - The Samaritans Hong Kong

182 81 (24-hour service hotline) - Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Zhi

Ruo Yuan Crisis Intervention and Support Centre Hotline

2772 0047 - Hospital Authority Mental Health Hotline

The Public Mental Health Research Office hopes that through the project "Entering Untouched Communities: Promoting Community Mental Health," they can reach unreached communities in Hong Kong. The goal is to enhance the understanding of mental health in the community, encourage those in need but neglected to take positive action, and improve their mental health.

This series of booklets is the first part of the plan, based on evidence and covering cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and lifestyle medicine. The aim is to address common mental health issues and analyze problems from different perspectives, enabling people to use self-help strategies to improve mental health.

