

STAY CONNECTED

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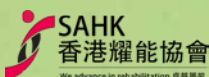
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香港聖公會福利協會有限公司
 HONG KONG SHENG KUNG HUI WELFARE COUNCIL LIMITED



東華三院
 Tung Wah Group of Hospitals



教育局
 Education Bureau



The new coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is rampant around the world. In order to control the pandemic, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) has announced a series of measures since January 2020 to reduce public gathering and social contacts. Mask wearing, hand/daily washing, home schooling/working from home, social distancing, etc. have suddenly become the “new normal” of our daily lives; the activities of the JC A-Connect: Jockey Club Autism Support Network (“JC A-Connect”) have also been affected.

STAY CONNECTED

Against all odds, JC A-Connect continues to provide holistic support to local students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families during the COVID-19 outbreak. Thanks to the concerted efforts of our team, whether they are from The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charity Trust, The University of Hong Kong, the frontline professional colleagues of our NGO partners, numerous contingency plans and measures have been put in place, e.g. online tutoring groups, WhatsApp parent consultation hotlines, cyber public education activities, and information on how to support children with ASD under the pandemic, etc. Those information has not only been uploaded to the project website to support the local ASD community, but also extended to North America, contributing to the global effort to support people with ASD amidst the pandemic.

In addition to supporting students with ASD and their families amidst COVID-19, JC A-Connect also advocates the long-term sustainability of support for local children with ASD. We are pleased that the Education Bureau has announced to integrate the “NGO-School Collaboration” approach of JC A-Connect into its ASD Project in the 2021/22 school year to provide continuous support for both schools and students.

This newsletter introduces the various support measures of JC A-Connect during the pandemic. Although we cannot get together, our hearts stay connected with each other, as always.

Congratulations!

HKSAR GOVERNMENT TO DEPLOY JG A-CONNECT PROGRAMME





We are pleased to announce that the Education Bureau will mainstream the “NGO-School Collaboration” approach of JC A-Connect to supporting students with ASD in schools.

With the financial support of The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, JC A-Connect operates through a collaborative approach between NGOs and schools in the 2015/16–2020/21 school years, drawing on the expertise of NGOs in ASD training to assist schools to provide Tier-2 support in the “Tiered Autism Intervention Model for Students with ASD”, i.e. supplemental small group training on social adaptive skills for students with ASD. JC A-Connect has supported more than 500 primary and secondary schools. In the light of the significant efficacy of the collaborative approach between NGOs and schools, the Education Bureau will integrate the “NGO-School Collaboration” into its “Whole School Approach to Providing Tiered Support for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders” (“ASD Project”) to sustain the services delivered in JC A-Connect. This part of the ASD Project will be rolled out in the 2021/22 school year to provide continuous support for both schools and students.

We are honoured that the Government has recognised the effectiveness of the JC A-Connect programme and is committed to supporting students with ASD in the long run based on the model developed by the JC A-Connect programme. The JC A-Connect programme will continue to provide quality support to the ASD community while promoting a better understanding of ASD in our society.



REFERENCES:

1. https://www.policyaddress.gov.hk/2019/eng/pdf/supplement_5.pdf p.65, point 1 under ‘Supporting Students with Different Needs’
2. <https://applications.edb.gov.hk/circular/upload/EDBC/EDBC20002E.pdf>

Fighting COVID-19 HOME

Upholding the “family-oriented” and “socially inclusive” principles, Hong Kong Young Women’s Christian Association (HKYWCA) offers trans-disciplinary services to students with ASD to enhance their skills for social communication, emotional management and learning adaptability, and to address their developmental and family needs.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, schooling was suspended. Students stayed home most of the time. They had to spend more time with their families, establish new daily routines, stay more alert to hygiene and self-care, attend online classes frequently and reduce social and outdoor activities. However, students with ASD are weak in adapting to rapid changes and thus feel challenged to fit in a flexible life mode and exercise proper emotional management. In fact, some parents reported more conflicts because they spent too much time staying close to each other. The parent-child relationship intensified; some families were at their wit’s end.

In view of this issue, the instructors of HKYWCA have been contacting students and parents through telephone and online means during the outbreak to provide emotional support and guidance on coping skills; and have provided e-learning sessions for parents to share their concerns and stress. HKYWCA also offered a “Pandemic Prevention Kit” with food, sanitisers and stress-relief tools, as well as a “Home-based Learning and Training Tool” to ease the burden of the underprivileged.

To enable students to adjust their life changes and avoid delaying their learning during the school suspension, HKYWCA has launched more than 40 online learning modules to meet the needs of different students, groups and schools. They can be used by primary and secondary schools under professional guidance. Students were very excited to meet their instructors online; they were hoping to meet their instructors in person soon. In addition, HKYWCA has produced a new animation “Back-to-school Kit” for parents and teachers. It can be freely downloaded to prepare their children/students back to campus.





Parents' Sharing:

Yin is a Primary 2 student. The HKYWCA instructor used the “Thematic Educational Videos” to guide and support Yin during the school suspension period. Yin’s mother said, “Visuals cues with train elements can strengthen my son’s learning... We can improve his concentration and motives for executive functioning during the school suspension”. Yin was easily distracted while dining at home. With the instructor’s assistance, Yin’s mother applied the skills learnt from the videos. She successfully guided Yin to finish a meal without leaving his seat. The mother and son often review the content of the videos together and that of the “Home-based Learning and Training Tool” of HKYWCA. “The Tool is extremely useful”, said Yin’s mother. She added that “The ‘Story Creation Fantasiser’ boosts Yin’s expressiveness and creativity a lot”. His father has also played with him the parent-child games suggested in the “Fighting COVID-19 Handbook”. These activities facilitate their communication and mutual affection and alleviate the pressure due to the lockdown.

剛才你是如何找出生氣、傷心和開心的人呢？



與人溝通時，除了眼神外，我們亦可以留意別人的表情及姿勢/動作，這樣有助我們理解對方表達的意思。



Parents' Sharing:

Long, another primary student with ASD, lives in a subdivided cubicle with his mother and a younger brother with ADHD. Due to the pandemic, they were trapped at home all day long. Long and his brother frequently quarrelled with each other, making their mother even more stressed. The HKYWCA instructor taught Long basic communication and interaction skills using the “Thematic Educational Videos”. His mom also utilised the video to teach Long to get along with others properly, thereby reducing sibling-conflicts at home. In addition, HKYWCA’s “Pandemic Prevention Kit” helped her to relieve parenting stress with the masks and food provided, and the “Home-based Learning and Training Tool” provided her two sons some board games that facilitated their verbal skills at home.

停課的日子就像駕駛 N42A

文：戴公主 公主樂乳牛
圖：Lydia You 藍和白



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主辦機構
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The Days of Suspension are Like Driving a Bus



Scan QR code to read the picture book

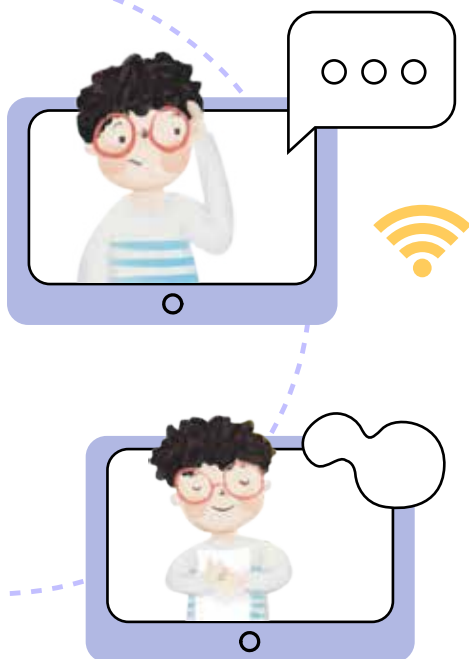


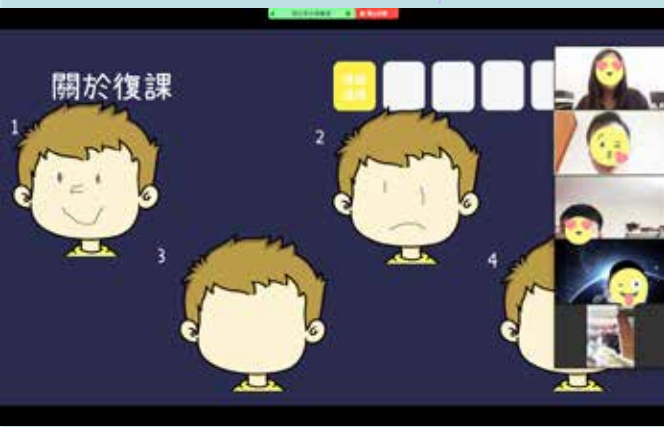
東華三院

Tung Wah Group of Hospitals

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong began to suspend classes in February; students needed to stay at home for online learning. For those with ASD, they may have emotional/behavioural issues due to prolonged home-staying or a lack of opportunity to interact with their peers. In view of this, the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (TWGHs) conducted online training and produced the picture book *The Days of Suspension are Like Driving a Bus* for students under JC A-Connect, allowing them to interact with their peers, continue to practise social skills and mitigate the uneasiness due to the school suspension.

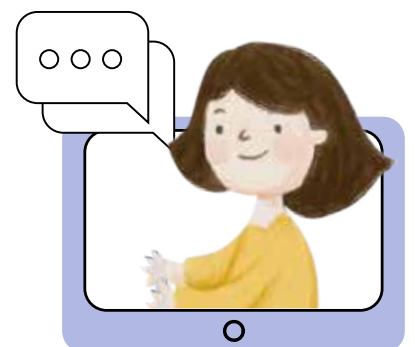
TWGHs started conducting online video meetings and recording videos with students for online teaching in March. After that, students were given homework and follow-up through the phone to ensure that they understand the social concepts learnt. Instructors made good use of video conferencing to enable students to practise social communication skills through online interactive games. For instance, students were encouraged to use brushstrokes to express their emotions and the emotions of others, enlivening the online learning experience.





It is difficult for students with ASD to master the online-learning etiquette quickly; the instructors reported incidents of students' inappropriate behaviours from time to time. While conducting online coaching, our instructors would first teach students basic and appropriate social skills online as some of them had thought that they could make themselves comfortable at home, e.g. lying in bed in pajamas and chatting with their family, even when they were attending online coaching. After repeated explanations and practices, the students' performance improved significantly. They would check their appearances and attires before class, and choose a suitable place for attending online coaching.

In addition to online coaching, instructors also chatted with students individually online to provide them with social guidance and evaluate their other social needs so as to better prepare for the coaching group next year.





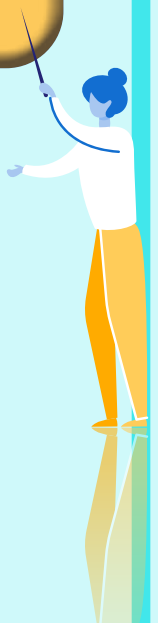
WHO-CST in Hong Kong amidst COVID-19

Train-the-trainers – Local and Abroad

With the rapid development of the World Health Organization Caregiver Skills Training (WHO-CST) for Hong Kong families of children with ASD or developmental delays since August 2018, Master Trainers (MTs) were trained by WHO and Autism Speaks (AS) on programme delivery, after a full version of WHO-CST was adapted in Chinese and made specifically to fit the needs of local communities in Hong Kong. Pre-pilot runs were successfully conducted

in 2019. All the experiences gathered were finalised and shared with WHO in the final adaptation meeting held in January 2020. Through the meeting, WHO and AS gained a better grasp of the implementation progress in Hong Kong and expressed their appreciation for the effort that everyone has contributed.

As a sign of recognition from WHO, our project manager, Dr Janet Lau, was endorsed as the Regional Technical Focal Point (RFTP) for WHO-CST and flew to Cairo as a WHO trainer to train the trainers, set up and sustain the WHO-CST in Egypt.



Staying Connected amidst COVID-19

Since February 2020, COVID-19 has quickly become a global pandemic. The WHO-CST pilot runs were halted due to school lockdowns and implementation of social distancing measures. The HKU team, together with NGO partners, expeditiously adopted various innovative measures to reach out to families and keep them engaged. An information hotline has been set up for parents. The hotline is maintained by a group of professionals including clinical psychologists, educational psychologists, counselors, nurses and child education specialists. Information and resources developed by NGO partners were first shared on the project website and then locally and abroad. In addition, the HKU team is going to develop an online version of WHO-CST soon.

I am very impressed for all the work that you have accomplished under less ideal situation of course. You have made immense progress and the fact that all the MTs are at near the fidelity is a measure of accomplishment, a testament of the quality of the team that we have.

Dr Andy Shih
Senior Vice President,
Public Health and Inclusion at Autism Speaks

Sharing the Hong Kong Experience

Hong Kong battled COVID-19 ahead of other countries, WHO, AS and WHO-CST teams worldwide were highly interested in the city's experience. Our project director, Dr Paul Wong, and Dr Lau joined various international meetings, such as the WHO-AS global community COVID-19 discussion meeting, and joined hands with other regions in developing tools to deliver WHO-CST amidst COVID-19. Dr Wong was also invited to be a keynote speaker at the International Society of Autism Research (INSAR) to speak on "Autism and Related Disorders in the Context of Humanitarian Emergencies: Challenges & Opportunities during COVID-19 Pandemic". As an RFTP, Dr Lau has continued to train and supervise MTs around the globe to deliver WHO-CST through regular online training workshops. Through international exchanges, the Hong Kong experience has proven to be invaluable to other countries. Moving forward, the HKU team will continue to actively participate in international meetings to share insights and gain further exposure at the international level.



Way Forward

All in all, WHO-CST will continue to evolve through communication and interaction between WHO-CST sites from all over the world. An online version is being planned and may be a long term solution towards the "new normal". But for now, everyone is working to implement WHO-CST using all the resources they could get. WHO-CST will resume services for parents with children of ASD once the social distancing measures are lifted. At the end of the day, the well-being of parents and children with ASD is our first and foremost concern.



Cyber Public Education



Despite COVID-19, the JC A-Connect public education team is still committed to promoting social inclusion and raising public awareness of ASD. Since February, most of our public education activities have been undertaken in an online mode to facilitate the participation of the public and ASD families amidst the pandemic.

Drawing Competition on Care and Social Inclusion

A drawing competition was organised to promote care, respect and social inclusion in the community. 164 outstanding artworks were received. Through the artworks, we can understand the thoughts and feelings of people with ASD, and the participants' perception of a caring and inclusive society. Some of the artworks were created by individuals with ASD, demonstrating their talents in arts and creativity.

An online gallery on the project website is now available to showcase all the artworks. Here are some of the winning artworks:

Scan QR code to visit gallery ▶



PRIMARY



SECONDARY



OPEN





COVID-19 Information and Resources

Our partner NGOs have developed a series of useful information and resources, including guidelines, videos and activity worksheets, to cater for the needs of the ASD community during the pandemic, as listed in the project website (www.jca-connect.hk). It is the most comprehensive resource in Chinese and has been shared with Autism Speaks for benefiting other Chinese communities in North America.



HKU Social Sciences
39 mins · 🌐

The UN World Autism Awareness Day (April 2) is here. Landmarks around the world and scores of people will 'turn blue' to show support and raise awareness of autism. We sincerely invite you to wear blue and post a selfie with the hashtags #LightItUpBlue and #jcaconnect today.*

To know more about JCA-Connect, please visit our website:
<http://www.socsc.hku.hk/JCA-Connect/>

* Participants are invited to send the screenshot of their uploaded photo with a return postal address to aconnect@hku.hk to redeem a souvenir while stock lasts.

四月二日是世界提高自閉症意識日。全球很多著名地標都會轉為藍色，很多人亦會穿上藍色服飾，以示對自閉症人士的支持。我們誠邀您今天上傳一張身穿藍色服飾的照片，並附上#LightItUpBlue及#jcaconnect的主題標籤，以示支持。*

了解更多關於賽馬會善伴同行計劃，歡迎瀏覽：
<https://www.socsc.hku.hk/JCA-Connect/?lang=zh-hant>

*參加者歡迎將上傳的照片的屏幕截圖以及回郵地址電郵至 aconnect@hku.hk，我們將寄出小禮品乙份，送完即止。



World Autism Awareness Month 2020

The project website is turned to blue every April, the Autism Awareness month, to echo the worldwide "Light It Up Blue" campaign. People in Hong Kong and Mainland China also posted their selfies wearing blue with the hashtags #LightItUpBlue and #JCAconnect on social media on the United Nations World Autism Awareness Day (April 2).

Animation Series

A series of animation that covers the challenges people with ASD face and the support they need is published. In less than three minutes of each episode, audience can know more about the characteristics of people with ASD and useful tips to cope with them.



Activities Overview

“From the mural painting experience, I discovered my son’s talent and his unique abilities,” said Fong Fong’s mother.

Parents’ Feedback

Co-creation of Art Piece in Kam Tin



Fong is a Primary 4 student with ASD. Their family joined the mural co-creation activity in January. Just like many primary school children, Fong first appeared reluctant to spend the weekend outdoor, he preferred to stay home and play video games. With his mother’s encouragement, Fong dropped the game controller and picked up the paintbrush at Kam Tin.

To Fong’s mother’s surprise, Fong was focused and demonstrated his talent in art when he was doing the mural painting. He embellished multiple patches and contributed to outlining and painting the flowers and horses. “I saw that my son has the ability to excel himself beyond merely following instructions. He could do it well and with passion. That makes me so glad”.

“It was my first time drawing on a wall and I love it! This experience is extraordinary!” said Sun, a 10-year-old boy with ASD.

Participants’ Feedback





Detail-minded, highly-focused and adherence to routines are some of the positive traits of children with ASD. The mural painting activity provides children with these characteristics to showcase their talents.

Sun loves painting and is extremely passionate about what interests him. He was hyper-focus when using different colours to decorate the walls of Kam Tin. Sun showed that he was attentive to details. He helped with outlining the birds and colouring them with vivid colours. Sun's mother told us that he refused to leave when the time was up.

"Seeing him being so passionate and overjoyed is the best thing I could ask for. I am happy to engage in new experiences with him", said Sun's mom.

Both Fong and Sun's mothers think the mural co-creation activity allowed them to know more about their children's talents. This experience inspired them to explore similar parent-child activities, e.g. Zentangle, which was a great kill-time when school was suspended during COVID-19.



Children with ASD are our good helpers

Facilitator's Feedback

I remember there was a little girl with ASD joining one of the mural sessions. I asked her to try to mix a colour tone for me. Surprisingly, the accuracy of her colour adjustment was more than 95%. That was incredible! It was extraordinary for her age. So I told this little girl that she has an eye for colour. She smiled, and took the initiative to help toning other colours. Children with ASD are just like us, we all have our strengths and weaknesses. As long as we make friends with them wholeheartedly, they can become our good companions.

Miss Kwok
Facilitator, Kam Tin Mural Village



PROFESSIONAL TRAINING 專業培訓

The following workshops were conducted online. We received positive feedback in all online workshops.

以下均為網上工作坊，參加者的評價都十分正面。

Information Sharing Session 資訊分享會

August 21,
2019

Second Professional
Training Seminar
睿智研討會 (二)

Participants'
Feedback
參加者的回饋

Understanding the rationale behind the Self-regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) and its basic operations, I learnt more about the needs and support for students with ASD when writing.

認識 SRSD 的背後理念及基本操作技巧，令我更了解有自閉特色的學生在寫作上的需要及支援策略。



May 7,
2020

Second SENCO
Seminar
SENCO 研討會 (二)

Participants'
Feedback
參加者的回饋

I learnt more about the needs of ASD students, such as the special difficulties and challenges during the pandemic.

我更了解有自閉特色同學的需要，例如疫症時的獨特困難和挑戰。

THEME
主題



Participants'
Feedback
參加者的回饋

October 10 and 11, 2019

Self-management
(Primary and Secondary sessions)

學習及自我管理

The workshop deepens my understanding on the training methods for ASD students' learning and self-management skills.

工作坊幫助我加深認識有自閉特色學生學習及自我管理訓練方法。

THEME
主題



May 27, 2020

Transitioning to
Secondary School
(Primary session)

升中適應 (小學)

I know more about ASD students' needs and difficulties when transitioning to secondary school.

我更了解 ASD 學生的升中需要和困難。

Participants'
Feedback
參加者的回饋

THEME
主題



Participants'
Feedback
參加者的回饋

December 17, 2019

Thinking and Learning Skills
(Secondary session)

思考及學習技巧 (中學)

I learnt new reading strategies that are helpful to ASD students to improve their reading comprehension.

我學會對 ASD 學生有幫助的閱讀策略，提升他們做閱讀理解的能力。



THEME
主題



Participants'
Feedback
參加者的回饋

April 29 and May 6, 2020

Social Skills with Peers
(Primary and Secondary sessions)
朋輩相處 (小學及中學)

I learnt to help ASD students to acquire social skills and enhance their motivation to make friends. I also gained knowledge of how to teach them the flow and methods in socialising.

我認識如何為校內有自閉特色學生建立朋輩社交技巧和提升他們交友的動機及教導他們社交技巧的流程和方法。

Participants'
Feedback
參加者的回饋

THEME
主題



June 17 and 24, 2020

Peer Inclusion
(Primary and Secondary sessions)
朋輩共融 (小學及中學)

I understand the framework and methods for teaching ASD students to cope with bullying.

我認識教導有自閉特色學生如何應對欺凌的框架和方法。

THEME
主題



Participants'
Feedback
參加者的回饋

June 3 and 10, 2020

Handling Conflicts and Negotiations
(Primary and Secondary sessions)
處理分歧及協商 (小學及中學)

I gain more understanding on situations where ASD students deal with negotiation. The tutor provided concrete suggestions on guiding them how to negotiate.

我對有自閉特色學生面對協商的情況有了更多認識，導師提供了有自閉特色學生處理協商的具體建議。

THEME
主題



Participants'
Feedback
參加者的回饋

June 30 and July 8, 2020

Friendly Behaviour
(Primary and Secondary sessions)
友好行為 (小學及中學)

I understand more about ASD students and how to train up their friendly behaviour. The workshop is well prepared with practical information.

我更認識有自閉特色學生，以及訓練他們友好行為的方法。工作坊準備充足，內容實用。