

Final Report of Project	Project No. : EDB/QEF/2013/0353
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Part A

Project Title: Cultivating Positive Mind and Attitude in Youths

Name of Organization/School: Department of Psychology, University of Hong Kong

Project Period: From 05/2015 (month/year) to 04/2016 (month/year)

Part B

1: Attainment of Objectives

Objective statement	Activities related to the objective	Extent of attainment of the objective	Evidence or indicators of having achieved the objective	Reasons for not being able to achieve the objective, if applicable
1. To foster positive emotion development for youths in junior forms of secondary schools.	- A group training program for local junior secondary school students was developed and delivered. Its program effectiveness was also evaluated.	Fully attained	The group training program was successfully implemented in the two participating schools. Results of program evaluation showed that the training program was effective in enhancing students' emotion regulation abilities particularly pertaining to adopting adaptive coping strategies.	
2. To promote mental health awareness.	- Two educational pamphlets were developed and delivered to junior forms secondary school students.	Fully attained	Free copies of the pamphlets were distributed to the two participating schools.	



<p>3. To share psychological knowledge and experiences with school teaching staff for their professional management of students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teaching staff of the participating schools were invited to be involved in conducting the youths' training program. Experiences in running the training sessions were shared and discussed after each session. - A teacher sharing session was organized in each of the participated schools for research team to share with all teaching staff the program details as well as exchanging ideas on general skills for facilitating students' emotion regulation. - A parent workshop on emotion management was delivered by professional clinical psychologist in introducing concepts and knowledge in relation to enhancing youth's positive emotion development as well as adaptive copings. 	<p>Fully attained</p>	<p>Sessions for sharing experience and knowledge are well received by attendees. Positive feedbacks were received and attendees actively participated in skills practice as well as Q and A sessions.</p>	
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2. Project Impact on

(a) Learning Effectiveness

The effectiveness of group training program conducted in between September 2015 and November 2015 was evaluated. A total of 253 Form 1 and Form 2 secondary school students (126 in experimental training group and 127 in waitlist control group) participated in this evaluation from the two local secondary schools -- Sing Yin Secondary School (SYSS) and Wah Yan College Kowloon (WYK). Students in the experimental training group completed a pre-test session, six hours of training sessions and a post-test session, whereas students in the waitlist control group only completed pre-test and post-test assessment sessions. There is no statistically significant difference between the experimental group and the control group at baseline for all self-report questionnaires except for the affect scores as indicated in the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule [$F(1, 278)=4.18, p=.042$]. Students in the waitlist control group were given the choice to receive the same training as the experimental group on completion of the program evaluation

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assessment phase. Fifty-nine students in the control group decided to join the training by the end of the evaluation phase, and received the training sessions in between February 2016 and March 2016.

Data screening was performed and six participants' data was discarded as they were outliers with their reported scores of the outcome variables being at least two standard deviations away from the group mean. Repeated measures ANOVA test was then performed to analyze the rest of the program evaluation data collected. Group (experimental training versus waitlist control) was entered as between-subject factor and Time (pre-training versus post-training) as within subject factor. Since a significant between-group difference was indicated in the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule at baseline, its affect scores were entered as covariate variables in the analysis. Results indicated that students who participated in the training program showed trends of improvements in cognitive skill aspects including *acceptance* [$F(1, 246)=2.96, p=.087$] and *positive reappraisal* [$F(1, 246)=3.00, p=.084$], as measured by the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ; Garnefski, Kraaij, & Spinhoven, 2001). The results implied that the group training program was effective in facilitating adaptive coping skills among local junior secondary school students.

(b) Professional Development

Professional development was facilitated by the teacher and parent workshops delivered. In fitting the school calendar of participated schools, teacher training sessions were conducted by our research team (led by professional clinical psychologist and research assistant) between January 2016 and March 2016. All staff from the two participated schools was welcome to join and a total of 35 teachers attended these sessions in the end. Background information, content of program, findings on evaluation of effectiveness as well as experiences learnt from the group training program were shared with participated teachers. In addition, the sessions also included an introduction to mental health knowledge and strategies in working with common emotion problems experienced by students. Participated teachers took part actively and welcomed the team initiatives' in sharing specific skills for facilitating youth's emotion development. Positive feedbacks were received from discussions throughout and after the sessions.

Parent workshops focusing on emotional management for the youths were also delivered by professional clinical psychologist in between December 2015 to April 2016. A total of 240 parents participated in the sessions across the two schools. In these workshops, mental health knowledge and practical skills in working with emotion regulation problems commonly experienced by adolescents were shared with the audiences. Participants showed keen interest in the topic and actively practiced the skills during the workshop under the guidance of the clinical psychologist. Participated parents expressed appreciation in acquiring new insights and perspectives in enhancing their youth's positive emotion development as well as adaptive copings. Positive feedbacks and requests for follow-up consultation and training sessions were received.

Two educational pamphlets were developed to promote mental health and positive psychology in relation to the topics of "Self-compassion" and "Gratitude". Free hard copies were distributed to the two participating schools. It is anticipated that all students from the junior forms (i.e. Form 1 and Form 2) would

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benefit from the pamphlets and their understanding on these psychological concepts facilitated.

(c) School Development

The two participated local schools were Catholic schools and shared values closely in alignment with the positive themes (e.g. gratitude, compassion) promoted in the present project. The present project therefore was highly compatible with and supported the schools' mission in promoting the spiritual and moral as well as intellectual, emotional and social development of the youths in learning, particularly with respect to fostering their positive values and adaptive skills.

The culture of collaboration between local secondary schools and university were also promoted. The training program was uniquely based on scientific research evidence and updated knowledge in the psychology discipline. This university-local schools partnership has its innovation and significance in promoting a culture to transfer latest scientific knowledge/findings and applied skills into an interactive curriculum program to enhance emotional and cognitive development for local youths. As such, the present pilot study provide important basis for advanced development of a more widely-based community program in the future, especially for young high school students who may be at risks for psychopathologies in this critical transition period as puberty begins in early adolescence.

3. Cost Effectiveness

Budget Items <i>(Based on Schedule II of Agreement)</i>	Approved Budget (a)	Actual Expense (b)	Change [(b)-(a)]/(a) +/- %
Staff Cost	\$91,920	\$92,547	+0.682%
General Expenses	\$3,180	\$2,471.50	-22.3 %

Staff Costs

A budget virement application had been submitted on 2nd April 2015 due to introduction of a new salary scale announced by the University in October 2014 after the QEF proposal had been submitted. The budget virement application had been approved and a half-time research assistant was employed on the new scale for 12 months. The duties include liaison with schools, preparation of training materials, implementation of the school-based training programs, collection of data, and preparation of reports and deliverables.

General Expenses

General expenses include stationery, photocopying and pamphlet printing costs, etc. The accumulated expenditure incurred is within the budget plan and all used funds have been spent in compliance with the principle of cost effectiveness.



1. Deliverables and Modes of Dissemination

Item description (e.g. type, title, quantity, etc.)	Evaluation of the quality and dissemination value of the item	Dissemination activities conducted (e.g. mode, date, etc.) and responses	Is it worthwhile and feasible for the item to be widely disseminated by the QEF? If yes, please suggest the mode(s) of dissemination.
Two educational pamphlets on positive coping, as well as teaching materials used in workshop.	The pamphlets promote knowledge and applicable skills related to the positive psychology topics of gratitude and self-compassion. The teaching materials include the presentation PowerPoints and homework sheets for the six sessions in the training program.	Hard copies of the pamphlets were delivered to the two participating schools for distribution to all junior forms (i.e. Form 1 and Form 2) students between January 2016 and April 2016. Soft copies of the training program were sent to all interested teachers of the participating schools on request.	Yes, deliverables such as the education pamphlets can be disseminated through the Quality Education Fund Cyber Resource Centre as appropriate.

2. Activity List

Types of activities (e.g. seminar, performance, etc.)	Brief description (e.g. date, theme, venue, etc.)	No. of participants				Feedback from participants
		schools	teachers	students	others (Please specify)	
Pre-assessment	September 2015 to October 2015	2		126 in experimental group, 127 in control group		N/A
Group training program	September 2015 to March 2016	2		185		Students reported that they were able to implement and practice the taught materials, such as positive coping strategies, self-compassion and gratitude into their daily lives.

Post-assessment	October 2015 to November 2015	2		126 in experimental group, 127 in control group		N/A
Sharing session with teachers from the participating schools	January 2016 to March 2016	2	35			Participants provided positive feedback, particularly on how the training program had helped students improve their positive coping skills. They were eager to get more information about the training program. They also actively raised questions in the Q and A session.
Workshop for parents	December 2015 to April 2016	2			240	Participants provided positive feedback, particularly on how the workshop helped them understand more about emotion management and positive coping skills for adolescents. They also actively participated in the practice sessions and raised questions in the Q and A session.

3. Difficulties Encountered and Solutions Adopted

The main difficulty encountered was that the timeline and format of training sessions were slightly adjusted in April 2015, and thus the seed school originally proposed to join the program was unable to join for the new time frame and format given an unforeseen change in the teaching schedule. Nevertheless, the program received interests and requests from other schools and Wah Yan College Kowloon and Sing Yin Secondary School had participated as the new partnership schools in the end.

In general, the entire project was carried out smoothly and the project team did not encounter any other major difficulties. There were some minor variations that were made during the project, such as the timeline changes in delivering the parent and teacher sharing sessions (for accommodating participated schools' year plan and activity schedules). However, such changes did not affect the general implementation and successful completion of the project across the two schools.