



Survey Results on the Relationship between Coping Capability, Family Well-Being, and Innovative Family Services in Times of Adversity

Over 53% of respondents reported high family coping capability

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[December 29, 2021, Hong Kong] The pandemic has continued to evolve and brought immense pressure to Hong Kongers under the “new normal”. To better understand Hong Kongers’ coping capabilities and their relationships with their family members, as well as how family services can cater to family members in need, the **Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project (“The Project”)** team from the **School of Public Health, Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, the University of Hong Kong (“HKU”)** researched the “Relationship between Adversity Coping Capability, Family Well-Being, and Innovative Family Services during the COVID-19 Outbreak”. The results were announced at today’s press conference.

Initiated and funded by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, the Project aims to encourage members of the public, social welfare units, and Integrated Family Service Centres to apply more elements of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to promote family well-being.

Hong Kong Jockey Club Executive Director, Charities and Community, **Mr Leong Cheung** said, “The Club has spared no effort in promoting the use of innovative technology, so as to strengthen the social service sector’s capability to cope with social issues and foster the development of local family services. We also supported various projects to encourage cross-sectoral cooperation, in a bid to develop a more suitable and effective service. Talent & Capacity Building is one of our key focus areas, the aim being to meet evolving needs in society and support the long-term development of Hong Kong.” Mr Cheung added that this echoes the Club’s commitment to the betterment of society, which is made possible by its unique integrated business model through which racing and wagering generate tax and charity support for the community.”

The Project team conducted both telephone (landlines and mobiles included) and online surveys for 7,438 Hong Kong adults between February and March 2021. The key findings are as follows – for detailed survey findings, please refer to the appendix:



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- 53.9% of respondents reported high coping capability against adversity in their families
- Coping capabilities positively correlate with age: A higher percentage of respondents from older age groups showed greater coping capabilities against adversity, as compared to respondents from younger age groups.
- Respondents with higher family adversity coping capabilities had a lower prevalence of anxiety and depressive symptoms.
- More respondents with high family adversity coping capabilities reported themselves as having better personal well-being (health & happiness) as well as family well-being (happiness & quality of communication).
- Respondents with lower family adversity coping capabilities were less willing to attend family services or activities when they encounter family problems. They tend to prefer emotion and pressure management-related activities organized by social service agencies that are held online.

Dr. Kelvin Wang Man-Ping, Associate Professor, School of Nursing, Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, HKU and Co-Investigator, Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project commented, “The pandemic has resulted in negative impacts on families. Practising high coping capabilities, sharing each other’s burdens, offering mutual support to your family members and showing care for one another are key ingredients to maintaining harmony under the same rooftop.”

Professor Lam Tai-hing, Sir Robert Kotewall Professor in Public Health, Chair Professor of Community Medicine of School of Public Health, Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine and the Principal Investigator of the Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project said, “Under the new normal, every sector must be savvy in Information Communications Technology (ICT), including social media and gaming, to facilitate better and quality communication between family members and friends as we ride out this pandemic.” Professor Lam suggested that the pandemic, despite having put stress on family service centres by substantially reducing contact and their service with and for their beneficiaries, could be turned into an opportunity for more innovations in preventive interventions. “According to our survey, it is deemed essential for frontline workers to consider more online programmes on emotion management and pressure management.”

Professor Lam added, “Our Family Portal is free – other initiatives such as a social media-based photo-taking competition, titled ‘SMART Appreciation Challenge’, to encourage family members to express gratitude to one another, as well as our web-based online family quiz game which centres on the themes of pandemic prevention, exercising and eating habits, aim to assist members of the public to do away the stress from the external macro-environment.”



The 4-year Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project assists 26 NGO-operated Integrated Family Service Centres and Integrated Service Centres to promote family well-being. The Project develops an online platform for capacity building, co-creation and co-learning for frontline staff; and organises public education and knowledge transfer programmes to strengthen family functioning. The Project encourages Hong Kongers to improve family ties with the use of ICT; it also promotes and had debuted 15 mobile apps for families to use together.

Project Manager and registered social worker, Mr. Stone Tsang, from Hung Hom Integrated Family Services Centre (HHIFSC) of Hong Kong Children & Youth Services, who is also a partner of the Project, further added that the pandemic has put stress on marital relationships with added conflicts and arguments. As such, the centre has debuted a series of marital relationship enhancement workshops for married couples that leverage on the “Language of Love” and the understanding of our five senses so participants can acknowledge each other’s virtues and get to know each other better. The workshops help couples relax and boost their intimacy via the app, “SMART Emotion”, which was designed by the Project team.

Mr. Jeremy Li, who is also a **registered social worker and another representative of the HHIFSC,** also says that intimate yoga moves can also help couples discover each other’s potential and other virtues while taking on new ICT tools. The feedback from service users of these workshops echo with the survey results, which conclude that those with low coping capabilities against adversity tend to be less receptive towards in-person family services – that’s why ICT tools can open another communication channel with one another. Through experiencing novel activities together and a taste of mobile applications, new, fond memories are created and it is believed that couples could then be more cooperative and resilient in face of challenges ahead.

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Image Captions:



Image 1 : Image 1 : Mr Leong Cheung, Executive Director, Charities & Community, The Hong Kong Jockey Club (middle); Professor Lam Tai-hing, Principal Investigator of the Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project (right); and Dr Kelvin Wang Man-Ping, Co-Investigator of the Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project (left) attend the press conference



Image 2 : Mr. Leong Cheung, Hong Kong Jockey Club Executive Director, Charities and Community, said, "The Club has spared no effort in promoting the use of innovative technology, so as to strengthen the social service sector's capability to cope with social issues and foster the development of local family services. We also support various projects to encourage cross-sectoral cooperation, in a bid to develop a more suitable and effective service."



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Image 3 : Dr Kelvin Wang Man-Ping, Co-Investigator of the Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project unveils the findings.



Image 4 : Professor Lam Tai-hing, Principal Investigator of the Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project share how to facilitate family well-being and enhance coping capabilities against adversity with the use of ICT and the family-friendly resources developed by the Project.



Image 5: Professor Lam Tai-hing, Principal Investigator of the Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project (second to the right), Dr Kelvin Wang Man-Ping, Co-Investigator of the Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project (second to the left), together with the frontline social workers, Mr. Stone Tsang and Mr. Jeremy Li, from Hung Hom Integrated Family Services Centre of Hong Kong Children & Youth Services (first to the left and first to the right), share how family service centres aim to marry ICT and online resources innovatively to facilitate family harmony.

This press release was distributed by GL events. For further media enquiries, please contact:

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About “Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project”

Initiated by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust in 2018 with a donation of over HK\$157 million, the four-year Jockey Club SMART Family-Link Project is a cross-sectoral collaboration to advance the use of Information and Communications Technology (“ICT”) in family services. The Project aims to devise an innovative and evidence-based family service delivery model that leverages the effective use of ICT and data analytics to enable service users to better benefit from preventive, supportive and early remedial services provided by all 26 NGO-operated Integrated Family Service Centres and Integrated Service Centres to promote family well-being. The Project develops an online platform for capacity building, co-creation and co-learning of frontline staff; and organises public education and knowledge transfer programmes to strengthen family functioning.



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Project partners include The University of Hong Kong (School of Public Health and Technology-Enriched Learning Initiative); Caritas – Hong Kong; Hong Kong Family Welfare Society; Hong Kong Christian Service; International Social Service - Hong Kong Branch; Christian Family Service Centre; The Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council; Hong Kong Children and Youth Services; St. James' Settlement; Tung Wah Group of Hospitals; Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council and The Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council.

Project Components:

Service Management System (i-Connect)

The system will help reduce manual input and administrative work, facilitate early identification of at-risk cases and perform data analysis both at the centre-level and aggregated across centres and NGOs. Participating IFSCs will be equipped with electronic hardware and ICT applications to enhance service delivery.

Interventions leveraging ICT (i-Action)

The Project Team initiated and co-created a series of i-Action programmes which provide hardware, software and technical support to the social service sector. The Project's i-Action programmes that are currently in place include:

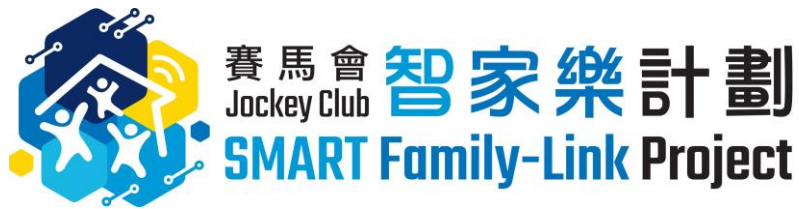
1. Evaluation Tool Builder (an online questionnaire building platform for the easy collection of service users' feedback)
2. Co-created e-messages and an e-message Portal (for dispatching e-messages on SMS and WhatsApp to render timely interventions)
3. Co-designed & co-created gamified ICT tools for workers to incorporate ICT elements in their daily work, making activities fun to join
4. Mobile Apps for families to use together, including those on SMART Parenting and SMART Emotion

Capacity building (i-TLS)

An online platform to facilitate frontline staff in sharing common information, useful resources and practice wisdom, both within the IFSC and across different centres in a co-learning e-circle.

Public Education & Knowledge Transfer

Social media events, press events, mass media dissemination, media interviews, flagship mass community events, and public education campaigns will be utilised to increase public knowledge and understanding of healthy family functioning.



Big Data Analysis & Evaluation

The School of Public Health of HKU will perform big data analysis on the data gathered through the i-Connect system. Such analyses can then help policymakers, IFSC operators, and even individual social workers understand the emerging service needs and proactively adjust their services accordingly to meet future needs.

For more details of the Project, please visit <https://jcsmartfamilylink.hk/en/>.