

Bringing Love and Encouragement to Support Survivors



Miss Luisa Maria Leitao is the program host of the series of "Walk with Survivors of Suicide Loss" video



The series of video was broadcasted in the press conference

"You'll never walk alone!" In the hope to support survivors of suicide loss on their healing journey, filling their lives with love, Suicide Prevention Services has introduced the world's first scheme – Project BLESS, to care for bereaved families with its unique service mode!

Suicide may be an end to those who committed it, but for their friends and relatives, it is the start of a nightmare of tremendous pressure, pain and grief. From a simple hug to professional support, we can all make an effort to prevent the next tragedy from happening.

On November 19 of this year, the International Survivors of Suicide Loss Day is designated by the United States Congress as a day when people affected by suicide loss gather at events in their local communities, to find comfort and gain understanding as they share stories of healing and hope.

In response to this Day and the Hong Kong community's concern on the rising suicide rate among youngsters, Suicide Prevention Services recently invited Dr. Amy Chow, Associate Professor of Department of Social Work and Social Administration, HKU, Mr. Vincent Ng, Executive Director of Suicide Prevention Services, and survivors, to share their experiences with the public, calling for more concern and care.

"There are around 1,000 suicide deaths per year in Hong Kong. According to studies, each suicide death will affect six to ten relatives or friends, and their risk of suicide is four and a half times higher than that of an average person," noted Ng. "Therefore, it is very important that we pay attention to the emotional state of survivors, and accompany them to seek appropriate and professional help."

Starting from the year 2014, Suicide Prevention Services, together with three local public mortuaries, have initiated a pilot system to refer survivors of suicide loss to Project BLESS. The scheme reaches out to bereaved families at an early stage, providing them with timely and professional bereavement services.

Sponsored by Community Partner Foundation, Project BLESS has walked more than 1,000 survivors through their healing journeys. The project offers counseling service that focuses on individual needs. It also allows survivors to participate

in mutual support groups and therapeutic programmes, as well as to be volunteers, helping them overcome their grief, and giving emotional support to one another.

To further encourage survivors to seek help and raise social awareness towards their needs, Suicide Prevention Services has organized a diverse range of community education programmes, with video promotion, media interviews and press conferences. A resource booklet for survivors – Relieving Distress and Caring in Your Hearts: A Booklet for Survivors of Suicide Loss, has also been published.



 For more information and enquiry on services for survivors of suicide loss, please call 2382 2737.



Project BLESS has won the Best Practice Award by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service in 2015. (From left to right) Miss Winona Chan, Director of Fundraising and Communications of SPS, Mr. Vincent Ng, Executive Director of SPS, Community Partner Foundation's representatives and Dr. Amy Chow, Associate Professor of Department of Social Work and Social Administration, HKU