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Hong Kong protests

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## Letters | Hong Kong protests: fix the crisis of trust to help distressed youth move on



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Students from Yau Tsim Mong and Sham Shui Po join a rally in Tsim Sha Tsui in December last year to support fellow students who had been injured or arrested during the anti-government protests. Photo: Dickson Lee

Earlier this month, we all learned of the staggering survey results of more than 2 million Hong Kong adults showing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) amid the months of protests triggered by the extradition bill. This has reinforced our worst fears as a community ([“More than 2 million Hongkongers show signs of PTSD, study finds”](#), January 10).

According to the study, [22 per cent](#) of respondents surveyed during last year's unrest reported probable major depression or suspected PTSD. As a result of what Hong Kong has experienced for the last seven months, we are now seeing concrete evidence suggesting that a sizeable number of Hong Kong people are facing a variety of mental health issues.

We support the call from the medical community for more mental health professionals to take on the job of healing. And we go one step further to say that, even within our sector of those working with youth, we are facing another challenge – mistrust.

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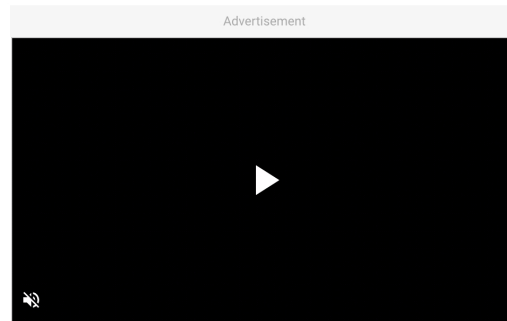
Even with adequate facilities and services, we cannot deny the fact that many of those who are struggling, including young people, find it difficult to trust the authorities and will not seek the help they need.

## Healing for protest-riven Hong Kong must begin with the mind

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Moreover, data from the [Mental Health Review Report](#) published by the Food and Health Bureau in 2017 showed that one in six adolescents in Hong Kong suffered from a mental disorder.



However, according to the Hong Kong Mental Morbidity Survey, published in 2015, only 26 per cent of the general public afflicted with a mental disorder were willing to seek help due to stigmatisation.

To move forward, Hong Kong must first rebuild trust and address negative public perceptions of those who are struggling.

Can we help Hong Kong by fostering trust through engaging young people to help other young people and creating safe spaces in our city for them to express themselves safely? Can we empower those who are struggling to share with others as a way to reduce the stigma for those who need help?

*Sky Siu, executive director, KELY Support Group*

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