

For Immediate Release

IT BEGINS WITH ONE STORY: Booklet Launch “Top Tips for Coping with Pressure” for their peers

(Hong Kong, 30 June 2016) – KELY Support Group (KELY) proudly launches our second booklet, “[It Begins With One Story: Top Tips for Coping Pressure](#)”, a drug prevention resource developed by a group of ethnic minority students participating in the KELY programme: It Begins with One Story. This programme aims to harness participants with the necessary resistance strategies, self-confidence, and peer support needed to combat daily stressors. Programme participants worked together with the support of trusted adult mentors, to formulate positive ways of dealing with the root causes of substance abuse among teenagers, while creating a supportive environment in school.

The United Nations’ (UN) **International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking** falls on June 26 each year to raise awareness of the major problem that illicit drugs represent to society. In recognition of this day, **IT BEGINS WITH ONE STORY: Booklet Launch** purposes to raise awareness on substance use, education and prevention efforts.

According to the **Central Registry of Drug Abuse**, latest data showed that drug use among ethnic minorities and non-Chinese speaking groups accounted for 9.2% of all reported drug abusers in 2015. This figure has been gradually increasing in the past decade and the situation is worrying. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2016), noted that poverty, easy access to substance, and peer influence are risk factors influencing youth to become drug abusers. Therefore, early prevention education is crucial in strengthening the protective measures (including self-confidence, peer support, etc.) for ethnic minority youth.

Supported by **The British Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong**, It Begins with One Story ran through the academic year of 2015-16, supporting about 40 students in Form 4 & 5 from **Delia Memorial School (Hip Wo)**.

The youth participants come from diverse ethnic communities, including Philippines, Pakistan, Nepal, India. Through engaging in various interactive activities, they gained a deeper understanding on the current trends and reasons behind drug use in Hong Kong.

“We know about drugs. We’ve been learning about drugs since Form 1. We know it’s important. Right now though, we want to learn something new, that we can connect to.” ~ Anonymous

“Sometimes I don’t see the purpose. I think, I’m not a drug addict why should I listen? Solution” Let’s learn about other topics around drugs, not just drugs” ~ Anonymous

As the programme progressed with open discussion, they concluded that pressure was a common cause that needed to be addressed in their campaigns.

As part of their own initiatives, the youth participants interviewed over 300 students aged from 14 to 21 in their school. This allowed them to identify 5 common sources of pressure before compiling them into a booklet: “[Top Tip for Coping with Pressure](#)”. Two common stressors were ‘worries for upcoming exams’ and ‘being puzzled with future plans’. By focusing on such issues, the students were then able to suggest preventative measures, running campaigns across their school and creating dialogue with their peers on positive coping mechanisms, some of which are included in the booklet.

The first English drug-free resource created by youth themselves through this programme as a culturally relevant piece for ethnic minority and non-Chinese speaking communities, was published in July 2014 with an aim of raising the parents’ awareness on youth issues related to drug abuse.

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About KELY Support Group

KELY Support Group (KELY) is a non-government funded bilingual organisation which provides empathetic, non-judgmental, confidential and inclusive support to youth between the ages of 14 to 24 in Hong Kong from English speaking, Ethnic Minority and Chinese speaking backgrounds.

Our mission is to empower young people through non-judgmental peer support to make informed choices in reaching their potential.

Our programmes and services focus on drug and alcohol prevention and intervention and are specially designed to tackle the root causes of misuse, including boredom, peer pressure, lack of self-awareness, low self-esteem, poverty, unemployment, and discrimination. This includes:

- Prevention & Harm Reduction
 - o School-based drug and alcohol education
 - o Long-term capacity building and life skills training
 - o Harm reduction and outreach
- Advocacy
- Intervention

At KELY, we serve three communities of youth. They are:

Chinese-Speaking - Youth from low socio-economic background with low self-esteem who may be facing drugs and/or alcohol abuse, and may not be receiving adequate support services.

Ethnic Minority - Youth from low socio-economic background with low self-esteem who may be facing drugs and/or alcohol abuse and issues relating to discrimination and integration, and are not receiving culturally relevant support services.

English Speaking - Youth suffering from low self-esteem who may be facing drugs and/or alcohol abuse and issues relating to discrimination or integration, and may not be receiving culturally relevant support services.

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