



# How Young People Cope with Stress

*In a highly competitive society like Hong Kong's, many adolescents experience stress, often exacerbated by personal, family and social factors.*

Adolescence is a time of change and uncertainty: biological, psychological, emotional and behavioral and this is reflected in the response of 22.3% of the young people in this survey. They say that when they feel under great stress it can last for over a month on average.

The main sources of such stress are concerns about academic studies (51.5%) or careers (31.5%). Other worries include doubts about future prospects (20.9%), family relationships (17.7%) and money (13.4%). The most common symptoms were described as deteriorating moods (31.2%), anxiety (26.0%) and insomnia (21.1%).

Hong Kong youth's response to stress in is generally positive, although some react negatively or pessimistically. Some also ignore their symptoms because they fail to understand their own emotional reactions and their sense of inability to cope. Those in this category also worry about not being accepted by others and are concerned about being stigmatized.



## Comments from think tank members

**Justen Li, convener** "The study found that many Hong Kong young people don't know how to cope with stress or manage their emotions. Ignoring underlying problems and failing to deal with them at an early stage exacerbates the difficulties they experience. It is worth considering a fully-subsidized outdoor camp programme for senior primary and junior secondary students that focuses on boosting self-confidence and improving communication and problem-solving skills. A territory-wide healthy life promotion campaign would also enhance awareness of the importance of mental health."

**Peann Tam, deputy convener** "Young people face pressure of all kinds nowadays. We recommend that the government allocates resources for online instant counselling. The development of youth physical and mental health should be a long-term government strategy that incorporates keeping track of the problem and coordinating services for greater impact."

### Report No. 22 HKFYG Youth I.D.E.A.S.

Society and Livelihood group

**Published title** "How Young People Cope with Stress"

520 Hong Kong young people aged 12-29 were successfully polled in a random sample telephone survey.

20 young people who suffered from stress and four experts or academics were also interviewed.

**Full details** [in Chinese]

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