

# Future-Ready Series : Research Postgraduate Wellness Initiative 2023/24

Ask Again

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## Research Postgraduate Wellness Ambassador Programme 2023/24: Para-counselling Workshop - Suicide Gatekeeping Training for University Students

Dr. Paul Wong and Ms. Melody Ip, Department of Social Work and Social Administration

**Dates:** Jan 26 and Feb 2, 2024 (Fri)

**Time:** 12:30 – 2:20 p.m.

**Venue:** Main Campus, HKU

### Overview

The suicide rate among university students raises public health concern, with postgraduate students facing additional mental health challenges such as social isolation, conflicts with supervisors, and adjustment difficulties. Evidence-based suicide prevention programs for routine delivery within halls of Hong Kong universities are lacking. To address this gap, a suicide gatekeeper training program called "I Can Assist, No Problems" (I-CAN) is developed and piloted using the Theory of Planned Behaviour as a conceptual framework. The "I-CAN" program aims to enhance university students' self-efficacy as gatekeepers of their peers' suicidal behaviour, reducing participants' stigma of suicide, and assessing gatekeepers' satisfaction and experience using the learned skills after the training. This project was supported by HKU's Seed Fund for Basic Research and approved by the HREC (EA230026).

### Selected Learning Outcomes

- Explain the cultural factors and societal pressures that may contribute to suicide risk in Hong Kong
- Describe the Theory of Planned Behaviour and its relevance to suicide prevention in Hong Kong
- Develop effective communication skills when supporting individuals who may be at risk for suicide
- Recognise the importance of feeling capable of intervening in a suicide crisis
- Develop strategies for building confidence and skills in suicide prevention in the Hong Kong University context
- Identify local organisations and initiatives dedicated to suicide prevention and mental health support



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## Learning Activities

Case study and review, skills training, videos, demonstrations, resources sharing

## Remarks

To enhance the learning of this gatekeeper training, there will be personal sharing among participants and instructors. Participants are encouraged to be mentally prepared for personal sharing and also to abide to the confidentiality issues that might arise. It is an advantage for participants to have completed the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training before, but the content and teaching style of this program are different from MHFA. Do join if you WISH TO BE PART OF THE SUICIDE PREVENTION FORCE within your learning community. Quantitative and qualitative feedback will be collected from this programme. Join us and become part of the research community.

## About the Instructors

**Dr. Paul W.C. Wong**, *D.Psyc.(Clinical), Reg.Clin.Psyc (Australia), RCP (HKPS), Ccoun&ACounS (HKPCA), FHKPsS, FHKPCA, MAPS*

Paul is an Accredited Register Clinical Psychologist and an Associate Professor in the Department of Social Work and Social Administration, HKU. His recent research projects encompass various areas, including youth social withdrawal behaviour, the utilisation of animals in educational and psychological interventions, positive youth development among local and non-Chinese young individuals, and family caregiving for individuals with psychological issues. Paul is a Fellow of the Hong Kong Psychological Society and the Hong Kong Professional Counselling Association, serves as the Programme Director of the Master of Social Science (Counselling), consultants and committee members for several government bodies (e.g., Education Bureau, Hong Kong Police College, Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority), non-government organisations (e.g., Consumer Councils, Hong Kong Council of Social Services, Joyful Mental Health, Mind HK, the Samaritans, and Zubin Foundation), and within HKU (i.e., Equal Opportunity Unit, Discontinuation Committee). He has received the Faculty of Social Science's Research Output and Knowledge Exchange Awards in 2015 and 2020 respectively. Moreover, he is a member of the CDC-HKEAA Committee on Health Management and Social Care, as well as the Chief Executive's Award for Teaching Excellence Steering Committee.

**Ms. Melody Ip** is a fresh graduate from The University of Hong Kong and working currently as a Research Assistant in the Department of Social Work and Social Administration, HKU. Her research interest encompasses various areas, including youth help-seeking behaviours and sub-clinical psychological issues. She co-founded a peer-led mental health organisation, Heartline Hong Kong in 2021, dedicating to provide free and anonymous listening service to local youths. Melody is an experienced peer listener and trainers, who has trained more than 150 youth volunteers over the past 3 years.

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