

CUHK Develops Resource Kit to Enhance Social Skills Among Autistic Students To be Promoted to All Local Schools

The Department of Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery and the Institute of Human Communicative Research of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) has jointly formed a Hong Kong Social Thinking Research Team with the Rehabilitation Service of Caritas (Caritas) and the Education Bureau to develop a training approach and a resource kit that can effectively enhance the communication skills of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The team is going to promote the approach to local mainstream secondary schools.

According to the records of the Education Bureau, over 6,000 students of subsidized schools in Hong Kong suffer from Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). As defined by the American Psychiatric Association, ASD is a complex developmental disability that appears during the first three years of life as a result of a neurological disorder affecting brain function. Since ASD students have social communication difficulties and are prone to emotional disturbances, they may have more conflicts with their classmates or teachers. They often become targets of teasing, rejection or bullying in school and fail to establish normal peer relationships.

To enhance the social skills of ASD students, the research team has introduced the Social Thinking Training in local schools. The training approach prompts students to think about the details in daily social activities and the reasons behind every social interaction (verbal or non-verbal). It is proven to be effective in improving the social and communication skills among ASD individuals.

In 2008, the research team introduced the Social Thinking Training programme to 44 ASD students in 14 secondary schools. A pool of concise phrases, namely Social Thinking Critical Vocabularies were used by various related parties as standard verbal cues to remind the students on corresponding important behaviours. A rating scale was used to assess the social behaviour appropriateness of the students before and after training. There was a 12.8% increase in their average score, which was statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ level. Significant improvement was observed in the areas of initiating interaction, perspective taking and active listening. In 2012, the research team further engaged 10 frontline staff of secondary schools to conduct the training on 35 students who showed an 7.2% increase in the average score at the $p < 0.001$ level.

With the support of the Knowledge Transfer Fund of CUHK and the Quality Education Fund, the research team has developed a training programme with resource kit that is specific to local language and culture. It is designed for secondary students with social communication deficits (e.g. ASD, ADHD) in local mainstream schools. **Prof. Michael Tong**, Professor, Department of Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery, and Associate Director & Chief Operating Officer, Institute of Human Communicative Research, CUHK, said, "The kit illustrates daily scenarios with colourful comics and explains in details the use of Social Thinking Vocabularies with suggested activities for teachers, social workers and counsellors to better understand the needs and difficulties faced by the students. A Social Thinking Vocabulary Booklet is included as a visual teaching aid."

A training seminar on Social Thinking Training was held in June that was well-attended by representatives of 154 schools and over 100 NGOs and related government organizations. Participants learned how to use the resource kit and took part in activity demonstrations during the seminar. Due to overwhelming responses, another session of the seminar will be held on

16 October 2013. Interested parties may visit here for details: <http://socialthinkinghk.com>. The resource kit will also be distributed to all mainstream local secondary schools via the Education Bureau.

For media enquiries, please contact Ms To, Department of Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery, CUHK (Tel: 3943-9609) or Ms Mak, Caritas Rehabilitation Services (Tel: 2117-3487/3488).

致新聞編輯
請即發放

中大研發教材提升自閉症學生社交能力 將推廣至全港學校使用

由香港中文大學（中大）耳鼻咽喉—頭頸外科學系、中大人類傳意科學研究所、香港明愛康復服務及香港教育局組成的香港社交思考研究小組（下稱研究小組），共同研發了一套社交思考訓練方法及教材，能成功提升患有自閉症之中學生的社交溝通能力，並將推廣至全港學校使用。

根據教育局的紀錄，全港資助學校現時約有 6,000 多名學生患有自閉症。自閉症是因腦部功能異常而引致的發展障礙，根據美國精神科學會的定義，自閉症患者有社交及溝通障礙，以及重複刻板的行為、興趣和活動模式，這些徵狀通常在三歲前出現。患有自閉症的學生亦容易受情緒困擾，因此較易與同學及老師發生爭執或衝突，成為被取笑、排擠及欺凌的對象，難於結交朋友。

為了提升自閉症學生的社交能力，研究小組計劃於本港學校引進「社交思考訓練」方法。「社交思考訓練」引導學生思考日常生活中的社交細節，例如每個社交互動行為背後涉及的語言及非語言元素和原因。這項訓練的成效在北美等地已獲得證實。2008 年，研究小組在 14 間中學為 44 位學生進行「社交思考訓練」，包括以一系列簡潔的關鍵字，對學生的重要行為作出提醒，並以社交思考量表來評估學生參加訓練前後的社交行為。研究結果顯示，參加者的總體平均分上升了增長 12.8%，升幅符合統計學上的顯著水平（ $p < 0.001$ ）。參與學生在主動溝通、想法解讀及聆聽技巧方面的進步尤為顯著。2012 年，研究小組訓練了 10 位學校前線人員，在他們所屬的中學為共 35 位學生進行「社交思考訓練」。參加學生的總體平均得分有 7.2% 的增長，成效顯著。

在中大知識轉移基金及優質教育基金的支持下，研究小組發展及編寫了一套融入本地語言與文化的「社交思考訓練」課程及教材，以就讀主流中學而患有社交溝通障礙的學生為訓練對象（如：自閉症及過度活躍症等）。中大耳鼻咽喉—頭頸外科學系教授及人類傳意科學研究所副所長唐志輝教授表示：「此教材以日常生活為題，利用漫畫闡釋學生的社交缺失，並詳細解釋有關概念及建議活動；還附有『社交思考關鍵提示』咭等視覺輔助教材，供中學教師、社工及輔導人員參考，加深他們對患有社交溝通障礙學生的認識及其所面對的困難。」

為推廣「社交思考訓練」，研究小組已於本年 6 月舉行了一場培訓講座，介紹教材及進行活動示範，共有 154 間學校代表及逾 100 間非牟利機構及政府機構的專業人士參加。由於反應熱烈，研究小組將於 10 月 16 日加開一場講座，詳情可瀏覽 <http://socialthinkinghk.com>。此外，教材亦會經由香港教育局派發給全港的主流中學。

傳媒查詢：中大耳鼻咽喉—頭頸外科學系杜小姐(電話：3943-9609)或香港明愛康復服務麥小姐 (電話：2117-3487/ 3488)