



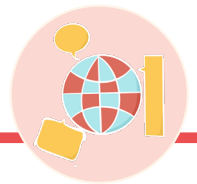
Your Wellness Is Our Business



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Headline



A recent report published by the Youth Research Centre of the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups found that in the past six months of social events, over 40% of interviewed youth claimed to have “occasionally” or “frequently” been in conflict with their parents. Among the reasons given, 70% were due to social events and political stances. The report also showed that for 15% of interviewed youth and parents, these conflicts have led to significant emotional distress, and 30% of interviewed parents claimed that family relationships have deteriorated in the past six months. Fortunately, most interviewees who experienced conflict at home were inclined toward improving their relationships.



Respect different perspectives; Cherish family relationships



When home has become a political battleground, how can we rectify the situation?

We encounter a large amount of political news and campaign literature daily, and it seems impossible to avoid discussing political topics with close family and friends. Psychologists (Safer, 2019) have pointed out that when we disagree on political issues, we may have unrealistic expectations – “I hope that the opinions of my family and my significant other are synchronized with my own.” However, this desire can actually become a catalyst for family conflict and escalate debates. On one hand, we are anxious for the future of Hong Kong, but on the other hand, we cannot accept that our family’s opinions are different from our own. Thus, professionals have pointed out that the primary principle to uphold when talking to family about politics is: respect each other as individuals; don’t insist on a consensus.

10 Tips for Political Discussions (Safer, 2019):

1. When discussing politics, do not raise your voice.
2. Do not discuss politics under the influence of alcohol.
3. Do not show your family unsolicited articles or links on contentious topics.
4. Do not forcibly initiate or continue the topic if you cannot have a civil discussion.
5. Do not start the discussion with, “How can your side possibly think...?”
6. If your friends publicly mock or attack your family member’s political stance, you should defend them.
7. Do not read your family members’ political posts on social media.
8. Never conduct a political argument over media platforms (e.g. Whatsapp, email).
9. Although your stances are different, try to believe that the other person is supporting his or her political ideal or figure with sincerity and kindness.
10. Remember, there is no winner at the end of a political discussion

With effective communication, we can get to know our family members and ourselves better through politics. Whether or not our political opinions are similar, we should still embrace each other and cherish our relationships.

References

Safer, J. (2019). I Love You, But I Hate Your Politics. NY: All Points Books. 中譯:《在家不要談政治:擁抱不同立場,修補彼此的關係黑洞》,時報出版。
青協「青年創研庫」(2019)。「改善香港的跨代關係」研究結果。



Sitting in front of the counselor is the muscular Derek. He initiated personal counseling because: “Recently I have been frightened everyday and afraid to go anywhere crowded. I hate noisiness and the feeling of being rushed. What if I faint on the street again? That was so embarrassing!” The counselor noticed that Derek looked down and smiled, but there was fear hidden in his smile.



Derek then explained his experiences. A few months ago, he retired early and hoped to enjoy family life. However, he suddenly had trouble eating and sleeping for a few days. He also had a sudden mood swing while eating dinner with his family, and even felt dizzy and unwell, which was likely a panic attack. Thankfully, his family offered him timely support and accompanied him to leave the scene. This situation even influenced his travel plans. He immediately declined his friend’s invitation to travel, fearing that he might get sick during the journey.

Other than these symptoms, the counselor also tried to thoroughly understand the causes. Derek is highly capable at work, often thoughtful and cautious, and already carefully planned out his life after retirement. Unexpectedly, his wife became seriously ill, which caused miscalculations. He felt out of control, and his hidden stresses and anxieties transformed into fear, which was manifested through physical symptoms. After the panic attack, his catastrophic thought process caused him to intentionally avoid certain settings and circumstances to avoid making the same mistake again. However, these chain reactions became a vicious cycle that trapped him in fear.

After analyzing the causes, the counselor referred Derek to receive psychiatric medical treatment while treating him with cognitive behavioral therapy. She encouraged Derek to practice meditation and relaxation, and helped him with cognitive reorganization to increase his awareness of thought traps and regulations. In order to maintain a balanced lifestyle, he also regularly attended gatherings with friends. In less than half a year, Derek happily announced that his wife’s situation was improving, and that they have decided to travel to see the cherry blossoms! Although his fears of losing control have not been completely swept away, Derek has gained an enhanced understanding and mastery of his physical and mental conditions. He has also learned to accept the concept of the impermanence of life.

Chicken Soup for the Soul



A baby bird and his mother lived in a warm nest on a tree. As baby bird grew up, mother bird began to teach him how to fly. Baby bird tried to flap his wings, but became discouraged because he could not fly. One day, when mother bird went hunting, baby bird was left alone in the nest. He was worried that predators would appear suddenly and eat him, and he hoped that mother bird would return soon to protect him.

At this time, squirrels were hopping around the tree to pick hazelnuts. The branches below the nest cracked and squeaked, and baby bird flew quickly toward the sky, knowing that the branches were about to break. He watched as his nest, along with the broken branches, fell onto the floor while he was successfully flying. From this day onwards, baby bird no longer feared predators or broken branches, because he believed in his own wings.



Life is filled with different difficulties and challenges. We will surely feel worried and anxious when these things occur, but we should not underestimate our potentials. When you are bold to face challenges, every experience can strengthen your wings, and allow you to fly higher and further.