

HK youths struggle to deal with setbacks: academic



A Chinese University professor, Chiu Chi-yue, says Hong Kong youngsters have a low ability to deal with social and emotional setbacks, and the social unrest last year and the Covid-19 pandemic have revealed their lack of resilience.

In an online forum organised by the think tank, MWYO, Chiu said some young people in Hong Kong had already labelled themselves as a “useless youngster” even before the pandemic.

The think tank was founded by Lau Ming-wai, the vice chairman of the government's Youth Development Commission and who currently heads the Ocean Park.

Chiu, who's the university's Dean of Social Science, said in a report published in 2013, one in three people in Hong Kong feel their life is meaningless – the highest proportion in the world.

So when the pandemic broke out late last year, after months of protests, this triggered emotions hidden inside young people's hearts and led to outbursts, he said.

The think tank said there's a need for Hong Kong schools and authorities to put more emphasis on enhancing students' social and emotional education.

According to a worldwide study released around two years ago, although Hong Kong students can handle academic challenges well, their social and emotional resilience levels are among the lowest globally.

Speaking at the forum on Tuesday, a frontline worker from the Caritas Social Work Services Division, Charlie Chan, said he can see some local young people are showing symptoms of trauma after the social unrest last year.

Chan, the service head of youth & community service at the NGO, said youngsters seem to have more signs of restlessness than before, with some feeling depressed and helpless.

The NGO said that during the pandemic, it has received more child abuse cases and requests by secondary school students for places in hostels due to escalated tension in their families.

Chan said he thinks young people's trust in adults has been greatly reduced since last year, and he would encourage teachers to continue reaching out to students to build supportive relationships.