

Social Skills

Individual & Small Groups

St. John's Counselling Service

*Professional Member of the
American School Counselor Association
British Association of Counseling and Psychotherapy*



Empowering the Human Spirit Towards Greater Awareness for Growth and Happiness

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Our History

The 1970's witnessed Hong Kong's government and the medical community increase its focus in mental health with institutional, hospital and community care for patients and their families. Concurrently in 1977 **St. John's Cathedral** enacted upon a vision to provide a community mental health service with the birth of **St. John's Counselling Service (SJCS)**. Thus, with one counsellor on the beautiful grounds of St. John's Cathedral, **St. John's Counselling Service** was formally launched to provide basic counselling in areas of family and relationship matters irregardless of age, race, gender, nationality, religion, faith and/or income.

Subsequently, as mental health was slowly losing its negative stigma around the world in the 1980's, there was a shift of seeing psychiatry and psychology from only treating mental health disorders to now being a key resource promoting good physical health *and* emotional well-being. Consequently, *prevention programs* and *treatment services* became the working model for mental health as we know it today in Hong Kong and around the world.

Hence, as mental health continued to change, so did **St. John's Counselling Service**. The 1990's saw **St. John's Counselling Service** experience two key local events that continue to influence us today; i) *increasing demand* for our counselling services from Hong Kong's Chinese, English and non-English speaking communities, and ii) *growing interest* in mental health careers by local college students and working adults. Consequently, we addressed these trends by i) relocating to a larger facility in Central with additional counsellors and support staff, and ii) developing our first public training program in relationship skills for those interested in pursuing the counselling profession.

Keeping pace with the ongoing advancements in mental health, **St. John's Counselling Service** in 2007 embraced *positive psychology* and *cognitive-behavioral therapy* as the foundation for our vision and mission to provide an effective, affordable, professional, and caring environment for counselling services. Today we employ over 26 counsellors who are PhD and master degree awarded psychologists and clinical social workers providing solution-focused counselling and therapy for children, teens and adults irregardless of race, gender, age, income, religion - faith, and nationality. Specifically with children and teens, we provide counselling in almost all areas of life that impact kids today: self-esteem, bullying, drugs - substance abuse, eating disorders, depression, career advising, divorce, adoption, grief, parenting, mood disorders, ADHD, self harm (cutting), internet addiction and life changes.

Overall we provide on-site school counselling at international colleges and local schools, employee assistance programs (EAP), individual - couple - family counselling, psychometric testing, life and career coaching, and a crisis response team for natural disasters and human tragedy. We also provide internship programs for master and doctoral psychology students, substance abuse rehab services, and training programs for pastoral counsellors, teachers, working adults, students, human resource managers, nurses, general healthcare practitioners, and mental health professionals.

Our Mission and Vision

SJCS mission is "*to empower the human spirit towards greater awareness in making choices for growth and happiness.*" Our mission is derived from **cognitive-behavioral therapy and positive psychology's** 20 years of research, clinical experience, and evidence-based principles whereby two goals are sought after in all of our counselling services. The 1st goal is to assess and better understand the unpleasant situation(s) a person is experiencing that impacts their emotions, behaviors and thoughts. The 2nd goal focuses on learning the key principles of cognitive-behavioral therapy and positive psychology whereby our clients can begin practicing *optimistic thinking*, engaging in *healthy behaviors*, and ultimately experiencing *pleasant feelings*. In short, we help our kids and teens turn the "bumps in the road" to manageable - learning experiences, and as well, improve their character strengths to enhance their health and happiness.

SJCS vision is "to become recognized and valued in the community-at-large as a preferred resource for personal growth and counselling with individuals, families, schools and organizations in need." Hong Kong is recognized as Asia's World City for it's global role in trade and commerce, and to sustain such an international leading role, Hong Kong's government and business leaders recognize the need for a healthy balance between work and life. Hence, as a result of our vision, we are now providing *Quality of Work-Life* QWL programs for all types of organizations and interested participants so that Hong Kong's happiness index (what we call our *self-worth* and *net-worth*) continues to grow in a positive direction.

Our Duty to Care

St. John's Counselling Service works closely with academic and government leaders, school boards, researchers, educators, school counsellors, parents and students from a integrated healthcare model approach. Our *Duty to Care* model collaborates with various Hong Kong general and specialized medical practitioners in providing services for eating disorders, depression, substance abuse, sleep disorders, hyperactivity, obsessive-compulsiveness (OCD), and ADHD behaviors to ensure the health and well-being of that child-teen is optimized. We also provide referral services to family medicine, psychiatry, pediatrics, OB-GYN, nutritionists, speech and occupational therapists.

Adhering to the standards of care by the American School Counselors Association, American Psychological Association and the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy, **St. John's Counselling Service** practices on a monthly basis quality assurance (QA) activities whereby a review of our services is routinely undertaken so we can meet and/or exceed those standards in healthcare models we subscribe to.



Social Skills Program

Program Overview

The Theory

Our Social Skills Program has two basic goals in mind: 1) helping children and teens feel good about themselves (*self-respect*) and 2) teaching kids and teens how to develop socially accepting behaviors (*self-confidence*). Research and clinical experience strongly indicate that a child can perform to his or her highest potential (school and social settings) when they have a good mood. Children who feel good about themselves have less social anxiety. Hence, when a child likes him or herself, that child is able to develop positive self-respect and then is able to respect others.

Our second goal is teaching kids through activities and games *cooperative play, group learning and team work behaviors* that develops their self-confidence in social settings (school and home). Our unique self-confidence assessment model allows the counsellor to determine what factors are causing *play, learning and team work behaviors to be unsuccessful*. Once we are able to identify those negative factors, we can then work towards building a child's self-confidence in choosing the right behaviors and expressing the right emotions in any social setting. Hence, when a child has self-confidence in choosing the right behaviors and is acknowledged by others, those positive behaviors become reinforced.

The 1:1 Model

Our Executive Director has worked in mental health for over 29 years with children and teens in hospitals, out-patient clinics, classrooms, group settings, and individual therapy. Those 29 years confirm that children and teens often arrive at social skills programs feeling inadequate, socially isolated, weird and/or "dumb." Consequently, for children to develop self-respect and self-confidence with the fewest distractions and as expedient as possible it is highly recommended children and teens begin with a personal tailored 1:1 program.

The 1:1 Social Skills Program is called *Foundation Skills* whereas the child or teen has the opportunity to explore in a safe, caring and non-threatening environment their social skills experiences in home, school and social settings. This allows our counsellor and program to carefully understand what roadblocks this person has in the following foundation social skills area:

- 1) Personal Hygiene
- 2) Eye Contact
- 3) Personal Space
- 4) Waiting in lines appropriately
- 5) Walking and playing in pace with others
- 6) Listening Skills - Public Speaking

The Small Group Model

The Small Group Social Skills (no more than 10 children or teens per group) utilizes role playing, art and play activities and games in a group context to enhance the social and emotional learning of a child or teen. The program is structured around five core competencies:

- 1) Recognition of one's emotions, values, strengths and limitations;
- 2) Constructive decision making and consequences of our decisions;
- 3) Develop and sustain positive relationships;
- 4) Express empathy and understanding of others;
- 5) Manage emotions and behaviors.

After each child or teen has completed the Small Group Program, the parent(s) of each participant shall have a session with the counsellor and our Executive Director to highlight their child's outcomes of the program, recommended next steps, and as well present a detailed report entitled "Your Child's 8 Required Social Skills Nutrients."



"Children will not remember you for the material things you provided but for the feeling that you cherished them."

Richard L. Evans

Program Details

1:1 Individual Fees: \$560 per person

Schedule: 6 sessions, each session 50 minutes in duration, daytime, evening or weekends

Dates: Open enrollment entire year

Medium of Instruction: Cantonese or English

Venue: St. John's Counselling Service - Central Hong Kong

Materials: course materials and handouts provided

Parent Support: parenting coaching session after course completion

Small Group Fees: \$3,500.00 per person

Schedule: 6 sessions, each session 50 minutes in duration

Dates: Commence 26 September 2011

Group A: 5 - 8 year olds (Monday and/or Wednesday evenings)

Group B: 9 - 13 year olds (Tuesday and/or Thursday evenings)

Medium of Instruction: Cantonese or English

Venue: St. John's Counselling Service - Central Hong Kong

Materials: course materials and handouts provided

Parent Support: parenting coaching session after course completion

Our Strengths

1. Our Counselling Model:

St. John's Counselling Service is an NGO that *does not focus on profit*, but instead, on how can we deliver an affordable and professional counselling service so that each and every person's counselling need is met from beginning to end. In other words, at the end of each year our dedicated Board of Directors at St. John's Cathedral and St. John's Counselling Service do not measure our "success" from a bottom line financial perspective. Instead, we measure our "success" with how many individuals, couples, families and organizations we have been able to provide an affordable, professional, effective and caring counselling service that improves physical and mental health.

St. John's Counselling Service counsellors bring forth both local and international academic qualifications and extensive clinical experience when working with children and teens. Our counselling model begins with a focus on developing a trusting and nurturing relationship between child and counsellor. Once we have established a caring and safe environment for the child or teen, we then commence with a well-structured program to promote health and happiness. Hence, to ensure our level of professionalism remains constant, our counselling model includes:

- a) monthly clinical supervision and case management activities;
- b) ongoing training and development with our counsellors;
- c) local and international counselling resources and tools (handouts, learning materials, case studies, research, etc);
- d) dedicated team of St. John's Counselling Service psychologists and clinical social workers who can provide additional support and counselling insights for the counsellor assigned to your child;
- e) access to a global and local network of qualified medical practitioners in OB-GYN, pediatrics, psychiatry, nutrition, speech therapy, psychometric testing, infectious disease specialists (eating disorders), occupational therapy, and drug-substance abuse;
- f) parental sessions and family counselling services.

2. Our Academic Activities:

St. John's Counselling Service is a recognized clinical supervision site for world-class universities to train and supervise students at bachelor, master and doctorate degree programs in psychology and counselling with Hong Kong University's HKU Family Institute and HKU Department of Social Work and Social Administration, Monash University (Australia), City University (Hong Kong), Alliant University (U.S.), Shue Yan University (Hong Kong), Australian College of Applied Psychology, and University of New England (Australia).



3. Our Research and Development Activities:

St. John's Counselling Service is committed to continuously improve our counselling programs and services for our clients. We review evidence-based research that comes from noted medical centres, universities and mental health organizations from around the world to ensure we remain up-to-date with CBT and positive psychology principles. Our *Social Skills Program* for children and teens and our *Brain-based Therapy* for depression are two examples of how we constantly improve upon our services from best practices that arise from evidence-based healthcare research.



"The most effective kind of education is that a child should play amongst lovely things."

Plato

4. Our Affiliations:

As an Organizational Member of **BACP (British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy)** **St. John's Counselling Service** is bound by its Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy, the Ethical Guidelines for Researching Counselling and Psychotherapy (where organizations undertake research) and subject to the Professional Conduct Procedure for the time being in force.



St. John's Counselling Service professional membership with the **American School Counselor Association (ASCA)** allows us to remain at the forefront in understanding the most recent trends in how to counsel kids and teens in their academic, personal, social and professional development.



Our membership with both **BACP** and **ASCA** also provides us a better understanding with the difference between signs of early mental health concerns and child-adolescent behavior that may reflect "typical" student behavior in today's changing world. We also acknowledge that the professional relationship between counsellor and principal, counsellor and parent, and counsellor and teacher are essential to ensure the child's counselling needs are being effectively met and that timely interventions and support are being achieved.