



Failure of negotiation: Whose fault is it?

The failure of the Filipino Police to resolve the hostage ordeal in the recent Manila hostage incident had resulted in the tragic death of eight innocent Hong Kong holiday-makers in the Philippines. The incident revealed many flaws in the local security forces in managing and resolving abrupt hostage crises.

Dr. Dennis Wong, Programme Leader of the BSocSc in Criminology and Associate Professor of Social Work, analyzed the grave mistakes of the Filipino Police Force and discussed who was at fault.

Dr. Wong noted that there are general rules for negotiators to follow toward reaching a compromise with hostage-takers.

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Photo from Sing Tao Daily



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Failure of negotiation: Whose fault is it?

(from the cover page)

The first rule is “never provoke.” The negotiator should calm down both the hostages and hostage-takers. But, the Filipino Police had provoked the gunman Mendoza by rejecting bluntly his requests. What was more appropriate to say would be “What can we do for you?” Without giving out false hope, listening to the gunman’s needs is a gesture toward making a compromise.

The second rule is “call for experienced, independent negotiators to conduct the negotiation.” The negotiator in the incident was but an ad hoc choice with only brief negotiation training. Since Mendoza was a former police officer, he had distrusted other police officers. Given the background of the gunman, the authority should have called for other sources of reputed negotiators, such as legislators, priests, or people of high social status, to help intervene.

The third rule is “establish an exchange based on the transactional theory.” While Mendoza requested for reinstatement to exchange the freedom of his hostages, the Police rejected his request and offered him nothing in exchange. Mendoza became infuriated and turned to killing.

The provision of proper communication devices is the fourth rule; a direct line should be provided to make communication possible between the gunman and the authority. In the incident, the gunman had to use his mobile phone and the mass media to make his voice heard.

When the negotiation is in an impasse, an emergency plan should be implemented, as the fifth rule. Impartial moral authority figures like the bishop of the Filipino Catholic church should be called out to express sympathy for Mendoza. The Police, however, threatened Mendoza by involving his brother instead.

Dr. Dennis Wong

*Programme Leader of BSoSc Criminology and
Associate Professor of SS*



Photo from Sing Tao Daily

When negotiation fails, sudden attack should be executed, as the sixth rule. “The Police could have shot down the gunman in split seconds, but they spent an hour breaking windows of the coach with hammers!” said Dr. Wong agitatedly.

While the Filipino Police was at apparent fault in the incident, “if one traces the cause of the failing system, one can link it up to the corruptive Filipino government,” said Dr. Wong. The inefficient government sabotages collaboration between departments and bureaus; there is a void of authority—no chief commander to give a central order and take responsibility. Officers in the operation were confused.

“The government’s priority was not to rescue the hostages but to maintain the eroding authority of the Police Force. The Filipino Police Force was indeed very corrupted in its administrative structure and capability,” indicated Dr. Wong. “Hostage taking happens frequently in the Philippines, but the government only wants to arrest the hijackers to enhance the reputation of the Police Force while putting the hostages at risk.”

“In fact, Mendoza was also a victim of the system,” Dr. Wong concluded. “The tragedy was the fault of the corrupted government.”

How to overcome Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)?



Dr. Tom Yuen

Registered Psychologist in Canada and Assistant Professor of SS

The Manila hostage incident has shocked many by its brutality and fatality. People who were victims in the ordeal or witnessed the tragedy on television both experienced distress. Some may experience symptoms of an anxiety disorder called Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which is triggered by the experience of a physical or psychological trauma.

Dr. Tom Yuen, a registered psychologist in Canada and Assistant Professor of Counselling, suggested ways to overcome the traumatic experiences of PTSD.

Dr. Yuen indicated that feeling panicky, depressed, and insecure and having recurrent nightmares were the emotional reactions of victims. He explained that some of the afflicted individuals were able to alleviate their distress, but some were unable to fight off sadness and were prone to develop PTSD. These people got heavily involved psychologically because of having similar previous experience or close relationship with the afflicted victims.

For those who suffer from PTSD (particularly the survivors), Dr. Yuen said that they would first deny the reality of losing a loved one and negotiate with a higher power like God with feelings of anger, madness, and regret. They then would accept the reality after a passage of time and finally move on in bereavement.

Dr. Yuen mentioned that some eyewitnesses of a trauma would suffer from secondary traumatic experience, as if they had felt the pain by only watching others suffer. They would feel panicky and have doubts about life, fearing that the same tragedy would happen to them.

“To overcome the traumatic experiences of PTSD is to accept cognitively the unpleasant side of life and re-

examine justice rationally. Victims usually go through a tough time after the incident. They would keep questioning about life and have doubts on justice. In the hostage incident, all afflicted victims were innocent holiday-makers who had absolutely nothing to do with the terrible plight of Mendoza. We may think this is so unfair to them and ask, ‘Where is justice?’” said Dr. Yuen.

“However, one has to realize that that good people may not always have good return. Bad things can happen to anyone! There is no guarantee in life!”

This incident has brought Hong Kong people together in public mourning; the government had exhibited tremendous support to the victims and their families. In public mourning, people had a chance to show their sympathy and grief. “The act of showing up actually has been transformed into millions of condolences to the victims and their families.”

Dr. Yuen concluded that the brutal trauma has dismantled the rosy picture of life in many people’s mind and it is an important life lesson that all have to learn. It gave us an opportunity to reflect on the purposes of our lives and become more aware of our mental strength.

Reported by Angela Cheung



Photo from Sing Tao Daily

Child Care for Dual-Income Families

According to the Hong Kong Paediatric Foundation, about 170 children of age three to six died of domestic accidents each year in Hong Kong. Headlines such as “A three-year-old child leaped from the window” and “Children climbed water pipes and were injured” flood the newspapers and strike a string in the hearts of parents, practitioners and policy makers, who concerned about the quality of child care in Hong Kong.

Although most parents understand the basic axiom of parenting and child safety: Keep an eye on your children always and never leave them alone at home, those mothers and fathers who have to work long hours every day—which seems to be the work culture that dominates the society of Hong Kong—find it inevitable to violate the working norm and take risk on the expenses of their son or daughter from time to time. Wong Kai Yee, a mother of a 16-month-old, expressed, “My husband and I can only accompany my 16-month-old baby for three hours daily on weekdays.”

If both parents are employed, which is a typical phenomenon in families in Hong Kong, they obtain childcare services from one or more of the following three sources: (a) helping from relatives, (b) hiring babysitters

or in-house domestic helpers, and/or (c) putting children in daycare centres. No matter which options they choose, they need to ensure that the caretakers are qualified, reliable, and trustworthy, so as to prevent child neglect. “My mother and our domestic helper take care of my baby when my husband and I are at work. We will be worried if our baby is taken care of just by our domestic helper. We trust my mum more, who is experienced in caring for children, and let her take up this important role,” said Wong.

Merely entrusting your child to an experienced and trustworthy caregiver does not equal to providing a high quality child care to your little loved one. Mutual communication between parents and caregivers and daily parent-child interaction are very vital to the quality of child care. “I always ask my mum what my baby does when we are working in the office. This helps us catch up with her growth and development,” reflected Wong enthusiastically.

Striking a balance between work and family is crucial for working parents to build critical bonding with their young ones. Employed parents are advised not to bring work from the office to





Ms. Wong Kai Yee and her family

home and spend sufficient time with their children after work. “Before giving birth, I participated in leisure activities with my husband and friends a lot on weekends. But now, we always stay with our baby.” Wong continued, “My husband even gave up a high-paying-but-demanding job so that he could spend more time with me and the baby.”

Employed parents, with the little time to spend with their children in their daily routine, can also provide better quality child care to their little ones, by showing their genuine love, care, and interest in them in the limited time.

Reported by Margaret Chung

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Response by Dr. David Lok Associate Professor, SS

Parents, caregivers, schools, and the government, each plays an important role in boosting the quality of child care. More important, parents, caregivers, and schools should establish mutual communication with each other—between parents and caregivers and between parents and schools—so that the three parties can learn more about their children and know what should be the best to offer them. Parents should not just rely on the caregivers to look after their children for them, because that may result in distant parent-child relationship. Rather, working parents should compartmentalize their daily life and schedule into work and family. They should never sacrifice their time with their children for their work or career advancement.

Moreover, the government can (a) offer more in-service training programmes to daycare centres’ staff on ways to deal with different children’s problems, (b) provide subsidies to families with financial difficulties for the payment of child-care centre services, and (c) increase the supplies of more regional daycare services.



Department Highlights

Research Degree Programmes

The Department offers full-time and part-time degree programmes in Administrative Science Policy, which cover areas in Applied Sociology, Psychology, Social Work, Criminology, Counselling, and Ageing leading to Ph.D. or MPhil degree. The aims of these research programmes are to (a) enable students to investigate and evaluate critically an approved research topic; (b) provide students opportunities to acquire competence in methods of research and scholarship in the field of Administrative Science Policy; and (c) enable students to complete a thorough and original research investigation to a professional standard.

Until October 2010, twenty-six postgraduate students have been enrolled in the research degree programmes under the supervision of academic staff who are experts in their fields and have excellent experience in supervising research students. The research areas and topics of these students are varied, including psychotherapy, juvenile delinquency, community crime, school bullying, mental health and community care for elderly people.

For application period, procedures and on-line application, please visit <http://www.sgs.cityu.edu.hk/prospective/RPg/apply> or refer to the Research Degree Programmes Admissions Handbook issued by the Chow Yei Ching School of Graduate Studies.

For enquiries, please contact the Research Degree Committee via email at ss.rdp@cityu.edu.hk

Words from the Head

Dear alumni, friends, and students of SS:

I am happy to inform you that in past six months we have successfully recruited the following new academic staff: Professor Daniel Fu-Keung Wong (SWK), Dr. John Bola (SWK), Mr. Andrew Yiu-tsang Low (SWK), Dr. Tina Rochelle (PSY), Ms. Sylvia Siu-yin Wong (SWK), and Dr. Bonnie Wing-yin Chow (PSY). In addition, we have hosted and co-organized a number of seminars and conferences with respective NGOs, including the "Outreach Social Work--Post 30th Anniversary Ceremony" (with the Hong Kong Council of Social Services); "Strengthening Hong Kong's Families - Obligation and Care across the Generations" (with the Central Policy Unit, HKSAR); "The 2010 Joint World Conference on Social Work and Social Development" (with IASSW, ICSW, and IFSW); "The 22nd International Society for Humor Studies Conference" (with ISHS); and "The Role and Challenges of NGOs in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau" (with Yan Oi Tong). I look forward to your unfailing support, participation, and advice in SS's future events.

Professor Alex Kwan
Head of SS



A Conversation with Professor Daniel WONG, Director of the Centre for Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CCBT)

Q: Can you tell us a bit about the background of your Centre?

In 2005, I received funding from the Mrs. Li Ka Shing Fund of the University of Hong Kong (HKU) to launch an applied research project, entitled “Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT): Combating Depression.” One of the objectives was to train up 20 frontline social workers from 10 NGOs in Hong Kong to learn to use CBT to work with clients suffering from depression. Another objective was to conduct a clinical evaluation of the outcomes of the CBT group therapy conducted with those clients who had gone through such group therapy services. In 2007, our team of professionals decided to set up a CBT training and research centre at HKU. With the kind consent of the Department of Social Work and Social Administration at HKU, we relocated this Centre to the City University of Hong Kong. Now, our Centre has developed a working model called SET (Services, Evaluation, and Training), which has been in use in all of our projects.

Q: What are the objectives of your Centre?

Our Centre has three objectives: training, research, and international CBT knowledge development and

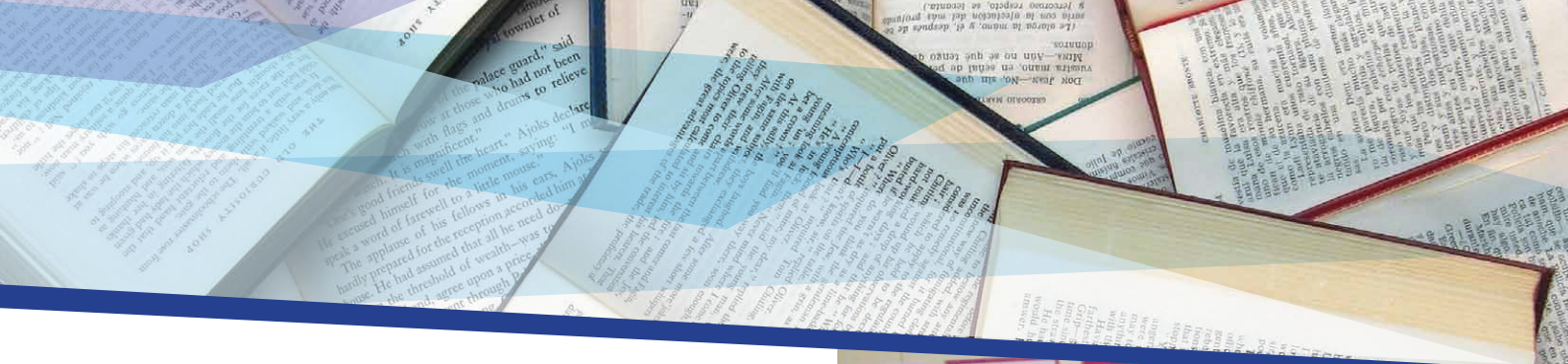
exchange. First, our Centre aims to provide training services for professionals interested in learning how to use CBT to help Chinese people suffering from emotional and mental health problems; we adopt Beck’s Cognitive Therapy (CT) approach as our major theoretical framework. Second, to promote evidence-based practice, we aim to conduct qualitative and quantitative studies to inform our practices. Third, our long term objective is to develop an Asia-Pacific CBT training and research hub so that academics and professionals from different parts of the world can gather together to share their experience and initiate new research agendas to further develop CBT for the Chinese populations.

Q: What are the specific activities of your Centre?

On training, we offer both short-term and long-term programmes. Our short-term programmes are targeted on training CBT skills for treating specific client populations such as depressed elderly and youth with emotional difficulties. Our long-term programmes, which include a 9-month period of training and supervision, are targeted on training practitioners, such as social workers, nurses, psychiatrists, physiotherapists, and occupational therapists, through open recruitment.



Prof. Daniel Wong, Mr. Angus Lam, Ms. Shirley Cheng and Ms. Veronica Chan from left to right



At present, we have implemented our programmes in Hong Kong, Macau, and Melbourne, Australia. Another type of long-term training programmes that we offer is the agency based programme. We have established contracts with NGOs such as the Caritas Social Services – Rehabilitation Unit, to provide one to two years of CBT training and supervision for their in-house staff. Currently, we have four projects in hand. To generate clinical research data, we conduct regularly CBT groups and case counselling to clients. We welcome any client referrals too.

Q: What is the linkage between the CCBT and the Department of Applied Social Studies?

We aim to build a close connection between our Centre and the Department. I teach CBT courses in various departmental programmes. Our Centre offers training workshops exclusively for students in the Department. We reserve seats for our students and staff to attend our workshops, talks, and conferences. Moreover, colleagues who are interested in the CBT practice are encouraged to join our professional study groups. Colleagues with certified CBT training are invited to join our Centre as clinical associates and conduct CBT for our clients at the Centre.

Q: Personally, what is your academic aspiration?

I enjoy doing research and writing and hope to collaborate with my colleagues in the Department more frequently in conducting research in the near future. I am a practitioner-researcher and want to engage in evidence-based practice and teaching on CBT. In terms of teaching, I enjoy interacting with students and want to share my knowledge and passion in CBT with them.



Q: What is the contact information of your Centre?

Our office number is 3442 5314 and e-mail address is ccbts@cityu.edu.hk. Our office is located in Room 4470, Mong Man Wai Building. Please drop by and chat with us! We are in progress of modifying our website. We do update our website regularly on current events. So, please come visit our website regularly to check out our news.