

A Turning Point to Regain Happiness

Hily came in 2014 as a participant at a Monthly Mental Health Workshop; afterwards, she decided to join in course “Managing Emotions for Women” that influenced and changed her life for the better.

My brother passed away—that was the beginning of my mental health journey. Ten years ago when I was in my 30s my life was thrown into disarray. For years, I cried thinking of him; a deep connection was lost forever as he was always a person I could rely on, share my stories with, and learn from, but suddenly he was gone, taken away from me without notice. The pain would reside in me for years. Tears would flow down my face when I drove to work, while I was at work, and when I was at home. This pain would gradually recede with time, but this solution and feeling were temporary.

As we all know sometimes when it rains, it pours; my father would be the next person to leave my side. His health quickly deteriorated; hospital visits became a regular destination for me, a second home that consistently reminded me of sickness and death. None of us like going to the hospital ourselves, but to attend and watch someone you love wither away is just heartbreaking.

Shortly after, issues with my mother, work, and other family members came up; the overwhelming feeling of all these problems were significantly pressing my mind, pushing me to extreme stages of anxiety. At first, I tried my best to cope with these problems, sometimes internalizing these issues, but ultimately, serious symptoms began to form. I started to find my hands involuntarily shaking, my heart rate beating extremely fast. I couldn't sleep and focusing on work was impossible—I was losing control of myself, my life.

One day, I started to repeatedly ask myself these questions, “Do I want to live like this forever? Do I want to take medication? Do I want my family to suffer because of me?” The rational answer is no, but when I was living these experiences I doubted myself, I questioned if I could do things on my own without modern medicine, burdening my family, and accepting my situation because I thought there were no alternatives.

Then, something changed. I saw an advertisement for a mental health workshop; initially, I didn't think much of it but thought I would at least attend and see what the workshop was about. Thank God I attended. The Monthly Mental Health Workshop organized by “Hong Fook” became a “Turning Point” to regaining my sense of self and happiness. The workshop motivated me to take action, and after I attended a Course of “Managing Emotions for Women”—I connected with a professional mental health worker and volunteers that transformed my life. Together we worked on understanding emotions, building self-esteem, positive thinking, self-rejuvenation, and so many other strategies.

The journey to recognizing my emotions, communicating with others, assessing my needs and strengths, applying the knowledge and resources from Hong Fook all contributed to my success in taking the path to mental wellness.

At Hong Fook, the emphasis of self-love and self-respect were relatively new to me, but with the unconditional care and support from the agency I was able to feel empowered; I was beginning to view stressors with a different mindset while having the right tools to overcome challenges. With Hong Fook I realized I was not alone, for we were all part of this life-long journey.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my mental health worker and all the volunteers; I won't forget their warm encouragement and continuous strength. Not only did they support and lift me up when I fell, but touched my heart, guiding me on a path that I am not afraid to take anymore. I am thankful that I did not have to compromise on my beliefs and desires as I am proud to say I never took medication. The darkness that was in my heart for the past ten years has been a heavy obstacle to clear; I am still on my journey, but I know that I am more capable than ever to cope, accept, and move forward from the creeping darkness that was threatening to swallow me. I can easily say, I am happier now than I have been in the past 40 years and that is thanks to the compassion at Hong Fook. Thank you.

Today, Hily feels more empowered than ever. She still attends our bi-monthly supportive sessions to gain further knowledge and assistance on her mental wellness path.