

**Community-based Rehabilitation: Healthy Cities for  
People with Disabilities**

Tseung Kwan O (TKO) is a rapidly developing new town under the Sai Kung district of Hong Kong. Up to date, there are 50 rehabilitation service centres ranging from pre-school rehabilitation service to adult service including residential, day service as well as community support service. That means in TKO, a comprehensive spectrum of rehabilitation services are available to people with different disabilities throughout their life stages.

**REHABILITATION SERVICES**

**PRE-SCHOOL SERVICE**

**Early Education & Training Centre**

The centre provides rehabilitation service to pre-school children aged below 6, with its capacity increased from 60 in March 1999 to 80 in September 2004. This reflects the immense service needs. In fact, it is not uncommon to come across children with special needs to wait for over a year before they could access the service they need.

To fill the service gap, a self financing "Seed Project" was set up last year to provide developmental training and rehabilitation service for children in need. This allowed 153 children to gain access to a wide range of programs, including Comprehensive Children Ability Screening, developmental training, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy etc. in 2004/05.

In order to promote early identification and facilitate early intervention, large-scale community education programs have been organized for five consecutive years. District-wide exhibitions and ability screening, colouring competition, slogan competition, centre's open week were conducted. Over 8000 participants and 52 schools were reached this year and it was of the largest scale so far.

**District-based Speech Therapy Team**

The District-based Speech Therapy Team (DSTT) has two training centres in Tseung Kwan O. The DSTT primarily adopts an outreaching mode which has expanded its service capacity from 228 to 246 serving 41 Integrated Programs (children with special developmental needs attending classes with other children in mainstream child care centres) in 29 Integrated Child Care Centres in September 2004. It aims to provide training to teachers as well as parents for their own training to children at home or school. This allows children with special developmental needs to have equal rights in schooling with their counterparts within the community.

To facilitate speech training with children, DSTT developed a systematic, interesting and useful Cantonese articulation training kit last year. This training kit includes a manual and more than 1000 colour printed training cards. This helps to empower families as well as service providers to serve children with speech problems. Overwhelming responses have been received from not only parents, teachers and therapists of child care centres, but also from mainstream schools, early education and training centres, hospitals and clinics from different parts of Hong Kong.

There are two resource corners in the district. Loan services of thousands of materials including audio-visual aids, books and toys are available to the public in one, while another specialises more on speech training aids and materials for parents and child care workers.

### **SPECIAL SCHOOL SERVICE**

There are three special schools in the district, with a total of 404 students, serving children aged 6 to 18 from mild to severe grade of physical handicap and/or mental retardation.

Apart from education and rehabilitation services for the children, joint functions are also organised with other special or mainstream schools to widen the horizon of students, e.g. Special Olympics, Joint School Concert, and Inter-school Athletic Meet. The emotional and psychological needs of parents are addressed through Joint School Parents' Health Food Day and "Angel's Voice" Musical Evangelistic Meeting. The speech therapists also participate in "speech therapy supportive network scheme" and offer supportive service to mainstream schools.

### **ADULT SERVICE**

For adult residential service, there are 23 hostels in TKO serving 632 people with disabilities. For day service, the service scope ranges from basic training to open employment targeted to people with mild to severe grade mental retardation, those with physical handicap as well as ex-mentally ill people.

### **The application of Activity Approach and Person-centred planning**

As stated in the *CBR – A Strategy for Rehabilitation, Equalisation for Opportunities, Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion of People with Disabilities – Joint Position Paper 2004*, "Rehabilitation service should no longer be imposed without the consent and participation of people who are using the services. Rehabilitation is now viewed as a process in which people with disabilities or their advocates make decisions about

what services they need to enhance participation. Professionals who provide rehabilitation services have the responsibility to provide relevant information to people with disabilities so that they can make informed decisions regarding what is appropriate for them.”

Based on the above philosophy, Activity Approach has been adopted for a few years. In one of the day centres that took a leading role, they integrated Person-centred Approach with Activity Approach in the day program. All trainings and activities are conducted in small groups instead of traditional class setting. At the same time, the application of “Person-centered Planning” is consolidated with the objectives of broadening the horizon, enriching experience and enhancing choice making for service users. Choice-making is emphasized in the planning of social and recreational activities and setting of menus. Service users are encouraged to express their views and indicate their preferences. Choice making is essential in fostering decision making skills which can empower people with disabilities and promote their quality of life. Service users are free to choose their own training or activities. A variety of indoor and outdoor programs and activities are arranged according to the choices made such as tours to the Ocean Park, the Gold Coast, the Space Museum, outlying islands and even Macau. Two tours to Macau had been organised for a total of 14 service users and their parents. They were very excited to visit another city of different culture. Others had great fun with new experiences of wild camps and water activities. Barbeque, hiking, picnicking, day tours, visits and Special Olympics etc. are welcome by service users. Very positive feedback has been received from both the service users and their caregivers.

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND POVERTY REDUCTION**

To advocate for the equalisation of opportunities and poverty reduction, vocational training is one of the major strategies. With vocational training, people with disabilities can expand their repertoire, build up their confidence and try to earn a living for themselves. Meanwhile, it also helps to improve acceptance of the general public toward people with disabilities, facilitates communication and understanding between both parties, and hence leads to de-stigmatization of people with disabilities.

A wide range of vocational training programs are offered including handicraft production, sales promotion, laundry service, snack preparation, car washing teams, office assistant training and mail delivery training. Promotion sales have been organised at different shopping malls and universities. Service users enjoy the opportunities of making contacts with other people while receiving training allowances that mean an invaluable recognition to them.

In TKO, the Integrated Vocational and Rehabilitation Services Centre work with the Supported Employment Unit to provide formal vocational training to people with disabilities such as car cleaning, restaurant cleaning, promotion sale and laundry etc. Such training provides them opportunities to work in a simulated working environment, e.g. car cleaning training conducted at the car park of a local hospital. It is a great delight that some of them subsequently get employed in the open market like phone operator, cleaning worker, domestic helper, general and accounting clerks, earning a close-to-market-rate monthly salary.

### **COMMUNITY INTEGRATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION**

To facilitate people with disabilities, both children and adults, to feel as part of the community, they are actively encouraged to enjoy the community facilities while having the opportunity to interact with the general public. Great variety of activities have been organised e.g. swimming in the public pool, travelling on public transportation, having buffet in restaurants, shopping in supermarkets, day trip to museums etc.

To further promote social integration, strategies such as community education, and volunteer development have been adopted. The rehabilitation service centres regularly organise open days where local people can tour around the centres and learn first-hand the services as well as the service users. The open days usually include a series of programs like game booths, promotion sales of handicrafts made by the service users etc. which help the public to understand and accept people with disabilities.

To take a step further, local people are actively recruited and trained to become volunteers to participate in service delivery for people with disabilities. For instance, one of the special schools successfully develops long term donor cum volunteer relationship with pilots and flight attendants of the Cathay Pacific Airline and the Sun Hung Kei Properties Ltd., a major estate developer in the territory. Meanwhile, people with disabilities are also trained to provide volunteer service to other people in need e.g. household cleaning and visitations to singletons.

Some of the rehabilitation service centres manage to train up service users to perform regular art or recreational performance at community events. For instance, a group of people with disabilities, having been trained as “models”, hosted 8 “fashion shows” last year. Their “cat walks” were well complimented by the public. As a consequence, participants also gained much self-confidence.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COLLABORATION**

### **Community Development**

Home-based Training and Support (HBTS) together with Home Respite Service play an important role in community development for people with disabilities and their families, especially those who are waiting for admission into residential service. The average waiting time is usually in terms of a few years.

Home-based Training and Support mainly provides self care training and necessary home environment modification to support people with disabilities to stay “independently” at home as far as possible. The service also actively builds up the support network among people with disabilities and their families. The total number of members in this network is 114. Besides, HBTS offers “Day Activity Centre Attachment Program” for graduates of special schools who can then start the adjustment before formal admission to adult day service. The establishment of a hotline helps to arrange appropriate services for those in need such as respite day care or residential care. A total of 144 calls have been recorded this year.

The service demand in Home Respite is ever rising. It aims to provide temporary relief amidst continual caring responsibilities for families or carers of people with disabilities. Apart from regular services like escort and personal care, partnership with special schools allows the extension of care service to children with disabilities during after-school hours as well as long vacation. No doubt the availability of respite service means invaluable support to such families or carers.

### **District-wide Collaboration**

The Rehabilitation Service Working Group is one within the committee structure of the local District Council. It consists of representatives from all local rehabilitation service units beyond organisational boundaries for collaboration and advocacy to the interests of people with disabilities. For the past few years, they have been putting a lot of efforts in promoting the mutual interaction and understanding between people with disabilities and the general public. Various programs and activities such as stage performance by people with disabilities and sales booths of their handmade art and craft products etc. have been organised and received with positive feedback.