

Public Statement: Sham Shui Po Tragedy

We are deeply saddened by the Sham Shui Po tragedy where three daughters were allegedly killed by their mother from a minority ethnic background. In view of this recent tragedy, we (the undersigned organizations and units providing services to ethnic minorities) would like the government to take urgent action. We ask the government to recognize the importance of mental health and wellbeing for all individuals, regardless of their ethnic background. We call on the government to prioritize the mental health needs of ethnic minorities and take concrete steps to ensure that they receive the support and resources they need to thrive.

We call on the government to take the following four measures:

1. **Review policies on ethnic minorities.** This devastating incident highlights the urgent need for the government to review its policies and provide better services to ethnic minorities. Mental health support and services are critical for all individuals, but it is especially important for ethnic minority communities who may face unique challenges and barriers in accessing these services. It is regrettable that individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds may not be receiving the necessary support and resources to maintain their mental health and wellbeing.

2. **Allocate more resources for ethnic minority mental health.** We call on the government to take immediate action to allocate appropriate resources to provide culturally sensitive mental health support and services for ethnic minority communities. This includes increasing funding for community-based organizations that serve ethnic minorities, and funding more language appropriate outreach activities to raise the awareness of mental health in the community and to refer identified cases to the appropriate services.

3. **Increase numbers of ethnic minority social workers and mental health professionals.**

a) According to a credible estimate, there are only 21 social workers from minority ethnic backgrounds who are serving a community of over 600,000 people. As social workers play a crucial role in providing support and assistance to individuals and families who are in need of help, and ethnic minority individuals often face particular challenges and barriers that require specific knowledge, skills, and expertise from social workers, it is essential that we have an adequate number of social workers from minority ethnic backgrounds who can provide culturally sensitive service to these communities. The current shortage of social workers from minority ethnic backgrounds is a serious concern that needs to be addressed urgently.

b) Aside from social workers, the talent pipeline for ethnic minority mental health providers is also seriously lacking. This poses an enormous risk to those in the ethnic minority community facing language and cultural barriers when receiving mental health support. It is suggested that the government encourage universities who run social work, counselling, psychology, psychiatry and other related programmes to offer places to ethnic minorities and incentivise ethnic minorities to study the related programmes.

4. **Work closer together with Secretary for Labour and Welfare.** We would like to call on a meeting with Mr. Chris SUN, Secretary for Labour and Welfare, to discuss this issue further so that by working together, we can develop effective strategies to improve mental health support for individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds and prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.

We extend our deepest condolences to the family and friends of the victims during this difficult time, and we pledge to continue to advocate for the need of mental well-being of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong.

Agency/Unit

1. Hong Kong Unison
2. KELY Support Group
3. The Zubin Foundation
4. Health In Action
5. Harmony House
6. HKSKH Lady MacLehose Centre, Services for Ethnic Minorities