

## DEPRESSION TOPS THE LIST OF PROBLEMS FOR WHICH STUDENTS SEEK COUNSELING

According to the statistics compiled by the Counseling Section of the Office of Student Affairs, in the years 2002 and 2003 the problem for which the largest number of Tamkang students sought counseling was depression. The statistics come from a study of the number of students receiving counseling and the types of problems they had.

In 2002, for instance, ninety-five students went to the counseling section for help; about thirty-five of them suffered from depression. The types of problems seen at the counseling section included: personal growth, career planning, general interpersonal relationships, emotion management and pressure adjustment. Twice as many female students as males sought counseling for these problems. Other problems include, for example, gender identity difficulties (22%) and intimate relationships (19%). The autumn semester 2003 (up to Friday 19 December) has seen forty-three cases, nearly half of which (twenty-four cases) were about depression. What's noteworthy is the percentage of cases of suicidal intentions: 16% is up from the fifth place to the third in the list of frequently seen problems.

Ms. Hu Yian-wei of the counseling section says that the study was triggered by a WHO report three years ago. The World Health Organization warned that depression would become the third largest epidemic in the 21st century. With the increase of pressure in a competitive world, how to adjust and manage one's emotions becomes a new issue for the young generation. Incidents of self-inflicted injury by students have recently been reported with increasing frequency. According to epidemiological statistics, the percentage of emotional disorders in a community (e.g. depression, manic-depressive disorder) is about 20% to 25%. Tamkang has a

student population of 27,000, but the number of students seeking counseling is very small, which suggests a large number of hidden cases on campus.

To improve students' mental health, the counseling section will extend the network of mental health assistance resources, combining the human resources of department chairs, tutors, and military trainers to help monitor the recovery of special cases. The counseling section will also improve its services by developing a system of online booking for counseling. Finally the counseling section urges anyone who needs individual counseling to visit B413.

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