

Concept and Objective of the Toolkit

Hong Kong owns the reputation of “Asia’s World City”. The education level of its residents has reached that of a developed country, there are good medical personnel and advanced medical equipment and medicine, yet the organ donation rate remains relatively low. There were only 5.59 deceased organ donors per million population (pmp) in 2020, far below those in the western countries. [Reference statistics: In 2020, the United States has 38.03 donors per million population (pmp), the highest in the world.]

Recently, there are more than 2,000 patients in Hong Kong waiting desperately for organ transplant every day. Most of them are patients with organ failure when medicine can only help alleviate their symptoms. Organ transplantation is the only hope for them. In 2019, the average waiting time for individual organs ranged from 15 to 54 months. We undoubtedly need more people to donate suitable organs for transplantation, to save the patients’ lives.

The attitude of Hong Kong people towards organ donation tends to be relatively conservative when compared with that in the western countries. It is, to a large extent, affected by traditional Chinese culture. People seldom talk about death, they want to keep the body intact and do not like to be dissected after death. At the same time, Chinese has strong family ties and respect. When a person has to make decision on whether to donate the organs of his/her deceased family member, he/she mostly would not opt to donate if the family member’s wish was unknown to them. This has resulted in a loss of many transplantation opportunities.

A decisions to donate organs or not depends on one’s personal values and traditional beliefs. To effect a cultural change, it is important to start education as early as possible. We hope that youngsters can explore the meaning and importance of organ donation from different perspectives. We shall help correct their misunderstandings and eliminate their worries, introduce proper knowledge and cultivate the message of selfless love deep in their heart. Only through a conceptual change in people’s mindset can we gain more support on organ donation in the long run.

Besides professional medical knowledge, it is more important for us to recognize the great love and the meaning of life behind organ donation. Students start to foster their cognitive development in junior forms, making it a good time to cultivate moral education. That is why the junior toolkit adopts the approach of using the moral education aspect to bring out the meaning of organ donation. After completion of the lessons in junior forms, teachers can continue to instill knowledge of organ donation in senior forms using the “Organ Donation: The Legacy of Love” Senior Secondary Liberal Studies Teaching Toolkit, which was published by the Foundation in 2016, so as to complete the subject of organ donation in the entire secondary school curriculum.