



## **Towngas, SKH Welfare Council and CUHK co-organise “Chef Anchor 2.0” to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of the elderly and their carers**

(16 September 2022) The Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council (the Welfare Council), The Hong Kong and China Gas Company Limited (Towngas) and the CUHK Jockey Club Institute of Ageing released a report on the effectiveness of the “Chef Anchor 2.0” programme, which has proven to be effective in enhancing the physical, mental and social health of elderly people with subjective memory impairment.

There are currently over 100,000 people living with dementia in Hong Kong. According to a study, the number is expected to increase dramatically to over 300,000 by 2039, causing a situation that cannot be ignored. Subjective memory impairment (i.e. the feeling that one's memory and thinking skills have deteriorated before others are aware of it) is a symptom of early cognitive impairment. Elderly people with subjective memory impairment are still able to take care of themselves, but they feel worthless because they are often forgetful. On the other hand, carers are also faced with different challenges. For example, some patients still want to be able to flame cook independently, and carers are conflicted between worrying about the safety of the elderly and not wanting to deprive them of their autonomy, and are under increasing pressure to care for them.

### **Carers participating the programme for the first time**

The “Chef Anchor 2.0” programme combined elements of occupational therapy with the professionalism of culinary instructors to integrate “procedural memory” into recipes, illustrating detailed cooking steps with colours, fonts and photo captions and allowing patients with subjective memory impairment to undergo cognitive training during the cooking process. The programme also added a new component of carer participation, allowing the elderly and their carers to enjoy flame cooking together. The elderly could demonstrate their self-cooking skills and regain their confidence through the programme. At the same time, the programme also helped carers to think differently, and learn that the skill of caring for the elderly is to let go at the right time, so that the elderly can participate in sharing household chores and maintain their self-care skills. In addition, the programme promoted mutual appreciation, strengthened relationships and passed on family culture by enabling the elderly and carers to learn to make authentic home-cooked dishes together. The carers can also build up a support network through group meetings before and after the event to relieve their caring stress.

### **The programme effectively improved the Health and Wellbeing Index\***

The CUHK Jockey Club Institute of Ageing analysed the performance of 60 pairs of elderly people with subjective memory impairment and their carers before and after

the programme, and compared data from the experimental and control groups. And the findings include:

1. The programme has boosted the elderly's confidence in cooking, with 50.0% of the elderly improving their confidence in cooking.
2. The programme has made carers feel more comfortable allowing the elderly to flame cook at home. 66.7% of carers had increased confidence in the elderly they cared for to cook their own food.
3. The programme has improved the Health and Wellbeing Index of the elderly and their carers. 55.0% of the elderly and 53.3% of their carers had their scores improved.
4. The programme brought back the joy of cooking and a sense of meaning to the lives of the elderly and their carers. 46.7% of the elderly and 43.3% of carers experienced an increased sense of meaning in their lives.
5. The event provided a platform for the elderly and their carers to cook together, thereby enhancing communication and cooperation between them and improving family harmony and satisfaction. 40.0% of the elderly showed improvement in their satisfaction with family harmony, with the improvement being particularly noticeable among the male elderly (75.0%).
6. The programme improved the self-rated health of the elderly with impairment in independent daily activities. 50.0% of the elderly had improved their self-rated health.

*\*The Health and Wellbeing Index is a score that combines four indicators of physical and mental health, including life satisfaction, well-being, meaningfulness of life and self-rated health.*

Mr Issac Yeung Chung-kwan, the Head of ESG / Head of Corporate Affairs, said, “Towngas wants to use its corporate strength – flame cooking - to help people with cognitive impairment. At the same time, we encourage our colleagues to participate as volunteers so that they can better understand the situation of patients and their carers, and help others to help themselves. Through the collaboration with the Welfare Council and the CUHK Jockey Club Institute of Ageing, we hope to further deepen the “Chef Anchor” programme and assist in various aspects.”

Ms Wong Chui-yan, the Assistant Director of the Welfare Council, remarked, “In view of the positive results of the ‘Chef Anchor 2.0’ programme, we have made some suggestions to improve our services to further support the elderly and carers in need. These mainly include promoting elderly centres and related organisations to organise more similar cooking activities for the elderly and their carers to cook together, so as to build up fond memories and enhance the physical and mental health of the elderly and carers in need; applying ‘procedural memory’ to everyday life beyond cooking; and implementing innovative and tailor-made services for the male elderly and promote men's participation in elderly centres and other social services.”

Dr Yu Ho-yan from the CUHK Jockey Club Institute of Ageing added, “The study is an important addition to the local health and caregiver support services for the elderly, and a key contributor to the development of research on the prevention of dementia. We also hope that the project will include cooking activities on the theme of "healthy eating" in the future to educate the elderly and their carers on healthy eating practices to promote their physical, mental, brain and social health.”

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### Press photos:

Photo 1:



Ms Judy Chan Kar-po (centre, back row), General Manager - Corporate Affairs of Towngas, Ms Wong Chui-yan (4<sup>th</sup> from left, back row), Assistant Director of the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council, and Dr Yu Ho-yan (3<sup>rd</sup> from left, back row), Senior Research Fellow (by courtesy) of CUHK Jockey Club Institute of Ageing, attend the event to introduce the effectiveness of the “Chef Anchor 2.0” programme.

Photo 2:



Ms Tsang (1<sup>st</sup> from left), social worker from Sheng Kung Hui, Ms Chung (1<sup>st</sup> from right), Towngas volunteer, and Ms Ng (2<sup>nd</sup> from right) and her granddaughter (2<sup>nd</sup> from left), participants of the “Chef Anchor 2.0” programme, share why they join this programme and thank you for the help this programme brings.

Photo 3:



Mr Leung (right), Towngas volunteer, shares volunteers’ role and happy feelings when seeing improvement in the participants of the "Chef Anchor 2.0" programme.

Photo 4:



Dr Yu Ho-yan, Senior Research Fellow (by courtesy) of CUHK Jockey Club Institute of Ageing, said that the “Chef Anchor 2.0” programme gives carers greater peace of mind when the elderly are doing flame cooking at home, with 66.7% of carers had increased confidence in the elderly they cared for to cook their own food.

Photo 5:



Towngas volunteers, the elderly and their carers joined the “Chef Anchor 2.0” programme to enjoy flame cooking together.

Photo 6:



Through the “Chef Anchor 2.0” programme, Towngas hopes to help the elderly regain their confidence and promote mutual appreciation, strengthen relationships and pass on family culture with their carers.

For media enquiries, please contact:  
The Hong Kong and China Gas Company Limited  
Ms Judy Chan  
General Manager – Corporate Affairs  
Tel: 2963 3486  
Fax: 2516 7368  
Email: [cad@towngas.com](mailto:cad@towngas.com)