

Collective document

Our stories of dealing with Pocket Kering (draft)

This document records down the ways in which we deal with Pocket Kering, or financial difficulty. We hope to share our knowledges with others, and also help others understand the conditions that we face.

Pocket Kering disturbing us at school

Sometimes, we need to buy books, important things or we want to buy stationary at the bookshop. One of us shared that she needs to buy her calculator because it has been spoilt for over a month. Some of us sometimes are unable to pay things at school, for example, a book that the teacher asks us to buy. We pray hard that the teacher will not ask for it as we may get scolded by the teacher. Sometimes, we do not have enough money to buy both food and water during lunch time, or we may have money for recess but not enough for lunch time.

Sometimes we feel a little different from other children. For one of us, Pocket Kering was very fierce and big last month. Pocket Kering made us lose our friends, and this made us very sad.

Pocket Kering making trouble at home

Pocket Kering sometimes makes me feel very bored at home. For example, we may want to buy a bicycle, and to have fun. Or we may want to go to the zoo or river safari like our friends. When we ask for toys, our family may need many months to save for the toys. We may not have enough money to buy gifts during birthdays.

Sometimes, especially 1 or 2 weeks before our parents' get their salary, we may not have money to buy food. We will feel hungry, and we know my mothers are hungry too, and this makes them sad. Sometimes we may cry.

One of us also fights with our siblings when one of us wants to borrow money from the other, but he does not want to share his savings. We sometimes fight over toys and food. The monster also makes my parents feel tired because they are very stressed and work very hard. It sometimes also makes them fight each other.

Other ways Pocket Kering makes life difficult

Sometimes when we go out, we will want to buy a little food and water, and toys, but we cannot buy it because we have no money. This may make us feel sad. Some of us will keep quiet, but sometimes we will be angry and make a fuss. This fuss we make may cause our family to be upset. Some of our parents looks very stressed, and when we want to buy something, and our father cannot buy it, sometimes it makes me sad when we see him.

Getting used to Pocket Kering

Sometimes we do not notice the effects of Pocket Kering because we experience it for many years. But our parents know that it is there, when we are very hungry when we reach home and eat a lot, and when we tell our parents that we are bored at home and wish we could go out. Some of us continue to have as much fun as we can. We may go to the library with our friends, go swimming (which does not need so much money). Sometimes our friends will *belanja* us.

Dealing with hunger

Some of us eat a lot - And our food runs out very quickly. When we feel hungry, we may drink lots of water, suck or thumbs or swallow our saliva until we can sleep. Drinking a lot of water will make us feel full, and we may also play with our siblings, or fill our stomachs with biscuits. Playing with our toys like Ultraman or Power rangers helps. We don't want to care about Pocket Kering at times, that's why we sometimes don't want to have anger. When we have no money for food, our parents may honestly tell us, and sometimes they will apologize. For some of us, our parents may then have a long talk about this, or money from their boss.

But this means that they will get less money for the next month. At times, our relatives may share their food with us.

When we feel hungry at school, and have no money, we will drink lots of water from the water cooler and play soccer, hide and seek or catching with my friends. Some of us may have less energy to run as fast but will still continue to play. Laughing with our friends also help. For those of us who go to student care, lunch is provided there so we can wait till then. Many of us are very good at waiting. We will wait to come home to eat, where we can eat a lot.

Taking care of our family members and ourselves

Sometimes when our parents may scream in stress. This is when some of us turn to the radio and enjoy our favourite pop songs. Korean pop songs have a happy tune and makes our family happy and have energy especially when our parents work 12-hour shifts. When our mama or papa is sad, we may play games with them. Some of us keep quiet when our parents are stressed so they will not be more stressed. Keeping quiet is an important power to have-we will give our parents space till they are ready to talk. We will also listen carefully to them.

Some of us also try not to care about the problems that Pocket Kering brings, and some of us have favourite corners in our homes to sleep, and we eat or play and not let Pocket Kering disturb them. So Pocket Kering, anger, sadness or stress seems smaller at those times. Some of our parents try to put these feelings aside and smile when we step home. Our parents try not to share their problems with us, so that the feelings will not affect us. Some of our parents at times have to work 2 jobs so that we can eat. Our parents also try to keep quiet when things are bad so that they will not vent the emotions in the home. Some of us help around to do housework, like sweep the floor or wash the dishes. Some of us also have learnt to share their emotions with others – they spend time talking to their children and sometimes find solutions to their problems at those times. One of us learnt this from her who grandmother always told her to talk to her about everything and not keep things inside. A few of us also massage our parents when they are stressed or tired. We learnt this from our parents who learnt it from their own parents who did it to help them to relax. Hugging also works well.

Sharing

As brothers and sisters, we often share with each other. Sometimes we will give our siblings money when they need it. Some of us also surprises each other with little gifts. Another mother shared that it is difficult for people to tell our problems to others, and some of us don't show it to others that we are upset. Instead, she listens to our friends' problems and help them to solve their problems. She feels that there is no point in showing others that you are moody and it affects people. She makes sure that she enjoys herself when she is out and at home, she starts thinking about her problems and how to solve them. Many of us have good relationships with our neighbors and share things with them and play together. Difficult times that Pocket Kering brings makes us share with each other.

Taking care of our money

Many of us take care of our money. We feel that we don't want to waste money. When we don't have food, the money can be used to buy drink and eat, especially when Pocket Kering comes to disturb us. Many of us have a tabung, and we will save money by not using all our pocket money-Sometimes we drink, and other times eat. Sometimes we don't eat anything until we reach home. It's a bit like fasting and when we reach home, we eat a lot. We sometimes also save the money that others gift to us. One of us has saved up a whole *tabung*! This made my mother very surprised. Our grandparents and parents buy these tabungs for us so that can learnt to save. Many of our parents also try to save. One of our mothers said, it's not important to count it as we put it in, just save some every day. Some of us get tabungs that cannot be opened from the bottom. One of us will not bring our pocket money to school, and just use the coupon. He also gave his Hari Raya money to his mother to keep. He lets them use it for the cooking when they have no money. Our tabungs are usually kept safely in our wardrobes. Many of us share the money that we save with our

parents when Pocket Kering is big. We think that this is ok because our parents have taken care of us since we were born, and this money is for our well-being. We cannot afford to eat fast food regularly and mostly eat at home. One of us says that sometimes she tells us that if she wants to eat fast food, for the next few days her family will eat very simple meals of Maggie mee. Sometimes we save money during recess time so that we can buy icecream after school.

Independence

Many of us have siblings, and we will play with each other, have our own competitions and play independently when our parents are doing other things or not at home. We have resourcefulness that helps us in hard times.

Playing games, tickling, laughing, teasing and telling jokes

One of us shared that in hard times, our mom will tickle our legs, and she will play with her sister or make rubber band bracelets. Many of us always tease each other, tell lame joke and annoy our sisters, this keeps the mood light at home. Some of us enjoy to watch videos on YouTube to take care of ourselves. One of us is very good at shaking his backside to make his family laugh when they are sad or stressed. We also enjoy playing tricks on each other. Many of us learnt to laugh and take it easy from our parents. Many of us try to take it easy – when you keep on thinking, your head can explode. One of our parents shared that she was admitted into the hospital for hypertension. We learnt to do what we can during birthdays, and we make cards for and save to buy small gifts for our family.

We just have to *tahan*

We learn how to *tahan* from our parents who have Hope, and they trust that things will get better. We tell ourselves that we need to keep strong. Most of us live in public rental housing. Some of our parents holds on to their dreams to purchase a new house. We hope that our mothers and fathers can be more relaxed (less tired) because we love them and want them to be happy not sad. When one of us lost most of his friends because of Pocket Kering, he started to focus on our classes instead of playing. But he learnt that despite Pocket Kering disturbing him, he has a close relationship with another boy. He will have recess and enjoys breakfast with him (pocket Kering made breakfast at home difficult).

Past difficult experiences teach us to be strong

Many of our parents experienced difficult times in the past. For some of us parents, divorce was very difficult. Some of us went through a cloud of depression, where we may talk to ourselves, laugh, and scold ourselves.

Many of us at one point of time, decided that we need to break the cycle, to change. Some of us learnt to mix around with others. Divorce can be unexpected, as we usually think and hope that it will work out.

One of us had a poor relationship with her caregiver. Caregivers sometimes scold us, and ruin our emotions. She is very aware of this, and this makes her despite her being upset herself, it is her mission that she will always cheer others up, to make them smile or be their listening ears.

A few mothers also shared how divorce gave them something new, "It made me discover that I am actually very strong, I don't think without it I will know that I can raise my 2 kids by myself, and juggle everything." Many of us does not receive maintenance. Our lives can be very messy. Often, these strength to deal with our situations is a gift from God.

Hope

One of our mothers wants to continue to study and find opportunities to upgrade herself. She hopes to do so that she can get a job that is office hours so that she can stay with her children. But it is difficult to study when we need to work for daily expenses. Another of us can't work because her work visa is always rejected, so she volunteers at a local grassroots agency where she learns many new things. She hopes to get a job at the nearby hotel as soon as she gets her work visa.

Faith to tahan hard times

Some of our parents believe God gives you obstacles because he is trying to tell you that he loves you. He's trying to tell you that you have a special power so he will give you this obstacle. They believe that something will be waiting for us, so some parents of us meditate, use praying water and pray and trust in God to give us to find the way. There are some songs that reminds us to be strong. For one of our mothers, it is Rascal Flatt's My Wish, with the words "I hope that my worries stay small and my hopes stay big..." She heard it when she was going through the divorce process. One of us shared that Ciara's like a boy encouraged her during hard times in her marriage to be independent as a single mother raising her 3 children. "Andai Ku Tahu" is another song that reminds a family to make full use of what they have now and not regret when they move on. Some of us also believe that these difficulties are something we must go through and face. Some of us have people who we look up to and help us stay strong in hard times. These people are the Prophet Mohammad who teaches us how to live our lives and focus on our family, and Tun Abdul Razak who teaches us hard work and humility.