

President stresses need for supportive community

Cheryl Teh

Mental well-being is an integral and essential component of good health, said President Halimah Yacob yesterday.

“Having a supportive community helps with the recovery for those with mental health issues,” she added. “By leveraging existing service providers, we can improve access to mental health services through community engagement.”

She added that collaborations among patients, social care workers, volunteers and local businesses can develop local networks.

These social networks can raise community mental health awareness, and improve knowledge on

how, when and where to seek help, better reaching the under-served, Madam Halimah said at the official opening of the third Brahm Centre, at MacPherson.

The centre offers a range of services for people with mental-health issues. Over 500 individuals have visited it for support and counselling since the services became available at the centre in October.

Associate Professor Angie Chew, founder of the Brahm Centre, said: “The centre is important as it serves both the mental and physical health needs of the community.

“Mental health is increasingly important as more people are finding life to be stressful.”

The number of children and elderly suffering from anxiety and

even depression is on the incline, noted Prof Chew, commenting as well on the high density of lonely elderly in the area.

“By being closer to them, they are able to benefit from the myriad of programmes that we offer,” she said.

The proximity of the centre to the MacPherson estate has allowed the staff to respond faster to the needs of the elderly, and made it more convenient for seniors to get to the centre for activities, noted its centre manager, Ms Fanny Foo.

The Brahm Centre, which offers free weekly health education forums, befriending and support services for patients and caregivers, and dementia screening and counselling services, also has outlets at Novena and Simei.

The organisation is also partnering with the Ministry of Health and the Agency for Integrated Care to establish a community safety network for people with or at risk of depression, dementia and other mental illnesses.

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President Halimah Yacob adding two leaves to a Chinese painting at the official opening of Brahm Centre @ MacPherson yesterday. With her are (from right) the centre's counselling and care manager Lily Tan, Brahm Centre founder Angie Chew and MacPherson MP Tin Pei Ling. ST PHOTO: GAVIN FOO