

MIND Matters



Photo Credit: Heidi Yeung

This is the first issue in 2016! May the year of the Monkey usher in good luck, health and fortune for all.

As we enter the new year, let's take a turn back to recognise all the mental health professionals who gave our clients unwavering support and the hope they needed through the toughest of times. In this issue, we pay homage to the community mental health professionals who have played crucial roles in the lives of their clients. Whether you are a social worker, a counsellor or a psychologist, we are all championing for the same cause. Let's keep the spirit going!

Here's a toast to all of you who may be working in the background, we honor your hard work.

MIND MATTERS, FAMILY MATTERS

On 27th and 28th of May, the Singapore Mental Health Conference with the theme of 'Mind Matters, Family Matters' will be held at the Singapore Expo. This conference is organized by the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC), Institute of Mental Health (IMH), Health Promotion Board (HPB) and National Council of Social Services (NCSS).

The Guest-of-Honor is Minister Tan Chuan Jin, Minister for Social and Family Development, who will be delivering the keynote address at the opening ceremony. Other plenary sessions include a sharing on Recovery and Resilience by Dr. Lori Ashcraft and Dr. Eugene Johnson. Dr. Ng Li Ling, a Specialist, and Assistant Professor Mythily, Director of IMH Research, who would be sharing on the findings and observations of a local mental health literacy study are the other exciting content coming up during the conference.

The conference is meant for the attendees to exchange ideas, share knowledge and discuss the provision of mental healthcare across the various sectors. More specifically, the conference creates an avenue for dialogues on improvisation on healthcare. SMHC also promotes discussion on mental health issues such as providing a more holistic care model for people suffering from mental health issues and giving adequate support to their caregivers.

Grab the early bird fees at \$310 before 31 March 2016! Find out more at <http://www.smhc.com.sg>

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Photo Credit: Channel News Asia

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Photo Credit: Filos Community Services



INSIDE STORY: SPREADING SMILES IS WHAT THEY DO BEST

When Mr Poh had a brush with the law, resulting in a police report, a social worker from the AMKFSC MindCare Community Intervention Team (COMIT) took on his case. Ms Sharon Ng, the social worker, conducted further assessments that showed that Mr Poh had many unmet health and social needs. She then worked with his family and other care providers to provide solutions for Mr Poh. In parallel, she would get advice on his case from other members in her COMIT team, a multi-disciplinary team of counsellors, occupational therapists, psychologists, nurses and programme coordinators.



Ms Sharon conducting home visit to ensure client and caregiver are coping well at home



Mr Poh is only one of many individuals in Singapore who benefitted from the tireless perseverance of social workers such as Sharon, and mental health counsellors such as Ms Balqis Maricar, who works at Club HEAL, a VWO that provides day care rehabilitation services in several communities. These professionals provide a much-needed link between the client's daily life in the community and his or her treatment life, which involves doctor visits and prescriptions. To the client, these two worlds may seem difficult to bridge.

Community-based mental health professionals also help hospitals and other service organisations, as they provide follow-up services to rehabilitate clients back into communities and escalate relapses or any other concerns to the hospitals. Balqis recalls a client of hers who was suffering from anxiety and had been given a prescription from her doctor. They worked together to develop a plan for the patient to attend rehab, counselling sessions, and take her prescribed medications. This integrated plan helped the client in her attitude and confidence, and she quickly improved.

In addition, these professionals can provide crucial links to other VWOs. For example, Sharon explains, a colleague from the Family Service Centre could provide case management support in sourcing for childcare, financial aid and other resources to alleviate the family's financial difficulty,



Ms Balqis providing counselling to her client

while MindCare could provide the emotional and psychological support to the caregivers and breadwinners.

Despite such a fulfilling vocation, both Balqis and Sharon note that it can be difficult in their field of work. Balqis says she struggles to balance her job as a counsellor with her duties to her children and home. Sharon adds, "The work we do can be draining physically and emotionally. Thinking that we are heroes or lifesavers will result in burnout." To prevent this, she notes that it is crucial to maintain collaboration with her team and partners, and good interpersonal skills with clients.

However, both of them are driven by what ultimately matters – their clients' reintegration into the community.

Sharon says, **"I believe in standing in the gap and providing support and interventions to mental health clients in need."**

"What drives me is the happiness I feel when I see that my efforts as a counsellor produce results – when I see the smile on my client's face," says Balqis.

COMIT Service Providers

- AMKFSC Community Services
- Clarity Singapore Limited,
- Club HEAL
- O'Joy Care Services
- Singapore Association for Mental Health

Key services by COMIT:

- Caregiver support and education
- Pre-crisis assessment, home-based assessments and interventions
- Developing intervention care plans and care coordination
- Counselling and other psychotherapy
- Care assessment of clients' and caregivers' needs

To find out more, visit www.silverpages.sg

Upcoming EVENTS

Mental Health First Aid - Older Persons at AIC Learning Institute on the 29th & 30th of March, 9am to 6pm and 11th & 12th of May

\$22.90 for S'poreans / SPRs
\$92.24 for non-S'poreans / non-SPRs
\$161.57 for other Orgs

Singapore Mental Health Conference at Max Atria, Singapore Expo on the 27th & 28th of May
For more information, please visit www.smhc.com.sg

Wellness Programme: Tai Chi for Health at AIC Learning Institute 20 & 21 of June

\$55.07 for S'poreans / SPRs
\$269.18 for non-S'poreans
\$483.28 for other Orgs

SHARING ON PAST EVENTS

Care in the Community in Kembangan-Chai Chee

In Kembangan-Chai Chee, a new programme titled "Care in Community" (CiC) will be provided by the Filos Community Services. CiC funded by Toteboard Community Healthcare Fund, comprises social wellness programmes, befriending services for the social care of vulnerable elderly as well as to monitor their chronic disease and mental health conditions, and home care to assist the physically weak with daily living activities in Kembangan-Chai Chee.

Filos' new centre was officially opened by Minister Tan Chuan-Jin, Minister for Social and Family Development and Adviser to Kampong-Chai Chee Grassroots Organisations on 23 Jan 2016.



LEARNING & SHARING

Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia (BPSD) Talk

On the 20th of January, Dr Joshua Kua, a geriatric psychiatrist, conducted a talk on the behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD). Dr. Kua was previously Chief of the Department of Geriatric Psychiatry at the Institute of Mental Health. He currently runs a clinic in Raffles Hospital and is also a visiting consultant and member of the Medical Advisory Board for Agency for Integrated Care (AIC).

Be a Mindful Caregiver

"This programme (Mindful Caregiver Programme) is unique as it focuses on both the caregiver and the care recipient. With mindfulness at its core, the programme seeks to empower both caregivers and care recipients to reduce their own level of stress and to be calmer when handling challenging situations and issues," said Dr Amy Khor, Senior Minister of State for Health, at the launch on 13 Feb 2016.

As Singapore's population ages, more and more people will find themselves in caregiver roles for their parents and/or spouses. Many caregivers focus so much on trying to meet their care recipient's needs that they forget to care for themselves. This programme also encourages the caregiver and recipient to be kinder to each other in speech and actions, and more accepting of each other, which is key to a harmonious relationship. This is achieved through workshops, interest groups and a support network. Within each interest or self-help group, like-minded members come together to form an informal network to support one another.



These symptoms are common and problematic in clinical practice and represent a significant part of the day-to-day workload of the care staff in the senior care centre. Improving one's recognition and management of BPSD can have a positive impact on the quality of life of one's patients and carers. Dr. Kua discussed real cases from senior care centres and presented techniques on how to manage clients with BPSD. Dr Kua also incorporated psychological approaches in his management!

Visit AIC Learning Institute at www.aic-learn.sg to find out the next session.

New CMH Partners on board!

Fei Yue Community Services - CREST

Fei Yue Community Services is a non-profit voluntary welfare organization established in 1996, with a mission to effect life transformation through the provision of quality social services. Fei Yue is committed to serving and reaching out to the needy in Singapore through their diverse services and programmes. They believe in promoting social development among all ages, seek to inculcate the spirit of volunteerism in the community, and advocate strong family ties in the society. Their services and programmes, which are varied and cater to the needs of different client populations, include counselling, adoption, family life education, early intervention programmes for infants and children, and services for youths, elderly, inmates and their families.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Fei Yue Community Services
Blk 107 Commonwealth Crescent
#01-230
Singapore 140107
Tel: 647 1 2022

NTUC Health (Bukit Merah) - CREST

NTUC Health Co-operative Limited was set up to provide quality and affordable eldercare services for seniors in the community. The NTUC Health at Bukit Merah has recently partnered with AIC. They provide outreach to residents with mental health information, do service linkages for residents with mental health issues, provide basic emotional support for clients and caregivers, follow up on the clients' care plans and engage community partners to increase their awareness of mental health resources.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

NTUC Health Cluster Support
Blk 121 Bukit Merah View
#01-96
Singapore 151121
Tel: 8612 8298/ 8612 8302

DO YOU KNOW...



There is no 'one size fits all' cure for clients; each individual client comes with a different set of presenting issues. We have to consider the needs and customize our approaches accordingly.



Photo Credit: RentInSingapore Blog

Getting involved with your community makes you more mentally resilient

Being part of social groups, from chess clubs to sports teams, increases psychological strength to tolerate and overcome physical challenges. Researchers suggest it gives us a sense of belonging and purpose. Family and friends help, too, of course.

You can attain a certificate in counselling in 6 months

Many colleges and institutes across our island are offering the option to get certification in counselling! Singapore Institute of Management and College of Allied Educators are offering diploma and degree certifications in counselling. This would be a good opportunity for those aspiring to widen their job scopes.

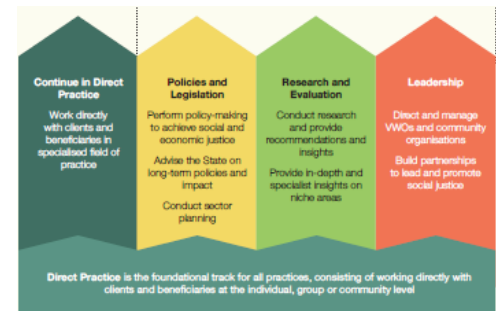
National Social Work Competency Framework



The national social work competency framework is a joint initiative between the Ministry of Social and Family Development and the Ministry of Health.

The framework was delineated to set out knowledge, skills and behavioral traits mandatory for social workers. This framework lays out exactly the different ranks of job descriptions and intricacy associated with the jobs. This would serve as a strategic guideline for the development of the social-work sector. This framework also serves as a reference for academic institutions to ensure that social workers graduate with the necessary knowledge, skills and prepare the graduates well enough for them to effectively practice the theories taught.

The framework comprises of a few tracks. They: Practice tracks for social workers, Key responsibility areas, Knowledge and skill competencies and Behavioral competencies.



The National Social Worker Competency Framework is essentially a crucial guide to any aspiring social worker or one who is aiming for career progression within the social work sector.

Have you read *mosAIC*?

Click [HERE](#) to read AIC's newsletter for the Community Care Sector and find out about initiatives that may benefit your organisation.

Free for Health and Social Care staff!

Visit aic.sg/mosaic for more information and to subscribe.

