

MEDIA FACTSHEET

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SYiNC: A PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE-IMH PROGRAMME TO SUPPORT YOUTHS WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

1. Launched today by President Halimah Yacob, the **Supporting Youth in Community (SYiNC)** programme is a pilot project by the President's Challenge and the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) to boost community-based support for youths with mental health conditions.
2. SYiNC will see IMH training and supporting Social Service Agencies (SSAs) to provide intervention and psych-social support to youths who are receiving outpatient care at IMH, had been seen at the IMH Emergency Service, or recently discharged from an inpatient stay in IMH, or referred by the IMH REACH¹ team.
3. Four SSAs have come on board the pilot with IMH. They are:
 - Club HEAL (Youth Mental Health @ Club HEAL)
 - Singapore Association for Mental Health (Youth X-Miles)
 - Singapore Children's Society (Oasis for Minds Services)
 - TOUCH Community Services (Youth-Clusion)

Pilot Schedule

4. The pilot will be carried out in phases, starting with SSAs recruiting the required allied health professionals (e.g. psychologist, social worker, counsellor or case worker), followed by training for these staff, and referral of cases to the SSAs.
5. Funding from the President's Challenge will go towards supporting the SSAs' training and resource needs for this initiative.
6. Training will take place from April to December 2022 and IMH will start referring cases to the SSAs from January 2023.

Training Curriculum

7. The curriculum is developed by a multi-disciplinary team from the Department of Developmental Psychiatry and the Community Health Assessment Team (CHAT).
8. It comprises two levels. The first level covers basics such as interview and assessment skills, assessment tools, and an understanding of the common mental health conditions (e.g. depressive and anxiety disorders, psychotic disorders, substance and behavioural addictions, etc.) and issues (e.g. bullying, cyberbullying, self-harm) that youths may face. Staff who had received similar training under other IMH and CHAT initiatives may be exempted.
9. The second level covers case formulation and an introduction to evidence-based interventions, such as behavioural and family therapy, anger management strategies, safety planning, etc.

¹ Response, Early Intervention and Assessment in Community mental Health

10. “The training curriculum is developed specifically with the psychological needs of youths in mind and it will build on the foundation that the SSA staff already have by enhancing their repertoire to deliver youth-centric interventions,” says Ms Lee Yi Ping, Principal Case Manager & Programme Lead, Community Health Assessment Team (CHAT).
11. “Because the needs of our youths are constantly evolving, our curriculum will likewise have to adapt so that care delivery remains relevant. It means taking an iterative approach where we will continually review and co-curate with the SSAs to address any training gaps or emerging needs that may be identified as the pilot progresses,” she adds.

Case Referral and Support

12. Youths to be referred to these SSAs will be in the age group of 13-19 years and assessed to be in a stable condition and can be managed by the SSA partner. They could be coping with conditions or issues such as stress-related disorders, depression, anxiety, addictions, self-harm behaviour, emotional dysregulation. However, only persons with mild to moderate mental health symptoms and who can benefit from secondary interventions and psychosocial support provided by the SSA partners will be referred.
13. “We will assess the young person to ensure that they are suitable to be cared for by the SSA partners before making the referral. Our collaboration does not stop at connecting the young person to the SSA partner; in fact, we will hold weekly case conferences with our partner for up to one year to ensure a smooth transition in care delivery,” says Dr Ong Say How, Senior Consultant and Chief, Department of Developmental Psychiatry, IMH.
14. “We will also dedicate a case manager as a single point of contact for each SSAs to facilitate any communication or clinical discussion that may be required during the care transition period. And if at any one time the young person shows a deterioration in their condition or require urgent intervention, the SSAs will always be able to refer them back to IMH for treatment,” he adds.

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About the Institute of Mental Health

The Institute of Mental Health (IMH), a member of the National Healthcare Group, is the only tertiary psychiatric care institution in Singapore. Located on the sprawling 23-hectare campus of Buangkok Green Medical Park in the north-eastern part of Singapore, IMH offers a multidisciplinary and comprehensive range of psychiatric, rehabilitative and therapy services in hospital-based and community-based settings. The 2,000-bedded hospital aims to meet the needs of three groups of patients – children and adolescents (aged below 19 years), adults and the elderly. Besides providing clinical services, IMH also leads in mental health research and training the next generation of mental health professionals in Singapore. For more information, please visit www.imh.com.sg or www.facebook.com/imh.singapore.