



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Art & Science of Wellbeing and Happiness

[Singapore Mental Health Conference](#)

8 – 9 September 2017, MAX Atria, Singapore Expo

1. Themed ‘The Art & Science of Wellbeing and Happiness’, the Singapore Mental Health Conference (SMHC) 2017 will feature speakers who will share their expertise on aspects of mental well-being across one’s lifespan, and examine the factors that contribute to happiness. The topics will also touch on how best to deliver mental healthcare and support across different settings.
2. This year’s event is jointly organised by the Institute of Mental Health (IMH), Health Promotion Board (HPB), Agency for Integrated Care (AIC), and National Council of Social Service (NCSS).
3. The conference, held at MAX Atria @ Singapore Expo, will open on 8 September with Mr Amrin Amin, Parliamentary Secretary (Home Affairs and Health) as the Guest of Honour. The conference has attracted over 500 professionals from the healthcare, social service, and Community Care sectors, as well as community-based workers and consumers of mental health services.
4. The two-day SMHC, with an opening keynote presentation, five plenary sessions, six tracks and 12 breakout sessions continues as a national platform for learning and networking in mental health. The SMHC was initiated by IMH in 2013.
5. In the opening keynote, Dr Joe Loizzo, Founder and Director of Nalanda Institute for Contemplative Science, New York, USA will highlight three breakthroughs in the understanding of the neural basis of happiness – namely, how the three simple practices of mindfulness, compassion training, and breath-work can flip the negativity bias that blocks wellbeing, and help rewire brains to support the traits of sustainable happiness. He will also elaborate on the revolution in mental health brought about by the confluence of cutting-edge science with contemplative practice.
6. Associate Professor Chua Hong Choon, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), IMH and Co-Chairperson, SMHC 2017 Advisory Committee said, “This year, we turn our focus from illness management to preventive efforts, which are as important because mental health is not just the absence of mental illness. Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, and can contribute to his or her community. This definition means that it is possible for persons with mental illness to have optimal mental health and be

involved in giving back to society, especially where there is support from other individuals, employers and the community in their recovery journey.”

7. Mr Gary Khoo, Director, Preventive Health Programmes Division, HPB and Co-Chairperson, SMHC 2017 Advisory Committee added, “Positive mental wellbeing is a key factor that contributes to an individual’s quality of life and is just as important as eating right and keeping physically active. To raise awareness of the importance of good mental health, the Health Promotion Board has introduced initiatives in the community, schools and at workplaces. These aim to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills to effectively manage the stress and challenges they may face in their daily lives.”

Highlights of SMHC 2017

8. SMHC 2017 was designed with mental healthcare professionals, community workers, and caregivers in mind. Below are some of the conference highlights.

Mindfulness at the Workplace: Does it Work...and How to Make it Work! (Plenary 2)

9. A large amount of research has found that being more mindful and training in mindfulness supports wellbeing and functioning. The role of mindfulness in the workplace for employees, leaders, and organisations will be discussed, backed by recent research findings, including those from studies conducted in Singapore. Practical strategies for individuals to incorporate mindfulness into their work life, and organisations to create more mindful workplaces will also be offered.

Ageing Well: Growing Old With Attitude! (Plenary 4)

10. Preliminary data from a national survey of a representative sample of older adults in Singapore will be presented, which assess their quality of life and attitudes towards ageing. This plenary will explore the attitudes associated with ageing well, and describe studies that used a survey tool to identify vulnerable older adults and develop an intervention targeted at negative attitudes towards ageing.

Wellbeing and the Elderly (Track 1)

11. This track looks at person-centric innovative initiatives developed to improve the resilience of seniors and to support them in ageing with a positive attitude. Mindfulness, art therapy and holistic intergenerational support are just some of the methods designed to engage seniors and keep them well. Seniors with dementia are also catered to, through integrated home and community-based services to help them age in place at home.

Workplace Emotional/Mental Health (Track 2)

12. A mentally healthy workplace benefits both employers and employees. Yet, such a workplace can only be achieved through an integrated approach, wherein employees and employers work together to promote an inclusive culture where open conversations on mental health and wellbeing can take place.

This track aims to reframe our thinking on integration of persons with mental health issues through an eco-system approach, highlighting efforts from national agencies, community partners, inclusive employers and individuals themselves. Through the sharing, participants will better understand the

value that employees with mental health conditions can bring in supporting mental well-being in the workplace.

Open your Minds: Let's Talk! (Track 4)

13. Teams from the National University of Singapore and Singapore Management University will go head to head in the first SMHC Debate Challenge, which promises to be an engaging and interactive session on the effects of social media on mental health.

With the growing momentum gained by the peer support movement in Singapore in recent years, the "Voices of Experience" (VoE) Mini-Symposium on the Peer Support Movement sets out to review the evolution of the movement and the achievements so far, with personal stories that illustrate the life changes in the Peer Support Specialists, as well as those they have helped. Learning points, as well as future directions will also be discussed.

Caregivers and Primary Care Track (Track 5)

14. Caregiving can be a rewarding journey. This track aims to highlight caregivers' positive experiences in the process of caring for persons with mental health issues. The speakers will also shed light on how caregivers can harness their own strengths and coping skills (self-care) as they support the rehabilitation or recovery of their loved ones.

Primary care plays a pivotal role in making mental health care more accessible to the community. There has been progressive development of the mental health sector within the primary care landscape over the past 10 years where more General Practitioners (GPs) have been trained to diagnose and care for people with mental health conditions. These GPs are complemented by allied health-led community intervention teams. Speakers for this track will share about their involvement in mental health in the primary care setting, and also cast a vision of the future primary care arena.

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About the Institute of Mental Health, Singapore

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 25-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 2010-bedded hospital aims to meet the needs of three groups of patients – children and adolescents (age 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.

About the Health Promotion Board

The Health Promotion Board was established as a statutory board under the Ministry of Health, Singapore, in 2001 with the vision of building “A Nation of Healthy People”. The Health Promotion Board aims to empower the people of Singapore to attain optimal health, increase the quality and years of healthy life and prevent illness, disability and premature death. As the key agency overseeing national health promotion and disease prevention programmes, HPB spearheads health education, promotion and prevention programmes as well as creates a health-supportive environment in Singapore. It develops and organises relevant health promotion and disease prevention programmes, reaching out to the healthy, the at-risk and the unhealthy at all stages of life – children, youths, adults and older Singapore residents. Its health promotion programmes include nutrition, mental health, physical activity, smoking

control and communicable disease education. HPB also promotes healthy ageing, integrated health screening, and chronic disease education and management.

More information can be found at www.hpb.gov.sg.

About the Agency for Integrated Care

The Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) seeks to create a vibrant Care Community enabling people to live well and age gracefully. AIC coordinates and facilitates efforts in care integration to achieve the best care outcomes for our clients. We do this by empowering them with health and social care information and arranging for their care when they are discharged from hospitals. We enable stakeholders to raise the quality of care, and also enhance collaboration by working with health and social care providers to increase services to support the ageing population. Our work in the community brings care services and information closer to those in need. For more information, please visit www.aic.sg.

About National Council of Social Service (NCSS)

NCSS is the umbrella body for over 450-member social service organisations in Singapore. Its mission is to provide leadership and direction in enhancing the capabilities and capacity of our members, advocating for social service needs and strengthening strategic partnerships, for an effective social service ecosystem. Community Chest and Social Service Institute (SSI) are part of NCSS. For more information, please visit: www.ncss.gov.sg.

Chinese Translations**Annex 1**

Institute of Mental Health	心理卫生学院
Health Promotion Board	保健促进局
Agency for Integrated Care	护联中心
National Council of Social Service	国家福利理事会
Associate Professor Chua Hong Choon Chief Executive Officer Institute of Mental Health	蔡奉俊副教授 院长 心理卫生学院
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