



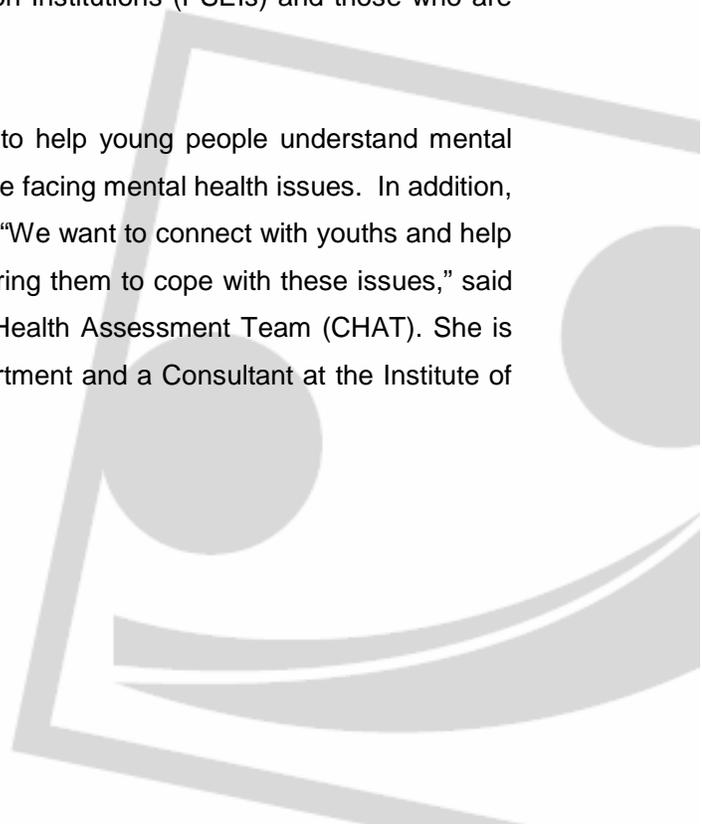
MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

25 June 2010

Launch of One-stop Resource Centre for Youth Mental Health

1. A one-stop centre providing mental health resources, assessment and professional help for adolescents and young adults aged 16 to 30 will be opened on the trendy streets of Orchard Road. Known as the CHAT Hub, it is the first of its kind in Singapore and will open its doors on 26 June at Level 5, *SCAPE.
2. An interactive website, **www.youthinmind.sg**, will also provide information on youth mental health, avenues for help, news articles, personal stories, blogs, videos, interactive forums with online polls, and interactive games. There is also a CHAT page on Facebook, **<http://www.facebook.com/chatfans>** to engage with the young.
3. All these are initiatives by the Community Health Assessment Team (CHAT). CHAT was started in April 2009, as part of the National Mental Health Blueprint, to address gaps in youth mental health services. Its key objectives are to provide early detection and intervention for youths, especially those who are from Post-Secondary Education Institutions (PSEIs) and those who are out-of-school.
4. CHAT aims to provide youth-friendly resources to help young people understand mental health and how to recognise if they or their friends may be facing mental health issues. In addition, CHAT also provides assessments for youths in distress. "We want to connect with youths and help them to identify the challenges they face while empowering them to cope with these issues," said Dr Swapna Verma, Project Director of the Community Health Assessment Team (CHAT). She is also the Chief of the Early Psychosis Intervention Department and a Consultant at the Institute of Mental Health.





5. CHAT's key strategy is to reach out to these youths outside a traditional clinical setting. The CHAT Hub aims to strengthen the programme's outreach efforts by being sited in an area frequented by youths.

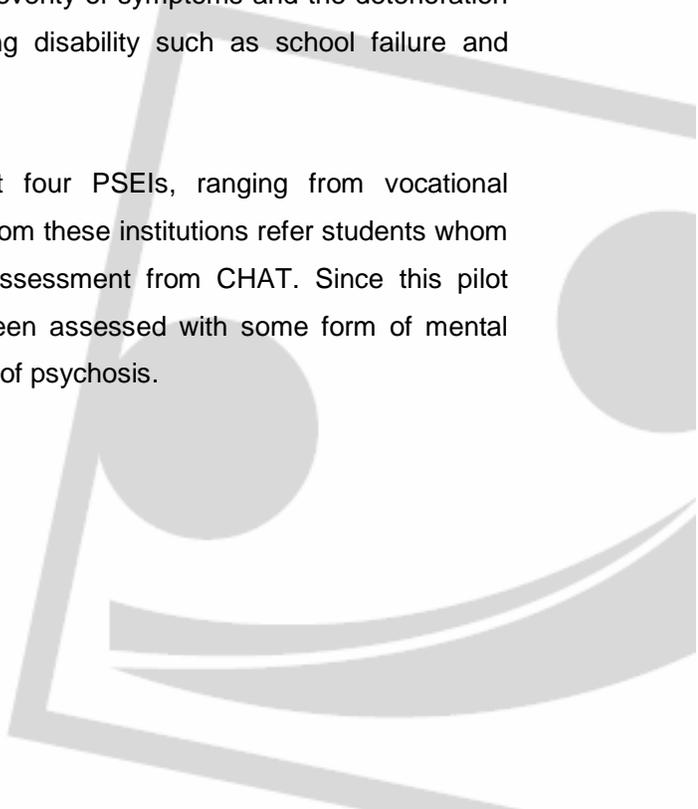
6. "The location of CHAT Hub is in the heart of Orchard Road where youths hang out. Having a physical hub allows a consolidation of mental health resources and assessment services in a central, accessible and non-stigmatising location," said Dr Swapna. "We hope that by being in a mainstream location usually associated with leisure and fun activities, youths will be more forthcoming in seeking out mental health information and services."

7. CHAT also provides training to school counsellors and students leaders to help in early identification of mental health problems in youth. These programmes provide education on mental health issues, suicide prevention, conflict resolution, and screening for early signs of emotional and behavioral problems.

8. "Many youths with mental health issues have a common belief that their problems will be resolved without assistance. Locally, there has been a lack of mental health services specifically for youths, hence the lack of awareness about where and how to seek help. Youths are also unlikely to independently do so. Accessibility of resources and services is therefore a key factor and that's how CHAT comes into play," said CHAT youth support worker, Ms Lee Yi Ping.

9. "CHAT seeks to intervene and detect potential issues in the lives of distressed youths in a non-stigmatising and youth-friendly manner before the severity of symptoms and the deterioration in functioning become entrenched, leading to enduring disability such as school failure and impaired employment," she said.

10. CHAT currently offers assessment service at four PSEIs, ranging from vocational institutions, polytechnics and universities. Counsellors from these institutions refer students whom they feel may benefit from having a mental health assessment from CHAT. Since this pilot assessment started in May 2009, 52 students have been assessed with some form of mental health conditions. One third was experiencing symptoms of psychosis.





11. “Many mental disorders have their beginnings in childhood or adolescence. Youth itself is a complex developmental phase during an individual’s psychological and social growth. It is also the peak period for the onset of major mental health problems and such problems are often associated with high levels of disability,” explained Dr Swapna.

12. She added: “Particularly for youths with an at-risk mental state, they have some factors that put them at ultra-high risk for the development of psychosis or other mental disorders. By doing a mental health assessment, we can minimise the disability of a possible mental illness, or even prevent or delay the onset of mental illness through rapid detection and, if necessary, timely commencement of treatment.

13. Following the official launch of the hub, CHAT hopes to open its services up to more youths and youth partners, such as counsellors from private schools as well as voluntary welfare organisations.

14. A launch event themed ‘*A Knotty Affair*’, will be held at the Playground of *SCAPE Building on 26 June from 2 to 7pm. Youths are invited to this free event, to enjoy performances by local bands, shop at a flea market, and take part in interactive activities with exclusive souvenirs and prizes. More details on the event is attached.

For media queries and interviews, please contact:

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Programme for C.H.A.T Hub Launch

*SCAPE Building | 26th June 2010

Time	Programme Description
1400	Welcome by Emcee to C.H.A.T Launch
1410hrs	Performance item 1 – Bloco Singapura
1500hrs	Performance item 2 – Huron Street Magic performance
1600hrs	Performance item 3 – Jazz and Pop music by Yours Truly
1700hrs	Performance item 4 – Huron Street Magic performance
1800hrs	Top 3 finalists “shout-out” contest on stage
1810hrs	Performance item 5 – Be treated to Nick Chim and Band
1830hrs	Crazy Half Hour sale

