

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**LAUNCH OF BIZLINK CAFÉ: VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR PATIENTS RECOVERING FROM
MENTAL ILLNESS**

1. In conjunction with the 8th Occupational Therapists' Day 2013 celebrations in the Institute of Mental Health (IMH), BizLink Café, a self-service food and beverage (F&B) kiosk, was officially launched today by Madam Halimah Yacob, Member of Parliament for Jurong GRC and Minister of State, Ministry of Social and Family Development.
2. The Café is operated in collaboration with BizLink Centre Singapore Limited, a non-profit organisation that provides employment services to the disadvantaged. BizLink will partner IMH to provide training in F&B for patients recovering from mental illness, under the hospital's vocational training programme.
3. This new Café and its backend kitchen located at IMH will serve as a training ground for patients recovering from mental illness. Selected trainees will first undergo a maximum of one month's training in kitchen skills and customer service by occupational therapy staff before they are placed to be trained at either BizLink Café or its kitchen. Trainees in the Café will get to hone their customer service as well as simple food preparation skills, whereas those in the kitchen will sharpen their backend kitchen skills.
4. Currently, four trainees have started their training in BizLink Café. Dr Tan Bhing Leet, Head of the Occupational Therapy Department, IMH revealed, "We target an enrolment of 20 trainees into the training programme for the Café per year, and 15 trainees into the training programme for the kitchen per year."

5. The placement will last between three to six months, during which the trainee receives a small training allowance for his/her work. During the course of training, they will also receive various forms of intervention from occupational therapists, in areas like vocational counselling, illness management, cognitive remediation, social skills training, etc. This helps patients to better manage their symptoms, and also improves their well-being.
6. The occupational therapist in charge of F & B vocational training will also conduct a formal assessment on the trainee each month, and determine when the trainee is ready to move on to Job Club, a one-stop IMH service that helps persons with mental illness select, secure and keep a job on the open market. This completes the model of vocational rehabilitation in IMH.
7. Besides training opportunities in F&B, the IMH vocational training programme also offers training in retail, cleaning services, and administrative work. In FY11, there were 124 enrolments in all the vocational training programmes. Forty-three of these patients obtained job placement upon completion of their training.
8. Associate Professor Chua Hong Choon, Chief Executive Officer of IMH, commented, "IMH is very pleased to partner with BizLink Centre in this worthwhile endeavour. Vocational training aims to help patients change from being a passive recipient of healthcare services to an active contributing member of the society; and such changes are best enabled through collaborations with external organisations which provide real-life environments in which patients can be socialised to help them realise their potential."
9. Mr Alvin Lim, Chief Executive Officer of Bizlink Centre, commented, "Apart from Bizlink's stable of social enterprises which includes Bizlink's Cards & Gifts and more recently Bizlink's Floral & Hamper, Bizlink is pleased to partner IMH to provide an actual training environment for recovering patients and people with disabilities to meet the tight labour crunch faced by the F&B industry. We urge F&B operators and businesses in the hospitality sector to consider availing employment opportunities to our group of beneficiaries."

10. Don Tan (not his real name), a 21-year old IMH outpatient, sought help at IMH for depression in April 2012. After undergoing rehabilitative therapy, his occupational therapist recommended that he join the vocational training programme in F & B, given his interest in cooking. Sharing his experience and his aspirations, he said, “When I first started training, I was nervous but after a few sessions, I learned how to cope in stressful situations. I have become more confident and hope to enroll in culinary school.”
11. BizLink Café is located at the IMH main lobby and operates on Mondays to Fridays from 7am to 4pm, and on Saturdays from 7am to 1pm.

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About the Institute of Mental Health, Singapore

The Institute of Mental Health (IMH) 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 counseling services. 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 clinical services, IMH also coordinates and oversees training of clinicians, nurses and allied health professionals in psychiatry and conducts research related to mental health. Over the years, IMH has established a significant reputation for quality psychiatry research. For more information, visit: www.imh.com.sg.

APPENDIX: ENGLISH-CHINESE GLOSSARY

Institute of Mental Health	心理卫生学院
Bizlink Centre Singapore Ltd, a Non-Profit Charity Organisation	商联中心慈善机构
Occupational Therapy Department	职能治疗部
Occupational Therapist	职能治疗师
A/Prof Chua Hong Choon, Chief Executive Officer, IMH	蔡奉俊副教授 院长, 心理卫生学院
Mr Alvin Lim, Chief Executive Officer, BizLink Centre Limited	林春智先生 行政总裁, 商联中心慈善机构
Ms Tan Bhing Leet Head, Department of Occupational Therapy, IMH	陈敏俐 职能治疗部主任