



Loving Hearts, Beautiful Minds

MEDIA RELEASE

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MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS

1. IMH will roll out the REACH (Response, Early Intervention and Assessment in Community Mental Health) programme at four Special Education Schools from 10 October 2011, with plans to bring the programme to all 20 Special Education Schools by 2013.
2. REACH aims to provide community mental health service to Special Education Schools to improve the mental health of the students in these schools. Similar to the programme provided to mainstream schools, REACH will offer advice on mental health issues to the designated school personnel through the REACH helpline. It will also conduct assessments of referred students at schools and offer early mental health intervention to those who need it.
3. The first four Special Education Schools to benefit from REACH are MINDS Lee Kong Chian Gardens School, Delta Senior School, Spastic Children's Association School, and Canossian School.
4. REACH will train staff of the Special Education Schools, such as the psychologist, social worker or counsellor, to detect and manage mental health disorders in their students. These staff will also act as liaison persons between the schools and REACH.
5. REACH was started in 2007 as a programme under the National Mental Health Blueprint, serving the mental health needs of children and adolescents in primary and secondary schools and junior colleges. The programme has since been fully rolled out in the mainstream schools of the north, south and east school zones by the

Institute of Mental Health (IMH) and in the west school zone by the National University Hospital.

6. The REACH teams work in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, family doctors, voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs), and the National Council of Social Service to provide early identification, support and intervention for children and adolescents with emotional and behavioural difficulties and related mental health problems. The teams provide training, support and helpline assistance to school counselors to identify and support these students aged 19 years and below. They work with general practitioners in the community on the diagnoses and management of emotional and behavioural difficulties as well as related mental health problems. The teams also collaborate with the VWOs and family service centres to provide early detection and intervention of mental health problems in their clients who are out-of-school youths.

7. By August 2011, all 362 mainstream schools are on board the REACH programme. Since REACH started in 2007, 12,714 calls were made to the REACH helpline by school counsellors to seek advice on managing their cases. Of the 1,107 cases referred by the schools to REACH for assessment, 485 cases were subsequently seen by doctors at IMH and NUH. The majority of cases seen were for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and emotional disorders such as anxiety disorders and depression. These students were able to receive early intervention, leading to more effective support. To-date, 29 general practitioners have also been recruited to partner REACH to provide care for children with mental health issues in the community, making it more convenient and faster for students to receive help for their conditions.

8. Said Mr Ong Lue Ping, Principal Clinical Psychologist and Team Leader of REACH South, "The training for Special Education Schools is different from mainstream schools as certain modules are customised to meet the special needs of the student population. These students will require more in-depth mental health assessment as some of the symptoms can be confused with the behaviour caused by their particular conditions. +

9. Besides the support provided to the allied health professionals, Special Education Schools will also benefit from a mental health network for their students in the community as REACH will be facilitating links between schools, social and community agencies, general practitioners and mental health service providers. The schools will be able to consult one another, and with other agencies such as family service centres, through case conferences.

 10. Said Ms Jacqueline Goh, Psychologist, MINDS Lee Kong Chian Gardens School:
%Working together with REACH to provide a concerted and integrated support system to promote and enhance the social and emotional well being of our students with special needs, is a long-awaited collaborative project for our school.+

 11. A/Prof Daniel Fung, Programme Director, REACH, commented, %With REACH successfully implemented in all mainstream schools, it is a natural progression to reach out to the Special Education Schools. REACH will leverage on its five years of experience working with mainstream schools to provide early intervention, support and training to Special Education Schools to improve the mental health of special needs students.+
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ANNEX 1: ENGLISH-CHINESE GLOSSARY

Institute of Mental Health (IMH)

心理卫生学院

REACH
治疗

社区心理健康反应, 初期
与评估计划

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About the Institute of Mental Health

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 1976-bedded hospital aims to meet the needs of three groups of patients . children and adolescents (age below 19 years), adults and the elderly. IMH also runs mental health education programmes for the general public. These programmes aim to promote mental wellness and raise awareness of the importance and benefits of prevention, early detection and treatment of mental disorders.

For more information, please visit www.imh.com.sg