FOCUS: World Mental Health Day – Reasons to Celebrate
World Mental Health Day – Reasons to Celebrate

In Singapore, are there truly valid reasons to celebrate? What are the existing challenges in our quest to achieve mental health for all? IMH Link’s Fiona Soh (FS) interviews IMH psychiatrists Dr Chua Hong Choon (CHC) – Chief, Department of General Psychiatry, IMH and Dr Lee Cheng (LC) – Chief, Department of Community Psychiatry, IMH. Two recovering patients Harris Ng (HN) and P Yeo (PY) also offer their valuable opinions in this feature.

In the old Woodbridge Hospital, when I was first admitted in my 30s as a patient requiring healing, I felt out of place. I was put behind barbwires and thick, high concrete walls with strong iron gates. In the present setup of IMH, I have been invited to speak at its Asia Pacific Psychiatric Rehabilitation Conference (APPRC) – talk about the difference over these 80 years!

Harris Ng, a recovering patient

Psychiatrists and patients talk about what this day means to them – the challenges and the milestones.

World Mental Health Day was observed for the first time in 1992. The day is officially commemorated every year on 10 October. The Institute of Mental Health (IMH) will join non-governmental mental health organisations, professional associations, governmental agencies, schools, and mental health service agencies in more than 100 countries to commemorate the 16th annual World Mental Health Day campaign in an effort to increase the public’s understanding of mental illnesses, promote positive emotional wellness and good mental health strategies, as well as encourage the reduction of stigma and discrimination against people living with mental illness.

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Dr Lee Cheng, Chief, Department of Community Psychiatry

FS: What does World Mental Health Day (WMHD) mean to you?

CHC: IMH has been celebrating WMHD for over 10 years but this year is special because this time around, there is a big co-ordinated nation-wide strategy in place – the National Mental Health Blueprint. At IMH, we firmly believe in focusing on the positive theme of prevention and building resilience through positive relationships, and this is in keeping with the efforts of the World Health Organisation to address not just mental illnesses but also proactive mental wellness strategies.

LC: WMHD is an opportunity to bring all parties who are involved in promoting, supporting and providing mental health services together. In this day, all parties reaffirm that we have a shared vision of what we are trying to achieve for persons with mental illness.

Compared to other countries, Singapore is really progressing in mental health care. Because we are able to address the wellness aspects, we have reached a level of maturity.

Dr Chua Hong Choon, Chief, Department of General Psychiatry
**FS:** What are some of the milestones that you are celebrating?

**CHC:** Compared to other countries, Singapore is really progressing well in mental healthcare. Because we are also able to address the wellness aspects, our mental healthcare system has reached a level of maturity. Other countries in the developing world have the capacity to deal with issues related to severe mental illness at the national level. Here in Singapore, we are fortunate enough to have resources channelled to mental health strategies, and not just strategies to deal with illnesses.

Also, since the 1950s to date, there have been pharmacological breakthroughs with the discovery of medications that are non-toxic, non-addictive and effective with reduced side effects.

**HN:** I agree. Mental healthcare in Singapore has really come a long way in Singapore. You need only look at the new sprawling, chalet-like campus of IMH. There’s been a transformation from the custodial concept. In the old Woodbridge Hospital, when I was first admitted in my 30s as a patient requiring healing, I felt out of place. I was put behind barbwires and thick, high concrete walls with strong iron gates. In the present setup of IMH, I have been invited to speak at its Asia Pacific Psychiatric Rehabilitation Conference (APPReC) – talk about the difference over these 80 years!

**LC:** I am pleased to see that more agencies and community groups have declared an interest in helping persons with mental illness. Besides providing direct patient services, agencies have also embarked on destigmatisation programmes and are advocating for changes in the current delivery of mental health services. In addition, more emphasis has been placed on community-based psychosocial rehabilitation services to promote the patient’s independence and integration.

**PY:** I’m stable enough to go to the Geylang Behavioural Medicine Clinic for follow-up treatment now. I really like the idea of being able to visit a nearby satellite clinic to collect my medication. It’s good to be put on such a programme in a community-based setting.

**FS:** What remains a challenge?

**CHC:** Stigma and the understanding of mental illnesses – talking about mental illness is still a big challenge. We still face some difficulty getting partners to work with us, but now at least there is a much greater acceptance of the need for mental wellness and health promotion.

**PY:** To me nothing is too big a challenge except perhaps my need to improve my typing speed. I do feel that for stabilised patients recovering from mental illness, it may be difficult to find a suitable and well-paying job, in relation to our qualifications and schedule.

**HN:** I have overcome the stigma and I believe there is definitely a growing acceptance of the need to embrace treatment and education. Having chronic schizophrenia is a great challenge, but it has taught me to learn and have insights into the core values in life. These are mainly love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, hope, humility and perseverance.

**FS:** What keeps you going as you recover?

**PY:** The need to do well in my new job so that I will have the resources to fulfill my dreams and ambitions - mainly to have enough money to be able to start my real estate career on a good footing.

**FS:** How do you encourage your patients on their journey to recovery?

**CHC:** My patients actually encourage me by sharing their success stories. There was a case of my patient suffering from serious depression. There were 10 episodes of relapse and he was near suicidal. He had no appetite, felt overwhelmed by guilt and had no interest in life. But with our help he accepted treatment, took his medication and pulled through. His story is one of inspiration and hope.

**LC:** The emphasis should be that recovery is possible despite the presence of the psychiatric symptoms. Someone told me this before – even in the word SCHIZOPHRENIA, the word HOPE is embedded in it!

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*Greenery abounds in Buangkok Green Medical Park, where IMH is located*

*Beyond the iron gates – IMH now boasts a garden resort-like feel*
世界精神卫生日 – 值得庆祝的原因

心理医生及精神病患者谈到世界精神卫生日对他们的意义 – 既是挑战，又是转折点。

全球首次世界精神卫生日是在1992年。每年的10月10日都被正式地宣布为世界精神卫生日。新加坡心理卫生学院将同全球100多个国家的非政府心理卫生组织、专业协会、政府机构、学校及心理卫生服务机构等一起庆祝第16个世界精神卫生日。借此，以增强公众对精神疾病的认知，促进心理健康以及保持心理健康的有效方式，同时鼓励人们减少对精神病患者的偏见和歧视。

在新加坡，我们是否真的有理由来庆祝这个日子呢？因为在每一个寻求心理健康过程中，我们医生目前所面对的挑战是什么？本刊的苏尤玲（FS）就针对这些问题采访了本院的心理医生：蔡泰俊医生（普通精神科主任）（CHC）和李清医生（社区精神科主任）（LC）。此外，两位正在康复的病患者吴玉明（HN）和杨先生（PY），也发表了他们的宝贵意见。

**FS：** 对你们来说，世界精神卫生日意味着什么？

**CHC：** 过去十年来，心理卫生协会每年都会庆祝世界精神卫生日，但今年有所改变，因为这次一个多国家合作的全国心理卫生研讨会已经举行出来。在心理卫生学院，我们确信，通过良好的人际关系建立乐观的心态，乃是预防精神疾病的良好方法。由于世界卫生组织所倡导的：“不要让精神疾病，而是要采取积极的心理健康策略的宗旨一致的。”

**LC：** 世界精神卫生日是将促进、支持和提供心理卫生服务的所有各方聚集在一起的好时机。在这一天，所有各方都会再次重申，我们对自己为病患者所做的一切以及我们所要达到的目标，拥有一个共同的美好愿景。

**FS：** 您能否列举一些你们所庆祝的里程碑？

**CHC：** 与其他国家相比，新加坡在心理卫生护理方面确实取得许多进步。除了治疗精神疾病，我们也重视心理健康方面的问题，因此可以说我们的心理卫生系统已经达到了成熟的水准。世界上其他国家，特别是在国家层次上处理与严重精神疾病相关的问题。在新加坡，我们非常幸运地享受着众多资源，以支持促进心理健康的策略，而不仅仅是应付精神疾病的策略。

此外，从五十年代以来，药理学已获得了许多突破，各类非毒性，非致瘾性以及疗效高、副作用低的抗精神科药物相继问世。

**HN：** 我同意这种说法。新加坡的心理卫生保健系统确实经历了一个很长的发展时期。您只要看一看现在环境优美的心理卫生学院，就会明白。这里有一个从监管人的理念转变过来的过程。但当我20多岁时初次踏入心理医院接受治疗时，我了解自己与当时的环境格格不入。当天，我被捕在带刺钢丝筑成的，又高又厚的混凝土围墙后面。坚固的铁门阻断了我与外界的联系。然而，在今天的心理卫生学院，我甚至受到过在它首次主办的亚太区精神病康复会议(APRCC)上发言，谈论过去80年的发展变化。

**LC：** 我很高兴看到，有更多的机构和社区团体表示愿意为病患者提供帮助。除了直接服务病患者之外，这些机构还积极实施各种计划来消除人们对病患者的偏见和歧视，并倡导改善目前提供心理卫生服务的方法。此外，还加强调依社区为主导的社会心理康复服务，以促进患者的自立能力和融入社区的能力。

**PY：** 经过在芽笼心理门诊部的后续治疗，我现在的状况稳定了。想到能够到周围的附属诊所就医取药，我非常高兴。在以社区为主导的背景下参与这样的计划，感觉真好。

**FS：** 还有什么挑战？

**CHC：** 人们对精神疾病的理解 – 说起精神病，仍然是一个巨大的挑战。我们与合作伙伴一起工作时仍然面临某些困难。至少现在人们正逐渐认同心理健康的重要性。

**PY：** 对于我来说，现在没有比除了提高我的打字速度等更大的挑战了。我确实觉得，对于康复后继续稳定的精神病患者来说，以我们的资历和相关条件，找到一份稳定而薪水好的工作，可能非常困难。

**HN：** 我已经习惯了这样的羞愧感。我相信，人们对于接受心理治疗和教育的需求的认同，一定会有增长的趋向。

患者慢性精神分裂症是一个挑战，但与疾病抗争的过程也让我改变和感到生命中的价值观，这些价值观包括爱、欢乐、和平、耐心、善良、希望、谦逊和坚持不懈。

**FS：** 是什么东西促使您在康复的道路上坚持向前？

**PY：** 做好我的新工作。这样让我拥有了实现梦想和抱负的资源 – 主要是有足够的钱开始的我的房地产职业生涯，并有一个踏实的立足点。

**FS：** 您是怎样鼓励病患者开始康复之旅的？

**CHC：** 事实上，是我的病人在我分享他们成功康复经历的过程中，我受到了鼓励。我有这样一位患有严重抑郁症的病人，曾十次复发，几乎让他走上自杀的道路，他没有胃口吃饭，在负罪感的重压下，对生活完全失去了兴趣。但在我们的帮助下，他接受了治疗，并按时服药，精神状况开始逐渐好转。他的经历始终令人感到鼓舞，充满希望。

**LC：** 所要注意的应该是，尽管患有精神病，还是可能康复的。以前有人曾这样告诉我 – 即使是在‘精神分裂症’这个英文单词中，仍然包含着‘希望’一词。
Awards, Accolades, Applause!

**Joint Commission International (JCI) Reaccreditation**

The Institute of Mental Health (IMH) has been formally granted the Joint Commission International (JCI) Re-accreditation status. Our achievement of this international benchmark shows the commitment of our staff to work as a team in continuously providing quality care in the interest of our patients.

Kudos to all our staff for their hard work in contributing to this significant achievement. Congratulations!

**National Day Honours**

The Singapore National Day Awards are given in recognition of various forms of merit and service to Singapore. Four of our staff were conferred National Day Colours this year:

- **The Public Service Medal**
  - Dr Leong Oil Ken
  - Senior Consultant, Department Of Community Psychiatry

- **The Commendation Medal**
  - Mdm Chua Siew Hong
  - Assistant Director, Nursing

- **The Efficiency Medal**
  - Mr Ravindran Kandasamy
  - Senior Nurse Manager
  - Ms Chin How Lin
  - Senior Nurse Manager

Kudos to Dr Leong, Mdm Chua, Ravindran, and How Lin for their tireless service to Singapore through their work here at IMH!

Our fourth recipient of the President’s Award for Nurses has emerged! She is none other than our Senior Nurse Clinician, Yang Chek Bte Salikin. In its 80 years of psychiatry care, IMH has produced four President’s Award winners – a fitting tribute to the exceptional calibre of nurses that IMH has nurtured. In addition to Yang Chek, the other three recipients of the President’s Award Nurses are ADN Chua Siew Hong (2000), Dr Premarani K (2004) and Pauline Tan (2006).

Yang Chek has dealt with mental patients for more than 30 years and was one of the first Advanced Practice Nurses registered in mental health locally. In addition, she is a Substance Abuse Counsellor certified by the International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium/Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse.

Also a model for life-long learning, Yang Chek went back to the National University of Singapore when she was 51 to obtain her master’s degree in nursing.

“I would like to dedicate this highest accolade for nursing to all IMH nurses and patients. They have taught me so much,” said Yang Chek.

**HMDP Fellowship Awards**

A total of 29 staff from the Administration, Allied Health, Medical and Nursing departments have been awarded HMDP places for 2008. They will be pursuing attachment stints and further training at relevant specialty centres and institutions in Australia, Canada, United States, Italy and Singapore. Our recipients received their awards from Mr Michael Lim, Chairman of the National Healthcare Group, at a presentation ceremony held on 16 July at IMH.
Our nurses are soaring to greater heights. First, IMH sponsored nurse educator, Poh Chee Lien to pursue a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) course in education at the Nanyang Technological University earlier this year. Just last month, another one of our nurses did us proud – Staff nurse Xie Hui Ting from ward 34B became the youngest nurse in Singapore to pursue a PhD, and also the first nurse in Singapore to obtain direct entry into the PhD programme in the USA with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN).

Hui Ting, 25, received the MOH-NHG Nursing Development Scholarship (MNDS) scholarship to pursue her PhD in Health Research Methodology, at the Case Western Reserve University in Ohio, USA. Her PhD training will equip her to conduct research for evidence-based nursing, directed at improving clinical standards.

Hui Ting shared, “Going to the USA all alone to pursue my PhD requires a lot of courage as I have to leave my family and all the familiar things back home. I desire to lead nursing research and mentor novice researchers with my newfound knowledge. I believe that, with zeal and determination, I will overcome the odds and fulfill my hopes.”

Awards, Accolades, Applause!

Asian Hospital Management Awards 2008

Congratulations to the two teams who have each won the Asian Hospital Management Awards – Excellence Award! The categories/entries were:

1) Departmental Service Improvement Project: 23-hour observation ward to reduce unnecessary admissions in a psychiatric hospital (team led by Dr Alex Su)

2) Human Resources: Everglow Nurses’ Programme (team led by Mdm Chua Siew Hong)

The 23-hour ward project at the Emergency Services was patient-centred, where we were able to reduce anxiety and stress levels of patients and their carers by preventing unnecessary admission. As for the Everglow Nurses’ Programme, IMH managed to address the shortage of nursing staff through the re-employment of former nurses.

Being among the best of 233 entries from 56 hospitals in 15 countries, the awards are testaments to our high standards. We applaud all the team members for their efforts and we look forward to more ideas to achieve better patient-care.

Both awards were officially presented on 26 September 2008 in the Philippines.

A Future Nurse Scientist for IMH

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Community In Bloom Awards 2008

IMH received a Gold award at this year’s Community In Bloom Awards ceremony, organised by the National Parks Board and Green Culture Singapore in support of the Singapore Garden Festival. This is the third time we have gained recognition for our efforts in using horticulture as a form of rehabilitation for patients by involving the community. Credit goes to the staff of Estate Management Services and Occupational Therapy for their efforts in sprucing up the garden for this assessment. Congratulations!

Work-life Achiever Award

IMH has been awarded the Work-Life Achiever Award this year once again (the first time being in 2006), for our commitment and sustained efforts in implementing work-life friendly initiatives. The initiatives include the introduction of flexi-work schedules and pro-family benefits such as family care leave. Conferred biennially on organisations by the Tripartite Committee on Work-Life Strategy, this award is given to organisations in recognition of their excellence in Work-Life initiatives.
**Ask The Expert**

– Community Rehabilitation

Dr Lee Cheng, Chief, Department of Community Psychiatry, IMH

**QUESTION** What is the focus of community rehabilitation and some of the challenges faced? What are the Community Psychiatry and recovery programmes available in IMH and in Singapore? As a member of the community, what can I do to understand the plight of people with mental conditions, and help them?

**ANSWER**

The focus of community rehabilitation is on empowering the patient towards independent living in the community, and strengthening family relationships. The key strategy to achieve these is through providing education and psychosocial support for patients and their caregivers to: (i) enhance effective coping skills, (ii) improve compliance with medication, (iii) reduce hospital admissions or length of stay, and (iv) improve their quality of living. This means that emphasis is placed on the restoration of functioning and has moved beyond the clinical concept of recovery, which mainly targets the remission of symptoms.

Mental healthcare workers involved in community rehabilitation need to be sensitive in the service delivery process, due to the nature of the illness, cultural beliefs about mental illness, and social-economic differences. Other challenges include helping our patients obtain and sustain employment as well as addressing and meeting the needs of the caregivers and our ageing patient population.

The Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) of IMH provides education, counselling and daily living skills training for patients. This multi-disciplinary team consists of doctors, medical social workers, nurses, occupational therapists and psychologists. This community-based service team communicates with the hospital and other community resources in providing occupational skills training, e.g. in car washing, being a cashier, cleaner, handicraft worker, sales worker, etc. The team also provides support and educational programmes for our partners in the community.

Thus far, the community-based psychosocial rehabilitation programme administered by the CMHT has achieved a 62% reduction in the length of hospital stay. The total intake of inpatients into the various rehabilitation programmes has increased over six-fold and the number of patients who have successfully completed the in-house programme rose from 59% in 2003 to 73% in 2007.

In addition, IMH’s Early Psychosis Intervention Programme (EPIP) won the inaugural State of Kuwait Health Promotion Award, presented by the World Health Organization, in 2006. For younger patients, treatment has started earlier along with appropriate rehabilitation and goals for them to return to the community and employment. Results have been positive, with reduced default rates, improved functioning, increased employment, high patient satisfaction rating, reduction in duration of untreated psychosis as well as prolonged hospitalisation.

Local voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs) such as the Singapore Association for Mental Health (SAMH), Singapore Anglican Community Services (SACS), etc also provide rehabilitation services. IMH works hand-in-hand with these agencies to ensure better coordination in the provision of psychosocial rehabilitation services to persons with mental illness.

Members of the community can attend public forums on mental health or arrange for a group visit to IMH to have a better understanding of mental illness. Gaining awareness is helpful in allaying one’s fears of persons with mental illness.

The community can also choose to volunteer at IMH and befriend our patients, visit them at home or in the hospital, or accompany them for some social activity or to the clinic for consultation. As the illness can make the patient feel inferior or neglected, giving someone with a mental illness a smile or saying “hello” when meeting them are some simple ways you can convey your acceptance of and concern for them.

**INTERESTED TO VOLUNTEER AT IMH?**

Here are some ways you could bring light into our patients’ lives:

- Be a guide and generate awareness of the different rehabilitation activities available
- Conduct indoor and outdoor games, singing, dancing, karaoke, drama, and outings to places of interest
- Guide patients in art and craft, grooming, basic social skills, painting, and the use of public amenities e.g. how to take public transport
- Plan, organise or participate in IMH’s ad-hoc projects for patients’ activities, or mental health advocacy events
- Keep patients company by talking to them or taking a walk with them and providing a listening ear

For more information and to sign-up, please visit [http://www.imh.com.sg](http://www.imh.com.sg).
问题

社区康复的焦点，和所面对的一些挑战，是什么？心理
卫生学院和新加坡国内有提供哪些社区精神康复计
划？身为一名公众人士，我能做些什么以理解精神病患
者的困境并帮助他们？

答案

社区康复的焦点就是授权精神病患者往独立地生活在社
区中，并加强他们的家庭关系。实现这些目标的主要策略，
就是为了病患者及看护人提供心理教育和支持，以达到以下
目标：(i) 加强应变能力，(ii) 增强服药的依从性，(iii) 减少
住院次数及长度，并(iv) 提高生活素质。这也表示康复的
概念已不再只针对于减轻临床症状，也强调恢复病患者
的生活技能。

由于精神病的性质和人们对精神疾病的误解以及社会经
济差异方面的原因，参与社区康复的心理卫生医疗服务
在提供服务过程中特别关注这些要点。其他一些挑战也包
括帮助我们的病患者找到并保住工作，以及解决看护人及
年岁的病患者的所面对的问题。

心理卫生学院的社区医疗组为病患者提供教育、辅导
d和日常生活技能培训。这专业队伍由心理医生、心理
程师、职业治疗师和心理学家组成。它以社区为基础，在提
供包括洗车、收银、清洁、手艺工作、销售等在内的各种
职业技能培训，并与医院及社区资源进行沟通。此外，
该医疗组亦为我们在社区的合作者提供支持和教育资源。

至今社区心理医疗组所实施的社区康复计划已将病
患者的平均住院时间缩短62%。各种康复计划的住院
病患者人数已增加六倍以上，而成功完成康复训练的病患者
人数则从2003年的59%上升到2007年的73%。

另外，在2006年，心理卫生学院下属初期精神错乱症治疗
科(EPIP)获得国际卫生组织颁发的“科威特国健康促进
奖”。对于年轻病患者来说，合理的心理治疗不仅
提前开始，而且还配合了适当的康复训练和目标设定，以
使他们早日重返社区并参加工作。目前，这项努力已取得
良好成果，主要表现为退出治疗的比例降低、病患者技能
加强、就业人数增加、病患者对本院服务的满意度提高。此
外，未进行治疗的发病期间，以及病患者住院的持续时
间，均得到缩短。

当地的一些志愿者服务团体（VWOs），例如新加坡心理健
康协会 (SAMHI)、新加坡圣公会社区服务 (SAGCS)、等也提
供康复服务。心理卫生学院与这些机构携手合作，协调为病
患者提供的心理康复服务。

公众人士可以参加心理健康讲座或座谈会，或者集体参
观心理卫生学院，以对精神病有更好地了解。这将助
于减轻一个人对精神病患者的恐惧。

此外，他们也可前来心理卫生学院做义工，照顾我们的病
患者，到家里或医院探访他们，或陪伴他们参加某些社交
活动或前往诊所就诊。由于有些病患者可能因疾病而感到
自卑或受忽视，因此在见到精神病病患者时，只需报以微笑
或说声“你好”这些简单的方式，便能表达你对他们的接
纳和关心。

您是否有兴趣
成为心理卫生学院(IMH)的
义工？

您可通过以下方式，为病患者的生活带去一线光明：
• 引导并宣传有关各种不同的康复活动
• 进行室内游戏、歌唱、卡拉OK、戏剧和景点远足等活动
• 指导患者学习艺术和手工制作、梳洗打扮、基本社会技能、绘画以及公共设施的使用
（例如怎样乘搭公共交通工具等）
• 策划、组织或参与心理卫生学院的患者活动或心理卫生宣传活动等各种特别项目
• 陪伴患者，包括与他们谈心、陪他们散步以及倾听他们的心声等。

欲知详情或登记，请上网查阅 http://www.imh.com.sg。
Ask The Expert
– Emotional Resilience

Ms Kong Lai Yee, Senior Medical Social Worker, Medical Social Work, IMH
Ms Ghawry Krishnan, Senior Medical Social Worker, Medical Social Work, IMH

QUESTION
What is emotional resilience?
How can the building up of relationships contribute to emotional resilience?

ANSWER
‘Notice that the stiffest tree is most easily cracked, while the bamboo survives by bending with the wind’

This quote talks about the humble bamboo tree as a symbol of resilience. Like the bamboo, an emotionally resilient person is seen as one who has the ability to withstand the ups and downs of life without breaking down, since they perceive that they still have control in their lives. They also tend to have realistic expectations and goals in life and are able to demonstrate compassion for others. Naturally, they are optimistic as well.

Resilience is a trait that is valuable at any point in life and is key to triumphing over various experiences or situations. While the challenges one faces differ at various stages of life, resilience is a core character trait that enables one to cope and stand firm in the face of adversity.

Maintaining positive relationships is an important way through which emotional resilience can be nurtured. Studies have shown that individuals with a good network of supportive relationships are able to withstand personal crises significantly better than others lacking such relationships.

Here are some tips on how to cultivate strong relationships at each point of life:

1. PARENTS – WITH YOUR CHILDREN
   - BE GOOD ROLE MODELS: Children are impressionable, and tend to learn through modelling after their parents or caregivers. Seeing how adults around them handle difficult and challenging experiences shapes their own attitudes towards coping with their own trials in life later.
   - MAINTAIN AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN YOUR CHILD’S LIFE: Know who your child’s friends are. Showing an interest in the activities they are involved in builds trust between you and your child, a key ingredient of a stable and positive relationship.
   - ENCOURAGE AND GUIDE YOUR CHILD IN PROBLEM-SOLVING: Ask your child for ideas on how to solve a problem, rather than solve it for him always. As he develops solutions on his own, and with your guidance where appropriate, he will develop self-confidence.

2. ADULTS – WITH YOUR FAMILY, SPOUSE, FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES
   - ACT WITH INTEGRITY: Keep your promises. Trust needs to be earned, and is a vital ingredient for any relationship.
   - LISTEN ACTIVELY: Take the time and effort to pay attention to what is being communicated, to avoid misunderstandings and miscommunications.
   - LEARN TO GIVE AND TAKE: Ensure there is give and take in your relationships. An unequal partnership can lead to conflicts and break-ups.
   - SHOW APPRECIATION OFTEN: Don’t take the important people in your life for granted. Express your appreciation of them verbally, or through notes and gifts.
   - TALK IT THROUGH: Hidden resentments poison a relationship; so if something bothers you, talk about it with the person concerned.

3. THE ELDERLY
   - ENSURE GOOD NUTRITION AND EXERCISE: Taking care of yourself especially in the golden years helps to keep your mind and body primed for situations that require emotional resilience.
   - KEEP ACTIVE AND BE INVOLVED WITH OTHERS: Engaging in social activities, be it with your family, friends, or through volunteering, gives greater meaning to life and also prevents loneliness.

RELATIONSHIPS ARE LIVING AND FRAGILE CONNECTIONS. As such, they require ongoing attention and cultivation – an investment of time and effort. However, the efforts are worthwhile as the benefits reaped from building positive relationships are priceless: Being able to weather life storms like the great bamboo tree!
问咨询专家——情感韧性

邝丽仪，高级药剂师，药物科部门，心理卫生学院
Ghawry Krishnan，高级药剂师，药物科部门，心理卫生学院

问题
什么是情感韧性？建立良好的人际关系对情感韧性具有怎样的促进作用？

答案
‘硬木易折，韧竹经风’

这句成语将低眉顺回的竹子刻画成适应力的象征。情感上具有韧性的人也像竹子一样，被视作有能力承受生命中的大起大落而不会被击垮。有始有终，他们认为自己仍然掌控着生命。对于生活，他们拥有着实际的期望和目标，不会好高骛远，而且能够表现出对其他人的怜悯之心。自然，他们也属于乐观派。

在生命中的每时每刻，韧性都是人的一种宝贵特性，是一个人在各种经历或状况下打开凯旋之门的钥匙。尽管一个人在生命中的不同阶段面对不同的挑战，但韧性却是一种能够让人在逆境面前应对自如、稳如磐石的主要性格特征。

保持良好的人际关系，是培养情感韧性的重要途径。研究显示，当一个人拥有一个给予他扶持及良好的人际关系网络，那么他承受个人危机的能力就会明显高于那些缺乏这种关系的人。

以下是有关生命中各个时段如何培养牢固人际关系的一些启示：

① 父母与其子女之间的关系

- 建立良好的行为榜样：儿童的可塑性较强，往往会模仿其父母或看护人的一举一动，有样学样。他们将观察周围的成年人如何处理棘手而具有挑战性的问题。从而会导致在今后生活如何面对种种挑战。
- 对孩子的生活保持积极的兴趣：要了解你的孩子有哪些朋友。对于孩子们所参与的活动表示兴趣，这将有助于你在孩子和孩子之间建立信任，而信任正是一种稳定、积极人际关系中的一个关键组成部分。
- 鼓励并引导孩子解决问题：如何解决某个问题，问问他有什么主意，而不是代替他解决问题。在孩子自己寻找答案的过程中，你可以在适当的时候给予引导，这样孩子会逐渐获得自信来自己解决问题。

② 成年人与其家人、配偶、朋友和同事之间的关系

- 诚实地事：遵守诺言。信任需要努力去建立，而且它是任何人际关系中不可缺少的主要部分。
- 积极聆听：要投入时间和精力来注意所交流的内容，以免发生不必要的误会或偏差的沟通。
- 学会给予和获取：确保你的人际关系中既有给予，也有获取。不等的关系，不仅会导致冲突，还会促使关系破裂。
- 悄悄地对他人表达谢意：切勿将你生命中重要的人视为理所当然。应通过言谈、字条和送礼等方式来表达你对他们的谢意。
- 有话就说：憋在心里的怨恨，实在人际关系之毒药。所以，倘若有心烦之事，就与有关成员说清楚。

③ 乐龄人士

- 确保良好的营养和适当的运动：关爱自身，尤其是到了晚年更应关心自己，这有助于让你的身心随时准备应对那些需要情绪适应力的状况。
- 保持活力并积极与他人交往：参与社交活动，而无论这种都是与家人、朋友一起还是通过做义工，都可让你的生活更有意义，同时远离孤独寂寞。

人际关系是现实生活中人与人之间的一种微妙联系。因此它需要不断投入时间和精力来细心呵护与培育。然而这种努力是值得的，因为你的情感韧性方面所得到的好处将成为生活中的无价之宝：就是将像伟大的竹子一样，能够经得住住生命中的疾风暴雨！
The 5th Congress of the Asian Society for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions (ASCAPAP) was successfully held over the weekend from 29 – 31 August at the Suntec International Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Themed The Asian Child: Resiliency in the Face of Evolving Challenges and hosted by the Institute of Mental Health (IMh), the Congress brought together 457 delegates from 20 countries in a discussion of the biological, psychological and socio-cultural factors contributing to the development of resiliency in our youth.

The delegates comprised medical and allied health professionals, researchers, school counsellors and educators from the different ministries, hospitals, voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs) and educational institutions of Singapore, the Asia Pacific countries and the world. They learned from one another through six symposiums and 12 workshops on a wide variety of topics including parenting, autism, bullying, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and community mental health. Eminent speakers included Prof Sir Michael Rutter (UK), Prof Felice Lieh-Mak (Hong Kong), Prof William Yule (UK), Dr Katharina Manassis (Canada), Prof Michael Hong (Korea), and Dr Cornelio Banaag (the Philippines).

Guest-of-Honour at the Opening Ceremony, Ms Grace Fu, Senior Minister of State for the Ministry of National Development (MND) and Ministry of Education (MOE) said in her speech, “Nurturing students with good mental health is one of MOE’s key educational objectives. Every school in Singapore has at least a full-time school counsellor who is trained to provide support for these children. In addition, our schools have in place a referral system which channels the identified pupils to the proper sources of help, be it the school counsellor, social work agency or mental health professional. I am glad that schools have a good collaborative partnership with IMh and other community-based agencies in addressing the issue of mental health.”

Prof Sir Michael Rutter, an internationally-renowned expert who delivered the Distinguished Speaker Lecture on Resilience in Children and Adolescents, commented: “There is room for greater scientific and clinical understanding of resilience and I am glad for this ASCAPAP, which examines pertinent issues related to resilience.”

A Gala Dinner was held too, where Guest-of-Honour, Prof Satkunanantham S/o Kandiah, Director of Medical Services, Ministry of Health gave out the awards for Best Paper and Best Poster. Dr Daniel Fung, Chief of the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (DCAP), IMh, also launched a child psychiatry textbook, A Primer of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, authored by himself and Dr Cai Yiming, Senior Consultant in DCAP. The textbook features local clinical cases and is the first of its kind in Singapore. Guests and delegates enjoyed a truly pleasant evening, mingling over the dinner and musical performances.

Mr Leong Yew Meng, Chief Executive Officer of IMh, commented, “Hosting this year’s ASCAPAP is yet another commendable initiative in our mission to promote mental health and pursue continuous learning and research, even as we celebrate our 80th anniversary this year.”

Indeed, ASCAPAP has been a platform for minds to converge. Through this Congress, it is hoped that delegates have gained knowledge and insights, which can be translated into practice in their respective countries.
Duke-NUS Students Start Clerkship at IMH

Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School Singapore (Duke-NUS) has set up a Secretariat Office at Block 2 in the Institute of Mental Health (IMH). A/Prof Rathi Mahendran, Chairman of the Medical Board, IMH, was appointed the Clerkship Leader and Dr Swapna Verma the Clerkship Coordinator in 2007.

Professor K Ranga Rama Krishnan, Dean of Duke-NUS, commented, “No good medical school can develop students in isolation or in a classroom situation. In order for our students to get the best training possible in clinical and research, it is vital for our students to be connected to real patients in a professional, well-run institute. IMH has generously availed its facilities, faculty and staff to our students, and we are grateful to be working with such a reputable and experienced partner like IMH.”

A/Prof Rathi affirmed, “We are honoured to work with Duke-NUS and their medical students, and we look forward to sharing our clinical knowledge and research insights in psychiatry.”

As part of their Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree training, IMH staff teach first year Duke-NUS students on psychosis and schizophrenia. For the Psychiatry Clerkship Rotation at IMH in their second year, the students will be assigned to B2 wards and the Department of Early Psychosis Intervention for ward work, learn to assess patients in various settings and go on home visits with case managers and community psychiatric nurses (CPNs).

A/Prof Rathi Mahendran, Chairman of the Medical Board, IMH (extreme left) and Dr Lee Cheng (extreme right) presented IMH’s 80th Anniversary Commemorative Book to our visitors

International Exchange of Best Practices

A team of Japanese mental health professionals from the International Medical Center of Japan and the National Center of Neurology and Psychiatry of Japan visited the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) from 15 – 17 September 2008. The team comprised psychiatrist Dr Naoko Satake from the Department of Psychiatry, Kohnodai hospital, International Medical Center of Japan; Dr Yutaro Setoya, researcher on Japan’s community mental health system and Section Chief in the Department of Psychiatric rehabilitation, National Institute of Mental Health, National Center of Neurology and Psychiatry; and medical social worker Ms Tomoko Shimura, from Kohnodai hospital.

The objective of the visit was to observe and learn from the mental health system in Singapore as the team is participating in a national study to shift mental health services in Japan from being hospital-based to community-based. The study is an international comparative study on the mental health system, especially outreach services, rehabilitation services and housing services. IMH is the first Asian institution the team has visited.

Organised by Dr Lee Cheng, Chief, Department of Community Psychiatry, IMH and supported by IMH’s Medical Affairs department, the Japanese team learned more about IMH through discussions with A/Prof Rathi Mahendran, Chairman of the Medical Board, IMH, and Dr Tan Weng Mooi, Chief Operating Officer, IMH. They also sat in on IMH’s Community Mental Health Team’s (CMHT) sector meeting and home visit, and visited the acute inpatient unit, Sunrise Wing (inpatient ward for children), the Occupational Therapy department and Community Wellness Centre. They viewed the facilities run by the local Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs) such as the Activity Hub at Pelangi Village and Hougang Care Centre.

“We knew a lot about the mental health systems in European and North American countries based on from previous visits and literature, but relatively little about other Asian countries. As such, it was truly interesting and informative to know about Singapore’s efforts in developing community mental health services,” remarked Dr Yutaro Setoya.

The visit concluded with the exciting possibility of a collaboration between the National Center of Neurology and Psychiatry of Japan and IMH being put forth.

By Vera Soo, Corporate Communications

By Dr Lee Cheng, Chief, Department of Community Psychiatry, IMH
**80 Years of Mental Health Nursing at IMH**

This year, the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) held a grand celebration for our nurses in conjunction with IMH’s 80th anniversary.

We were honoured by the presence of Mr Heng Chee How, Minister of State for Prime Minister’s Office at our Nurses’ Day ceremony, where he presented prizes to our award-winning nurses. Afterwards, Mr Heng and IMH’s senior management also turned chefs to prepare and serve lunch in a show of their appreciation, much to our nurses’ delight.

There was a host of events like champagne-toasting, cake-cutting, musical performances by the doctors, and even a lucky draw where the top prize was a diamond pendant. The nurses were pampered with massages, pedicures and manicures, and showered with colourful gerberas, tasty muffins, and sleeping bags. Those on the night shift were also pleasantly surprised with supper and other treats from senior management who visited them in the wards that night.

Dr Premarani K, Director of Nursing in IMH, said, “I wanted to make this year’s Nurses’ Day a special one. They’ve all worked so hard, giving the best care for our patients and they deserved the best.” Truly, this year’s Nurses’ Day was a memorable one.

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**Let’s Get A.C.T.I.V.E!**

In September, the Institute of Mental Health’s (IMH) Healthy Lifestyle Committee carried out their lively campaign, themed “Let’s Get A.C.T.I.V.E!”, where A.C.T.I.V.E. stood for “All Come Together In Various Exercises”.

The month started off with a special weekly distribution of healthy snacks to all staff, and weekly health talks to broaden staff’s knowledge about how to enjoy good health. These initiatives led up to Active Day itself on 19 September 2008. The mass aerobic, yoga, and line dancing sessions saw overwhelming participation from staff, including Dr Tan Weng Mooi, Chief Operating Officer (COO), IMH and other Heads of Department. Lucky draw prizes and 200 goodie bags totalling S$570 were given away as well. Marigold products were also sold at discounted prices.

Let us continue to spur one another on towards a healthy lifestyle!

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**Braving the Rain for Charity**

A contingent of more than 300 staff from the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) together with their mascots turned out in full force at the 2.5km Heartstrings Walk @ Esplanade Park 2008, held on 23 August. Despite the rain, the strong support and unity shown by our staff, uniformly decked in purple IMH shirts, saw our mascot Barney the Dinosaur winning the “Best Dressed” title, much to our staff’s delight.

The charity walkathon was organised in celebration of Singapore’s 43rd birthday and the Community Chest’s silver jubilee.
People with mental illnesses often feel isolated and hopeless when there is inadequate therapeutic and social support. Due to the nature of the illness, many of them also lack independence skills and face emotional or social issues, which cause them difficulties integrating into society.

With an understanding of these needs, rehabilitation for patients in IMH has taken on a more holistic look now with “The OCTAVE” – “Occupational Therapy: Activities, Vocation and Empowerment”. The OCTAVE is the enhanced IMH Day Centre, with a focus on activities to promote community independence and psychosocial support, vocation to improve occupational performance, and empowerment to nurture patients’ potential and promote recovery.

Apart from support groups, other forms of psychosocial intervention such as cognitive remediation, lifestyle modification, symptom management, and social skills training are also conducted, so as to address psychological and emotional issues that patients face in their daily lives. Autonomy, self-determination and empowerment are emphasised as the ingredients for mental well-being and independent living.

Patients also participate in a variety of creative activities, expressing themselves through basketry, woodwork, pottery, jewellery-making and even batik-painting. Through these, patients’ work habits and behaviour are also developed. These craft products are later sold under the branding of “Craft Creates”, which showcases the talents of our patients.

Industrial assembly work, which builds basic work skills and routine in a sheltered work setting, are also available to patients.

At the OCTAVE, patients participate in a variety of groups which train them in lifeskills like money management, household tasks, simple computer applications, community orientation, personal grooming etc. These training groups enable patients to be more independent in taking care of themselves and also their families.

There are currently about 120 patients attending The OCTAVE. With IMH’s shift towards rehabilitation and societal integration, it is hoped that these patients will benefit from this revamped programme and be successfully integrated into society.

Ms Tan BHING LEE, Head of the Occupational Therapy Department, said: “With the IMH Day Centre, people often had the impression that it was meant for chronic patients, and that they were engaged mainly in industrial work like packing, and sorting. However, the OCTAVE presents patients with a more holistic range of creative and psychosocial activities, aimed at improving patients’ functioning, and not the mere maintenance of it. We also run regular support groups and sessions such as anger and stress management, relaxation therapy etc, so as to promote mental wellness.”

Ms Tan BHING LEE, Head of the Occupational Therapy Department, said: “With the IMH Day Centre, people often had the impression that it was meant for chronic patients, and that they were engaged mainly in industrial work like packing, and sorting. However, the OCTAVE presents patients with a more holistic range of creative and psychosocial activities, aimed at improving patients’ functioning, and not the mere maintenance of it. We also run regular support groups and sessions such as anger and stress management, relaxation therapy etc, so as to promote mental wellness.”

This came after these departments’ Value Stream Analysis (VSA) in May. In the RIES, teams were required to make rapid changes or improvements collectively, through a systematic approach. Trials were implemented immediately midweek, and both teams showed tremendous success in their improvement.

Our Emergency Services team had their turn for a 4.5-day VSA in August 2008, when they walked through the sequence of steps that patients undergo. The team identified the current improvement opportunities and set clear improvement targets over the next 12 months. In September 2008, the team engaged in an RIE to improve waiting time for consultation.

We thank all the team members who participated in the RIES and look forward to engaging more colleagues on IMH’s Kaizen journey to bring better services to our patients.

By Geraldine Tay, Occupational Therapy

By Catherine Seow, Corporate Development
First Sports Carnival for Inpatients Kicked Off!

IMH inpatients had a blast of a time at a special sporting event organised for them, in the spirit of the Beijing Olympics 2008, which had been the event of the year for Asia.

It was decided that the event should have a carnival-like atmosphere, where different games would be conducted simultaneously, with staff and the patients’ relatives looking on at our “athletes”.

A total of 56 patients turned up for the games, and they took part with much gusto. Adrenaline-pumping music was also played aloud to stir up the atmosphere, made exhilarating by the crowd’s cheers.

Eventually, Team Blue won the challenge trophy with a great display of teamwork and coordination. This was impressive considering that the team consisted of inpatients from two different wards.

The Sports Carnival would not have been possible without the support and efforts of the IMHope volunteers, Nursing and Support Services. Overall, the event was well-received by the patients, who enthused:

“I nearly scored a goal! I really had a good time.”
Y.T.*, 38 years old

“We enjoyed the event very much.”
Aaron*, 44 years old

“I hope we can have it again next year.”
Mr K*, 55 years old

* Pseudonyms

Fusion Food At IMH

Secret Recipe Pte Ltd, a well-known café chain, has set up an outlet in IMH!

The outlet offers a large variety of cakes and pastries as well as an “Asian fusion” menu. Patrons can choose to do either take-aways or enjoy an al fresco meal by the lush surroundings of the Sayang Garden. Staff of IMH are entitled to a 15% discount off their purchases.

Apart from the outlet, Secret Recipe, in collaboration with IMH’s Occupational Therapy Department, has also set up a kitchen in IMH (known as the ‘SHARE’ kitchen) to provide Food and Beverage skills training for patients. Patients may be trained as service crew or kitchen assistants, gaining relevant skills for employment in this industry. IMH occupational therapists work closely with their partners from Secret Recipe to customise patients’ training according to their strengths and limitations.

Upon completion of the three-month café outlet or kitchen programme, suitable patients may be offered job positions in other Secret Recipe outlets. This initiative has indeed opened up employment opportunities for patients.

Linking Up for Patient and Visitor Welfare

Ever since Woodbridge Hospital (WH) was re-organised and established as the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) operating from Buangkok View 15 years ago, those arriving by public transport had to weather rain and sun. This is now history! On 1 September, a new covered walkway was unveiled, linking the main road to the Sayang Wellness Centre clinic and the Main Lobby where our Clinic B is. Walking into and leaving IMH on foot has certainly been redefined in terms of comfort.

By K Ravindran, Senior Nurse Manager, Ward 72A

By Yogeswary Maniam, Occupational Therapy and Eddie Chua, Corporate Development

By Michael Khoo, Facilities Planning and Development
The Child Guidance Clinic (CGC) provides psychological and psychiatric services for children and adolescents up to 19 years of age. Most of the children and adolescents seek professional help at the CGC for emotional or behavioural problems, and do not suffer from mental illness.

THE AUTISM DIAGNOSTIC INTERVIEW – REVISED (ADI-R) WORKSHOP

THE AUTISM DIAGNOSTIC INTERVIEW – Revised (ADI-R) (Le Couteur et al., 1989; Lord, Rutter, & Le Couteur, 1994) is a standardised, semi-structured diagnostic interview for use with the parents or caregivers of people with autism or other Pervasive Developmental Disorders. The interview focuses on three main areas:

(i) quality of reciprocal social interaction,
(ii) communication and language, and
(iii) repetitive, restricted and stereotyped patterns of behaviour.

The ADI-R produces an algorithm which is linked to the diagnostic criteria of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) and Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV).

Conducted by Dr Kylie Gray from the Centre for Developmental Psychiatry and Psychology at Monash University, participants will be taught the administration of the instrument, how to apply the codes, clinical and practical applications of the ADI-R and also the interpretation of ADI-R results.

DATE
12 – 14 November 2008
TIME
8.30am – 5.00pm
VENUE
Hotel Rendezvous
FEE
$2,100 (before 7% GST; includes lunch, 2 tea breaks, and all course materials)
ORGANISER
Child Guidance Clinic and Learning & Development Unit, IMH
TARGET AUDIENCE
Anyone who is experienced and knowledgeable in Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) or qualified to be involved in diagnostic work with ASD or in research – i.e. psychologists, psychiatrists, paediatricians, speech and language therapists.

WEBSITE
www.imh.com.sg
ENQUIRIES
Please contact Ms See Mee Mee at Mee_Mee_See@imh.com.sg, or (65) 6389 2894; or Mr Hsu Li Ren at Liren_Hsu@imh.com.sg, or (65) 6389 2168.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

A crisis can happen to anyone, and at anytime, and any place. Understanding a crisis and being aware of what may happen puts us in a better position to protect both ourselves, and the people around us.

Learn how to be prepared for the unexpected. Mental health professionals from IMH will impart to you skills you need to take charge of your personal mental well-being, as well as to offer support to your colleagues, friends and family during a crisis.

TOPICS INCLUDE
• breaking bad news
• helping affected individuals
• crisis intervention methods
• active listening skills
• crisis counseling

DATE
7 November 2008
TIME
9.00am – 5.30pm
VENUE
Institute of Mental Health
Meeting Rooms 3 & 4
Buangkok Green Medical Park
10 Buangkok View, Singapore 539747

FEE
$450/pax (before 7% GST; includes lunch, 2 tea breaks and all course materials)

ORGANISER
Corporate Consulting Services
CONCESSIONS
A discount of 20% off the registration fee will be granted to every 3rd person who registers as part of a group.

TARGET AUDIENCE
General Public

WEBSITE
www.imh.com.sg
ENQUIRIES
Please contact Sharon Lai at Sharon_YF_Lai@imh.com.sg or call (65) 6389 2831.

The Child Guidance Clinic (CGC) provides psychological and psychiatric services for children and adolescents up to 19 years of age. Most of the children and adolescents seek professional help at the CGC for emotional or behavioural problems, and do not suffer from mental illness.

We would love to hear from you!
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