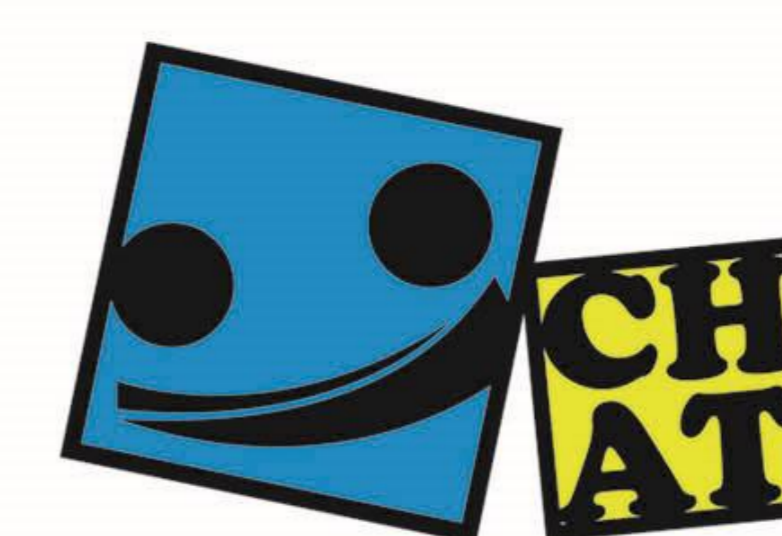


Engaging CHAT Ambassadors in Improving Outreach Initiative - #MYSECRETBEDROOM



Community Health Assessment Team

An initiative by



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Background

Community Health Assessment Team (CHAT), Singapore, aims to raise awareness of youth mental health issues through outreach initiatives, training and facilitating access to mental health resources via our free mental health assessment service for young people aged 16 to 30 years.

Recognising that involving young people was vital in effective service design and promotion (Barry, 2014), CHAT Ambassador Programme comprising mainly students and young working adults, was formed in 2014 to partner CHAT in planning for service improvement initiatives.

Selected Goal

This project aimed to work alongside CHAT Ambassadors to review CHAT's outreach booth, and improve the effectiveness of the booths in delivering messages of mental health among young people.

Method

2 CHAT staff facilitated brainstorming sessions with 3 CHAT Ambassadors on alternative ways to redesign CHAT booths.

CHAT Ambassadors proposed strong visuals and interactive elements to be key factors in gaining the attention of young people during outreach.

Riding on the idea of "looking beyond the surface", a thematic experiential booth in the form of a bedroom called #MYSECRETBEDROOM (#MSB) was designed to showcase personal experiences with mental illnesses.

The booth was part of the 'Same Same But Different Festival' held in *SCAPE, a youth-friendly mall located in the heart of city-centre. The festival aimed at gathering youths doing social good to share ground-up initiatives and gain new inspiration from the community.



Interactive components of the booth included having audience walk around the set to unravel hidden secrets and learn symptoms of mental illnesses. A brochure, which included a quiz, a segment for writing encouraging help-seeking messages and a post-event questionnaire was given to participants. A token of appreciation, in the form of a tote bag with CHAT collaterals, were given to those who participated in the booth.



Results – Likert Scale

There were 100 responses from the post-event survey, which involved Likert scale and open-ended questions to evaluate the effectiveness of this project.

72% of respondents said #MSB was effective or very effective in increasing awareness of mental disorders. 67% of respondents said #MSB was effective in addressing stigma associated with mental disorders, while 82% of respondents said that it was easy or very easy to understand the message that #MSB was putting across.

Results – Open-Ended Questions

Below are responses on aspects of #MYSECRETBEDROOM which the audience found helpful in their understanding mental health issues during the event:

Aspects of #MSB	Percentage
Viewing bedroom	56%
Reading profiles	35%
Doing quiz	40%
Staff presence	36%

Open-ended questions were asked to gather their views on mental illness before and after visiting the booth.

Pre-event: Feedback showed a certain stereotype towards mental illness. "Crazy" and "scary" were common labels used to describe mental health issues. Many thought mental illness was incurable.

Post-event: Some realized there is mental health support, while others mentioned about becoming more sensitive to terms they had been using.

Aspects they would like to see in the future	Percentage
Wider scope of mental disorders	8%
Interactive component	56%
Different layout	36%

Lessons Learnt

Overall, engaging young people, i.e. CHAT Ambassadors, toward CHAT service improvement, has been proven beneficial.

By supporting and championing CHAT Ambassadors' initiative in improving CHAT's outreach, #MYSECRETBEDROOM has resulted in positive outcomes via greater awareness on mental health issues and positive attitudinal change toward mental illness as seen from survey results.

Next Steps

Future plans include maintaining interactive and experiential components in future outreach initiatives, as well as continuing to engage CHAT Ambassadors in CHAT service improvement and delivery.

Reference: Barry, J. (2014). An Investigation of Youth Participation in an Irish Youth Mental Health Service: Staff and Young People's Perspectives. Dublin Institute of Technology, Dublin.