



MEDIA RELEASE

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Mind Matters, Family Matters

[Singapore Mental Health Conference](#)

27 – 28 May 2016, MAX Atria, Singapore Expo

1. Themed ‘Mind Matters, Family Matters’, the Singapore Mental Health Conference (SMHC) 2016 will feature both international and local speakers who will share their wealth of knowledge and lived experiences in supporting persons dealing with mental health issues across family, community, and workplace settings. The conference will also showcase cross-sector collaborative efforts that have allowed for more inclusive and integrative care across different contexts.
2. This year’s event is jointly organised by the Institute of Mental Health (IMH), Agency for Integrated Care (AIC), National Council of Social Service (NCSS), and Health Promotion Board (HPB).
3. The conference, held at MAX Atria @ Singapore Expo, will open on 27 May with Mr Tan Chuan-Jin, Minister for Social and Family Development, as the Guest of Honour. The conference has attracted about 500 professionals from the healthcare, social service, and Intermediate and Long-term Care (ILTC) sectors, as well as community-based workers and consumers of mental health services.
4. The SMHC, initiated by IMH in 2013, has become a national platform for learning and networking in mental health with keynote presentations, five plenary sessions, ten tracks and 14 breakout sessions over two days.
5. The conference’s opening keynote speaker, Minister Tan Chuan-Jin will speak on the supportive roles of the family, as well as the “extended families” in the community and workplaces in promoting mental well-being and helping persons with mental health issues recover successfully. He will underscore the importance of addressing mental health issues holistically, not only from the medical perspective but also from a social standpoint.
6. Dr Chua Hong Choon, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), IMH and Co-Chairperson, SMHC 2016 Advisory Committee said, “Mental health issues are multi-faceted, and impact families, communities and workplaces in different ways. As such, to effectively address mental health issues, the work of intervention must be systemic in nature. Every unit in the mental healthcare ecosystem – be it restructured hospitals, community-based care providers, voluntary welfare organisations or social service agencies – needs to work together with its counterparts closely.”

7. Dr Tan Weng Mooi, Chief, Community Mental Health Division, AIC and Co-Chairperson, SMHC 2016 Advisory Committee added, "It is important to build mental resilience so that we can manage both normal stresses of our lives and work productivity. Mindfulness is one of the ways to do so. With the right mindset and support from our immediate family, social and community network such as friends, colleagues, befrienders and care professionals, we can better manage the challenges in our lives. Increasingly, we are seeing that many community partners are collaborating closely with various government agencies, social service agencies, grassroots leaders and volunteers to build up community network to promote mental wellness and integrate care more seamlessly to empower and enable all of us to live and age at home and in the community. Together, we are one big family, here to support one another."

Highlights of SMHC 2016

8. The conference programme for SMHC 2016 was designed with mental healthcare professionals, community workers, and caregivers in mind. Below are some of the event highlights.

Uncovering Mindfulness and Well-Being (Plenary 1)

9. Mindfulness trains a person to respond skillfully with open-minded curiosity and acceptance to whatever is happening in the present, whether positive or negative. More than 500 peer-reviewed scientific journal papers have been published on mindfulness, which is widely used in the United Kingdom across various settings. This plenary session will introduce the technique of mindfulness and illustrate its applications for impacting well-being in people of all ages.

Mental Health and The Elderly: The Impact of Dementia (Plenary 2)

10. This plenary session addresses the impact of dementia on the individual, his family, friends and caregivers, health and social services, and society. A comprehensive range of health and social services which are accessible, affordable, individualised and responsive are required to meet the needs of people living with dementia and their families. Speaker, Dr Ng Li-Ling, a senior consultant psychiatrist at Changi General Hospital and current Chairperson of the National Dementia Network, Ministry of Health, will speak on the need for an integrated, multi-pronged approach to dementia care as well as new models of dementia care in our community.

Elderly & Support Network (Track 1)

11. The Well-being of the Singapore Elderly (WiSE) study found that the prevalence of dementia was 10 percent in the elderly population aged above 60 years. The capacity of the primary care and community-based sectors has been scaled up to cater to the current and upcoming needs related to this chronic disease. Insights on the progress of these support services for dementia will be shared.

Integrated efforts by the social and healthcare sectors are needed to raise awareness, promote early detection of mental health conditions, as well as provide timely support such as AIC's Dementia Home Intervention Programme for affected individuals and their caregivers. This track will reveal new developments in coordinated community mental health support through a multi-agency network, and highlight the positive results reaped to date arising from these combined efforts.

Family (Track 3)

12. As the building blocks of society, families provide the first line of support for persons with mental health issues. This track will journey from the womb to beyond – shedding light on perinatal anxiety, parent-infant interactions and what family and caregivers need to promote family resiliency in the face of mental health issues. The speakers will also emphasise the need for caregivers to receive coaching and emotional support, given the various demands made on them across the trajectory of their loved one’s illness.

Workplace Mental Health (Track 4)

13. Employment plays a critical role in the reintegration and recovery of persons with mental health issues. This track will explore various initiatives that encourage the hiring and sustainability of persons with mental health issues in employment, such as the Employment Internship Programme by NCSS and Singapore Anglican Community Services, and what it takes to create a mentally healthy and inclusive workplace.

Youths and Advocacy (Track 5)

14. Recognising that patients and caregivers are the key components of patient-centred care, IMH’s “Voices of Experience” (VoE) programme taps on a cross-departmental, common pool of patients and caregivers for focus groups, advocacy or consultation work within IMH. This track reviews the VoE journey so far and examines the potential and power that mental health advocacy has in making the voices of service users heard.

Family and Caregivers (Track 6)

15. Caregivers play an important role in improving mental healthcare services and should be given opportunities to contribute more in this regard. This track will provide practical guidance on how to set up a caregiver support group and how to lead them in ways that promote growth and resilience in families. A caregiver, a gerontology expert and a service provider will also share their first-hand experiences on the complexities of caregiving.

Primary Care and the Community (Track 8)

16. This track will look at the integration of mental health with primary care, where access is improved and where mental health needs are more likely to be identified and treated together with the co-morbid physical condition. It will also highlight how persons with mental health issues who are discharged from hospital care can continue to receive community support to stay well.

Last year, the General Practitioners (GPs) under the Mental Health-GP (MH-GP) Partnership Programme saw over 1,000 new cases related to mental health issues in the community. Under the same Programme, more primary care doctors, including those from polyclinics and family medicine centres, were also involved in diagnosing and managing persons with mental health issues in the community this year. These GPs are supported by community intervention teams, which regularly monitor and ensure that these persons with mental health needs are taking care of their personal well-being.

Peer Empowerment (Track 10)

17. This track uncovers the paradigm shift towards a more peer-led and recovery oriented approach in mental health services, where persons with mental health issues actively participate in the design and implementation of services. Peer support has been found to have immense positive effects on

both persons with mental health issues and their peers. This session will bring mental healthcare and social service professionals, a peer support specialist and a mental health advocate together to discuss the unique role of peers and peer specialists in mental health recovery, and how community recovery begins with the empowerment of persons in recovery.

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About the Institute of Mental Health, Singapore

The Institute of Mental Health (IMH) a member of the National Healthcare Group, 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 therapy services in hospital-based and community-based settings. 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 providing clinical services, IMH also leads in mental health research and training the next generation of mental health professionals in Singapore. For more information, please visit www.imh.com.sg.

About the Agency for Integrated Care

The Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) seeks to create a vibrant Care Community enabling people to live well and age gracefully. AIC coordinates and facilitates efforts in care integration to achieve the best care outcomes for our clients. We do this by empowering them with health and social care information

and arranging for their care when they are discharged from hospitals. We enable stakeholders to raise the quality of care, and also enhance collaboration by working with health and social care providers to increase services to support the ageing population. Our work in the community brings care services and information closer to those in need. For more information, please visit www.aic.sg.

About the Health Promotion Board

The Health Promotion Board (HPB) was established as a statutory board under the Ministry of Health, Singapore, in 2001 with the vision of building “A Nation of Healthy People”. HPB aims to empower the people of Singapore to attain optimal health, increase the quality and years of healthy life and prevent illness, disability and premature death. As the key agency overseeing national health promotion and disease prevention programmes, HPB spearheads health education, promotion and prevention programmes as well as creates a health-supportive environment in Singapore. It develops and organises relevant health promotion and disease prevention programmes, reaching out to the healthy, the at-risk and the unhealthy at all stages of life – children, youths, adults and older Singapore residents. Its health promotion programmes include nutrition, mental health, physical activity, smoking control and communicable disease education. HPB also promotes healthy ageing, integrated health screening, and chronic disease education and management. For more information, please visit: www.hpb.gov.sg

About National Council of Social Service (NCSS)

NCSS is the umbrella body for over 450 member voluntary welfare organisations in Singapore. Its mission is to provide leadership and direction in enhancing the capabilities and capacity of our members, advocating for social service needs and strengthening strategic partnerships, for an effective social service ecosystem. For more information, please visit: www.ncss.gov.sg

Chinese Translations**Annex 1**

Institute of Mental Health	心理卫生学院
Agency for Integrated Care	护联中心
Health Promotion Board	保健促进局
National Council of Social Service	国家福利理事会
Associate Professor Chua Hong Choon Chief Executive Officer Institute of Mental Health	蔡奉俊副教授 院长 心理卫生学院
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Caregivers Alliance Limited	照顾者联盟
Singapore Association for Mental Health	新加坡心理健康协会
Singapore Anglican Community Services	新加坡圣公会社区服务