

USAGE OF CAREGIVER RESPITE SERVICES INCREASED BY AT LEAST 50% BETWEEN 2015 AND 2017



1. Elvin Tan is a two-time caregiver. He now looks after his 68-year-old brother with schizophrenia and used to care for his late mother with dementia. Since being a caregiver, he has learnt much about himself. The 54-year-old retiree has also grown closer to his mother and brother. There have been challenging moments, but also fond memories.



2. “Acknowledging that I am a caregiver made me aware that I need support. For example, we need skills and knowledge to give care. When we feel close to our tipping point, we need to turn to people who can encourage, advise and support us, so that we can take a break,” shared Elvin. As a second-time caregiver to his brother, Elvin walked his talk. He asked the medical social worker at the Institute for Mental Health (IMH) for day-time caregiver support, and his brother now attends All Saints Home (Tampines)’s day care centre a few days each week.

Greater Awareness of the Importance of Respite

3. Increasingly, more caregivers like Elvin are taking heed of the importance of their mental and physical wellbeing. To date, over 1,600 people have tapped on respite services offered at selected day care centres and nursing homes. Usage of these respite services has increased by at least 50% between 2015 and 2017.

4. The length of these services varies from a few hours at the centres so that caregivers can take a break and run errands, to up to 30 days in a nursing home. The latter supports caregivers who need to take an extended break to seek their own medical treatment for example.

5. Dr Jason Cheah, Chief Executive Officer of Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) shared, “A healthier and happier caregiver can provide better, longer-term care for their loved ones. Working with the National Council for Social Service (NCSS), we are organising our first Caregiver Symposium to drive home the message of the importance of psychological wellness for caregivers. By raising awareness of the various caregiver support and respite services available in the community, we also hope that those caregivers who need the respite will make use of them.”

6. Apart from respite care services, AIC and NCSS member organisations are rolling out other forms of caregiver support. Some examples include:

- **Peer support.** NCSS member organisations such as Caregivers Alliance Limited (CAL) have developed a network of caregiver support groups to allow caregivers to share their experiences and support one another. For CAL, over 2,300 caregivers of persons with mental health issues have completed their 12-session Caregiver-to-Caregiver Education programme since it started in 2012. Participants are encouraged to join online support groups using WhatsApp chatgroups to provide support and information to each other outside of the training sessions and after completing the programme. CAL estimates that more than 100 online support groups have since been formed. Other social service organisations like AWWA are also piloting caregiver support group projects to help provide extra support to caregivers.
- **Training for domestic helpers.** In November 2016, AIC introduced the ElderCarer Foreign Domestic Worker (FDW) Scheme for families who need to urgently hire a helper trained in eldercare. The number of participating employment agencies has grown from eight since inception to over 40 today, with more than 270 families benefitting from this scheme.

First Nationwide Study on Caregivers' Quality Of Life Underway

7. A nationwide study will be conducted by NCSS this year to better understand caregivers' quality of life. The study will reach out to those caring for children and

adults with disability, persons with chronic illness and persons with mental health issues. Findings such as the level of social support they receive, their psychological needs and the relationship between caregivers and their care recipients will facilitate planning for caregiver services. Results of the study will be released in the second half of 2019.

8. Ms Tina Hung, NCSS' Deputy Chief Executive Officer shared, "Caregivers play a critical role in supporting their loved ones on a daily basis, often putting themselves second. To avoid burnout, caregivers need to be empowered to practise self-care and be connected with the support resources available. This inaugural symposium takes a person-centred approach to equip them with skills and knowledge to empower their journey. We hope that this brings us one step closer to realising the social service sector's shared vision of having every person, (including caregivers), empowered to live with dignity in a caring and inclusive society."

Empowering Caregivers and Care Professionals

9. About 800 caregivers and professionals attended the inaugural Caregiver Symposium at the Lifelong Learning Institute on 3 February 2018. This symposium was graced by Guest-of-Honour Dr Amy Khor, Senior Minister of State for Health.

10. The event was held as two separate back-to-back sessions for caregivers and professionals respectively. Themed "Psychosocial Wellness in Caregiving", it aimed to raise awareness about caregiving, including the importance of self-care, and better prepare caregivers for their roles. Keynote speaker Dr Saamdu Chetri from Bhutan shared on realising happiness through mindful caregiving. Other topics include acceptance of one's caregiver role, advance care planning, and the impact of caregiving on psychological wellbeing and health.

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About Agency for Integrated Care

The Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) is set up by the Ministry of Health (MOH) to oversee, coordinate and facilitate all efforts in care integration. Our mission is to achieve best care outcomes for our patients 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 National Council of Social Service

National Council of Social Service (NCSS) is the umbrella body for over 450 member social service 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. Community Chest and Social Service Institute (SSI) are part of NCSS. For more information, please visit www.ncss.gov.sg.

Caregiver Symposium Programme

Time	Activity
For Caregivers	
8:15am – 9:00am	Registration
9:00am	Arrival of Guest of Honour (GOH)
9:00am – 9:15am	Opening Performance
9:15am – 9:30am	Welcome Speech by GOH, Dr Amy Khor, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Health
9:30am – 10:00am	Realising Happiness through Mindful Caregiving by Dr Saamdu Chetri, Visiting Professor for Rekhi Centre of Excellence for Science of Happiness under IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) Kharagpur
10:00am	GOH takes leave
10:00am – 10:15am	Tea break
10:15am – 10:40am	A Caregiver's Roller Coaster Journey by Dr Joseph Khoo, General Practitioner
10:40am – 11:25am	Art Therapy for Self Care: 'Note to Self' Therapeutic Art Experiential by Ms Karen Koh, Art Therapist
11:25am – 11:50am	Advance Care Planning: What is Best for my Loved Ones? by Ms Janelle Chan, Senior Medical Social Worker, Singapore General Hospital
11:50am – 12:15pm	Leave A Legacy and Protect Your Loved Ones by Mr Patrick Tan, Founder & CEO of Fortis Law Corporation
12.15pm – 1:15pm	Lunch & Fringe Wellness Activities
For Care Professionals	
1:00pm – 1:45pm	Registration
1:45pm – 2:10pm	The Caregiving Journey: Role of Care Professionals in Supporting Caregivers by Yong Cheng Huat, Caregiver

Time	Activity
2:10pm – 2:35pm	Psychological and Health Impacts of Caregiving by Dr Rahul Malhotra, Associate Professor, Centre for Ageing Research and Education, Duke-NUS
2.35pm – 3:00pm	To What Extent Does Instrumental Support Address Caregivers' Distress by Ms Anita Ho , Training & Services Development Consultant (Eldercare and Carer Support)
3:00pm – 3:15pm	Tea break
3:15pm – 3:40pm	The Effects Of A Multi-Family Group Programme Targeting Individuals With Early Psychosis And Their Families In Singapore by Mr Wilfred Liang, Case Manager, Institute of Mental Health
3:40pm – 4:00pm	The Need for Culturally Appropriate Advance Care Planning Advocacy and Conversations by Mr Andy Sim, Principal Medical Social Worker, Singapore General Hospital
4:00pm	Closing

Resources for Caregivers

Disability	AWWA Caregiver Service (Disability) Tel: 1800-2992-992 <i>Mon to Fri: 9.00am – 6.00pm</i>
Eldercare	The Seniors Helpline (manned by SAGE Counselling Centre) Tel: 1800-555-5555 <i>Mon to Fri: 9.00am – 7.00pm</i> <i>Sat: 9.00am – 1.00pm</i>
	Singapore Silver Pages (developed by AIC) www.silverpages.sg
	Singapore Silver Line (manned by AIC) 1800-650-6060 <i>Mon to Fri: 8.30am to 8.30pm</i> <i>Sat: 8.30am to 4pm</i>
	AICare Links (manned by AIC) 1. AICare Link @ Maxwell (above Amoy Food Centre) 2. AICare Link @ Changi General Hospital (CGH) 3. AICare Link @ Khoo Teck Puat Hospital (KTPH) 4. AICare Link @ Ng Teng Fong General Hospital (NTFGH) 5. AICare Link @ National University Hospital (NUH) 6. AICare Link @ Singapore General Hospital (SGH) 7. AICare Link @ Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH)
Mental Health	Caregivers Association of the Mentally Ill 24/7 helpline: 6782 9371
	Caregivers Alliance Limited Caregivers Support Centre: 6388 2686 <i>Mon to Fri: 9.00am – 6.00pm</i>
	Care In Mind (manned by AIC) Email: careinmind@aic.sg