September - December 2012

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MICA Permit: 192/12/2011
Persons labelled by their psychiatric disability often become victims of ostracism and consequently develop a sense of self that reinforces a “patient” identity, creating self-stigma and perpetuating social stigma. In response to this vicious cycle, the mental health consumer movement was born, seeking a culture of health and ability in recovery-based environments as opposed to a culture of illness and disability.

Peer support is a system of giving and receiving help founded on psychosocial processes such as experiential knowledge, social learning theory and the helper-therapy principle. Because of their life experience, peer support specialists have an expertise that professional training cannot replicate. They are a powerful force in empowering individuals to outgrow the mental patient role and in progressing societies towards democracy based on justice and equality.

In this issue, we are very excited to feature two outstanding role models to persons recovering from mental illness: Dr. Daniel Fisher, Executive Director of the National Empowerment Center and keynote speaker for our World Mental Health Day 2012 celebrations, and Mr. Julius Chan, pioneer Peer Support Specialist of SAMH. We are also honoured to have been selected for the inaugural Charity Governance Award for small- to medium-sized charities out of a field of 50 applicants.

As 2012 comes to a close, SAMH would like to wish all of our readers Merry Christmas and a Wonderful New Year!

Kelvin Teng
Editor
From 2 to 5 October 2012, Dr Daniel Fisher with co-trainer Ms Sam Ahrens, conducted the Emotional CPR (eCPR) Train the Facilitator Workshop in IMH’s Seminar Rooms 1 & 2. Both trainers travelled all the way from the United States to our little Red Dot. There were also three facilitators from Australia – Jenny Speed, Sharon Stocker and Vinay Nair – who assisted in the class work.

Emotional crisis is a universal experience – it can happen to anyone at any time and it can result from any event: illness, abuse, violence, disaster, or even loss or threat of loss of something important in a person’s life. Just as physical CPR can save the life of a person who had a cardiac arrest, eCPR can also benefit a person experiencing emotional distress. It is an educational programme designed to teach people to assist others through an emotional crisis using three simple steps:

1. Connect with Compassion and Concern to Communicate one’s own stories that reflect the same feelings the person in distress is having
2. emPower to experience Passion, Purpose, and to Plan and Perform
3. Revitalise through Re-establishing Relationships, Routines, and Rhythms in the community.

The training was very hands-on with many role-plays. The participants were divided into groups and each group was tasked to do a presentation towards the end of the training. The trainers and facilitators all did a wonderful job in raising awareness of our internal dialogues that interfere with deep listening as we give support to a person in distress.

Skills in deep listening are crucial in making the connection between a person in distress and the person giving the support. Without that connection, it will be almost impossible for a person in crisis to reach the stage of being empowered and eventually be revitalised. A very important principle in eCPR is recognising that each person is a whole being unbroken by crisis. The person experiencing the crisis is capable of taking charge of his/her life and making decisions.

Through the course, I experienced first-hand that eCPR truly works! The role-plays I did as part of the class work were “real-play” and my partners practised the eCPR principles taught during the training. Another key thing that I learned during the training was self-care that involved doing eCPR on myself, also known as Internal CPR (iCPR). It is a simple method of keeping connected with something that keeps me alive, of keeping myself empowered to move towards my dreams, and of keeping myself revitalised.

Kate Loreto
"The Way Forward – Weaving Community Safety Networks" was the theme for this year’s World Mental Health Day. Jointly organised by SAMH, Institute for Mental Health (IMH) and Agency for Integrated Care (AIC), it was held on 6 October 2012 at the Drama Theatre, School Of The Arts. Dr Lam Pin Min, Chairman, Government Parliamentary Committee (Health), graced the occasion as Guest of Honour.

It was an eventful day that saw the launch of various exciting initiatives – the National Schizophrenia Network helmed by IMH, a photography exhibition “Picture My World” featuring the works of 15 recovering patients with mental illness, a mobile application with a suite of useful information for people living with depression developed by RealTime Health in collaboration with SAMH, and the presentation of certificates to peer specialists who had passed the certification training organised by SAMH and Singapore Anglican Community Services (SACS).

This year’s celebration was especially heartwarming with the sharing of personal stories that took place onstage. In his opening address, SAMH’s President, Dr Daniel Fung, shared about his mother who has dementia. Dr Daniel Fisher, the keynote speaker for the day, talked about finding purpose in life while recovering from schizophrenia. SAMH’s first staff peer specialist, Mr Julius Chan, shared his experiences and his aspirations as a peer specialist.

Other highlights of the afternoon were the brilliant performances by IMH’s Very Special and Outstanding Performers (VSOP), SAMH beneficiaries who performed an exotic masked dance, rock band Rubber Band which thrilled the audience in funky space costumes, and a delightful puppet performance by SAMH beneficiaries and Paper Monkey Theatre to cap off the festivities.
In Conversation

with Dan and Tish

Dr. Daniel Fisher received his AB from Princeton University, his Ph.D. in biochemistry from the University of Wisconsin and his M.D. from George Washington University. He is a board-certified psychiatrist who completed his residency at Harvard Medical School. He is presently Executive Director of the National Empowerment Center.

Dr. Fisher is also a person who has recovered from schizophrenia. He was hospitalised several times prior to becoming a psychiatrist. He is one of the few psychiatrists in the USA who publicly discusses his recovery from mental illness. He is a role model for others who are struggling to recover as his life dispels the myth that people do not recover from mental illness. His recovery and work in the field were recognised by his selection as a member of the White House Commission on Mental Health.

On Dr Fisher’s very first trip to Singapore, he and his wife, Dr. Letitia K. Davis who was by his side, kindly shared their beautiful story with us – an inspiring narration of trust, love, hope and recovery.

When I was 18, my roommates in college noticed I was unhappy. However, I did not notice this. I was 25 years old when I first noticed something was wrong. My first wife left me and I experienced great loneliness and emptiness and a sense of failure. I was working as a biochemist at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) on the so-called biochemical basis of mental illness. My laboratory work began to feel meaningless as I learned from my personal experience that mental health issues have more to do with lost dreams than lost dopamine.

I went into psychoanalysis within several weeks of my wife leaving to understand what had gone wrong in my personal and my work life. Psychoanalysis was not right for me at that time. I became increasingly paranoid and took psychedelic drugs to relieve my unhappiness, but they made it worse. I became so frightened that I no longer felt safe to talk or move. My condition was called catatonia. I was hospitalised and given Thorazine, an early antipsychotic medication. I had two more hospitalisations: one at age 26 and another at 30.

At age 30, I met my wife to be, Tish, at a dance. We started to date and developed a good relationship. After a year, we went on a camping trip and both became frightened on a cold and windy night. We were worried that we might be attacked by a peculiar man we met earlier in the day. I was unable to attend my medical school classes. My fear magnified into paranoia and I again became catatonic. This time was different, however. Tish stayed with me and I trusted her. She was frightened, but she asked my friends what she should do. One friend reassured her that he had seen me go through these incidents before and said that I came out in better condition than when I went into them. This gave her the confidence to stay by my side.

I felt safe enough in her presence to re-emerge and started talking and went back to medical school. Tish has always believed in me. She never felt I would need to go through another acute break from reality and she was right. We continued to date over the next 4 years, and have been married for 33 years. We have two wonderful daughters, aged 30 and 28.

Daniel B. Fisher, M.D., Ph.D.
Executive Director, National Empowerment Center

When I met Dan, he described his psychiatric history so I knew he had problems in the past. I saw no evidence of his disturbance during our first year together. He seemed more attuned to and able to express his emotions compared to other men I had known. This was an appealing quality.

About a year into our relationship, we went on a camping trip. We both became frightened. Driving back, he started talking in ways that did not make sense. This got worse over the next several days and he started acting strangely as well. For instance he put his face into his food. I was frightened and panicky. I felt I was losing someone I loved. The person I knew was not there.

I tried to listen and be there for him, but realised that was not enough. Because I knew of his history, I remembered he had been through similar episodes before and had recovered. I spoke with his therapist and close friend. They both gave me reassurance that he could recover. I had hope because of the knowledge that he could. At that point he took medication for several days. Surrounded by friends, he came back.

There was a minor recurrence on a trip a year later. He was starting a difficult rotation in medical school and also reading a science fiction book. It was about machines coming to life which was reminiscent of his earlier delusions. We talked and he agreed to stop reading the book. I felt he made a commitment to knowing himself and was actively taking care of himself so that this would not happen again. This was very important to me. He was able to continue his medical school studies and we were able to continue our relationship.

I was fortunate that these experiences were short in duration and I did not consider giving up. I believe that because of what Dan has gone through, he is very emotionally attuned and that in this way he teaches me and gives me strength. What pulls us through is that we recognise each other’s strengths and weaknesses and we help each other.

Letitia K. Davis, Sc.D.
Director, Occupational Health Surveillance Program
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
The day finally came for us to apply for a HDB flat under the Build to Order (BTO) Scheme – a home that we can eventually call our very own. My wife and I met our social worker at HDB. We were so excited as there was so much to look forward to! It is as if we won first prize in a lottery!

We occupied ourselves by first viewing the show flats (3-room, 4-room and 5-room) even though our plan was to apply for a 3-room flat. We were fascinated by the layout, design, built-in renovations and the sense of comfort that comes with the possibility of living in a flat like that.

We had so many questions for the HDB customer service officer. We had a few stressful moments of having to furnish full CPF contribution statements and a full year’s pay slips before we could proceed with the application for the special grant. It almost felt as if I was taking a loan from a money-lender. I was like Oh man… so cumbersome!

To think – we are going to have a house of our own and we can plan exactly how we want it to be! It takes someone like my wife and I, who have experienced being homeless, to truly appreciate the stability of having a place to truly call our own. I recall the time when I was homeless and I went to a church for help and Ps Jan was kind enough to put me up at his home until I was referred to BGGH. It made me realize how accepting he and his wife were – to be able to trust and want to go out of their comfort zone to help someone like me (whom they have only met about three or four times) by offering me a place in their own household.

My wife and I hope that one day we would be able to do likewise for someone else who is in the same boat as me then. For the time being, we look forward to favourable news of getting the grant and finally our flat! Thanks to BGGH staff and to my best friend Mike for their support.

E & B

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The opening ceremony started with a ribbon-cutting ceremony by the Guest-Of-Honour, Mr Tan Kien Lip, 41st Vice-President of Ngee Ann Kongsi. Thereafter, guests proceeded to tour the exhibition. The Club 3R and Pelangi Village artists were extremely excited upon finding their art pieces, all of which were nicely displayed at different areas around the exhibition hall. Some of the artworks were also on sale. The beneficiaries had learnt basic pottery skills during their art lessons and each of their art pieces were unique in theme and style. After posing with their respective art works for pictures, they were treated to a sumptuous buffet, ending the event on a delicious note.

The experience was an eye-opening and inspiring experience for the SAMH artists, and I am sure we will be seeing more masterpieces from them in the future.
SAMH Wins Inaugural Charity Governance Award 2012

It was first meant to be part of an unpretentious learning journey towards excellence in raising governance standards. So it was a nice surprise for all of us in SAMH to hear the 6 November announcement that the Association had won the inaugural Charity Governance Awards 2012. The Charity Council had introduced this to promote governance standards in the charity sector and give recognition to well-governed charities, holding them up as examples for others to learn from.

At the Awards ceremony held at the School of the Arts, SAMH President Associate Professor Dr Daniel Fung said, “We are all responsible for our work, whether we are board members, senior management or staff. In SAMH, we try to empower everyone from volunteers to staff to be accountable for our work and exercise leadership in helping people with mental illness in our society.” He added that mutual trust, respect and the cooperation of all concerned had contributed to raising governance standards in the Association, and that we should continuously strive for further improvement.

Good governance, and especially the integrity and commitment of our people, are the backbone of the Association. We are honoured to have won the award, and we know well that we have the duty to be a good example and ensure best governance practices in all areas, including fundraising and donor management practices; Board governance; keeping current and relevant policies and procedures; financial and human resource management; and ensuring transparency in our communications with all staff, stakeholders and supporters. We trust that our accomplishment will help to raise the awareness of good governance practices, and inspire others to take the same route we did.

James Wong

Jurong Lake Run 2012

The warmth of the morning sun, the fresh lakeside air, the gravel crunching underneath one’s shoes: these were some of the sensations experienced by the 15,000 participants waiting to start the Jurong Lake Run 2012, an annual event organised by the Taman Jurong Community Sports Club. Its tagline “Running As One” encapsulates the hope of integrating members of the community and the corporate world in support of charitable causes. SAMH was privileged to be nominated by Mdm Halimah Yacob, Minister of State for MCYS and MP for Jurong GRC (Bukit Batok East), to be one of the beneficiaries of the Run.

The stunning views and cultural heritage of Jurong Lake Park, Chinese Garden and Japanese Garden provided a scenic setting befitting the worthy cause and lifted the steps of every runner. Near the finishing point was a lively carnival with all sorts of interesting booths set up by different organisations spreading the message of community integration.

Many participants in the day’s festivities stopped by the SAMH booth to contribute their well-wishes to people recovering from mental illnesses at the Beyond the Naked Eye mobile art exhibition. Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, who was the event’s Guest of Honour, also stopped by to pen “One heart, One mind” in support of our cause.

A total of $250,000 was raised that day, out of which SAMH will be receiving a kind donation of $15,000, but more importantly, the event achieved its objective in strengthening relationships between people, corporations and community agencies. We can hardly wait to run again in 2013!

Dan Astryte
Asia’s much-awaited garden and flower show, the Singapore Garden Festival returned for the fourth time from 7 to 15 July 2012 with a record number of international and local award-winning garden and flower designers and displays. The event brought together 39 designers representing 19 countries across four continents under one roof to showcase their masterpieces at the Suntec Singapore International Convention & Exhibition Centre.

Clients of SAMH Bukit Gombak Group Homes had the opportunity to visit the exhibition thanks to a kind sponsor who donated tickets for the event. Spending three hours at the exhibition feasting their eyes on the enchanting and exuberant displays was time well-spent to help the clients relax and relieve stress. Everyone was awed by the beauty of the gardens and commented that they really enjoyed the outing.

On 11 November 2012, Mindset Care Limited organised their event, The MINDSET Challenge 2012, which is a vertical climb up 33 storeys of the Marina Bay Financial Centre Tower 1 to raise awareness and understanding of mental health issues throughout the Jardine group of companies. SAMH was invited to set up an educational and craft sales booth. At the same time a beneficiary from SAMH was also invited to share his story with managers and senior staff of Jardine business units. SAMH President, Dr Daniel Fung presented in his capacity as Chairman of Medical Board, IMH and advisor of Jardine Mindset, sharing with the audience on the need to change the mindset on mental illness and mental health.

Mr Aljunied, one of the core persons in the mosque committee, said that they were more than happy to share the joy of giving amongst the residents. Khalid Mosque is very well known for their delicious briyani dam – a north Indian specialty consisting of fragrant basmati rice cooked with spices into golden aromatic perfection, served with mutton “dam” and vegetable curry or “dalcha”, with dashes of “achar” or pickled cucumbers. Even the evening rain and late arrival of the residents to the mosque due to traffic congestion did not deprive them from receiving VIP treatment upon arrival, with reserved seats prepared for them plus dedicated servers to attend to them.

Coincidentally, the Minister of Information, Communications and the Arts, Dr Yaacob Ibrahim was also present at the mosque as a special guest at their iftar event along with the mosque committee members and other prominent figures. Dr Yaacob came by to speak with our SAMH staff before taking his leave. He said, “This is truly a good partnership that SAMH and Khalid Mosque have built, in showing what the true meaning of Ramadan is all about.”
Mooncakes for Mid-Autumn

On 29 September, two clients and two staff from BGGH volunteered at an annual mooncake-making session organised by Xin Yi Zhong Xing, a Taoist group, in collaboration with Pasir Ris Elias Community Club, with the aim of making 10,000 mooncakes for distribution to the less fortunate in Singapore.

The event was held at Pasir Ris Elias Community Club. After donning the apron, mouth mask, and gloves, we waited patiently to be assigned the task of the day. Those with little knowledge started with something simple, like weighing and rolling the snow skin and lotus paste into appropriate sized balls. Although we hardly knew anyone, we managed to settle in fast and work alongside the other volunteers. The atmosphere was cheery and light hearted as everyone was working hard towards a common goal. Close to noon, there was an announcement informing everyone that we were halfway to the target. The whole room erupted in exuberant cheers!

We worked hard throughout the entire day and even brought back some mooncakes for our BGGH clients! As our clients made their way back to BGGH, dog-tired, I am sure they were comforted by the fact that they had in many ways made the elderly folks smile at the warmth of the mooncakes.

Barclays Staff Volunteer at Activity Hub

On a warm August afternoon, a group of volunteers from Barclays visited SAMH Activity Hub as part of the organisation’s efforts to support the charities in which they work, through community partnerships by giving back time, energy and resources. Led by Mr Tan Wen Xiang, Deputy Head, Vocational Services, the visitors engaged the residents of Pelangi Village in various games such as Simon Says. The volunteers and our in-house musical group Rubber Band also took turns wowing each other with song performances. The residents enjoyed themselves thoroughly in the company of the Barclays staff and hope that they will come back to visit again soon.

Arts@Work

The corporate programme Arts@Work is a collaborative effort between Singapore Association for Mental Health and National Arts Council. As part of their welfare programme, staff of Far East Organization took part in four sessions of Pointillism. The participants had the chance to experience an art style that was foreign to them. Over the course, it was a delight to see their sketches come alive on canvas. In addition, these sessions allowed them to interact more with their colleagues from different departments.
SAMH Social Enterprise

The SAMH social enterprise has been really taking off since its inception last year with many stores and opportunities set up in the past few months at various locations. The programme serves to help clients recovering from mental illness enhance retail skills and facilitate readiness for competitive employment as well as to increase awareness of mental health issues and reduce social stigma.

Jardine MINDSET Roadshow
On 20-21 July 2012 MINDSET held a Mental Health Awareness roadshow at City Link Mall which SAMH participated in. The roadshow was for various agencies to showcase crafts and useful items made by beneficiaries.

Suntec City with SingYouth Hub
SingYouth Hub, a non-profit organisation provided a social enterprise booth during the Hari Raya festive season for SAMH where clients from Activity Hub sold handmade products.

Hougang Mall
As part of Hougang Mall’s community integration programme, the mall invited SAMH to set up a booth for a period of six weeks spanning the months of September and October 2012. Many members of the public actively engaged with the trainees and also supported us by purchasing items.

*SCAPE Underground
In October 2012, *SCAPE introduced a new retail concept called *SCAPE Underground which invited social entrepreneurs to set up booths selling their products. As part of their community outreach, *SCAPE also invited SAMH to set up a social enterprise booth for a period of three months. On 20 October 2012, Second Minister for Trade and Industry, Mr. S Iswaran launched the retail concept and visited our booth and interacted with the retail trainees.

The success of the SAMH social enterprise would not have been possible without the gracious support of our partners and the generous opportunities they have provided. We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for their partnership in creating a supportive and integrative community for persons recovering from mental illness.

WSQ Food and Beverage Course

In August, SAMH, North West Community Development Council (NWCDC) and Eduquest International Institute jointly conducted a Work Service Quality (WSQ) Food and Beverage Course held at Activity Hub for 13 participants from Pelangi Village, YouthReach and BGGH. This marked the second collaboration between SAMH and NWCDC to provide training and employment opportunities for persons with mental illness.

The comprehensive week-long programme comprises four modules: Customer Interaction, Delivering Service Excellence, Offering Customised Personalised Services and Basic Food Hygiene. Every course participant completed all the modules successfully and 11 graduates proceeded to a selection interview for service crew positions under the local franchisee of Subway Restaurants, a chain of sandwich outlets. Eight of them succeeded in getting jobs and commenced employment on 8 October 2012 at outlets in various locations.

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to North West CDC and Remnant Holdings Pte Ltd for going the extra mile to provide opportunities for our clients.
INTERVIEW WITH ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR LESLIE LIM

Associate Professor Leslie Lim is a Senior Consultant who has worked at the Institute of Mental Health for 13 years and has been with the Singapore General Hospital for the past 7 years. He holds numerous distinguished appointments including Adjunct Associate Professor with Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School, Clinical Associate Professor with the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore, and visiting Consultant Psychiatrist with the National Cancer Centre. He was also the immediate past president of SAMH and currently Honorary Treasurer. Associate Professor Lim has published numerous journal articles and authored books and book chapters. His latest book is titled “Depression: The Misunderstood Illness”.

1. Why did you choose to specialise in mental health?

I first decided to become a doctor at age eight to help alleviate suffering in mankind. When I had to make a decision to specialise, there were not many psychiatrists in Singapore. I felt appalled at the plight of psychiatric patients and the stigma surrounding psychiatric illness. It seemed fine to admit you suffered from diabetes or cancer but intolerable shame surrounded the diagnosis of mental illness. With the marginalisation of the mentally ill by people who do not understand mental illness, our patients are severely disadvantaged. This provided the impetus for me to take up the challenge to improve the lot of the mentally ill, to help them lift their heads in society again.

2. What do you enjoy about your work as a psychiatrist?

Opportunities to interact with patients and to see them improve with treatment. I am especially gratified when patients defy all odds to recover from their poor prognosis. They are able to complete their education, hold down jobs and raise a family.

3. What are some challenges that you face?

The whole profession faces stigma. I have visited numerous psychiatric wards overseas. Most of them are situated at the rear of buildings far away from the public eye. Mental health has been given low priority until recent times. Mentally ill patients with physical problems are also less likely to be taken seriously concerning their physical symptoms. As for patients, many often have preconceived ideas about their treatment. They want to stop treatment the minute they get better. This leads to early relapse.

4. How do you think mental illness diagnosis and treatment has changed since you first went into practice?

Treatment-wise there has been newer medications that are better tolerated, such as the atypical antipsychotics and the newer antidepressants. Apart from drug treatments, the use of psychological treatments is also important. I have often stressed the importance of psychosocial interventions and advocated the practice of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT). I am pleased to note that these therapies are used more extensively nowadays, but there are still relatively few doctors who practise CBT, instead preferring to refer their patients to other professionals.

5. Finally, what advice would you like to give persons with mental health needs?

Have faith in your psychiatrist and counsellor and have faith in God. Stick to your treatment even though your symptoms have disappeared and you are feeling well. Psychiatric conditions very often require lifelong management. Ask questions of your psychiatrist if you are not sure about anything. He/she can advise you when it is time to stop treatment.
Hi, I’m Paul, new Vocational Placement Officer at Activity Hub. I want to contribute and make the residents feel warmth and care. I enjoy photography very much and do street photography during my leisure time.

Hi all, I’m Zhi Ling, Occupational Therapist at Activity Hub. My work is very interesting as it allows me to interact with people from all walks of life. Being someone who enjoys challenges, joining SAMH has never been a better choice. During my free time, I wheelchair dance, trade stocks, swim, cycle and read books.

Hi, I’m Valerie, Rehabilitation Officer at Activity Hub. My interest is to work with people with disabilities in the area of vocational rehabilitation. I spend my free time with my family and friends. I love running and I drink Coke every day.

Hi, I am Tiffany Loh, Social Work Assistant. I used to work in accounts but I switched to social work to pursue my passion. My ambition is to work with individuals with mental illness and help them recover and regain their rightful place in our community. I like to swim, listen to K-pop music, chill out with friends, sing karaoke and read.

Hello! I’m Dorothy Lim, Art Coordinator. I love sweating it out in a game of captain’s ball or frisbee, immersing myself in orchestral music and spending time with loved ones. I think of myself as a piece of clay, imperfect and incomplete; but through the joys and struggles in life, I’m moulded to become a person with life full of worth and meaning.

Hi, my name’s Natalia, Counsellor at Insight Centre. I enjoy meeting different people and helping them to improve their lives. I’m passionate about psychology and mental health, and am always curious to learn more. I also travel frequently and enjoy learning new things, watching movies and outdoor activities.

Hello, I’m Shu Rong, Case Worker at Oasis Day Centre. It is critical to empower individuals with mental illness and to assist them in reintegrating back to society. I’m glad to be part of the process, and hopefully someday, individuals with mental illness will no longer have to bear social stigma. I love travelling and exploring new places and I enjoy a good read.

Dear SAMHians, I’m Min, Centre Coordinator for Jurong Club3R. I’m glad to be part of this dynamic family of dedicated professionals. Mental health is a subject that is close to my heart and I really believe that social work is my calling. I enjoy playing golf, sewing, reading, watching independent films and writing.

Hallo SAMHsonites, greetings and salutations! I’m Julius Athanasius Chan. I’m privileged and honoured to be the first Peer Support Specialist in SAMH. I’m an advocate and am very passionate when it comes to recovery issues and the healing process. I was a Trainer for people with intellectual disability for about 9 years in VWOs.

Hello, we are the team from HQ Finance. I’m Irene Tan, Finance Manager, who loves eating for energy, sleeping and shopping to release stress. I hope I can contribute toward the progress of SAMH.

I’m Rohana, Admin Assistant (Accounts) in the Finance Department. Watching documentaries and horror shows are what I enjoy most. The common things that we share are monies, figures and $$$$$$$$. Also, when the going gets tough, the tough goes shopping!
Music Therapy

1. What is the role of music therapy in mental health care?
Music therapy involves the use of structured interaction to enable clients with mental health needs to be engaged, manage some of their symptoms, improve emotional states and express feelings relating to their experiences. Music therapists undergo comprehensive training and are adept in supporting each client’s process towards restoring, maintaining or improving health.

2. What types of music are being used?
All types of music are used, including instrumental and vocal music approaches to facilitate changes which are non-musical in nature. Music selections and active music making approaches are modified to individualised preferences and needs (i.e. song selection and music may vary accordingly).

3. Who is suitable for music therapy?
Music therapy is mainly suited for individuals of all ages with mental health issues, especially those who experience difficulty in relating to people and social situations. One does not require any prior music background in order to benefit from music therapy.

4. Is there scientific basis in music therapy?
Yes. Evidently, there are many articles published in various scholarly journals by music therapists. The Cochrane Collaboration which is recognised internationally as the “gold standard” in evidence-based healthcare exemplifies the validity of scientific basis in music therapy.

5. Does listening to music amount to music therapy?
Lin et al. (2011) reviewed almost 100 studies of music therapy and mental health and found no demonstrable evidence that simply listening to music resulted in clinical improvement as compared to music effectively used by music therapists.

"HEAL THE WORLD..."

I think it’s awful how Jason bullies Debbie all the time.

Papa says that brothers and sisters can learn to get along.

That’s right Sophie. Children can get along just like adults get along.

But Papa, Ms Boulder who lives opposite is always saying very mean things about our neighbours the Stones.

In fact, I heard her shouting at them yesterday for making too much noise during their party.

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Does it bother you to live in times like these, Ashley? Everyone seems so angry all the time. It makes me feel sad when people quarrel.

Don’t worry Sophie. I’ll give them 10 years to get things sorted out. By the time we’re grown-ups, I expect this quarry to be perfect!

We shouldn’t have to live in a world the adults have messed up. I want to live in a happy world so they had better get started!

What if they need more time?

Tell them not to bother asking for an extension. The answer will be, “NO!”
Public Forums

Thanks to your support and interest in mental health issues, SAMH public forums have enjoyed generally good attendance and lively participation. Our line-up of forums for the next quarter promises to be as enriching and exciting as before. Do mark down these dates in your calendar if you are interested in the topic, and we hope to see you there!

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<th>Topics</th>
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<td>Schizophrenia</td>
<td>8 Dec 2012</td>
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<td>Depression</td>
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<td>Caregiving</td>
<td>16 Mar 2013</td>
<td>YMCA Lee Kong Chian Auditorium</td>
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*If you wish to be on our mailing list to receive updates and invites to our public forums, kindly drop us a line with your name and email address to samhcomed@gmail.com

Every Thing Matters: SAMH Community Art Exhibition

The Singapore Association for Mental Health (SAMH) presents an exhibition of still life and pop art-inspired pieces created by the beneficiaries of SAMH. The works were produced through weekly workshops conducted by Singaporean artist Justin Lee and also features some of the artists’ works. This exhibition advocates the dignity of individuals with mental illnesses seeking to assimilate into society.

- **Opening Show:** 23 November 2012 @ 6.30pm
- **Opening Venue:** Glass Hall @ Singapore Art Museum
- **Exhibition Venue:** The Gallery 2.7 & 2.8 @ Singapore Art Museum
- **Exhibition Period:** 12 November 2012 to 21 April 2013

*Visit singaporeartmuseum.sg for more information

Contribute Today!

In Singapore, it is estimated that one in six people experience a form of mental illness at some point in their lives. SAMH needs your help to reach out to a growing number of people in need. Do you feel strongly for this important community mental health cause?

SAMH is appealing for donations to support our programmes that benefit both current and future beneficiaries. Your donation will go a long way in empowering many who need help rebuilding their lives.

SAMH is a registered Institution of Public Character and all outright donations qualify for concessory tax exemption benefits of 2.5 times the amount. For further enquiries, please contact Melissa Shepherdson at 6315 6778 or email melissa@samhealth.org.sg.
SAMH CHARITY DINNER 2013

Guest-of-Honour:
DPM Teo Chee Hean

Friday 3 May 2013 at 6.30pm
Compass West Ballroom, Resorts World Convention Centre

“SCA is proud to collaborate with SAMH once again. For the first time ever, we are happy to feature the SCA National Junior Team. This goes in line with the theme for the SAMH-SCA charity event. As the first ever country in the world to start a junior chefs’ club, we recognise the tremendous potential of youths to lead and serve the community. In showcasing the culinary talents of our youths, we hope this will inspire generosity and support from our kind donors. Bon Appetit.”

Mr Edmund Toh
President
Singapore Chefs Association

“The popular saying “out of sight, out of mind” is reversed in mental healthcare. The stigma of mental illness is best told through those who suffer from it. We hope that the stories, like the food, will “touch your hearts” and help you understand mental health better.”

Assoc Prof Daniel Fung
President
Singapore Association for Mental Health

“Embracing Families, Celebrating Life” is a timely reminder of the importance of supporting and helping our family members who may be suffering from physical or mental illness. Asian culture is deeply rooted in family traditions and customs, and what better way than to foster our bonds over a scrumptious meal to celebrate family ties? Enjoy!”

Dr Ong Say How
Chairman, Fundraising Committee
Singapore Association for Mental Health