



MINI MEDICAL
SCHOOL @ KTHP

Mental Health Matters

Is it ok not to be ok?



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As we look back on MMS 2023, we see, hear and feel your enthusiasm in learning how to care for yourselves and your loved ones. We hope that the conclusion of MMS 2023 was not the end of the chapter of learning on mental health, but the beginning to a journey of self-discovery.

In this post-event summary, we revisit what we have learnt about mental health and wellbeing, and the steps we can take to rise above our challenges.



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Revisiting MMS 2023

Session 1

HEALTHY Mind, HEALTHY LIFE

MS. JANHAVI VAINGANKAR IN SERVICE TO MENTAL HEALTH

MENTAL DISORDER (Warning sign icon)
 ! SIGNIFICANT DISTURBANCES
 OUTSIDE NORM OVER TIME
 I DIDN'T KNOW ITS A DISORDER...
 I DONT NEED HELP...
 DEPRESSION
 ALCOHOL ABUSE
 OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER
 18-34 YRS = VULNERABLE
 INTERPERSONAL SKILLS
 SPIRITUALITY
 PERSONAL GROWTH
 EMOTIONAL SUPPORT
 POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH
 ROLE OF PMH: MEDIATE
 IMPACT OF MENTAL DISORDERS ON HEALTH OUTCOMES

RISK FACTORS
 FAMILY & BODY
 BIOPHYSICAL
 PSYCHOLOGICAL
 SELF-DOUBT
 SOCIAL
 NO SOCIAL SUPPORT
 SPIRITUAL
 WHAT'S MY PURPOSE?
 DISRUPTS THINKING DIFFICULTIES IN LIFE
 MENTAL ILLNESS
 LANGUISHING...
 I CANT COPE...
 SYMPTOMS

MENTAL HEALTH
 I'M ABLE TO DEAL WITH STRESS
 FLOURISHING
 RECOVERY + WELLNESS
 ASK FOR SUPPORT
 LET GO + FORGIVE
 SLEEP
 DAILY SCHEDULE
 EXERCISE
 MEDITATION
 DIET

EMOTIONS
 CHANGES IN INSIGHT, PERSPECTIVE PERCEPTION
 EMOTIONS CONTROL BEHAVIOUR
 THINKING PERCEPTION EMOTIONS
 FEEL WELL
 FUNCTION WELL
 MAKE CHOICES
 I CAN COPE
 REALIZE ABILITIES
 DELAY 1 HR AFTER WAKING UP
 REDUCE INTAKE
 EXERCISE
 SOCIAL
 HOW WE
 30 MIN 5 X WEEK
 COFFEE
 CONSIDER TEA

WHAT IF I JUST ASK & SAY RATHER THAN GUESS & HINT

MS. KUIK SHIAO-YIN COMMON GROUND CIVIC CENTRE + CONSULTANCY

MY JOB IS TO BE CLEAR and KIND
 CLEAR
 KIND

SPEAK OUT
 WHAT YOU THINK, FEEL, WANT TO DO
 CHOOSE a HELPFUL RESPONSE
 SELF
 OTHER
 SITUATION

SLOW DOWN
 CHECK-IN
 WHAT'S GOING ON IN BODY, MIND, HEART & SOUL
 BRING OURSELVES TOGETHER
 WHICH COLUMN WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL?
 I THINK I ALSO THINK... I NOTICE...
 I VALUE (X) CAN I (REQUEST) VIA REQUEST + OFFERS I CAN (OFFER)
 NO ONE ELSE KNOWS WHAT I'M THINKING...
 RESENTMENT... IS A FORM OF ENVY...
 WHAT AM I
 • NOTICING
 • THINKING
 • FEELING
 • WANTING

MIND QUIET
 BREATHE OBSERVE
 ENLIVEN
 SOUL INTEGRATES
 FOCUS
 SPEAK TO YOURSELF AS A KIND LOVING FRIEND...
 (YOUR NAME) IT'S OK... THIS WILL PASS...
 MY THOUGHTS ARE THE STORY I MAKE UP ABOUT THE FACTS
 NOTICE...
 TURN YOUR RESENTMENT INTO A REQUEST
 Breathe...
 TEACH OTHERS HOW TO RESPOND
 ACCEPTANCE
 BODY CORE
 TEACH PEOPLE HOW TO RESPOND TO YOU?
 I'M FEELING DURIAN TODAY!

Visual: TIM HAMONS / ART OF AWAKENING

Revisiting MMS 2023

Session 2

Is it ok not to be ok?

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Steps to getting help

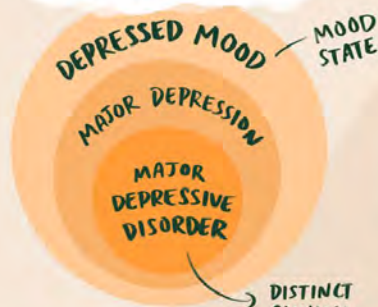


- SYMPTOMS ARE SEVERE
- FUNCTIONING IS SEVERELY AFFECTED
- OTHER MENTAL HEALTH SYMPTOMS:
 - FEELING ANXIOUS
 - ABNORMAL EXPERIENCES
Eg HEARING VOICES / SOUNDS THAT OTHERS CANNOT
- ASSOCIATED WITH PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS
- ASSOCIATED WITH SUBSTANCE / DRUGS OR MEDICATIONS

WHEN TO SEEK HELP?



WHAT IS DEPRESSION?



CAUSES OF DEPRESSION

- GENETICS
- BRAIN STRUCTURE & FUNCTION
- MEDICATION & DRUGS
- PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS
- STRESSFUL LIFE EVENTS
- SOCIAL FACTORS
- EARLY LIFE ADVERSITY
- MEDICAL CONDITIONS

NOT JUST ONE FACTOR!
BY CHIEF

PHQ-9 SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL
for.sg/phq9

EVEN IF YOU SCORE 0-9, DON'T HESITATE TO SEEK HELP IF YOU FEEL THE NEED TO!

DEPRESSION
LOW ENERGY

ANXIETY
NEED ENERGY (FLIGHT OR FIGHT)



GENETIC FACTORS (SIBLINGS, TWINS)

FORM 36% - 51% OF OVERALL RISK

WE ARE TWINS (SIBLINGS, TWINS)

WILL WE BOTH GET IT?

SAME EARLY LIFE ADVERSITY

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

DEPRESSION "LIFE IS DIFFICULT"

NO DEPRESSION "LIFE IS GOOD!"

WHERE TO SEEK HELP?



- 4. TEXT-BASED SERVICES
 - Beyond the Label helpline (BELLIE)
 - Samaritans of Singapore (SOS)
- 6. HELPLINES
 - SOS, Singapore Association for Mental Health (SAMH), Fei Yue Community Services
- C. CENTRE-BASED SUPPORT SERVICES
 - Family Service Centres (FSCs), Private Counselling
- D. COMMUNITY OUTREACH TEAMS
 - CREST / COMIT
- E. FAMILY PHYSICIANS
 - GPs, POLY CLINICS
- F. PSYCHIATRISTS & PSYCHOLOGISTS
 - General Hospitals, IMH, Private

Revisiting MMS 2023

Session 3

Recovery, Resilience & Peace of Mind

My Journey of Recovery

PROF. CHUA HONG CHOON
YISHUN HEALTH

MR. NICHOLAS LEE
RESILIENCE COLLECTIVE

REDUCE MIND CHATTER

FINDING PEACE OF MIND

GRATITUDE

SEEK SUPPORT

SHARING = RELIEF & PERSPECTIVE

MINDFULNESS
I AM GRATEFUL FOR...

HOW I AM FEELING TODAY?

TOOLS

MY CHALLENGES

JOURNAL: CHECK IN ON MYSELF EVERY DAY

TALK WITH OTHERS

RESILIENCE

BUILD SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

COPING SKILLS

PRACTICE SELF-CARE

SET REALISTIC GOALS

SEEK SUPPORT

I CAN BOUNCE BACK

SEEK OUT UPLIFTING PEOPLE + STORIES...

TALK WITH PEOPLE about your EXPERIENCE...

CONTINUE TO SEEK HELP

CANNOT EXPECT it to BE WELL ...all the time...

RECOVERY IS POSSIBLE

ALLOW SPACE for SELF-DISCOVERY & GROWTH

RECOVERY IS A JOURNEY

PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT

HOLISTIC APPROACH

PERSON-CENTERED CARE

HOPE & RESILIENCE

PEER SUPPORT

3 MYTHS: MEDICATION

SEVERE SIDE EFFECT

HAPPY PILLS

TAKE FOR LIFE

BIO-PSYCHO

SOCIAL

PSYCHO

BIO

SOCIAL MODEL

EXERCISE + NUTRITION

BRAIN STIMULATION

MEDICATION

PSYCHO THERAPY

MINDFULNESS + MEDITATION

RELAXATION

IT CAN HIT ANYONE

RECOVERY... IT'S NOT A LINEAR JOURNEY...

TIM WAINING - ART: SPANISHINKING

Here's What You Shared With Us

The background features a series of overlapping, wavy bands of color. At the top, there's a light peach or orange gradient. Below this, there are several layers of wavy bands in shades of orange, dark green, and teal. The bands flow across the page, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall aesthetic is soft and organic.



Life is a complex journey filled with a kaleidoscope of emotions, each of which plays a crucial role in shaping our human experience. From the soaring heights of joy and love to the deep valleys of sadness and anger, our emotional spectrum is vast and intricate. Emotions are not meant to fit into neat boxes; they are meant to be felt in their entirety, messy and unfiltered. It is important to remember that all these emotions are undeniably valid and lets us discover the richness and authenticity of the human experience!

- ♥ Self-Care
- Social Support
- ★ Spiritual Support
- ⊙ Setting Goals
- ▲ Finding Closure
- ✘ Non-Pharm Intervention

We are presented a myriad of challenges and roadblocks, ranging from the seemingly simple to the extraordinarily complex. These obstacles can be as diverse as the paths we tread, testing our resolve and adaptability.

Yet, it is not the nature of these challenges that defines us, but rather how we choose to strategise and navigate through them that truly matters. Our capacity to strategise, whether in the face of a minor setback or a life-altering crisis, is a testament to our resilience. It empowers us to adapt, learn and emerge stronger from every trial.

Each of us must find our own unique journey. Remember, tough times may linger, but they never last in the face of our unwavering determination. Here, we draw inspiration from the stories of resilience shared by people who have navigated their trials, exemplifying the human spirit's indomitable strength.



Strategies that people felt have helped them get through their challenges

- 1 "I share my problems with close friends & two other siblings."
- 2 "I actively keep to my therapy sessions. It is my safe space for reflection. I also share safe words to indicate to those around me that I am experiencing a downcycle."
- 3 "Talking to others, positive self-talk, writing a journal! Putting thoughts down on paper helped a great deal."
- 4 "Although I sometimes met with barriers, I thought that I should keep on trying"
- 5 "Meditation, hiking, long walks"
- 6 "Dancing to music"
- 7 "The very thought that my 4 children still need me."
- 8 "Talking to other like-minded people. Doing things I enjoy doing."
- 9 "Try to connect to friends and family which give me a

sense of security. Read books and attended webinars which talk about mental health"

10 "Having a positive mindset and choosing to never give up easily. Do whatever practically and reasonably possible to challenge the disease."

11 "I drew on my knowledge of paracounselling and more importantly the love and support of my dearest wife."

12 "I was initially skeptical about seeing a psychiatrist / psychology due to the stigma associated with seeking such help and I was not very cooperative in my visits. However, I began to know them better and started opening up myself and talk about my problems and feelings. I learnt deep breathing techniques and also participated in mindfulness practice all of which helped me to slowly get better."

Inspirations to get through your day and make your way to the finish line of life!

- 1 "Now that I'm here, how much worse can it get?"
- 2 "No feeling is final. Whatever dark clouds hovering over your head can't take away tomorrow from you. Just as happy moments pass, so too will the bad moments, and there are people who are glad to have met you."
- 3 "Whatever happens had happened, what had happened is a fact but our reactions and feelings to the experience is not a fact"
- 4 "Take one step at a time."
- 5 "George Bernard Shaw: "You don't stop laughing when you grow old, you grow old when you stop laughing""
- 6 "Let it go"
- 7 "I told myself that I have to stay calm and be gentle with myself. I don't have to meet everybody's expectation. I just have to be my true self."
- 8 "船到桥头自然直 – let's worry about it when it happens"
- 9 "I am in control of my choices. Not others"
- 10 "KTPH: Keep Thinking Positive, Healthy (Happy)"
- 11 "Turn and face the sun – and the shadows fall behind you!"
- 12 "Never say never"
- 13 "Life is great with Professor Laufey in the house." *Professor Laufey is a pet dog

Hear from some of our students on their personal challenges

! Trigger warning: Some sharings may contain sensitive/disturbing content



"The most "challenging" to me is my health – I have inherited thalassemia, so my immune system is not as good as normal people and medical expenses are a big challenge.

Sometimes I feel very sad – why does it have to be me to have such a disease? I try to relieve myself on joining religious communities. I attend church, also studying Buddhism."



"I am the mother to 4 boys and everything is a challenge when all 4 (children) meltdown together. There are no words to describe my emotions, but having time and space to think and recalibrate helps"

"I have been suffering from depression after getting molested in the MRT. I felt very uncomfortable, disgusted, sad and angry over the experience. I went through counselling and gotten a lot of support from counselling. Whatever happens had happened, what had happened is a fact but our reactions and feelings to the experience is not a fact."

"Life itself is a challenge. I feel like I'm fighting with myself. I feel an extreme range of emotions –from rage to love; emotional to apathy. I attend therapy. It is the only place I can express myself. I have poor coping mechanisms, particularly alcohol and sedatives."

"I am a senior citizen staying alone. A challenge I face is loneliness, which makes me sad. To cope, I turn on the TV without watching it, so I can listen to the sounds and music."



"I was faced with a serious challenge when I lost all my teaching jobs during the pandemic and had to self-isolate during Circuit Breaker. My self-esteem

suffered badly and I felt guilty that I let my family down. I decided to gather a small group of people to go for regular walks in nature places, which helped me tremendously. This picture shows the most recent walk that I led."



"I'm anxious about my prospect as a newly trained counsellor as my last interview was over 30 years ago. I fear the failure of not being a counsellor and I don't know how to help others since I can feel depressed. My coping

mechanisms include getting into a routine, volunteering, community support, regular walks and reading the Bible / self-help books. I tell myself that I must have more self-compassion."

"I failed one paper and had to repeat the subject. I felt a sense of loss, disbelief, anxiety and could not sleep. Talking to others, doing positive self-talk and writing a journal helped a great deal. I took concrete steps to study again and continued living one day at a time."

"I am a single senior who worries about my parents under the care of a new helper. I feel frustrated with the repeated change in helpers, shock and anger with my helper's mistreatment of my parents. I also feel burnt out juggling work and training my helper. I talked to friends and relatives and listened to hymns."

"I am a teacher who has difficulty balancing work and family life. I feel frustrated at this, however, I try to prioritise the things that need to be done."

"I am a retiree who likes watching videos of real life stories, health-related talks and motivational Christian movies. The most challenging time of my life is when my husband had a stroke, a massive one. I was very distraught and felt helpless. It was very painful to see a loved one suffering. There was no strategy; I just accepted what came though I didn't understand why. I believed that there was a reason this was happening and something to learn from the experience."



These examples remind us that adversity, although inevitable, does not define us. The strategies we employ to overcome challenges illuminate our unique paths to resilience. As we navigate the maze of life, we hope you can understand that tough times will pass and that you are not alone on your journey.

Thank You

We would like to extend our heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed in one way or another to Mini Medical School 2023!

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Ms **Janhavi Vaingankar** (Institute of Mental Health)

Ms **Kuik Shiao-Yin** (Common Ground Civic Centre & Consultancy)

Dr **Chris Tan Ze Jia** (Institute of Mental Health)

Prof **Chua Hong Choon** (Yishun Health)

Mr **Nicholas Lee** (Resilience Collective)

Mr **Chirag Agarwal** (Talk Your Heart Out)

Mr **Eric Lim** (Brahm Centre)

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As we wrapped up MMS 2023, we reflected on the knowledge gained, relationships built and the sense of community that had grown stronger. We are proud to have had everyone as part of this journey and we look forward to our next edition of MMS!

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