

A collaboration between



&



# MENTAL WELLNESS

@North West **TOOLKIT**



# This mental wellness toolkit is for *you!*

## HOW CAN I USE IT?

The toolkit is designed to feature what mental wellness looks like within the community through the stories of everyday Singaporeans. It also showcases the different mental health support and providers available within North West District.

There are **3** general sections:



### OUR STORIES

For those seeking to better understand mental wellness through our stories.



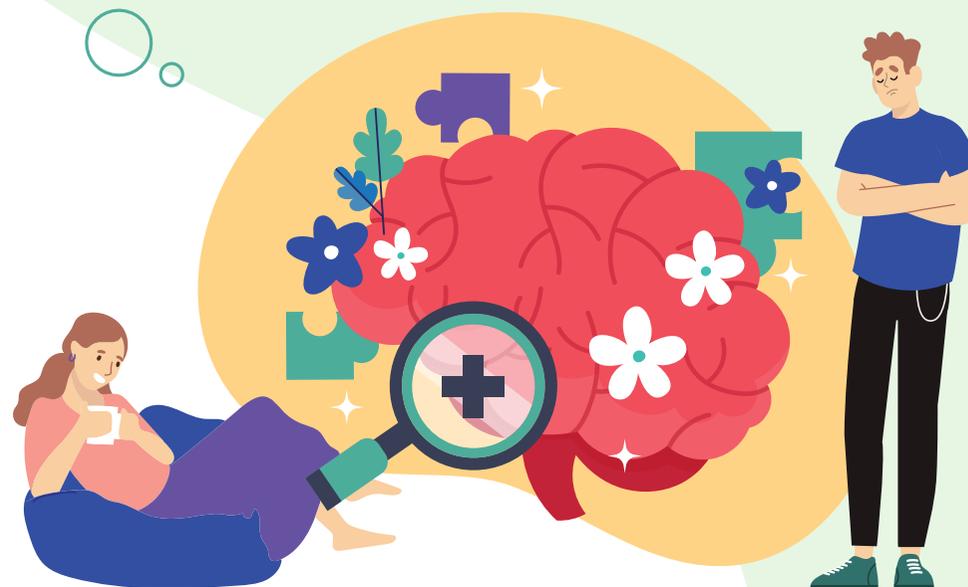
### PRACTICAL RESOURCES

For those seeking well-being tips on the common issues that we share.



### HELPFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

For those seeking care providers / social service agencies in the North West District.



This project is a collaboration between **North West Community Development Council (North West CDC)** and the **Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS)**. The content has been developed by students from SUSS PsyConnect Psychology Interest Group with the support of SUSS psychology faculty members as well as various members from different Social Service Agencies (SSAs).

## Why talk about **Mental Wellness**

Mental health is one of many important aspects that influence our overall health, which includes physical and social factors. Often, mental health becomes easily overlooked, as they may not have obvious visible signs, like how having a cold may give you a runny nose. Also, mental stress contributes to many physical conditions related to cardiovascular and gastrointestinal health.

### MENTAL HEALTH AROUND THE WORLD



Mental Health conditions have increased by **13%**



**20%** of children/adolescents have a condition



Suicide is **2nd** highest cause of death for 15-29 years old



Depression/Anxiety alone cost **US1 Trillion** globally

### MENTAL HEALTH IN SINGAPORE



**Top 3** conditions  
*Mood Disorders (Depression and Bipolar), Anxiety Disorders (OCD and GAD) and Alcohol Use Disorders*



**1 in 7** Singaporeans experienced one of the above in their lifetime



More than **75%** with disorders do not seek professional help

### What Mental Wellness is

- ✓ Core component of **overall health** and well-being
- ✓ Enables individuals to **overcome life stressors**
- ✓ Empowers individuals to **increase self-awareness** and develop their **full potential**



Scan the QR code or [click here](#) for a self-assessment on your mental well-being on HealthHub

### What is not mental wellness

- ✗ The absence of mental health conditions
- ✗ Consistent positive state of mental well-being throughout your life, as different life stages present different challenges
- ✗ The same state of mental well-being for everyone, as all of us are unique and respond differently to different challenges

# STRESS

## More than a familiar word

In a 2019 global well-being study, **92%** (as compared to 84% globally) of Singaporeans felt stress at work, of which **13%** found it overwhelming.

### BALANCING BETWEEN LIFE & WORK

In 2021, Channel NewsAsia reported that Singapore:

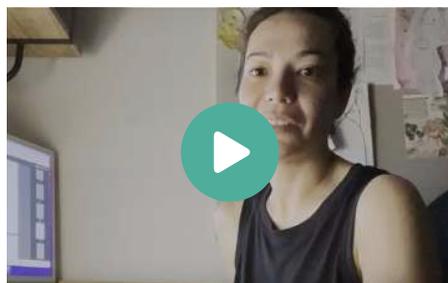


**Top 1**  
most fatigued  
country



**Top 2** most  
work hours annually  
*Ahead of countries such  
as China and Japan*

It comes as no surprise that balancing between life and work is a common struggle for Singaporeans.



**Watch the video** to find out more from our expert at SUSS as well as from some students on how they integrate work, study and life.



**Watch the video** to find out more from our expert at SUSS as well as from a student on how he maintains his physical well-being.



### Is it all bad?

Research has shown stress in the right amounts can:



Develop Immunity



Build Resilience



Improve learning  
and memory



### HEALTHY BODIES, HEALTHY MINDS

Apart from physical benefits, exercise can:



Reduce depression  
and anxiety



Aid self-esteem



Improve cognition



Reduce social withdrawals

### HOW IS YOUR MENTAL WELL-BEING?



Scan the QR code or  
click [here](#) for the resources  
on Stress Management

# What is MENTAL ILLNESS

Have you ever come across a viral video of someone behaving out of norm and being recorded? Have you ever struggled mentally and found it hard to find someone to share with? Those are some of the challenges for those who struggle with mental illness or support a loved one who struggles with mental illness.

## KEY CHARACTERISTICS



## LEARNING MORE ABOUT MENTAL WELLNESS



**SHINE Resilience** [Click here](#) for more info

- Provides psychoeducation for youths/caregivers through talks/activities
- Mental health screening services



**Care Corner RITE/INSIGHT** [Click here](#) for more info

Outreach/Programmes for educating youths/caregivers to provide support for others



**Club HEAL** [Click here](#) for more info

Programme for increasing self-acceptance, self-confidence, and removing self-stigma

## WHERE TO SEEK HELP



**Clarity Singapore**

[Click here](#) for more info

Counselling for Adult/  
New mothers/youth/group



**SAMH InSight Centre**

[Click here](#) for more info

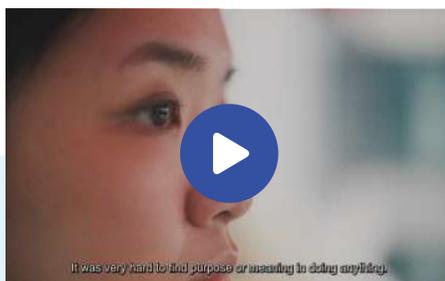
Counselling for  
Individual/Family



**Care Corner Singapore**

[Click here](#) for more info

- In-person/Phone/Zoom/Counselling
- Toll free Mandarin Counselling Hotline



Hear **Sabrina's story** on her road to seeking help and finding support from those around her.



## TRUTH OR MYTH?



Scan the QR code or [click here](#) to discover more about common mental illnesses in SG and their myths

# Are you a CAREGIVER

## WHO IS A CAREGIVER?

Anyone who is responsible for someone struggling with mental/physical medical conditions that require support and care.

No one desires for their loved ones to suffer, as such many caregivers take on many responsibilities to provide care and support. However, many may not be well-equipped or receive enough support themselves.



## ARE YOU A CAREGIVER?



Scan the QR code or [click here](#) to discover more about caregiving and caregivers' support from Caregivers' Alliance

## LEARNING MORE ABOUT MENTAL WELLNESS



**General Guide** [Click here](#) for more info

**(By Caregivers' Association of the Mentally-Ill [CAMI])**

Provides information on mental illnesses and how to support as a caregiver



**Guide for Youth** [Click here](#) for more info

**(By Singapore Association for Mental Health [SAMH])**

Resources for parents and other caregivers. Provides information on common issues youth face and the available services for them



**Managing a Mental Health Crisis (By SAMH)**

[Click here](#) for more info

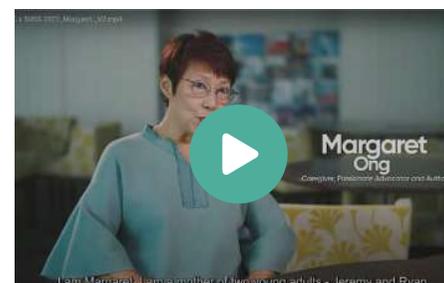
Find out more about mental health crises and how to provide support to someone in it



**Dementia Guide (By ClubHEAL)**

[Click here](#) for more info

Information on understanding dementia and providing support



Hear **Margaret's** story from Caregivers Alliance, who journeyed with her husband suffering from Schizophrenia.



# What is STRESS

Stress occurs when a stressor (situation/object) causes a physical, emotional, and psychological reaction to bring attention of a potential danger to your mind. Whether a stressor is stressful depends on how we perceive its importance (primary appraisal) and our perceived capabilities (secondary appraisal) in managing them. For instance, heights can be absolutely terrifying for most people, but to an expert skydiver, jumping out of an airplane is thrilling.

## HOW TO COPE

It is impossible to be completely stress-free, however, there are **techniques** that can help us to reduce/prevent them from becoming overwhelming.

Focusing on the problem means to think of a practical solution for the problem. There are two ways to cope with stress: (1) Focusing on the problem; and/or (2) Focusing on the emotion felt. Sometimes managing our feelings first will help to help us function better before resolving any potential stressors faced. Building our flexibility to use different coping strategies for different situations will help us become more resilient. Both focuses are useful for different situations, here are some basic emotion-focused coping techniques that you can try:

### Grounding

A technique to **redirect from unwanted inner thoughts and feelings**. To reconnect with the present moment through the five senses, try identifying:

-  **5** things you can **SEE**
-  **4** things you can **TOUCH**
-  **3** things you can **HEAR**
-  **2** things you can **SMELL**
-  **1** thing you can **TASTE** OR  emotion you can **FEEL**

### Breathing Exercises

A technique to help us **reduce anxiety** experienced during stressful situations.



Scan the QR code or click [here](#) to discover more about breathing exercises



### Imagery (Leaves on a Stream)

A technique to help us **attend to stubborn unwanted thoughts and to let them go**. This acceptance safeguards us from avoiding negative emotions through unhealthy behaviours.

Close your eyes and imagine you are next to a stream, with leaves falling gracefully around you.



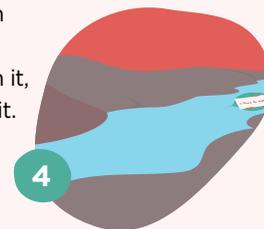
Notice a thought you are having, could be good or bad (Imagine physically attaching that thought to a leaf - stapling, gluing, whatever you can think of!)



Place that leaf with the thought on the stream and watch it slowly float away.



Notice that leaf until it floats out of sight. If it gets stuck or remains longer than expected, do not rush it, just notice it.



Keep repeating this process with each new thought you notice.



When you are ready, take a deep breath and open your eyes. Using the previous grounding technique, slowly bring yourself back to the present. Spend time to notice your surroundings.

# What is a HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

Two or more individuals coming together to form a strong bond, where there are opportunities for everyone to grow and share about themselves.

## HEALTHY FAMILY RELATIONS & HABITS



**Engage in regular routines** such as sharing of meals and leisure activities to build cohesion.



To build **inter-generational** support, provide love, advice, and care towards family members in their unique rhythm of daily life.



**Self-disclosure**, the process of sharing information about yourself with others, helps to build trust between friends.



**Engage in reciprocity** with those beyond your family circle by providing social and emotional support.



Being in a **quality relationship** provides partners with beneficent experiences in terms of intimacy, affection, and nurturance.



To have **positive couple functionality**, couples must be committed to the relationship, for example being willing to sacrifice for each other.

## UNHEALTHY ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS & HABITS

- ✗ Some examples of negative interactions include constant arguments, being critical and making too many demands.
- ✗ Avoid engaging in toxic Behaviours that lead to termination of the relationship.
- ✗ Make sure to strike a balance between virtual and face-to-face communication to avoid a reliance on online social networking and computer-mediated communication.
- ✗ Relationship stressors can potentially cause mental disorders related to anxiety, eating, substance abuse, and suicidal ideation.
- ✗ Be authentic! Desires to please your partner by suppressing authenticity and displaying disruptive behaviors can compromise one's role-identity performance.
- ✗ Strained relationships can occur when family members begin to put their own needs and obligations over the family's needs.

# What is ADDICTION

Addiction is characterised by persistent, intense urges to engage in certain activities. People who suffer from addiction engage in harmful behaviours despite the consequences involved to satisfy these cravings.

## TYPES OF ADDICTION

### SUBSTANCE

Substance addiction begins with **substance abuse**, followed by **substance dependence**, and lastly **addiction**.

With substance abuse, the abuser compulsively uses in high quantities and uses to feel a certain way, for example, drinking alcohol to feel confident. Substance dependence is when the body tricks one into assuming they have to consume the substance to perform daily activities, causing symptoms like headaches and forcing one to have incapacitating cravings and obsessive thoughts.

#### Risk Factors

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)
- Prolonged stress exposure
- Mental Illness
- Genetic history

#### Consequences

- Exacerbation/development of mental illness
- Increased chance of other addictions
- Comorbidity of mental and physical illness

#### SHINE's Youth Enhanced Supervision (YES)

[Click here](#) for more info

#### Club HEAL

[Click here](#) for recommended books

#### Other resources

[Click here](#) for more info



Scan the QR code  
or [click here](#) to  
learn more about  
substance addiction



### GAMING

Gaming addiction is defined as **a pattern of persistent or recurrent gaming behaviour** which manifests in

- impaired control over gaming,
- giving gaming a higher priority over other activities,
- and continuation and escalation of gaming even when negative/detrimental effects arise.

#### Consequences

- Poor sleep quality and overall health
- Deteriorated social interaction with loved ones
- Withdrawal symptoms
- Worsening of existing mental illnesses
- Neglecting other responsibilities and interests

#### What makes games so addictive?

Games have reinforcing features that contribute to persistence and potentially to addiction:

- High scores
- Beating/completing the game
- Role-playing
- Discovery
- Forming (or formed) relationships



Scan the QR code  
or [click here](#) to  
learn more about  
gaming addiction

#### TOUCH Youth Intervention (TYI)

[Click here](#) for more info

#### WE CARE

[Click here](#) for more info



# What is SLEEP DEPRIVATION

We have all heard about the importance of getting our 8 hours of sleep, yet it seems Singaporeans never seem to get enough. In numerous studies conducted across the globe, Singaporeans have been found to be amongst the most sleep deprived worldwide, with one study citing Singapore as the **3rd most sleep deprived** of 43 cities. In fact, a worrying trend has emerged with the average amount of hours that Singaporeans sleep decreasing from 7 hours in 2020 to 6.8 hours in 2021.

## IMPACT OF SLEEP DEPRIVATION

The sleep deprivation that many Singaporeans face today has many consequences, let's take a look at some of them below!

### Short Term



Reduced ability to multitask efficiently



Higher sensitivity to stressful events

### Long Term



Greater impulsivity, slower cognitive processing and impaired executive function



Metabolic dysfunction and loss of muscle mass and function



For teenagers, it can lead to increased risk taking behaviours, mood fragility and greater anxiety

## PRACTICAL WAYS TO IMPROVE SLEEP



Reduce caffeine and alcohol intake before bedtime



Engage in light exercise such as stretches



Consume micronutrients (eg. calcium, magnesium and vitamin D)



Consume food and drinks such as fatty fish and tart cherry juice



Try out mindfulness meditation to relax yourself before bedtime!



Avoid using electronic devices (such as phones and computers) before bedtime



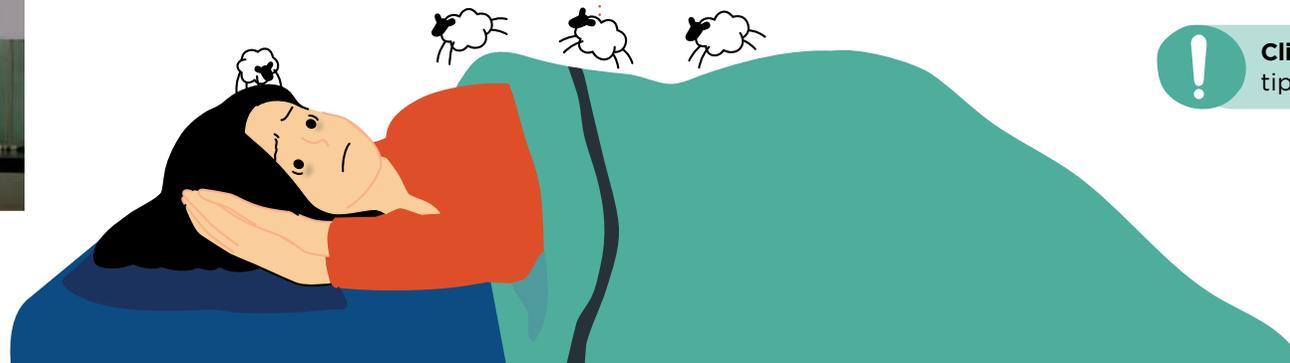
Maintain a consistent sleep schedule, making sure to sleep and wake up at the same time daily (including weekends!)



Avoid taking naps during the day as it may make it harder to fall asleep at night, disrupting your sleep schedule



Learn about additional **sleep deprivation impacts.**



**Click here** to read additional tips for better sleep!



# EXERCISE & NUTRITION

## as important mood regulators

Our bodies are programmed to eat and move for survival. Doing either rewards us with feelings of pleasure, improving our mood. However, too much of a good thing can be bad so it's important to eat and exercise well. Poor eating habits can lead to bad gut health, which affects the brain and your immunity.

### EMOTIONAL EATING IS REAL

Just tasting delicious food can lead to a better mood. The sweet and fatty foods we love can also reduce stress and temporarily increase energy. Eating affects your mood and your mood can also affect eating habits. Here's how your eating habits can change based on emotions:



Disruptions in eating schedules due to low mood



Eating to curb stress, anxiety or depression



Food choices guided by emotions



Eating based on feelings (inconsistent diet)

#### Sustainable Habits is Key

If you find yourself struggling with healthy eating, **intuitive eating** might be a way to help you build a healthy relationship with food. Focus on how you're feeling and not the numbers on a scale.

Besides eating, **exercise** is also great at improving moods. It's important to find physical activities you enjoy to keep you motivated. Incorporating movement into your daily routine is also a simple way to exercise more. Block off time to exercise like you would for other events.



**Click here** to learn how your gut and brain are linked!



**Click here** to find out some simple ways to increase your daily activity levels!



# Living with PANDEMIC & OTHER UNEXPECTED CHALLENGES

Researchers have found that the prevalence of mental health disorders has risen among working adults and students in Singapore. A study conducted reviewed the challenges of COVID-19 on children and adolescents' mental health and found that those from low-income families and the marginalised were at a higher risk.

## RISK FACTORS & MENTAL HEALTH



### Community related factors

- Limited access to basic services (kindergarten, schools, medical care, etc.)
- Limited leisure activities since common public areas were closed
- Loss of educational time, limited access to friends and loss of daily routine due to school closures



### Family related factors

- Parents struggling to juggle between working-from-home and home-schooling children
- Disruptions to family connections and support

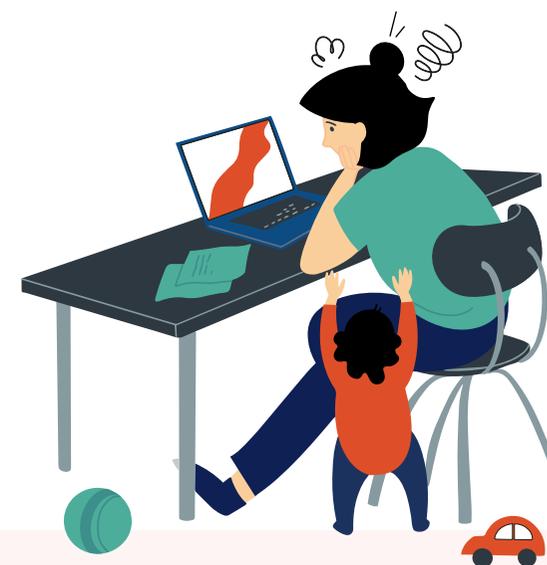


### Quarantine related factors

- Increase in post-traumatic stress symptoms during and after quarantine
- Increased risk of online sexual exploitation



**Click [here](#)** to find out more information regarding how one would feel upon experiencing a mental disorder.



## WAYS TO COPE

### Strategies

- Recognise anxiety is entirely normal
- Look for distractions
- Look for new means to maintain existing friendships
- Concentrate on self
- Connect with your emotions
- Be compassionate to everybody

### Safety Planning

- A plan to support yourself during tough times should consist of:
- How to recognise warning signs
  - Things that helped you to cope in the past
  - Names and contact details of people you could reach out to
  - Relevant helplines and support services
  - Steps to ensure that the immediate environment is safe

### Creating New Routines

While it can be tough to enjoy certain activities, having a new routine that combines these activities with other enjoyable activities could be planned.

- Activities such as:
- Reading
  - Listening to music or podcasts
  - Voice or video calls with others
  - Picking up new hobbies

### Looking after physical health

- Establish a regular bedtime routine and sleeping pattern
- Eat regularly and drink plenty of water
- Look after your hygiene

## PSYCHOLOGICAL/EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

### CLARITY SINGAPORE

Offers **assessment and counselling services for a range of psychological problems**, including anxiety, depression and stress. Our professional team consists of full-time Counsellors, Psychologists and Associate Psychologists. We also have pro-bono Therapists who are trained to deliver assessment and/or treatment.

We serve clients with mild to moderate psychological and emotional difficulties, including:

- Anxiety Disorders
- Depressive Disorders
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders
- Traumatic Disorders
- Maternal Mental Health

Submit an online pre-registration for services form  
<https://www.clarity-singapore.org/contact-us>



#### Location

- Block 854 Yishun Ring Road, #01-3511 Singapore 760854
- 7A Lorong 8 Toa Payoh, #04-01 Singapore 319264



#### Phone

6757 7990



#### Email

ask@clarity-singapore.org



@ClaritySG



@clarity\_sg



t.me/claritysg



## ELDER SUPPORT

### MONTFORT CARE - GOODLIFE! YISHUN

Montfort Care is a network of programmes committed to improving the lives of the individuals, families and community facing transitional challenges. We are a group of social workers committed to **delivering community based social services to empower lives and strengthen communities**.

GoodLife! is the eldercare arm of Montfort Care. GoodLife! aims to provide just that for our seniors. The centre takes a holistic approach to active ageing by **organising activities that address both the physical and mental wellness** of our seniors.

Services provided:

- Active Ageing Activities (e.g arts, exercise, educational talks)
- Befriending services
- Case work and Management
- Group work and Counselling



#### Location

838 Yishun Street 81 #01-322, Singapore 760838



#### Phone

6484 8040



#### Email

GoodLife-Yishun@montfortcare.org.sg

**Goodlife!**

A Programme by MontfortCare

## MENTAL WELL-BEING PROGRAMMES FOR YOUTH & YOUTH CAREGIVERS

### SINGAPORE ASSOCIATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH (SAMH)

SAMH has been uplifting lives and promoting mental wellness for all since 1968. We improve the lives of persons with mental health issues **through rehabilitation and reintegration**. Our beneficiaries include youths and adults. We are here at every step of their recovery journey, while also providing emotional and practical support to their families and caregivers.

**SAMH C'SAY** stands for Sports, Arts and Youths, echoes our belief that youths should have a SAY! in their lives. As physical health and mental health are closely linked, this our centre **offers arts, sports, outdoor and art interactive activities to help spark conversations, promote general well-being, cultivate resilience, and prevent the onset of mental illness**. SAMH C'SAY serves 12 to 25 years old youths at the North Region, and new participants will be contacted for an intake to ensure eligibility to participate in activities. The activities are complimentary for eligible participants.

Services include:

- Mental health awareness and outreach education
- Mental well-being screening: recognition of early signs and symptoms of mental health conditions
- Caregivers support
- Basic emotional support
- Individual art therapy.

 **Location**  
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 **@samhsingapore**



## MENTAL WELL-BEING PROGRAMMES FOR YOUTH & YOUTH CAREGIVERS

### SILIENCE @ SHINE (CREST YOUTH SHINE @ WEST)

The Youth Community Outreach Team (CREST-Youth) **increases awareness of mental health and promotes early identification by organising outreach events**, involving parents and peers in the recovery journeys and link them to appropriate health and social support networks. We serve youths aged 12 to 25 years who are at risk of or with mental health conditions and their caregivers.



#### Location

SHINE Children and Youth Services, 329 Clementi Ave 2, #01-248



#### Phone

67786867 / 8788 3171 (Whatsapp)



#### Email

resilience@shine.org.sg

#### Mental Health Screening

Meant for youths who are in distress and want to make sense of their mental state. It is done in a semi-structured 1-2-1 interview by our team of qualified mental health professionals. Screening sessions are between 30 - 90 mins and are performed at the convenience of the service user either in person or online.

Screening differs from mental health assessment as the intent and focus of the screening is for early identification of mental health needs and risks so that youth can be directed to appropriate and relevant services to get the help they need and be aided in accessing services in this vast landscape that may be confusing for the layperson, whereas mental health assessment is an in-depth assessment towards youth's presenting symptoms of distress.

#### For mental health screening:

Mon to Fri: 9am to 6pm (arrangements can be made for those who might require services after office hours)

#### Mode of service delivery:

Online (Zoom) / In-person (at SHINE Centre - Clementi) / Home visit (if any of the above is not feasible)

#### Caregiver Engagement and Support

The aim of caregiver and engagement support is to help caregivers understand their youths' specific mental health difficulties and needs by equipping them with knowledge and skills to aid in their management of their youths in distress, helping them to respond in an appropriate manner to support youths seeking for help. If necessary, referring caregivers to the relevant services to increase their resilience to prevent caregiver burn out.

#### Basic Emotional Support (BES)

Aims to equip youths and their caregivers with skills to manage their mental health through increasing protective factors such as strengthened emotion self-regulation skills and expanded social network. BES can only be recommended and provided after the youth has been screened.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY



For full list of bibliography and further reading please scan here or refer to this link <https://psyconnect.github.io/resources/nwcdc-mental-health-toolkit/> for more information

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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