



Dare To Share

MENTAL HEALTH E-KIT

A resource for your
mental wellness
in Singapore



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Dear Reader,

This booklet represents the culmination of Dare To Share, a project about promoting awareness around mental health for male teens. Across the past few months, through interacting with individuals from various walks of life, we have developed a greater appreciation for the importance of mental wellness—not just for male teens, but also society at large. Lately, much has been done to bring mental health into the mainstream consciousness, including efforts by various groups in the community. An increased awareness is a huge step forward as it can help combat one of the greatest barriers facing mental health awareness in Singapore: social stigma.

Apart from mental health organisations that have helped steer the conversation locally, we have also chanced upon many platforms started by mental health enthusiasts on their own accord. Harnessing the power of social media, many of these individuals have crafted an online voice to spread their messages of hope and resilience. In crafting Dare To Share's campaign, we have taken invaluable inspiration from them, and have also gathered resources that we have deemed most useful and relevant for you.

You may find these resources at your disposal here in this booklet. We hope that you will not only become more knowledgeable about mental health, but also confident in engaging with issues on mental wellness, both with yourself and your peers.

Working on a topic as consequential and indispensable as mental health has been extremely rewarding. To know that our campaign has positively helped others has made the work worthwhile. However, we are merely beating the drum for the importance of mental health awareness in Singapore. In the grand scheme of things, Dare To Share is but one of many puzzle pieces, all of which assemble to make the topic of mental health more accessible for everyone. We hope you will look to the greater community of advocates around us, many of whom tirelessly champion mental health issues in Singapore day in and day out.

Here's wishing you the best, and only the best.

Cheers,

The Dare To Share Team
(Abigail, Stefanie, Wei Liang, Wei Tai)

Seeking Help 101

Seeking help can be a daunting process for many of us because of the various unknowns it may present. **Who can help me? Where do I reach out to? How do I even know I might need help to begin with?**

In this section, we do our best to equip you with the knowledge to answer these questions. Read on!

Do You Need to Seek Help? A Handy Checklist

You have been showing signs of distress

- Your grades are fluctuating
- You experience unexplained body aches and pains
- You want to sleep all the time or find it hard to sleep at all

You are behaving differently from how you normally would act

- You do not interact with your friends as much as you usually would
- You experience greater changes in mood
- Your negative thoughts stop you from doing things you enjoy

You may be causing harm to yourself or others

- You may be refusing to eat or are overeating
- You may be hurting yourself physically
- You may be intentionally involving yourself in dangerous situations

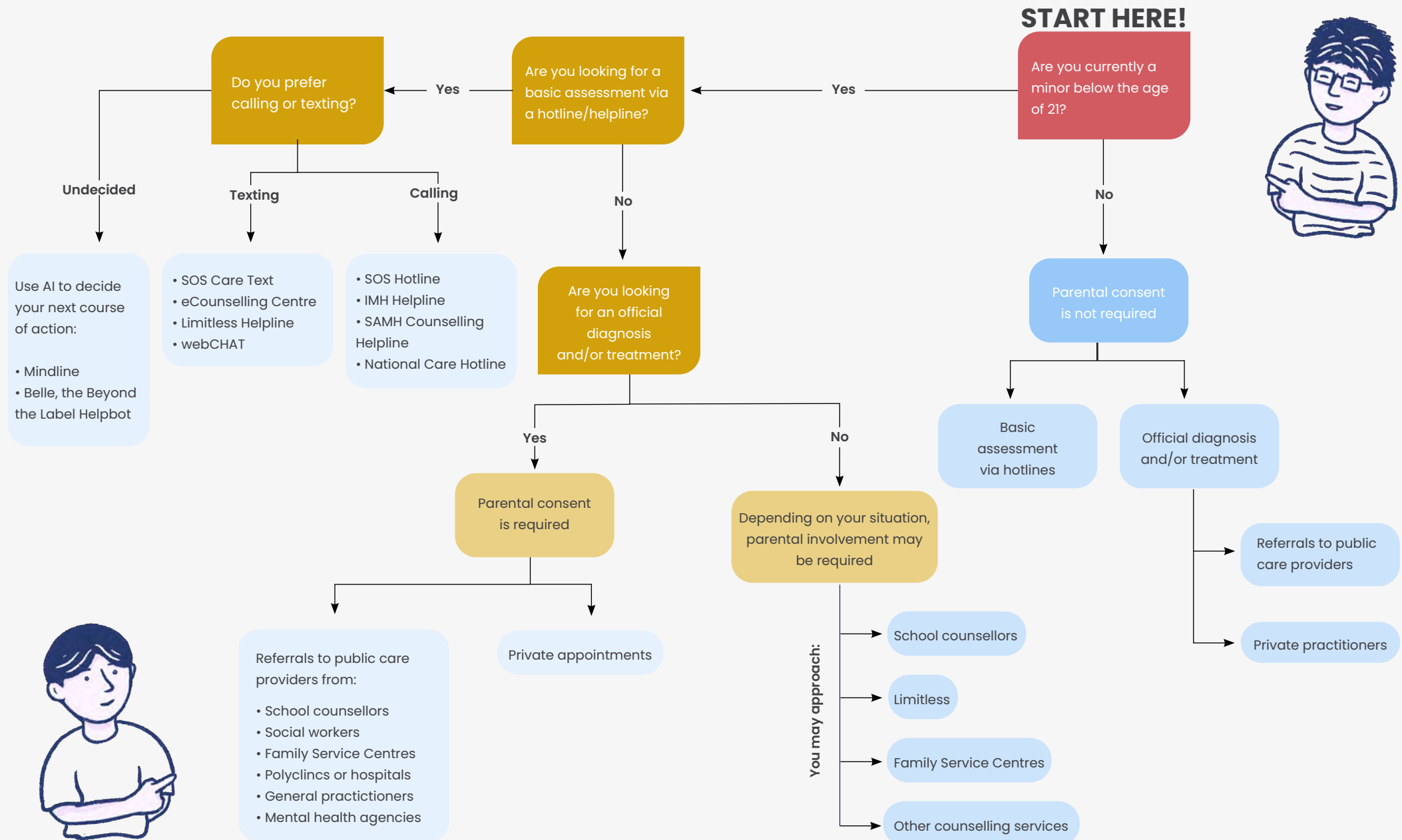
You seem to be struggling to take care of yourself

- Getting out of bed seems like a challenge
- You just do not have it in you to do chores such as washing the dishes or doing laundry
- You do not see the point in caring for yourself (such as taking a shower)

One or more of the symptoms above have been exhibited for an extended period

- Such behaviour has been persisting for weeks or even months

ROADMAP TO HELP-SEEKING



Helplines & Resources

We have broken down the next segment into 4 parts—**Helpbots/AI Chatbots, Online Chat and Text Services, Hotlines, and Counselling Appointments**—based on different needs.



Helpbots/AI Chatbots

Unsure of your next course of action? Consider checking out these Helpbots/AI Chatbots that can help direct you to suitable resources for your situation. You may access them anytime.

Website	Details
Belle, the Beyond The Label Helpbot	Helpbot that connects one to services and resources related to mental health
Mindline.sg	Chat with Wysa, an emotionally intelligent AI chatbot, and get directed to sites of care and support, based on one's self-reported needs and emotional states through a clinically validated self-assessment tool

ABOUT HELPLINES

Helplines connect you with trained volunteers or professionals who can provide a listening ear and advise you on your situation. All of the sessions are kept strictly confidential and come at no cost. If you are hesitant to visit a trained professional, contacting organisations through these services is a good start.

Online Chat and Text Services

Uncomfortable speaking over the phone? Here are some options that allow you to communicate via text.

Website	Details	Operational hours
Samaritans Of Singapore (SOS) Care Text	Text trained SOS volunteers through Facebook Messenger	Mon - Thurs: 6PM - 6AM Fri: 6PM - 11:59PM; Unavailable on Public Holidays (PH)
eCounselling Centre (eC2)	Free counselling chat room by egen.sg	Mon - Fri: 10AM - 12PM, 2PM - 5:30PM; Unavailable on PH
webCHAT	Live chat service by Institute of Mental Health (IMH)'s Community Health Assessment Team (CHAT)	Tues - Sat: 12PM - 9PM; Unavailable on PH
Limitless Helpline	Catered for youths. Simply indicate on the form to be contacted via WhatsApp, text or call	-

Hotlines

If you would like to share your troubles or get a listening ear over the phone, here are some options:

Helpline	Details	Operational hours	Contact No.
Samaritans Of Singapore (SOS) Hotline	24-hr suicide prevention hotline service for people experiencing distress, contemplating or affected by suicide	24 hours, daily	1800 221 444
Institute of Mental Health (IMH) Helpline	Offers support for those in mental health distress and/or seeking medical help	24 hours, daily	6389 2222
Singapore Association for Mental Health (SAMH) Counselling Helpline	Also offers counselling sessions; able to help cover costs	Mon - Fri: 9AM - 1PM, 2PM - 6PM	1800 283 7019
National CARE Hotline	Offers psychological support amidst COVID-19 pandemic	Mon - Sun: 8AM - 12 AM	1800 202 6868
TOUCHline (Touch Youth)	Offers support around cyber wellness	Mon - Fri: 9AM - 6PM; Unavailable on PH	1800 377 2252

Helpline	Details	Operational hours	Contact No.
Care Corner Counselling Centre Hotline	Provides counselling in Mandarin for individuals and families	10AM – 10PM, Daily	1800 3535 800
Silver Ribbon	Promotes a positive attitude towards mental health among the community	Mon – Fri: 9AM – 5PM; Unavailable on PH	6386 1928

Note: Helplines are not substitutes for professional help. Do consider seeking help from a trained professional if your condition persists.

Counselling appointments

Make an appointment with a trained professional today.

Avenue	Details	Contact
Samaritans Of Singapore (SOS)	24-hr suicide prevention hotline service for people experiencing distress, contemplating or affected by suicide	Tel: 1800 221 4444 Email: pat@sos.org.sg Website Link
Limitless	Offers support tailored for youths aged 12 – 25	Website Link
Singapore Association of Mental Health (SAMH)	Offers support to individuals, couples and families with psychological, psychiatric and/or relationship problems	Tel: 1800-283-7019 Website Link
Institute of Mental Health (IMH)	Offers support for those in mental health distress and/or seeking medical help	Appointment Line: 6389 2200 Enquiry Line: 6389 2000 Email: imh_appt@imh.com.sg Website Link
Community Health Assessment Team	Confidential mental health checks for young persons between 16 and 30 years old	Website Link
Silver Ribbon	Promotes a positive attitude towards mental health among the community	Tel: 6386 1928 Email: info@silverribbonsingapore.com Website Link

What to Expect on Your First Visit to a Mental Care Provider



Making your first visit to a mental healthcare provider is a courageous step forward to take; you may not know what to expect, so we have listed some tips that will hopefully help you through your journey!

1

Make some preparations

You'll be asked general questions during the first contact:

- Why did you approach us?
- What issue are you facing?
- How is this affecting you?

It's recommended to think about these ahead of time and jot them down on a piece of paper or type it on your phone to refer to, if needed.

2

Be honest

Being truthful helps the other party advise you better, but don't feel pressured to reveal everything from the get go if you are not ready!

3

Embrace the up-and-down process

In the event you do not vibe with your counsellor/therapist – don't give up! Seeking help is a two-way street in terms of communication. If one does not suit you, it is perfectly okay for you to find another one that better suits your needs.

4

Manage your expectations

It is important to understand that the road to mental wellness is a journey. It is unrealistic to expect all issues to be solved immediately, so hang in there!

“Today I refuse to stress myself out over things I can't control and change.

- Unknown

Being a Pal 101

During one's formative years, peers become an important influence.

A big part of being a good friend means becoming **a reliable pillar of support for others**, especially through difficult times.

In this section, we talk about the ways in which we can be there for the friends who might be going through struggles in their lives.

Checking In With a Friend: The Dos and Don'ts

Sometimes, we may not know how to check in with a friend as mental health is a sensitive topic for some. However, it is still important to show our support and let our friends know that we are here for them. Hence, we created a non-exhaustive list of what to do and not to do when checking in with a friend!

What to do when checking in with a friend:

1 Express your concern

This is the most direct way to show your friend that you care about their well-being. It may even give them the confidence to turn to you in times of need, which could benefit their mental health.

What you can say:

- "I'm concerned about how you are doing recently, would you like to talk?"
- "I noticed you've been feeling down, I am all ears if you want to share."

2 Help them verbalise their problem

At times, a friend may struggle to convey their exact feelings. Help them expand their emotional vocabulary by providing some guiding questions. It may even help them get to the root of their distress.

For example, in cases where your friend feels sad, they may only know the words "depressed" and "sad". Guiding questions can help

them delve deeper into more specific feelings, such as "I am sad because I feel isolated", or "I feel helpless and trapped."

At the end of the day, when they go home, they may Google their symptoms based on your guidance, potentially making it easier for them to seek help.

What you can say:

- "How do you feel about this?"
- "What about that incident made you feel that way?"

3 Validate their feelings

- This reassures your friend, which can make them feel more comfortable in opening up and sharing more.
- There is most likely a root cause behind someone's feelings—even if it makes

no sense to you, whatever they feel is valid. Try your best to validate their feelings.

What you can say:

- "It's okay to feel that way."
- "It makes sense that you are feeling this way."

4 Offer your support

- Provide ways in which you can be there for your friend; it also helps him express the kinds of help he would like to receive.
- Your support can mean the world to your friend, whether or not they take you up on your offer.

What you can say:

- "I'm here if you need to chat."
- "I'll be there if you need a listening ear."
- "What are some things I can do to help you feel better?"

5 Gently direct them towards help-seeking

- If your friend is open to listening to your advice, you could bring up professional help-seeking subtly.
- Offering to accompany them can also make it seem less daunting.

What you can say:

- "Have you thought about finding someone for help?"
- "I can accompany you to the counselling centre if you like."

6 Give them space

- Accept that your friend may be uncomfortable to share and that's okay. Just because you are ready to listen, doesn't mean they are ready to share. There is no need for additional pressure.
- With all they may be struggling with, the added pressure may be harmful to their mental health.

What you can say:

- "It's okay if you don't want to share."
- "Feel free to drop me a message if you want to share some time."
- "Take all the time you need to think through. I'll be here when you are ready."

What not to do when checking in with a friend:

1 Don't Dismiss

- Your friend's feelings are valid; being dismissive may result in them bottling things up, which can be detrimental to their mental health.
- The moment we dismiss our friends, we lose credibility as a confidante, and they lose a potentially valuable part of their support system.

What not to say:

- "Can't be that bad lah."
- "Just get over it."
- "It's all in your head."
- "Just sleep it off."

2 Don't Judge

Imagine mustering up all the courage to tell someone how you are feeling—only to be mocked or judged. If a friend comes to you about his struggles, it means that he trusts you. Let us not betray this trust by being judgemental. Create a safe space for your friend to share.

What not to say:

- "Man up can anot?"
- "Don't be a sissy."
- "This kind of thing you also sad."

3 Refrain from giving solutions

- In the words of Johnathan Chua, one of our interviewees: "What makes you the giver of solutions?" Indeed, some solutions may seem clear to us. But when your friend attempts to voice out, all he might want is someone to hear him out, not tell him what to do.
- Of course, there are cases where a friend might be coming to you for advice. So it is important to look out for cues. Sometimes they may ask you for

suggestions straight up—a direct cue to go ahead and give your input. If you are unable to tell if it's an appropriate moment to give advice, do not be afraid to ask how you can provide help or support.

What not to say:

- "Maybe you should..."
- "Go and try..."

4 Don't compare

Everyone is going through their own things, but it's not a competition. No one's problems should undermine another person's and at the end of the day, comparing problems helps no one.

What not to say:

- "At least it's not..."
- "Wah but I think I more stressed."
- "Cannot be me lah, that day I..."
- "How can be sad about this? The children in Africa are starving."

5 Don't make it about yourself

- Your friend came to you to be heard. Try acknowledging what they have said without inserting your personal experience(s). Give them a chance to speak about it without making it all about you or giving judgement.
- If you have your own issues you'd like to share, arrange to have a talk at another time, or wait till your friend has finished sharing. At the present moment, it should be about what your friend has to say (if you have the personal capacity to listen).

- Don't forget, it is okay if you find it difficult to hold a conversation about what your friend is going through. Everyone has their own struggles and may not have the mental capacity to listen. Let your friend know that you are not up for the conversation so that it doesn't hurt the both of you.

What not to say:

- "I feel you, one time I..."
- "Same, if I were you..."
- "OMG, me too, that time I..."

6 Don't ask them to just deal with it

- If your friend comes to you for help, they are looking for your support. No point in asking them to just deal with it because it may be more complex than you think.
- If they could deal with it, they probably wouldn't be coming to you.

What not to say:

- "Don't be a wuss."
- "Just deal with it."
- "Aiyo, so easy, just own self settle."



Ways You Can Support Your Friends



How to support your friend:

1. Look out for signs of distress.
2. Approach them privately, don't talk in the open.
3. Ask them, **"I noticed you don't seem to be yourself recently, do you want to talk about it?"** Listen actively when they do share.
4. Try not to be pushy if they don't want to share. Be reassuring instead.
 - **"It's okay if you don't want to talk, but you can find me if you need someone to talk to."**
 - **"I am here for you whenever you are ready to share."**
5. Plan to spend quality time with them based on your shared interests, or suggest new activities!

Directing your friend to formal help:

1. Listen to what your friends are willing to say, and then enquire what they plan to do. **"What's helping you cope right now?"**
2. Gauge their willingness to seek formal help by asking them. **"What do you think will happen if you see a professional?"**
3. You can show support by offering to accompany them to their first session. **"Would you like me to accompany you to the therapist?"**
4. Expect resistance, be patient. You may have gotten them to ponder about help-seeking, so let them have the space to consider it.
5. Show interest in their counselling sessions. **"How did it go?", "What do you think about your therapist so far?"**

Other resources on peer support

1

Campus Psy Supporting Youth



QR Code:



2

Interacting with Persons with Mental Health Issues



QR Code:



Strange, isn't it?

Each man's life touches so many other lives.

When he isn't around he leaves an awful hole, doesn't he?

- Clarence The Angel,
It's A Wonderful Life

Stories

Stories help us make sense of experiences in life, grabbing our attention in ways that can make us **pause, listen and reflect.**

They also help us learn about others, develop empathy and in turn better understand ourselves.

A diverse group of individuals shared their heartening stories with us, and we would like you to hear them.

Dr Wan Rizal



^click the above thumbnail to watch

#DownToShare: Episode 1

In the first instalment of our #DownToShare video series, we sat down with Dr. Wan Rizal, a Member of Parliament for Jalan Besar GRC. An educator by profession, Dr. Rizal has been passionate about today's youth and their mental health.

He shares more about his motivations in championing the latter topic in Parliament and its importance in our society.

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#DownToShare

Ron Yap



#DownToShare: Episode 2

Communications undergraduate by day, budding content creator by night. Ron Yap has channeled a flair for expression into building an Instagram community around mental health, a topic close to his heart.

He gives a frank account of his mental wellness journey, including some personal stories, and reflects on how it has impacted his life growing up.

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Ng Hanbin



#DownToShare: Episode 3

Ng Hanbin's passion for basketball pushed him to achieve much on-court success, including stints with the national team and Singapore Slings. However, he has also faced multiple setbacks, including nagging injuries that eventually ended his career.

In this thoughtful interview, Hanbin shares stories of perseverance, alongside other lessons he has learned through basketball.

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Johnathan Chua



#DownToShare: Episode 4

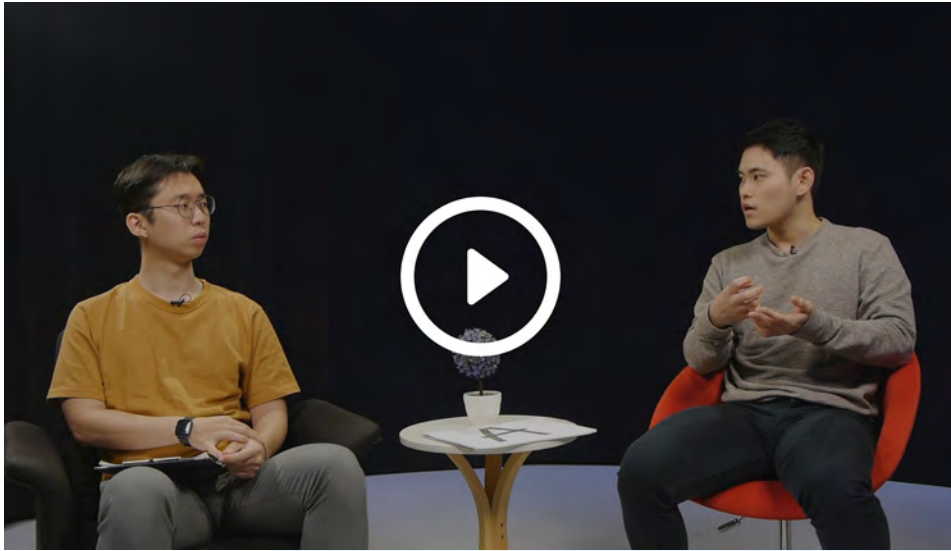
As the down-to-earth host of popular millennial talk show *Real Talk*, Johnathan Chua has made known to many his opinions on current topics concerning youths. Away from the screen, he also helms his own media company, GRVTV Media.

In this interview, Johnathan shares humorous stories from his formative years that have toughened him up and shaped his ways of thought.

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Tan Xiang Tian



#DownToShare: Episode 5

Tan Xiang Tian was a world champion wushu exponent in 2015, overcoming difficult knee injuries en route to reaching the pinnacle of his sport. Now a special needs educator at a social service agency, he has indeed come a long way.

In this candid interview, Xiang Tian opens up about his mental health struggles and how they have shaped him to be who and where he is today.

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Voices From The Ground

(TW: Mentions of self-harm and suicide)

Everything Has A Price

by Maya

I'm sure everyone knows this phrase "Everything has a price". And it's true. Everything does have a price tag, nothing is free. But have you ever paid for something worthless with something priceless? I have.

I have been bullied because of my body millions of times. I wasn't sure when, but slowly, I started to believe everything my bullies told me. I started seeing myself as an ugly, worthless person who can't do anything right. I thought I was someone who nobody can love. Unless, I lose weight and become "pretty". I thought then that I could be happy. But boy—was I wrong.

Beauty is something that is not concrete. Everyone is so obsessed with being slim and tall and whatever the media has been promoting. And so was I. I still am.

I started to go on "diets" that were pretty much me starving myself. And over exercising to the point where I can't even stand anymore. I did it, and became "slim". I lost 10 kgs. Was I happy? Nope. It wasn't enough. Because in my head no matter how much weight I lost I still looked the same. In my head I was always the ugly, useless person who nobody loved. I realised that I had to love myself first because that's the only way I can ever be happy. And



I now know how stupid I was, sacrificing my happiness for something super dumb.

I'm in a much better state now, or at least I think I am. I'm still trying to lose weight, but not going to the extremes. I'm trying to eat healthy and exercise in a healthy amount.

I'm still not happy. And don't love myself yet. But I know I'm on the right path even though my destination is far ahead. I have a long way to go, but I don't plan to stop no matter how hard the path is.

For anyone struggling from body image issues, trust me, **losing your happiness to get other people's approval is not worth it.** If you want to change the way you look, do it for yourself, not for others. And don't hate yourself, love your body and it'll listen to you wholeheartedly.

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Surrounding Myself with Good Energy

by LT

I was diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder.

I knew from the age of 11, there was something unusual about me. Somehow, there was a gaping crater in my heart I couldn't fill, no matter what I tried to do to make myself happy.

Growing up with an abusive and traumatic childhood, I was constantly causing trouble at school – perhaps from the neglect I faced at home. My form teacher at P5 was so done with me being unable to complete my homework, she referred to me as a “thing”, and she didn't want to handle me anymore. I think that statement alone made me crack, and I don't think I was the same ever again.

In the early years of Secondary School, I was bullied from day 1 when I was chosen to be a Class Chairman, and me complaining about it to my teachers were met with an even more sour relationship between me and my classmates.

I wasn't a stranger to cutting myself and even attempting suicide. During my poly days, my mental health got better until the end of year 1, where it spiralled down drastically. The drama pitted against me got so bad that I had to disappear from school for a week – and that marked the first time I tried to kill myself and my mom finding out. From then on, she finally supported me to see a psychiatrist.

Life got better until I tried to kill myself again right after my final year project ended – I hadn't seen that psychiatrist for awhile because he wasn't giving the best help I needed, and my school schedule wouldn't let me see the

psychiatrist often.

I remember lying in my bed trying to bleed out, and calling my mom to apologise. She called my sister, who reached home first and stopped me from cutting even more. From that point, I knew I wanted to get better – not just for myself, but for the people around me who also deeply cared for me. I made an effort to regularly attend all my sessions with a new psychiatrist, and a psychologist as well. Until today, I'm still seeing them.

I'm serving National Service now and am due to ORD this year. I didn't think I was improving until recently, where a psychologist in camp pointed out that I was applying all the tactics my personal psychologist taught me after a few conversations. A lot of people also thought of me as someone who's stable compared to other people who faced psychological issues in camp. I think this journey isn't just to show that it gets better, but also that sometimes, you do improve yourself without even knowing, and by **surrounding yourself with people who support and care about you and stick by you through this journey.**



Opening Up, Moving Forward

by Astrid

As someone who has always struggled with suicide ideation, there came a point where I started to methodically plan my death. It was this honest expression of a death wish to two people in my life that made them extremely concerned. Their concern pushed me to “seek help”, so I went for counselling to show them that I did try, that despite my efforts I still had to die.

True to my thoughts, counselling did nothing but drain even more energy from me. “Letting it out” didn't make me feel better, nor did “self-help” or “self-love” exercises. I was tired, determined to give up. But I think I realised that I need psychiatric help, and in an attempt to prove to myself that I had tried, asked my counsellor to refer me to a psychiatrist. She refused initially, to which I came clean with her about my life: insomnia, vivid nightmares, always tired, no appetite and stuck in a constant state of suicide ideation where the only times I felt something were the times I tried to hurt myself. So she referred me to a psychiatrist.

The diagnosis, medication and sessions helped a little, but it was only after switching to my current psychiatrist that I started to really feel improvement. Now my nightmares are occasional, I don't struggle to fall asleep as much, and I eat a bit more. I still feel tired and unmotivated a lot, my appetite fluctuates, and I sometimes fall into low moods or feel suicidal again. I am still severely depressed and suffer from anxiety.

But I am living each day, striving to just keep living. And I hope that people who struggle with mental illnesses like I do will start to understand that this is something we have to

live with our whole life, but it doesn't have to define us. We can still try to do the best we can to get past every day, and **learn to talk about our mental health as openly as we do about physical illnesses like a flu or a cold.**



We Are Not Robots

by Nicole

I'm 25 this year and I've had undiagnosed/self diagnosed depression & anxiety for quite many years. Most of it stemmed from childhood trauma under narcissistic parenting. I never really felt the need to go seek help. In fact, I was always encouraging people to go for help if they saw a need to but for me it was always like, “I already survive so long what... and I'm still functional so... means I'm okay enough la right no need see doctor.”

It was only until a really toxic relationship that was rocky af and my partner then encouraged me to seek help so I went for – not therapy, but counselling. Cause I heard from my best friend that it was affordable. So I went. And it really made it more comforting to know that the option of counselling meant that there would be no diagnosis or prescription of drugs because personally I did not and still do not feel ready for that change, especially when I don't even know how to adjust & handle my emotional and thought processes.

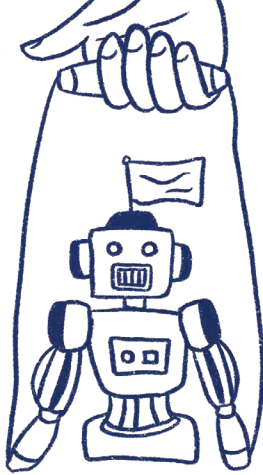
My experience with it was... Great, but definitely not perfect. And I think people shouldn't expect

perfection when receiving help. Not all professionals are great, but more importantly we need to keep trying ourselves to seek the best form of help suited for us.

I waited two months for my first appointment slot. And of course I was hella apprehensive... Do I just enter a room and unload my two-decade-long baggage to a stranger (o_0*) ? But because my

best friend had recommended the place, I felt more at ease going, knowing that the assigned counsellor would be patient and understanding. And he was! Also, after the end of each session, people around me who knew I was going for counselling often asked, "DID IT WORK?" Like what LOL—talk for one hour how to cure sia. Like no doubt, I appreciate the optimism but it's not realistic...

A few months went by and I didn't book an appointment because I felt like I wasn't making progress in life and in my choices, and also quite sian to know that the fees went up. Things in life were getting more bleak and I felt embarrassed to go back to my counsellor to tell him I made no progress, and that I even deteriorated. I put a lot of pressure on myself like, "Ok now I'm paying money for professional help so I SHOULD be better. But I'm wasting my money because I'm not doing improving myself & I'm not taking the advice of my counsellor..." Looking back, **it's important for us to allow ourselves some room for mistakes because we're not robots with a technical error in our systems** that can just be fixed like that. Your counsellor/therapist is there to help undo all your mental knots—you are not supposed to impress them with progress.



They are not there to judge you and if they do, they are being sh*tty at their jobs, it says nothing about your progress (or lack thereof), and it's definitely not representative of the entire industry. Ultimately there's no point acting strong in front of our doctor because we also need to help them help us. There's a lot of self awareness and balancing involved, like listening to your own cues and boundaries, seeing how ready you are to open up, etc. Pace yourself, yet don't remain stagnant.

Honestly now... I have decided to stop going for counselling altogether. But also because I do feel I'm in a better place and feel ready to not attend anymore. But just because I'm in a better place doesn't mean I'm "cured" and completely stable and "functional". I don't think my mental health struggles ever really go away. And I think it sets an unhealthy goal to expect ourselves to "fully heal". **I've come to accept that it's okay so long as I constantly work on myself.** Neurotypical or not, we all always have to work on ourselves.

Just because I've decided to stop going, I'm not shutting out the idea of seeking professional help again in the future. Just focus on what you need and if you can't tell what it is you need, I think that's when professional help is useful! And definitely take your time to go seek help. **No point "forcing" yourself to go if you're not mentally ready for a third party's perspective.** Go with an open mind, and at the end of it even if the doctor is really sh*t, it's okay & you should be proud of yourself for stepping beyond your comfort zone to pursue something good!

Seeking help & addressing our inner demons is a form of self care, so don't give up!

We Can Do It

by YT

It all started from like primary school or even earlier. My family brought me up with 'tough discipline'—urging me to study and all and when we don't, there will be caning.

Despite that, my grades in primary school were average. I don't really socialize much with my classmates and by primary 6 or so, I started to mix into the bad company. I recall stealing money from my father then going to the arcade with them and doing things like that.

Around this time, I was also sexually abused by one of my guy classmates. I didn't know who to turn to—I was afraid of my parents after all the abuse and in school I'm scared to seek help. Getting bullied was also a common occurrence from primary school days up to secondary school. The bullies made fun of my appearance, causing me to grow anxious and insecure of my looks. The bullying continued till upper secondary and when I was 15, I almost jumped down a 5 story building due to the overwhelming stress and pressure I faced both at home and in school.

What held me back was probably me thinking that there's another way out instead of dying.



Only at 16, I went to my school counselor just for social anxiety and didn't open up my suicidal thoughts. I was referred to polyclinic to be referred to a hospital for Counselling. However, there was quite a wait but any first consultation appointment was about 2-3 months later. In the midst of waiting for my appointment, I suddenly felt very suicidal so I texted my friend to ask him if he can help me tell my dad to bring me to IMH's emergency to see a doctor ASAP. Although my dad rushed home, he dismissed me and blamed me for using my phone too much and told me to sleep it off. I felt so helpless at that moment.

As time passes, I become better at coping but suicidal thoughts resurface every once in a while.

In 2020, I tried to overdose on gastric medicine as I felt suicidal. In January of 2021, things took for the worst, I had to drop out of my traineeship course due to my mental illness. Under pressure from my family to continue studying, I appealed and managed to secure a slot even though I am very reluctant to continue studying. I only started school like one month later than the rest of the classroom and I feel like I am missing a lot and there's a lot of stress and pressure. I started to self-harm to cope but I try to stop whenever I'm in a better headspace.

For me, this is an ongoing battle to try to fight this but it's really draining for me. Even though I have so many appointments and I feel so mentally drained, I am not going to give up and to anyone reading this, you should not as well. **I really hope everyone can cherish your life and never feel bad for seeking help, let's all go through this together.** Let's do our best to spread more awareness on mental health and suicide prevention especially among teenagers.



Your illness is not who you are,
Your struggle is your success story,
Your courage is your identity.



- Clarence The Angel,
It's A Wonderful Life

Mental Wellness

Some activities that are beneficial to our mental well-being include journalling, drawing and listening to music, among others.

Writing and drawing are effective outlets of expression, while music can help make us more relaxed.

We have included some of such activities in this section that you can check out. They are fun and easy to carry out. Enjoy!

Rent-Free Thoughts:

THE ART OF JOTTING DOWN HOW YOU FEEL

Writing down your thoughts can help process your emotions, reveal things about yourself that you may not be consciously aware of and also help you increase mindfulness. All in all, it can lead you towards healthier practices in managing your thoughts and feelings.

Try out some of these prompts that we have picked out:

1. Write a story with a beginning, middle and end about a memory you had, good or bad.
2. How are you feeling now in this present moment? Why?
3. How do you cope when going through a rough time? Which of these coping methods were helpful, and which ended up hurting you instead?
4. In the last week, write down 10 sensations (that you saw heard/smelled/tasted/felt that you are grateful for.



Music to Your Ears: Songs on Mental Health & Resilience



A compilation of songs that reminds us of the importance of mental health. Created by you, for you.

^Click or scan me
for the playlist!

Group Activities To Do With Your Friends!

Musical Drawing

1. Grab your drawing materials.
2. Choose a random song in our Dare To Share playlist.
3. Create a picture based on the lyrics of the song. Be as creative as possible!
4. Share your drawings with one another and describe what you have drawn.

Charades

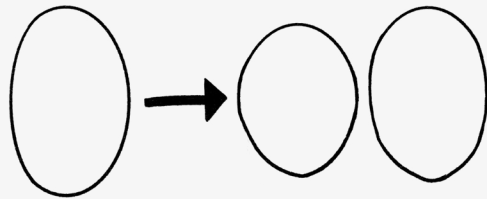
1. Choose someone in your group to tune in to our Dare To Share playlist and make sure it is on shuffle.
2. The person tuning into the playlist should try to act out the song without saying anything.
3. Other players should try to guess in the shortest time possible.
4. Take turns repeating Steps 1 to 3 with everyone else!



Draw Your Own Characters

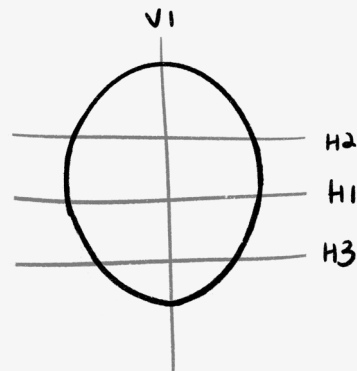
(In DTS' Style)

1. Start out with the rough face shape. You may begin with an oval/circle, before adding editing the shape to include more definition (i.e. for the chin, cheeks).



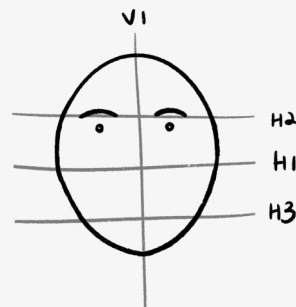
2. **Lightly sketch** 4 guiding lines (3 horizontal, 1 vertical) for the facial features, to be erased later.

- 1st horizontal line [H1] – halves the face for symmetry
- 2nd horizontal line [H2] – further segments top half of face into 2
- 3rd horizontal line [H3] – further segments bottom half of face into 2
- Vertical line [V1] – halves the face for symmetry



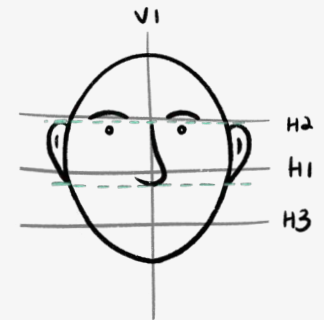
3. Add in the brows (2 curved lines) and eyes (2 dots).

Use H1 as a guide; the eyes can sit on H2.

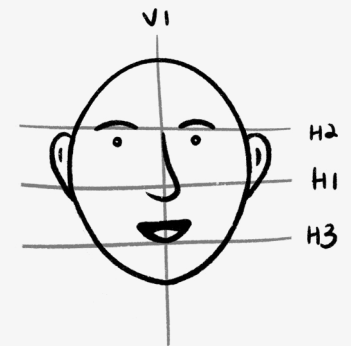


4. Add in nose and ears. As a guide, nose and ears can sit roughly between H1 and H2.

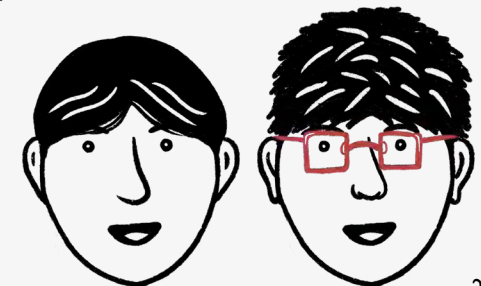
The bottom of the nose should correspond with the bottom of the ear lobes, while the top of the nose bridge should correspond with the top of the ears.



5. Add in the mouth. As a guide, the mouth can sit on top of H3.



6. Add in hair and accessories if you'd like! You are done. Congratulations! Now, try drawing your friends!



“Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count;

Everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted.

- Albert Einstein

Acknowledgements

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“You are on your own timelines,
going down your own path,
at your own pace.

Don't rush it.



-Chris Devenaars

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