

PARENTS STEP INTO WORLD OF GAMING AND COSPLAY AS PART OF COMMUNITY-BASED MENTAL WELLNESS PROGRAMME

The Health Promotion Board is introducing a community-based 'Healthy Mind, Healthy Community' Mental Well-being Initiative, which uses platforms like a talk show and parent support network to equip parents with the skills to nurture the mental well-being of their children.

Singapore, 21 July 2012: To empower parents by equipping them with the skills and knowledge to nurture the mental well-being of their children, the Health Promotion Board (HPB) is introducing an array of programmes as part of the 'Healthy Mind, Healthy Community' Mental Well-being Initiative being launched at Nee Soon East Community Club (CC) today.

2. The **Cyber Wellness Programme**, for instance, is for every parent who has ever wondered why their children would spend hours chatting and gaming online, or deck out in outlandish costumes and accessories in the name of Cosplay.

3. Aimed at helping parents recognise the subtle signs of harmful online behaviour in their children as well as create a healthy cyber culture at home, the four-part programme starts with a half-hour talk show, during which youths engage in frank and open discussions with parents on their thoughts and experiences as avid gamers and Cosplayers.

4. In addition to the Cyber Wellness Programme, other initiatives designed to boost parents' mental health literacy throughout their children's various life stages include:

- **Parent Support Network**

Kicking off today at Nee Soon East Constituency with an invitation for parents to sign up, the Parent Support Network will consist of parent health advocates who will be trained by

HPB to equip other parents within the community with the parenting skills to nurture their children's mental well-being.

- **'Raising Healthy & Happy Kids' Parent Resource Kit**

A resource kit for parents to teach children about stress management and coping mechanisms using games and activities, it also teaches parents to build their children's self-esteem and be a positive role model.

- **Theatre Forum**

A 45-minute production used to generate discussion on ways to handle stress as a family, cope with life's challenges and enhance relationships. Unlike a traditional play, however, the audience is invited to suggest different possible 'solutions' to the story, which the cast will enact.

5. Empowerment of parents is a key thrust of the 'Healthy Mind, Healthy Community' Mental Well-being Framework – research identifies parental responsiveness as well as strong parent-child relationship and support as two determining factors of effective parental care, which are crucial to a child's overall healthy development.

6. To complement the launch of these capacity-building programmes for parents, HPB is also bringing to Nee Soon East CC programmes to empower youths, such as:

- **Youth Mental Health Ambassador Programme**

Bringing HPB's Youth Mental Health Ambassador Programme to Nee Soon East, HPB has trained 30 youth health ambassadors from Nee Soon East CC's Youth Executive Committee, Northland Secondary School and Yishun New Town Secondary School. These young advocates will use the mentorship and project management skills they learn to plan and facilitate peer-led projects such as resilience campaigns as well as community activities such as road shows and exhibitions related to mental well-being.

- **Wellness on Wheels (WoW) Programme**

The Wellness on Wheels programme is a highly visual programme that teaches resilience through sports. Using cycling tricks and stunts, national cyclists from the Singapore Cycling Federation will engage youths on the three 'C's – **C**ommitment, **C**onfidence and **C**ourage, as well as highlight practical tips on building mental resilience through sports.

7. Said Mr Patrick Tay, Adviser to Nee Soon East Grassroots Organisation: “A place where both parents and children can easily find common ground through the wide spectrum of activities and programmes offered, the neighbourhood Community Club is an ideal place to introduce HPB’s ‘Healthy Mind, Healthy Community’ Mental Well-being Initiative. Such an Initiative is important as mental wellness and resilience is an intrinsic part of a truly healthy lifestyle. I encourage all Nee Soon East residents to make use of the programmes and resources to learn the coping skills we all need to deal with the ups and downs in life, and build even stronger family units.”

8. Said Mr Ang Hak Seng, Chief Executive Officer, HPB: “The ‘Healthy Mind, Healthy Community’ Mental Well-being Initiative aims to empower parents with the skills and knowledge to teach their children important mental well-being skills. We want them to be able to better understand what makes their children tick, so that they will be more equipped to support and encourage their children to make better decisions – before a pastime becomes an addiction; before a disagreement turns into a family feud. While parent empowerment is a key thrust, HPB is also riding on the strengths of the entire community to boost the mental health literacy of the young; such as teachers, neighbours and, not forgetting, the young themselves. This we do through working with, for example, schools and grassroots to train active and passionate health ambassadors.”

9. Said Mr Tan Meng, Chairperson, Nee Soon East CC’s Active Ageing Committee: “Reports indicate that young people in Singapore are more likely to suffer a mental illness than someone else over 30. The days of our youth can be a time of adventure or a time of angst – the difference sometimes boils down to our outlook or the effectiveness of our coping mechanisms. As the driver of health promotion efforts at Nee Soon East Constituency, the Citizens’ Consultative Committee’s Active Ageing Committee wants to do what we can to help our young within the community nurture their mental well-being.”

10. HPB plans to introduce the ‘Healthy Mind, Healthy Community’ Mental Well-being Framework to 25 constituencies and reach out to 30,000 parents and youths by 2015.

Annex – Programme Highlights

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Programme Highlights

Cyber wellness Talk Show

This talk show aims to provide an insight into the youth culture and the internet generation. It showcases an interactive discourse between the audience, and a panel of youth and experienced practitioners. A youth gamer who takes part in online and on-site gaming competitions and a youth costume player will both share about their life experiences and lifestyles. A young Internet entrepreneur and author will share important facts about the uses of the Internet as an educational tool and social medium. An experienced practitioner, who is a Psychologist from the Institute of Mental Health will talk about the current trends of youth online activities and share tips on how parents can protect their children / adolescents from potential risks of online activities.

Wellness on Wheels

The Wellness on Wheels programme is a highly visual programme that teaches resilience through sports. Using cycling tricks and stunts, the national cyclists from the Singapore Cycling Federation will talk about the 3Cs – “Commitment”, “Confidence” and “Courage”. They will share resilience stories and highlight practical tips on building mental resilience skills.

Colin Cool Exhibition

The “Be Cool! Be You!” Colin Cool Mental Wellness Exhibition aims to build resilience of primary school children through interactive and engaging activities. The exhibit focuses on a range of topics, namely positive self-esteem, coping with emotions and social skills, which highlights the following messages:

- a) I am a Very Important Person! (Self esteem)
- b) Everyone has strengths, you never know what you can do until you try
- c) Express your feelings/emotions
- d) Friends and family are an important source of support

Anakku Sayang Forum Theatre

The Anakku Sayang Forum Theatre depicts a challenging family situation, triggering parental conflict and affecting the dynamics of parent-child and sibling relationships. The story is used to generate discussion on how to better deal with stress, coping with life challenges and enhancing relationships. This forum theatre piece is written by an experienced Malay Theatre Director who is also an experienced Counsellor, and facilitated by an experienced Life Coach, who have conducted numerous personal and professional empowerment programmes across Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore.

Youth Health Ambassadors

A total of 30 youth will be trained as Youth Health Ambassadors. The youths are from the Nee Soon East Youth Executive Committee (YEC) and student leaders of Yishun Town and Northland Secondary Schools. A targeted training lesson has been planned to equip the youth with knowledge about mental wellness and the activities of the launch.

Parent Network

A parent network, the 1st of its kind in a community club (CC) setting, has been set up for parents to become mental health advocates for their children. HPB will train these Parent Advocates with skills to provide support to other parents in the community. Parent advocates shall support these parents by providing them with tools and information to help them strengthen parenting skills in raising mental wellbeing of their children.