

Club H.E.A.L

**Volunteers & Persons with
mental illness (PMI)
building a therapeutic
relationship**



Take a minute to refresh your mind

- This person you will soon meet in the subsequent weeks is not:
 - an 'outcast'...
 - a 'weirdo'..
 - an outcome of his own wrongdoings..
 - possessed..

But is a brother or a sister in humanity

- **“ The believers are nothing else than brothers...” (49: 10)**
- A human being with **hopes**, the potential to be **empowered**, worthy of being **accepted** and **loved**.

5 Things to Do!

1. Be GENUINE

- Show genuine interest
 - Body language
- Say only genuine things you feel and believe in
 - Avoid cliches
- Sharing similar personal experiences
 - Helpful in making a PMI feel understood
 - But not too much! (do not use this as a springboard to tell your life story)

1. Be **GENUINE**

- A PMI can detect when someone is exhibiting artificial behaviour
 - Brushing off that ‘everything is going to be alright’
 - Asking a question and then not waiting for the answer



2. Having EMPATHY

- Perceive the meanings and feelings of the PMI and to *communicate that understanding* to him.
- Does not mean that you have to have the exact same experience
- Put yourself in the other's shoes

2. Having EMPATHY

- Listen and SENSE THE IMPORTANCE the PMI gives to a particular issue.
- Understand the issue before making assumptions

3. Validate

- Before giving advice, validate the feelings and thoughts of the PMI
 - *Let them know* you understand and what is it that you understand
 - Clarify if you don't understand
 - PMI will want to know that you see where they are coming from

“Tell me whether my understanding of it agrees with you...”

4. Listening

- Sometimes, more than advice and lessons, one just needs a listening ear
- Life experiences mean different things to different people → listen out for what it means to the person you are listening to
- Anticipate fluctuation in moods

5. Having RESPECT


- Build trust and rapport before enquiring personal issues
- PMI will come from various backgrounds, lifestyles and have various behaviours
- Consider PMI's preference and ideas while engaging in activities

5 Things to Avoid!


1. Avoid Labelling

- Remember— some mental illnesses are hereditary!
- PMI did not choose to be mentally ill
- The club is supposed to be a safe, non-judgmental place for PMI to turn to seek comfort and solace

2. Avoid Pretending (even if you mean well)

- If you do not see what they see or hear what they hear, do not pretend you do
- M: Sometimes I hear voices.. Can you hear them?
V: Yes, I hear them too. 
- Calmly and quietly express your perceptions without arguing or belittling their experience

3. Avoid belittling feelings

- M: I have nothing to live for..I wish I was dead.
V: “Everybody gets down in the dumps..its okay..” 
- Equating a person’s feelings to a *general expression* that ‘everybody’ faces implies that one *is not* trying to understand the individual’s experience

4. Avoid challenging

- M: Sometimes I'm just a lifeless leaf floating aimlessly..


V: If you are lifeless, why is your heart beating?



- Every individual has a unique way of expressing themselves
- Listen with an open heart and mind, and encourage expression

You can't pour water into an overturned glass- Anonymous

5. Avoid hastening cliché advice

- M: I don't like taking medication
- V: Take it, it's for your own good! 
- Automatic responses may indicate that you did not put much thought into them
- Take time to *explore the meaning* and feelings behind why one says something

What if I say the wrong thing?:o

- No one magic phrase can solve a person's problems
- No single statement can significantly worsen them
- But be kind in your words
- Listen carefully & Show genuine interest
- If you had a slip of tongue and said sth insensitive, don't panic, keep calm and readdress yourself :
“that didn't come out right, what I meant was..”

You are not alone!

- APPROACH US:
 - if a PMI expresses suicidal ideation/thoughts
 - If a PMI expresses non-compliance to medication
 - Whenever you feel like sharing your thoughts and feelings:)

Enjoy the Experience! 😊

- It is more often than not, that we choose to take on an experience to touch the lives of others only to realise that they have touched ours.
- Thank you for taking the time and energy to make club H.E.A.L possible :)

"Snowflakes are one of nature's most fragile things, but just look what they can do when they stick together." ~Vesta M. Kelly

Thank You!