

# HEAL

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*Where Hope,  
Empowerment,  
Acceptance &  
Love prevail*



## About Club HEAL

Club HEAL was registered with the Registry of Societies in February 2012 (Reg No: T12SS0028K) by a group of like-minded individuals who have a strong passion in helping people with mental health issues and their family members lead a fulfilling and stigma-free life.

We run a psychiatric rehabilitation day care service for persons with mental illness. We also provide outreach programs to them, their caregivers and the general public.

In February 2013, Club HEAL was made an Institution of a Public Character (IPC). Club HEAL aims to assist and empower persons with mental health issues to regain confidence in themselves and others in their journey towards community reintegration. It also aims to eradicate the stigma surrounding persons with mental health issues thereby breaking unnecessary barriers to their recovery process.

## President's Message

By Dr Radiah Salim

We started this club with the aim of helping persons with mental health issues (PMHI) not only cope with life's challenges but also to give them **hope** that their problems are not insurmountable, that they can be **empowered** to reach their full potential, that they need to **accept** their challenges with faith and perseverance and that they are not alone and are deserving of **love** from their fellow humans.

Since our very first meeting at Dr Bibi Jan's (Exco member) place back in February 2012, we have reached many milestones, Alhamdulillah.

Club HEAL has been very fortunate that we have received much support from its advisors, members and volunteers and also members of the public. The Malay press, radio and TV in particular have been very supportive from Day One.

### rehabilitation service

Our two patrons, Mdm Halimah Yacob and Mr Zaqy Mohamad, have also been very supportive of our efforts. Through them, we were very fortunate to get our first day rehabilitation service at Masjid AlKhair and, later on, our very own premises at Bukit Batok East.

We are especially grateful to the board members and staff of the 2 mosques – Masjid AlKhair and Masjid Darul Aman (MDA), for being so accommodating and supportive of our day rehabilitation service.

Club HEAL is also lucky to have the support and advice

of our expert advisors, consultant psychiatrists Dr Joseph Leong and Dr Habeebul Rahman, and our legal counsel Ms Roslina Baba.

The passion and commitment of Club HEAL's members, staff and volunteers drive our organization forward. We started with a blog and facebook page, and later set up a website. One of our volunteers, Ustazah Laila Abu Hassan, generously offered us the use of her madrasah at Woodlands Point for our first Majlis Iftar (fast-breaking). We were also very fortunate to get dedicated student interns to help run our day rehabilitation service and outreach programs.

Our Vice-President, sister Yang Chek, successfully started our monthly caregivers' support group at our MDA premises – a much-needed initiative indeed.

### Club HEAL short films

The Club HEAL short films (the brainchild of our hardworking Exco member Hidayah Amin) have indeed helped propel Club HEAL into national media. What is particularly valuable about these films is that they make many viewers feel, think and reflect. The excellent quality of these films, thanks to our brother, Sanif Olek, has prompted established organizations like IMH and AIC to want to use them as educational tools.

We have had successful collaborations with EPIP and SAMH, and insyaAllah will be doing future collaborations with other agencies like MUIS, Mendaki, MKAC, SACS, CMHT, HPB and AMP.

We reached an important milestone in February this year with the attainment of the IPC status. In the year ahead, Club HEAL wishes to expand our outreach efforts to

PMHI's who are unable to attend our day rehab service. InsyaAllah, we want to employ an outreach worker who will spearhead this program with the help of our 'Healing Friends'.

With our very own premises at BBE, we were also able to improve our rehab program to include vocational rehabilitation through the establishment of a thrift shop, a café and a car-wash service.

This club would not have moved without the loyal support of the PMHI's and their caregivers. I am truly humbled by their perseverance and their presence in our lives is a gift from Allah.

It is my hope that, someday, Club HEAL will be run mainly by PMHI's and their families. We are already seeing that happening with sister Yohanna Abdullah, our resident writer and intern, and a few others.

### versatile and resourceful

Last but not least, I want to particularly thank our wonderful staff, for working with very little resources. They have been very versatile and resourceful, masya Allah.

Alhamdulillah, the publications committee members have put in much effort to come up with this, our inaugural newsletter, HEAL, designed to give accurate information about mental health issues and, at the same time, keep readers informed of the activities of Club HEAL.

In a sense, all of us are Club HEAL's volunteers because we chose to be here and all of us are beneficiaries because we all benefit from being a part of the Club HEAL family.



## Our Activities

It had been an exciting and eventful first half of 2013 for Club HEAL as we approached our first full year of operating as a charitable organization. Do read on as we bring you through our milestones over the months.

### Film Screening

Club HEAL held its very first film screening 'Are you Mental? The De-stigmatization of Mental Illness' at the Singapore Management University on 30 January 2013. Representatives from our partners (Institute of Mental Health, Singapore Association of Mental Health and Singapore Anglican Community Services), Club HEAL participants and volunteers, as well as members from the general public joined us



for the evening. The film produced by Hidayah Amin and directed by Award-winning Director Sanif Olek showcased four short films centred on various mental health issues and the need for public awareness. The beautifully crafted films star well-known actors like Adrian Pang, Sanif Hussein and Nadiah M Din. The screening was followed by a thought-provoking panel discussion with Senior Consultant and Club HEAL expert adviser Dr Joseph Leong, Director Sanif Olek, a participant from Club HEAL (Ms Yohanna Abdullah) and a caregiver (Ms Kartika Hosni). It was an engaging night where raw emotions and experiences were shared by panelists and audience alike. Club HEAL received such a positive reception that an encore was carried out two months later with a different set of panelists. The film screening was featured in 'Singapore Today' on Channel News Asia and the film has been uploaded on our website. Do view it and take your step towards eradicating the stigma surrounding mental illness!

### Official Opening of Club HEAL at Bukit Batok East (BBE)

On 11 May 2013, Club HEAL at BBE was officially opened by our patron, Mdm Halimah Yacob, to a crowd of Club HEAL participants, members, volunteers and the general public. With the support of Mdm Halimah and her BBE grassroots organizations, Club HEAL obtained its very own premises at the heart of Bukit Batok East on 28 January 2013, after having conducted its sessions in the west for nine months at Masjid AlKhair. While we were sad to leave our friends at Masjid AlKhair who had



provided us with so much hospitality and generosity in providing a venue, we were equally excited to step into our very own home. The new premises house Club HEAL's thrift store, where you can procure diverse items ranging from books to scarves at rock bottom prices. There is also a spacious air-conditioned room where rehabilitative

“ More importantly, the Café cum Car Wash is run by the participants of Club HEAL as part of their vocational rehabilitative activity, so supporting it means supporting their rehabilitation. ”



activities can take place. A Café cum Car Wash is conducted on every last Saturday of the month at the premises. For a small amount that goes towards a good cause, you can treat your taste buds to an assortment of delicacies while getting your car washed at the same time! More importantly, the Café cum Car Wash is run by the participants of Club HEAL as part of their vocational rehabilitative activity. Hence, supporting it means supporting their rehabilitation as well. Why wait? Head over to Club HEAL soon!

### Family Link Programme

Club HEAL supported the Singapore Association of Mental Health in conducting its very first Family Link Programme (FLP) series in Bahasa Melayu on 9 April 2013. The FLP is a series of eight workshops for caregivers of persons suffering from any one of three kinds of mental illnesses – schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or depression. For more information on the next cycle of the FLP series, log on to [www.samhealth.org.sg](http://www.samhealth.org.sg). Or 'Like' our page on Facebook to receive the latest updates!

### Beneficiary of Te Ra Seh! and MUIS Wakaf Disbursement



Club HEAL was honoured to be a beneficiary of popular MediaCorp's Suria variety show 'Te Ra Seh!', which saw representatives from Malay Television and Radio battle it out in a series of fun-filled games. Club HEAL was represented by Team Radio. Although Team Radio came in second at the end of the competition, it has proudly helped Club HEAL raise a handsome sum of \$4500. Club HEAL would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in making 'Te Ra Seh!' a successful variety show with a cause.

Club HEAL was also a recipient of MUIS's wakaf disbursement held on 12 June 2013. We received a generous amount from the wakaf of Sharifah Shaika Binte Omar Bin Ali Aljunied and would like to thank all parties involved in contributing to Club HEAL's efforts in supporting people with mental health issues lead a fulfilling life.

### Jurong Lake Run 2013

Club HEAL was one of the beneficiaries that took part in the Jurong Lake Run 2013 (JLR13) carnival, held on a perfect Sunday morning on 7th July 2013. Our volunteer and beneficiary, Yohanna Abdullah, was selected as one of the JLR13 heroes who epitomized 'Courage'. Joining in the fun were some of our staff, volunteers and beneficiaries who took part in the 3km walk-a-jog. We would like to thank JLR13 for making the event one that was memorable for Club HEAL and all those who participated.



## Upcoming Events

#### 15th August (Thu)

– National Day cum Hari Raya Celebration with CRSS and SAMH at BBE

#### 24th September (Tue)

– Golf Amal (AMP) at Orchard Country Club

#### 6th October (Sun)

– Silver Ribbon Community Mental Wellness Carnival @ Geylang Serai CC

– CRSS Mental Awareness Day @ Jurong Spring CC

#### 12th October (Sat)

– Participation in World Mental Health Day Celebration (by IMH/SAMH)

#### 13th October (Sun)

Community Mental Wellness Carnival by Health Promotion Board

#### 20th October (Sun)

Mental Resilience Day @ BBE by Club HEAL and BBE MAEC



## HEALing Journey

### Home Alone

By Yohanna Abdullah

Often, all we need is a listening ear and, for someone living alone, a visit from three members of Club HEAL proved to be heaven-sent.

Mdm Azizah (not her real name) welcomed with open arms the president of Club HEAL, Dr Radiah Salim; its manager, Siti Hamidah Bahashwan; and me, a patient-volunteer, to her home in July. "It is as if *lailatulqadar* has come early for me - my wish for guests has come true!" she gushed excitedly.

Azizah has schizophrenia. She enthused about her joy at receiving us and willingly shared insights into her life, including the fact that she had problems with her mother. She hears voices, and they sometimes urge her to kill her mother.

"Azizah's case shows how important it is for befrienders to talk to these mentally-ill patients, especially when they live alone. It is important to listen without judging. It doesn't matter if what they say is not really factual, we acknowledge their perceptions," says Hamidah.

Azizah is a *Hajjah* and is well-read in Islam. Her four siblings keep a lookout for her as she lives alone. She was twice married and has a grown-up son.

During the visit, Dr Radiah invited Azizah to attend Club HEAL at Darul Aman Mosque. Dr Radiah explained, "A day rehab centre is what PMHI's (Persons with Mental Health Issues) confined to spending their days at home need. They will meet friends and have activities to do to keep their minds and bodies occupied. I agree with Kak Hamidah that she should have befrienders visit her home and take her out. I feel sad for her because she lives alone. For me, no one should live alone. It's very lonely and can drive anyone 'crazy'. But I think she has accepted the fact that she is meant to live alone."

Dr Radiah added, "I think befrienders will find it easy to befriend her as she is friendly. I hope she successfully becomes rehabilitated and eventually volunteers for Club HEAL. *InshaAllah*, PMI's make the best volunteers because they have been there."

A few days later, I accompanied Azizah to Darul Aman Mosque. I was heartened by her warmth and admired her ability to control her mind by referring to the teachings of Islam. Her negative thoughts she attribute to disturbance by satan, which she combats with remembrance of God.

Azizah is currently attending Club HEAL at Darul Aman Mosque and is exultant about her new routine. "Club HEAL keeps me busy and I learn many new things there. I also have new friends," she says.



## Ask the Expert

### Question:

**My 17-year-old brother has not been himself lately. He isolates himself and his personal hygiene has declined. He skips college and his school performance has deteriorated. He talks to himself. My parents have brought him to see an ustadz (religious teacher) but he says there is nothing wrong. What should we do?**

### Response:

**Your brother may have ARMS (at-risk mental state).**

Certain changes in thoughts and feelings have been identified as an indication of an at-risk mental state that may be experienced before the onset of a psychiatric illness. For some, ARMS indicates the early stages of a psychotic disorder that will develop over time. For others, the symptoms fade or remain mild. About 30% of people who experience ARMS go on to develop a psychotic disorder.

“Young people at risk may appear withdrawn and lose interest in activities that they used to like. They may require prodding to engage in normal activities like showering and may appear less emotional or confused by their emotions.”

Young people at risk may appear withdrawn and lose interest in activities that they used to like. They may require prodding to engage in normal activities like showering and may appear less emotional or confused by their emotions. Close relations may notice that their appearance is odd, that they have become focused on unusual ideas, or that they have developed a sense of unusual self-importance. A decline in school or work performance is common. You can help by getting him a referral from the polyclinic to see a psychiatrist. The earlier treatment is sought, the better the outcome.



## InfoHEAL

### Sufferers of Psychoses need Understanding and Acceptance

"... There is a medicine for every disease. When the medicine is applied to the disease, it is cured by Allah's permission ... "[Muslim]

Psychotic illness can affect anyone – even geniuses have been known to have psychoses, e.g. Nobel Laureate John Nash, whose touching story is portrayed in the movie 'A Beautiful Mind'.

### What is psychosis?

Psychosis is the inability to distinguish reality from fantasy; and results in the creation of a new reality for the sufferer.

Modern psychiatry states that serious psychotic illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder have multiple underlying causes. For example, the

person in whom schizophrenia develops may have a specific biological vulnerability which is triggered by stress. Stresses may be genetic, biological, psychosocial or environmental. How well a person with a serious mental disorder copes depends on how successfully he tackles all aspects (bio-psycho-social) of the disorder. This holistic approach includes biological treatment (medications and sometimes electro-convulsive therapy), psychological treatment (psychotherapy) and social support.

### Unhelpful attitudes and myths

1. *Ridiculing sufferers* – Many comedians use examples of bizarre behaviour displayed by the psychotically ill to draw out laughter. Naturally, taunting a sufferer of psychoses will increase his stress.

*continued on page 4*



## HEALing Friend

### Amirah's Testimony

I first decided to do my internship at Club HEAL because I thought it would be an interesting experience. Boy, was I right!

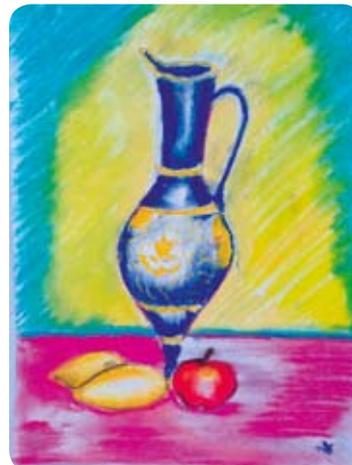
I worked at Club HEAL's first psychiatric rehabilitation day service, located at AlKhair Mosque. Basically, I assisted the programme executive in running the service. I helped plan, execute and facilitate sessions. This involved liaising with programme participants, caregivers and volunteers.

Through the various activities at Club HEAL, I experienced moments that were insightful, fun and heart-warming. The experience has taught me life skills that can be applied not only to my future teaching profession, but also to my everyday life. It has also been memorable as I made new friends along the way. The enjoyable experience that I had in Club HEAL has definitely prompted me to continue in Club HEAL as a volunteer.

By:  
Amirah Talib  
Teacher Trainee



## Creative Corner



▲ Colourful cupcakes made by participants during a break fast gathering

◀ A beautiful drawing of a vase and fruits by a participant of Club HEAL using an interesting blend of colours.

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2. *Believing psychotics are violent* – Most sufferers prefer to be left alone to reconcile their disordered thought processes. Provocative behaviour of people who do not understand this inner struggle sometime triggers a violent response.
3. *Believing psychosis is the work of black magic/evil spirits* – When families seek help from traditional healers as a result, psychiatric treatment is delayed.
4. *Looking down upon sufferers* – Sufferers are often viewed as being of a 'weak personality' or even as 'choosing to be mad'. No wonder sufferers and their families hesitate to seek treatment!
5. *Stigmatizing sufferers* – When employers hesitate to hire people with a history of psychotic illness, their sense of self-worth declines, leading to depression and an increased risk of relapse.

## Islam Explains

From the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w):

1. "Allah has not sent down a disease without sending a cure for it." [Bukhari]

Clinical psychosis is a disease and medicines developed through modern research can treat it (by Allah's permission). The afflicted needs to accept that Allah has sent this illness to him as a test and believe that medication will help him stay well. Proper insight into his illness will help him comply with the 'cure'.

2. "There are three (types of persons) whose actions are not recorded: a sleeper till he awakes, a child till it reaches puberty, and an insane person till he is restored to reason." [Muslim]

Islam does not fault the person with mental illness. The insane person (i.e. the person with psychotic symptoms) is not responsible for his behaviour until he has recovered – there is no stigma. If Allah Himself will not record their actions, how can Muslims judge them? We help, not shun.

From the Qur'an:

1. "If God touches you with affliction, none can remove it but He ... He has power over all things." (6:17)

If Allah has burdened a person with a devastating illness, He has the power to remove such devastation. In the end, the sufferer should turn to Allah for help and comply with modern medicine to control his symptoms.

“Allah promises that He listens and grants relief, even if no one else understands, Allah does. These verses give the believing sufferer the psycho-spiritual strength to cope with his illness.”

He can have a happy and productive life.

2. "And (remember) Ayyub, when he cried to his Lord, 'Truly distress has seized me, but You are the Most Merciful of those that are merciful.' So We listened to him: We removed the distress that was on him ..." (21:83-84)

Prophet Ayyub (a.s.) was afflicted with a severe illness that resulted in being shunned but never lost hope in Allah and Allah cured him. The sufferer should identify with Ayyub's (a.s.) suffering – it will help him overcome his illness, by God's will.

3. "[Allah] listens to the (soul) distressed when it calls on Him, and ... relieves its suffering ..." (27:62)

Allah promises that He listens and grants relief, even if no one else understands, Allah does. These verses give the believing sufferer the psycho-spiritual strength to cope with his illness.



EXCO 2013-2014

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## Thrift Shop

Club HEAL operates a Thrift Shop at our BBE premises to serve as a platform to empower our participants with occupational and entrepreneurial skills.

We sell an array of items ranging from women accessories to delicious cakes. We also sell Islamic calligraphy and quotes from Rumi which have been beautifully hand-painted.

Do visit us at void deck of Blk 244, Bukit Batok East Ave 5 – operating hours are during weekdays from 9am till 1pm (closed on public holidays).



## Be A HEALing Friend

"You see, the Mu'min in their mutual piety, love and affection, are like a (single) body. When a part (of it) has a complaint, the whole body is united with it in wakefulness and fever." – (Bukhari and Muslim).

As a member or a volunteer, you can contribute in a variety of ways, from assisting in Club HEAL events to conducting rehabilitative activities! We need people from all walks of life who can contribute their time and skills to fulfill our cause.

To become a member, please fill up the membership form available at our website (see Resources section) and email it to us at admin@clubheal.org.sg or mail it to Club HEAL, Blk 244, Bukit Batok East Ave 5, #01-02, Singapore 650244.

We look forward to hearing from you!



## Donations & Sponsorships

As Club HEAL is an Institution of a Public Character (IPC), all donors will be eligible for 2.5 times tax reduction. Donations can be made by cheque to 'Club HEAL' or by GIRO – form available at our website.

Please contact us at 8400 6306 for further details or email us at admin@clubheal.org.sg.

We thank you for your kind efforts.



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