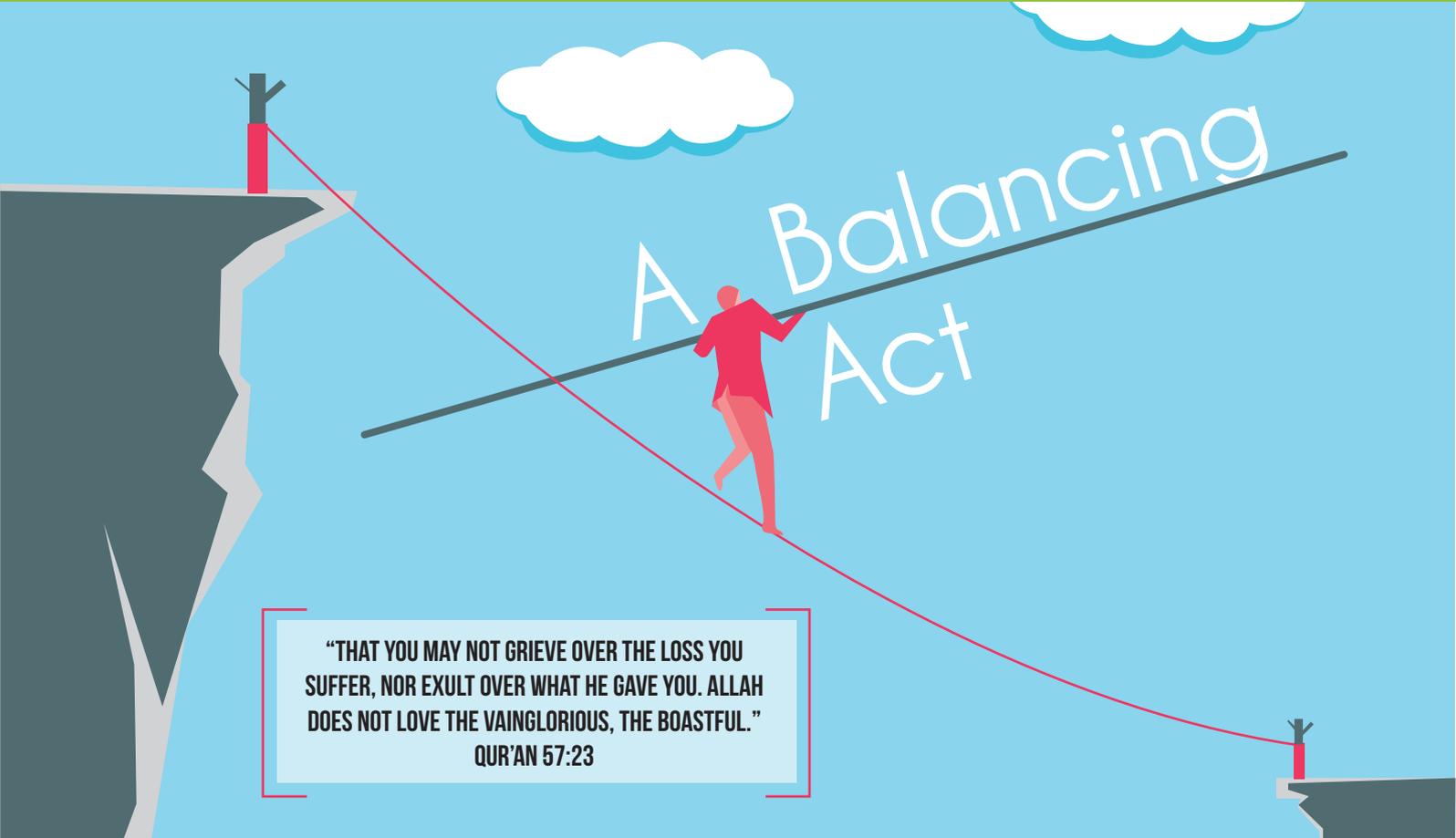


HEAL



HEAL ISSUE 14 (October–December 2016) • ISSN: 2339-5443



A Balancing Act

**“THAT YOU MAY NOT GRIEVE OVER THE LOSS YOU SUFFER, NOR EXULT OVER WHAT HE GAVE YOU. ALLAH DOES NOT LOVE THE VAINGLORIOUS, THE BOASTFUL.”
QUR’AN 57:23**

PRESIDENT’S ADDRESS

My friend who has bipolar disorder always tell me that she cannot be too happy. At first glance, this seem such a tragic statement, doesn't it? On reflection, however, restraining oneself from becoming too happy or too sad is recommended, whether one has bipolar disorder or not.

Chemical imbalance in a person with bipolar disorder exaggerates the mood swings that many of us experience in response to losses or gains. While we all need to keep our emotions in check, a person with bipolar disorder has to put in extra effort to do the same.

On the upside, many persons with bipolar disorder has that extra 'oomph' that makes them that much more creative and intelligent than most people.

Research has demonstrated that they are more likely to show a range of creative abilities, especially in areas where verbal proficiency is advantageous, such as in literature or leadership roles.

On a mood scale of zero to ten where zero is catatonically depressed and ten is ecstatic, out of this world happy, my friend opts for a 5.5 that helps get her creative juices going. Five is boringly normal.

Hence my friend prefers to regard herself as being mentally blessed rather than mentally ill. She regards her chemical imbalance as a God-given blessing and embraces her illness with grace and dignity.

Indeed, this illness has instilled in her not only the opportunity to exercise discipline over her emotions, but also allowed her to contribute in a way that she would not have been able to if she had never suffered the illness. Thank God for our bipolar bears!

About Club HEAL

Club HEAL is a charity that aims to assist and empower Peers (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 Peers thereby breaking unnecessary barriers to their recovery process. Services provided by Club HEAL include day rehabilitative services, home visits, public education, support groups and volunteer training.

Contact Club HEAL: 6899 3463 (9am – 5pm weekdays)
Blk 244, Bukit Batok East Ave 5, #01-02 Singapore 650244

info@clubheal.org.sg | www.clubheal.org.sg | FB: Club H.E.A.L
Registration No: T12SS0028K

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO HAVE BIPOLAR DISORDER?

A GROUP CHAT ON 

On 29 August 2016, four peers from Club HEAL, got together online for a friendly conversation about what it means to experience bipolar disorder. They are Noor Baizura, 28, realtor and trainer, Daryl Tan, 30, a HEALing Friend at Club HEAL, musician Mano Esperanza, 34, and Yohanna Abdullah, 49, writer/editor. Below is a part of the group chat on Facebook [editor: very slightly edited for the purposes of readability].

Noor Baizura:
On a scale of 0 to 10
(*0 = Catatonically depressed,
10 = ecstatically manic)
how is your mood?

Daryl Tan:
7

Yohanna Abdullah:
I am a high five.

Mano Esperanza:
I am a 3. Lots of things
happening.

Yohanna: Imagine I know nothing about bipolar disorder (BD) and ask you what it is ... give your own true definition of BD?

Mano: In my humble opinion, my definition is just 'simply the toying of emotions'.

Baizura: I find being bipolar like being a race car driver. You have to zoom in and race through life and familiarise yourself with the complex circuit of life. Sometimes you bang into the wall...and need to get yourself together...but the more you work that circuit the better you get at avoiding accidents. I really find my life like a movie at times. The highs and lows...the confusion and elation... and sometimes just dragging yourself out of bed. But every small victory counts...every smile and every effort to not be in a zombie like dazed mood from ending up in hospital and being titrated on heavy meds, etc... all of it matters.

Yohanna: I can relate to that. Ever asked God why He is playing with my emotions like never before. Having bipolar disorder is like being an officially moody person with grand mood swings...Yes it does feel like in a F1 race. I guess it should get better with experience, what say you Daryl?

Daryl: We are like water. We can be calm and still. Sometimes we rush like a waterfall.

Mano: I haven't had a manic episode in years. The lithium is working fine but I've gotten more depressed...

Yohanna: Are you Type 2 Mano? Type 2 is more depressed and Type 1 is more manic.

Mano: Oh. Definitely type 2.

Yohanna: I think the rest of us are Type 1 right?

Baizura: Daryl, I completely agree with you. In fact I do art...especially when I'm healing in hospital. I love to paint series of water droplets and it reflects how I feel. Manic is rushing waters and strong strokes. Or calm and Zen strokes of a peaceful ripple. Yes. Water is a very good element to express moods.

Yohanna: Bai, I always assumed you were Type 1 and Daryl too. So it looks like I am the only one Type 1 and hence prone to manias while you are all steady and cool.

Daryl: I am Type 1 lah.

Baizura: Actually it is funny...doctors said I'm Type 2...because my highs are hypomania and not mania...but my lows could seem prolonged. But I usually sign myself into hospital when I'm near a high...because I find myself too hyper that I cannot handle being suddenly exhausted and burn out. So my doctor has always tried to tell me to come when I'm low...to study my low. But lol ... when I'm too low I never think of him or remember my appointments!

Yohanna: That is good, you know how to control your highs before it gets too over the top, I think I am getting the knack to deal with my rapids.

Baizura: But chances are high that over the years I become more type 1 then type 2...it's been a long time since I had a crying episode. Music helps a lot. I have a playlist of choice for highs and a different one for lows.

Yohanna: Do you define yourself as a bipolar? I got into saying I am bipolar like I say I am Malay, is this good or bad?

Baizura: When I'm in my high...people just keep wanting me to perform more. I learned from a good motivational guru and psychologist ...not to say I am bipolar. But to say I have bipolar. If you are bipolar that encompasses the whole of you. There is nothing else to you. And everything you define yourself by is within a subset of bipolar. But when you say I have bipolar. It is only a fraction of you. You have some parts of it...but there is more to you than everything that describes the bipolar side of you.

Daryl: Bipolar is not a 'regular at once' understood term. Why the need to say bipolar disorder? Why not say I'm a happy bipolar? Best just tell others I experience frequently intense mood swings.

Yohanna: Yes I know that, but I also feel like it is a bigger part of me than being Malay or being a graduate for instance. My life has been turned upside down and inside out because of having BD.

Baizura: I actually made a chart for myself. 10 columns. For moods 1-10. And in the rows I label as follows: Appetite - Dressing - Sleeping - Music - Habits - Activities - Thoughts, etc. I realized I saw a pattern in my habits at different numbers...and seeing it early helps me to evade sloping up or down. It also helps to have a buddy or best friend, or family member whom you trust and love and can really rely on to recognise some of your moods with you. I like to believe we are all a little mental...those who handle it best are less mental than the next guy. So even if you are diagnosed and they are not...the fact that you can handle yourself better than some people... it is praiseworthy.

Mano: But I think part of the human experience is to go a little crazy once in a while. I have been in moments where the so called 'normal' people didn't make any sense whatsoever.

Daryl: We are no different from others. I'll just comment that we are more prone to being triggered and be paranoid in our own ways. I shall not say we are taking medication, but we are seeking treatment on a regular basis. We are no different from others.

DEBUNKING THREE MYTHS ABOUT BIPOLAR DISORDER



1. Mania is fun

Mania is fun as the patient expresses himself freely and do the things he will not do otherwise. When someone experiences an extremely high mood with bipolar disorder it's known as a manic or hypomanic episode. People can sometimes feel really happy during these periods: they tend to have a lot of energy, can think quickly and get lots of things done. But this is only up to a point; the lack of sleep and the disturbed thinking with hallucinations and delusions ultimately takes its toll and the patient may become out of control and need medical attention.

2. Bipolar disorder is when you are happy one moment and sad the next

Changes in moods are normal. But when you experience symptoms of bipolar disorder your moods are much more extreme and can experience moods that range from severe highs and severe lows. The moods can be really disruptive and can make it really hard to function in day to day life. With bipolar disorder, one specific mood extreme can last for weeks or months.

3. Medication fixes bipolar disorder

Medication is usually a large part of a successful treatment plan for bipolar disorder, so people are always advised to work with a doctor to manage bipolar symptoms. However, management of bipolar disorder is much more successful in the longer term when medication is not the only course of treatment. Different strategies that are used to manage bipolar disorder include psychological treatment, and other self-help strategies. All of these, however, should only be tried with the okay of your doctor.

Text adapted from <http://au.reachout.com/5-myths-about-bipolar-disorder>



SNAPSHOTS OF PAST EVENTS

1. Long-stay Raya @ IMH – 14 July

Club HEAL hosted a Hari Raya Aidilfitri gathering for 70 long-stay ward patients at the Institute of Mental Health (IMH). There were songs and games and dances and, of course, yummy food. This is our third year bringing cheer to our IMH peers, some of whom performed a Malay dance for the event. Club HEAL peer Mano Esperanza performed a medley of Hari Raya songs and many patients joined in, in their own special ways.



2. Hari Raya Celebrations cum racial Harmony Day @ BBE – 18 July

About 55 participants from Club HEAL Bukit Batok East centre, Community Rehabilitation and Support Service (CRSS), Bukit Gombak Group Home and Octave mingled with old and new friends as it has been a tradition to meet at CRSS during these festive occasions. We played the traditional Malay game, congkak, made paper Diwali lamps and folded ang pow fishes. The event was graced by MP for Jurong GRC Mdm Rahayu Mahzam.



3. Official Opening cum Hari Raya Celebrations @ Pasir Ris East – 23 July

Club HEAL official opening of its third centre was officiated by MP for Pasir

Ris-Ponggol GRC Mr Zainal Sapari, who had also kindly assisted in its procurement. Since starting operations in June this year, the centre has received 150 referrals. The official opening was followed by a Hari Raya Celebration with about 100 peers, caregivers and volunteers. Some danced, many sang, and we all enjoyed the food.

4. Friday Mosque Collection – 29 July

Several senior citizens and many students kindly offered their services for this fundraising activity. Mr Mohd Ramli Bin Ibrahim, 68, walking with the aid of a cane, noted spryly, "Club HEAL is my home, I am happy to contribute." We raised \$50,000 - alhamdulillah.

5. Booth @ Heartstrings walk ComChest @ Marina Bay Sands – 31 July

We set up a booth and took part in the scenic walk. The carnival saw beneficiaries, caregivers, donors and volunteers coming together for a single cause.

6. Caregiving tips for Dementia BH Seminar SPH – 6 August

Raffles Hospital, Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) and Berita Harian jointly organised an "Ageing Well" seminar at the Singapore Press Holdings Auditorium. Our president, Dr Radiah, joined other doctors to speak on managing chronic issues such as heart disease, diabetes and dementia in the golden years.

7. Mental Health Workshop for Asatizahs pt 1, Al-Ansar Mosque – 11 August

Dr Radiah conducted the first of a four-part series on Mental Health Awareness, touching on common mental illnesses and their treatments to 50 attentive asatizahs as part of their asatizah accreditation on a fine Thursday afternoon at the Al-Ansar mosque.

8. HEALing Friends Training (HFT) @ Pasir Ris East – 13 August

Kak Yang and Kak Junn helped our first-time presenters, Counsellor Nurleen and Social Worker Ilham, conducted our first HFT at Pasir Ris to a very enthusiastic group of 15 would-be volunteers.

9. Mental Health Awareness talk at Bukit Merah Neighbourhood Police Centre (NPC) – 16 August

Counsellor Hakim delivered an informative and fun session on common mental illnesses; dementia; and effective communication with peers and persons with Dementia (PWD), to policemen and policewomen at Bukit Merah NPC.

10. Mental Health v Mental Illness talk @ ITE Simei East – 24 August

Programme Head and Senior Counsellor, Zainal Lee, shared with 600 ITE Simei East students debunked common myths about mental illnesses and encouraged them not shy away from seeking help if needed.



11. Talk @ EPIP Public Forum "What's wrong with my child?" plus booth – 10 September

This wonderful public forum was designed to educate the public on early intervention of psychosis and other mental health conditions. It was co-organised by our community partners Early Psychosis Intervention Programme (EPIP), Community Health Assessment Team (CHAT) and Silver Ribbon Singapore. Club HEAL contributed a talk, chaired break-out sessions and set up a booth.

12. VWO Art & Craft Mart by Retired & Senior Volunteer Programme (RSVP Singapore) @ Junction 8 – 16 September

Rishah and Daryl had fun promoting and selling our handmade items to the public at Junction 8 one fine Friday and made record sales.

13. Talk @ Changi-Simei CC Women's Wellness Day – 18 September

Dr Radiah gave a talk, "A Healthy Mind in a Healthy Body", to 40 interested residents at Changi-Simei CC during their Women's Wellness Day event.

14. Mental Health Workshop for Asatizahs pt 2, Al-Ansar Mosque – 20 September

Our counsellors, Fauzy, Balqis and Nurleen, interacted with the asatizahs and provided invaluable tips on effective communication.

15. "Don't Worry Be Happy – On Anxiety and Depression" – talk @ Clementi CC – 25 September

Dr Radiah's talk was in both Malay and English. The 70-plus crowd also benefited from sister Aneez Fathima's sharing of her experience as a sufferer of posttraumatic depression.

16. "Managing Stress and Building a Resilient Mind" - talk by Dr Radiah plus booth – Yio Chu Kang CC (NHGP's World Mental Health Day event) – 2 October

Dr Radiah and peers Daryl, Rishah and Salamah mingled with about 400 seniors. The talk was in both English and Mandarin (NHGP's psychologist helped with the Mandarin delivery).



17. Presentation of paper on Club HEAL's Empowerment Programme @ World Mental Health Day 2016 – 7 October

The Club HEAL team led by Yohanna explained our approach to empowering peers in front of an international audience at the 2nd Asia Pacific Conference and Meeting on Mental Health organised by Silver Ribbon Singapore.

18. "Walk with us, Stamp the Stigma" @ Orchard Rd – 8 October

Mdm Dr Halimah walked with Club HEALers and other mental health advocates down Orchard Road to affirm our efforts to stamp out stigma. Programme Executive at BBE, Fizah, also shared her experience of depression before a packed public forum.



19. Joint Book Launch – Association of Muslim Professionals (AMP) – 10 October

Club HEAL successfully launched 'Mind at Peace' and 'Jiwa yang Tenang', together with Suf Supiani's 'Panic Disorder – the Choice and Willpower to Survive' at AMP Auditorium.





UPCOMING EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upcoming Events

1. "Don't Worry Be Happy" (DWBH) Day @ BBE – 16 October
2. Talk on mental wellness and caring for the elderly @ Al Falah mosque – 16 October
3. Photographic exhibition @ Bukit Batok (BB) Library – 17 to 23 October
4. DWBH talk and art therapy session @ BB Library – 22 October
5. Booth at Finding Dignity, a dance production @ SOTA – 22 & 23 October
6. Poetry recital/musical performance @ BB Library – 19 November
7. Booth @ Punggol Park (Silver Ribbon) – 20 November
8. Booth @ Jurong Spring (CRSS) – 20 November

NAMS @ Club HEAL – The National Addictions Management Service of IMH conducts a clinic at Club HEAL every Tuesday for existing and walk-in patients with addiction issues. No charge required to speak to a NAMS counsellor. To make an appointment, please call 6-RECOVER (67326837).

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 68993463 for further details or email us at admin@clubheal.org.sg.

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 fulfil our cause. To become a member, please fill up the membership form available at our website (under Resources section) and email it to us at info@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!

Creative Corner

THE BIPOLAR RIDE OF LIFE

By Noor Baizura Rahaman

*O Bipolar!
What wonder
Yet pain you could be!*

*Am I bipolar
By definition
Or are you
Just a part of me?*

*Should I laugh or cry
Or laugh while I cry
O you have turned me
Into such a mystery!*

*While the world
Calculate pain score
On a chart of 0 to 10*

*My doctor, hardly
Ever use that to
Evaluate me*

*Instead he asks
Me if 0 is suicidal
And 10 is manic
Tell me how do you feel?*

*You have made me
Charismatic on
Hypomanic days
I could be the envy of
many*

*Yet you wrap me in
A blanket of sadness
On other days
.And make people wonder
Why do I walk under an
invisible cloud of misery*

*Nothing is ever consistent
With me
Except for my
inconsistency*

*I shall not let you
Dictate the life of me
You make me such
A parody*

*I thank you though
For the lessons I have
learned*

*For the joys
For the love
For the tragedies*

*You have made me
closer
To God on some days
And reminded me that I
can be someone
Or something
But the truth is
We are nobody
And nothing*

*Like leaves that grow
From seed
And be a part of life
And someday discolour
And perish*

*I am a painting of God
Oh yes
A brilliant stroke
Of ever changing
colours
In His very own
Masterpiece
Of Life*

*So paint me Lord
A Bipolar Polaroid
I will sing Your praises
No matter how You
Colour me*

*Be it I am up
Or down
I know I am Yours
Bipolar or not
I know
You are Sufficient
For me!*

Editorial Team

Writer

Ms Yohanna Abdullah

Chief Editor

Ms Noorunnisa Ibrahim Kutty

Editorial Team Member

Dr Radiah Salim

Designer

Ms Nur Halimah Ali

Patrons:

Madam Dr Halimah Yacob
Mr Zaqy Mohamad

Expert Advisors:

Dr Joseph Leong Jern-Yi
Dr Habeebul Rahman
Dr Norhisham bin Main
Dr Mariam Aljunied

Hon Legal Counsel:

Ms Roslina Baba

EXCO

President:

Dr Radiah Salim

Vice-President:

Dr Zuraimi Mohd Dahlan

Hon Treasurer:

Ms Siti Hawa Sulaiman

Hon Asst Treasurer:

Ms Noor Baizura Rahmatullah

Hon Secretary:

Ms Noorunnisa Ibrahim Kutty

Hon Asst Secretary:

Ms Lubna Shah

Members:

Dr Bibi Jan Ayyub
Mr Saifudin Maarof
Ms Siti Hawa Sulaiman
Ms Yang Chek Salikin
Mr Abd Rahman Abdullah
Ms Maznah Masop
Mr Zafilin Abdul Hamid
Ms Junaidah Tarjo
Ms Tazrinah Hussin
Ms Rohizan Talib
Ms Ng Wei Chin