

# HEAL



HEAL ISSUE 21 (July - September 2018)

*“Water hacked is not severed  
[any more than family bonds can be severed by a spat]”  
- Malay proverb*

## President's Address

Back in 2008 when I was working at the Institute of Mental Health (IMH), I saw many patients who found themselves suddenly without caregivers when their parents passed away. This was because their siblings had not been trained or equipped to take on the caregiver role.

The result was tragic – such patients deteriorated drastically, and some even ended up in the long-stay wards of IMH.

It is very important that people with mental health issues (PMHI) have the support of some caregiver. While some are fortunate enough to have their spouses and children take over such care, singles – who make up a large proportion of PMHI – will have to rely on siblings and friends.

In this issue of HEAL, we feature two stories of siblings who have stepped into the role of caregiving successfully.

There are many things that siblings share while growing up in the same household. Having similar looks, eating the same food, sharing the



same struggles, playing (and sometimes fighting) together, and vying for the limited resource that is their parents' attention and time, they may end up as the best of friends or the worst of enemies. Regardless, they are forever bound by blood ties.

“Fear Allah and treat your children fairly.” [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

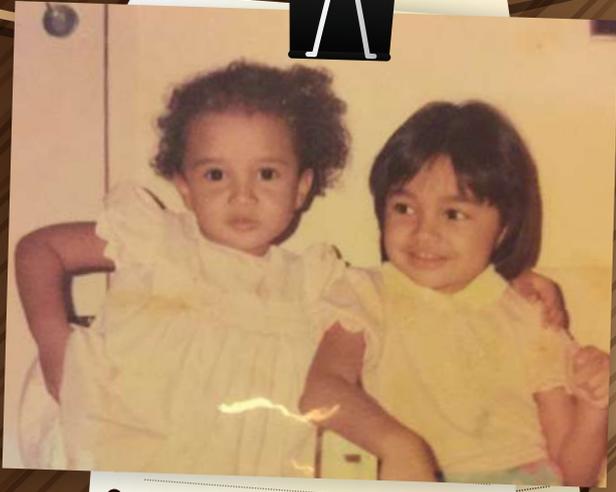
There is good reason not to show preference for a child based on gender or other superficial characteristics such as looks and intelligence. Unfair treatment can incite feelings of jealousy and hatred that could fester for life, and lead to bitterness in a child's heart. This may be why some siblings are reluctant to take on the mantle of caregiver later.

To encourage siblings to commit to caregiving, preparation is necessary, not only in educating all family members on mental health issues but also in nurturing closeness and mutual care among them. God Willing, if such a foundation is set, every family member will be ready to look out for the others should the need arise.

“The best of you is he who is best to his family.” [al-Tirmizi and al-Darimi]

## 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.



## *A Beautiful Pain*

**A sister with schizophrenia writes to her late sister who had Rett's Syndrome**

*My sweet sister,*

I hate to remember how when I was younger, I wanted a 'normal' sister to call my *Kakak*. I wanted someone to play Barbie Dolls with. Someone who could go cycling with me, play catching, and especially who would talk back when I initiated a conversation. But you had Rett's Syndrome – which meant that you were special, a child destined for a better place – heaven. Thinking about you brings the ache in my chest, that is guilt, that is regret, that is missed opportunity, that is yearning. I wish I had loved you better when you were alive.

But I hold on to pieces of advice I have collected. Like the Ustazah who shared that if we wanted to gain the love of someone we have lost in the afterlife, send them a lot of prayers and recitations dedicated to them as gifts (like *Surah Al-Fatihah*). Or something I learnt from a counsellor – think of all that you did for them, instead of what you did not do or could not do. Count them and hold on to them. And strive to be a good person myself, so that I may meet her in the best of places in the Hereafter.

Sis, I sincerely think of you every day and will say prayers for our family to reunite.

Today, I am also managing a condition, albeit mine is a mental illness, while yours was a physical one. I thank God – perhaps my heart has softened now, being not 'normal' too. I am in awe of the patience and endurance you displayed while going through all that you did throughout life. It will serve as a reminder for me to always be strong through fragility.

I know you will definitely hold our parents' hands, when the time comes, to pull them into Paradise, with the permission of God. I hope that, despite my shortcomings, I will be in that picture too, and we will start anew, sisters forever, free of tiredness, illnesses and grief.

Love,  
Sumaiyah

*I hope this letter will help anyone love their sibling who has health issues with all their heart, and to show that love while they still can. They are gifts from God – precious and beautiful.*



## *Caring for each other*

**The story of "Mariah and Marianah"**

**(con'td next page)**

My sister was diagnosed with DID (Dissociative Identity Disorder) in her mid-thirties. She had so many different identities. She could switch between personalities at any time, on any day, back then. It was baffling, frightening and irritating, yet funny at times. My parents thought she was possessed by an evil demon or *jinn* (spirit). As a result, my whole family was cheated, manipulated and abused – mentally and emotionally – by a distantly-related family who claimed to be able to cure my sister. Instead, she got worse. The last straw came right after my late father passed away in India. By God's will, we discovered the truth about them. Nevertheless, we were at our wits' end as to how to treat my sister. Thankfully, she found the courage to be admitted into IMH and we supported her decision.

Unfortunately, the treatment and counselling were not very effective at IMH.

My sister then decided to switch to SGH. There, she finally started to improve and made tremendous progress. She was blessed with excellent doctors and was introduced to Club HEAL by her psychologist. Club HEAL played a very important role in her road to recovery. My mum and I began to understand more about her mental illness and we did everything we could to support her and encourage her to overcome her condition. There were times when her negative mindset frustrated us. But, by God's grace, we persevered and did not allow my sister to give up on herself.

She gradually educated herself on all the medicines she was taking to understand how they worked to make her feel better. She was disciplined in taking her medication and we never had to worry. She was very responsible for her condition and helped herself without much monitoring. I believe her determination to get well won us half the battle.



## Snapshots of Past Events

### 1. Talk on Anxiety @ Orange Valley Woodlands Peak – 4 April 2018

Dr Radiah gave a talk on anxiety to an attentive audience of seniors in English, Malay and Mandarin (thanks to the help of a translator)

### 2. Workshop on Mental Health @ PPIS – 6 April 2018

Dr Radiah spoke in Malay on the topic of “Health is Wealth” to an enthusiastic audience.

### 3. HFT @ Pasir Ris – 7 April 2018

Kak Yang and Lubna Shah conducted an informative Healing Friends Training to 21 potential volunteers at our Pasir Ris East centre.

### 4. Sharing session @ Marsiling Welfare Care Workshop – 15 April 2018

Juniahti and Faizal shared on the work of Club HEAL to a large audience at Marsiling CC.

### 5. Asyafaah Mosque Silver Volunteers Training – 19 April 2018

The Club HEAL team conducted essential dementia training to a group of befrienders at the Asyafaah Mosque at Sembawang.

### 6. Booth @ Narpani Pearavai Youth Community Run – 29 April 2018

Aneez and Rishah conducted an outreach via our booth at this event organised by our community partner Club2Care.

### 7. Rotary visit to BBE garden – 1 May 2018

Members of the Rotary Club of Singapore spent Labour Day morning at the BBE Healing Garden.

### 8. Talk at SASA gathering – 6 May 2018

Dr Radiah and Sumaiyah shared with a group of ladies from the Singles and Singles Again group on “Managing Stress and Building Resilience”, which was very well received.

### 9. MOU with PERGAS – 11 May 2018

Club HEAL signed a training MOU with Pergas – members of Pergas from among the Asatizah will now receive training in mental health from Club HEAL professionals.

### 10. Booth @ Bazaar Raya Utara – 17-19 May 2018

The CREST team had a booth, and were out in full force reaching out to Bazaar Raya customers in the North.

### 11. Iftar @ PRE – 22 May 2018



About 100 of the Club HEAL family gathered together for a cosy breaking of fast (iftar) at our Pasir Ris East centre. The event was made more special by the presence of President Halimah Yacob.

Certificates were issued to outstanding peers. For example, our senior citizen Mdm Patimah bte Sulong was given the “Very Committed to Recovery Award”. A peer, Ms Zubaidah Mohideen,

shared her experience of recovering at Club HEAL and Mdm Hawa Aris and Mr Muhd Shafique read the Qur’an. There was a sing-a-long of two classic nasheed (Islamic songs) by staff Faizal and Muhammad Fauzy, followed by a short talk by Ustazah Aminah bte Sakiman.

### 12. Workshop (“Dementia Awareness and Communication with Elderly”) @ Masjid Omar Kampung Melaka – 2 June 2018

Together with AIC support, Ilham and Atiqah conducted a half-day workshop for Perdaus youths prior to their visit to the elderly at Pearl’s Hill Care Home.

### 13. Talk @ MWTI – 2 June 2018

Dr Radiah shared on the topic of depression in Malay to zakat recipients of Pergas at an event organised by MPP (Majlis Pelajar Pergas)

### 14. Talk and Booth @ Al-Amin Mosque – 2 June 2018

Nurleen and the Club HEAL team conducted a talk and manned a booth reaching out to attendees of Ramadhan Rescues event by MUIS and Fitree.

### 15. Talk @ PERGAS – 27 June 2018

Dr Radiah spoke to a packed audience of asatizahs on mental health and the training that Club HEAL can offer.

### 16. Talk @ Ministry of Law – 27 June 2018

20 employees from the Ministry of Law (mediation department) attended a mental awareness talk by Dr Radiah jointly organised by AIC and Club HEAL followed by a lively Q&A.

### 17. Talk @ HDB Hub – 27 June 2018

Senior Counsellor Hamidah gave a very informative and engaging talk on caregiving to 50 employees of HDB in this event jointly organized by AIC.

### 18. Long-stay Raya @ IMH – 28 June 2018

Club HEAL staff and volunteers had a fantastic time performing Hari Raya songs and serving festive goodies to nearly 100 patients from the long stay wards of IMH.

### 19. Our HEALing Voice – 30 June 2018

Our HEALing Voice is an exciting programme where participants can learn skills, share their story to inspire others and gain experience in peer mentoring. Participants started their journey in the 6-month programme with an introductory session, as they played icebreaker games, learnt about recovery language and set their personal vision statements.

### 20. Mental Health Screening and Promotion @ NHS Kids – 30 June till 1 July 2018

The Club HEAL team were out over the weekend reaching out to residents from HDB rental blocks at Boon Lay Drive through our booth at the Neighbourhood Health Service Kids Programme organised by NUS medical and social work students.

### 21. Hari Raya Celebrations cum Volunteer Appreciation @ BBE CC – 7 July 2018

The Club HEALers had a wonderful Hari Raya celebration at Bukit Batok East CC. With support from Mdm Rahayu Mahzam and her grassroots leaders, we were also fortunate to have had the help of Project Weave with the programme. This year, apart from our usual volunteers, we also recognised the contributions of our Advisors and EXCO – both past and present.

Today, she is a very responsible and reliable house-keeper. While she has her low moments, she also has her good ones. She helps her fellow peers in Club HEAL by calling them up to enquire about their wellbeing and going out with them. She also engages herself in a lot of other activities. She even helps me to face my problems at work. She encourages me and gives support with love and care. I am so proud of her progress and effort to get well.

*“I am so proud of her progress and effort to get well.”*

The stresses in the educational system and working environment of Singapore put a lot of people at risk of mental breakdown. The community must be educated and made aware of this rising trend so that we can salvage the situation before it becomes worse. Many people suffer in silence because of the taboo associated with mental health. People only realise the seriousness of mental illness when their loved ones commit suicide, hurt themselves or others, etc. This can be prevented.

I have seen my sister suffer AND recover. I have gained from my personal experience as a caregiver and know I have made a difference. Likewise, I do hope that the family and relatives of mentally sick people in our Muslim community would educate themselves on mental illnesses. Family members, relatives, friends and even neighbours can do a lot to help a peer.



## Upcoming Events & Announcements

### Upcoming Events

1. Friday Mosque Collection – 20 July 2018
2. Dementia talk @ Masjid Hj Yusof – 21 July 2018
3. NTUMS Walkathon in aid of Club HEAL – 28 July 2018
4. Conference @ Casa Raudha – 2 August 2018
5. Booth @ Marsiling CC National Day Celebrations – 9 August 2018
6. Booth @ RSVP Singapore – 8 September 2018
7. Silver Ribbon Singapore Global Summit – 4-5 October 2018
8. World Mental Health Day event @ BBE – 28 October 2018

### NAMS @ Club HEAL

The National Addictions Management Service of IMH conducts a clinic at Club HEAL every Monday (at Pasir Ris), Tuesday (at BBE) and Thursday (at Marsiling) morning 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).

### GTPs @ Club HEAL

Club HEAL's three centres are now designated GTP's (Go-To-Points) for lost PWDs (Persons with Dementia).



## 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](mailto:info@clubheal.org) 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 at: [www.clubheal.org.sg/donate](http://www.clubheal.org.sg/donate). Please contact us at 68993463 for further details or email us at [admin@clubheal.org.sg](mailto:admin@clubheal.org.sg).

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## Creative Corner



## Sisterhood

By Sumaiyah Mohamed

*It's like someone lifting  
the burden off your back  
and saying  
"Sister, I'll be here till that smile  
comes back!"*

*It's like someone listening to your thoughts  
their quiet presence  
sometimes the only thing  
stopping you from turning into this train wreck.*

*It's like two souls connecting.  
It's like two hours of talking  
that touches the core, turns the sour  
into remembering what your existence is for.*

*So maybe sometimes I get sad.  
So maybe sometimes you make me a little mad.  
But your companionship keeps me calm.  
And deep down  
you're the one I know I can count on.*

*Now I sit in solitude  
and I silently say a prayer to God above  
that He keeps love flowing between  
these sisters of mine  
always.*

*Always  
forever, may our hearts incline  
towards growing in strength together,  
racing to reach  
the Hereafter, hand in hand,  
sisters till the end.*