

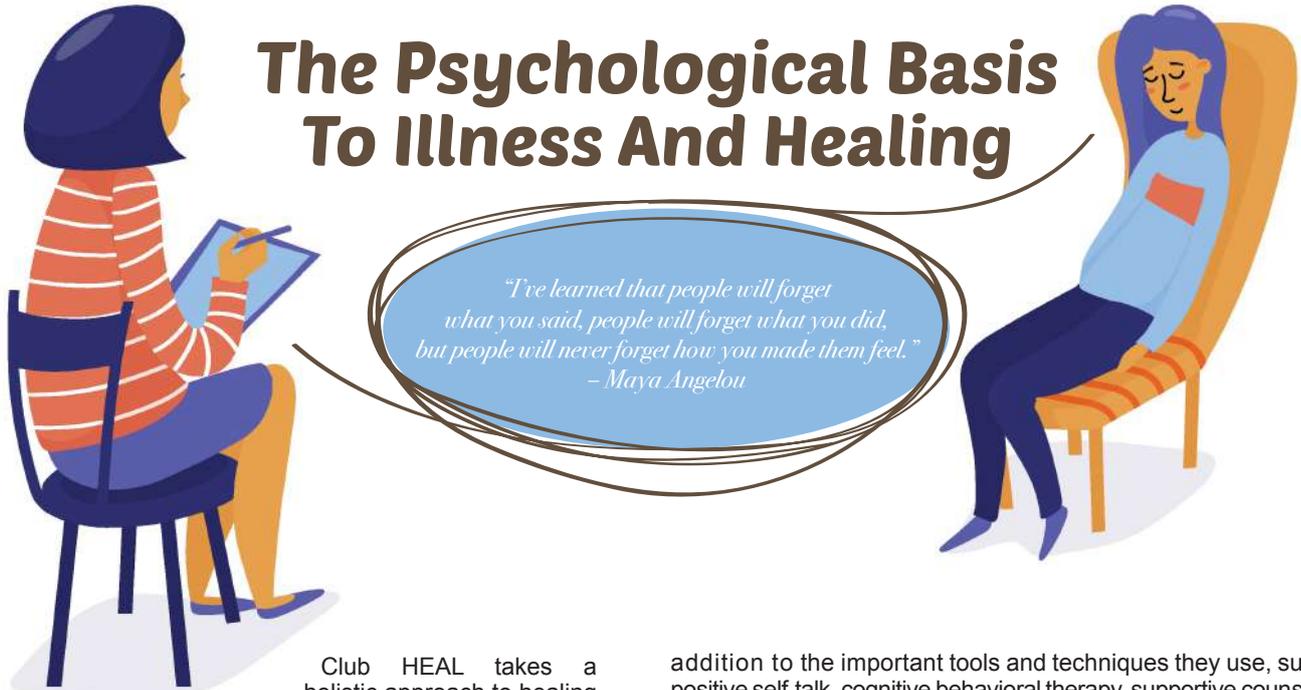
# HEAL



K J Pargeter

HEAL ISSUE 24 (April - June 2019)

## President's Address



## The Psychological Basis To Illness And Healing

*"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."*  
– Maya Angelou

Club HEAL takes a holistic approach to healing that considers biological, psychological, social and spiritual factors that contribute to mental illness.

In this issue of HEAL, we explore the psychological basis behind illness and how the psychological approach helps in the healing process.

This approach applies to all illnesses but particularly in mental health. The practitioners of psychological approaches need to develop a high EQ to be effective.

The most important quality a therapist should have is 'empathy' – or the ability to feel what another person feels, which is done by putting oneself in another person's shoes.

Ideally, not only psychologists, but all mental healthcare professionals – psychiatrists, counsellors, nurses, mindfulness instructors and expressive therapists, etc – should have great empathy for the people they are helping. This must be in

addition to the important tools and techniques they use, such as positive self-talk, cognitive behavioral therapy, supportive counselling and mindfulness.

However, due care must be taken to not cross boundaries, which could break the necessary barrier a therapist must place between herself and her client for the therapeutic relationship to continue.

Hence family and friends cannot 'treat'; they can only give their moral and emotional support.

A person in distress from illness, particularly when emotionally and mentally so, need to know that someone cares. As aptly said by one of our peers, Daryl Tan, "One thing Club HEAL does is listen. Solving that problem at the time wasn't what I wanted. Having someone to share my problems, was."

*"When My servants ask you concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calls on Me..."*  
– Al-Qur'an 2:186

### 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.

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# The Healing Gift of a Counsellor – *Uncovering the Strength of a Survivor*

Life for Stock

## Struggles and Symptoms

Adam (not his real name) – in his twenties – was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and schizophrenia while in National Service (NS). His distorted thoughts perceived implicit messages in ordinary things, eg, others wearing blue meant he had to wear blue. He was negative, paranoid and suicidal.

Despite the challenges, he managed to recover. He enrolled into university, studying civil engineering at NTU. However, he experienced a relapse in university due to friendship issues. He was warded in hospital for about half a year and took a leave of absence from university for three semesters.

## The Path to Acceptance

He hesitated to accept his diagnosis initially as he strongly felt the stigma surrounding mental illness, ie, the belief that diagnosed patients would be dependent on medication and hospitals forever. However, he became more accepting of his mental health condition once he understood the latest advances in medical treatment, and fully acknowledged it after meeting his counsellor, Mr Sebastian Seet.

## A Counsellor He Counted On

Adam feels he improved vastly under Mr Sebastian's guidance. Mr Sebastian was well-trained and experienced. Always calm and composed, Mr Sebastian could manage the mood swings Adam faced. Adam felt Mr Sebastian related well to his experiences, so felt safe to share what he experienced freely. Mr Sebastian went the extra mile to assist Adam: he replied whenever contacted for an appointment, and was always willing to offer a listening ear. He never refused to help.

What Adam took away from their sessions most was the use of positive affirmations, in his own self-talk and in his communication with others. He is now able to process his thoughts and move on, should negative perceptions come to him. He is also able to better cope with past trauma.

Adam is now confident enough to continue his studies at NTU, and do whatever else he needs to. He can discern reality from hallucinations, make wise decisions and stay grounded.

## Words of Encouragement

Adam encourages his peers with mental health challenges to do the following:

- Accept your illness and take your medication.
- Seek professional help.
- Keep the faith.
- Keep busy: pursue an interest or hobby to fill up your time.
- Move out of your comfort zone and seek small successes; the past is a stepping stone.
- Develop spirituality - a holistic approach to wellness helps.

In short, Adam is thankful for his counsellor's guidance, and the psychological methods to cope with his challenges. Adam's strength and determination also helped. It took two, along with the helping hands of many in Adam's support circle, to drive him along the path of recovery.



*A tree can grow despite extreme conditions, with the right nurture. After days of work, it grows into a majestic tree. Likewise, mental illness is an extreme condition affecting one's wellness, but with the right coping strategies, resources and support, one can grow and thrive.*

## Siti Hamidah Bahaswan, A Force that Influences, Inspires & Energizes *- through Psychological Methods in Counselling*

Raw Pixel



### Meet the Inspiring Siti Hamidah

Siti Hamidah Bahaswan changes the lives of peers and caregivers by giving them fresh perspectives, hope and motivation. She feels it is a privilege to help and give hope to people with mental illness. She sees her role as a team

member too, where counselling and psychiatric rehabilitation work together for clients to move forward. "We combine our expertise to give them the best support," she enthuses.

### Her Eclectic Mix of Psychological Methods

Siti Hamidah uses many psychological methods in her clients' healing. She explains that the psychological approach to healing involves the mind but there is a relationship between the mind and the heart. Thoughts interact with feelings, affecting outward behaviour. "If a person comes to see me, I focus on getting to know that person, their thoughts and their emotions. I use what they have shared, their strengths and their goals as impetus for recovery."

She describes the psychological approach and methods she uses as eclectic. It is a good mix: what she has learnt in her social work degree; her Masters in Psychology; her family therapist

certification (specialising in the Virginia Satir approach); brain gym; her expertise as a PSYCH-K practitioner (a way to change subconscious beliefs that perpetuate old habits of thinking and behaving that the client would like to change); and her rich experience. Virginia Satir's Iceberg analogy has been particularly influential in guiding her approach with clients. "A person who comes in to see me is an iceberg. Their behaviour and speech are at the tip, but within them, which cannot be seen but can be sensed and felt are the layers – how they see themselves and others; how they perceive others view them; their expectations and yearnings. My job is to support them as they uncover that their self is a gift and discover the resources within themselves."

She tries to get the client to achieve balance. If the client is wracked with emotion, she guides them to think critically and logically about their challenges. But if they think too much, she supports them in reaching emotions deep within themselves.

### Success Stories

Her success stories include Mdm S's transformation. "When I first met Mdm S, she had not left her house for ten years! She has chronic schizophrenia. Now, she comes to Club HEAL as an involved, engaged and open participant." Another success is Ms T, a client in denial of her schizophrenia. She helped Ms T see the diagnosis as just a label, and empowered her to move beyond it. Ms T finally gained enough confidence to return to teaching.

*"If you can inspire someone to aspire to be better, you're a leader,"* opines Siti Hamidah. This senior counsellor is certainly a leader – both in Club HEAL and outside!



## Snapshots of Past Events

### 1. Talk on Mental Health @ Quantum Storage Singapore – 12 Dec 2018

Senior Manager Hery conducted the talk for the staff of Quantum Storage Singapore in an intimate discussion which the staff found interesting.

### 2. Talk @ Madrasah Aljunied – “Understanding Your Students” – 27 Dec 2018

Madrasah Counsellor Noraliza shared with a group of 40 madrasah teachers on Stress, Depression and Coping Skills.

### 3. Talk on Relationships and Emotions Management @ Masjid Hj Yusoff – 30 Dec 2018

Senior Counsellor Hamidah conducted a workshop on relationships and managing emotion for Masjid Haji Yusof Management Committee as part of their strategic planning retreat. Participants were active and eager to improve on their EQ to resolve personal and professional challenges.

### 4. Our HEALing Voice Graduation @ NLB – 5 Jan 2019



We proudly celebrated the graduation of 17 graduates of Our HEALing Voice. It was held at the POD @ The National Library, with mental health advocate, Mr Hsieh Fu Hua, founder of BinjaiTree, as our guest-of-honour.

### 5. Forum on Suicide @ Safinah Institute – 8 Jan 2019

Dr Radiah teamed up with Ustaz Mizi Wahid in conducting a forum on suicide for an attentive audience.

### 6. HEALing Friends Training @ Club HEAL PRE – 12 Jan, 2 Mar 2019

The HEALing Friends Training was vibrant and the enthusiastic participants asked relevant and pertinent questions.



### 7. Singapore Mental Health Conference @ Max Atria – 30, 31 Jan 2019

Club HEAL was part of the organising committee of the 2019 Singapore Mental Health Conference with the theme of ‘Empowerment for Resilience and Recovery’. We had a booth which was visited by President Halimah Yacob and our team had a pleasant time interacting with her and updating her on our latest programmes. Daryl and Sumaiyah also made a presentation to promote empowerment in a plenary at SMHC.



### 8. Student Symposium @ NLB (“Program Emas: Kesihatan Minda dan Emosi”) – 31 Jan 2019

Dr Radiah gave a talk and participated in a panel discussion at a symposium in Malay on mental health to 140 enthusiastic secondary school students taking Higher Malay.

### 9. Mental Health Talk @ Singapore Polytechnic – 8 Feb 2019

Bro Daniel facilitated a mental health talk to raise awareness on the common issues organised by students at the “For Your IIm” event, organised by Singapore Polytechnic Malay Language Society at the Singapore Poly.

### 10. Talk on Depression @ Al-Mawaddah – 9 Feb 2019

Counsellor Fauzy delivered a fruitful talk in Malay on mental health to 50 participants at Al-Mawaddah Mosque with good response and high participation.

### 11. Corporate Engagement Service: Role Play @ SATS – 13 Feb 2019



Senior Counsellor Hamidah and Student Social Worker Juniahti facilitated a Crisis Intervention Workshop at SATS to raise mental health awareness and teach core soft skills to interact with people in distress to a group of ten volunteers.

### 12. Assembly Talk @ RGS – 14 Feb 2019

Two assembly talks to 1600 secondary schoolgirls on mental health and wellbeing was delivered by Dr Radiah at her *alma mater*, as she walked down memory lane.

### 13. Meeting with Minister Masagos @ PRE – 16 Feb 2019

The Club HEAL team had an engaging session with Minister Masagos Zulkifli and top MUIS officials discussing Club HEAL’s role in community engagement and empowerment at our Pasir Ris Branch.



### 14. Mental Health Week Booth @ NTU – 18 Feb 2019

Sumaiyah and Rishah attended to the enquiries from students on the different mental health conditions. We made sales from the pottery items made by our beneficiaries.

### 15. Dementia Talk @ En-Naeem – 23 Feb 2019

Dr Radiah and ‘Atiqah conducted talks in Malay on dementia one Saturday afternoon to a captive mosque audience of 60.

### 16. SMH Film Festival: Living with Schizophrenia Panel Discussion After “The Girl, The Mother And The Demons” @ The Projector – 23 Feb 2019

Sumaiyah was a panellist for a discussion after the movie screening. The panel discussion was on the topic of living with schizophrenia – its signs and symptoms, and how to get help. Fellow panellists were IMH Associate Consultant Dr Lee Kok Wei and Therapy Room founder and psychologist, Dr Geraldine Tan. The panel was moderated by Anita Kapoor.

### 17. Talk on OCD @ NUS – 23 Feb 2019

Daniel and Daryl reached out to the crowd of NUS Yale University Campus. Despite hearing about us for the first time, the students showed interest in the services we offer.

### 18. Learning Journey for Club2Care @ Mars – 9 Mar 2019

17 members of Club2Care came to Club HEAL @ Marsiling to learn about the growth and operations of Club HEAL. The sharing was conducted by Dr Radiah and peer support specialists Kak Junn, Daryl and Sumaiyah.

### 19. IMSSA Mental Health Talk @ Darul Aman – 9 Mar 2019

The Indian Muslim Social Service Association invited Club HEAL to help create awareness about dementia and depression among a largely Indian-Muslim audience. It was facilitated by Senior Counsellor Hamidah in English and Malay, and Para-Counsellor Aneez Fathima in Tamil.

### 20. Forum on Mental Health Issues in the Elderly Community @ NUS Project Link 2019 – 15 Mar 2019

Case manager Atiqah shared about common mental health issues, elder suicide and caregiver stress to a group of 30 students from NUS Project Link. The forum had speakers from Alzheimer’s Disease Association and Habitat for Humanity Singapore too.

### 21. Talk on Mental Health @ Masjid Kassim – 16 Mar 2019

Counsellor Fauzy reached out to another mosque audience on the topics of dementia and depression.



## Upcoming Events & Announcements

### Upcoming Events

1. Staff Bonding Day – 30 March 2019
2. Talk on Mental Resilience at Raffles Institution – 12 April 2019
3. Iftar – 10 May 2019
4. Hari Raya Celebrations and Caregivers' Appreciation Day – 29 June 2019



## Pledge your Support

Do help people with mental health challenges receive the support they need.

### How to Give?



Online at [www.giving.sg/club-heal](http://www.giving.sg/club-heal)



Interbank transfer – **OCBC Current Account 641372131001**. Kindly email [info@clubheal.org.sg](mailto:info@clubheal.org.sg) with your name, NRIC, address, date of transfer and gift amount.



Cheque (crossed & made payable to 'Club HEAL'). Mail to Club HEAL Head Office, 244 Bukit Batok East Ave 5 #01-02 Singapore 650244



Should you have any questions, or wish to make a deep and lasting contribution to Club HEAL through a major gift, please get in touch with our Fund Manager, Ms Marina Chong, at [marina@clubheal.org.sg](mailto:marina@clubheal.org.sg) / +65 8488 5130.



## Creative Corner

### More Compassion

by Aneez Fathima

#### More care

To those who stopped to cheer

#### More love

To those who feel unloved

#### More happiness

To those depressed by sadness

#### More listening ears

To those who lost their dears

#### More empathy

To those who hate pity

#### More enrichment

To those who need empowerment

#### More guiding light

To those who are less bright

#### More accepting

To those who are suffering

#### More hope

To those who struggle to cope

#### More compassion

Let it be our mighty mission.



## 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](mailto: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!

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