

MEDIA RELEASE

9TH TOGETHER AGAINST STIGMA GLOBAL CONFERENCE CO-ORGANISED BY IMH AND NCSS WITH PARTNERS

- *Singapore is the first Southeast Asian country to host the international conference*
- *Conference will see over 500 local and international delegates from the healthcare and social service sectors gather in a global fight against mental health stigma*
- *Employer toolkit and online assessment tool launched to support mental wellbeing and resilience at the workplace*

3 OCTOBER 2019, Singapore – Singapore is the first Southeast Asian country to host the biennial ‘Together Against Stigma’ (TAS) international conference to discuss stigma issues that continue to plague persons with mental health conditions. This 9th international edition is themed ‘*Beyond The Label – Towards An Inclusive Society*’, and will take place from 3 to 5 October 2019 at the Sands Expo & Convention Centre. The line-up includes distinguished expert speakers from around the world and locally, as well as persons in recovery.

The TAS conference is co-hosted by Singapore and the World Psychiatric Association (Mental Illness and Stigma Section). It is led by the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) and the National Council of Social Service (NCSS), and co-organised with the Agency for Integrated Care, Health Promotion Board, MINDSET Care Limited (a mental health charity of the Jardine Matheson Group) and the Singapore Psychiatric Association. **President of the Republic of Singapore, Mdm Halimah Yacob**, is the Guest-of-Honour for the Conference.

“Mental health stigma is a global issue that plagues almost every culture and society. There have been many campaigns and advocacy efforts to change mindsets and build an inclusive culture at the individual, community and societal levels. Such efforts can gain better momentum and create a greater impact if we all come together to share and learn,” said Prof Chua Hong Choon, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of IMH and Co-Chair of the Advisory Committee for the Conference.

Ms Tina Hung, Deputy CEO of NCSS and Co-Chair of the Advisory Committee for the Conference, said, “We are so privileged and excited for this opportunity to host the 9th edition of the international TAS conference. The sharing of best practices and valuable lessons that we can draw from the bigger mental health community will go a long way in uniting us in our collective efforts to build a caring and inclusive global community for all.”

Previous editions of the Conference were held in Copenhagen, Denmark (2017), San Francisco, United States of America (2015) and Ottawa, Canada (2012).

The Conference will bring together more than 130 international and local speakers, including a group of graduates from NCSS’ Peer Support Specialist Programme who will be sharing on the value of peer support. Collectively, they will explore in-depth issues regarding mental health stigma in different countries, and exchange best practices and learnings. World experts and leaders of advocacy movements from USA, Scotland, Japan, Hong Kong, Canada, New Zealand and the Netherlands will also be attending. (Refer to Annex A for the profiles of the key speakers, and the full programme for the Conference online [here](#).)

Over 500 delegates from 24 countries are expected to attend the TAS conference and they include healthcare and social service professionals, academics, researchers, anti-stigma experts, employers, students, caregivers and persons with mental health conditions. Persons in recovery are also involved in other aspects of the Conference, like receiving delegates and sharing with them their lived experiences.

Efforts to promote mental well-being in the workplace

This sharing of best practices and insights to bring about greater awareness of the importance of mental well-being is in line with the empowerment and collaborative approach underpinning the Social Service Sector Strategic Thrust, the five-year roadmap guiding the sector to achieve the shared vision of every person being empowered to live with dignity in a caring and inclusive society.

On the workplace front, a 2017 NCSS survey of 505 companies found that companies that had implemented at least one workplace adjustment, such as access to counselling, general mental health education, training for supervisors, flexi-work arrangements and job re-design, observed benefits. Benefits include reduction in absenteeism, reduction in medical claims, increase in productivity and increase in employee’s morale. Hence, it is beneficial for

companies to consider implementing workplace adjustments to promote mental well-being in the workplace.

To this end, the Ministry of Manpower's Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Institute, WSH Council, IMH, Health Promotion Board and Changi General Hospital have jointly developed iWorkHealth 1.0, an online self-administered psychosocial health assessment tool. The tool helps organisations and employees identify common workplace stressors so that they can implement appropriate interventions to foster mental well-being and resilience, and will be fully rolled out early next year. (Refer to Annex B for more information on iWorkHealth.)

For employers that are willing to hire persons in recovery, NCSS has developed an employer toolkit containing useful information and resources for organisations hiring or supporting persons in recovery at the workplace. (Refer to Annex C for information on organisations that have adopted workplace adjustments.)

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About Institute of Mental Health

The Institute of Mental Health (IMH), a member of the National Healthcare Group, is the only tertiary psychiatric care institution in Singapore. Located on the sprawling 23-hectare campus of Buangkok Green Medical Park in the north-eastern part of Singapore, IMH offers a multidisciplinary and comprehensive range of psychiatric, rehabilitative and therapy services in hospital-based and community-based settings. The 2010-bedded hospital aims to meet the needs of three groups of patients – children and adolescents, adults and the elderly. Besides providing clinical services, IMH also leads in mental health research and training the next generation of mental health professionals in Singapore. For more information, please visit www.imh.com.sg.

About the National Council of Social Service

The National Council of Social Service is the umbrella body for over 450 member social service organisations in Singapore. Its mission is to provide leadership and direction in enhancing the capabilities and capacity of our members, advocating for social service needs and strengthening strategic partnerships, for an effective social service ecosystem. Community Chest and Social Service Institute (SSI) are part of NCSS.

Social Service Sector Strategic Thrusts (4ST)

The Social Service Sector Strategic Thrusts (4ST) is a 5-year roadmap for the sector, co-developed by NCSS with stakeholders in the social service ecosystem – member organisations, service users, government, community, business leaders and civic-minded individuals. It is guided by a person-centred and holistic approach towards advancing the quality of life for individuals. The 4ST calls for active participation and collaboration so that everyone in the ecosystem plays a part to achieve a shared vision, where every person is empowered to live with dignity in a caring and inclusive society.

About the Health Promotion Board

The Health Promotion Board (HPB) was established as a statutory board under the Ministry of Health, Singapore, in 2001 with the vision of building “A Nation of Healthy People”. HPB aims to empower the people of Singapore to attain optimal health, increase the quality and years of healthy life and prevent illness, disability and premature death. As the key agency overseeing national health promotion and disease prevention programmes, HPB spearheads health education, promotion and prevention programmes as well as creates a health-supportive environment in Singapore. It develops and organises relevant health promotion

and disease prevention programmes, reaching out to the healthy, the at-risk and the unhealthy at all stages of life – children, youths, adults and older Singapore residents. Its health promotion programmes include nutrition, mental health, physical activity, smoking control and communicable disease education. HPB also promotes healthy ageing, integrated health screening, and chronic disease education and management. More information can be found at www.hpb.gov.sg.

About Agency for Integrated Care

The Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) aims to create a vibrant care community enabling people to live well and age gracefully. AIC integrates care to support the needs of seniors as they grow old. We reach out to caregivers and seniors with information on staying active and ageing well, and connect people to services they need. We support partners in strengthening their capability to deliver quality care, and bring partners to work together to meet the needs of our ageing population. Our work in the community brings care services and information closer to those in need. For more information, please visit www.aic.sg.

About MINDSET Care Limited

MINDSET Care Limited (MINDSET) is a registered charity established by the Jardine Matheson Group of companies to make a tangible difference in the area of mental health. Led by Jardine Ambassadors, MINDSET aims to raise awareness and understanding of mental health issues to change attitudes, while at the same time, provide practical support to individuals, families and charitable initiatives in the mental health sector. MINDSET was awarded the Charity Governance Award 2018 and Charity Transparency Awards 2016, 2017 and 2018 by the Charity Council. MINDSET is also named a Champion of Good by the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre. For more information, please visit <http://mindset.com.sg/>.

The Jardine Matheson Group companies in Singapore are: Jardine Matheson (Singapore), Jardine Cycle & Carriage; Cycle & Carriage Singapore, Jardine Engineering Corporation; JOS; Innovix Distribution; Schindler Lifts (Singapore); Gammon Construction; Hongkong Land; MCL Land; Mandarin Oriental, Singapore; Dairy Farm Singapore (Cold Storage; Giant; Guardian Health & Beauty; and 7-Eleven); Maxim's Catering Limited, a company incorporated in Hong Kong; Genki Sushi Singapore; and Starbucks Singapore.

About Singapore Psychiatric Association

The Singapore Psychiatric Association (SPA) was formed in 1980 and ordinary members are psychiatrists. The SPA aims to maintain a high standard of practice in Psychiatry amongst members through education and research. Education and social events are held regularly for members. As a member society of the several international psychiatric organisations, the SPA networks local psychiatrists to overseas experts.

Annex A – About the key speakers for the 9th Together Against Stigma conference

Professor Norman Sartorius was the Director of the World Health Organisation’s Division of Mental Health. He is currently President of the Association for the Improvement of Mental Health Programmes in Geneva and Co-chair of World Psychiatric Association’s Stigma Section. Professor Sartorius holds professional appointments at universities in different countries including China, UK and USA. Together with Professor Sir Graham Thornicroft, Chair of World Psychiatric Association’s Stigma Section, Professor Sartorius had provided much advice on the planning of the Singapore conference. His main interests at present are problems related to comorbidity of mental and physical disorders, the fight against stigma and the education of psychiatrists.

In his key note, Professor Sartorius will be share on the stigma of mental illness from a global perspective. Stigma related to mental illness is the main obstacle for the provision of mental health care and one of the main reasons for a variety of problems and the reduced quality of life of people with mental illness and of their carers. Recent years have seen the development of programs aiming to prevent or reduce stigmatisation due to mental illness in many countries. Their success varied but jointly they vastly increased knowledge about factors contributing to the stigmatisation of people with mental illness, of their carers and of care systems established to help them. Professor Sartorius’ presentation will describe the main lines of the strategy – based on experience and results of research in recent years – that could reduce the stigma of mental illness and its consequences.

Ms Sue Baker, OBE, is the Global Director of Time to Change. Time to Change is a growing movement of people changing how we think and act about mental health issues. Ms Sue has worked to de-stigmatise mental health for almost 25 years in the UK, New Zealand, and now globally. She set up the Time to Change campaign in England in 2007 that has led to a "sea change" in public attitudes in England and reductions in discrimination. She advises Governments and NGOs on social change programmes aimed at improving public attitudes, reducing discrimination and empowering people to lead change, and now leads a new global anti-stigma programme working with NGOs and people with lived experience in Africa and India. She was awarded an OBE for services to mental health in 2016. In the workshop “Social marketing anti-stigma campaigns in high and lower income settings”, Ms Baker and her colleagues from Time to Change will share on social marketing methodologies, behaviour

change models, audience insights research, and the processes used to develop creative content for the campaigns.

Mr Micheal Pietrus is Director of the Mental Health Commission of Canada's international award-winning anti-stigma initiative Opening Minds. He is also the Director of Mental Health First Aid Canada. Under Micheal's leadership, the Commission launched Opening Minds, its anti-stigma/anti-discrimination initiative in 2009, which is the largest systematic effort to reduce the stigma of mental illness in Canadian history. He co-founded the Global Anti-stigma Alliance (GASA), which comprised 16 international organisations working to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness. Mr Pietrus, will be joined by Ms Sue Baker and other GASA members to share on the anti-stigma initiatives, beyond Asia.

Dr Jamie Chiu, clinical psychologist and founder of The Brightly Project, is driven by one goal – that no student's first contact with support should be because of a suicide attempt. As a teen, Jamie struggled with depression and anxiety, but fell through the cracks because she showed no visible signs — and so now she builds tools that make mental health more measurable, helps schools “know early” which students are at risk, and creates resources that support youth during overwhelming and anxious times feel capable and hopeful. Jamie has been recognised as a Forbes 30 Under 30 for creating a video game that can detect non-obvious signs of depression, and won Gold at the 2018 Hong Kong ICT Awards for The Brightly Project's digital suicide prevention program for schools called “Know My Students”. She was also selected as one of Real Leaders 100 most visionary young leaders in the world and was chosen as one of Channel NewsAsia's Champions For Change in 2019. Through The Brightly Project, Jamie is empowering schools and teachers to feel more confident, capable, and knowledgeable in their efforts to proactively support students at risk of suicide.

Ms Lyn Lee is the Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer at Royal Dutch Shell, Singapore. In her 17 years at Shell, she has held HR leadership roles in the Commercial Downstream businesses. Lyn is also passionate and committed to promoting care and de-stigmatising mental illness. As an individual with lived experience – she was diagnosed with Bipolar 2 about ten years ago, a mood disorder which she had lived with undiagnosed through her teenage and early adult years – she is aware that her illness is permanent and that active management is critical and part of her life. She has established a lifestyle, which embraces the three aspects of mental, emotional/spiritual and physical well-being. At her workplace, she feels blessed to have received necessary support and accommodation to balance her work and her mental

health. With this perspective, she understands the potential for individuals to thrive in a supportive workplace.

Annex B – Helping Companies and Employees to Identify Workplace Stressors

The iWorkHealth 1.0 is developed by the Ministry of Manpower's Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Institute, in partnership with the WSH Council, Institute of Mental Health, Changi General Hospital and Health Promotion Board. It is an online, self-administered psychosocial health assessment tool for companies and their employees to identify common workplace stressors.

The iWorkHealth 1.0 supports Singapore's WSH 2028 strategy of enhancing focus on workplace health by raising awareness of work stress so that measures can be taken to promote employees' mental health.

The tool comprises 71 questions relating to stress-related factors at the workplace such as work content, work environment, relationship with supervisors and co-workers.

The participating organisation will receive an aggregated company report on the following:

- a) Key workplace stressors;
- b) Extent of work stress and mental well-being of their employees;
- c) Possible harassment within the organisation; and
- d) Resources available to improve employees' mental well-being.

Employees of the participating organisation will also receive a personalised report on their mental well-being and work stressors, which will enable them to take the necessary steps to manage and improve their mental health. In addition, companies can use the tool to gauge the effectiveness of their mental health intervention programmes at the workplace by conducting pre- and post-intervention assessments.

The tool will be soft-launched at the Together Against Stigma Conference and fully rolled out early next year. More information can be found on www.iworkhealth.sg.

Annex C – Organisations that have adopted workplace adjustments

1) Accenture

People are at the heart of Accenture and the company believes that it is important to focus on the mental well-being of its employees along with their physical well-being. In 2018, Accenture started its Mental Health Allies programme in Singapore in conjunction with World Mental Health Day.

In its first year, the programme focused on increasing awareness on mental health issues and #SmashingTheStigma associated with the topic. More than 120 of its workforce across all levels in Singapore became Mental Health Allies, who are trained to listen, provide non-judgmental support and point people to the right resources for help. Accenture also started an article series called “Why I am a Mental Health Ally”, in which Allies from the Programme shared their personal stories on the topic.

Moving into its second year of the Programme, Accenture will continue building on the awareness and understanding of mental health issues, and focus on proactive strategies for mental well-being and supporting people with different roles, e.g. caregivers.

Accenture also incorporated mental well-being into its employee benefits. Employees have access to the Employee Assistance Programme, which offers confidential life management and personal support service. Singapore employees are also eligible for mental health coverage under its enhanced outpatient specialist insurance plan.

In addition, Accenture encourages employees to connect and engage in activities outside of work. The Accenture Recreation Club, which organises monthly social activities, and connects employees through 13 different sports and social interest groups that meet up regularly. The Accenture Corporate Citizenship team also rallies its employees for volunteer activities, while providing a platform for them to expand their social network.

2) Hush Teabar

Since it became a social enterprise in 2016, the entire premise of Hush as an impact business is committed to the cause of mental health – both in the services that it provides, that is to promote mental wellbeing at the workplace for its clients, as well as the employees that it empowers.

Hush has seven staff on payroll, five of whom are persons in recovery from mental health conditions and two are Deaf. It has another 10 to 15 Deaf persons on project employment. There is an open culture of sharing about mental health challenges and support for each another through regular check-ins.

Hush identifies and adopts workplace adjustments so that its employees can thrive. Some examples include:

- i) Redesigning job roles and work processes
 - a. Mr Lewis Chen, Lead Partner (Experience, Operations & Finance), Hush TeaBar, lives with major depression, mild schizophrenia and bipolar, and was first employed for the role of business development. After finding out that this role triggered his anxiety attacks from past work traumas, his role was re-designed to be in operations. His performance improved drastically and he was subsequently promoted to lead the operations team comprising the Deaf.
- ii) Flexi-work arrangements and mental health-friendly policies
 - a. As part of its trust culture, Hush adopts a virtual team structure for flexibility and for members to have a sense of empowerment of their time and life. The team uses technology like WhatsApp to update on workplan and development. It also has mental health-friendly policies such as no work text messages after 9pm and on weekends, wherever possible.
 - b. It has also started weekly psychological counselling sessions for staff with Shan You Counselling, a mental health social service agency in Singapore.

3) Johnson & Johnson

With the vision to have the healthiest workforce and our focus on holistic health (physical, mental and emotional wellbeing), Johnson & Johnson is fully committed to promoting employee health and wellbeing. With the holistic outlook on health, it encourages physical movement at the workplace by providing indoor walking trail, onsite fitness center, inviting stairwells, sit/stand desks, as well as all-year round promotion of physical activities.

It also promotes a culture of Healthy Mind, supporting employees with the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and Worklife Services, training and resources. For example, confidential EAP counselling is provided for employees and their family members, 24/7 and at no cost. Other initiatives include training like the Mental Health Fundamentals for Managers and Employees, the Health App and Healthy Mind portal.

To further enhance a mental health-friendly culture, Johnson & Johnson launched an employee resource group, Mental Health Diplomats. This is as part of its Alliance for Diverse Abilities that was started in Singapore in 2018, to build a more inclusive culture and encourage peer-to-peer conversations about mental health and well-being. Its Mental Health Diplomats Chapter is also launched worldwide.

Johnson & Johnson also provides a supportive ecosystem as well as a standardised process to assist employees on Return to Work. This approach involves key stakeholders such as Occupational Health, Consulting Medical Professionals, EAP, Human Resources as well as the Manager. To support employee recovery, work accommodation or modified duty may be recommended, e.g. reduced number of hours or change of job scope, etc.

4) Oracle

Oracle fosters an inclusive environment that leverages the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of its employees, suppliers, customers and partners to drive a sustainable global competitive advantage. Oracle Singapore supports mental wellbeing in three ways – Recruitment and Career Development, Awareness, and Workplace Enablement.

Firstly, once a year, a training on unconscious biases is organised for its management and talent acquisition teams. This is to ensure that it upkeeps with its intention of being a fair employer for candidate selection and employees' career development.

Secondly, Oracle reaches out to its employees to raise awareness on the resources it has available for both employees with mental health conditions as well as colleagues who work closely with them. It recognises that mental health conditions affect individuals as well as their family, friends and colleagues. Managers are mandated to participate in a mental health workshop to help them understand the basics, recognise personal biases and look out for potential signs of conditions in employees. Separately, about twice a year, Oracle invites mental health specialists to speak with interested employees in the office. On a larger scale, mental health is a key segment in its annual Corporate Wellness Day event. As an ongoing initiative, it is looking to restart its bi-weekly Mindfulness sessions to help its employees cope with their daily stress and anxieties and build a supportive community internally.

Lastly, it is in Workplace Enablement. Due to its fast-paced environment and frequent overseas engagements, its employees are empowered to manage their time and wellbeing, with flexible work hours and remote working arrangements that they can agree with their managers. As part of its Employee Assistant Program, Oracle engages a third party which offers confidential professional counselling 24/7 to all employees and their family members. Its flexi-benefits program also allows for employees to reimburse their counselling, psychological and psychiatrist treatments.

As a pledged company behind Singapore's 'Beyond the Label' movement, Oracle's culture as a whole is one that is accepting and versatile. It appreciates that every individual brings something valuable to the table and that is often as a result of their life experiences. It believes that personal experiences such as managing existing mental health conditions or the journeys recovering persons have taken are assets that can be utilised to build relationships with internal stakeholders and provide better quality service to its customers.

5) Shell

Inclusion is a key pillar of Shell's #mygreatplacetowork campaign, which aims to develop high employee engagement. Its inclusive culture welcomes diverse people and views and encourages psychological safety within teams.

To complement this, in 2018 Shell in Singapore launched an initiative called "I'm Not OK" to promote open and honest conversations about mental health. The initiative is designed to help employees support each other, create awareness about how to access the professional counselling available through Shell's employee benefits, and to empower teams to create a workplace where it is safe to say, "I'm Not OK".

Workplace adjustments are developed for each employee with support of a tripartite group comprising representatives from Management/Line supervisor, HR and Health. The services available and provision for employees include:

1. Programs for Line Managers/Supervisors to create more awareness of mental wellness at the workplace.
2. Access to flexible work arrangements intended to restore confidence and self-belief in our employees. These include job redesign, flexibility in work intensity, working from home and regular check-ins to provide support and care.
3. Employee Assistance Helpline available 24/7.
4. Resilience/Mental Health/Workplace Wellness Programmes for Teams and Individuals.
5. Comprehensive Medical Plan that includes coverage for Mental Health.
6. Shell Volunteers, which is a network that enables our employees to contribute to the community and develop gratitude and empathy.
7. As well as commemorating World Mental Health Day, where Shell SG staff share openly about their own stories in coping with mental health, and business leaders sharing about how they are developing a culture of resilience and care in their own teams.