



DBS, Singapore Courts and National Council of Social Service launch “Hackathon for a Better World” to crowdsource solutions for a more mentally-resilient society

SINGAPORE, 21 July 2023 – DBS, Singapore Courts (SG Courts) and the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) today launched the fourth edition of “Hackathon for a Better World”, themed “Creating a Supportive and Mentally Resilient Society”.

The community hackathon, which will run from 21 July 2023 to 17 October 2023, will challenge 37 teams in groups of two to four, to develop solutions to promote mental wellness in the workplace, as well as better support persons with mental health conditions.

First held in 2020 by DBS and SG Courts, Hackathon for a Better World is a public-private collaboration providing an action-oriented platform to foster innovative solutions tackling societal issues. It adopts a unique “learn-as-you-hack” format, where participants are challenged to work on their problem statements for about three months through an iterative process. Previous hackathon topics include access to justice (2020), online harms for girls (2021) and scams (2022).

This year’s theme of mental wellness was informed by a number of landmark studies:

- a) Singapore’s Covid-19 Mental Wellness Taskforce Report found that nearly 10% of respondents in an Institute of Mental Health survey met the criteria for clinical depression, anxiety, or mild to severe stress due to public health measures and loss of livelihoods during the pandemic¹.
- b) An NCSS study in 2021 on Public Attitudes towards Persons with Mental Health Conditions found that more can be done to address stigma and garner more support for mental well-being. Six in 10 respondents were willing to work with a person with mental health condition and four in 10 respondents had a positive score for questions asking how they felt towards persons with mental health conditions².

The participating teams comprise diverse representations from the legal sector, institutions of higher learning, government agencies, social enterprises, and DBS and SG Courts employees. Participants will be challenged to address one of the following problem statements:

- a) How might employers promote employees’ mental well-being and support employees in building mental resilience?
- b) How might society foster openness and acceptance towards persons with mental health conditions and encourage people to speak up or take actions about their mental health and well-being?
- c) How might stakeholders in the community provide support (e.g. legal, financial, social, etc.), or remove barriers to help persons with mental health conditions or loved ones of persons with mental health conditions navigate challenges?

Mr Lam Chee Kin, Group Head of Legal & Compliance, DBS, said, “We are delighted to align with key public stakeholders again in addressing real social issues. This year, issues on resilience are

¹ [Covid-19 Mental Wellness Taskforce Report 2021](#)

² [NCSS Study on Public Attitudes towards Persons with Mental Health Conditions](#)

topical and we welcome NCSS together with our long-term partners in the judiciary in tackling mental well-being. This is a global issue that may benefit from being addressed from the perspective of the individual, his/her social support structure as well as the broader perspective of employers and the system as a whole.”

Mr Tan Ken Hwee, Chief Transformation and Innovation Officer, SG Courts, said, “In line with the vision of SG Courts, the Hackathon for a Better World series will continue to explore creative ways to do social good and improve access to justice. Mental health is a complex issue that requires a community effort to tackle. We hope that this year’s hackathon will bring together different viewpoints and experiences, generating a good range of ideas that could support those in need and empower their loved ones.”

Ms Sim Hui Ting, Director, Services, NCSS, emphasised, “Mental health is an important issue, and we can all play a part in building the mental well-being and resilience in our society. To address mental health stigma, NCSS has been driving the Beyond the Label (BTL) movement since 2018. The BTL Collective rallies like-minded partners from the public, private and people sectors to promote and enable help-seeking and help-giving behaviours in schools, workplaces and the community. Hackathon for a Better World will further support the BTL efforts and involve the community in co-creating solutions that will enhance mental wellness and support for persons with mental health conditions.”

Participants to benefit from design thinking workshops and mentorship

Hackathon for a Better World differs from the usual hackathons which require participants to come up with solutions within a few hours or days. By adopting a “learn-as-you-hack” format – taking place over two months – participants are better empowered to gestate and refine their solutions, whilst managing their existing commitments.

To support participants on their hackathon journey, DBS will conduct a design thinking workshop, which will for the first time incorporate a behavioural science component, as well as receive mentorship by subject matter experts from the three partners, who will share how their respective organisations have been championing workplace mental wellness (examples in Annex A). Participants will also be empowered with additional data points from survey and research findings on mental health issues contributed pro-bono by research firm Milieu to better guide them in their innovation journeys.

Participant Tay Zhonghao, an Assistant Director with SG Courts, said, “This is the second consecutive year that I am participating in Hackathon for a Better World because I believe that developing sustainable solutions to complex social issues requires a diverse range of perspectives. The hackathon provides a unique opportunity for public officers to exchange views with subject matter experts and participants from the private sector, which can lead to better solutions. By joining again, I hope to continue learning from others and contribute to the development of impactful solutions.”

Participating teams will be judged on four criteria: innovativeness, feasibility of implementation, positive impact to society and application of design thinking. The teams will be required to submit their proposals on 11 September, after which six finalists will be selected to deliver a final pitch to a panel of judges on 6 October. Four winning teams will be announced at an awards and prize presentation day on 17 October, in conjunction with a showcase exhibiting solutions from the finalists.

Annex A – Championing mental wellness in the workplace

DBS

In 2022, DBS launched iOK, a free and confidential platform that provides round-the-clock access to professional counsellors and searchers for various work and life issues. DBS' efforts in promoting mental wellness in the workplace were recognised at the inaugural WorkWell Leaders Awards in March 2023, when it won the Lead Well award that recognised organisation-wide initiatives in creating safe and inclusive workplaces. DBS is also looking to support mental wellness in the community through the DBS Foundation's Community Impact chapter, which was formed in 2022 to equip the underserved with future-ready skills such as digital and financial literacy, to better face the future with confidence.

SG Courts

Over the past three years, SG Courts has implemented various initiatives related to mental wellness. As part of the Workplace Health Programme for the Judiciary, the Whole-of-Government Hotline and Counselling Services is available for SG Courts officers to call in and seek help. SG Courts has also appointed wellness ambassadors within the organisation to look out and care for fellow officers. Officers can reach out to any wellness ambassador for a casual chat. In addition, wellness talks / activities are available for officers to sign up at different periods of the year. One of the highlights would be the annual wellness-themed Staff Appreciation Week, where staff can participate in wellness activities like meditation sessions, health screening and enjoy little treats.

NCSS

NCSS is co-leading with the Ministry of Manpower on the Interagency Taskforce on Mental Health and Wellbeing Employment Support Workgroup, where it works with tripartite partners, employers and social service agencies to improve employment of persons with mental health conditions and enhance workplace mental wellbeing measures. NCSS is strongly committed to the wellness of staff and continuously reviews its policy, procedures and protocols in effectively managing wellness in the workplace. NCSS takes a two-pronged approach – Upstream Preventive Support and Downstream Acute Support. For instance, NCSS conducts the iWorkHealth survey to understand the state of overall mental well-being of staff and to plan and execute interventions. Regular follow-up surveys are also planned to analyse the data trends. In NCSS, more than 20 staff volunteered as 'Kopi-Kakis', serving as Wellness Ambassadors who support and lend a listening ear to fellow staff. NCSS also leverages on the Whole-of-Government suite of counselling, psychological and professional support for staff. Staff who have mental conditions are encouraged to seek professional help in the first instance and NCSS supports the payment of these services for staff.

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About DBS

DBS is a leading financial services group in Asia with a presence in 19 markets. Headquartered and listed in Singapore, DBS is in the three key Asian axes of growth: Greater China, Southeast Asia and South Asia. The bank's "AA-" and "Aa1" credit ratings are among the highest in the world.

Recognised for its global leadership, DBS has been named "[World's Best Bank](#)" by Global Finance, "[World's Best Bank](#)" by Euromoney and "[Global Bank of the Year](#)" by The Banker. The bank is at the forefront of leveraging digital technology to shape the future of banking, having been named "[World's Best Digital Bank](#)" by Euromoney and the world's "[Most Innovative in Digital Banking](#)" by The Banker. In addition, DBS has been accorded the "[Safest Bank in Asia](#)" award by Global Finance for 14 consecutive years from 2009 to 2022.

DBS provides a full range of services in consumer, SME and corporate banking. As a bank born and bred in Asia, DBS understands the intricacies of doing business in the region's most dynamic markets.

DBS is committed to building lasting relationships with customers, as it banks the Asian way. Through the DBS Foundation, the bank creates impact beyond banking by supporting social enterprises: businesses with a double bottom-line of profit and social and/or environmental impact. DBS Foundation also gives back to society in various ways, including equipping communities with future-ready skills and building food resilience.

With its extensive network of operations in Asia and emphasis on engaging and empowering its staff, DBS presents exciting career opportunities. For more information, please visit www.dbs.com.

About Singapore Courts

The Singapore Courts - comprising the Supreme Court, State Courts and Family Justice Courts - is one of the three constitutional pillars of government in Singapore. Known collectively as SG Courts, we are integrated and coordinated to serve as one judiciary. As an organ of state, the judiciary's function is to independently administer justice. Headed by the Chief Justice, we are a forward-looking, innovative and trusted judiciary. Built on judicial professionalism and transparency, we maintain the highest standards of integrity in safeguarding our community. We pledge to ensure equal and continuous access to justice, and we are committed to deliver justice that is fair and impartial.

For more information, please visit www.judiciary.gov.sg.

About National Council of Social Service

The National Council of Social Service (NCSS) is the umbrella body for over 500-member social service agencies 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 is the fundraising and engagement arm of NCSS and Social Service Institute (SSI) is the human capital development arm of NCSS. For more information, please visit www.ncss.gov.sg.

About Beyond the Label

Beyond the Label (BTL) is a nation-wide movement started in 2018 by NCSS, which focuses on addressing stigma and promoting social inclusion for persons with mental health conditions. In 2022, the BTL Movement launched the BTL Collective, which comprises partners from the public, private and people sectors working together, to create an empowering and inclusive environment for persons with mental health conditions and improve the mental well-being of all Singaporeans. For more information on BTL, please visit <https://www.ncss.gov.sg/our-initiatives/beyond-the-label>.