

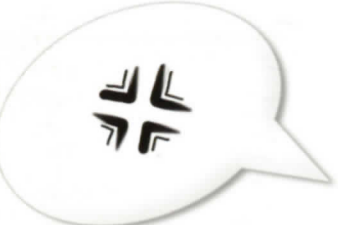


CONNECTIONS

The Counselling Newsletter

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THE JOURNEY »» FORWARD



BE THE *Artist* OF YOUR LIFE



I firmly believe that there is a reason why we can see all kinds of colours. One could suppose that this incredible ability of us to be able to see so many kinds of colours signifies that life isn't just grayscale and uneventful as one would portray it to be.

I see our lives as a big canvas that is as tall and as wide as our eyes can see. It is a canvas that we paint on as we journey through our life experience. People that touch our lives, especially our friends and our love ones colour it bright and sunny as they support us in making our lives a beautiful piece of art. My friends in college, my second family, proves it time and time again.

Nonetheless, it is we the artist that are such perfectionists that we drive ourselves in making the painting flawless. The more we focus on perfection, the more flaws we see in the painting which irks us on. Most of us drive ourselves to the ground without realising that we have sacrificed our health and the tools in making our life painting possible. Sometimes all it takes is a little self-care to make it better. When we give our body what it needs- be it rest or a balanced diet, it helps us to perform with much efficiency and accuracy. We are able to focus better, we are less irritable and realised where the

mistakes lie and correct it immediately. When we take care of our tools, we will realise how much better we can perform. Most importantly, it is our perception that we need to take care off.

The more we focus on perfection, the more flaws we see.

It is what we choose to see that will determine what colour we choose to paint- be it bright and colourful or dull and grey. Remind yourself that there are more colours than the colours on your palette, it is a question of whether we look for them. Keep a journal of the times where you were introduced to the different bright and sunny colours in your life. Do not limit yourself to the dark colours that are on the palette at that time, find the colours that you want on your painting. This is where you challenge yourself to find what is meaningful and worthwhile for you to paint. Never stop trying.

You are the artist of your life. You have the power to draw and change your painting accordingly. When you change your thinking, your movement will mirror it. There are times were we need to step out of our comfort zone, with persistence and drive, we are able to make it a habit to stay.

Pick yourself up when you see the need to colour a never ending darkness. Remind yourself of the people who support you and will support you time and time again to paint another sunshine. Remind yourself of the courage and strength that you have thus far and you have painted a mile away from when you first begin. Continue with the determination that you have.

Remember that you are always able to consult another artist to give you perspective on how to make your painting a better one. Perhaps they are able to offer you a different perspective that will help you overcome you blind spot. You will learn of another way to paint.

In any painting, there will be bright and dark colours. Most of us tend to focus on a specific colour and forget the picture as a whole. Look at the picture as a whole. Be it bright or dark, you will realized that life is full of colours. Remember of the role you play as the artist of your life. Remember the brush in your hand. Let your painting flow- let your life flow. You will learn to live life.

The Silver Lining

The harder the struggle, the more glorious the triumph.

Everyone goes through ups and downs in their lives. No one is spared from it because it is part and parcel of life. Moreover, if one did not go through any rough patches in life then how could one ever appreciate the good things that happen in life? As the saying goes you can't have a rainbow without a little rain. Therefore, the ultimate question is what you do when things look bleak, when you feel that life is dragging you down, and all you feel like doing is curling up and sleeping instead of waking up and facing the world. What can you do in times like this? What kind of coping methods can you utilise during these times that will give you the much-needed boost to keep you going?

Many a time I have had life push me to the brink where I had everything happen all at once and it overwhelmed me to the point where I began to feel hopeless and helpless. In times like this I found writing down my thoughts and feelings on paper helped me tremendously as it gave me a chance to regroup and regain myself again. Writing down what you are going through can help you let go whatever you feel. This will, in turn, make your heart lighter once you are finished. Some may even find that writing out what they are going through cathartic and find a cathartic release once they get their thoughts down on paper.

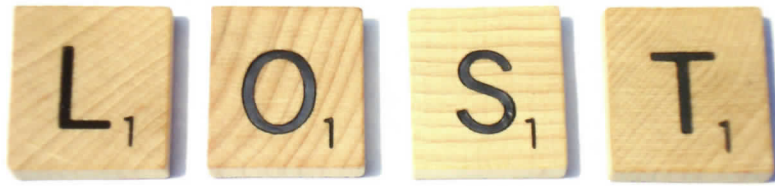


Apart from writing down my current thoughts and feelings as I go through difficult times, I found that keeping a gratitude journal where I jotted down whatever things that I was thankful for improved my outlook on life immensely so much that I became more positive. When faced with a negative situation, I had a better comeback from it. The best part about having a gratitude journal is when you look back, it will surely fill your heart with happiness. I also spend my time recalling all the positive things people have said to me. When I remember how it felt like when they were saying it to me, it lifts my mood exponentially.

**AS THE SAYING GOES
YOU CAN'T HAVE A
RAINBOW WITHOUT
A LITTLE RAIN**

Lastly, mindfulness helps me focus on the here and now and it helps me keep track of my thoughts rather than drowning in my past. You can pick up any book on mindfulness at a bookshop and I can promise you that you will not be disappointed. I used it when I was depressed and it helped me a lot.

Often than not, we get so caught up with the hum drum of life that we lose ourselves in the process; we become overwhelmed and saturated in the long run. Therefore, it is important to find balance with whatever we do in our lives. Never give up on life and utilise the resources you have at hand. Life is a journey that challenges us to realise things that are meaningful and worthwhile for us. **Never stop trying.**



Need Help! What Avenue?

It was the Christmas day 2 years ago, a day which I will never forget. I lost him, my pillar of strength and support- my dearest father.

Just as the many Christmas Eves before, I stayed at my friend's house for the barbeque party and the long awaited Christmas count-down. It was a night of fun and laughter just like any other Christmas Eve. My dad would usually pick me the next day for a family dinner during Christmas. Nothing prepared me for what was about to happen the next day:-

He didn't turn up.

It was my frantic uncle that showed up at the door step rushing me to the hospital to meet my mom and brother. I was then told that my dad died instantly at a car crash. No one knew what caused the crash. I was stunned, my mind just went blank. The only thought that came to my mind was not having the chance to even be there for my dad's "last moment". It was and would still be an indescribable feeling to me.

The deep scar that was left after my father's death made me lose hope in life bringing me down with severe depression. There wasn't a night that I didn't cry. I had even resorted to cutting myself. Nothing I did help to alleviate the situation until I finally sought help.

Friends

These close people may not be able to help solving my problems but have been very supportive to me, especially when I needed a shoulder to cry out, when I need an ear to listen to me ranting and my problems.

Support Group

I joined a support fellowship group, and I am really glad to have the brothers and sisters around supporting me through the trials. I am very much surprised too, meeting few of them who are from single-parent family, they have provided me different perspectives to my problems.

Counsellor

My support group encouraged me to see a counsellor as they felt I wasn't my usual self. It was an eye opening experience as the counsellor provided me with different viewpoints which contributed to potential solutions for me to tackle what I'm facing, instead of doing things that may hurt me physically and emotionally.

No doubt these scars will never leave me, but as time passed by, I have become stronger and knowing that all things happened for a reason. I made it through and I want you to know that you can go through what you are facing too!

I believe that challenges will still come in our way, but I truly hope that somehow, some way, you will come to the realization that recovery is not impossible. The realization that you can and will, with determination and support from others, be able to get well. I wish you the strength and courage it takes to start living for real. I wish you a complete recovery.





AM I MAD TO SEE A COUNSELLOR?

An age-old thought that has not change through time- be it those who are planning to seek help or even who have already sought help from a counsellor. It has always been very cryptic as to what a counsellor does during a session. There isn't someone off the street that can tell you exactly what they do. What one counsellor does may differ from the next. Do they read minds? Are they as mysterious as we think?



I took the opportunity to get the perspective of one of the counsellor at our university. She laughed as I told her my thoughts saying that she didn't know that they were that mysterious. These were the words she said as she explained to me:-

"It's really not that complicated. We offer a broader perspective as people get stuck with an issue. You don't have to be crazy to have an issue. It's part of life, part of being human. Sometimes, you just need someone to tell you "hey, let's look at it from a different perspective, have you thought of it this way? What can we do then?" At the end of the day you'll have to decide what you would like to do with this new found awareness. The decision falls back on the person seeking help because you are the author of your life. What do you

Sometimes, you just need someone to tell you "Hey, let's look at it from a different perspective, have you thought of it this way? What can we do then?"

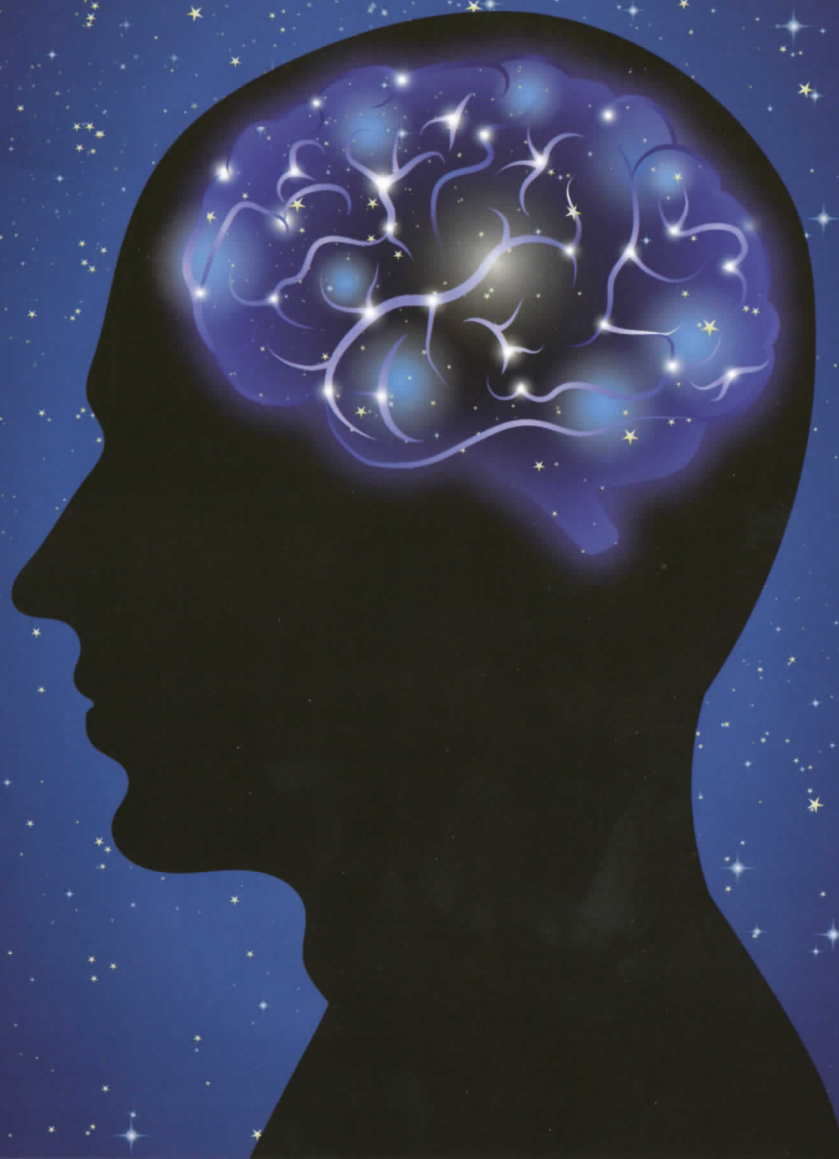
Most people struggle through this step. As Virginia Satir once said, "Most people prefer the certainty of misery to the misery of the uncertainty." When you are able to challenge yourself to develop yourself further in life, you have taken a big step ahead in your journey in life.

Learn to accept who you are, learn to live life. It's a live long journey of self-discovery."

After listening to her explanation, it sounds like our life is a big adventure. There'll be times where we'll be hit with obstacles. When we are lost, we'll look for the clue master called "the counsellor" to ask for a clue on how to overcome it. How we choose to use the clue is up to us then. That's what I understand from it.

Do you need a clue?

BY AVERY TEE (FST)



DEMYSTIFYING THE CLINPSYCHERS

Modern society has evolved into being very much concerned with aesthetics, so much so that if you do not fit into the stereotype of (mainstream) beauty, you don't fit in at all. How many of us have had the experience of walking around in a mall only to be approached by people selling skin whitening, glowing, shining products? Or being called at awkward times for gym memberships because obviously anything other than a size

zero needs to be worked on, right? Although these are extreme examples, the spirit of it is fundamentally the same, if you're healthy on the inside (through fitness regimes and proper diet), then that shines through your skin and you appear youthful, happy and more energetic and the list goes on.

However a point to consider is that although being healthy on the inside does focus on psychological

health, does it only stop there? What about those million thoughts that run through our head?

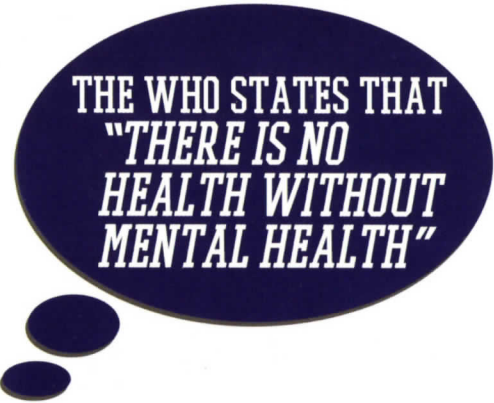
The emotions that course through our heart (or rather the limbic system)? Or the overt observable behaviours that we commit every day? All these or rather the proper management of these goes a long way in keeping our mental health intact.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines: health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. The WHO states that “there is no health without mental health”.

Mental health isn't about depression, anxiety, schizophrenia or whatever diagnosis you can find in the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. It's about feeling satisfied, coherent, balanced, happy, hopeful, and having psychological resilience that helps you handle every curve ball that life throws at you and of course function at an optimal level in your surroundings. It looks at ensuring that one has a wholesome experience of life. This is where the job of a Clinical Psychologist starts, in ensuring that these positive experiences are preserved in one's life and ensuring their well-being in a holistic manner through education and preventive programs.

That being said, the question is how then is this achieved? In the span of the developmental process, many things happen to and around us that shapes our values, beliefs and personalities that then influence how we take on the future. Some of these things may be positive, others not too positive and some just down right depressing. The bad news is, we can't always control these events in our life but the SUPER good news is that we can choose our reactions to it. Some of us can naturally adapt to these changes in a functional way while others can't and this is where a clinical psychologist plays a role in helping them learn, relearn or remind them of the tools at their disposal to overcome life's challenges.

It helps to look at wellness in a continuum where at one extreme the person is highly competent and well both physically and mentally; while on the other they are ill, unable to function, having diminished coping resources which most times leads to psychological disorders that most people fear. However, note that because wellness happens on a continuum, early detection of the signs that we



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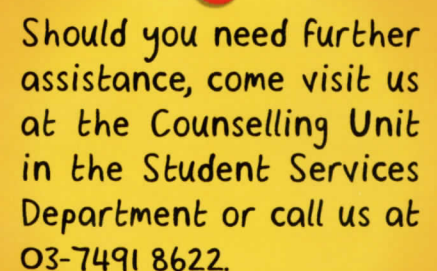
aren't doing too well, and the ability to ask for help comes in handy. Just like early detection helps with cancer, having insight on our mental health, helps us identify the triggers and symptoms that are causing us discomfort and clinical psychologists help alleviate this through a combination of assessments and intervention strategies' that are best suited to you and your situation. The different realities of the individual are taken into account comprising their genetic vulnerabilities, family, social, thought processes and value systems amongst others before a diagnoses is given and the case is formulated with clear goals and specific objectives to be met. Intervention strategies' are often dependent on the theoretical orientation of the clinical psychologist.

Rest assured, you as a client are a free participant and may voice your satisfaction, dissatisfaction or decide to stay/terminate the session at any point. An important point is that it is never too late to seek help.

The road to recovery though, needs commitment and persistence on the part of the client as, there are no magic pills that would wash all your worries away.

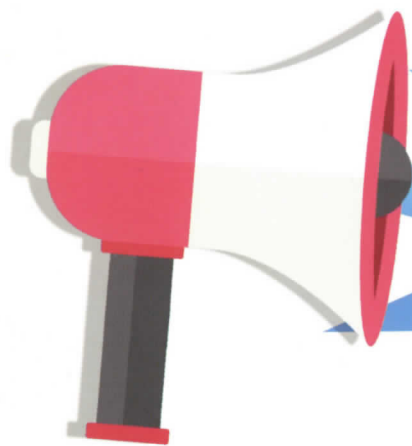
The clinical psychologists use a combination of the scientist-practitioner approach to conduct researches to gather new information about improving mental health and the practically apply this to their diverse clientele that spans across ages, cultures, and diverse socioeconomic statuses. Besides this, some choose to go into the training or teaching industry to use their knowledge on human development and behaviour to tap into the potential of individuals from various sectors to help them function more effectively with knowledge of their self and others.

ClinPsychers can be found practicing in hospitals, private practices, academic institutions, and corporate companies and so on and so forth. With the help of our dear friend the Google, professionals around your area are easy to track, however do make sure that you do your homework and background check to save yourself the ghastly experience of going to a hoax or a fraud.



Should you need further assistance, come visit us at the Counselling Unit in the Student Services Department or call us at 03-7491 8622.

P/S: We don't bite



PCV SPEAKOUT

What is PCV all about?
What made you join this network?



Ellen Chai, President
Studying A Levels

I first got to know about the Peer Counselling Volunteers (PCV) during my programme's orientation. A few days later, my curiosity and passion to help led me to join this peer support network. I have learnt through PCV's training that counselling is not about giving advices and temporary solutions, but it is geared more towards listening, empathizing and helping your peers to stand up on their feet again.

Here at PCV we are trained by counsellors to be equipped with the ability to help our peers to view problems from a different perspective, and to accept and conquer them using alternative pathways.

We are here to uphold each other, with patience, strength and faith. I welcome you to be a part of us today!

*A listening ear, a helping hand,
an open door.*



Lemina Lim,
Vice President
Studying BSc (Hons) in Actuarial
Studies

PCV is a platform where students are given the opportunity to help and support their peers who face difficulties in various aspects such as studies, finance, and relationships with friends and family. I joined PCV because I wanted to further develop my listening skills and help others at the same time.

After undergoing the personal development training sessions, I not only understand myself better, but I also learned how to understand and approach others. The sessions helped me discover the different types of personalities and survival stances one may have but more importantly, I found out what was mine.

Other than that, being a part of PCV has enlarged my circle of friends as I meet people from courses that are completely different from mine.

To sum it up, I have really enjoyed myself in all the sessions and I definitely do not regret joining PCV!



#THROWBACK

Let's reminisce through the year 2015

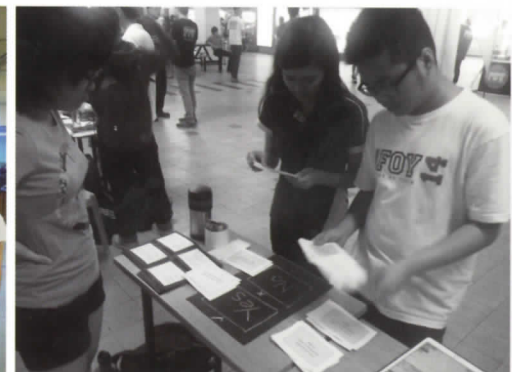
JUMBO DAY

Simply put, PCV is a huge extended family and Jumbo Day is a get-to-know-your-family day. Every year in April and September, PCV members of all batches get together and participate in tons of fun and exciting activities!



ADJUSTMENT TO CAMPUS LIFE

We learnt key points in adjusting to campus life. We also got to know what type of friend we are and what to look out for.



STRESS ARREST

We learnt ways on how to tackle our common enemy - stress.



YOUR BODY SPEAKS

This workshop highlighted the importance of body language in terms of eye contact and body posture. It was fun trying to read each other's body language!



GETTING MENTAL

During Getting Mental Fair, we had our booth and prepared stress relief techniques + games. On top of that, we sold our colourful Cheering Pastilles attached with cheerful messages.



Upcoming Events





- Campus tour
- Chill sessions
- Valentine's/Friendship Day fundraising
- Preview party
- Counselling workshops
- Jumbo Day
- Hospital/Orphanage visits
- Explore Race

* Subject to changes

Weekly Dialogue Listen. Talk. Connect.

What: Topic discussions related to mental health.
Why: To raise awareness about various issues and promote a culture of people helping people as peers in Sunway community.

Every Friday | 12.30PM-1.30PM @ NE-5-4

 PERSONALITIES 13th November	 AUTISM 27th November
 VERBAL ABUSE 20th November	 DEPRESSION 4th December

Interested? Send in your enquiries to sunwaypcvinfo@gmail.com

PCV Jeffrey Cheah Foundation
 Supporting the Arts of Passion

 sunwaypcvinfo@gmail.com
for any enquiries

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WE LISTEN



bit.ly/sunwaypeer2peer



by Peer Counselling Volunteers

If you have concerns/issues in life, you can write to us anonymously.

**WE ARE
HERE
FOR
YOU.**



Peer Counselling Volunteers
Empathise • Encouragement • Empower

