The Mental First Aid Kit: Addressing the mental health needs of older adults in Singapore

Health Promotion Board, Singapore

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28th International Conference of Alzheimer's Disease International, 18-20 April 2013, Taipei
SINGAPORE. 新加坡. SINGAPURA. சிங்கப்பூர்

- 5.18 million population; 710km² land area
- Multi-ethnic city-state:
  - 77% Chinese
  - 14% Malay
  - 8% Indian
  - 1% Others
- 4 official languages: English, Chinese, Malay, Tamil
National Mental Health Blueprint

Aims of NMHBP

i) Promote mental health and, where possible, prevent the development of mental health problems and mental disorders

ii) Reduce the impact of mental disorders

Total Investments

$180m invested to improve mental health

Focus areas

i) Mental health promotion

   ii) Integrating mental healthcare

   iii) Strengthening manpower

   iv) Developing mental health research

Outcomes

Most projects achieved their intended objectives and met their key performance targets

Source: Ministry of Health
Three Aspects of the Community Mental Health Masterplan

1. Develop general community-based mental health services
   - Shared care teams
   - Allied health services to support GPs
   - Community support teams
   - GP Partnership Program
   - Helpline for social service agencies
   - Case management

2. Develop dementia services
   - Memory Clinic expansion
   - Dementia Shared Care Teams
   - Dementia Eldersit and Home Intervention Service
   - Upgrading NH to be dementia friendly
   - Increase dementia NH beds
   - Develop dementia capability in CH

3. Develop psychiatric ILTC facilities
   - Expansion of capacity for
     - Psychiatric Nursing Homes
     - Psychiatric Rehab Homes
     - Psychiatric Sheltered Homes
     - Pilot of Psychiatric Youth Sheltered Home

Source: Ministry of Health
HPB’s Mandate

- Education
- Empowerment
- Prevention
- Health Literacy
- Destigmatization

Treatment (Clinical setting)

- Early Detection
- Help seeking
- Support

Risk reducing Behaviour & lifestyle

Well & Low Risk

Moderate to High Risk

Unwell

School, Community, Workplace Settings

Across Life Span
### MENTAL HEALTH – STRATEGIC Grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Foci</th>
<th>MENTAL WELLBEING</th>
<th>PREVENTIVE MENTAL HEALTH</th>
<th>MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION &amp; LITERACY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capacity to positively experience life, effectively manage challenges, realize</td>
<td>Systematic provision of information and enabling skills to reduce health risks e.g.</td>
<td>Efforts to raise awareness, knowledge and understanding about mental disorders which aid in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>potential and make meaningful contribution to community</td>
<td>depression, dementia</td>
<td>recognition, management or prevention of mental illnesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy</td>
<td><strong>Optimal mental wellbeing</strong></td>
<td><strong>“Inoculation”</strong></td>
<td>De-stigmatisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Risk</td>
<td><strong>Increased protection</strong></td>
<td><strong>Improved risk profile</strong></td>
<td>Early detection and Intervention efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhealthy</td>
<td><strong>Decreased disease burden</strong></td>
<td><strong>Decreased disease co-morbidity</strong></td>
<td>Enhanced disease management De-stigmatisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Desired outcomes

- Healthy
  - Optimal mental wellbeing
  - “Inoculation”
  - De-stigmatisation

- At Risk
  - Increased protection
  - Improved risk profile
  - Early detection and Intervention efficacy

- Unhealthy
  - Decreased disease burden
  - Decreased disease co-morbidity
  - Enhanced disease management De-stigmatisation
The Singapore ‘Silver’ Mental Health Challenge

- By 2020, the projected population 65 years and above will be 575,200
- By 2030, one in five residents will be 65 years and above
- Current prevalence of Dementia stands at 5.2% (National Mental Health Survey of the Elderly, 2003).
- Current prevalence of Depression stands at 3.6% (for aged 50-64) and 3.8% for those aged 65 and above (Singapore Mental Health Survey 2011).
MENTAL FIRST AID KIT PROGRAMME

• Mental wellbeing programme for seniors aged 50 and above

• Modular, community based programme developed to:
  • Promotes mental health literacy (Depression and Dementia)
  • Empower seniors to optimise their mental wellbeing
  • Encourages sustainable preventative health strategies
  • Facilitate social interaction and connections

Available in multiple languages
## Programme Foundations

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Increased mental health literacy facilitates early detection of mental health conditions and help seeking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Programme content is based on locally validated dimensions of mental wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Positive mental wellbeing capacities can be developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Social capital and connectedness is protective against mental health difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Ongoing mental activity and stimulation is a protective factor against cognitive decline and dementia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Multi-domain cognitive training can enhance cognitive functioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Declining cognitive functioning is related to increased risk of functional impairment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MENTAL FIRST AID KIT PROGRAMME-FRAMEWORK

- Mental health education
- Interactive Workshops – art, music, role play, drama
- Mentally stimulating & socially engaging activities
- Promoting mental wellbeing and lifestyle for healthy ageing

NURTURE YOUR MIND (psycho-social education)

STIMULATE YOUR MIND (cognitive functioning)

MENTAL FIRST AID

ARTS FOR MENTAL WELLBEING (Enrichment elective)

- Exposure to mental wellbeing enhancing activities
- Pilot of recycled Arts elective

• Multidomain cognitive skills training
• Body-Mind Connect

Knowledge & Skills  Lifestyle  Risk Reduction
MENTAL FIRST AID KIT PROGRAMME

Participant Profile

* Early sixties
* Culturally Diverse
* Low literacy (technological, mental health)
* Little formal education
* Minimal exposure to formal learning environments
* Spent much time caring for the family
MENTAL FIRST AID KIT PROGRAMME

Psycho-social education:
Nurture your Mind (NYM)

Programme Structure

- 7 weekly sessions
- 3 workshops and 4 game sessions

Psycho-education and capacity building workshops

- Depression and Dementia awareness
- Understanding Mental Wellbeing
- Enhancing Inter-Personal Relationships

Mental stimulation and social engagement activities/games

- Experiential activities/role plays
- Fingerprint Art
- Rummy-O  A-Million  Bingo
MENTAL FIRST AID KIT PROGRAMME

Making mental wellbeing relatable
**NYM Evaluation**

- Programme is well received and liked
- Participants looking forward to each lesson, especially interactive game sessions
- Participants demonstrated an increased knowledge of Dementia, Depression and mental wellbeing
- Participants are interested in ongoing engagement and further learning opportunities

**Self Reported Mental Wellbeing: Singapore Mental Wellbeing Scale**

-> Post Programme Mental Wellbeing scores are significantly higher than pre-programme scores (p<0.001, n= 1410)
MENTAL FIRST AID KIT PROGRAMME

Cognitive Skills Training Module: Stimulate Your Mind (SYM)

- 5 interactive workshops, once a week (2.5hrs each)
- Cognitive Skills Training including:
  - Attentional training
  - Memory mnemonics
  - Reasoning strategies
  - Speed of processing training

- Sessions focus on strategy instruction and practice
- Emphasis on application of strategies to activities of daily living supported by homework assignments
## SYM Evaluation (Pre-Programme)

### Perception and Knowledge

- Self reported independence in activities of daily living
- Believe that keeping mentally stimulated will keep their cognitive skills strong
- Believe that they can learn how to improve their cognitive skills

### Self assessment of cognitive skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception Area</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Mean Participant Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>My ability to remember information is good</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have trouble remembering new information now, more often than in past</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>My problem solving ability is good</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have found it more difficult to understand and follow conversations</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I find it more difficult to make decisions</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed of</td>
<td>My ability to think quickly is good</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing</td>
<td>I find it difficult to respond quickly to questions</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I take more time to do mental calculations</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Cognitive Self Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Application</th>
<th>Post Programme</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am more confident in my ability to remember</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am more confident in my ability to make a good decision</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am more confident in my ability to respond and think quickly</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have used the skills taught in my daily life</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I will use the skills in my daily life in the future</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Enrichment elective: Arts for Wellbeing

Introduction of participants to recycled arts as a modality to

* learn and keep mentally stimulated
* maintain hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills
* promote creativity and self expression
* promote a sense of achievement and self-confidence
* nurture relationships and build supportive communities

Collaboration with the National Arts Council (NAC)

Engagement of Senior Health Ambassadors as programme facilitators

“Learning new things keeps my mind active”
The **Mental First Aid Kit** is a modular mental wellbeing programme for older adults.

- MFAK includes psychosocial education and cognitive skills training modules.
- Participant gains include enhanced mental health literacy, increased mental wellbeing and improved cognitive self efficacy.
- Planned programme enhancements include the development of enrichment electives.

**Challenges**

- Maximising Outreach
- Responsive Programming
- Evaluation
Thank You