

Innovate &
Collaborate

Independent
Living

Leaders in
Special Education

Everyone is a
Caregiver

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rapport

at the heart of what matters



OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO
EXCEL

WORKING TOGETHER WORKS

Collective contributions for seamless services



Community help to improve mental well-being

In Singapore, the number of outpatients seeking treatment at the Institute of Mental Health for disorders like schizophrenia, depression and anxiety totalled 33,000 in 2008, up from 29,000 in 2005.

"With the mounting statistics of mental illness in Singapore, no organisation or government can single-handedly tackle this issue," said Ms Angela Chau, Director of BinjaiTree. BinjaiTree functions as a grant maker to provide financial support for individuals and charities.

In August 2009, BinjaiTree initiated a milestone collaboration with three other organisations, namely, NCSS, the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Singapore Anglican Community Services (SACS), in a public-people-private sector partnership to form the Mental Health Working Group.

The four organisations joined forces to collectively strategise forward plans for the mental health sector, build capability of service providers, identify service needs and the right partners to bridge gaps and facilitate links to funding. This leveraging on existing networks and sharing of ideas has resulted in outreach and early identification by providing mental health services right in the heartlands.

Bringing the organisations together filled the gaps in terms of the support rendered to people with mental illness once they leave the clinical setting and reintegrate into society.

"Through engaging the private sector such as BinjaiTree, we hope to tap on their expertise in helping new partners to run sustainable businesses. With SACS on board, we have also ensured that we have a strong provider of services to lend a guiding hand when building up

the capabilities of other VWOs. By bringing together the strength of these organisations, NCSS hopes to plug some of the gaps in the provision of community mental health services in Singapore," said Ms Tina Hung, Deputy CEO of NCSS.

"Initially, the challenge was getting together given all our tight schedules and existing commitments," said Mr Keith Chua, Chairman, SACS. "But it was wonderful to see each partner

giving this top priority; it was also very encouraging to get top-line support from MOH."

The working group will focus on providing community-based rehabilitation services through case management, counselling and expanding existing support by VWOs like SACS. Caregivers will be given more support and have access to training courses and resources like the Caregivers' Association of the Mentally Ill guidebook, co-funded by BinjaiTree and the Health Promotion Board with inputs from NCSS.

There will also be an expansion of the job placement and support for persons with mental illness. NCSS worked with SACS in the development of the service model for Employment Support Service and linked them with Temasek Cares and Tote Board to fund the needed service, which helps to put their clients in touch with potential employers.

Ms Chau said: "At the end of the day, we want to provide organisations with more clarity, networks and capability to help them grow. There are no egos dominating our work group, just compassion and a common goal to improve the state of mental health in Singapore."

Framework for vocational education for students with special needs

Students with special needs can look forward to a structured programme that will prepare them for successful transition to employment.



Students from Tanglin School undergoing vocational training in hospitality services, horticulture and food & beverage.

“NCSS appreciates MOE’s leadership in drawing up the new vocational education framework. The framework will provide the structure and pathway for our special schools to develop a curriculum for children to acquire soft skills and vocational skills systematically, which will enhance the employability of our special schools graduates.”

Ms Tina Hung, Deputy CEO, NCSS

A workgroup comprising representatives from the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Institute of Technical Education, Workforce Development Agency, Singapore National Employers Federation, Enabling Employers Network (EEN), NCSS, Katong School, Tanglin School, Grace Orchard School and Metta School came up with a framework for vocational education to help special schools operationalise a comprehensive and

structured vocational education programme for students.

The framework outlines the objectives, learning outcomes, and comes with a series of guides that includes a vocational assessment toolkit and the curriculum for competencies and skills for employability, that will equip students with industry-specific skills and social emotional competencies.