

EMBARGOED UNTIL 11 MARCH, 12AM



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To News Editor

**ENHANCED MENTAL WELLNESS SUPPORT FOR THE NORTH WEST
COMMUNITY**

North West CDC rallies network of community partners to provide
targeted support for residents facing mental wellness issues

As part of efforts to build a caring and healthy North West community, the **North West Community Development Council (CDC)** is expanding its **Mental Wellness @ North West** programme, evolving from promoting awareness over the last two years, to providing more direct support for the community on mental wellness. North West CDC has established an initial support network comprising grassroots organisations, social service agencies (SSAs), schools and healthcare providers, which the CDC is looking to grow. The network will be spearheaded by 36 newly minted Mental Wellness Ambassadors, who will be tasked to engage and identify residents who may be facing mental wellness issues and offer a first layer of support to ensure that they have access to mental health services early. Should the identified resident require further

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assistance, the Mental Wellness Ambassador could refer the resident to partners within CDC's established network, which have been on-boarded to support the stepping up of mental wellness support for the community.

2 North West CDC has partnered PsyConnect, a psychology student interest group comprising Psychology undergraduates and alumni from SUSS, to design and develop a **Mental Wellness Toolkit** aimed at providing a guide for caregivers and even residents affected by milder mental wellness conditions, to self-help and manage their loved ones or own situations. The Mental Wellness Ambassadors could also use the toolkit for reference or share it with residents during their engagements. As there are many other partners which provide support in mental wellness, the PsyConnect team has consolidated the various avenues and resources in the North West District for residents to know where to seek timely assistance, for issues ranging from providing psychological and emotional support, to providing support for different target groups, including caregivers, youths and seniors. The toolkit will be available for download on North West CDC's website, at <https://go.gov.sg/nw-mw> (see Annex A for factsheet on PsyConnect).

3 In addition, the CDC recognises that social issues and personal circumstances could also affect a resident's mental wellness. To provide better support in this area, CDC has partnered Care Corner Singapore to provide training for the Mental Wellness Ambassadors to expand their knowledge and understanding of mental health and wellness, equip them with tools and skills to identify, engage with and support residents. Care Corner's team of professionals also provide:

- Mental health screening to pick up early signs and symptoms of mental health conditions (for youths aged 13-25)
- Fully subsidised counselling services (for youths aged 13-25)
- Support for caregivers of youth who are struggling with their mental health.

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4 The CDC works with Woodlands Health to provide support to residents with underlying health conditions. These residents could be referred to either of the six Community Health Posts (CHPs) located within the Woodlands and Marsiling Divisions. At the CHPs, community nurses would assess, manage resident's overall health conditions, provide advice on recommended lifestyle changes, and guidance on how to follow-up on his/her mental wellness issues with an appropriate care provider. The community nurses would also conduct house visits for residents who are homebound.

5 In line with stepping up efforts and providing a network of support for the North West community, 36 Mental Wellness Ambassadors will be appointed at the Appointment Ceremony on 11 March 2023. These ambassadors are Grassroots Leaders (GRLs) who are passionate about mental wellness, and keen to contribute to the community. They will be trained by Care Corner Singapore, on basic mental wellness knowledge and communication techniques to effectively engage and support their communities. Throughout their two-year appointment, they will be further supported by North West CDC with periodic check-ins, advanced trainings and refresher courses. The roles of the ambassadors are to help to drive mental wellness efforts such as co-organising mental wellness workshops or talks, share positive mental wellness tips, and identify residents who may require assistance. Through the Mental Wellness Ambassadors, more members from the community, such as the GROs and other circles, may be trained in the future as North West CDC expands its network of support for mental wellness. (see [Annex B](#) for ambassador profiles)

6 North West CDC constantly explores new and innovative ways to form new partnerships to enhance the impact of projects for residents. Speaking on CDC as an enabler in connecting partners' resources to serve the various needs of the community, **Mr Alex Yam, Mayor of North West District** says, "Aligning with Healthier SG's direction of Preventive Health, we encourage residents to take up regular fitness activities by joining our existing range of healthy living programmes. Many residents join the fitness gatherings regularly, allowing them to de-

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stress while building bonds. For residents who may need support on mental wellness, the CDC aims to increase our outreach, and support them in receiving early help. We will also continue to synergise efforts with community partners and healthcare providers to strengthen our support network on mental wellness." (see [Annex C](#) for list of Healthy Living Programmes)

7 Mental Wellness @ North West was launched in 2021 as part of the CDC's Healthy Living programmes in promoting holistic wellness, which aims to raise awareness of mental wellness in the community. It brings together healthcare experts, community and corporate partners, and residents to build up a mental wellness support network through talks and workshops. (see [Annex E](#) for Media FAQs)

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Media Reporting

The news is embargoed until 11 March, 12am. Media interviews with the various profiles, including Mayor Alex Yam, and the Mental Wellness Ambassadors, can be facilitated upon request. Should you have clarifications, please get in touch with North West CDC through the following contact persons below.

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Enclosed:

- 1) Annex A – Factsheet on PsyConnect, SUSS
- 2) Annex B – Ambassadors Profile
- 3) Annex C – List of Healthy Living Programmes
- 4) Annex D – Key Translation Terms
- 5) Annex E – Media FAQs (separately enclosed)

About North West Community Development Council (CDC)

The Community Development Councils (CDCs) were established to build a tightly knit, compassionate and self-reliant community. North West CDC works closely with various community and corporate partners to strengthen Singapore's social fabric; and encourages the more able and successful to come forward to help the less successful, and to foster greater sense of community ownership and self-help among the residents.

We strive to align our activities and efforts with our mission:

(a) **Aggregator of Needs and Resources**

To help the less fortunate through local assistance programmes

(b) **Builder of Capabilities and Capacities**

To bond the community through projects & programmes to bring them closer to one another

(c) **Connector of Communities**

To develop strategic partnerships with corporate and community partners to better serve our residents

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To achieve our mission, North West CDC continues to build programmes and work with various partners to provide support to residents under four key pillars:

i. Uplifting the Community

To support for residents through local assistance schemes and encourage self-reliance and empower residents to improve their lives and employability.

ii. Promoting Health and Wellness

Through a range of healthy living programmes, we hope for our North West residents to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle, and join our health and wellness movement.

iii. Advocating Green Living

Working towards a sustainable future, we aim to imbue a green mindset and spark behavioral change among residents. Through various green initiatives, residents are encouraged to adopt green habits starting from the simplest actions.

iv. Enabling partnerships and Volunteerism

We will play our enabler role in connecting our community and corporate partners' resources and volunteerism, to serve the various needs in the community.

The North West District comprises Marsiling-Yew Tee GRC, Nee Soon GRC, Sembawang GRC, Holland-Bukit Timah GRC, and Bukit Panjang SMC.

Factsheet on PsyConnect, SUSS (心理连结组)

Vision:

- To enrich education in psychology through meaningful activities
- To provide all students with a strong social network
- To be the bridge between students and the academic faculty

About

PsyConnect is a student interest group for the psychology students of the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS). Our vision is to be a bridge between students and the academic faculty, to provide all students/alumni with a strong social network, and to enrich psychological education through meaningful activities. We utilise a network that helps promote sharing among all students as well as organise activities that expose students to different psychological fields in Singapore. Through PsyConnect, our students have participated in volunteering sessions with mental health organisations, gone on field tours, and attended various career talks by industry professionals.

PsyConnect has partnered with organisations such as the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) and Apex Harmony Lodge in organising volunteer activities to enrich the lives of residents. Each semester, we organise 3 sessions at IMH for students to be exposed to the area of mental health. Students have also widened their experiences during our prison tours where prison psychologists and wardens share their work with students. Past SUSS alumni in various fields of psychology, such as forensic psychology and clinical psychology, have continued to contribute by speaking at our networking and career talks at SUSS that is held every semester.

Activities and Events:

1. Volunteering and visits in Psychology-related fields
2. Organising and participating in psychology-related events, competitions & symposiums
3. Organising student community events to foster a sense of community among members, alumni, and faculty

Instagram: [susspsyconnect](#)

Profiles of Mental Wellness Ambassadors

Venus Tan Hui Guek, 53 & Ng Yu Ki, 23

Venus has been actively involved as a community volunteer at Nee Soon South Division for more than 15 years, where she would counsel and share life experiences with residents. She is delighted to be appointed as a Mental Wellness Ambassador, along with her 23-year-old daughter, Ms Ng Yu Ki, and embark on their mother-daughter journey together to help the community around them. At a young age, Yu Ki was inspired by her mother's benevolence and aspired to grow up to be like her and make other people's life better. The mother-daughter duo hopes to be able to use their voice to encourage their community to focus on mental wellness, inspire healthy emotional habits, and take proactive measures to stay mentally healthy.

Alvin S/O Ragavan Reggie, 46

As a pastor, Alvin actively listens and counsel his congregation. He has also witnessed how seniors and migrant workers' mental health were affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic and understood the importance of mental wellness. Through this experience, he realises that more can be done to help the community around him in Canberra Division where he serves as a GRL. Alvin hopes that through his role as an ambassador, he will be able to help educate his community on mental wellness, normalise discussion about mental health, and develop skills and knowledge to recognise signs and symptoms to help them get access to mental health services early.

Muhammad Haizuruldin Bin Gimin, 40

Haizu, 40, is a student development officer who helps students develop holistically and mentally. He teaches them ways to reflect for mental wellness, imparts skills to facilitate mental health-related talks. He conducted webinars during the pandemic to promote mental wellness and create a supportive environment for the students. Through his personal experience, Haizu understands the importance of mental wellness at various stages of life and hopes that as a Mental Wellness Ambassador, he will be able to provide more support to the younger generation, especially peers of his generation, who are often caught in between and need a listening ear.

Kendrick Lau Tze Siang, 39

Kendrick is an active volunteer in the Zhenghua Division's Wellness Committee. He works closely with a group of volunteers to outreach and educate residents on the importance of mental wellness. He opines that mental wellness is a topic often neglected as residents who are facing such situations would not have the courage to step forward. He hopes that with the right education and awareness, more residents will be able to assist in identifying and assessing such situations within their community, and refer these residents to the help that they require, at an early stage. He is excited to embark as a Mental Wellness Ambassador, where like-minded volunteers can share best practices and link up with the different Divisions across North West to understand more on the various local mental wellness initiatives.

Tan Koon Sheng, PBM, 35

As a grassroots leader in Bukit Panjang, Koon Sheng is in-charge of managing neighbourly disputes. Through first-hand experience, he has seen many cases of fractured relationships, which could have been sparked by residents behaving erratically, due to underlying mental wellness issues which were not picked up and treated. He regularly applies the mediation and negotiation skills which he has learnt from his engagements with residents over the years, to quell disputes and keep the peace in the community. Koon Sheng is eager to be appointed as a Mental Wellness Ambassador, as he will be given structured training to better engage and manage residents, some of whom may be unaware of their poor mental health. He hopes that with the training, he will be able to provide some rudimentary advice to residents to help them or their loved ones better cope with their situation. He is also keen to learn about the available resources, so that he can refer distressed residents to the right agencies to receive more care and help.

List of Healthy Living Programmes

North West Brisk Walking Club

North West Brisk Walking Club is suitable for residents of all ages to achieve a healthy lifestyle through brisk walking, while promoting community bonding and social cohesion.

North West Dance-Fit Club

North West Dance-Fit Club promotes a healthy lifestyle in residents through dancing. Members have weekly gatherings to dance and workout which help to improve their strength, stamina, and flexibility levels.

North West FitnessX Club

North West FitnessX Club offers four high-intensity exercises - CrossFit, Fight Do, Kpop Fitness and Zumba, as a fun way for residents to tackle cardio workouts and lead a healthy lifestyle.

North West Health Qigong Club

Together with Qigong Shi Ba Shi Association, North West Health Qigong promotes a healthy lifestyle through regular qigong exercise as well as to encourage active ageing among the residents.

North West Running Club

North West Running Club provides a platform for residents to keep fit through group running activities by building up fitness level and stamina while exploring the district on foot.

North West Tai Chi Club

North West Tai Chi Club promotes health maintenance through regular Tai Chi exercises, and allow Tai Chi practitioners to bond and forge friendships with each other.

Key Translation Terms

North West Community Development Council (CDC)	西北社区发展理事会 / 西北社理会
North West District	西北区
Mr Alex Yam Mayor of North West District	任梓銘先生 西北区市长
PsyConnect, SUSS	心理连结组
Woodlands Health	兀兰医疗集团
Care Corner Singapore	关怀机构
Mental Wellness @ North West	心理健康与西北
Mental Wellness Ambassadors	心理健康大使
Grassroots Leaders (GRLs)	基层领袖