

Not All Wounds Are Visible

A MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCE
BOOKLET FOR SECONDARY
SCHOOL STUDENTS



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NOT ALL WOUNDS ARE VISIBLE

FOREWORD

Life is filled with ups and downs. At times, we will struggle and require a helping hand to lift us up.

Being able to identify mental health issues, learning to cope with them, and having the courage to seek help are important in helping us to overcome any mental stress.

Our mental health is as important as our physical health. That is why TOUCH Community Services, together with Salt&Light, has created *Not All Wounds Are Visible*, a mental health resource booklet to equip you with mental wellness knowledge.

This mental health resource booklet contains information on suicide prevention and common mental health issues among youths such as depression, anxiety, eating disorder, and self-harm. You will read about the causes of each condition, the accompanying signs and symptoms, and the possible treatments available for them.

We have also included step-by-step instructions for various exercises which you can perform to help you cope with moments of anxiety and stress in a healthy way. In addition, various community helplines are included at the end of the booklet, should you or someone you know feel overwhelmed and in need of a listening ear and professional advice.

I hope that this booklet will guide you in your journey to achieving mental wellness and enable you to be a pillar of support for your peers struggling with mental health issues.



James Tan
Chief Executive Officer
TOUCH Community Services





INTRODUCTION

- TOUCH Mental Wellness (TMW), a service of TOUCH Community Services, provides personalised therapy and counselling programmes to empower individuals to rise above their circumstances. TMW has been organising mental wellness awareness mass runs, talks and workshops since 2015. It also specialises in mental wellness awareness and educational programmes for schools. In 2018, TMW launched Do You M.I.N.D.?, a school-based mental wellness programme that incorporates virtual reality immersive experiences with adventure based experiential learning. It also launched Singapore's first-ever VR Gaming Experience to educate students on anxiety in a fun and engaging way in 2019.

- As you explore the material in this resource book, we hope that you will increase in awareness of yourself and others, at the same time, learn healthier coping skills for areas that you may be struggling in. We hope this booklet will help to improve your knowledge, perception and behaviour towards mental wellness, and enable you to take practical steps in your mental wellness journey.

- If you, or someone you know, require professional support through one-to-one counselling, please call the TOUCHline at 1800-377-2252. This helpline operates on Mondays to Fridays, 9am to 6pm. Remember, you are not alone in this journey.





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Anxiety





WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Anxiety happens when there is too much stress for you to handle. Having too much stress in one's environment or stretching yourself beyond your ability to cope could lead to unhealthy levels of anxiety.



GENERALISED ANXIETY DISORDER (GAD)

GAD is characterised by persistent and excessive anxiety and worrying over a period of at least six months, which the individual finds difficult to control, thereby affecting various aspects of one's life, including school and work

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS



Excessive anxiety and worry over a number of events at school or at work



Difficulty controlling the worry



Restlessness, feeling keyed up or on edge



Fatigue



Difficulty concentrating or mind going blank



Irritability



Muscle tension



Difficulty in sleeping





OTHER TYPES OF ANXIETY DISORDERS



SOCIAL ANXIETY DISORDER

The intense fear of being judged, criticised and negatively evaluated by people in social situations. Affected individuals may exhibit discomfort with eye contact, stumbling over words or avoidance of social engagements.



OTHER TYPES OF ANXIETY DISORDERS

PANIC DISORDER

A panic attack is a brief episode of intense anxiety, lasting from a few minutes to half an hour. It can occur without an external trigger.

A panic disorder is characterised by recurring episodes of panic attacks.

Both are treatable and recovery is possible!

Panic Disorder \neq Panic Attack

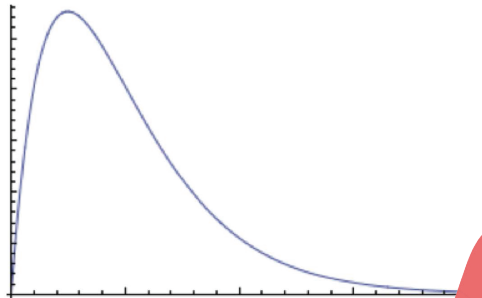


SYMPTOMS OF PANIC ATTACK

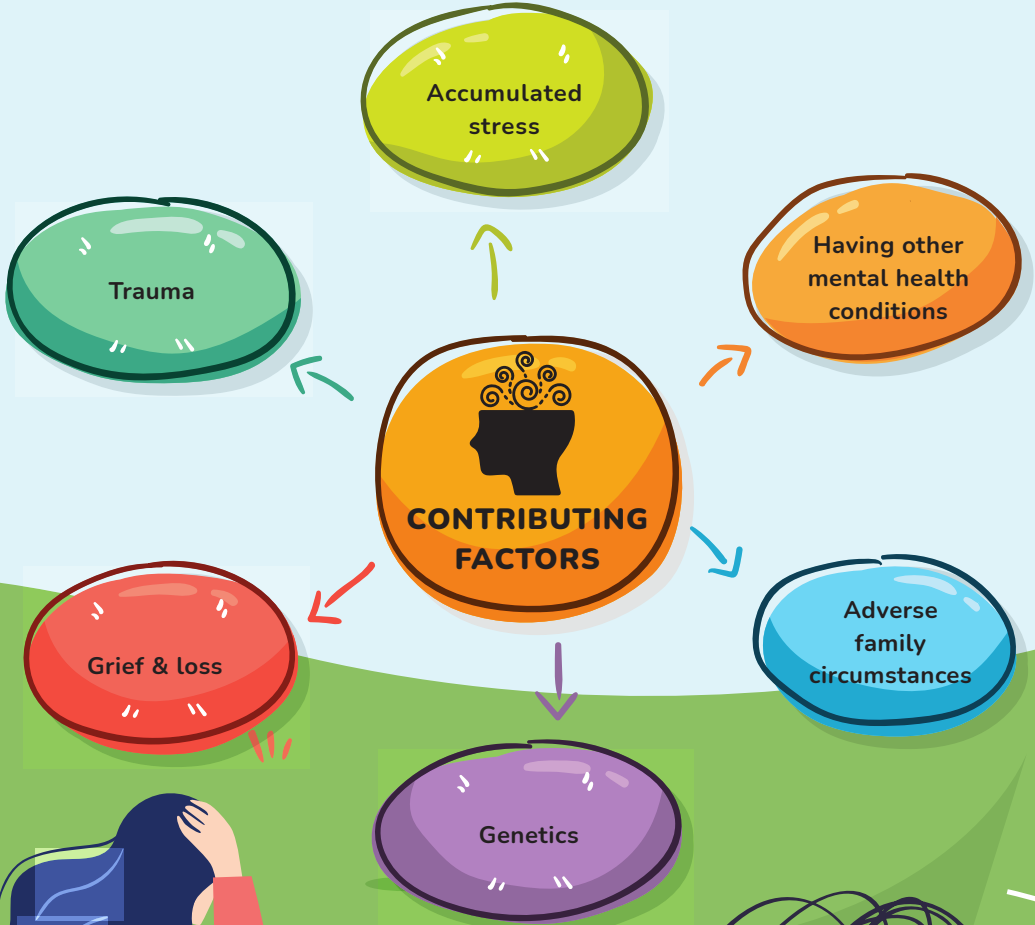
A panic attack is characterised by four or more of the following symptoms

- ✓ Palpitations, pounding heart, or accelerated heart rate
- ✓ Sweating
- ✓ Trembling or shaking
- ✓ Sensations of shortness of breath or smothering
- ✓ A feeling of choking
- ✓ Chest pain or discomfort
- ✓ Nausea or abdominal distress
- ✓ Feeling dizzy, unsteady, lightheaded, or faint
- ✓ Feelings of unreality (derealisation) or being detached from oneself (depersonalisation)
- ✓ Fear of losing control or going crazy
- ✓ Fear of dying
- ✓ Numbness or tingling sensations (paresthesia)
- ✓ Chills or hot flushes

Surge of intense fear or discomfort. Starts suddenly, lasts a few minutes.



THERE ARE DIFFERENT FACTORS WHICH MAY CAUSE ANXIETY DISORDER...





POSSIBLE TREATMENT METHODS & SUPPORT

PSYCHOTHERAPY

Speak with a doctor or mental health professional for help. It helps to unravel underlying causes that are perpetrating anxiety. Techniques that help to manage stress include deep breathing and relaxation techniques, regular exercises, healthy diet etc



POSSIBLE TREATMENT METHODS & SUPPORT

MEDICATION

Commonly prescribed medication
for anxiety helps with alleviating
tension and induces relaxation



BREATHING & BODY SCAN EXERCISE

OBJECTIVES

The breathing and body scan exercise can help you to find relief from stressful situations. It enables you to be more aware of how your body reacts to stress. Did you know that your body posture can also affect your mood? It is harder for you to get angry if you are sitting comfortably.



BREATHING & BODY SCAN EXERCISE



STEPS



Watch to learn!

- ✓ Take several breaths at your own pace.
- ✓ Examine the sensations that are going through your body. At the same time, continue with the deep breathing. Feel the expansion and contraction of your body with each breath.
- ✓ Notice if there are any images that come to your mind. Observe them without passing any judgements.
- ✓ Start with your head. Notice if there is any tension or feeling going through your forehead, eyes, mouth and your jaws.
- ✓ Proceed to scan for any sensations in your neck, shoulders, forearms and hands. Notice if there is any pain in your shoulders. Are your shoulder movements flexible or are they tensed up? Are your fingers clenched or are they relaxed?
- ✓ You might notice that there are unrelated thoughts or emotions coming into your mind. Gently bring your attention back to your breathing.
- ✓ Continue to scan the rest of your body – your spine, abdomen, hips, legs and feet. Notice if there is any feeling in your joints or between your toes.
- ✓ Whenever your mind wanders off, remember that your breathing is the anchor point in focusing your attention.





HOT TEA EXERCISE

It helps you to gain control over your attention and lets your mind focus on one thing at a time in the present moment. Training your mind to be present and disengage from unhealthy thinking patterns makes you calmer and less vulnerable to emotional distress.

HOT TEA EXERCISE

STEPS

- ✓ Brew yourself a cup of hot, simmering tea. Consider Chamomile, Lavender, or Green Tea.
- ✓ Sit yourself down at a comfortable spot away from distractions or external stimulus.
- ✓ Place the cup of tea close to your chest and feel the warmth of the steam. At the same time, inhale deeply and exhale slowly. Enjoy the scent and take slow sips when the tea has cooled to lukewarm temperature.
- ✓ Feel the warmth of the tea move down your throat and to your stomach. If you find your thoughts wandering off, bring your focus back to the deep breathing and the warmth of the tea.
- ✓ Repeat these steps until your mind is calmer and more focused.
- ✓ Note: Avoid substituting tea with coffee in this exercise. The caffeine in coffee tends to act as a stimulant, which may make it harder for you to relax.



Watch to learn!





GROUNDING

Grounding exercises are things you can do to bring yourself into contact with the present moment.

Deep, slow, and long breaths are your first priority for achieving a calm mental state, before proceeding with the steps on the next page.

GROUNDING

IDENTIFY

- ✓ 5 things you can see
- ✓ 4 things you can touch
- ✓ 3 things you can hear
- ✓ 2 things you can smell
- ✓ 1 thing you can taste



Depression





WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Feeling sad is a natural part of the human experience. We may feel sad or depressed when a loved one passes away, or when we're going through a life challenge, such as a serious illness.

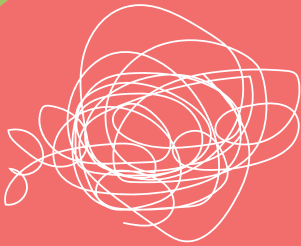
These feelings are usually short-lived. When someone experiences persistent and intense feelings of sadness for at least two weeks, they may have clinical depression, which requires medication and / or therapy support.

WHAT IS CLINICAL DEPRESSION?



Clinical Depression (also known as Major Depressive Disorder) is a common and serious mental illness that affects a person's emotions, thoughts, perception (world view) and behaviour, to a point of dysfunction. It is characterised by prolonged periods of low moods, feelings of hopelessness and lethargy.

Clinical Depression also diminishes one's interest in their usual activities, resulting in them being perceived as unmotivated.



ANOTHER TYPE OF DEPRESSION



PERSISTENT DEPRESSIVE DISORDER (FORMERLY KNOWN AS DYSTHYMIA)

It is a milder and more chronic form of depression. Its symptoms would come and go over a number of years but they persist for more than two months at a time. Even though it is less serious than major depression, it could disrupt one's daily functioning, relationships and ability to concentrate.



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

You may be suffering from depression if you experience five or more of these symptoms every day for two weeks or longer. Use the acronym **SAD CAGES*** to help you remember the symptoms better.

S



sleep disturbances

A



appetite changes

D



depressed mood, or feelings of sadness / hopelessness over a sustained period of time

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

C



concentration problems
(e.g. difficulties in completing
tasks, cloudy mind)

A



anhedonia – loss of interest in
enjoyable activities
(e.g. hobbies, spending time
with friends & family, etc)

G



Excessive guilt
or shame

E



low levels of energy /
enthusiasm (e.g. constantly
feeling tired / restless)

S



suicidal thoughts due to
feelings of helplessness
and hopelessness





CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

BIOLOGICAL

- ✔ Genetic factors - history of mental illness within the family
- ✔ Temperament / personality - melancholic tendencies may make one more predisposed to depression.



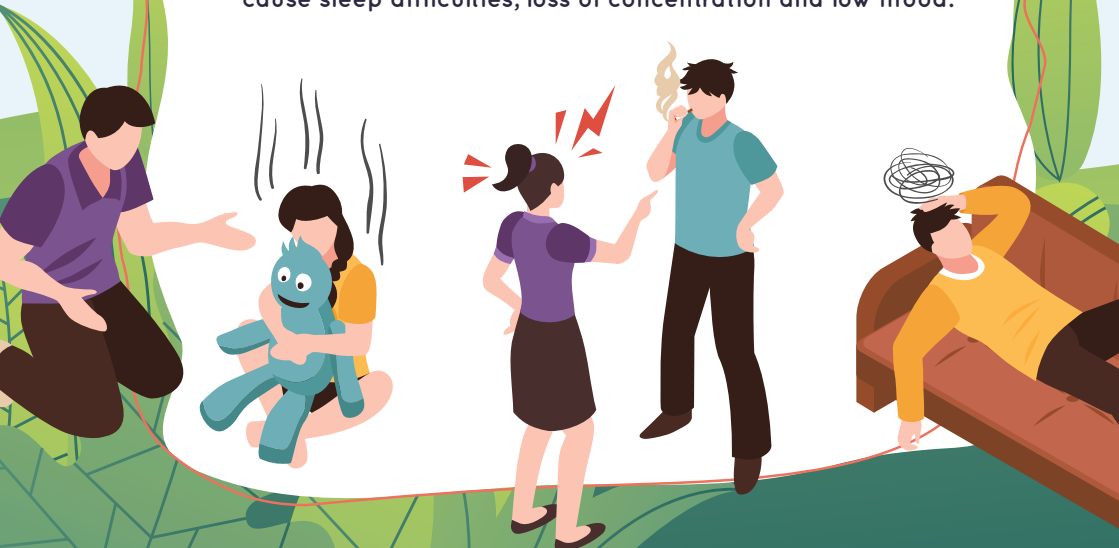


CONTRIBUTING FACTORS



SOCIAL

- ✔ **Emotionally invalidating environment:** It can create self-doubt and feelings of inadequacy within an individual, which can contribute to depressive symptoms such as excessive guilt or feelings of hopelessness.
- ✔ **Adverse family circumstances:** Divorce, hostile relationships or drastic changes within the family system can be mentally distressing.
- ✔ **Grief & loss:** When bereavement issues are not properly managed, it can cause low mood, feelings of hopelessness and depressed feelings.
- ✔ **Trauma:** It can compromise an individual's sense of safety and cause one to feel perpetual distress. This may also cause sleep difficulties, loss of concentration and low mood.



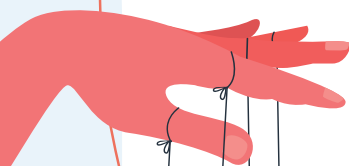


CONTRIBUTING FACTORS



EMOTIONAL

- ✔ Difficulties with emotional regulation
- ✔ Poor coping skills





POSSIBLE TREATMENT METHODS AND SUPPORT

Depression is highly treatable. When depression is recognised and treated, a person's quality of life can be greatly improved.



MEDICATION

✓ A psychiatrist can prescribe medications, such as antidepressants, which help to ease depressive symptoms by increasing the levels of these hormones in our brain:

- Serotonin, the hormone that controls our wellbeing and happiness.
- Norepinephrine, the hormone that regulates our mood and ability to concentrate.
- Dopamine, a neurotransmitter that regulates our emotions.



THERAPY

During therapy, a person with depression talks to a licensed and trained mental healthcare professional who helps the individual identify and work through the factors that may be triggering the depression.



COPING WITH DEPRESSION USING S.E.A.M

SEEK OUT

Seek out support - share your difficulties with people whom you feel safe with, and are mature enough to handle your vulnerable moments.

ENSURE

Ensure that you get sufficient rest everyday. Having adequate and quality sleep can help in regulating your mood.

ACCUMULATE

Accumulate positive experiences - learn to schedule a pleasant activity each week. Self-care helps us to pay attention to our emotional needs. When we learn to care for ourselves, it helps us to regulate our emotions better.

In doing so, it can help to reduce “emotional deficits”.



MAKE

Make mental health treatment a priority. This may mean medical compliance, going for medical appointments regularly and being consistent with therapy sessions.

Eating Disorder



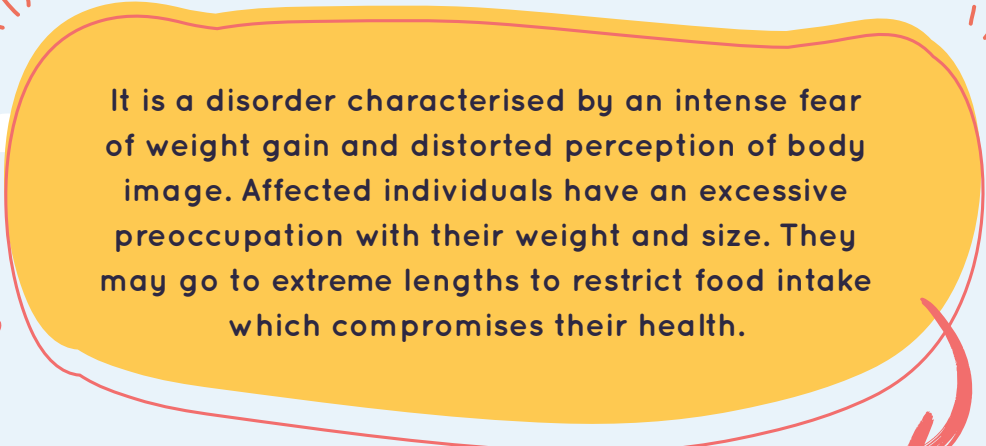


DEFINITION

It is a medical condition related to severe disturbances in an individual's eating habits and the way they view and perceive their body weight and shape.



ANOREXIA NERVOSA



It is a disorder characterised by an intense fear of weight gain and distorted perception of body image. Affected individuals have an excessive preoccupation with their weight and size. They may go to extreme lengths to restrict food intake which compromises their health.



SYMPTOMS

- ✓ Extreme and drastic weight loss
- ✓ Appearing very thin
- ✓ Starvation
- ✓ Severe restriction of food intake / skipping meals
- ✓ Frequent complaints about being fat
- ✓ Rigid food rituals

BULIMIA NERVOSA

It is a disorder where affected individuals cycle through episodes of overeating and purging.

SYMPTOMS



Negative / distorted
body image



Unusually large
consumption of food



Damaged teeth
and gums



Significant and sudden
fluctuations in weight



Swelling in face
and cheeks



POSSIBLE TREATMENT METHODS & SUPPORT



COUNSELLING

This helps you to develop healthy ways of taking control of your life.

Research shows that Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) can be effective in treating bulimia and binge eating disorder.





POSSIBLE TREATMENT METHODS & SUPPORT



NUTRITION EDUCATION

This encourages the patient to get rid of food myths and learn how to design healthy meals.



Scan to Learn more about
My Healthy Plate,
an easy-to-understand visual
guide designed by the
Health Promotion Board.





POSSIBLE TREATMENT METHODS & SUPPORT



MEDICATION

The support of a psychiatrist and nutritionist is important in treating eating disorders. Medication may be provided as well, if anxious or depressive symptoms are also present.





WHAT IS BODY IMAGE?

- ✔ Body image describes our idea of how our bodies look and how we think it is perceived by others.
- ✔ These can include our thoughts and feelings about our height, weight, shape, skin and colour.
- ✔ Body image does not only affect females, but males as well.





TIPS FOR HEALTHY BODY IMAGE

- ✓ Be aware of the language and words we use when having conversations about body image. A kind word goes a long way!
- ✓ Monitor your usage of social media and the content you follow. What we see online are usually edited to make people look amazingly good, but it's not real.
- ✓ Be realistic about your body image.
- ✓ Learn to practice self-acceptance. Be comfortable with yourself!
- ✓ Refrain from extreme diets and workouts. Balanced is the way to go!
- ✓ Families can lead by example by having healthy eating habits and positive attitudes on body image.





COPING WITH EATING DISORDERS

- ✔ Surround them with positive influences and be a positive influence yourself! Friends who are confident about their body image will encourage them to feel the same and vice versa.
- ✔ Be active! Involvement in meaningful activities leaves lasting positive impacts on your outlook and mental health.
- ✔ Make a list of positive self-affirmations.
- ✔ Create a gratitude list.
- ✔ Practice self-care: schedule an activity you enjoy doing each week.



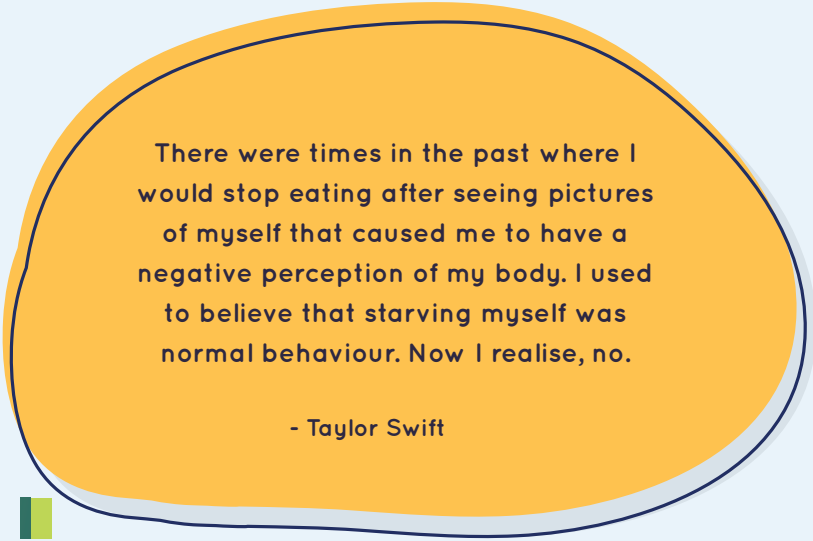
Watch to learn!





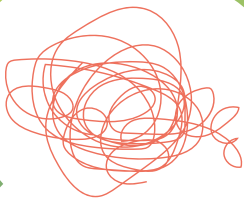
IN MY SHOES – CELEBRITIES WITH LIVED EXPERIENCES

Anyone can suffer from mental health issues. Let's hear how their mental health issue affected their lives.



There were times in the past where I would stop eating after seeing pictures of myself that caused me to have a negative perception of my body. I used to believe that starving myself was normal behaviour. Now I realise, no.

- Taylor Swift



Self-harm





DEFINITION

- ✔ Self-harm is the intentional injuring of one's physical body, either externally or internally, using any method.
- ✔ Self-harm is not a mental health condition but rather an attempt to cope with emotional distress.
- ✔ Sometimes, it is also an attempt to regain a sense of control in the face of helplessness.



CONTRIBUTING FACTORS



Unable to cope with stress



Having an existing mental health condition



Wanting to escape emotional pain / suffering



Interpersonal issues



Social isolation



Feelings of hopelessness / helplessness



Peer pressure

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS



Unexplained scars or wounds on the body, typically on wrists, arms, or thighs



Wearing multiple layers of clothing, even on hot and humid days



Spending a lot of time alone



Attributing visible wounds to frequent 'accidents'



Irritability



DANGERS OF SELF-HARM



Unhealthy coping mechanism



Accidental death



Scarring and disfigurement



Worsening feelings of guilt



HEALTHIER ALTERNATIVES TO SELF-HARM

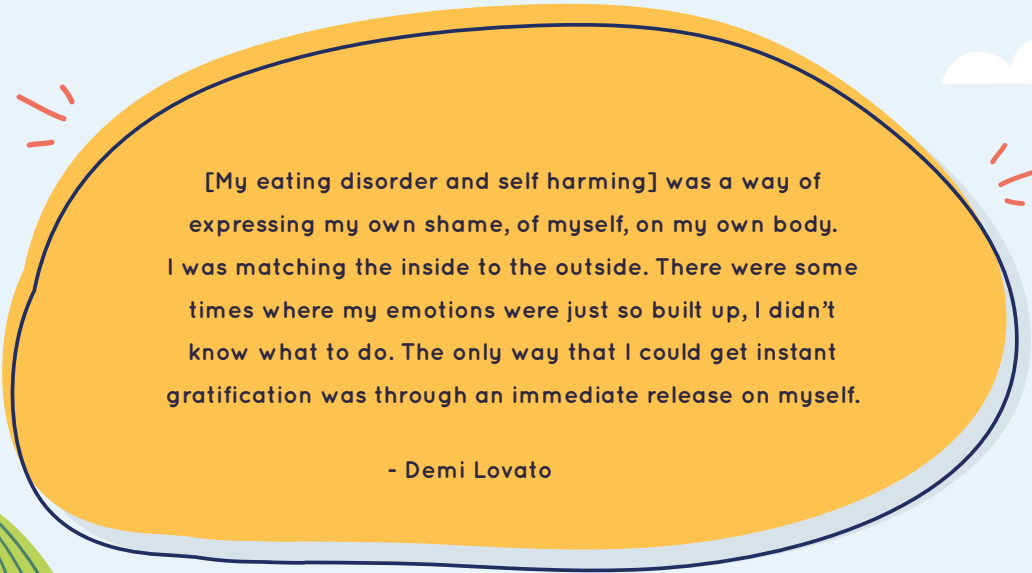
- ✔ Seeking therapy.
- ✔ Journaling.
- ✔ Confide in someone you feel safe with.
- ✔ Practice distress tolerance, such as deep breathing, and hot tea relaxation.





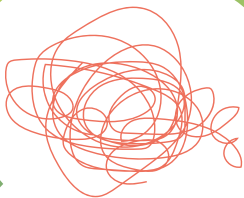
IN MY SHOES – CELEBRITIES WITH LIVED EXPERIENCES

Anyone can suffer from mental health issues. Let's hear how their mental health issue affected their lives.



[My eating disorder and self harming] was a way of expressing my own shame, of myself, on my own body. I was matching the inside to the outside. There were some times where my emotions were just so built up, I didn't know what to do. The only way that I could get instant gratification was through an immediate release on myself.

- Demi Lovato



Suicide prevention





DO YOU AGREE WITH THESE?

MYTH: Conversations about suicide may induce ideation.

FACT: Having open and authentic conversations about suicide may help to save someone's life.

MYTH: People who talk about suicide aren't serious about it.

FACT: Symptoms of suicidal ideation may not be obvious. Sometimes, affected individuals could "joke" about it. Do not dismiss their casual statements or indirect references about death. Before a suicide attempt happens, most individuals would have exhibited signs and clues prior to the act.

MYTH: Suicidal people are attention-seeking.

FACT: Talking about suicide may be a way an affected individual chooses to seek help. We should not ignore the distress they are going through as the suicidal ideation could potentially escalate into an attempt.





UNDERSTANDING SUICIDE

- ✔ People who struggle with suicidal ideation are fraught with feelings of hopelessness, self-loathing and despair as they are unable to see an alternative to their relief apart from suicide.
- ✔ Suicide is an attempt for affected individuals to find relief from the unbearable suffering. Despite their desire to end the pain, they are deeply conflicted about taking their lives too.
- ✔ It can be challenging for unaffected individuals to comprehend why suicide is regarded as a solution for some.





UNDERSTANDING SUICIDE

WARNING SIGNS

- ✓ Giving away personal possessions
- ✓ Social isolation or withdrawal
- ✓ Increasing feelings of helplessness / hopelessness
- ✓ Increased self-loathing behaviour
- ✓ Sleeping too little or too much
- ✓ Talking about death frequently
- ✓ Writing farewell notes to others
- ✓ Increased usage of drugs and alcohol





FACTORS THAT INCREASE THE RISK OF SUICIDE





THESE ARE THE THINGS YOU CAN DO IF SOMEONE IS STRUGGLING WITH SUICIDAL IDEATION



Having Open
Conversations



Establish Safety



Being Present



Seek Help



Stay Connected
With Them

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Our negative experiences as a result of the use of social media is one of the possible factors that trigger suicidal thoughts. Therefore, it is important to be responsible with our behaviour online.

DOS

- ✔ Think of how your comments might affect the other person before you respond to them. Would you say these things to the individual face to face?
- ✔ Think carefully if your post / comment have the intended effect of the message you want to convey.

DONTS

- ✗ Do not like or share content that encourages suicide.
- ✗ Do not minimise the impact of suicide.
- ✗ Do not provide or increase access to pro-harm / pro-suicide trends online. It is possible for these posts / messages to go viral, which increases its permanency on the Internet.
- ✗ Do not post graphic details (such as method, location, etc) of a suicide or any related attempt.



ONLINE SAFETY TIPS

✔ **Language & etiquette**

Refrain from using judgemental phrases such as “attention-seeking”, “loser”, “selfish” or “you are such a coward” on posts relating to suicide.

✔ **Consider the following questions before you post:**

What are the possible effects or outcomes on your audience? How would you handle comments that are hurtful or unhelpful?



HATE!

LOSER

ATTENTION-SEEKING



ONLINE SAFETY TIPS

- ✔ Share stories on hope and recovery.
- ✔ Share resources and avenues where people can seek help (e.g. counselling hotlines, etc).
- ✔ Help others to understand that suicide is preventable and treatment is possible too.
- ✔ Use neutral and inclusive words. Refrain from using labels such as “depressed”, “mentally-ill”, “psychotic” when referring to an affected individual.





RESOURCES: LOCAL HELPLINES

Helpline	Organisation	Details	Contact Details	Operating hours
TOUCHline	TOUCH Community Services	Provide support for children and youth with mental health, cyber and behavioural issues.	1800-377-2252	Mondays - Fridays, 10am to 6pm
Belle	Beyond The Label, NCSS	Belle is a help-bot by Beyond The Label. It can connect you to more resources and helplines for mental health-related advice.	https://go.gov.sg/hotlines	24/7
Tinkle Friend Helpline	Singapore Children's Society	Provide support, advice and information to primary school children in distress.	1800-274-4788	Mondays - Fridays, 2.30pm to 5pm





RESOURCES: LOCAL HELPLINES

Helpline	Organisation	Details	Contact No	Operating hours
Mental Health Helpline	Institute of Mental Health	Open to Public who come into contact with individuals who are experiencing any mental health crisis.	6389-2222	24 hours
SOS Helpline	Samaritans of Singapore	Provide emotional support for individuals having difficulty coping during a crisis, thinking of suicide or affected by suicide.	1800-221-4444	24 hours
Care Corner Hotline	Care Corner Counselling Centre	Provide emotional support to Mandarin-speaking clients	1800-353-5800	Everyday, 10am to 10pm



For more resources,
scan the QR code below!



REFERENCES

Anxiety

1. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/anxiety-disorders/index.shtml>
2. <https://www.verywellmind.com/diagnosing-panic-disorder-2583930>
3. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/anxiety/symptoms-causes/syc-20350961>

Depression

1. <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/depression/what-is-depression>
2. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/persistent-depressive-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20350929>
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Self-Harm

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2. <https://www.bridgestorecovery.com/blog/5-warning-signs-of-suicidal-behavior-that-are-easy-to-miss/>
3. <https://www.healthline.com/health/suicide-and-suicidal-behavior#suicidal-signs>
4. <https://www.healthline.com/health/suicide-and-suicidal-behavior#risk-factors>
5. <https://www.orygen.org.au/chatsafe/Resources/International-guidelines/Singapore-%E2%80%93-English>
6. <https://www.orygen.org.au/chatsafe/responding>

DO YOU M.I.N.D.?

Mental Wellness Education

Fully Subsidised

Held in School



ABOUT

DO YOU M.I.N.D.? is a 3-hour Adventure-Based Experiential Learning & Virtual Reality Immersive Experience for secondary school students.

AIMS

Increase knowledge on common youth mental issues, including the signs and symptoms.

Increase acceptance and empathy towards persons with mental health issues.

Increase knowledge on mental health services & resources in Singapore.

Increase confidence in supporting persons with mental health issues, including peers in school.

GET IN TOUCH

 1800 377 2252

 mentalhealth@touch.org.sg

 @doyoumindsg  @wellnessbytouch



UPPER ROOM

Mental Wellness Programme

Fully Subsidised Subject to Intake Assessment

Individual Counselling Groupwork Sessions

ABOUT

UPPER ROOM is a one-year intervention programme for youths aged 12 to 25, who are struggling with emotional distress & mental health issues.

AIMS

Address underlying causes that are perpetuating the mental health symptoms.

Reduce maladaptive behaviours and emotional suffering by equipping them with appropriate emotional regulation & distress tolerance skills.

Build up social capacities so that they can create and maintain meaningful relationships.

GET IN TOUCH

 1800 377 2252

 mentalhealth@touch.org.sg

 @doyoumindsg  @wellnessbytouch

HELP123

Youth Intervention Programme

Fully Subsidised



ABOUT

HELP123 is a cyber wellness and digital parenting platform by TOUCH Community Services, supported by Singtel. It features content developed by experts from TOUCH Cyber Wellness, TOUCH Youth Intervention and TOUCH Parenting, which are services under the TOUCH Integrated Family Group.

CONTACT US

Website

www.help123.sg

Email

hello@help123.sg

(Responds within 3 working days)

Hotline

1800 6123 123

(Mon - Fri, 9am to 6pm,
except public holidays)

GET IN TOUCH

 1800 377 2252

 youth.intervention@touch.org.sg

By appointment only



Mental Wellness Resources

 **TOUCHline: 1800 377 2252**

 **mentalhealth@touch.org.sg**

 **@doyoumindsg**  **@wellnessbytouch**

If you, or someone you know, needs counselling support, please call TOUCHline. This helpline is available on weekdays, from 9am to 6pm. We are closed on weekends and public holidays.