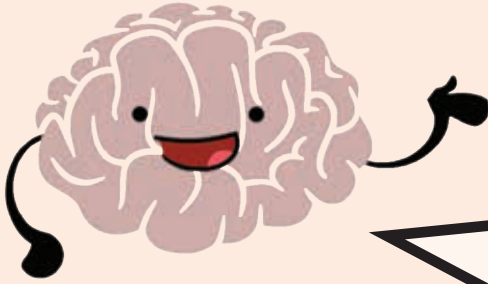


# The Caregiver's Guide To Psychosis



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Hi guys, my name is Brainy! I will be your friendly guide to answer your doubts and concerns throughout this booklet!

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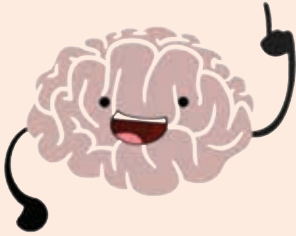
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# ROLE OF CAREGIVERS

Who is a caregiver?



A caregiver is an unpaid individual who provides care to a family member, relative or friend who is dependant because of age, illness, and/or physical, or other disability.

## TIPS TO BECOME A GREAT CAREGIVER

### Be a knowledgeable caregiver

- Be educated on a young person's illness and treatment to be able to give necessary care.
- Being knowledgeable helps you to manage different situations hence decreasing your stress level as a caregiver.

### Be understanding

- Understand that mental illnesses are unlike other illnesses and the young person may have unusual behaviours.
- Take time and patience to talk and listen to the young person.
- Recognize and acknowledge his/her fears and anxiety.
- Monitor for stressful life events.

## Encourage adherence to medication

- Medication is essential in stabilizing the illness.
- Remind the young person to take medication without nagging or criticizing by using some of the tips mentioned in this booklet.

## Know the early signs to avoid relapse

- Recognize the early signs of relapse and bring the young person for treatment before the relapse happens.
- Refer to page 20 for more information on preventing relapses.

## Give the young person time to recover

- You might feel frustrated and worried if the young person may not recover quick enough.
- Recovery rate varies and depends on many factors, hence go easy on the young person and yourself.

## Be encouraging and supportive

- Research studies have shown that being encouraging and supportive provides a conducive family environment for recovery.
- Critical, hostile and over-protective attitudes are threatening and may undermine the young person's recovery.
- Although it is useful to provide as much assistance to the young person during recovery, it is also important to empower the young person by encouraging independence.

## Establish good relationship with the treating team

- Keeping close contact with your *psychiatrist* and *case manager* provides you more opportunities to understand the illness and treatment options better.
- Doing so would also aid you in better participations in the young person's needs and rehabilitation.
- Write down questions you may want to ask to make most of the meetings with your *psychiatrist* or *case manager* and do not hesitate to ask if you have any enquiries or do not understand the medical terms.

## Engage family member in caregiving process

- Develop a plan on how each family member can share the caregiving responsibilities.

## Don't take things personally

- Changes in the young person's thinking and behaviour happens during the acute phase of the illness.
- Do not take their hurtful comments to heart as the young person is often not himself/herself until their symptoms are gone.

## Organize a "Care book" for easy access of information

- Caregivers need to keep track of various contacts and important information.
- Information can include:
  - The young person's medication and dosage.
  - Contacts of your case manager and other related health professionals.
  - Progress on the young person's recovery (E.g. recent stressors; symptoms frequency; sleeping patterns).

## Allow the young person to develop his/her social network

- Balanced social network and social interactions facilitates the young person's recovery by creating a sense of belonging, allowing for more emotional support and improving coping skills.
- It is important to receive social support apart from family members.

# COMMON SYMPTOMS OF

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SO

**PHYSICAL**

Withdrawal From Family And Friends

Disorganized Speech—switching Topics Erratically

Sleep Changes—sleeping Too Much Or Not Enough

Difficu Functi

Suicidal Actions

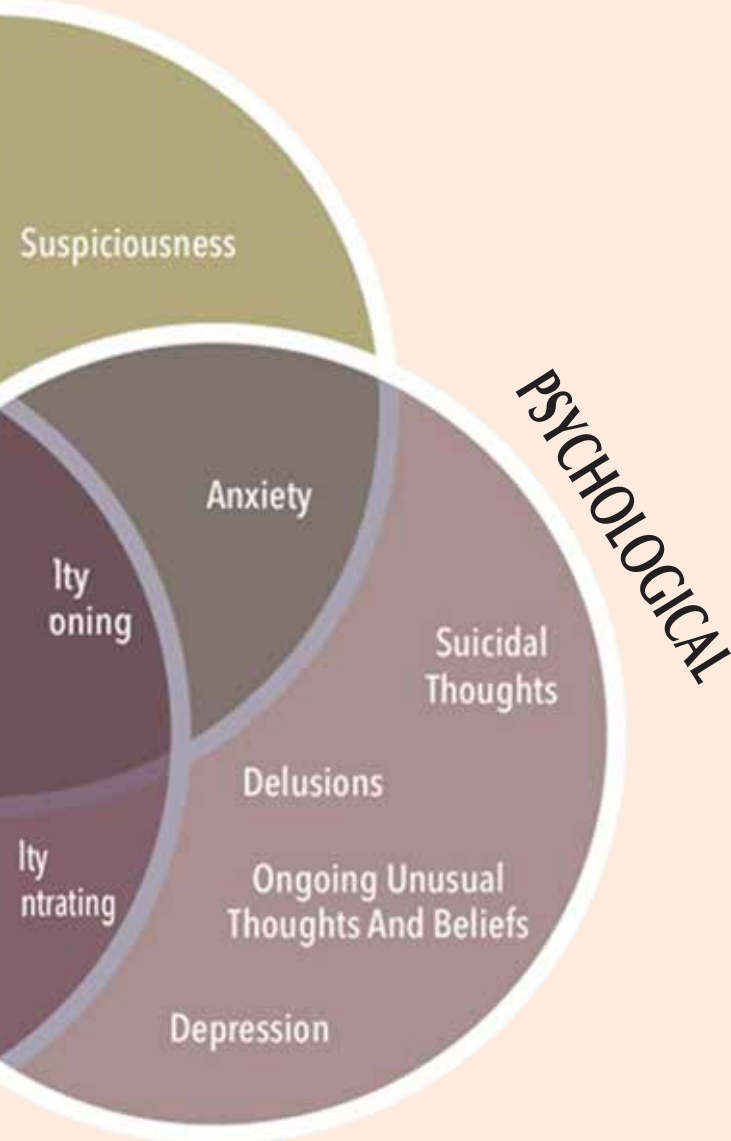
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# PSYCHOTIC CONDITIONS

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# TREATMENT OF PSYCHOSIS: MEDICATION

## WHAT ARE ANTIPSYCHOTIC MEDICATIONS?

Antipsychotic medications act against the symptoms mentioned in the previous page. These medications cannot “cure” the illness, but they can take away many of the symptoms or make them milder. In some cases, they can shorten the course of an episode of the illness as well.

## IMPORTANCE OF ANTIPSYCHOTIC MEDICATION

CORRECTS AND MAINTAINS CHEMICAL  
IMBALANCE IN THE BRAIN

REDUCES THE INTENSITY OF PSYCHOTIC SYMPTOMS



REDUCES NEED FOR HOSPITALISATION

CHANCES OF RELAPSE IS REDUCED WITH  
REGULAR ADHERENCE

SEVERITY OF RELAPSE IS REDUCED

SPEEDS UP TREATMENT OF RELAPSE

# TYPES OF ANTIPSYCHOTIC MEDICATION

<b>1</b> <b>ORAL</b> 	<b>2</b> <b>INJECTIONS</b> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Taken orally in pill forms.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A slow release medication taken on a 3-4 weekly basis.</li></ul>

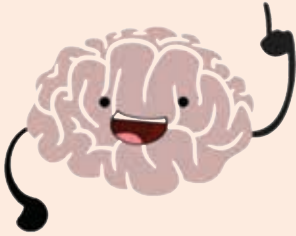
\* There is no singular medication that works best for individuals as every young person with psychosis has a unique set of symptoms.

## OTHER TYPES OF MEDICATION

### **PRESCRIBED FOR THE TREATMENT OF PSYCHOSIS**

<b>1</b> <b>ANTIDEPRESSANTS</b>	<b>2</b> <b>MOOD STABILIZERS</b>	<b>3</b> <b>ANXIOLYTICS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Used to treat depression</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Treatment of mood swings</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Control acute anxiety or agitation</li></ul>

## How do doctors decide the dosage of the antipsychotic medication?



The dosage needed varies from person to person, depending on factors such as physical differences (E.g. sex, weight, and metabolism rate), physical health, severity of symptoms and history of antipsychotic medication treatment.

### POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

1. Drowsiness
2. Weight gain
3. Dry mouth, blurred vision, constipation, dizziness, difficulty in passing urine
4. Tremors, rigidity and slowness of movement
5. Restlessness and urge to walk
6. Absence of menses or discharge from breast
7. Sexual problems
8. Involuntary movements affecting mouth, lips and tongue
9. Muscle cramps



Side effects differ with the intake of different antipsychotic medications and the young person may not develop all or any of the side effects mentioned above. The side effects listed are a hindrance to one's daily routine but they are not serious, nor are they permanent.

# HOW DO I ENCOURAGE THE YOUNG PERSON TO ADHERE TO HIS/HER TREATMENT

DO'S	DON'TS
Assure the young person that side effects can be addressed and treated easily.	Use words that cause further guilt in the young person E.g. complaining about the medical bills in front of him/her.
Speak to the young person calmly and help them understand their condition according to the psychiatrist's and case manager's explanation.	Spike the young person's food or drink as it might cause a strain in your relationship or reinforce your relative's belief that recovery is not due to the medication.
Speak to the young person to determine the reasons for his/her medical non-adherence.	Provoke his/her behaviour.
Help the young person recognize and acknowledge his/her unusual experiences as symptoms of the illness, and adherence with the medication helps ensure successful recovery and prevents relapses.	
Assure the young person that medications prescribed by the psychiatrist are not street drugs and would not lead to addiction.	
Offer simple, practical advice on remembering to take medication.	
Explore alternate options with your psychiatrist or case manager.	

# Concerns regarding side effects and medications

**There are four ways that your psychiatrist may deal with the side effects:**

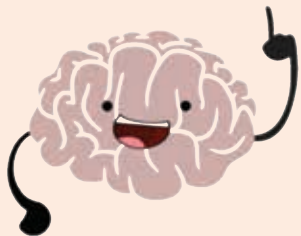
Prescribe additional medication to resolve some of the unpleasant side effects.

Reduce the antipsychotic medication dosage.

Switch the young person to another type of anti-psychotic medication.

Help the young person to develop coping strategies.

## When can medication be stopped?



The psychiatrist usually advises young people to take medication for a minimum of six months to two years, depending on the young person's progress in recovery, the type of psychotic disorder and the young person's day to day coping.

Psychiatrists may slowly decrease the medication dosage if the young person does not experience any relapse during the time he/she is in medication.

## What happens if the young person forgets to take medication?



It is not necessary to make up for the missed medication by taking a higher dosage as young people do not usually experience a relapse if they miss a few days of medication.

However, frequent and prolonged non-adherence to the medication is strongly discouraged.

Instead, continue at the dosage recommended by *psychiatrist* for daily consumption.

# TREATMENT OF PSYCHOSIS: psychological and social interventions



## PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTION...

Is a form of talk therapy provided to the young person on an individual basis by the psychologist.

### Therapy sessions with the psychologist includes:

Addressing the problems  
that the young person  
is experiencing.

Talking about and exploring  
the underlying meaning of  
the young person's difficulties.

Understanding persistent  
symptoms

Imparting strategies and  
techniques to help the young  
person cope with symptoms  
effectively.

The young person will also receive the following psychological interventions from his/her case manager:

Stress management skills.

Social skills training.

Supportive counselling

Psychoeducation on the  
illness and treatment options.

\*Please discuss with your *psychiatrist* or *case manager*, who will assess if the young person is suitable to receive psychological intervention.



# OTHER FORMS OF INTERVENTION

## CLUB EPIP:

Club EPIP is a drop-in centre for young people with the goal of helping them to regain their confidence and skills to reintegrate them back into society.

An environment that provides warmth and comfort to young people in recovery.

Provides opportunities for young people to support one another through various activities.

\*For more information on Club EPIP, please talk to your *case manager* who will make necessary referral.

## Cognitive Rehabilitation

In club EPIP, young people go through cognitive rehabilitation. Cognitive rehabilitation involves retraining of specific cognitive skills through uses of functional tasks.

**Examples of cognitive skills include:**

MEMORY

CONCENTRATION

FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS\*

PROBLEM SOLVING\*

PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION\*

DECISION MAKING\*



\*These are examples of the management of cognitive process

# Group Therapy

In Club EPIP, group therapy may include activities such as:

ARTS AND CRAFT

MUSIC

COOKING

SPORTS

DISCUSSION GROUPS

PEER SUPPORT GROUPS



## Inpatient/day care programs

### **Institute of Mental Health**

- Promotes holistic and integrated services that assist patients in attaining functional abilities, independent living and high standard quality of life in the community.
- Eight weeks inpatient programme.
- Core programme includes:
  - Medication management
  - Basic conversational skills
  - Symptom management
  - Community reintegration

\*For more information on this programme, please contact your case manager.

# FUNCTIONAL TRAINING/ REHABILITATION

This training is to help young person's resume their roles in self-care, work and leisure.

IMH Occupational Therapy Department (OTD) runs a job training programme which serves as a training ground for the patients before they seek competitive employment.

Areas of jobs are as followed:

Food handling and  
preparation skills

Customer service  
in retail sales

Administrative  
duties

Cleaning  
services

- \* Each of the above areas has its own set of selection criteria.
- \*\* It is necessary for the occupational therapist to further assess and ascertain the young person's suitability for the above programmes.

## Occupational therapists can also be engaged to provide the following trainings:

HOME MANAGEMENT

LEISURE EXPLORATION

SELF-CARE

TIME MANAGEMENT

MONEY MANAGEMENT

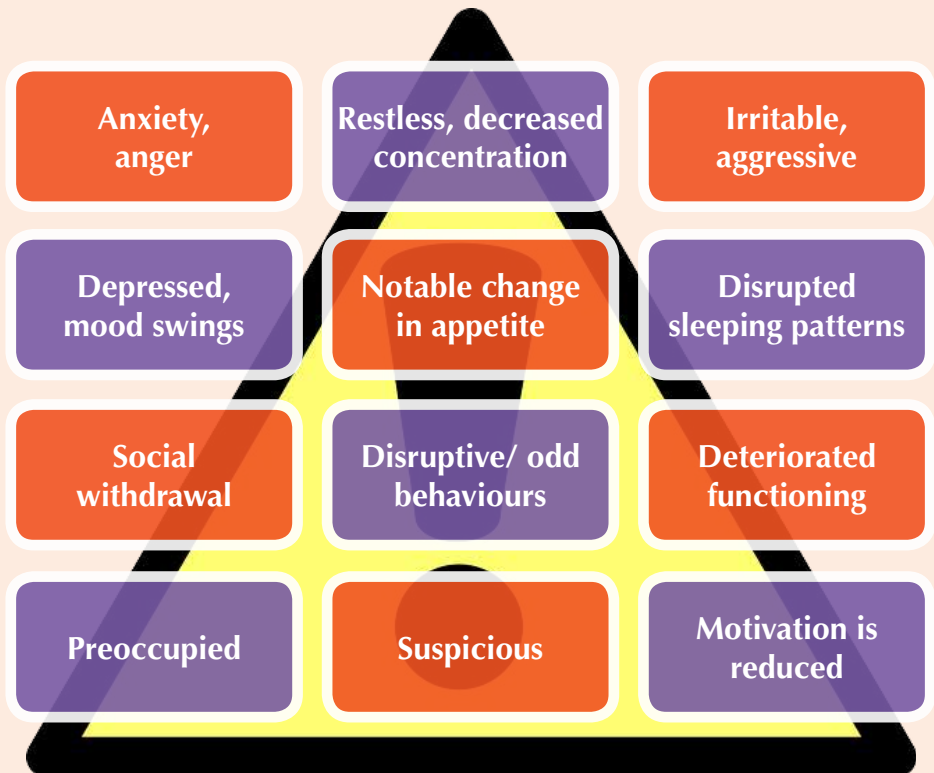
# PREVENTING RELAPSES

## What is a relapse?



A relapse is the recurring symptoms of the illness or deterioration in the symptoms of the illness. A relapse happens when young people are overly stressed out, stop taking medication or the dosage of medication taken is not enough to control the illness.

## Early Warning Signs of Relapse



# Concerns regarding relapse

**What happens when the young person experiences a relapse?**



- Re-admission into the hospital.
- Increase in dosage of medication.
- Change in medication.

**What can I do to prevent a relapse?**



- Ensure adherence to medication.
- Monitor stressful life events.
- Help the young person to develop coping and stress management skills.
- Know the early signs of relapse.
- Identify and recognize early warning signs of the illness.

**What if the young person refuses to return for appointment despite relapsing?**



- Contact your case manager for assistance.
- In cases of persistent refusal involving aggression and suicidal actions, your case manager may advise you to call the police/ ambulance for assistance to bring the young person to IMH for an admission.

# COPING WITH PSYCHOTIC SYMPTOMS

When a patient experiences hallucinations & delusions...



- Listen empathically.
- Avoid convincing or arguing with the young person that their experiences are not true.
- Ask the young person to describe the symptoms and how he/she feels about it
- Do all things with patience and understanding.
- Respect his/her decision if they do not want to talk about it.

Help the young person to reduce distress associated with symptoms through:

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGIES	BEHAVIOURAL STRATEGIES	COGNITIVE STRATEGIES
Physical exercise	Encourage social and non-social activities (E.g. conversing; reading)	Distract the young person from anything that can trigger the symptoms
Listening to music		Think positively
Deep breathing exercises		Pay little attention to symptoms and combine it with positive thinking
		Accept conditions and aim towards other goals

# WHEN A PATIENT LACKS MOTIVATION...



Increase daily structure

- Ensure that the young person is engaged in daily structured activities E.g. vocational training program; volunteer work; house chores; job

Encourage the young person to interact with relatives through enjoyable activities

- Activities should be simple yet enjoyable



Identify recreational activities the young person enjoys

- Engage the young person in this interest in baby steps

For family bonding tips and ideas, scan the QR code on the left or go to [everybodycares2k15.wix.com/ohana](http://everybodycares2k15.wix.com/ohana)



# LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

## SELF-GUILT AND ACCEPTANCE

Here are some misconceptions in society about mental illness:

“Taking medication displays the inability to function without chemicals”



“People who are mentally ill are dangerous and scary”

“Mental illnesses are due to inadequate parenting”



“A child has mental illness to pay the debts for his/her parents’ wrong doing”

But remember, these stigmas come about because the public do not know what mental illnesses are truly about. Therefore take strength and correct others with love, in letting them know that mental illness is a biological illness which is treatable and not self-induced.

“Mental illness is nothing to be ashamed of, but the stigma and bias shame us all.” – Bill Clinton



# TIPS TO OVERCOME SELF-GUILT AND ACHIEVING ACCEPTANCE



No one is to be blamed for a young person's mental illness. There are many factors that contribute to mental illness such as genetics, inability to cope with stressors etc. therefore here are some tips to aid you in overcoming self-guilt and achieving acceptance.

**F**

**Forgive yourself-** You may find that you're self-blaming when the young person's recovery is not going well, or blaming yourself for other matters but caregivers would never wish the worst for the young person so be kind to yourself and forgive yourself.

**A**

**Acknowledge your feelings-** Do not ignore your guilt or other emotions. There is nothing wrong with having emotions, the first step in turning negative thoughts to positive thoughts is to acknowledge your feelings.

**C**

**Aim to be a caregiver that Cares,** not a perfect caregiver- Guilt surfaces when one falls short of his/her own expectations. There can never be a perfect caregiver hence give what you can give to the young person rather than looking at what you cannot give.

**T**

**Talk to somebody-** Talking with other caregivers who are going through the same difficulties can help you deal with your feelings and experiences. Pay attention to your inner dialogue- The conversations that go on in our head are often full of judgment, criticism and insecurities. Guilt results from what we say to ourselves after the occurrence of the actual event.

# PRACTICAL TIPS FOR SELF-CARE

“On an airplane, an oxygen mask descends in front of you. What do you do? As we all know, the first rule is to put on your own oxygen mask before you assist anyone else. Only when we first help ourselves can we effectively help others. Caring for yourself is one of the most important - and one of the most often forgotten - things you can do as a caregiver. When your needs are taken care of, the person you care for will benefit, too.”



## HOW TO COPE

Caregivers may experience periods of stress, anxiety, depression, and frustration. The following suggestions can help keep you from feeling overwhelmed or burned out

1

### RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS OF STRESS

The following are signs of stress:

- Feeling exhausted all of the time
- Getting sick more often than usual
- Not sleeping enough
- Feeling impatient, irritated, or forgetful
- Not enjoying things you used to enjoy
- Withdrawing from people.

**2**

## **FIND SUPPORT**

Feeling angry, guilty, alone, afraid, and/or sad can be common for caregivers. Talking with other people who are caring for a family member or friend in similar situations can help you cope. Support Group Information can be found on pg 31 & 32.

**3**

## **MAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF AND OTHER RELATIONSHIPS**

Spending time doing something you enjoy can give you a much-needed break. Taking breaks can help you continue to be an effective caregiver. Also, spend time with other people who are important to you. Maintaining those supportive relationships is important for your own health and wellbeing.

**4**

## **BE KIND AND PATIENT WITH YOURSELF**

Many caregivers experience occasional bouts of anger or frustration and then feel guilty for having these feelings. Try to find positive ways of coping with these difficult feelings, such as talking with supportive friends and exercising. Journaling is another positive outlet.

5

## TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY

Make time to exercise, eat healthy foods, stay hydrated, and get enough sleep. In addition, re-evaluate your own health. The stress of caregiving can lead some people to develop or increase unhealthy habits, such as smoking, drinking too much alcohol etc. If you cannot make healthy changes on your own, seek professional help.

# When to seek professional help

It is important for caregivers to pay close attention to their emotional and mental health. If you are having trouble coping with your emotions, talk to your caseworker.

Keep in mind that taking care of your emotional health and physical needs makes you a more effective caregiver, which ultimately contributes to the recovery of the person who is ill. 😊

## RESPONDING TO CRISIS

What is a crisis? The most severe kinds of crisis related to psychosis are those in which someone's safety is threatened.

For example:

- Destructive behaviour
- Suicide attempts
- Threats of hurting oneself or others
- Severe side effects to medication



# What should I do if a crisis happens?

## Be Prepared

- Anticipate to deal with it before it happens. Hence, take preventive measure by making a list of phone numbers in advance. This list can include how to reach your Case Manager, the Suicide hotline (SOS), the nearest emergency room, the police and any other services that might be helpful.

## Get Another person

- When possible, get another person to help you deal with the situation as this will lessen your burden and may help you respond to crisis more effectively.

## Be Calm

- When a crisis happens, calmly state that you are concerned about the situation instead of panicking and hurrying around.

# IMPORTANT CONTACTS

## INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH

### IMH Main Line / General Enquiries

URL: [www.imh.com.sg](http://www.imh.com.sg)

Tel: 6389 2000

Hrs: 24 hours hotline

### Mental Health Help Line

Tel: 6389 2222

Hrs: 24 hours hotline

### Outpatient Appointment

Tel: 6389 2200

Hrs: 8:00am - 6.00pm (Mon-Fri)

Email: [imh\\_appt@imh.com.sg](mailto:imh_appt@imh.com.sg)

### Admission Enquiries

Tel: 6389 2003/ 6389 2004

Hrs: 24 hours hotline

### Billing Enquiries

Tel: 6511 4338

Hrs: 8:30am to 5:30pm (Mon – Fri)

### Community Wellness Centre (CWC)

Located in the heart of the community, the Community Wellness Clinic (CWC) is a one-stop centre that focuses on a continuum of care - from preventing mental illness to treatment and rehabilitation. Each CWC is fully staffed with a multi-disciplinary group of specialists (comprising psychiatrists, psychologists, occupational therapists, community psychiatric nurses, counsellors, medical social workers and case managers) who provide comprehensive and integrated community care for our patients.

### Community Wellness Clinic, (Geylang Polyclinic)

Add: 21 Geylang East Central, Level 4,  
Singapore 389707

Tel: 6389 2200

### Community Wellness Clinic, (Queenstown Polyclinic)

Add: 580 Stirling Road, Level 4,  
Singapore 148958

Tel: 6389 2200

# OTHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES

## CAREGIVERS ALLIANCE LIMITED

The Caregivers Alliance Limited provides programs for caregivers to learn new skills and knowledge about caregiving, and also receive support for themselves

URL: [www.cal.org.sg](http://www.cal.org.sg)  
Main Office: Add: 491-B  
River Valley Road, #04-04  
Valley Point Office Tower,  
Singapore 248373  
Tel: 6460 4400

### Caregivers Support Centre

Add: Outside Clinic B, Main Lobby,  
Main Block, Institute of Mental Health  
Tel: 6388 2686 / 6388 8631

## SINGAPORE ANGLICAN COMMUNITY SERVICES (SACS)

The Singapore Anglican Community Services provides support for families and family members in crisis. They also provide counseling, spiritual devotion, work therapy vocational training and job placement through their four mental health centres.

URL: [www.sacs.org.sg](http://www.sacs.org.sg)  
Tel: 6586 1064  
Email: [admin@sacs.org.sg](mailto:admin@sacs.org.sg)

## HOUGANG CARE CENTRE (SACS)

Provides rehabilitative services and psychiatric rehabilitative programs  
Tel: 6386 9338

## SIMEI CARE CENTRE (SACS)

Provides rehabilitative services and psychiatric rehabilitative programs.  
Tel: 6812 0888

## SINGAPORE ASSOCIATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH HELPLINE (SAMH)

Information and services for individuals with psychiatric disabilities and their families.

URL: [www.samhealth.org.sg](http://www.samhealth.org.sg)  
Tel: 1800 283 7019  
(Toll-free counselling helpline)

# OTHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES

## ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN FOR ACTION & RESEARCH

### (AWARE)

URL: [www.aware.org.sg](http://www.aware.org.sg)

Tel: 1800 774 5935

## SAMARITANS OF SINGAPORE (SOS)

For anybody in crisis and suicidal

URL: <https://sos.org.sg>

Tel: 1800 221 4444

Email: [pat@sos.org.sg](mailto:pat@sos.org.sg)

## CREATIVE HUB (SAMH)

The Creative Hub aims to promote psychological wellness and mental health recovery through expressive arts and creative therapies.

**Predicated on the belief that people can heal through the various forms of creative expression, visual arts, music and dance are utilised in a supportive environment to meet the individual needs of clients.**

Add: 90 Goodman Road,  
Goodman Arts Centre

Block L, #01-47 Singapore 439053

URL: [www.samhealth.org.sg/  
creative-hub](http://www.samhealth.org.sg/creative-hub)

Tel: 6344 8451

Email: [ch@samhealth.org.sg](mailto:ch@samhealth.org.sg)



# NOTES

# NOTES

# NOTES

# NOTES

# AMBULANCE SERVICES

**Emergency Ambulance**  
Tel: 995  
Hrs: 24 Hours (Daily)

**Hope Ambulance**  
Tel: 6100 1911  
Hrs: 24 Hours (Daily)

**StarCare Ambulance**  
Tel: 6899 1000  
Hrs: 24 Hours (Daily)



Hey! The card on the right can be cut out and you can put it in your wallet! It contains useful hotlines to call in the case of an emergency!

# When should you call these hotlines?

When someone is in the midst of a severe emotional crisis characterized by suicidal or homicidal intent or when a life is threatened.



Samaritans of Singapore:  
Suicide hotline



**1800 221 4444**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Team EveryBody would like to express their heartfelt thanks to the following individuals and organisation for their invaluable guidance and assistance through the course of our project:

- Ms Ong Ai Weig, Social Sciences (Social Work) Lecturer in Nanyang Polytechnic's School of Health Sciences and our supervisor
- Mr Christopher Loh, Senior Case Manager and Family Therapist at the Institute of Mental Health's Early Psychosis Intervention Department and our point-of-contact
- Caregivers and siblings of loved ones diagnosed with Psychosis who shared their experiences with us

## ***A NOTE TO THE CAREGIVERS...***

Caregiving is very much a role that is often given little credit for. The role that caregivers play is one that demands dedication, love and perseverance. Through this booklet, we hope to give caregivers a resource that will provide them with encouragement, information and tips, so that in as many ways possible, the caregiving burden can be relieved in various stages of the caregiving process.