

Tuning in to the Leaders

Session 16



MRS SYLVIA MUN

CHIEF MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKER
KK WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL



Each with a Story to Tell

In this session, Mrs Sylvia Mun hoped that by sharing her journey as a Social Worker, she would be able to inspire other Social Work professionals in the field and students intending to join the profession to create their own story.



Mrs Sylvia Mun has been a Social Worker for more than 23 years. She graduated from the National University of Singapore (NUS) with a Bachelors in Social Work and a Masters in Social Sciences Social Work. She started her career as a Medical Social Worker at Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) before joining KK Women's and Children's Hospital, where she pioneered the Paediatrics Social Work. She was appointed Chief Medical Social Worker in the year 2000, and as the head of the department, she has the experiences of overseeing and running both the women and children's Medical Social Work service.

In 2008, she was conferred the National Day Award Commendation Model and in 2010 she was awarded the Outstanding Social Workers Award. She won the Singapore Women's Weekly Great Women of Our Time Award for the education and public service in 2011.

Mrs Sylvia Mun's passion for Social Work goes beyond limits. To her, even if she had to relive her life all over again, she would still be a Social Worker.

Summary



1. Collaboration & Partnership

Mrs Mun emphasized the importance of collaboration; no one can practice Social Work alone. In order for the patients to receive maximum help, many collaborative helping hands are required.

"I learned to work with my own colleagues, within the department, outside the department and I also learned to work (with agencies) outside the hospital".

Working together towards a common goal is for the betterment of the patient and the family.



2. Never a Second Fiddle

The primary players in a hospital environment are usually the doctors and nurses. Many a times, social workers are seen as secondary players, but even so, Mrs Mun believes that Social Workers still need to assert professional rights when it is due.



3. Keep an Open Door

Mrs Sylvia Mun expressed that Social Work is a very tough profession. Clinical work can be both challenging and demanding, especially when clients are faced with difficult circumstances.

Noting this, she urges supervisors and social work leaders to keep an Open Door policy for all supervisees who needs a listening ear and to direct them to a guided path when they are stuck. This is effective in allowing employees to feel supported and important. (listen to her share in her video titled "What are the qualities of a good leader?")

So... What is your story?