



Project Novo 3.0

Group 7-11

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Multi-Year Project



Overview of Project

1. Area of Concern

Parkinson's is the second most common neurological degenerative disorder in Singapore and is a chronic, incurable and progressive disease, with no known way to prevent it. In Singapore, between 6,000 to 8,000 people suffer from Parkinson's.

Based on numerous interactions with People with Parkinson's (PwP) at Parkinson Society Singapore (PSS), our beneficiary, we found out that many PwPs often have suicidal thoughts and face mental problems such as depression and anxiety as they feel stigmatised by the public and lacked social confidence. As a result, many PwPs live isolationary lifestyles and seclude themselves in their own houses as a result of internalized oppression and public stigma that they face.

Furthermore, the lack of physical activity that many PwPs experience due to various factors (inconvenience and mobility issues faced as a result of the symptoms caused by Parkinson's, along with the aforementioned seclusionary lifestyle) may lead to the further regression of symptoms brought on by Parkinson's.

2. Challenges Identified

General

We have realised that interaction with PwPs tends to be extremely precarious, and we had to rethink our methods of how to make the most impact on helping such PwPs better integrate into society and to mitigate the impacts of social anxiety on their day to day lives through our interaction sessions.

Planning-Related

However, we also faced significant adversity in trying to carry out our interaction activities given the limitations imposed by Parkinson Society Singapore: with an already tightly-packed schedule of activities and lessons



for the PwPs organized by PSS, we were not able to organize regular interaction sessions with PwPs which focused on building social confidence.

Furthermore, we were also not allowed to participate in regular PSS-organized activities with the PwPs as we did not have the qualifications required to help out and participate in such activities. As such, our interaction opportunities were greatly limited.

3. Underlying Problem

Given that the PwP are self conscious about their plight, how might we build up social confidence for People with Parkinson's so that they may feel integrated into society?

4. Plan of Action

In order to avoid the lack of interest in our programmes we faced last year from the PwP (as a result of lack of personal connection & trust from the PwPs and the aforementioned social confidence issues), we have decided to take a three-step approach in integrating PwPs into society and to help them regain their social confidence.

Step One: Internal Interaction

We started the project by building up trust between the PwPs and us by getting to know them personally in a safe space, building up the volunteer-PwP interpersonal relationship in a safe space.

Step Two: External Interaction

We continued to increase social confidence and physical activity of PwPs by bringing PwPs in groups out to locations with higher public interaction, in order to achieve the double effect of exploring areas out of their social comfort zones and allowing them to do so with familiar faces around them such as to acclimate them to an area requiring higher public interaction.

Step Three: Public Interaction

Now that the PwPs have shown improvement in interaction and social confidence, we continued on with our project to increase social confidence through exposing PwPs to events of high social interaction, and to encourage sports as a way of life.



Section II: Actions and Outcomes to date

Date	Event	Objective
January to March	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Liaising with PSS to ensure continuity of the project</u> 2. <u>Instagram Set-Up</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Posting of facts and events to document progress and raise awareness about common misconceptions about Parkinson's 3. <u>Young Changemaker Open Mic</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Helped public and ourselves gain a better understanding of where Project Novo should be headed for the year to come 	
April	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Move to Beat Parkinson's 2019</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raised awareness about Parkinson's is to general public and Minister of Health, Gan Kim Yong, and letting them try out our Parkinson's simulator to do simple tasks while experiencing hand tremors. 	Raising Awareness, Direct Interaction
May	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Interaction Session 1 at YMCA</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Got close and in touch with the PwPs themselves, and developed a better understanding of the problems they face in their social lives through interaction and conversation. 	Social Confidence
June	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Enliven Session at Botanic Gardens</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hiked together with PwPs along a trail at Botanic Gardens with members of the public and volunteers 2. <u>Bon Appetit Dinner at HCIBS</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encouraged interaction between PSS and public through a charity dinner at HCIBS - Public experienced difficulties of eating with hand tremors through Parkinson's Simulator 	Direct Interaction, Raising Awareness, Social Confidence



	<p>3. <u>Interaction Session 2 at YMCA</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participated in Karaoke Sessions with PwPs, continued interaction and bonding with PwPs. 	
July	<p>1. <u>Run for Parkinson 2019</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2km run held out in school during Combined Sports Meet; more than 40 PwPs and members of the school body ran together. - Encouraged interaction and physical activity in day-to-day life 	Direct Interaction, Encouraging Active Lifestyles

Section III: Project Outcomes

1. Accomplishments

Our project focused mainly on the betterment of PwPs' lives improving their social lives, seen to be successful in the >30 separate PwPs and caregivers participated consistently in our activities: many of whom expressed an increase in social confidence and decreased self-consciousness when in public.

We managed to successfully integrate the public into our events at a scale that was comfortable for the PwPs, with more than 50 members of the public engaged in quality interaction with PwPs through our various events, over 300 people tried out our Parkinson's Simulator through our various events and have had a better understanding of the various symptoms induced by Parkinson's, and thus had a better understanding of how to help PwPs.

We also have involved a total of 21 volunteers for the project in the various initiatives, with all having experienced interaction with the PwPs, allowing them to empathise with the PwP on a deeper level.

As a bonus of the various initiatives of the project, we have also raised more than \$800 for Parkinson Society Singapore.



2. Reflections

Through this project, we learnt how to empathise with PwP on a deeper level, which significantly changed our perceptions of the community. Before the project, we did not fully understand the daily challenges Parkinson's patients face, and this led to our limited knowledge regarding the extent of symptoms of Parkinson's. However, after long-term interaction with many patients, we discovered that Parkinson's has a profound impact on the patient not only physically, but emotionally, socially and psychologically.

Despite the many limitations imposed our way, we have ultimately benefited from the hardships and experience, learning that service should focus more on what the beneficiaries need rather than arbitrary things such as awareness and funds, it is only through quality experiences do people fully get the message we try to put across, and only through tangible experiences do the beneficiaries gain the most benefit.

3. Scope of Impacts

Community Impact: Members of the public could learn more about Parkinson's, the physical and psychological impacts that Parkinson's brings upon those afflicted by it. As such, members of the public would be able to easily empathise with People with Parkinson's and be more accepting of them into our society in order to decrease the stigma and increase the social confidence of PwPs.

Testimony from a participant of our events:

Mr Teo Wei Pin: "Thank you, Project Novo, for **creating the opportunity for us to interact with those with Parkinson's**, especially Alice and Mona. I have a **relative with Parkinson's, and now I know how she can receive more support.**"

Community Involvement: Our Parkinson's Simulator sessions allowed for members of the public to be involved in trying out the Simulator, allowing them to experience some of the symptoms of Parkinson's disease.

Quote from interviewee who has experienced our Parkinson's Simulator:

- (Name omitted): "...**only after trying the first hand experience of the Parkinson's Simulator**, I am able to **better understand the struggles** that the



Parkinson's Warriors face daily, and am able to **better empathize with them.**"

Furthermore, with our various events, we managed to get the help of 21 volunteers from all walks of life to come together and interact with the PwPs, allowing them to get a better understanding of what Parkinson's is, while increasing the social confidence of PwPs through constructive interaction.

Resolution of Underlying Problem: Given that we identified that there was a lack of social confidence in the PwP, the three-tiered approach towards increasing the social confidence of PwPs has been seen to be widely effective, with PwPs originally described and observed to have conservative social personalities repeatedly attending our events, and having increasingly open personalities throughout the course of the project. For the general public, we have also sought to break social stigmas about Parkinson's through our information booths at our various events, thus helping to resolve our main underlying problem of a lack of social confidence due to stigmas about Parkinson's imposed by self and the public.