



Project Helios

7-14

Chua Jia Zhi, Edison 4H103 (L)

Ng Jin Yin 4O115

Ryan Wong Yan Heng 4O121

Tan Kai Jun Xavier 4S326

Second-year project

Project Overview

Areas of Concern (AOCs)

1. Mental Illness is a widespread problem which affects many people

In a survey done by the Institute of Mental Health (IMH, 2016), 1 in 7 Singaporeans have experienced a mental disorder such as bipolar disorder, alcohol abuse, etc. in their lifetimes, an increase from 1 in 8 several years ago.

2. Stigma surrounding Mental Illnesses

The National Council of Social Service (NCSS, 2019) reported that more than 5 in 10 respondents have indicated that they are unwilling to live with, live nearby or work with people with mental illnesses.

3. Treatment Gap due to Lack of Awareness



There is a high proportion of people with mental illnesses who are not seeking the help that they require, with the statistic at 3 in 4 people, reported in 2016. (IMH, 2016)
Recognition for Major Depressive Disorder and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder were at 55.2% and 28.7% respectively, both of which are worryingly low. (IMH, 2012)

4. Detrimental Effects of Mental Illnesses

Suicide is the leading cause of death for those who are in the range of 10 to 29 years old. There are 2.5 more deaths from suicide than transport accidents in 2017, a total of 361 deaths were as a result of mental illnesses. (SOS, 2017)

Studies have shown that depression, may affect up to 18% of the youths. If not treated adequately, the illness will persist into adulthood. (CNA, Unknown)

Chosen Voluntary Welfare Organisation (VWO)



Underlying Problem (UP)

Given that there is a lack of understanding and numerous misconceptions towards Mental illnesses, how can we step in to raise awareness and educate the public about Mental Health to help reduce stigma and organise activities that will allow for People with Mental Illnesses to feel included?

Objectives

In response to the Underlying Problem, crafted based off our Area of Concern, the following objectives were set:

1. Raise awareness about Mental Illnesses and educate the public on how to help the diagnosed
2. Provide and render assistance to the People with Mental Illnesses to help them overcome daily challenges on the road to recovery
3. Provide support for SAMH through direct involvement with beneficiaries

Targeted Service Outcomes

Outreach: 10,000

Funds Raised: \$5,000

Plan of Action

Raise awareness	Raise funds	Interaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public Exhibitions (June - July)• Street Sales (June)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Street Sales (June - August)• Youth For Causes Bazaar 2019 (June)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Socio-recreational activities with Oasis Day Centre (May - June)• Volunteering at YouthReach! (July - August)• Taking part in events organised by SAMH (January - August)

Challenges Identified

SAMH has many centres all over Singapore, providing various services from counselling to rehabilitation to skills workshops. Being a non-profit organisation, they require the funding to ensure the operations of these services. SAMH focuses on counselling and rehabilitation services. Hence, they will require help from us to increase their outreach.

Mental Illnesses are often easy to hide and very similar to each other. The public is not able to identify the different Mental Illnesses and their impacts. This hinders their ability to render assistance to those around them. Hence, we had to find ways to condense the information into a clear and concise manner for the public.

There were also some clients who were less comfortable interacting with strangers, hence our volunteers had to take extra caution to not make them feel uncomfortable. Our activities had to also cater the large age group we were working with, this included making our sporty activities less intensive, which was challenging

Summary

Area of Concerns

Mental Illness is a widespread problem which affects many people

Stigma surrounding Mental Illnesses

Treatment Gap due to Lack of Awareness

Detrimental Effects of Mental Illnesses

Objectives

Raise awareness about Mental Illnesses and educate the public on how to help the diagnosed

Provide and render assistance to the People with Mental Illnesses to help them overcome daily challenges on the road to recovery

Underlying Problem

Given that there is a lack of understanding and numerous misconceptions towards mental illnesses, how can we step in to raise awareness and educate the public about Mental Health to help reduce stigma and organise activities that will allow for People with Mental Illnesses to feel included?

Our Role

Be the Bridge between the Public and the Clients of SAMH

Be the shoulder that the Clients need

Be the helping hand that SAMH requires



Implementation of Project

Activities and Outcomes to Date

For all activities that raised awareness, any information pertaining to Mental Illnesses were vetted by SAMH.

Activity	Description	Objectives Met
Open House Exhibition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 25 May 2019 (Saturday) ● Estimated Outreach: 1500 ● Funds raised: \$350 ● Information board and a message board was set up to engage the public ● Visitors were invited to write messages of well wishes and purchase Project Helios merchandise to raise funds for SAMH 	Raised awareness and funds
Socio-Recreational Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Three sessions: 9 and 21 May 2019, 20 June 2019 ● Activities were planned based off the idea of “Mental Wellness” ● Origami Sessions and a Walk @ Botanic Gardens took place ● Involved clients of Oasis Day Centre (ODC), who were between 25 and 70 years old ● Total of 15 HCI Volunteers took part as facilitators 	Promote Interaction and a healthy lifestyle
Street Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 10 sessions of Street Sales between 1 and 30 June 2019 ● Jurong East, Bishan etc. neighbourhoods ● Estimated outreach: 7000 ● Funds raised: \$1032.40 ● Volunteers sold products from SAMH's Social Enterprise department and Drawstring Bags 	Raised awareness and funds

<p>YFC Social Bazaar 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 14 June 2019 (Friday) ● Estimated Outreach: 1500 ● Funds raised: \$117.05 ● Message board was set up to engage the public on the topic of Mental Wellness ● Visitors were invited to write messages of well wishes and purchase Project Helios merchandise to raise funds for SAMH 	<p>Raised awareness and funds</p>
<p>Media Interviews</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● English and chinese interviews with Shin Min Daily and Today ● Shared about volunteering with SAMH and Mental Wellness 	<p>Raised Awareness</p>

Project Outcomes

Accomplishments

Impact on community, resolution of AOCs & UP

- Achieved all 3 objectives
- Total outreach of 10000
- 27 secondary school student volunteers
- Total funds raised: \$1449.45
- 256 followers on Instagram
- 10 street sales sessions
- 3 socio-recreational activities
- Media interviews with TODAY and Shin Min Daily

Scope of Impact

Community Impact: The public were able to learn more about Mental Wellness through our exhibitions and how to care for those around them. Through our exhibitions, we suggested lifestyle changes and tips to care for their loved ones. Our activities, involving SAMH's clients, were filled with much fun and joy. They told us that they thoroughly enjoyed the activities that we had planned, and we received positive feedback from both the clients and the staff.

Community Involvement: Together with the core members, we had a total of 27 extended organising team members from HCI. They took part in the socio-recreational activities, which promoted interaction and allowed them to gain the knowledge to be Mental Wellness ambassadors in school. They are able to better understand mental wellness as a whole and will be able to spread what they have learnt to their social circles as well.

(Lam Yu Han): "it allowed me to better relate to the clients. I realised the importance of mental health and will advocate for it"

Resolution of AOCs/UP: Through the raising of funds (\$1499.45), we helped SAMH to ensure their financial sustainability. At the same time, we planned activities in accordance with their "Arts and Sports" vision, which would help clients to maintain a healthy lifestyle in their road to recovery, while allowing for interactions. These interactions help to iron out any misconceptions while forging friendships. Our public exhibitions allowed us to reach out to around 10,000 people which we will be able to engage them on the topic of Mental Wellness. With the information, the public will be better able to sympathise and understand people with mental illnesses, reducing the stigma. Reducing the stigma results in a more comfortable and encouraging environment that allows people suffering from Mental Illnesses to get the help they require.

Reflection on Outcomes

Through our activities and interactions, we were able to understand the plight of people with mental illnesses much better. It removed the stereotypes we had of Mental

Illnesses. We thought that the clients will be quiet and reserved, which would make our activities much more challenging to execute. We went in, with reservations, but we were rewarded with friendships. The conversation we had with the clients of SAMH helped us to understand Mental Illnesses. Many of the clients shared about how the illness affects both their personal lives, and their family members as well.

At the same time, we realised the severity of the issue, seeing many members of the public ignorant of Mental Health. They are not aware of how to help themselves nor others. When coming up with solutions, we realised just how important small lifestyle changes are in playing a role in Mental Wellness. While we received much support from the public, we believe there is still some way to go before we can achieve a truly “Mentally Healthy” society, in terms of public education. Organisation like SAMH, plays an important role in the community, however more has to be done to gain public support and to spread the message of Mental Wellness, which can help those suffering from mental illnesses to seek the help they require.

Over the past few months, we had managed to carry out most of our planned activities and achieved the goals we had set for ourselves. However, we fell short of the fundraising goal, which could have been resolved with more manpower and more street sales sessions. We realised how demanding the entire project was and we will work closely with the next batch of core members to further Helios’ impact.

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