

MIND SCIENCE CENTRE

FY2021 NEWSLETTER #1

NUHS
Centre of Excellence

NUS
Yong Loo Lin
School of Medicine,
Academic Research Centre



"There is no health without mental health. People in Singapore are gradually recognizing the need to focus on mental well-being as part of what makes us a healthy person. Since five years ago, Mind Science Centre (MSC) has embarked on its journey to uncover upstream non-drug methods to optimise cognitive performance and build emotional resilience. The key is to continuously invest in innovative research and translate the findings into scalable and impactful community-based interventions for the people."

Professor Kua Ee Heok
Advisor, Mind Science Centre

"Over the years, the research teams at MSC have investigated the mental health benefits of engaging in a variety of psychosocial activities. With 2021 MSC Seed Grant, we will be embarking on innovative research areas that aim to catalyse cross-disciplinary research collaborations in emotional resilience, cognitive enhancement and digital mental health."

Associate Professor Rathi Mahendran
Chairperson of MSC Academic Committee



NEWS BULLETIN



*"Make time for yourself.
It's not selfish."*

Take on midlife by taking care of yourself.

MSC was featured on the Straits Times for our recently published Mind Booklet, titled: *Midlife Challenges and Self-Compassion for Women*. The handy 10-page booklet highlighted the multiple challenges (physical, emotional, mental, social, occupation, and spiritual) women face in this transition period and shares self-compassion tips for women to take good care of their physical and mental wellbeing. Click on the QR code to access the e-version of the booklet!

READ THE NEWS



*"Let's
reach out
to the seniors
empathetically."*

Mental well-being of Singapore's seniors during pandemic times

Has complacency set in among seniors amidst COVID-19 pandemic? An MSC research led by Dr Yu Jun Hong made news with its finding that indeed lesser precautions were taken over time. Beyond that, it was found that the number of seniors with depressive symptoms rose during the circuit breaker and the impact remains even after it ended. This highlighted the critical issue of senior's mental well-being during period of extended isolation. This was featured on Channel 8, 95.8 radio and Channel News Asia.

VIEW IT NOW



*"Choral Singing is good
for my mental health."*

Prof Kua Ee Heok on CNA938 Radio

The publicity efforts of the webinar collaboration between MSC and Voices of Singapore caught the attention of Channel News Asia. Prof Kua was invited on Health Matters, hosted by Daniel Martin, to talk about how Choral Singing can benefit us mentally and physically. In fact, the MSC research, conducted at Jurong Point with seniors around the area, found that choral singing brings the benefits of improved concentration and positive emotions. Through this activity, social health and community resilience can be enhanced too.

WATCH THE INTERVIEW



Click on the QR code
to donate NOW

Keen to make a difference in the mental health scene of Singapore?

Support our research and community programmes today!

For more information, get in touch with us at Wileen@nus.edu.sg

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT



A Longitudinal Analysis on How Circuit Breaker Impacted on the Older Adults

During Circuit Breaker last year, a climate of uncertainty overshadowed our daily lives and social interactions were restricted to help the nation cope with the rising community cases. As such, our research on 419 community-dwelling older adults, led by Dr Yu Junhong, found that depression, anxiety symptoms and social isolation have significantly increased during this period. Furthermore, social isolation had a much stronger influence on depression and anxiety during the lockdown/circuit-breaker than before. The findings highlighted the critical issue of senior's mental well-being as a result of extended isolation. With an abrupt disruption to normal activities and social interactions, social support for the elderly is greatly weakened, which may contribute to increased mental vulnerability. Building and preparing for adequate social support in the community is of priority, especially for the seniors.



Mindfulness Led to Attention-related Improvements and Neuroplastic Changes for Seniors with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI)

Dr Yu Junhong analyzed the data collected from a 9-month randomized control trial among 54 senior participants with age-related MCI to examine the effects of mindfulness-based intervention on various cognitive abilities and cortical thickness. Half the participants were assigned to a Mindfulness programme while the remaining were assigned to a Health Education programme. During the Mindfulness sessions, participants were taught to focus their attention on their bodily senses and to engage in practice tasks like slow walking and mind-body coordination. Results revealed that there were significant cognitive improvements in working memory span and divided attention for participants of the mindfulness programme, as compared to those in the other intervention. Mindfulness can indeed enhance cognitive abilities among older adults and effectively delaying cognitive decline. These improvements are accompanied by observable changes in the brain.



'Where-there-is-no-psychiatrist' - Brief Integrated Personal Therapy for Community-Dwelling Older Adults

Community-dwelling seniors often go unnoticed and outreach tends to be limited in our local context. Recognizing that there is a need to provide timely support to prevent the deterioration of their overall well-being, Dr Shefaly Shorey, the recipient of the President's Award for Nurses, rolled out a trial to see if a trained volunteer-led community-based intervention is feasible to support these older adults. A pilot randomized controlled trial was conducted with questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to explore participants' perceptions and acceptability of such an intervention. With high attendance and smooth implementation of the trial, the feasibility of such interventions in the community is shown.

Note: Full article is pending publication.



Impact of Comprehensive Dietary Counselling (CDC) on Cardiometabolic Health, Mental Health and Dietary Quality in Older Adults

Good nutrition is essential for healthy aging and a good quality of life at old age. Since 1990, dietary risk factor has consistently been the top contributor to Disability-Adjusted Life Year in Singapore. In another words, we could have lived longer if these factors had not resulted in years lost due to ill-health, disability or early death. This study by Dr Kim Jung Eun was initiated to assess the effects on cardio-metabolic health, mental health, dietary quality and quality of life when seniors are provided with CDC. During the 12-week intervention, female seniors attended CDC once per week, where they learn about the healthy plate, food label reading and nutritional risk factors. Though the study has yet to be fully concluded, preliminary findings showed that the lifestyle changes can be persistent with improvements to health and dietary quality.

Note: Full article is pending publication. Check out our mind booklet titled "Food for the Mind" to find out more on what are the essential nutrients for a resilient mind.



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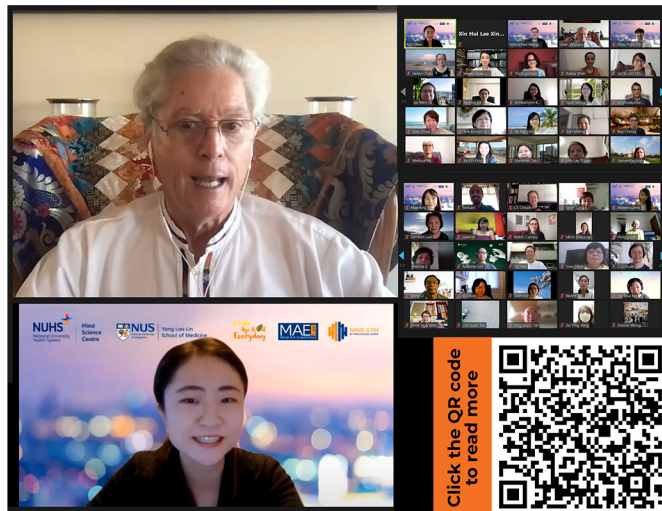
EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



5 JUNE

VOS X MSC: Navigating The Pandemic Webinar

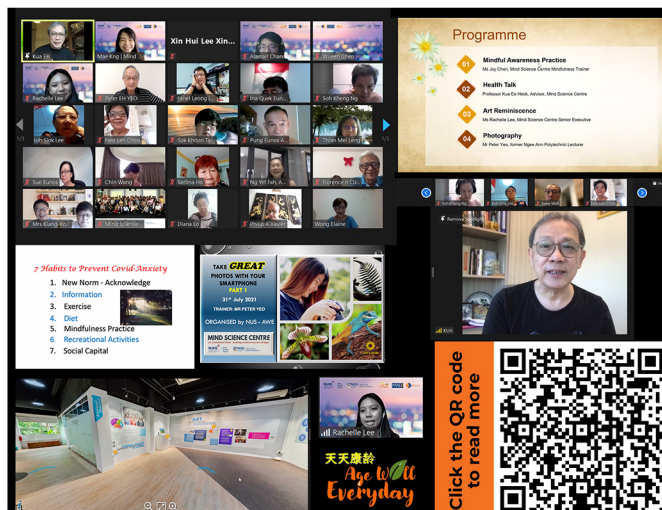
Featuring three expert speakers from paediatric, psychiatric and music background respectively, the 1.5 hours webinar was held on 5 June 2021 at 10.30am, with over 300 registrants for the Saturday event. During the first segment, Dr Chan Si Min weighed in on the current COVID-19 situation in Singapore and provided professional opinions on vaccinating children. This was followed by an interesting talk segment by Prof Kua and Mr Darius Lim on how one can enhance mental resilience and overcoming pandemic fatigue through song and music. The audience were serenaded with a beautiful song performance by the artistic director as he demonstrated the vocal effects and techniques to express one's emotions. View the video highlights in the article for more information!



19 JUNE & 26 JUNE

A Mindful Saturday Morning with Dr Alan Wallace

A total of 112 participants and invited guests retreated from their busy lives and joined us on the half-day mindfulness workshop with Dr Alan Wallace across two Saturdays on 19 and 26 June. During the workshop, Dr Alan Wallace first presented, in theory and practice, ways of cultivating an inner stillness and awareness that can be sustained even in the midst of a very active lifestyle. The second theme focused on the cultivation of compassion, directed toward ourselves and toward others. He emphasized that there is a fundamental yearning to find a sustainable sense of well-being and freedom from anxiety and depression. Training in mindfulness is crucial for us to evolve to a higher degree of psychological maturity. Full workshop recording is available for public viewing. Watch them in the article now!



31 JULY & 14 AUGUST

Warming the hearts of our Age Well Everyday (AWE) seniors during Phase 2 (Heightened Alert)

Singapore took a step back towards Phase 2 (Heightened Alert) restrictions on 22 July. While many may be feeling down in this situation, the critical concern is the negative impact on seniors' mental health. To mediate the consequences of extended isolation, the MSC team pooled in the resources to organize a 2-part mini-AWE series on Zoom to allow our AWE participants to reconnect online and learn more about how they can cope with the pandemic fatigue. With a great total turnout of about 170, the sessions were held on two Saturday mornings on 31 July and 14 August. Seeing the familiar faces over Zoom brought solace and warmed the hearts of all who joined virtually.

Our Mission

With our key focus in Research, Education and Upstream Intervention Services, we strive to make a difference in the mental health scene across the age continuum. We are the first mental wellness centre in the world focusing on the Asian culture, lifestyle, phenotype and issues, so as to develop innovative holistic solutions that are uniquely Asia. Our ongoing research seeks to discover the potential benefits of engaging in *Mindfulness*, *Art Reminiscence*, *Taichi*, *Horticulture*, *Rainforest Therapy*, *Choral Singing* and *Chinese Ink Painting*.

Support our meaningful cause by funding our research work!

PROGRAMMES



“Active Ageing in the community, by the community, for the community.”

While the life expectancy in Singapore has risen over the years, it is the quality of life at old age that matters most. Successful ageing is multi-dimensional, encompassing: (i) the avoidance of disease and disability; (ii) the maintenance of high physical and cognitive function; (iii) the sustained engagement in social and productive activities.

AWE holistically encompasses a series of community activities for seniors to engage in active ageing. This includes health education, physical exercise, mindfulness practice, art and music reminiscence, horticultural therapy, choral singing and therapeutic forest.

As this programme is facilitated by the volunteers at our various community partners, we recognised the importance to provide content training that is of quality and with consistency. As such, in collaboration with SUSS UniLEARN and Stroke Support Station, we have rolled out our AWE E-learning Training Course to allow interested volunteers to acquire knowledge and skills, at their own pace and time. The modules are open to the public, so do check them out to see if you would love to know more about the topics covered.

**Course fee applies. More information is available on our website and in our brochure.*



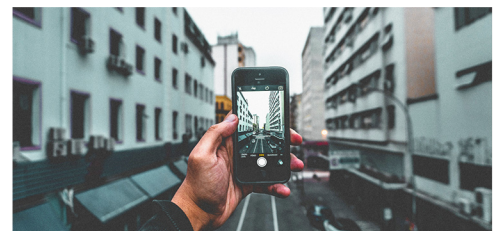
New modules are available now!

Other than the standard full suite, you can choose to enrol in the ‘Lifestyle Management’ course only to learn how lifestyle changes can have enormous health benefits and aid in prevention of major chronic disease. If you are keen to be a volunteer instructor with our community partners, complete all the modules and enrol in the ‘Teaching & Facilitation’ module to receive the official certification.



Full suite of modules in Chinese

The full suite of modules, which covers Depression, Stroke, Dementia, Caregiving, Lifestyle Management I & II, are available in Chinese now! Expanding the outreach of our programme to benefit more people is always on the top of our mind, so we are currently in the works to produce the content in more languages. Stay tuned for more updates in the latter half of the year! We will let you know when it's ready for launch.



AWE Handphone Photography Workshop

Have you ever wanted to learn easy tips and tricks to capture professional-looking photos with your smartphone? The AWE Handphone Photography Workshop will be up real soon! In this workshop, participants will learn the basics of photography and take beautiful pictures through an easy-to-follow, step-by-step process. Keep a look out for further exciting updates!

ENROL NOW

REGISTER NOW

STAY TUNED



“When Art meets Science, it creates wonder.”

We have opened our doors to welcome visitors to Mind Art Experiential Lab (MAELab) - our new innovative space where art meets science to create meaningful insights to mental resilience. Despite the pandemic restrictions, we have a total of 91 visitors, who toured our inaugural curation, over the past three months. We would like to thank our healthcare colleagues and members of public for the warm support and praises they have given us.

Beyond the exhibition wing, MAELab houses the MindGym. In this contemplative space, visitors will be able to have a mindful moment focusing on the present to consolidate their learnings from the themed exhibition. In the future, this space will be used to host events and programmes that will inspire more people to cultivate mental fitness.

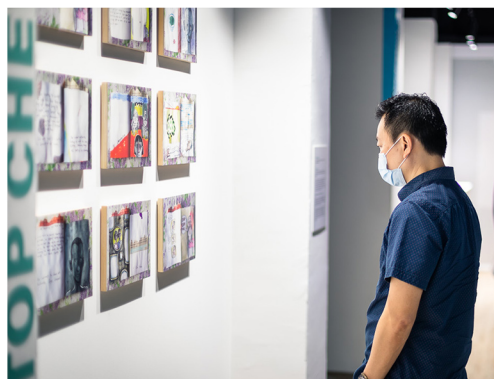
Alexandra Hospital, 378 Alexandra Road, Block 29 Level 2, Singapore 159964

As MSC continues the efforts to strengthen community mental resilience through our programmes, we would like to invite you to be part of our cause and keep you updated on our events and programmes!

1. Scan or click on the QR code to sign up for our mailing list.
2. Like and follow our FB page and website.

medicine.nus.edu.sg/nmsc
 @mindsciencecentre





"Arts, Mindfulness & the Ageing Brain" Curation @ MAELab

Ageing is inevitable but have you ever wondered if we have control over how we age? Find out what are the lifestyle changes we can engage in as interventions to mitigate the effects of ageing at MAELab's very first curation! To add a dose of wonder: What if you could prevent cognitive decline and improve your brain health through art and mindfulness? Get ready to explore the wondrous link between art, mindfulness and the ageing brain!

Duration of Exhibition: Till November 2021

Admission is by booking only.



Virtual Tour: Featuring our curation online for everyone at anytime

MAELab's first virtual tour is created with the thought of providing ease of access to quality research and information about mental health & the arts in an engaging and interactive manner. Digitalisation of MAELab will allow us to continue spreading awareness and inspire members of the public even though we are unable to meet physically. The "Arts, Mindfulness & the Ageing Brain" curation will be available for revisiting even after the exhibition space is refreshed with another exciting curation.



Calling out to all Mindfulness Practitioners

MindGym offers mindfulness-based practices to help working professionals and students mitigate the stressors of daily life. Besides the quarterly 8-week Mindfulness programme, we offered lunchtime practice sessions for our NUHS healthcare colleagues as well. To facilitate more Mindfulness programmes under MindGym, we are looking to build a community of Mindfulness Teacher. For interested practitioners, please register your interest by dropping an email to Joy Chen at joy_jiaoyu_chen@nuhs.edu.sg.

BOOK YOUR SLOT HERE

VIEW THE TOUR NOW

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST

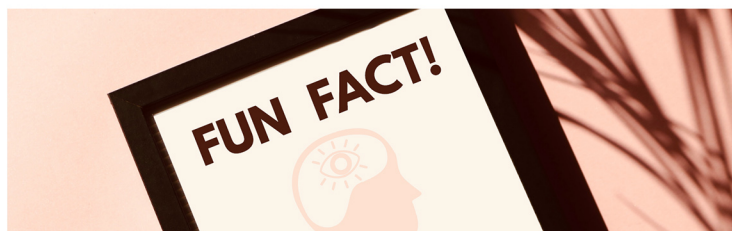
Let's destigmatize Mental Health Issues

Click the QR code to find out more

Introducing SPECTRUM

MSC is complementing NUS in its efforts to strengthen students' emotional resilience and to nurture them towards optimal cognitive performance, as they transit to adulthood. SPECTRUM, a NUS-wide community mental health initiative led by the NUS Public Health Society, aims to promote mental health inclusiveness, where every individual exists on the same mental health continuum. Understanding the inclusivity and fluidity of mental health will allow more people to recognise the importance of being aware of our own and others' mental well-being.

In order to foster a culture of mental health awareness, SPECTRUM intends to (i) destigmatise mental health conversations, encourage; (ii) help-seeking; and (iii) help-giving behaviours within the on-campus student community with engaging yet empirical content.



SPECTRUM is the winning team from the NUS Public Health Challenge held in August 2020. Since then, SPECTRUM has begun its very first needs assessment by conducting Focus Group Discussions within the NUS Residential Colleges to understand on-campus students' perceptions of mental health and their current participation in NUS mental health initiatives.



The SPECTRUM community has been growing in student size, professional network and resources over the past year. They will be kickstarting the recruitment for the next AY21/22. Students who are interested to be part of this movement can approach NUS Public Health Society through their email at phsoc@u.nus.edu.



Click on the QR code to donate NOW

Keen to make a difference in the mental health scene of Singapore?

Support our research and community programmes today!

For more information, feel free to email us at Wileen@nus.edu.sg

WHAT'S SHAPING UP!



MAELab Volunteer Recruitment

If you are enthusiastic about the Arts, Mental Health topics or even Psychology, join us as a volunteer at MAELab! We are looking for volunteers to help with providing guided tour for our curated exhibitions. Volunteers will have to commit to at least 4 hours per week for 3 months. Training will be provided to familiarize you with the current curation, so all you need to do is to be confident in engaging our visitors!

APPLY NOW



Therapeutic Rainforest Walk with Seniors: Volunteer Recruitment

If you are interested in Nature and how a mindful walk in the rainforest can build mental resilience, join us as a volunteer to help facilitate our Therapeutic Rainforest Walk! Volunteers will have to commit to the training sessions and be able to lead groups of seniors through a guided forest walk. The programme is set to launch in November!

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST BY EMAILING US:
pcmbbox6@nus.edu.sg



4th Tow Tiang Seng Distinguished Lecture: Arts for Mental Health

To commemorate World Mental Health Day on 10 October 2021, join us at 2.30pm to hear our keynote speaker Professor Foo Keong Tatt speak about 'The Art of Emotional Balance'. Associate Professor Rathi Mahendran will also be giving an insightful talk on 'The Science of Art Therapy'. Let's celebrate this special day together and learn the ways to achieve an Undeclared Mind!

REGISTER NOW



Mindful Self-Care Programme (MSCP) for Healthcare Professionals

In collaboration with the Centre for Healthcare Professionals Training, our brand-new MSCP is set to begin its first run in November. This programme, adapted from Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy, will feature a selection of succinct topics for self-care and shorter daily practices, taught over three 3-hour sessions (16, 23 & 30 November). Dr Virginia Lien will be facilitating this new programme.

*Programme fee applies

SIGN UP NOW



AWE: Train the Trainer Workshop

This workshop for AWE volunteers will be happening in November! It will feature insightful talks on diabetes, hypertension, diet and fall prevention. In addition to the informative talks, we will be introducing a whole new activity for the seniors - Mindful Therapeutic Rainforest Walk. Once the volunteers completed the workshop, you will graduate as an AWE Trainer. Stay tuned for more information.

STAY TUNED



Fundraising Concert in Jan 2022

Do you still remember our 2018 fundraising musical titled 'Remember Me'? We will be bringing back our production crew for a brand new musical concert, titled "An Undeclared Mind"! This meaningful concert is set to debut on 10 January 2022. Make a note on your calendar and be sure not to miss out! More information will be released closer to the date.

STAY TUNED

"The ability to give is a blessing."

— The late Mr Wee Sin Tho, Founding Chairman of Mind Science Centre

As an organization dedicated to build mental resilience across the demographic profiles in the community, we have invested in continuous research and rolled out evidence-based intervention and prevention programmes. These efforts have touched the lives of more than 2,800 seniors, healthcare workers and youths. As we are fully dependent on philanthropic support and grants, we sincerely appeal for your generous support of a memorial donation, which will go a long way in enabling MSC to persevere in our mission.

The key areas your generous support will be channelled to:

- Forging Early Childhood Resilience
- Helping Seniors Age Well
- Mind Art Experiential Lab (MAELab), Mind Gym
- Sustainable administration of Mind Science Centre

Together, we will make a difference to the mental health scene in Singapore!
Scan the QR code to donate today!

