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New Taskforce to Enhance Mental Health Care Support for Migrant Workers

6 November 2020 | [Foreign manpower](#)

1. A new taskforce named Project Dawn, comprising representatives¹ from the Ministry of Manpower (MOM), Government psychologists, the Institute of Mental Health (IMH), the Migrant Workers' Centre (MWC) and HealthServe, has been set up to enhance the mental health care support for migrant workers in Singapore. Project Dawn has established a framework to build a support ecosystem that will improve mental health awareness among migrant workers and provide better access to care services.
2. At the core of the framework is a seven-point strategy which consists of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention:

Primary Prevention	Secondary Prevention	Tertiary Prevention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental and social wellness awareness and promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of at-risk patients and risk factors • Screening for mental health issues • Surveillance for mental and emotional distress • Counselling, and training of para-counsellors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely escalation of care • Provision of post-intervention support

3. The seven-point strategy will be implemented in three overlapping phases over the next two years:

a. [Phase 1: Raising awareness and supporting good mental health practices](#)

- We will promote good mental health and stress management practices among migrant workers in culturally appropriate ways. One example is to ensure social well-being activities, such as **Safe Rest Days** and excursions with managed itineraries to places like parks with our community partners, are more accessible to migrant workers.
- We will include mental health education in our Settling-in-Programme (SIP) for migrant workers from next year. This will help us reach out to all new migrant workers and equip them with positive mental wellbeing tips and resources to support them in their transition to Singapore. Culturally adapted mental health resources will also be developed for migrant workers and made available on tech-enabled platforms such as FWMOMCare App and websites.

b. [Phase 2: Strengthening care system to improve migrant workers' access to mental health services](#)

- Efforts will be geared towards improving migrant workers' access to mental health services. We will equip frontline officers, dormitory operators, employers and NGOs with the necessary knowledge and skills to better detect at-risk workers early and refer them to appropriate care. We have begun training our **Forward Assurance and Support Team (FAST) officers** in psychological first aid and will extend similar training to

all regional medical centres. Counselling and para-counselling services would also be strengthened in terms of capacity and capabilities.

c. Phase 3: Enhancing integration and support in the community

- We will improve the range and level of support of services for migrant workers who may need follow-up care in the community. Besides medical support, case management at the community level will also be an important area to enhance under this thrust. The priority is to enable appropriate triaging and escalation of cases requiring specialist intervention to our healthcare partners such as IMH. Beyond case escalation, it is vital that discharged migrant workers continue to receive care and support for their recovery.

4. We are committed to strengthen migrant workers' understanding and resilience towards mental health, ensure at-risk migrant workers are identified early, and enable appropriate access to care services, including counselling and post-intervention support. Through the Project Dawn framework, we now have concrete plans to make this happen.

Annex A – MEMBERS OF THE JOINT-TASKFORCE

	Name	Designation	Organisation
1	Dr Lam Meng Chon	Director (Medical), Assurance, Care and Engagement (ACE) Group	Ministry of Manpower
2	Dr A Majeed Khader	Chief Psychologist	Ministry of Home Affairs
3	Dr Mok Yee Ming	Senior Consultant, Mental Health, <u>ACE Group</u> Senior Consultant/Chief, Dept of Mood and Anxiety/South Region	Ministry of Manpower Institute of Mental Health
4	Dr Jared Ng	Consultant, Mental Health, ACE Group Consultant, Emergency and Crisis Services	Ministry of Manpower Institute of Mental Health
5	Mr Bernard Menon	Executive Director	<u>NTUC</u> - Migrant Workers' Centre
6	Mr Joshua Sham Lechemanam	Deputy Director, Operations & Mobilisation	NTUC - Migrant Workers' Centre
7	Ms Sujatha D/O Palpanabban	Deputy Director, Admin & Programmes	NTUC- Migrant Workers' Centre
8	Dr Jeremy Lim	Vice Chairman, Board of Directors	HealthServe
9	Mr Michael Cheah	Executive Director	HealthServe
10	Dr Benjamin Kuan	Medical Director	HealthServe

FOOTNOTE

1. Please refer to Annex A for the list of Taskforce members.

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