

NEWS RELEASE

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Elderly mental health campaign launched by Ministry of Health (MOH) and Health Promotion Board (HPB) – the first of its kind

The one-year long campaign stresses the importance of elderly mental health especially amidst the increasing rates of dementia, depression, and suicide among the elderly.

Singapore, 24 October 2021 – The Ministry of Health (MOH) and Health Promotion Board (HPB) are launching a campaign to raise awareness on elderly mental health. This is the first ever campaign that focuses on the mental well-being of the elderly, and it will be launched by Minister of Health Dr Desmond Tay. The campaign is ushered in by #ForgetMeNot, an event on 1 December 2021 which will be held at Suntec City Convention Hall 3 from 1.00pm to 4.00pm, with Dr Tay being the guest of honour. This move comes after concern regarding elderly mental health. According to the Institute of Mental Health (IMH), 10% of elderly aged 60 years and above are affected by dementia, and up to 6% of elderly have depression – the most common mental illness among them. The Samaritans of Singapore have also reported the highest rates of elderly suicides in 26 years.

Regarding these statistics, Dr Tay said: “It is very worrying that the mental health of our elderly is declining, and this is something that we need to address urgently. We hope that this campaign helps to raise awareness of the elderly’s mental well-being and encourage citizens to pay more attention to them.”

#ForgetMeNot begins with a 1.5-hour panel discussion at 1.00pm by gerontologist Dr Lawrence Seah from the Gerontological Society of Singapore, and counsellors Ms Angela Tan and Mr Gerald Lim from SAGE Counselling and Tsao Foundation respectively. The topics covered include the importance of social interaction, healthy living, dementia awareness and early diagnosis of ageing-related illnesses pertaining to the elderly in Singapore.

Speaking on the relevance of the panel, Dr Seah said: “We hope to help the elderly as well as their family members recognize the things that the elderly can do to avoid hospitalization and poor health. Dementia, depression, and suicide can be prevented with good support and healthy living.”

Finally, Mr Kevin Lee of the popular TV show “Singapore’s Got Talent” will host a quiz on ageing-related illnesses at 3.00pm. A pair of air tickets to Sydney, Australia, as well as 3 sets of the latest Huawei P40 Pro smartphone are up for grabs for quiz participants. There are only 20 spots available for the quiz and interested visitors who wish to participate must apply by 1 November 2021.

Visitors who are interested to attend #ForgetMeNot are required to sign up for the event by 24 November 2021. Goodie bags will also be given to the first 200 visitors who attend.

MOH hopes that the #ForgetMeNot campaign will help citizens to be more comfortable talking about elderly mental health, recognize the signs of dementia and depression to seek timely help, and adopt healthy living habits which keep ageing-related illnesses at bay.

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The Ministry of Health (MOH) is a government organization established in 1955 and with the vision of “Championing a healthy nation with our people – to live well, live long, & with a peace of mind”. MOH is focused on promoting healthy lifestyles, the reduction of illnesses, and is committed to improving the physical and mental health of citizens. MOH also ensures the accessibility of healthcare information and seeks to educate citizens through innovative and engaging events.

More information can be found at <https://www.moh.gov.sg/>

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