

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS SINGAPORE

MENTAL HEALTH TIPS IN A TIME OF COVID-19

This e-publication consolidates the best of mental health tips to help you and your loved one cope with mental illness, thrive in spite of challenges, and build resilience while navigating the COVID-19 situation.



ccmh@aic.sg



1800-650-6060 (AIC)
1800-202-6868 (National Care Hotline)



[/MentalHealthAwarenessSG](https://www.facebook.com/MentalHealthAwarenessSG)

Developed by Caregiving and Community Mental Health Division, Agency for Integrated Care

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Daily Questions

- What am I grateful for today?
- Who am I checking in on or connecting with today?
- What expectations of "normal" am I letting go of today?
- How am I moving my body today?
- How am I contributing to the world today?

Bored at home? Head over to sgunited.wixsite.com/stayathomesingapore for a list of fun activities to keep yourself occupied!

Adapted from: greatergood.berkeley.edu

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Today, I will
stop panicking!

A guide to keeping calm



WASH YOUR HANDS REGULARLY AND THOROUGHLY

Use plenty of soap and water. Can't get to a sink? Carry a small bottle of hand sanitizer and use it regularly.



AVOID OVERCONSUMPTION OF MEDIA ON COVID-19

Don't scare yourself or worry about it constantly. Instead, read the MOH website for accurate, factual information.



REACH OUT TO TRUSTED FRIENDS OR FAMILY

To relieve your stress and reduce your anxiety, try speaking with a friend or family member to talk through your anxiety.

Questions? Email ccmh@aic.sg

Created: 2 April 2020

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YOUR PERSONAL BEST

2

COVID-19

V.I.C.T.O.R.Y.

To Stress Management



V

VERIFY information received which could be false, misleading and cause anxiety. Obtain information from reliable sources such as www.gov.sg.

I

INVEST time in maintaining good health and boost the immune system through exercise, a balanced diet and getting sufficient sleep.

C

CONNECT with family and friends via phone calls, emails and social media for support.

T

TALK to a loved one or a professional if you feel overwhelmed, anxiety or experiencing trouble eating, sleeping and concentrating.

O

ORGANISE your thoughts and don't do too many things at a time.

R

READ up about COVID-19 and its preventive measures. With a better understanding, you'll feel more assured in handling the situation.

Y

YOUR mental health matters. Please take care.

Credit: Silver Ribbon (Singapore)

YOUR PERSONAL BEST

3

STAYING POSITIVE THROUGH COVID-19



CONNECT WITH OTHERS

Use this time as an opportunity to proactively connect with friends, family, and colleagues, and build a sense of optimism collectively.

DRAW ON YOUR RESILIENCE

Draw on skills that you have used in difficult times. Think of positive things to lift your mood. Try journaling, meditation or a relaxing activity.

FOCUS ON WHAT IS GOING WELL

It is easy to ruminate on what is wrong in situations. Instead, think about what you are grateful for, and what is going well, how we are fighting this together.

BE MORE UNDERSTANDING

It is natural to feel distressed, worried or scared because of covid-19. Seek to practice greater empathy and kindness towards others during this period.

Questions? Email ccmh@aic.sg

Created: 2 April 2020

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YOUR PERSONAL BEST

DURING COVID-19, LET YOUR KINDNESS BE CONTAGIOUS.

BE THE FIRST TO REACH OUT

Your action will be very welcome during a time of stress and anxiety. Be a listening ear for colleagues to talk about stresses and issues bothering them.



SPARK POSITIVE FEELINGS

Remind colleagues to plan for activities they enjoy, and to take regular breaks while working from home. Mental well-being is important.



GIVE A SMILE

Drop a note, write a card... Don't forget to smile! A little goes a long way.



SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

Familiarise yourself with mental health and counselling services, to share with others experiencing significant distress.



REDUCE FEAR AND ANXIETY

Acknowledge discomfort and risk of infection. Help colleagues who may be anxious, to maintain objectivity about COVID-19.

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Questions? Email ccmh@aic.sg

Created: 1 April 2020.

YOUR PERSONAL BEST

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Be kind to yourself - Don't judge how you are coping based on how you see others coping. You should not try to compensate for lost productivity by working longer hours.

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FOR COVID-19



Go to <https://bit.ly/mindbossrocks> for more information and AIC counselling support.

Be kind to others - Don't judge others in how they are coping based on how you are coping. Success will not be measured the same way it was when things were normal.

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FOR COVID-19



Go to <https://bit.ly/mindbossrocks> for more information and AIC counselling support.

You are not "working from home", you are "at home, during a crisis, trying to work". Your personal physical, mental and emotional health is extremely important right now. Take care of yourself!

MENTAL HEALTH TIPS
FOR COVID-19

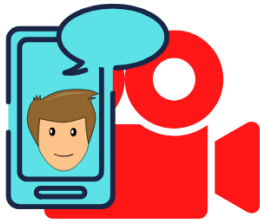


Go to <https://bit.ly/mindbossrocks> for more information and AIC counselling support.

STAYING CONNECTED DURING COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in disruptions to the social, family, work, economic and school aspects of our lives. Social distancing restricts social gatherings and in-person contact. How can we stay socially connected despite this?

SUGGESTIONS ON STAYING CONNECTED IN A TIME OF COVID-19:



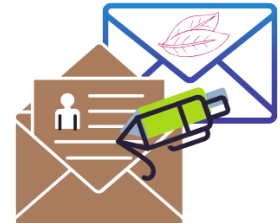
1. EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Use technology to stay in touch, you can video chat from your smartphone. Seeing someone's facial expressions can deepen connection.



2. START PROJECTS THAT INTEREST YOU

Bonding through exercising and playing board games together online, virtual lunches or daily chats with your loved ones.



3. CURATE BONDING MOMENTS

Handwritten letters can contain personalised messages of care, and can express your creativity. Sending such letters is a refreshing way to stay connected with others.

Get Thinking, Take Action and Be Creative

on how you can minimise the spread of COVID-19 and its social and psychological effects.

ACE-ing social distancing, self-isolation or quarantine:



ADAPTATION: Try to see this time as unique and different, not necessarily bad.



CONNECTION: Stay connected to your values. We are all in this together!



EXPOSURE: Limit your exposure to news and media. Choose specific times of the day to get updates which are from reputable and reliable sources.

Social distancing need not mean social isolation. We may be physically distant but we can have social solidarity.

Have questions? Reach us at ccmh@aic.sg or call AIC Hotline 1800-650-6060.

4

FEELING BURNT OUT DURING COVID-19? TYPES OF PANIC WORKERS

Source: Forbes

People deal with the uncertainties of Covid-19 differently. Some react by panic working. Panicked workers are at greater risk of burnout and damaging their mental health.

1

THE OSTRICH

Some cope with perceived threats by ignoring it and continuing like its business as usual. The more they ignore reality, the harder they work, leading to panic working. Try to understand the source of fear and deal with it directly.



2

THE BUSY BEE

Feeling pressured to keep sending emails all day or make yourself constantly available as you work from home? Failing to recognise workplace cues of validation can cause burnout. Set clear boundaries and realistic daily targets to achieve.



3

SURVIVAL INSTINCT

The fear of losing your job can spur you into hyperdrive. It triggers you to work harder as a way of acting out their need to survive. Communicate regularly with your supervisor to set achievable goals. Make time for self-care.



4

REGAINING CONTROL

Uncertainty can make you feel powerless. Panic working and applying excessive effort can be a maladaptive way of exerting control and gaining a false sense of security. Reframe negative thoughts and reach out to loved ones for support.



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FEARS

VERSUS

REALITY

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WORKING FROM HOME IN A TIME OF COVID-19

Negative self-talk?



"My boss is not replying to my email two minutes after I send it. Will I be fired?"

"I can't log into Zoom for my conference call... I'm a loser."

"I can't cope with kids, family and work. The dog won't stop barking. The situation is hopeless. There must be something very wrong with me."

"I should be as productive as I was in the office, no matter how anxious I feel during this time of COVID-19."

Try asking yourself:



Am I jumping to a hasty conclusion?
Am I imagining the worst scenario?

Am I being fully objective?
Can I learn something new?

What is the evidence for this? Does the conclusion really follow?

Am I considering the full picture? Am I being kind to myself?

Questions? Email ccmh@aic.sg or call the AIC Hotline at 1800 650 6060.

WORKING FROM HOME?

How to stay motivated, boost productivity, and make the most out of working from home.

CREATE A WORKSPACE



- Work from a desk.
- Keep your workspace separate from eating and sleeping areas.
- Keep the space well-lit.
- Keep your desk clean and uncluttered.

TAKE REGULAR BREAKS



- Do light stretches.
- Deep breathing can help with relaxation.
- Step away from the screen from time to time.

ESTABLISH A ROUTINE



- Communicate regularly with your supervisor and colleagues.
- Work only during office hours.
- Set boundaries between your personal and professional obligations.
- Get enough sleep.

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Go to <https://bit.ly/mindbossrocks> for more information and AIC counselling support.



Tips for Working from Home

For those of us who are accustomed to and appreciative of conventional "office life" and having regular interaction with our colleagues, the shift to working from home might cause anxiety, stress and tension. Here's some tips on how to adjust to our new circumstances while staying happy and productive.

Maintain a morning routine

- Keeping your morning routine consistent will help keep your mind geared to switch into work mode.
- Showering, drinking a cup of coffee, whatever your routine is, stick to it.



Set a work schedule

- Line up your day with set "office" hours.
- Having clear guidelines for when to work and when to call it a day helps many remote workers maintain work-life balance.



Set up your workspace

- Set up an area of your house to use as a workspace. Sitting down in this space sends a clear signal to your brain that it's time to focus.



Test your devices

- Make sure you have your company's telecommuting devices such as Skype or Zoom tested and ready to go so you can stay connected with your colleagues.



Discuss your work plan in advance

- If your family member shares your space when you work, let them know your working style to avoid conflict.
- Communicate with your family member about when you need to be on a call. That way, you minimise sounds and distractions if both of you need to be on a call at the same time.



Take care of your mind

- Make it a priority to be thoughtful about how often and what type of media you consume while working.
- If reading COVID-19 related news gives you anxiety and makes you lose focus, set up apps that will block that news on your device.



Take breaks

- Taking short breaks throughout the day will be critical to your sanity and it also allows you to rest your eyes from sitting in front of the computer.



Compassion & communication

- While parents are trying to balance work and parenting, there are also many people who are juggling work and elder care at home.
- Remember to navigate this situation with compassion for yourself and others, and offer support and a listening ear when you can.



Sources • Forbes Media | Psychology Today | Healthline Media



How to Survive Working from Home with Kids

Children demand constant attention - and parenting while working from home is no easy task. If you are struggling to stay sane and productive while juggling both, here's some useful tips that may help.

Create a schedule for yourself

- Line up your day carefully, with set "office" hours.
- Take advantage of your child's nap-time to finish assignments that require your complete focus.



Create a schedule for your child

- Plan a schedule based on their school routine, with different activities or school work scheduled, along with recess.
- Set up a table next to yours so your child feels as if they have their own designated place to do their painting and homework while you work.



Set up your workspace

- Establish a defined work area at home - and to let your children know that when you're in work mode, you're not to be disturbed.
- Ideally, look for a quiet corner where you can set up everything you need to work through your tasks as efficiently as possible.



Communicate with your colleagues

- Be transparent about the fact that you're juggling the needs of your kids so your colleagues are not caught by surprise. For e.g. if you're on a conference call, let them know that your child might walk into the room.
- If your toddler is fussing while you're on the line, end the call and reschedule if you can.



Embrace healthy screen time

- While parents are trying to adjust to the new circumstances, it's fine to allow your child more screen time than usual.
- A way to tie learning and screen time is to follow your child's interests and find educational media to match whatever they are interested in.



Alternate shifts

- Alternating shifts with your spouse throughout the day can make working remotely a lot easier, allowing each other to have uninterrupted work time.



Take breaks

- Juggling parenting and work is incredibly stressful and draining, which is why it's important to take time out to take short breaks and speak up when you need extra support.
- It does not hurt to also offer support to another colleague who may need a break as well.



Sources • Care.com | CNBC | Parents.com | Families for Life | The Verge

MANAGING ANXIETY AT HOME

For many people, the uncertainty surrounding the COVID situation is a difficult thing to handle, and can lead to anxiety and panic.



Quick tips

Useful during a panic attack

Breathing exercises

- Breathe in for 4 counts and breath out for 4 counts for 5 minutes in total



Take a break from the problem and revisit the issue later



- Taking time off the problem can help reduce your anxiety
- Go for a short walk outdoors or do 15 minutes of exercise

Long-term tips

Useful to prevent future panic attacks

A healthy routine can help reduce anxiety attacks

- Have regular meals even if you don't feel like eating, have regular exercise, and practise good sleep hygiene
- Continue to take your medications prescribed by your doctor



Stay connected

- Talk to a friend or a family member about your feelings via phone or video call

Focus on things you can control or change about the situation

- Focusing on things beyond your control will not help the situation, and will just worsen your anxiety

Have questions? Reach us at ccmh@aic.sg or call the AIC hotline at 1800-650-6060

MANAGING DEPRESSION AT HOME

amidst circuit breaker measures

It can be hard to keep calm given all that is happening around us in the current climate, and depression is not unusual for people of all ages.

There are things we can do to deal with the stress, and support one another.

We hope these 4 tips can give you a start.

BE REGULAR with your daily routines

- Your eating habits and sleep patterns can affect how you feel. Have regular meals even if you don't feel hungry, snack less, and go to bed on time!
- Continue taking your prescription medications

TAKE CARE of yourself

- Alcohol may help you relax but don't drink too much! Alcohol is a depressant which can make you feel even worse.
- Instead, indulge in a hobby or try out a new recipe

STAY CONNECTED with your social networks

- Socialising can help improve your mood. Keeping in touch with friends and family means you have someone to talk to when you feel low.
- Schedule regular chats or video calls with someone you are comfortable with.

WORK OUT and stay active

- Exercise can be a mood lifter.
- Check out workout videos on YouTube or your local gym/exercise studios web offerings.
- Take a walk or jog around your neighbourhood.

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In the midst of circuit breaker measures, how can we manage our obsessive-compulsive behaviours at home?

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We are currently living with a pandemic. It may be difficult for persons with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) to tell which behaviours are reasonable and which are due to excessive anxiety.

Here are some strategies we hope will help.

Reduce your news intake

- Limit how often you check for updates – consider checking the news only once a day for up to 30 minutes
- Stick to a few trustworthy news sources such as CNA, Straits Times, WHO for news and updates

Follow valid recommendations

- Understand health recommendations from MOH and WHO, like handwashing
- Do not overdo the measures beyond what is being recommended

Practice self-compassion

- Know that there is nothing wrong with feeling anxious during these times
- Make time for self-care - exercise, read a book, or just something you enjoy doing
- Give your best and do what you can to keep your compulsions in check, consult your therapist if you need help

HAVE QUESTIONS? REACH US AT CCMH@AIC.SG OR
CALL THE AIC HOTLINE AT 1800-650-6060



HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR LOVED ONE

MENTAL HEALTH CAREGIVER TIPS

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental health conditions are common and can affect anyone. According to the Singapore Mental Health Study (2016), 1 out of 7 people in Singapore will develop a mental health condition over the course of their life. Major Depressive Disorder, Alcohol Abuse and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder were found to be the top three most common mental health conditions in Singapore.

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we **think, feel, and act**.



Determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. **Good mental health is related to mental and psychological well-being.**

RESOURCES ON MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS



MIND MATTERS RESOURCE DIRECTORY BOOK

The Mind Matters Resource Directory provides an overview of the Community Mental Health Masterplan including the available and accessible **community mental health services** and **resources** to support you and your loved one in this journey.



MIND MATTERS RESOURCE DIRECTORY LISTING

Contains a listing of the **GPs and Community Mental Health partners island wide**. Respite centres and information on caregiver support groups are also available.

HAVE QUESTIONS? EMAIL CCMH@AIC.SG OR CALL THE AIC HOTLINE AT 1800 650 6060

Fighting and coping with the COVID-19 pandemic is not just a physical and medical challenge, but also a psychological one. The impact might be even more intense for a person with a mental health condition.



HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR LOVED ONES WITH MENTAL HEALTH IN CONTINUING THEIR TREATMENT FROM HOME DURING COVID-19

Here are some tips on how to support your loved ones with mental health in continuing their treatment at home during this period:



Sufficient supply of medications

Talk to your mental health professional about the medication supply and suggest to increase the supply of medication to ensure a sufficient amount in case follow-up appointments get postponed.



Practise the skills taught

Make an active effort to ensure your loved one practises the skills taught during the psychotherapy sessions. For examples, putting up reminders and posters around the home.



Watch for signs of relapse or behaviour changes

Observe your loved ones for any changes in behaviour or mood. This could be their way of expressing unmet needs. Refer to our info-sheet 'Preventing a Relapse for your loved one' for more information.



Ensure that you are supported

Caregiving for loved one with a mental health condition can be challenging. Coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, there could be more strain and stressors faced by yourself and your loved one. Refer to our info-sheet 'Support for Caregivers during COVID-19' for more information.



Go online

There are tele-counselling and helpline services available during this period with trained professionals on standby to provide emotional support.

Psychological support during COVID	
The National Care Hotline (24-hr)	1800-6202-6868
Ageing, caregiving and mental health related issues	
Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) Mon-Sun, 8:30am-8:30pm	1800-650-6060
Crisis	
Samaritans of Singapore (SOS) (24-hr)	1800-221-4444
Emergency and Crisis	
Institute of Mental Health (IMH) helpline (24-hr)	6389 2222
Caregiving	
Caregivers Alliance Limited (CAL) Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm, except public holidays	9720 7590 / 9770 7996
West Cluster	9729 8628 / 9826 7115
Central Cluster	
East Cluster	9736 9170

Have questions? Reach us at ccmh@aic.sg or call AIC Hotline 1800-650-6060.

HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR LOVED ONE WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES DURING COVID- 19

The COVID-19 pandemic is challenging for most. It can be even more challenging if you have a loved one with mental health issues who is having difficulties adjusting to the current situation.

Here are some tips on how to communicate with your loved one.



1 Everyone reacts differently

How an individual responds depends on many factors such as their social support system, their character traits, age and severity of their condition.



2 Be transparent and share age-appropriate information

Share and explain to your loved one about the current situation. Do ensure that the message is tailored to their age.



3 Watch out for behavioural changes or new patterns

This can be in the form of sudden personality change such as mood swings or loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed.

COMMUNICATION TRAPS TO NOTE:

✓ DO'S

Ask questions from your loved one's point of view

"What are the things that are hard for you?"

Use a collaborative stance and contextualise your statements

"When you do X in situation Y, I feel Z"

Listen with the intent of understanding

Set aside your opinions and see the situation from their point of view.



✗ DON'TS

Avoid finger-pointing

Do not call your loved one "arrogant", "ignorant" or "selfish" when they challenge or rebuke you.

Avoid saying:

"You never listen to me" or "You always act like this"

Avoid debates

Do not focus on the facts. Hear their perspectives.

Have questions?

Reach us at ccmhd@aic.sg or call AIC Hotline **1800-650-6060**.



PREVENTING A RELAPSE FOR YOUR LOVED ONE

People in recovery from a mental health condition may sometimes fall back into a relapse when they encounter certain triggers or stressors. Here are some things you can do to reduce the chances of a relapse.

What can I do?



1. MEDICATION MANAGEMENT

Stopping medications prematurely is a major reason for relapse.

- » Advise your loved one to continue taking their medications even if they are feeling well.



2. LOOK OUT FOR POTENTIAL WARNING SIGNS AND TRIGGERS OF A RELAPSE

Different people may have different warning signs that they are about to fall back into a relapse, as well as different triggers for a relapse.

- » Learning to spot warning signs and triggers allows you and your loved one to take action early, before it turns into a relapse.

COMMON WARNING SIGNS

1. Lack of sleep or too much sleep
2. Weight loss or gain
3. Irritability or anger
4. Withdrawal from friends, family, or colleagues

COMMON TRIGGERS

1. Loss or grief
2. Conflict among loved ones
3. Significant life changes e.g. births, deaths, loss of job

HAVE QUESTIONS? EMAIL CCMH@AIC.SG OR CALL THE AIC HOTLINE AT 1800 650 6060



PREVENTING A RELAPSE FOR YOUR LOVED ONE

People in recovery from a mental health condition may sometimes fall back into a relapse when they encounter certain triggers or stressors. Here are some things you can do to reduce the chances of a relapse.



3. REINFORCE HEALTHY COPING SKILLS

Having healthy coping skills can help your loved one handle stressors or triggers more effectively, reducing the chances of a relapse.

- » Discuss with your loved one some practical and healthy coping skills he/she can practice if they expect to face upcoming stressful situations or triggers.

Tips to consider:

Face stressors slowly and gradually

Remind them to allocate time for self-care

Cut back on non-essential ongoing responsibilities

Ensure realistic expectations of situation



4. REMIND YOUR LOVED ONE TO SEEK HELP WHEN NEEDED

Remind your loved one that seeking help is not a sign of weakness.

- » Discuss any issues with your loved one's healthcare professionals if needed
- » **Plan:** Having a plan in place on what you and your loved one have agreed to do for him/her in the event of a relapse may help ease worries

The plan may include:

- » At what point does your loved one want to seek help?
- » What treatments or emergency department does your loved one prefer?

You may also like to discuss duties or chores they may need help with in the event that they need to spend time in a hospital during a relapse.

HAVE QUESTIONS? EMAIL CCMH@AIC.SG OR CALL THE AIC HOTLINE AT 1800 650 6060



MANAGING YOUR LOVED ONE'S MENTAL HEALTH MEDICATIONS





Caring for a loved one with a mental health condition can be a strenuous and lonely journey. If your loved one is undergoing treatment, they may be prescribed various medications in addition to their therapies. It may be overwhelming for you to keep track of and manage your loved one's medications and their side effects.

Here are some information and tips on how to manage your loved one's medications and their side effects.

I AM WORRIED THAT MY LOVED ONE'S MEDICATIONS MAY BE TOO EXPENSIVE. WHAT CAN I DO?






-  Discuss this with your loved one's doctor if you or your loved one is concerned with the cost of the medication prescribed; the doctor may be able to switch the medication to a cheaper or subsidised alternative if available.
-  You can refer to www.moh.gov.sg/cost-financing/healthcare-schemes-subsidies/drug-subsidies-schemes for the list of subsidised medications in Singapore.



MY LOVED ONE IS BEHAVING UNUSUALLY DUE TO HIS/HER MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION. WHAT CAN I DO?






-  Listen and show patience, care and encouragement as much as possible.
-  Clear and kind communication is also important, as your loved one needs support and not criticism.
-  Consult his/her doctor or therapist if you need further help.

HAVE QUESTIONS? EMAIL CCMH@AIC.SG OR CALL THE AIC HOTLINE AT 1800 650 6060

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF MY LOVED ONE'S MEDICATIONS?








-  All medications can have side effects. During treatment, the doctor will try to find medications that work for your loved one and ensure that its side effects can be managed. This may take a few trials of different medications.
-  To understand the common side effects caused by common psychiatric medications, you can refer to www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/mental-health-medications/index.shtml.
-  For more information, speak to your loved one's doctor or a pharmacist to understand more about what can be expected from the medications.



MY LOVED ONE IS REFUSING HIS/HER MEDICATIONS. WHAT CAN I DO?



-  Family support is vital to persuading him/her to resume their medications.
-  Talk to your loved one without being judgmental, to understand his/her reasons for refusing his/her medications. Some common reasons are:
 - ▶ A lack of awareness and understanding of the severity of their mental illnesses
 - ▶ They cannot manage the side effects of the medications
 - ▶ They feel that the medications are not working for them
-  Manage your loved one's expectations of the medications he/she is taking.
-  Let your loved one know you are there for him/her, and slowly persuade him/her by addressing his/her concerns.
-  Consult his/her doctor or therapist if you need further help.

HAVE QUESTIONS? EMAIL CCMH@AIC.SG OR CALL THE AIC HOTLINE AT 1800 650 6060



UNDERSTANDING YOUR LOVED ONE'S MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENTS



Caring for a loved one with a mental health condition can be a strenuous and lonely journey. Knowing more about your loved one's mental health treatment options can prepare you for the upcoming journey. Here's some information on common treatment options which your loved one may be undergoing.






WHAT CAN MY LOVED ONE AND I EXPECT OF THIS MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION?

A mental health diagnosis may change over time, or when there new information or symptoms are uncovered. This may point to a different diagnosis.

Getting timely help for your loved one can help to manage the mental condition and reduce complications. Your loved one can recover and achieve a full and satisfying life.

WHAT TREATMENT OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR MY LOVED ONE?

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to mental health treatment. Some things to note include:

-  Although they are effective methods for managing many mental health conditions, they do not cure the mental health condition.
-  Different people may respond to the same treatment differently. The same medication or therapy that works for someone may not be effective for your loved one.
-  Different people may take different amounts of time to recover.

HAVE QUESTIONS? EMAIL CCMH@AIC.SG OR CALL THE AIC HOTLINE AT 1800 650 6060

COMMON TREATMENTS - PSYCHIATRIC MEDICATIONS



Examples: Antidepressants, Anxiolytics, Mood Stabilisers

Tips to note if your loved one is undergoing this treatment



Psychiatric medications can help to make other concurrent therapies more effective.



Some psychiatric medications take around a few weeks for the full effects to be felt.



Psychiatric medications should not be stopped without the advice of your loved one's doctor.

COMMON TREATMENTS - PSYCHOTHERAPIES



Examples: Cognitive-behavioural therapy, Psychoanalytic therapy, Client-centred therapy

Tips to note if your loved one is undergoing this treatment



Psychotherapies involve your loved one talking about the condition and related issues with his or her therapist.



Your loved one will learn about his or her condition, moods, feelings, thoughts, and behaviour.



With these insights, your loved one can learn coping and stress management skills.

HOW LONG DOES MY LOVED ONE HAVE TO UNDERGO TREATMENT?



The length of mental health treatments varies from one person to another, and usually matches the nature and severity of the person's presenting issues or concerns. Length of treatment also varies with the type of treatment given. It is important to consider the following when deciding the length of treatment:



Treatment successfully ends when your loved one has achieved the goals he/she has agreed upon with his/her therapist/doctor.



Discussion of treatment length should be part of your loved one's conversation with his/her therapist/doctor.



Treatment length is often tentative and revisited throughout the course of treatment.



It is common for therapists to have a few rounds of assessment before suggesting a treatment plan for your loved one. In some cases, additional treatment goals may then be suggested by the therapist.



In general, people show higher levels of recovery with longer lengths of treatment. It is important for your loved one to have received enough treatment and have reasonable expectations of treatment lengths before deciding treatment is not working.



HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR LOVED ONE

MENTAL HEALTH CAREGIVER TIPS

MENTAL
HEALTH
AWARENESS
SINGAPORE

SEEKING HELP

Caring for a loved one with a mental health condition can be a challenging journey. You can support and provide better care when you are informed about the **conditions, type of treatment** and **help** available.



HOW TO TELL IF IT IS A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION OR IS IT JUST STRESS?

It is not easy to notice changes in someone's behaviour and mood, even if you know them well. You are more likely to notice big or sudden changes. Often it can be mistaken for signs of stress.

CONSIDER THE CONTEXT OF THE SYMPTOMS OR BEHAVIOURS

STRESS-RELATED ISSUES

The symptoms are usually linked or due to a recent incident or event.

The severity of the symptoms is usually proportionate to the intensity of the event. E.g. your loved one may be feeling down or have poor appetite in response to a loss of a beloved pet.



MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION

The symptoms are usually **not** due to any identifiable event or incident.

If there is an identifiable event, the severity of the symptoms may not appear to be proportionate to the intensity of the event. E.g. your loved one is feeling down or has poor appetite suddenly without any triggering events or incidents.

Another way: **consider the impact of your loved one's symptoms or behaviours.** If your loved one's symptoms are affecting how they function and perform their daily tasks, regardless of whether they are due to stress-related or mental health issues, it may be beneficial for your loved one to seek further help.



WHERE SHOULD I BRING MY LOVED ONE TO SEEK HELP?

For the list of mental health services available, refer to:

www.ncss.gov.sg/GatewayPages/Social-Services/Persons-with-Mental-Health-Conditions.

HAVE QUESTIONS? EMAIL CCMH@AIC.SG OR CALL THE AIC HOTLINE AT 1800 650 6060



SELF-CARE

IS AN ACTIVE PROCESS YOU HAVE TO CREATE AND PLAN FOR YOURSELF TO PREVENT BURNOUT IN EVERY STEP OF YOUR CAREGIVING JOURNEY.

SELF-COMPASSION

Be kind and understanding to yourself instead of criticising or blaming yourself.

ENERGISE

Make an attempt to partake more in activities that energise and excite you. Interests groups and opportunities to socialise are available at your nearest Community Club.

LEARN ABOUT THE SERVICES AVAILABLE

Explore the various schemes and services available to better support yourself and your loved ones.

PAY-IT-FORWARD TO OTHER CAREGIVERS

Share your experience with other caregivers and offer them tips if they are agreeable.

Bear in mind that you are the expert of your loved ones. Advice provided by healthcare professionals might need to be tweaked to your loved ones' personality and interest.

CARE FOR YOURSELF FIRST

Ensure that your needs are met first to maintain your well-being so that you can better care for your loved ones.

ASK FOR HELP

It is okay to ask for help. It is not an indication of weakness, or suggest that you are an incompetent caregiver.

RESPECT YOUR BODY AND MIND

Listen to your body. Get sufficient rest, be mindful of your inner voice and practice good eating habits.

EMPATHISE WITH YOUR LOVED ONE

A mental health diagnosis does not define your loved one. Your loved one is an individual with hopes and dreams. Encourage their interests and support them in reaching their goals.

IF YOU FEEL OVERWHELMED OR BURNOUT, DO CONTACT US AT CCMH@AIC.SG AND WE WILL ASSIST TO LINK YOU UP TO THE NEEDED SERVICES.

HAVE QUESTIONS? EMAIL CCMH@AIC.SG OR CALL THE AIC HOTLINE AT 1800 650 6060

3Cs for Caregivers' Self-Care



Care



Care for yourself so that you can care for others. Prioritise your needs use coping strategies. Eat healthy, get enough sleep, relax and exercise to recharge.



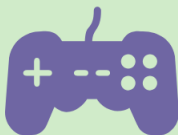
Connect



Be connected with others and speak to trusted people about your feelings. Call a hotline if you feel you are unable to cope.



Control



Take a step back and think about the areas you can take control of. You will feel better when you know you can help yourself and others.



Credits • Dr Joshua Kua, Psychiatrist, Visiting Consultant Agency for Integrated Care

Have questions? Reach us at ccmh@aic.sg or call AIC Hotline 1800-650-6060.



Need a listening ear?

TALK TO SOMEONE TODAY

The current COVID-19 situation has affected many of us one way or another. Should you feel overwhelmed & need to talk to someone, here are some helplines that can help you.



General



- **Mental Health Helpline** (24 hours) – 6389 2222
- **Samaritans of Singapore** (24 hours) – 1800 221 4444
- **Singapore Association for Mental Health (SAMH)** (Mon-Fri 9am - 1pm & 2pm - 6pm) – 1800 283 7019
- **Silver Ribbon (Singapore)** (Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm) – 6385 3714 / 6386 1928 / 6509 0271
- **Viriya Therapy Centre** (Mon to Fri: 10am-5pm) - 6256 1311



For Seniors



- **CareLine** (24-hours) - 6340 7054
- **Hua Mei Centre for Successful Ageing** (Mon - Thurs, 8.30am - 6pm, Fri 8.30am - 5.30pm) – 6593 9549
- **Lions Befrienders** (Mon - Fri, 9am - 6pm) – 1800 375 8600
- **O' Joy Care Services** (Mon - Fri, 8am - 5.30pm) – 6749 0190
- **The Seniors Helpline** (Mon - Fri, 9am - 7pm, Sat 9am - 1pm) – 1800 555 5555



For Caregivers



- **Caregivers Alliance Limited (CAL)** (Mon - Fri, except PH) 9am - 6pm – West Cluster: 9720 7590 / 9770 7996, Central Cluster: 97298628 / 98267115, East Cluster: 97369170



For Youths



- **CHAT** (16 – 30 years old) (Tue – Sat 12pm – 9pm) - 6493 6500 / 6501 or email: CHAT@mentalhealth.sg
- **E-Counselling for Youths** (13 – 25years old) – Website: eC2.sg



For Children



- **Tinkle Friend** - Helpline (Mon – Fri 2.30pm – 7pm) – 1800 274 4788, or online chat (Mon – Thur 2.30pm - 7pm; Fri till 5pm) - www.tinklefriend.sg

A community message brought to you by:

Green Ribbon Taskforce a group of resident volunteers from Bukit Batok SMC who care for your mental health & wellness

The above information is correct as at Apr 2020

FURTHER RESOURCES

SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS

SUPPORT IS CRUCIAL IN YOUR CAREGIVING JOURNEY TO PREVENT BURNOUT. HERE ARE SOME SOURCES OF SUPPORT THAT MAY HELP YOU BETTER CARE FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR LOVED ONES.

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF SUPPORT AVAILABLE?

FORMAL SUPPORT



Professionals in the hospitals and community

► Eligibility for most services and schemes are subject to **means-testing**. Speak to the **Medical Social Worker** to find out more.

INFORMAL SUPPORT



Family, friends and loved ones



Self-Care

Keeps you best prepared to care for your loved one

WHERE CAN I FIND SUPPORT?



NAVIGATING THE COMMUNITY CARE SECTOR

Approach AIC Link, a one-stop resource centre for caregivers to find out more about the various schemes and services that you and your loved ones can benefit from.



SERVICES IN THE COMMUNITY

There are many service providers who provide care in the community. Plan ahead for the care of your loved ones, so that you have sufficient time to explore the various services. Ask care staff such as nurses about the available care options. Visit www.aic.sg for more information.



RESPITE OPTIONS

Respite care helps to provide short-term relief for caregivers. It can be arranged for a few hours, or for several days or weeks at home or in a healthcare centre.



CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS

Caregiver support groups serve as a collective platform for caregivers to come to share more about their caregiving journey and to bond with other caregivers. You are not alone!



COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

There are community mental health services for clients and caregivers. Support in terms of counselling, service linkages and psychoeducation can be provided. Email ccmh@aic.sg to find out more.

HAVE QUESTIONS? EMAIL CCMH@AIC.SG OR CALL THE AIC HOTLINE AT 1800 650 6060