



voices

MINDEF should ensure top-down training on mental health issues

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FROM RAYMOND ANTHONY FERNANDO - APRIL 17

Schizophrenia is believed to be the most distressing of all mental disorders, and it is never easy to manage this severe brain disorder.

The illness is unpredictable: Fear, hallucinations, nervousness and poor hygiene are some of the symptoms of schizophrenia relapses. The most important thing to help patients in their recovery is to exercise patience, understanding and strong emotional support.

In "Coroner rules out foul play in NSF's death" (April 8, Channel NewsAsia), it was reported that the national serviceman's supervisor did not know the severity of schizophrenia.

Although Mr Reganathan Magindren had informed the army about his son's mental disorder, poor coordination between his son's supervisor and the medical team, as well as the lack of knowledge of schizophrenia have no doubt led to this tragedy.

If the Ministry of Defence still requires those who have mental disorders to enlist, then it is only proper that there be top-down training on mental health issues.

Psychiatrists, recovered patients and caregivers could be invited to enlighten personnel on mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and depression.

This holistic approach would give clear insights into mental disorders and help supervisors and commanders to better manage soldiers with such conditions. Let us work together to save and reclaim every life.

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