



voices

Mental health recovery is possible with treatment

Like many people, we are saddened by the apparent suicide of talented actor and comedian Robin Williams, which was reportedly linked to his long struggle with severe depression.

FROM TAN LI LI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SINGAPORE ASSOCIATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH - AUGUST 15

Like many people, we are saddened by the apparent suicide of talented actor and comedian Robin Williams, which was reportedly linked to his long struggle with severe depression.

Worldwide and in Singapore, statistics point towards a worrying growth trend in the number of people with depression.

Many of them feel “alone and afraid”, as Mr Williams felt, he admitted in an interview with The Guardian newspaper in 2010.

Also, they often report feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, loss of interest in daily activities, changes in sleep patterns, self-loathing and other maladaptive behaviour patterns.

In such instances, seeking professional help early is imperative, particularly when the person has a preoccupation with killing or harming himself.

Frequently, people with severe depression are unwilling or unable to seek help themselves. It is thus important that those closest to them take necessary steps to obtain professional help on their behalf.

The Singapore Association for Mental Health (SAMH) offers a range of services for people with various levels of depressive disorders and other mental health issues.

These include professional counselling, residential homes and aftercare services, day-care centres, support groups and a mobile support team. The SAMH operates a toll-free helpline (1800-283-7019).

□ People with depression are more vulnerable to hurting themselves physically or through alcohol and drug abuse in attempting to escape from their fears and problems. It is a sobering fact that depression can strike anyone at any stage of life.

The good news is that recovery is possible with proper treatment. □ Over the years, the SAMH has seen many cases of people recovering fully from their illness and returning to lead normal lives. It gives us hope that even in our increasingly stressful society, we can aim to achieve our vision of “mental wellness for all”.

[Click here to read the full article on TODAYonline](#)